THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND: CASE STUDIES & PROCESS EVALUATION

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About

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI) is a demand-driven workforce and economic development initiative implemented by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. It is designed to make sure that Rhode Island provides the talent needed for companies to grow by offering targeted education and skills training for state residents. The goal of RJRI is to develop partnerships between employers, educators, and community-based organizations to remove communication barriers and improve the fit between workers and employer needs. The program accomplishes this by leveraging resources from the federal and state governments to build sector capacity and communication, develop new targeted training programs, and support workers through training and into employment. For more information, visit: http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/.

The **Rhode Island Department and Labor and Training** (DLT) supplies the information, tools, and funds needed to help Rhode Island's businesses and workers be competitive and expand in the modern economy. The DLT's mission is to provide workforce development, security, and protection to the state's workers, employers, and citizens. The DLT utilizes both federal and state funding to offer employment and educational services and economic opportunities to the residents and businesses of the Ocean State. For more information, visit: http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/.

The **Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy (SSIREP)** at the University of Rhode Island is a campus-wide consortium that brings together strong campus units including political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, English, languages, computer science and statistics, history, gender and women's studies, nursing, pharmacy, Africana studies, environmental and natural resource economics, marine affairs, education, business, human development, engineering, communications, and labor studies. The SSIREP fosters interdisciplinary programs in scholarly research, teaching and learning, and outreach to students, faculty, business, government, and the community. In addition, SSIREP's affiliated faculty conduct program and policy evaluations for Rhode Island's government and nonprofit agencies. For more information, visit: https://web.uri.edu/ssirep/

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Executive Summary

State-sponsored, sector-based workforce strategies are a promising model for economic development. Rhode Island is one of many states to embrace an industry-led, sector-based strategy as a model for workforce and economic development. Rhode Island's decision to invest in sector strategy reflects its recognition that innovative and sustainable workforce development and employment training approaches are required to ensure that Rhode Island businesses and workers can compete in the technological, global age and that the state can deliver the talent needed to retain employers, attract new businesses, and foster business growth. Beginning in 2015, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) piloted its first round of grants for sector-based workforce development partnerships. In July 2015, the DLT issued the first round of 21 RJRI planning grants. Following the planning phase, 26 grantees received funds to implement sector workforce development programs in 2016. Funds for the initiative came from several federal and state funding sources, causing the agency to innovate by creating a braiding funding structure and introduce new data collection and reporting techniques so that each partnership could receive funds from a variety of sources based on the purpose of their programming and the individual participants in training programs. As a result of their efforts, the program brought industry, community based organizations, and educational institutions together in partnerships to work in innovative ways. The goals of the program were to place new employees into immediate job openings; up-skill current employees to advance skills and/or remain competitive; and create pipelines of talent for the future.

Institutional History

The mission of RJRI was to create innovative and comprehensive systems change that would align the state's workforce and training investments with the needs of employers to help workers, employers, and spur Rhode Island's economy. However, implementation was complicated by both internal and external regulatory and systems challenges. The RJRI team experienced significant hurdles and created innovative solutions in order to effectively implement the program given funding constraints and cultural challenges. In particular, the RJRI team had to be very creative to overhaul and build new systems for reviewing proposals, documenting participants, reimbursing partnerships and ensuring programmatic and financial accountability and oversight. These innovations contributed greatly to the success of the program.

Addressing Sector Need and Innovation

The RJRI program was designed to spur innovation among partnerships to develop valuable job training and workforce development programs. Fourteen partnerships with prior experience working with the DLT or the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) added new partners to create a workforce pipeline or developed new plans for workforce development. Twelve partnerships had either no experience working with the DLT or the GWB, or had partners working with DLT for the first time. For these partnerships, their participation in an industry-led program allowed them to learn about industry needs by focusing on government or industry-sponsored research, collaborating with industry partners, or conducting needs assessments. The systematic analysis of workforce and training data allowed partnerships to design training programs based on anticipated economic and industry trends, current and projected workforce needs, and the inadequacy of current training programs to meet industry needs. Under RJRI, 19 partnerships expanded existing programs, five partnerships developed training curricula, and five partnerships

created completely new training programs. Compared with what was offered prior to RJRI, 17 of these partnerships underwent a fundamental change in terms of delivering programming and eight modified existing programming to better meet employer needs.

Partnerships

A central objective of the RJRI program was to cultivate industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of Rhode Island's workforce and develop a pipeline of workers that could expedite sustainable sector growth. There was wide variation in the numbers of partners across the various partnerships, ranging from four to 46, and some partnerships continued to add partners over time. Since sector strategies often bring together groups of employers that are competitors or organizations that operate under differing procedures and timelines, instituting these types of partnerships can be challenging. Some of the common challenges encountered by RJRI partnerships included issues or breakdowns in communication and difficulties in navigating bureaucratic requirements of various institutions and a lack of capacity for addressing these issues. Some also struggled with identifying and working with new partners. Partnerships overcame challenges by finding partners that shared the same vision and were committed to the goals of the partnership as well as identifying partners that were willing and able to train workers and quickly hire trainees into jobs upon program completion. To help ensure partnership success, sectors should utilize a workforce intermediary when possible. Other suggestions include utilizing a facilitator if an employer is the primary grantee, convening an advisory board to inform recruitment and programming, and ensuring effective, thoughtful planning of partnership meetings and communication to provide equity about time and travel commitments and continued engagement in the partnership.

Sustainability

To encourage sustainability of RJRI programs, the 2016 RJRI partnerships were required to develop plans for sustainability as part of the planning and implementation process. Partnerships utilized several strategies to plan for sustainability, including offering programming under a fee-for-service model, utilizing colleges and universities to build lasting degree and certificate programs, seeking out alternative sources of grant funding to maintain their programs and services, and developing entrepreneurial enterprises to fund the partnership's programs and services. Two partnerships did not create plans for sustainability due to either the end of their partnership after 2016 or their reluctance to continue programming without state funding. Overall, 13 partnerships had a strong likelihood of continuing either immediately or in the near future without state aid, five partnerships were possibly sustainable without state aid, and eight partnerships appeared unlikely to continue without state financing. In order to increase their possible sustainability, future partnerships could pursue industry buy-in and input into their training programs, design flexible "a la carte" programming that serves an identified industry need and is eligible for outside sources of funding, and engage with a workforce intermediary to assist with partnership leadership and mediation. The DLT can help future partnerships become more sustainable by helping lead partners connect with industry, workforce intermediaries, service organizations, and other partners to provide flexible and functional programming that best serves industry and worker needs.

Recruitment and Outreach

A critical plan of action for sectors in need of workers is to employ effective recruitment and outreach and to utilize a range of strategies to identify and recruit potential workers for their

industry. The RJRI partnerships employed a wide variety of strategies for recruitment or outreach, many of which were successful. Overall, RJRI partners came very close to reaching their targets for recruitment. Partnerships set an overall goal of recruiting 1,333 workers into programming, and 1,116 workers were successfully recruited into partnership training activities. However, in the pilot year of RJRI, several partnerships struggled with recruiting workers in a tight economy, as fewer people were out of work. As the economy continues to grow and the workforce continues to age, it will become even more important for the state's economic sectors to create intentional plans to recruit in communities and from populations with higher than average unemployment or underemployment, or who currently are employed in low wage, non-career jobs. In addition, sector partnerships will need to create effective "green housing" strategies (strategies aimed at youth before graduation) to reach young people and ensure that there is a seamless school-to-career pipeline. This also will allow partnerships to reach and develop the next generation workforce before they become un- or underemployed. Many of the practices utilized by RJRI grantees can be adopted and employed in other industries that may face continued issues in hiring and reaching potential workers.

Programming

Grantees utilized various methods to execute and implement their RJRI programming, and many grantees incorporated multiple methods, taking into account different aspects of the industry and different target populations. Grantees implemented a total of 21 new worker programs, often including content for both specialized and basic skills, taking place as either single or half day, multi-day, or multi-week programs, and providing additional supports for participants. Fifteen partnerships provided training for incumbent workers, and these often were multi-week programs with employers referring incumbent workers. At least 11 grantees took steps to implement or develop sector-building programs. These activities included developing infrastructure, services, and resources for the benefit of their sector. Additionally, many grantees outlined concrete steps to expand and improve their services. Partnerships used a variety of locations to hold trainings or other activities. The most common locations for new and incumbent worker programs were local colleges, universities, and public schools, though many programs were held at employer sites as on-the-job or in-house trainings. Overall, RJRI partners successfully trained 920 participants, and 81.2 percent of those recruited into training completed it. One of the key aspects of RJRI that helped to increase the rate of success was that partnerships could adapt and adjust their trainings through an ongoing improvement process. This flexibility was an important benefit and allowed the partnerships to learn from challenges and adopt effective practices to overcome them. Being able to provide training stipends or monetary incentives to those in the training programs, including those programs that involved the use of mentors, was crucial for many sectors' success with trainee recruitment and retention.

Trainee Challenges

Growth industries likely will face challenges finding potential workers as the economy continues to expand. Consequently, companies will need to draw talent from populations with traditionally higher numbers of un- and underemployed workers. These populations may face significant barriers to workforce participation that need to be addressed in order to support economic growth, the most common being transportation, child care, affording training, soft and basic skills, and finding scheduling times that work for trainees. The largest barriers were those involving transportation and child care. Many RJRI partnerships successfully provided supports

and programming to help overcome these barriers and developed models that could be employed by other partnerships. Providing temporary transportation and child care supports for trainees both during training and once they enter employment would limit this barrier to economic growth, but the state also needs to invest in assessing transportation and childcare access on a systems level, as the current supply of transportation and childcare options is not aligned with workforce needs.

Transition from Training to Employment

Successful execution of job training and workforce development programs allows industries to recruit more workers and training participants to find long-term careers. A total of 56 percent of training participants were employed after completing training by the time of this writing. Nearly all partnerships experienced some type of challenge relating to the placement of trainees into employment. In this regard, partnerships can improve their placement by designing training programs to align with industry hiring seasons, addressing the time gap that exists between the completion of training and the delivery of licenses required for employment, and aligning the completion of pre-clearance procedures with training program end dates. Many of these challenges were successfully overcome by other partnerships participating in the RJRI program. These included partnerships that hired workers prior to their participation in the training program, delivered stipends and post-training services to training graduates in order to ease the time gap between training and employment, delivered industry-valued training programs that improved the prospects of hiring, and connected trainees with employers. Moreover, one goal of sector workforce development programs is to expose potential workers to a field that will allow them to determine whether the career is the right one for them—a goal that often decreases the number of trainees completing training or choosing to pursue employment in the field. Few programs accounted for this goal in their processes. Future performance metrics should acknowledge that job training participants are considering whether to pursue long-term careers through the training program and aim to recruit more workers for training than are expected to be employed in the industry.

Evaluation of the Department of Labor and Training

Partnerships reported overall positive attitudes toward the RJRI program and the DLT. The flexibility of the program, its demand-driven and employer-focused structure, and the enthusiasm and commitment of the DLT staff were particularly appreciated by partnerships. The program was described as “open,” “encouraging,” and “business friendly.” Partners also greatly appreciated the program’s focus on long term sustainability in building a future workforce, the ability of employers to work in teams and the focus on connecting employers within a sector, and the spotlight on expanding and building new programming guided by employer input. There was an appreciation for the program due to the many best practices that DLT employed during 2016. Some areas for improvement included improved clarity and communication in RFPs and during the contracting process about the expectations and commitments of RJRI partners to attend events, report data, and the timeline for funding. Partners also requested additional streamlining of grant applications, addenda, and the paperwork for enlisting trainees and filing for reimbursements. More attention also should be paid to refining the process for tracking performance metrics and assigning accountability for tracking. Several other improvements also will be important to the future of the program.

Section 1: Introduction

The Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI) program is a sector workforce development program initiated in 2015 by the State of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT). The DLT developed RJRI to support the creation of industry-led sector partnerships in order to implement workforce training programs that would enhance and increase the skills of Rhode Island's workforce, increase the ability of sectors to grow, and advance the state's overall economy. RJRI was designed specifically to increase the flexibility and responsiveness of the state's support for workforce development initiatives that industries need in order to prosper, and provides funding for training new workers, upskilling incumbent workers, creating pipelines of potential workers and students, and supporting the growth of industry workforce intermediaries in the state's expanding economic sectors.

Central to the functionality of RJRI are industry-led partnerships. Made up of industry employers, educational institutions, workforce intermediaries, community-based organizations, and training partners, partnerships create workforce solutions that are intended to directly address the unique issues facing their industry. Through RJRI, the DLT funds these partnerships to enable them to carry out sector development, workforce training programs and related services. This industry-led strategy allows RJRI to be flexible, responsive, and focused on the needs of Rhode Island's growing economic sectors.

Goals

Sector-based strategies are based on relationships between state policy makers, workforce intermediaries, private employers, community organizations, and educational institutions that unite behind the goal of improving and expanding the workforce of a particular economic sector. These organizations form a sector partnership that can provide training and other developmental programs. Often referred to as "demand side workforce development", sector strategies start with economic sector needs and enlist employers to develop training modules for skills that are lacking but essential for their industry to grow and stay competitive. Sector strategies aim to develop a strong talent pool for a specific industry, and well-designed sector strategies target specific subgroups of workers who are prepared for additional industry-specific training in order to build the talent pool. This differs from "supply side" workforce development, which focuses on un- or underemployed individuals from a specific community or demographic group, identifies their needs and barriers to employment, and conducts programs to address those needs and barriers. Supply side programs often are noted for their strength in providing support services and helping their clients develop basic competencies and increased employability, and therefore getting people into jobs quickly. However, supply side programs frequently are challenged and criticized because the jobs they train for may not always exist, especially as the economy becomes more technically advanced, and, more importantly, the jobs often provide subsistence pay, have little to no potential for growth and do not provide long-term stability or opportunities for career advancement.[1] The most successful state-sponsored economic strategies employ elements of both supply and demand side training approaches. As is the case with RJRI, these programs seek to place workers in career-oriented positions that industry needs while also

[1] Social Solutions. *Place Based vs. Sector-based Workforce Development.* http://www.socialsolutions.com/blog/place-based-vs-sector-based-workforce-development/

supporting the specific needs of workers with significant barriers to employment. In the end, if these programs are designed well, they can both reduce barriers to well-paid career positions for communities that historically have been excluded and provide the workers that employers need to grow.

Through their focus on reducing barriers and training workers in critical industry skills, sector-based strategies directly address the closure of the growing skills gap. The current workforce in the U.S. largely lacks the skills and qualifications needed for jobs in the fastest-growing industries, leading to what some scholars have referred to as "job polarization."[2] While the economy has largely recovered since the Great Recession, it has done so by increasing its demand for high-skilled (and, as a result, high-wage) workers and low-skilled/low-wage, mainly service, workers, but opportunities for middle-skilled/middle-wage jobs have declined.[3] Although Rhode Island was among the states experiencing the most job loss, both nationally and regionally,[4] its economic recovery has seen a shift in which employers are filling more high-demand, high-wage jobs with out-of-state workers, a trend driven by the growth of jobs that require a college education.[5]

Nationally, the gap between workers' skills and employers may lead to up to 7.7 million unfilled jobs by 2020—the vast majority of which require either a college degree or a postsecondary certificate.[6] To close this gap, sector-based partnerships focus on training new workers for low- and middle-skilled positions and upskilling incumbent workers to enable them to advance within the industry. When done in tandem, sector partnerships can create career pipelines that both help sectors fill middle- and high-skilled jobs with workers with experience in the sector and clear bottlenecks from the career pipeline—helping low-wage workers increase their earnings, helping industry decrease expenditures on training and retaining workers, and allowing companies to expand because they have a qualified workforce ready to fill new positions.

Sector-based partnerships focus on middle- and highly-skilled positions because they form the bulk of unfilled positions within the economy. Middle-skilled positions reflect jobs that require more education than a high-school diploma, but not as much as a postsecondary degree or certificate.[7] Highly-skilled positions usually are those that require both a postsecondary degree and additional employment-related training.

Middle skilled positions are particularly difficult to fill since many existing un- and underemployed potential workers possess only a high school degree or equivalent. Training for middle-skill positions often targets populations without a postsecondary degree and the un- and underemployed, especially members of underserved populations such as people with criminal

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[2] Canon, Maria, and Elise Marifian. "Job polarization leaves middle-skilled workers out in the cold." *The Regional Economist* Jan (2013). https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/regional-economist/january-2013/job-polarization-leaves-middleskilled-workers-out-in-the-cold

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] Burke, Mary A. "Rhode Island in the Great Recession: factors contributing to its sharp downturn and slow recovery." *Current Policy Perspectives Paper* 14-09 (2014).

[5] Burke, Mary A. The Rhode Island labor market in recovery: where is the skills gap? *Current Policy Perspectives.* (2015). https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/current-policy-perspectives/2015/the-rhode-island-labor-market-in-recovery-where-is-the-skills-gap.aspx

[6] A. Carnevale. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018*, Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University, June 15, 2010.1.

[7] A. Carnevale, N. Smith, J. R. Stone, P. Kotamraju, B. Steuernagel, and K. A. Green, Career Clusters: *Forecasting Demand for High School Through College Jobs*, Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University, November 2012. 10.

histories, minorities, and those lacking basic skills such as literacy or language.[8] Training for middle-skilled positions allows those workers to attain the specific skills and certifications required by a particular industry and secure stable and often well-paid jobs within the industry without the investment in postsecondary education. A 2009 study of middle-skill career pathways found that training programs targeted at preparing new workers for middle-skill positions resulted in an average 18 percent increase in earnings for participants compared with untrained peers.[9]

Further, many industries require both a college degree and specific technical skills, and highly value the possession of technical skills in potential workers.[10] This fact is often a challenge for recent college graduates who possess the credential to get a job in a growing industry but can't get a job without experience or specific knowledge that can be gained only on the job. Such workers can benefit directly from the industry-specific training provided through sector-based strategies.

Sector-based partnerships also focus on upskilling incumbent workers, particularly workers who lack the additional skills or credentials to move up in their industry.[11] This creates challenges for businesses, which struggle to hire internally to fill upper-level positions as their workforce ages and retires.[12] By training incumbent workers to gain the skills and certifications needed for advancement, sector-based partnerships allow businesses to hire existing industry employees for upper-level industry jobs and break up a dam of experienced but under-skilled middle- and entry-level employees who are preventing new workers from entering the industry. Many industries today face an aging workforce of upper and mid-level management and do not have clear strategies for training current employees to replace these retirees.[13] Further, many industries have not identified effective means of utilizing employees near retirement to train new or middle-level employees, nor do they provide options for phased retirement, which could have benefits related to worker retention, transfer of knowledge across generations, retirement transitions, and workforce planning.[14] In addition, some industries cannot expand due to a lack of experienced upper-level talent available for employment. Incumbent worker training programs are designed with just this purpose in mind.

Together, this dual focus of sector-based strategies on training new workers for middle-skilled positions and upskilling incumbent workers allows sector-based partnerships to improve the overall health and efficiency of the industry. Utilizing this strategy is thought to help industries fill existing positions with workers trained with the specific skills and knowledge needed by the sector and create direct and open pathways for advancement within the industry. Further, this strategy helps industry companies lower the training costs associated with hiring

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[8] S. Spaulding, A. Martin-Caughey, *The Goals and Dimensions of Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs*, Urban Institute, December 2015.

[9] S. Maguire, J. Freely, C. Clymer, M. Conway, and D. Schwartz, *Tuning in to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Study*, Public/Private Ventures, July 2010.

[10] Bentley University, Bentley University's PreparedU Project on Millennial Preparedness. January 29, 2014. https://www.slideshare.net/BentleyU/prepared-u-project-on-millennial-preparedness

[11] Taylor, Colin, *Employer Engagement in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions*. 2011. Boston: Jobs for the Future.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Caldo, Thomas J., "Talent Management in the Era of the Aging Workforce: The Critical Role of Knowledge Transfer." *Public Personnel Management*. Winter 2008, 37:4, pp. 403-416.

[14] Jeszeck, C., Collins, M., Hoffrey, L., Beedon, L., & Rider, J. "Older workers: Phased retirement programs, although uncommon, provide flexibility for workers and employers." June 2017. .http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3063441

new employees. This strategy has shown some success in other states. For example, in Pennsylvania, 84 percent of employers who participated in sector-based industry partnerships in 2009 experienced significant increases in their overall productivity.[15] Similarly, in Massachusetts, employers reported reduced turnover rates, improved job performance, and fewer customer complaints after participation in sector-based partnerships.[16]

The success of sector-based workforce development relies heavily on the sector partnerships. Coordinated work between training providers and industry representatives allows for the design and implementation of training programs that directly serve the needs of the industry while also providing trainees with valuable skills. To facilitate this relationship, sector partnerships frequently rely on workforce intermediaries, groups that serve the needs of both industry employers and industry employees.[17] Workforce intermediaries act as a valuable middleman in sector partnerships, as they can communicate between industry companies, recruiting agencies, and training providers to coordinate clear and effective training programs. Workforce intermediaries are especially valuable because they can overcome inherent competition between companies in a sector due to their status, and as a result can help mediate the relationship between individual companies, or between the industry and organizations outside the industry.

Sector-based strategies and sector-based partnerships can be an effective method for improving individual industries and the state's economy. To have the greatest impact, however, these strategies rely on the following best practices:

- Effective sector-based strategies are funded by the state to increase stability but establish stable and long-term relationships in the form of sector partnerships to ensure that training can continue, potentially without direct funding.
- To help encourage stability, effective strategies plan for sustainability and work to cement strong relationships within the partnership. The inclusion of a workforce intermediary helps in many cases to ensure the strength of the relationships between each member of the partnership. These partnerships work to create a defined curriculum that trains a distinct target population that would both benefit most directly from training and be beneficial to the industry.
- Effective strategies focus on training both new workers and incumbent workers to avoid stagnation within an industry.
- Effective sector-based strategies focus on serving industries that need the help of workforce training programs due to projected future growth or current stagnation.

RJRI is fundamentally a sector-based workforce development strategy and directly reflects these best practices in its goals and practice. Its design features include:

- Industry-based strategies that address skills gaps and personnel shortages.
- Building career pathways and increasing the number of available jobs. This is accomplished through the training of new workers and the upskilling of incumbent workers to increase upward mobility within the industry.

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[15] Industry Partnerships in Pennsylvania, booklet, *Pennsylvania Workforce Development*, April 2009. http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=575072&mode=2.
[16] L. Woolsey, G. Groves, *State Sector Strategies: Coming of Age*, National Governors Association. 2013. 2.
[17] *Ibid*.

- Connecting private industry, education providers, community organizations, and workforce intermediaries to enhance the state's overall economy. This goal focuses on the creation of sector-based partnerships that can successfully execute sector-based strategies.

RJRI was developed initially in 2015 and began with a request for proposals (RFP) for planning grants of up to $25,000 to facilitate sectors coming together, analyze sector needs, identify training components that would benefit the industry, and design programming to meet identified needs.[18] The agency then issued an RFP for implementation grants to fund training and sector development utilizing a cooperative agreement structure. The DLT awarded 26 sector partnership proposals in 11 industries in four regions of the state.[19] While most of the successful implementation grants had also received planning grants, several partnerships were funded that did not participate in a planning grant.

RJRI focused on sectors identified by the Brookings Institution as either "advanced growth areas" or "opportunity industries."[20] These industries were identified by Brookings as investing heavily in research and development and STEM workers, prioritizing innovation, and demonstrating high productivity, strong exports, and higher pay. According to Brookings, these advanced industries "…encompass the nation's highest-value economic activity…[and]…are the country's best shot at innovative, inclusive, and sustainable growth."[21] Rhode Island's advanced industry growth areas included: biomedical innovation; IT/Software, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Data Analytics; Defense Shipbuilding and Maritime; Advanced Business Services; and Design, Food, and Custom Manufacturing. Opportunity industries that Brookings determined to offer "good jobs with livable wages for individuals with varying levels of educational attainment" included Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics; and Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism.[22] In addition, the DLT decided to add the healthcare industry to this list because it employs the most workers of any industry in the state.

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[18] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: *2015 Real Jobs RI 2015 Planning Grant Awardees.* http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/PlanGrantRecipients.pdf
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] Battelle Technology Partnership Practice. *Rhode Island Innovates: A Competitive Strategy for the Ocean State.* Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. (January 2016)
[21] Battelle Technology Partnership Practice. *Rhode Island Innovates: A Competitive Strategy for the Ocean State.* Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. (January 2016), 6
[22] *Ibid*., 7

Table 1.1: Industries for Growth and Opportunity by the Brookings Institute and the DLT

Advanced Industry Growth Areas[23]	
Biomedical Innovation	• 31,548 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, digital health
IT/ Software, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Data Analytics	• 12,538 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: data sciences, cyber-physical systems
Shipbuilding and Maritime	• 19,107 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: submarine & boat building, ocean sciences, marine/coastal tourism
Advanced Business Services	• 34,780 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: back office operations
Design, Materials, Food, and Custom Manufacturing	• 11,045 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: product design, food processing
Opportunity Industry Growth Areas[24]	
Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism	• 42,801 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: marine/coastal tourism, colleges & universities
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	• 21,322 jobs in 2013 • Priority areas: grocery wholesale, warehousing & storage
Additional Industries Added By DLT[25]	
Hospitals and Health Care	• 27,279 jobs in 2013[26] • Priority areas: certified nursing assistants, nursing professionals, community health, behavioral health, physical therapy, & medical technology[27]

[23] *Ibid*., 6-8
[24] *Ibid*., 6-8
[25] Hospitals and Healthcare were added by DLT due to the size of the industry in Rhode Island
[26] Battelle Technology Partnership Practice. *Rhode Island Innovates: A Competitive Strategy for the Ocean State.* Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. (January 2016), 39.
[27] The priority areas listed here are made up of the areas focused on by partnerships, since the Brookings report did not include Healthcare as a priority industry.

Overview of 2016 Programming

RJRI aimed to be an industry-led program that utilized educational institutions, community-based organizations, training organizations, government partners, and workforce intermediaries to provide sustainable and innovative workforce development programming for different populations of workers, and the 2016 Implementation of RJRI met these goals. This is evident from the composition of the partnerships that participated in the 2016 implementation period. Industry employers clearly informed the development of programming through their widespread participation in 2016 partnerships. While a majority of the organizations that participated in RJRI in 2016 worked with only one partnership, a substantial number were involved in multiple partnerships, facilitating the spread of connections and knowledge throughout many RJRI partnerships. Educational institutions were particularly well represented in 2016 partnerships, and were largely involved in multiple partnerships that served different state industries. These diverse and industry-led partnerships benefited a substantial number of Rhode Island industries and populations. In doing so, the 2016 implementation of RJRI provided training and workforce development to the critical industries and populations identified in the Brookings Institution's 2016 report.

Overview of 2016 Programming

26 Partnerships & **335** Individual Partners

186 Employers

46 Community-Based Organizations

31 Training Organizations

28 Workforce Intermediaries

26 Educational Institutions

16 Government Agencies

274 Partners involved in... **1** Partnership

42 Partners involved in... **2** Partnerships

9 Partners involved in... **3** Partnerships

4 Partners involved in... **4** Partnerships

Higher Education Involvement

CCRI: 10 Partnerships

NEIT & URI: 8 Partnerships

RIC, Brown, RWU: 4 Partnerships

Bryant, MTTI, JWU : 2 Partnerships

RISD: 1 Partnership

Career & Technical High Schools: 13 Partnerships

Partnerships by Industry

4
Construction

4
Regional

3
Healthcare

3
Manufacturing

2
Bioscience

2
Finance & Insurance

2
Defense

2
Information Technology

1
Design

1
Hospitality

1
Aquaculture

1
Marine Trades

Partnership's Target Population

14
Un & Underemployed

9
College Educated

6
Youth

10
New Worker Programs

5
Incumbent Worker Programs

10
New & Incumbent Programs

Workforce Needs Addressed

26
Workforce Challenges

25
Industry & Economy Challenges

9
Training Challenges

University of Rhode Island

In 2015, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training contracted the University of Rhode Island (URI) to conduct an analysis of the RJRI program. The University of Rhode Island team was tasked with creating an institutional history of the RJRI program's implementation, conducting case studies on each of the 26 implementation grants awarded in the 2016 RJRI implementation period, and conducting an overall evaluation of the RJRI implementation in 2016 to identify the best practices and common challenges in implementing a sector workforce development program.

Researchers from URI conducted interviews with partnership lead grantees and staff at the DLT and analyzed program documents. URI sought to better understand how the sector partnerships and related programs were implemented and to identify the challenges, successes, best practices, and lessons learned during implementation of the grant.

This report represents the completion of URI's analysis of the RJRI 2016 programming. The institutional history includes the history and development of RJRI and follows its implementation process from its origins to the completion of the 2017 implementation period.

The case study portion of the analysis consists of 26 case studies, one for each of the partnerships that received implementation grants in 2016. These case studies examine the formation of each partnership, the needs of the industry each partnership planned to serve, what each partnership implemented to serve those needs, and an assessment of the challenges, achievements, and outcomes of this implementation process. Each case study also includes best practices employed by the specific partnership, lessons learned from implementation, and recommendations for the future.

The analysis identifies and examines themes in the overall challenges, achievements, and best practices of all 26 partnerships, as well as presenting recommendations for future iterations of the RJRI program for consideration by the DLT based on the experience of grantees for the 2016 programming. More information on the methods used to conduct the analysis can be found in the methodology section at the end of the report.

Partnership Descriptions

Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership

The Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership (RJRICP) was created to address the state's growing demand for trained cybersecurity workers. It formed under the direction of the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA) and incorporated a diverse group of universities, defense companies, and technology and cybersecurity training companies. The goals of the RJRICP were to increase awareness about the defense industry's cybersecurity needs and opportunities to the public, recruit potential workers to the cybersecurity industry, and help small businesses in the cybersecurity industry bring new ideas to market. To achieve its goals, the RJRICP offered a Cybersecurity Awareness Training, a Core Competency Assessment for jobs in the cybersecurity industry, a Cybersecurity Certification Training, a Cybersecurity Internship Program, and a Cybersecurity Ideas and Product to Market Council. These programs targeted under- or unemployed individuals, students, and veterans.

Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program
The Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program led by the Claflin Medical Equipment Company was formed to address a shortage of experienced applicants for technician positions in the biomedical and health field. The apprenticeship program collaborated with eight companies from the healthcare and biomedical industries as well as local community colleges. The partnership also made use of the facilities and services of local hospitals and nonprofits for training purposes. The goals of this partnership specifically included: developing training and apprenticeship programs for Biomedical Equipment Technicians and Data Scientists; working with the Community College of Rhode Island to achieve accreditation and certification of the programs participants; collaborating with local healthcare providers to provide hands-on training experiences for program participants; and producing qualified and skilled workers who would be able to handle the unique challenges of this industry.

Residential Construction Partnership
The Residential Construction Partnership (RCP) was created to increase the talent pool for members of the construction industry and to restore the industry's aging workforce. It formed under the direction of the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) and included a broad number of stakeholders, including local Career and Technical (CTE) schools, construction industry associations, and training providers. The goals of the RCP were to promote and create training opportunities for young people in the residential construction industry, and to increase recruitment into the residential construction industry. To achieve these goals, the RCP created an industry jobs bank, increased recruitment and engagement with CTE schools, and assisted with the placement of students and job seekers into internships and jobs. The RCP's services primarily targeted students and current employees in the residential construction industry.

Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program
The Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program (RIUAP) was formed to address the longstanding underrepresentation of women and minorities in the plumbing and pipefitting industry and in anticipation of replacing the currently aging and retiring workforce. The RIUAP was formed by the Local 51 Plumbers and Pipefitters union and the Mayforth Group, who partnered with non-profit community organizations to provide support services to training participants. The goals of the RIUAP were to produce a talent pipeline to meet the immediate employment needs of the industry by preparing training participants for an already existing industry apprenticeship program. To achieve this goal, the RIUAP offered pre-apprenticeship training to a target population that consisted of people of color and under- or unemployed individuals in urban cities.

RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative
The RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative (RIMGC) was designed to increase the employability of under- or unemployed populations and prepare them for careers in the manufacturing industry to replace the currently aging and retiring workforce. The RIMGC was formed through collaboration between the RI Research Foundation/Polaris Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Association (RIMA), who partnered with a broad group of colleges and universities, manufacturing companies, and training providers. The goal of the RIMGC was to develop basic skills, job training, and an assessment center that provided employers in the manufacturing industry with pre-screened and pre-trained

employees who were identified for their commitment to long-term success and employment in the industry. To achieve this goal, RIMGC offered a manufacturing "bootcamp" training program targeted at under- or unemployed individuals and low income populations, as well as populations that traditionally encounter barriers to employment.

Marine Trades and Composites Partnership

The Marine Trades and Composites Partnership (MTCP) was designed to attract and retain skilled workers in the marine trades and composites industry through training programs for both potential and incumbent employees. It formed under the direction of the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (RIMTA) and incorporated numerous companies from across the marine trades industry, including training institutes, manufacturers, non-profit companies, marinas, and boatyards. The goals of the MTCP were to establish training opportunities that prepare workers for current jobs in the marine trades and composites industry and to expand outreach to increase recruitment into the marine trades and composites industry. To achieve these goals, the MTCP offered a carpentry apprenticeship training program, a marine and composites pre-apprenticeship training program, a launch training program, and an incumbent worker training program, as well as programming aimed at vocational high schools, sailing programs and public high schools.

Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island

The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island (LDPRI) formed to improve the leadership and soft skills of new managers and supervisors in the manufacturing industry. LDPRI was formed by Toray Plastics and numerous manufacturing companies, manufacturing industry associations, and colleges and universities. The goals of the LDPRI were to create a comprehensive, competency-based leadership training program to train incoming or inexperienced employee leaders, and recruit and train senior leaders to act as industry mentors for new leaders. To achieve these goals, the LDPRI offered a leadership training program and a mentor training program to employees in the manufacturing industry.

Healthy Jobs RI Partnership

The Healthy Jobs RI Partnership, led by Rhode Island College, was formed to address several issues within the healthcare sector. These issues included: difficulty training and retaining paraprofessional healthcare workers, a lack of training in behavioral healthcare, and the changing workforce and healthcare needs of local populations. The Healthy Jobs RI Partnership formed committees to facilitate the advancement of their goals. Their goals consisted of developing a behavioral health training for incumbent healthcare paraprofessionals and unemployed trainees, a community health worker training, and a peer mentoring program to support new hires. The partnership's committee members included local NGOs, Central Falls School District, and several industry groups.

Man Up 2 Careers Partnership

The Man Up 2 Careers Partnership (MU2CP), led by Man Up Inc., was formed to address the lack of opportunities and skills in target populations. Target populations included low income incarcerated men and women of color. MU2CP worked to prepare this population for careers in the manufacturing and marine trades industries. The target population faces many barriers to employment in addition to their criminal record including lack of skills, experience, and credentials. Because of these unique challenges, it was essential for MU2CP to work closely with

local industry trade associations, training and educational partners, and support service providers to meet their goals. Their goals consisted of providing participants with case management and support services and implementing and executing a multifaceted workforce training plan in order to provide the target population with the skills and credentials necessary to attain high wages, diverse and viable employment options, and further educational opportunities.

Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership

The Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership (PMCSBP) was formed to recruit and train new workers for the shipbuilding industry to meet its increased demand for labor. The partnership was led by Electric Boat and consisted of institutions of higher education, high school career and technical education (CTE) programs, and a variety of industry employers. The goals of the PMCSBP were to expand CTE programs to build a pipeline into careers in the shipbuilding industry, and offer training programs that trained workers in high-demand industry skills. To fulfill these goals, the PMCSBP worked with the Rhode Island Department of Education to expand training opportunities at CTE schools so that Rhode Island's youth were introduced to the opportunities relating to shipbuilding and the manufacturing trades. It also offered training modules in maritime welding, machining, maritime shipfitting, maritime pipefitting, maritime electrical, robotic welding, and maritime sheet metal, as well as CTE Maritime Training and shipbuilding internships. These programs targeted students, the under- or unemployed, veterans, and skilled workers.

Healthcare Training Collaborative

The Health Care Training Collaborative (HCTC) was formed to address issues with recruitment and retention of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and other specialized healthcare professionals in the eldercare industry. The eldercare industry is a fast-growing sector in the state of Rhode Island. The pace of growth has made it increasingly difficult to fill needed positions with qualified, skilled workers. The HCTC was composed of several non-profits, educational institutions, and senior living centers, with the primary grantee being St. Antoine Residence. The goals of HCTC specifically were to: recruit, train, and support un- and underemployed individuals as CNA's; increase the skill set of incumbent CNA's through training; and recruit and train nurse practitioner and physical therapy students in geriatric health care service delivery.

Medtech Innovation Engine

The MedTech Innovation Engine (MTIE) was created to develop a sustainable curriculum for medical technology (medtech) entrepreneurs. It also planned to foster collaboration between entrepreneurs and various healthcare related sectors with an ultimate goal of developing an innovation pipeline. The medtech industry is a fast-growing industry and a key driver of job creation, and Rhode Island's medtech sector is deficient in resources, capacity, and infrastructure compared to its neighboring states. MTIE aimed to address and develop solutions for these deficiencies. MTIE consisted of collaborators from medtech companies, hospitals, governmental partners, and universities. With most training programs provided by Social Enterprise Greenhouse (SEG), MTIE aimed to provide several services to medtech entrepreneurs including early-stage feasibility checks, workshops, an accelerator program and late-stage huddles. SEG also provided meeting space for entrepreneurs.

RI Food Management Training Partnership
The Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership (RIFMTP) was established by the Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA) in collaboration with its sister organization, the Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF). This partnership sought to address a deficit of skilled workers to fill management and supervisory level positions in the food industry. This partnership included the membership of many local restaurants and hotels as well as The Community College of Rhode Island. The primary goal of this partnership was to provide professional development, training, resources, and knowledge for career advancement to mid-level incumbent workers. The RIFMPT met its goal by providing in-person and online incumbent worker training on training topics as requested by employers that would benefit their businesses and employees.

Insurance Innovation Partnership
The Insurance Innovation Partnership (IIP) was created to address a number of issues within Rhode Island's Insurance Industry. These issues included an aging workforce, lack of new talent and licensed insurance professionals, and an absence of training, education, and career pathways in the industry. The lead applicant in this partnership was the Independent Insurance Agents of Rhode Island. This partnership included several local insurance companies as well as inVest, which provided training materials and curricula. The goal of this partnership was to execute trainings for both potential and incumbent employees. It aimed to create pathways into the industry for new employees as well as to assist incumbent employees with retaining or advancing their careers. IIP directed their recruitment of potential employees towards unemployed general office employees, veterans, and high school/college graduates.

RI Financial Skills Initiative
The Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative (RIFSI) was created to develop and implement solutions to several issues within the banking industry of the financial and insurance sectors. Rhode Island's finance and insurance industry are outpacing the rest of the economy in terms of growth. The current workforce is aging and the industry lacks sufficiently trained replacements, including credit-trained personnel with commercial lending knowledge. The lead applicant in this partnership was the Rhode Island Bankers Association. This partnership's members included many local banks as well as the Community College and University of Rhode Island. The goals of RIFSI included implementing trainings on the fundamentals of banking and commercial lending, and these trainings were aimed at incumbent workers.

Aquaculture Training Partnership
The Aquaculture Training Partnership (ATP) was formed to train new workers to acquire the skills necessary to be successful employees in the aquaculture industry. The ATP was formed by The Education Exchange, and included numerous aquaculture industry partners, non-profit recruiting partners, and institutes of higher education. The ATP's goals were to design a training program that filled industry skills gaps and provided career pathways to new entry-level workers. To fulfill these goals, the ATP offered a rigorous training program that included training and on-site internships. This training program targeted under- or unemployed workers, and those with experience working outdoors, with a special focus on fishermen, farmers, contractors, veterans, Narragansett Indians, and recent high school graduates in Washington County.

Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership
The Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership (CTSUP) was formed to help small contractors grow and compete in Rhode Island's thriving construction industry. Led by the West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, the partnership included educational partners, construction companies, city governments, and other industry employers. The CTSUP sought to eliminate the barriers to business expansion facing small contractors, as well as helping to meet their business and professional development needs. To achieve these goals, the CTSUP offered a training program that developed the skills necessary to manage a successful construction business. The CTSUP also developed a Contract Support Center to provide administrative support to small construction businesses and graduates of the training program. These programs primarily targeted the owners and employees of small contracting businesses working in the Rhode Island construction industry.

Building Futures Partnership
The Building Futures Partnership (BFP) formed to provide safety and skills training to construction workers to prepare them for employment on large-scale energy infrastructure projects in Rhode Island. The BFP was formed by Building Futures, a non-profit that has offered training programs and pre-apprenticeship training in Rhode Island since 2007, along with local unions, training providers, and construction industry companies. The goals of the BFP were to offer safety and skills trainings to current members of Building Future's pre- apprenticeship program and to incumbent workers in the building trades, and to enable them to work on large scale energy projects as employees or apprentices. In 2016, the BFP hoped its program graduates would contribute to the construction of Deepwater's Block Island Wind Farm. To achieve these goals, the BFP offered a maritime safety training, a safe rigging practices training, and a scaffold safety training.

Real Jobs IT Partnership
The Real Jobs IT Partnership (RJITP) was initially formed to address skills gaps and to build a more comprehensive pipeline of education and training programs in the Information Technology (IT) sector. During the RJRI Implementation process, however, the RJITP's goals were modified to focus instead on stabilizing and increasing the organizational capacity of the RJITP's lead applicant, the Tech Collective. This shift in focus allowed the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) to work with Tech Collective to develop a strategic plan for the organization, revitalize the organization's board of directors, restructure and stabilize the organization's finances, and establish the organization as the fiscal agent for a P-Tech employer liaison.

CNA Talent Network Partnership
The CNA Talent Network Partnership (CNA TNP) sought to address a number of problems within the healthcare sector. Certified nursing assistants (CNAs) are currently the fastest growing occupation in Rhode Island, and employers have noted that many CNAs lack essential skills needed for success in this industry. CNA TNP sought to address this skill gap. The CNA TNP partnership was composed of the lead applicant Stepping Up, The Community College of Rhode Island, local community organizations, and industry partners. CNA TNP sought to specifically provide training, education, career coaching, and support services for low skill under- or unemployed job seekers and workers, so they may work as CNAs for healthcare and long-term

care organizations. This partnership targeted recruitment towards individuals who were under- or unemployed and those with low incomes.

Phoenix Partnership

The Phoenix Partnership was designed to address the core issues currently facing Rhode Island manufacturers by developing and implementing a training program focused on training employees in Lean Manufacturing practices. The manufacturing industry has a potential for strong growth in the U.S but currently has difficulty recruiting and identifying qualified workers with the necessary skills for success. The Phoenix Partnership, led by Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc., worked with industry groups, educational partners, and local manufacturers to design and implement tailored training programs. The Partnership endeavored to create a training that addressed three levels of skill sets, gaps in manufacturing knowledge, and employee competencies. The trainings targeted both newly hired and incumbent workers and was designed to decrease turnover and increase productivity in the manufacturing sector within Rhode Island.

Partnership for Real IT Jobs

The Partnership for Real IT Jobs (PRITJ) was formed to support the growth of tech talent in Rhode Island. Organized by LaunchCode, the partnership included non-profits that aided in recruitment efforts and numerous companies that served as apprenticeship training sites. The goal of the PRITJ was to create a support system to introduce new tech talent to employers in Rhode Island. To achieve this goal, the PRITJ delivered an online tech skills assessment, executed a CS50x coding bootcamp, and facilitated a tech apprenticeship program where participants were matched with apprenticeships in companies seeking information technology workers. The RITJ also engaged in substantial recruitment efforts to build a pipeline of candidates for this apprenticeship program. This program targeted students from local colleges and universities, veterans, and under- and unemployed workers.

The Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women

The Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women (The Hire Path) led and implemented by the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Rhode Island (OIC) was created to provide workforce readiness training for underserved populations, specifically people of color and women. The program was tailored towards careers in the marine trades, construction, and green industries. The HirePath implemented a workforce readiness training program to assess and develop basic workforce skills. Some of the topics covered included interview skills, workplace etiquette, and critical thinking. The HirePath was composed of a partnership between local businesses, community organizations, and local technical and vocational education providers. The HirePath focused their trainings on trades that would lead to long-term employment in careers that pay a living wage. The broad goal of this partnership was to create systems change that generates pathways for minorities and women to become employed in sectors where these populations are less represented.

Design Forward Partnership

The Design Forward Partnership (DFP) formed to strengthen and support the design sector by increasing exposure to the industry, while helping professionals gain necessary business skills and develop their careers. Led by DESIGNxRI, the partnership consisted of companies seeking design employees, institutes of higher education, and training partners. The goals of the DFP

were to cultivate a pipeline of high school-aged students by educating them about the potential of turning creative skills into future high-paying jobs, retaining Rhode Island's young talent by informing local students of professional work opportunities, growing the professional skills of post-graduates, and supporting designers already in their careers to meet the ever-changing needs of the sector. To achieve these goals, the DFP offered an Advance Design Talent training program, a Post-Graduate Design Fellowship, and a Career Exploration Program. These programs targeted incumbent workers in the design industry, current students and recent design graduates from the state's institutions of higher education, and high school students.

Westerly Regional Jobs Partnership

The Westerly Regional Jobs Partnership (WRRJP), led by The Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, was designed to address the insufficient capacity in the Westerly region to meet current and projected workforce needs. For example, the Westerly area has a high rate (7.5 percent in 2015) of unemployment compared to surrounding areas. The WRRJP partnered with many Westerly area businesses, non-profit organizations, local schools, and an adult learning center. This was an employer-led approach that aimed at implementing a six-week Work Readiness and Digital Literacy training program for un- and under-employed, low skilled individuals. The second goal was to execute two, week-long Biz Camp programs designed for high school students. The partnership provided case management services, on-site visits to potential employers, and internship opportunities to increase employability among its trainees.

RJ Partnership of Northern RI

The Real Jobs Partnership of Northern RI (NRI Partnership), initiated by the main applicant Connecting for Children and Families in Woonsocket, was created to provide competency-based training that met the goals, skills shortages and gaps, and real-time job opportunities for banking, insurance, call centers, and bookkeeping/accounting jobs within the finance and insurance sectors. The focus of this partnership was dictated by DLT data on 2022 Occupational Projections showing that these industries have many job openings but that employers have a difficult time finding professional and skilled workers to fill positions. The NRI Partnership included members from local banks, educational institutions, and industry organizations. The main goal of this partnership was to provide competency-based trainings that supported unemployed and underemployed individuals in gaining skills and job opportunities.

Section 2: Institutional History

In November of 2014, Gina Raimondo was elected as the 75th governor of Rhode Island. As part of her campaign, she advocated for workforce and economic development for Rhode Island, and championed the "Real Jobs Now" program as her plan to achieve this development. The "Real Jobs Now" program was a sector-based, employer-driven workforce development strategy that emphasized the importance of industry-based partnerships to encourage state-wide economic growth. After her election, Governor Raimondo tapped Scott Jensen, then Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation in Maryland, to lead the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT). During his tenure in Maryland, Jensen launched the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland program, a sector-driven workforce development strategy implemented by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. Since the EARN Maryland program was a successful, real world example of what Governor Raimondo hoped the "Real Jobs Now" program would be, the Governor pressed Jensen about how quickly such an effort could launch. When he estimated "nine months," the Governor said she expected it up and running in six. Director Jensen began his tenure at the Rhode Island DLT on January 7, 2015.

After moving from Maryland to Rhode Island, Jensen started developing the programmatic details that would eventually become the Real Jobs Rhode Island program (RJRI). Jensen then drafted a memo to the Governor's office to establish the program. Over a period of several weeks, Governor Raimondo, Jensen and the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff, Kevin Gallagher, met to make sure that Real Jobs would achieve the Governor's vision. The program would build upon the economic and workforce development theories that served as the backbone of EARN Maryland, especially that it be driven by employer demand and run through the use of workforce intermediaries. EARN focused on creating programs that served the needs of key industries and employers by providing trained workers ready to help companies expand and thrive. Director Jensen and Governor Raimondo wanted to maintain this structure for RJRI, and adopt the lessons learned and best practices of EARN to make RJRI successful. They also wanted to improve and build upon the shortcomings of Rhode Island's existing workforce development programs. These programs were primarily supply-side programs that provided training for un- or under-employed workers without sufficient consideration for the needs of the employer, who would hire the newly minted employees.

Out of this conversation, they agreed on a set of overarching goals for RJRI:

- Addressing the needs of employers and industry sectors by providing them with workforce solutions to their staffing needs;
- Addressing the needs of workers by reducing barriers to employment and connecting them to jobs with immediate and long-term openings;
- Forming public/private partnerships to facilitate the organization of workforce development training initiatives;
- By means of the legal authority of the Governor's Workforce Board, aligning diverse groups of stakeholders into partnerships led by workforce intermediaries that facilitate the organization of workforce development training initiatives;
- Coordinate education, economic, and workforce development planning through these partnerships to manage workforce development and demands;

Overall, the mission of RJRI was to create innovative and comprehensive systems change that would align the state's workforce and training investments with the needs of employers that would help workers, employers, and Rhode Island's overall economy.

Implementation was much more complicated than envisioned, however. As discussed in this section, the RJRI team experienced significant hurdles and created innovative solutions in order to effectively implement the program given constraints.

The Steps to Implementation

Step 1: Identify Key Industries

Effectively investing in economic development requires identifying sectors of the economy that have the potential to expand or that are prevented from maximizing their potential due to workforce shortages. Prior to the implementation of RJRI, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation commissioned the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, along with its partner, TEConomy Partners, LLC, to identify the state's most critical industries, conduct an overall economic assessment, and recommend actions for Rhode Island's economic development. As part of this assessment, completed in January 2016, the Brookings Institute divided Rhode Island's key industry sectors into "advanced industries" or "opportunity industries." Advanced industries were identified as those that prioritized innovation through a focus on research, development, and STEM work, and included biomedical innovation, IT/software, cyber-physical systems, data analytics, defense shipbuilding and maritime, advanced business services, design, food, and custom manufacturing. Opportunity industries were identified as those that offered workers of varied levels of education the opportunity to maintain a good job with a livable wage, and included transportation, distribution and logistics, arts, education, hospitality, and tourism. The DLT chose to focus the RJRI program on serving these industries, as helping them would have the best chance of lifting the state's overall economy. The DLT also included the healthcare sector as a focus of RJRI, because the sector employs the most workers of any industry in Rhode Island and is a sector plagued by workforce shortages.

Step 2: Building a Team

To build the team that would implement the RJRI program, Director Jensen united people from the Rhode Island DLT and from the EARN program in Maryland who followed Director Jensen from Maryland to Rhode Island to work on RJRI. Mostly, this team was composed of people who stood out at their jobs or in early RJRI planning meetings held by Director Jensen. Falling directly under the supervision of the Director's office, but existing administratively in the Governor's Workforce Board, a division of the DLT which has a legislative mandate of its own, the new team utilized the knowledge and perspectives of several upper-level DLT administrators.

Step 3: Promotion and Recruitment

Once the fledgling RJRI team was established, it set to work promoting and recruiting employers and sector intermediaries to participate in the program. A key part of this process was running a widespread public relations campaign. A first piece in this public relations campaign was an event on April 13, 2015 announcing the kick off of the Real Jobs Rhode Island Program attended by the Governor. This was four months and six days after the inauguration – nearly two months ahead of the deadline envisioned by the Governor. After the program was public, members of the RJRI team met with anyone who they thought could be a potential partner, including workforce intermediaries, employers, chambers of commerce, trade associations, and community-based organizations. These meetings were informal and lacked a set agenda other than explaining the nature of the program, and were tailored to the specific relationship between the DLT and those in the meeting

Director Jensen and the RJRI team ran the majority of these meetings. However, Governor Raimondo met with reluctant or particularly important potential partners to encourage them to be engaged. For example, her involvement was especially crucial with companies like Electric Boat (EB), that are deeply important to the state's economy and represent an essential partner in the state's Defense Shipbuilding sector. After convincing EB President Jeff Geiger to give her new administration an opportunity to improve upon what EB saw as an effectual relationship with the state, the Governor convened a meeting of the leaders of the entities who would need to play a role to meet EB's needs – the Community College of RI, state colleges (URI and RIC), K-12 system leaders and New England Tech, a private institution of higher education. The governor's role was essential to convincing these stakeholders to form a partnership and submit an application to the program. Governor Raimondo also helped the public relations campaign and recruiting process by discussing RJRI with state agencies and negotiating how they would help the program succeed. This intervention and advocacy was particularly important when working with stakeholders inside of the state government such as the state's institutions of higher education as well as with large companies in the state.

Once the state's employers and key industries were introduced to the RJRI program, the DLT RJRI team hosted a pre-bid conference on May 22, 2015 at Save the Bay in Providence. This conference was advertised through traditional means, such as newspapers and internet postings, but also directly through the DLT's workforce training contacts. At this conference, the program was explained in more detail to stakeholders, and all attendees were invited to raise questions about the program. These questions, while mostly answered at the conference, were also recorded on an online FAQ by the DLT after the meeting. This FAQ was updated with any new questions the RJRI team received throughout the pre-application period. Through this online resource, all potential applicants would have access to the same questions and information about the RJRI program.

The DLT conducted this thorough process of promotion for two reasons. First, the DLT wanted to attract potential grantees that had not historically partnered with the agency to RJRI, and entice them to apply. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the DLT wanted to overcome public hesitation and misconceptions about the RJRI program.

The DLT also faced pushback from non-profits and traditional workforce development organizations, many of which initially believed this program was designed to help big businesses and not struggling workers and was akin to "corporate welfare." Additionally, some felt threatened, because they believed "we already do that." Because the effort was demand-driven, the DLT also had to overcome widespread skepticism by members of the private sector that any government program would be beneficial to them. Director Jensen quipped that he often started

his pitch to business leaders with Ronald Reagan's famous line "I'm from the government and I'm here to help," to humorously address the genuine skepticism many businesses have that government programs would actually serve them well. Overcoming these reservations was key to the initial success of RJRI.

Step 4: Issuing Planning Grant Solicitations

After promoting RJRI across Rhode Island, the DLT issued a solicitation (RFP) for planning grants. Planning grants were intended to spark the partnership process, bring intermediaries, community-based organizations, educational institutions and employers together and provide financial help with planning purposes.

Sector based workforce development programs like RJRI require partnerships composed of various stakeholders, including sector employers, educators, workforce intermediaries, and community-based organizations. However, as is true of most new sector-based strategies, many of these stakeholders had never worked together before and needed time and help to bring groups together around employer needs so that whatever interventions they planned would do better at ultimately landing a person in a job. Planning grants provided the funds to unite stakeholders and design workforce development programming for their sectors.

The RJRI planning grant fulfilled this purpose. Eligible applicants, which included employers, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, industry associations, labor unions, local governments, and local or regional economic development entities, were asked to submit proposals that included a detailed plan of how the applicant planned to bring together an industry partnership, how this partnership would identify industry needs and create a training plan, and what funds were necessary to accomplish this process.

Writing the initial RFP proved to be somewhat challenging. Deciding on standard terminology and definitions was key to the process. Throughout the initial planning phases of RJRI, the DLT staff had developed multiple, different terms for single concepts, and used them interchangeably in discussions. However, this became an issue when staff members would use different terms to describe the same part of RJRI to members of the public, leading to confusion and frustration. To avoid this, and to ensure that terminology would be standardized in the future, the RJRI team met to formally define all the terms used in the RFP. Besides avoiding further confusion, this process helped the team firmly establish what they were looking for in partnership proposals.

The RFP was published on April 30, 2015 and proposals were due on July 3, 2015 by 3:00pm.[28] Proposals were accepted and recorded by members of the RJRI staff. This process is mostly standard procedure for grant applications. Several proposals came in with seconds to spare and DLT staff holding the door to make sure the maximum number of proposals were received. This dedication of the staff to receive as many as possible was reflective of RJRI's focus on providing services and assistance to employers.

Step 5: Reviewing the Planning Grants

After all planning grant applications were received, the DLT composed several committees to review the proposals. These committees were composed of members of the

[28] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals: FAQ. April, 2015. http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RIVIP/ExternalBids/Grants/DLTBids/RJRI%202015-01.pdf

governor's workforce board as well as staff at the DLT, and evaluated proposals based on metrics determined by the DLT. Each proposal received a score based on these metrics. Once the committees had scored each proposal, the scores were sent to Director Jensen. He then met with members of the RJRI team and several key advisors to discuss the scores and make the final decision on which proposals to accept.

To consider funding a proposal, the RJRI team wanted to see either a strong group of partners that could plan and execute a training program, or a strong plan for attracting committed partners. Applicant groups ideally would have both, but having one or the other gave the group room to grow and develop during the planning process. Using these criteria and the scores provided by the earlier committees, this smaller reviewing committee was easily able to accept or reject many proposals. However, it proved more difficult to decide on proposals in the "middle" category. The main issue of contention came from deciding whether to fund grants that were not written as professionally but represented industries that the DLT wanted to help or key demographic groups of the state that the DLT wanted to serve.

The inequalities endemic to this type of process are well documented and were seen at DLT as well. Organizations with the capacity to hire (or have internal) professional grant writers were in a better position to receive a grant than organizations who had limited technical capacity for grant writing but were important for the state's economic growth. It was controversial internally at the DLT to consider grants that were not as well written, but Director Jensen was concerned that, due to bias towards well-written grants, they would fail to fund essential programming aimed at the state's most underserved populations. Resource imbalance between organizations can lead to funding going to those who need it least and not to those who need it most, regardless of the merits of their programming, due to just this type of problem. In the end, the final decision on these proposals was made by Director Jensen and included funding several proposals that did not receive high marks from the committee but were essential to reaching both the state's key industries and the state's underserved populations.

This discussion in and of itself was an example of RJRI's innovative flexibility. Usually, grant recipients are chosen based on a score assigned to their proposal by a rubric, and the highest scoring proposals get awarded grant funds. Rarely if ever is this system modified. But anticipating this challenge, DLT had done research. During deliberations about the solicitation strategy, DLT Chief Financial Officer Dianne Gagne pointed out that section 10 of Rhode Island's procurement regulations distinguished granting from other kinds of purchases. This led to a meeting with officials at Rhode Island's Department of Administration's (DOA) Procurement team, at which the Real Job's solicitation polices were conceived, approved by the DOA and memorialized in writing. These polices fit the intent of the Real Jobs program, while insuring compliance with the letter and spirit of Rhode Island's procurement rules. Carefully working through what too often can be seen merely as an administrative impediment allowed for more flexibility in this process, and helped organizations that might otherwise have been excluded.

Step 6: Awarding the Planning Grants

To award planning grants to successful proposals, the RJRI team hosted a press conference that they invited all applicants to attend. Results were also listed on-line, where they could be viewed by others considering a future application and the media. Successful applicants were awarded up to twenty-five thousand dollars and given the three months between July and

October 2015 to implement their strategy and develop a training plan for their industry. The funds were provided to allow awardees to incentivize the attendance of key industry leaders and stakeholders at planning meetings, cover the costs of refreshments and staff time at these planning meetings, to compensate for organizational time spent on the planning process, among other things. At the end of this time, DLT hoped planning grant awardees would be well positioned to submit a formal training plan for consideration for an implementation grant.

Step 7: Start Recruitment for Implementation Grants

Once planning grants were awarded, grant recipients had three months to work on their proposal for an implementation grant. Implementation grants were designed to provide partnerships the funds to implement their workforce development plans developed in the planning grant stage. While the DLT expected all planning grant recipients to apply for an implementation grant, the receipt of a planning grant was not mandatory to apply for an implementation grant.

In the three months after the awarding of planning grants, the DLT engaged in another round of marketing and recruitment for the implementation grants, mostly to attract groups that had not applied for a planning grant but were essential to the state's economy. Similarly, to the planning grant marketing and recruitment period, the RJRI team hosted a pre-bid conference where interested members of the Rhode Island workforce infrastructure could learn about RJRI, the implementation grant application process, and ask questions about both. Like the planning grant pre-bid conference, a list of FAQs was collected and posted on the DLT website for interested groups to use as a reference.[29] The governor became essential in this stage. The planning grant process allowed the DLT to get an idea for which sectors of the economy planned to participate and identify sectors that were not involved but were considered essential. The governor helped reach out and convene meetings with these sectors to get them on board.

To help potential applicants prepare to submit an implementation grant, the DLT hosted a Technical Assistance Conference on September 15, 2015. This conference hosted people who had worked on the EARN Maryland program to discuss the best practices of the formation of partnerships in sector-based workforce initiatives and included industry break-out sessions. Both Director Jensen and Governor Raimondo attended and spoke at the conference, and conference attendees who had received a planning grant had a chance to meet with their grant advisors from the RJRI team.

Step 8: Accept and Review Implementation Grants

The process of accepting and reviewing the implementation grant proposals occurred in a similar way to the planning grant process. Applications were accepted at the DLT, then reviewed in a two-step process by an impartial committee, and then by the RJRI team and Director Jensen. This time, however, the final discussions lasted for two days and were, at times, contentious. To consider funding a proposal, the RJRI team wanted to see either a strong group of partners that could plan and execute a training program, or a strong plan for attracting committed partners.

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[29] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: Real Jobs Rhode Island. "Questions and Answers on the Implementation Grant Solicitation." July 2015, April, 2015. Accessed August 2018. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/faqRJRISolicG.htm

Applicant groups ideally would have both, but having one or the other gave the group room to grow and develop during the planning process.

Using these criteria and the scores provided by the earlier committees, this smaller reviewing committee was easily able to accept or reject many proposals. However, it proved more difficult to decide on proposals in the "middle" category. Again, there was a bias clearly against smaller, less economically prosperous organizations particularly that served underserved populations and as before, the director decided to step in and use his authority to make sure that grants he saw as essential to serving the entire state were awarded even if their proposals were not as technically well written.

As in the earlier phase, DLT made use of the protocols it had created under the supervision of the RI DOA, which allowed the agency to make decisions that allowed common sense to augment the procurement strategies designed for purchasing goods and services.

To announce the successful implementation grant recipients, the DLT organized a large reception on May 13, 2016. The governor, as well as then US Secretary of Labor Tom Perez and Rhode Island's congressional delegation, attended the announcement as a show of support and enthusiasm for the project. Once implementation grants were awarded, each grant was assigned a grant manager from within the RJRI team who would work with the partnership to make sure they received what they needed from the DLT and that they were achieving their contractual obligations.

After the first round of implementation grants were awarded, the DLT turned their focus towards managing the grantees. The DLT paired each partnership who had been awarded an implementation grant with one of the five RJRI grant advisors. These grant advisors, who had been initially responsible for helping promote, recruit, and evaluate applicants, now directly oversaw and interacted with their partnerships. It was these assigned grant advisors who negotiated award process with the partnerships and acted as their contact point within the RJRI program for help, questions, and guidance.

Innovations to Overcome Constraints

A substantial proportion of RJRI's development occurred outside of the linear stages the DLT followed to implement the program. This development occurred as a result of the DLT working to overcome the challenges and constraints that arose during the implementation process. The following section discusses these challenges, the ways that the DLT overcame them, and the programmatic developments that occurred as a result.

Contractual Relationships, Proposals, and Timelines

Establishing a Cooperative Agreement Structure

The RJRI Implementation Grant Awards were modeled after the cooperative agreement structure most commonly used by the federal government, specifically, in the U.S. Department of Commerce's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program. A kind of grant, the cooperative agreement structure allows for ongoing negotiation between the government and the awardee over what the award will contain. Further, the government remains involved in the implementation of grant funds throughout the grant period, instead of leaving the implementation process solely under the direction of the grantee. In order to translate the proposals into cooperative agreements, the DLT developed what they referred to as an "addenda" that would

serve as a cooperatively designed contract between the DLT and the partnership. This process allowed each RJRI grantee to work with their specific grant advisor to decide on the specifics of their award. As part of this negotiation, grantees and RJRI staff identified specific program outcomes, a partnership budget, and a program timeline.

The inclusion of an addendum with the grant award was an innovation by the RJRI team. Grants traditionally do not include any space for grantees to respond to the demand that motivated the award originally. In the traditional process, the granting organization has unilateral control over the outcomes, timeline, and budget of grantees. It is up to the grantees to submit a proposal and a budget that fits within the granting organization's parameters. RJRI, however, was designed to be more flexible, but also to be responsive to continued changes in employer needs, while at the same time being performance based. The innovation of an addendum reflects this philosophy by giving the partnership a say in the form of their final award, and laying out a firm game plan for the implementation of their award, while also identifying specific outcome goals for each project. This was also an important innovation given the nature of the program.

The differences between partnership addenda can clearly be seen in a comparison of addenda issued to different partnerships during the RJRI 2016 Implementation Period. The two partnerships, the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership and the Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island, have different timelines, different performance metrics, and different budgets that reflect their individual training programs and needs. While this lacks standardization that makes reporting and measuring outcomes more difficult, it fulfills RJRI's mission to be flexible to the specific needs of industry.

Table 2.1: Addenda Comparison: Performance Metrics of the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership

Program Activity Report Schedule (Performance Metrics are Cumulative)					
Performance Measure	**Q1 (ends 4/2/16)**	**Q2 (ends 7/2/16)**	**Q3 (ends 10/1/16)**	**Q4 (ends 12/31/16)**	**Final Report Q1 - 2017**
Module 1 - Cybersecurity Awareness					
Awareness Presentations to Potential Future Workers	0	5	10	15	15
Awareness Presentations to Small Businesses	0	2	4	6	6
Module 2 - Cybersecurity Competency Assessment					
Total Participants recruited/assessed	0	0	30	60	60
Total Assessed Participants moved to Modules 3 or 4	0	0	TBD	TBD	TBD
Module 3 - Cybersecurity Rapid Certification Trainings					
Total Participants enrolled in training	0	128	208	288	288
Total Participants completing training	0	128	208	288	288
Total Participants that withdrew/dropped out	0	0	0	0	0
Total Participants receiving certifications	0	0	128	208	288
Total Participants placed or retained in related employment	0	0	128	208	288
Module 4 - Cybersecurity Internship Program					
Total Participants placed in internships	3	8	16	24	24
Total Participants completing internships	0	3	8	24	24
Total Participants that withdrew/dropped out	0	0	0	0	0
Total Participants placed in related employment	0	0	1	2	3
Module 5 - Intellectual Property to Market Council					
IP to Market Mentorships	0	0	0	0	2

Table 2.2: Addenda Comparison: Performance Metrics of the Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	DEFINITION (IF NECESSARY)	PLANNED TOTAL
Total		
Total Mentors Enrolled		20
Total Participants enrolled		20 X 2= 40
Total Participants that complete training		TBD
Total Participants that earn an Certification	Leadership Mentor Certificate from URI	TBD
Total Participants promoted due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)		TBD
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)		TBD

The "Pitch" Process

The original RFP requested proposals spanning one to three years of programming with the possibility of renewal for up to two years. The implementation awards covered three years of funding for RJRI partnerships. Originally, Director Jensen wanted all grantees to be funded for five years, while members of his staff preferred funding grantees for two years. Three years was a compromise decision, and included an option for grantees to renew their agreement for an additional two years if desired and if they were reaching their goals without having to go through another application process. But within the 3 to 5-year relationship created by the RFP were addenda set up for programs spanning 6 to 12 months.

This was intentional as the DLT wanted to ensure that the programs were learning from mistakes and successes, implementing needed programming, and not locked into ineffective or less-than-effective programming. Instead of a long-term specific contract for repeated programming, the awards given from the RFP for the three-year time frame were meant to guarantee that the partnership would be a RJRI partner and would be able to request funding for ongoing programming for three to five years, but not a guarantee they would receive funding for the same type of programming in each year.

The DLT addressed the challenge of having a 3 to 5-year relationship but short-term contracts for programming by creating what they called a "Pitch" process to streamline funding ongoing projects or new projects with existing RJRI partners. Pitches entailed "mini" proposals for specific new or ongoing programming. They could also be submitted at any time. This allowed a significant amount of flexibility for both RJRI partners and the agency. Partners were not tied to RFP deadlines that could potentially cause needed programming to not be implemented for months while a partnership awaited the next RFP, and it allowed for immediate adjustments to programming based on the experiences of the partnership. Additionally, it allowed for the partnerships to be responsive to industry needs and changes. The pitch process, from submittal to approval, was intentionally designed to be rapid and easy. Partnerships create new award agreements in as fast as two weeks with this process, which made the award agreement flexible and responsive to changes and new ideas. Successful pitch proposals were

provided with their own award agreements, budgets and performance metrics, but after implementation were reported as part of the partnership's larger programming instead of independently.

Again, DLT worked closely with the DOA procurement team to make sure the RJRI pitch process complied with all the relevant purchasing rules. Creating a program that is flexible enough to achieve its intended beneficiaries (companies and workers) meant DLT and DOA had to be innovative and work harder in the administrative context than normal grants and contracts. Real Jobs did not "throw away the rules." DLT worked collaboratively so that its processes were geared toward the goals of the program and did not exist for their own sake.

This plan, which varies from the fixed, non-negotiable timeline of traditional grant programs, caused some confusion for grantees, and needed to be clarified throughout the first round of RJRI but ultimately did provide the type of flexible, responsive funding for sector development the agency desired. It was hard to really believe that the government was there to help, but grantees appreciated the genuine effort of the Real Jobs team and acknowledged marked, if not total, improvement.

Funding and Compliance

As the RJRI team worked to recruit, promote, and implement the RJRI program, they simultaneously developed a funding scheme for the project. This was a critical priority, as the ability to fund RJRI was key to its solvency. Ultimately, the DLT utilized multiple different sources for the program and braided funding across state and federal sources. These sources included:

- **State Funding Sources**:
  - Rhode Island Job Development Fund
    - Fund composed of taxes collected from state employers that is used to develop and implement workforce development programs for state workers
- **Federal Funding Sources**:
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Set-Aside
    - This provides the Governor with control over ten to fifteen percent of the total funding package to spend on state job training initiatives
  - Workforce Investment Act Incentive Grant
    - Provides funds to help eligible workers find training services and employment opportunities
  - Sector Partnership National Emergency Grants for Dislocated Workers (SPNEG) Grant
    - Provides funds to help states develop workforce and training programs that are organized through industry or regional partnerships.
  - American's Promise Grant
    - Provide funds to assist in the development of regional or sector-based partnerships that create pipelines of skilled workers for the region or industry
  - US Department of Labor American Apprenticeship
    - Funds programs that offer apprenticeships as a method of workforce training

Table 2.3: Expenditures Funded by Revenue Stream by Fiscal Year

Real Jobs RI Expenditures Funded by Revenue Stream by Fiscal Year									
	State Funds			Federal Funds					
Fiscal Year	JDF Adult	JDF Incumbent Workers	JDF Youth	Sector Partnership NEG	WIOA State set-aside	WIA Incentive	America's Promise	Apprenticeship Accelerator	Total
2016	1,064,653			491,516	274,373	345,260			$2,175,802
2017	2,788,428		175,856	2,368,096	515,564	2,619,075	518,750	45,346	$9,031,115
2018 thru 5/31/18	4,599,587	334,291	895,524	2,290,219	51,025	35,665	2,369,932	94,654	$10,670,897
Total by Funding stream =	$8,452,668	$334,291	$1,071,380	$5,149,831	$840,962	$3,000,000	$2,888,682	$140,000	**$21,877,814**
		Total State Funds =	$9,858,339				Total Federal Funds =	$12,019,475	

Of these funding sources, the state had access to the Rhode Island Job Development Fund, the Workforce Investment Act Incentive Grant and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Set-Aside prior to the conception of the RJRI program. The other funding sources, including the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grants for Dislocated Workers, America's Promise Grant, and US Department of Labor American Apprenticeship Grant were applied for by the DLT after the conception of RJRI to help fund the program. Most of these funding sources were designated for direct programming.

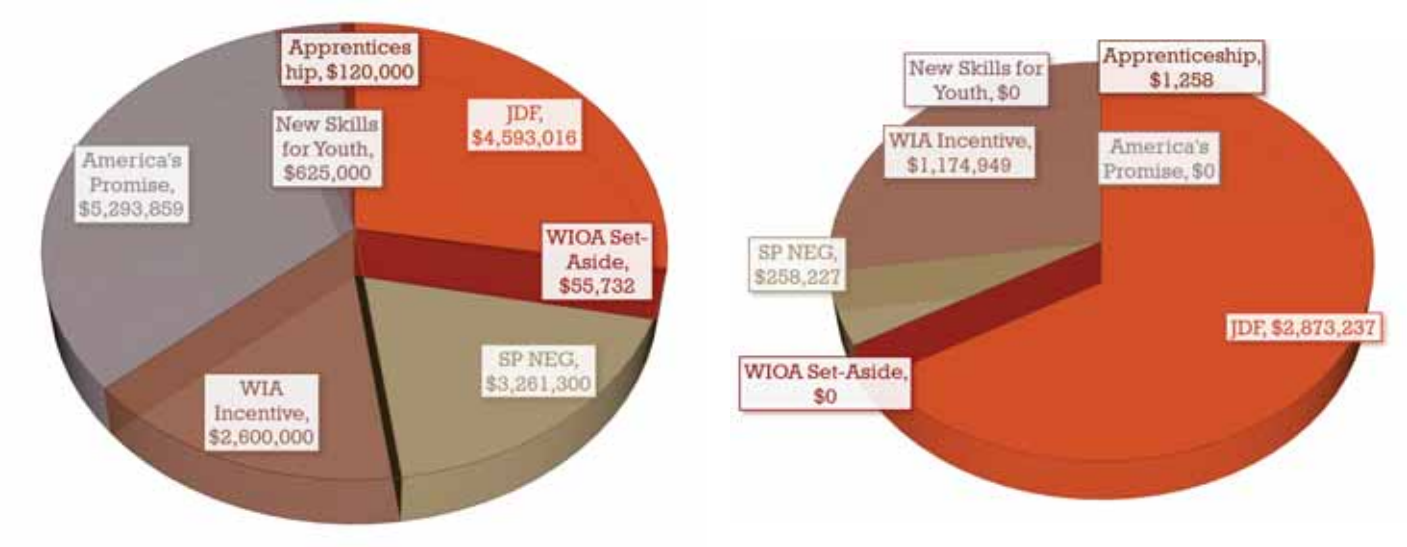
Perhaps the largest barrier faced by the DLT was figuring out the most effective way to combine their multiple funding streams to fund partnership's programming. Combining state and federal funds (and different federal funds) was a challenge, however, primarily due to the strict, inflexible nature of federal grant funding, much of which is tied to the circumstances of individual participants. Each federal funding stream came with highly specific criteria about who could receive funds under the program. This was a challenge for the DLT because not every RJRI partnership served exclusive populations that were eligible for federal funding. Most partnerships served a mix of populations through multiple programs, and only some of these people were eligible for federal funding. See figure 2.1 for funding metrics.

In order to fully fund all RJRI partnerships, therefore, the DLT had to creatively braid state funds, which are more flexible and can be applied to a broad variety of programs and populations, with the strict federal funds. This was particularly difficult balance to achieve while also keeping paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles at a minimum. Federal funds are designed in a manner that funding follows individuals, so each individual comes with a certain amount for which they can be reimbursed. As a result, grants from these funding sources typically go to programs aimed at a single target population. For example, one set of funds could be used for welfare recipients, former foster youth, and veterans, whereas another could fund youth and incumbent workers. Whereas the RJRI partnerships sought to reach a mix of populations, some of which would qualify for federal funds and some of which would not.

After the first round of implementation grants had been issued, the DLT found that only a small percentage of trainees were qualifying for federal funds, particularly funds for "dislocated workers." This USDOL term of art describes a worker whose career earnings trajectory was thrown off by a disruption in the labor market (like a recession or depression). DLT knew that Rhode Island's recovery from the Great Recession left many people "dislocated" in USDOL's sense but nevertheless DLT was depleting the state's funding streams, because it could not provide enough proof that participants were "dislocated" to meet regulations. In 2016, roughly two thirds of the funds spent on RJRI came from the state's Job Development fund. The RJRI team knew that this should not be the case given the population that was being trained.

To alleviate this challenge, the DLT instituted several important innovations. First, several of the federal funding streams, particularly the SPNEG grant could only be spent on dislocated workers. As a result of this regulation, the DLT traditionally collected ten years of employment data from workers including the exact date on which they were laid off from a job, documentation of that layoff, and their employment since. However, this documentation was so cumbersome that many trainees failed to provide the paperwork needed to enable the use of federal dollars in many cases because they no longer possessed the information. The DLT realized that it was due to state definitions that were causing this barrier and invested in writing definitions that would allow more trainees to qualify for federal funding while still being in line with the federal regulations.

Figure 2.1: Funds Available vs. Funds Spent



One specific example of this change in definitional status was the specific definition of a "dislocated worker" "Dislocated workers" had been traditionally defined as unemployed persons receiving unemployment insurance or whose unemployment benefits had expired but who had not find stable work since, veterans and their spouses, and or former stay-at-home wives and mothers looking to re-enter the workforce. The DLT issued a definition through the Governors Workforce Board defining "dislocated workers" as people who: [30]

- Had been laid off from their jobs and were either ineligible for or had exhausted their unemployment benefits sometimes in the past
- Were employed for a minimum of one month or two full pay periods
- Are unlikely to return to jobs in their former industry due to reasonably explainable circumstances, or
- Are a dislocated home-maker including spouses of members of the armed forces, an individual providing unpaid services to family members in a home, or an individual who had been supported by the income of another family member but was supported no longer.

The expansion of these definitions allowed the DLT to utilize far more federal dollars. In particular, the expansion of the definition of dislocated homemaker allowed the DLT to include former dependents (not just state-at-home mothers) that contributed to the home's household duties such as youth and divorcees whose expenditures had been offset by a breadwinner but were no longer in the category of trainee that could draw on federal dollars with current state definitions. Moreover, the third category "Are unlikely to return to jobs in their former industry due to reasonably explainable circumstances" allowed them to qualify workers who had experienced unemployment but returned to a lower wage job in a different industry to qualify as dislocated. Due to these changes in definition, the DLT could utilize more federal funds and serve a broader population of the state's workers.

[30] Governor's Workforce Board. New Dislocated Worker Eligibility Definitions. December 14, 2016. Accessed August 2018. https://gwb.ri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/15-17-12-14-2016.pdf?189db0

Eligibility Requirements and Intake

In tandem with the change of definitions, the DLT realized it had a problem with the intake form used to identify which trainees qualified for which funding streams that was further reducing the number of eligible participants from tapping federal funds. Originally, these checks relied on applicants filling out an extensive intake form and providing documentation related to federal funding eligibility. However, many recruits found these questions impossible to answer due to lack of documentation, or were reluctant to provide accurate information because they were being asked for it by an employer. For example, telling a potential employer that one had been laid off, had bounced from low paying job to low paying job or that one was on food stamps or another federal social service program was embarrassing for many applicants. They did not want their employer to know these intimate details of their life and therefore would either incorrectly answer or would leave the questions blank.

Many employers also felt uncomfortable asking for this information and did not want to know the intimate details of their potential employees lives. Employers also felt the extensive intake form ate up too much of their time. This was particularly true because traditionally, if someone indicates that they qualify for federal funds they are then required to provide proof in the form of a letter of termination from an employer (often from many years ago), or a letter acknowledging receipt of a social subsidy. Partnerships were spending a considerable amount of non-reimbursable time collecting and processing this paperwork and were considering terminating their relationship with the DLT, and their programming, as a result.

Further, the process of incorporating, processing, and following up on incomplete forms or supporting evidence ate up a substantial portion of the RJRI team's time, diverting their attention from other implementation efforts. To foremost make the overall intake process easier for applicants, the RJRI team worked to find an easier way to ascertain participant eligibility. Director Jensen was also determined to reduce the burden on employers and participants and move the burden of compliance for federal funds to the DLT. In an attempt to meet both goals (1) broadening the number of trainees utilizing federal funds and (2) reducing the burden on employers and employees), the DLT undertook two initiatives.

First, the DLT reduced the intake form to include only absolutely essential information that would allow the DLT to pull state records on participants. To accomplish this, Jensen challenged the RJRI team to investigate every question asked on the intake form, and determine if the inclusion of that question was essential or if the information could be accessed in some other manner. If the inclusion of the question on the intake form was not necessitated by law or asked for information that could be gathered another way, it was removed from the form. This process caused significant tension in the RJRI team, as it required a radical overhaul of an established process that many DLT staff considered essential. However, the final result was a one-page intake form that only asked participants to provide essential information, and made the intake process far more accessible to partnerships and program participants. The new form eliminated 66 questions. The new intake form also simplified many existing questions, and included the option for participants to select "I don't know" for many questions. The new final form was only 1 page in length and included questions regarding a person's name, social security number, date of birth, contact information, address, citizenship status, selective service registration status, veteran status, educational background, race, ethnicity, gender, English

proficiency, and employment status. The original and revised intake forms are included in the appendix A.

Having developed this new intake form, the DLT then needed to figure out how to access information that were needed for compliance for accessing federal funds but had been eliminated from the form due to the fact that state records should already have the information. Using participant's social security numbers and names, the DLT ran the individual against the DLT's own wage and unemployment records. These records included all people who had ever accessed unemployment as well as their post unemployment wages.

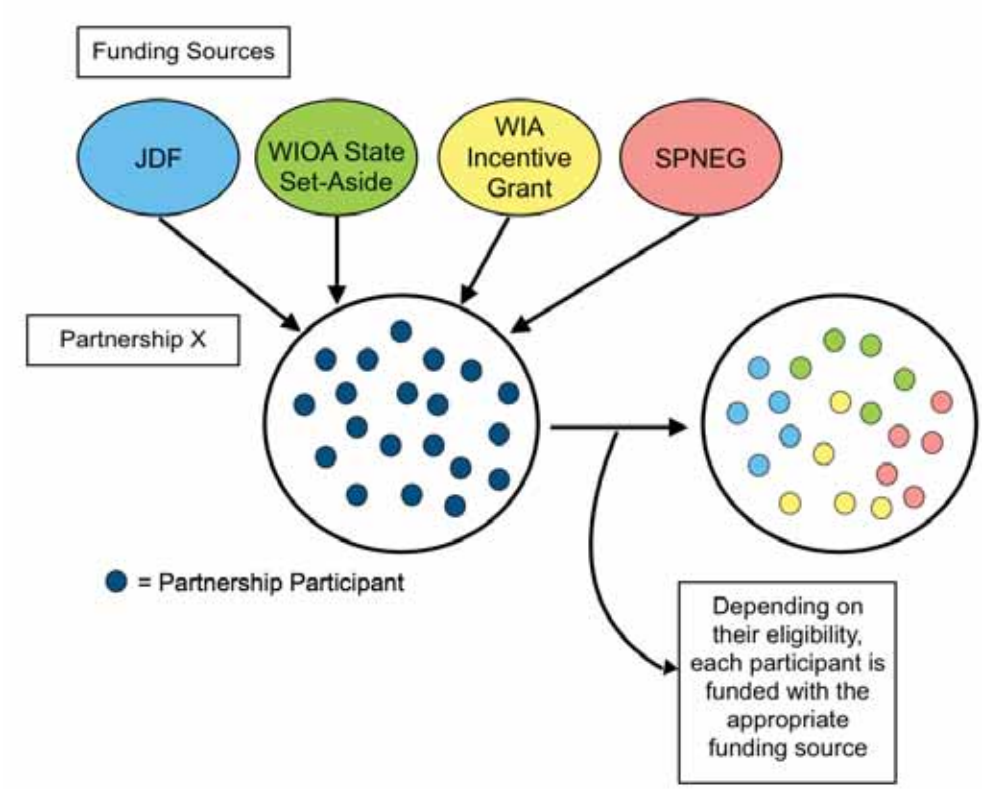
This database did not contain information about every participant, but included much of the information the DLT required to determine eligibility for the particular federal funding programs RJRI was using. In particular, it helped the DLT determine if workers were dislocated even if they had regained employment after initial unemployment. Using the individuals' previous wages in a specific industry, general labor market information and information about the growth of the worker's former industry, the DLT could calculate what the individual's salary would have been if they had not been dislocated from their original industry. If this salary was less than the individual's current salary, the DLT could define the worker as dislocated. The state then utilized the state's other databases to determine eligibility under other funding streams. For example, the DLT worked with the Department of Health to cross reference participants with DOH's databases to acknowledge receipt of state and federal welfare programs that would make the individual eligible for federal workforce training dollars. DLT referred to this new system as "ping and comply."

Importantly, ping and comply intentionally placed the burden on the DLT to find as much information as possible about an individual's eligibility instead of on the participant or partnership. This was part of RJRI's mission to be accessible and easy for those the program was intended to serve, a mission which included reducing the pressure on possible RJRI trainees to prove their eligibility for funding as well as reducing the paperwork and compliance burden for the partnerships. However, this system also came with a cost to DLT. The internal systems in the state were not set up to check lists of participants in mass and automatically identify eligibility. Instead the RJRI team had to check each participant one by one and determine eligibility, a process that cost hundreds of man hours to complete. However, Jensen felt it important that those hours be spent internally instead of by the partnerships or trainees in need of assistance and was willing to accept that burden on his team. Additionally, this process meant that expenditures on program overhead was much larger than programs that put the burden of compliance on participants. During the 2016 Implementation period, five staff members worked full time to determine participant eligibility and record participant data for reporting purposes, a process that cost roughly one million dollars in staff time and department costs. Since eligibility for federal funding had yet to be determined for partnerships or trainees at this point, this money came primarily from over-utilized state funds.

The implementation of the broadened, clarified definitions, the shortened intake form, and the "Ping and Comply" system greatly increased the number of trainees who could access federal funds. Only once the state's databases had been exhausted were participants funded using state unrestricted funding. Fifty percent of participants now qualify for federal funding, a number much more in line with the reality one would expect for job seekers looking to find a place in the state's economic life. The remaining challenge for the state is that no federal dollars exist to pay for under-employed but not dislocated workers or incumbent worker training.

The DLT refers to its use of innovative mixing of funding streams as "braided funding" because instead of single funds being used to pay for a specific program that can only serve a limited population, the program is designed to serve many populations and draw from many different funding sources. This process happens behind the scenes at the DLT, and takes the responsibility off individual partnerships to figure out how to fund demand-side programming.

Figure 2.2: Braided Funding Structure



The ability to broaden definitions and braid funding streams for RJRI partnerships was key to the DLT's ability to implement RJRI, but were determined co-currently to the acceptance, review, and issuance of RJRI programs. This was risky, since a legal or technical issue with funding could have a dramatic negative impact on the ability of sustaining programming if they could not tap federal dollars. However, Director Jensen believed that the rapid implementation of RJRI was critical to its success, as it would gain crucial momentum and political support as it was implemented and the system worked out after implementation.

Challenges to Program Design

Creating Sector-Based Partnerships

RJRI is fundamentally a sector-based workforce development solution, but sector partnerships are hard to establish. Sector-based solutions rely on the formation of partnerships between actors across institutional lines, including multiple employers within a sector, workforce

intermediaries training providers and educational institutions, and community-based organizations.

These partnerships rely on uniting traditional competitors within a sector and disparate interests into one, industry wide group. This unification caused tension for RJRI, as they had to work closely with employers to assure them that their participation in sector partnerships was not going to give their competitors an upper hand and that working together could be mutually beneficial. This competition and reluctance to work together can often be assuaged through the participation of a workforce intermediary. Intermediaries act as mediators between all parties in a partnership, and can support and lead disparate interests effectively. However, the DLT struggled to encourage all partnerships to work with workforce intermediaries and some sectors lacked a stable intermediary.

While, some partnerships, especially those that served established and well-connected industries, already had established workforce intermediaries that could serve as leaders in RJRI partnerships, less established industries such as IT, or economic sectors that don't see themselves as a united industry did not have established workforce intermediaries. Other intermediaries did not have experience designing or implementing training programs. It was challenging for the DLT to convince these industries to unite and choose a partnership leader who could serve as an intermediary for the partnership.

The DLT also struggled to help some of the organizations that acted as intermediaries in RJRI partnerships. Several of the organizations that filled that role had small, very tight budgets and small staffs. These organizations lacked the institutional capacity to run normal operations while also organizing a RJRI partnership and programming. In addition, some of these organizations lacked experience working with the state to implement programming and workforce development initiatives, and struggled with the work required of them to comply with DLT and federal reporting requirements. The DLT dedicated time to stabilizing these organizations and building them into effective intermediaries because they saw the existence of an intermediary as crucial to the success of partnerships and thus the success of the program.

Another challenge to small entities engaged in partnerships was the timeline for reimbursement. Standard practice at the DLT (and in the federal government) was a one-month turnaround between submission of documents needed for reimbursement and the cutting of a check to the organizations. Several organizations struggled to keep the lights on and pay for programming without money up front. Several others they could not pay their staff if the reimbursements came over two weeks after the programming. As a result, the DLT changed protocol to have some up-front payments to help organizations stay afloat while conducting programming and shortened the reimbursement time to between two to three weeks.

The DLT also faced challenges in getting industry employers and training providers to unite into sector partnerships. Each actor in the sector partnership had their individual specialties, and was used to working in silos to accomplish independent missions. This was especially true of training providers, who were accustomed to running supply-side training programs independently of employers and industry engagement. RJRI tasked them to work together, and cooperatively execute joint projects. Overcoming hesitations, uniting, and learning to work together was a crucial first step to the formation of RJRI partnerships, and the DLT was extensively involved in helping the first RJRI partnerships form. Once other industries saw how partnerships formed and functioned under RJRI, the DLT could step back from this coordination role. However, as this report documents, sustaining and effectively managing partnerships was a challenge for many of the lead partners. Several existing partnerships only minimally engaged

employer partners and, as a result, faced problems placing trainees. The DLT either ended these contracts or worked with them to engage employers more fully and align programming with employer needs more effectively.

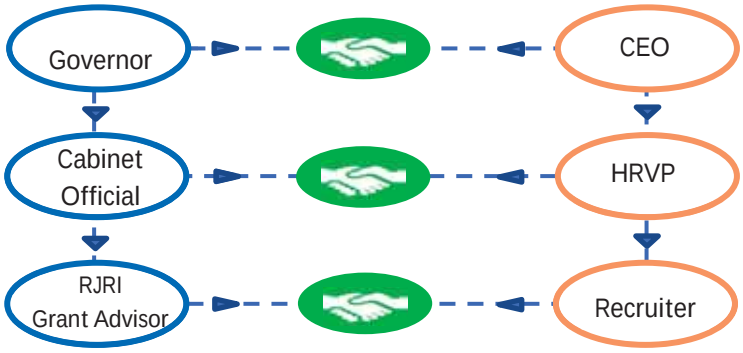
Another hurdle that the DLT had to overcome when uniting sector partnerships was getting partners to embrace the innovation of RJRI as a program. RJRI differs dramatically from traditional workforce training programs in many ways. It's demand-driven, giving industry partners a large amount of sway over what programming is offered. It is focused on maximizing the numbers of participants employed rather than the number of participants trained or enrolled. It is flexible, and asks the partnership to help determine their budget, timeline, and outcomes. Finally, it asks partners to unite across industry lines and try new solutions. Embracing and understanding these innovations proved to be difficult for some partnerships, especially those that had worked with the DLT on past programs. However, once the program started, partners became increasingly comfortable with the changes of RJRI and more willing to try the new ideas the program advanced.

Demand Side Programing and Skills for Chicagoland's Future

There are many terms of art or buzz-words in workforce development, and "demand-driven" is one of them. To avoid chasing a vague goal devoid of meaning, it was important to develop a clear idea of what "demand-driven" would mean in the Real Jobs RI program. Such clarity, however, is a challenge, because if a program is premised on letting demand drive its work, and counting on intermediary organizations to tap that demand, it is not possible to define a priori what will and will not count as demand-driven.

While RJRI would not formally require it, it chose to pattern what it meant by "demand-driven" by the example of Skills for Chicagoland's Future (SKILLS).[31] Instead of defining some criteria or another that would define "demand-driveness" and then issue policy guidance to grantees to that effect, RJRI chose to emulate SKILLS, who approached the matter through multi-tiered engagement model based on private sector consulting best practices. RJRI relationships with industry partners would use this model as an exemplar to model what demand-driven meant practically.

Figure 2.3 The Multi-Tiered Engagement Model



[31] Skills for Chicagoland's Future. "About". Accessed August 6, 2018. https://www.skillsforchicagolandsfuture.com

Again, RJRI would not mandate its intermediaries adopted this form as a matter of compliance but rather RJRI grant advisors had the job of coaching partnerships to strive for it. Demand-driven, then, meant an intermediary whose multitier engagement model is working well, such that the partnership was creating workforce solutions with its partners that it partners demand as that partners saw it, evidenced by the fact that partner companies hired successful participants.

Measuring Outcomes and Tracking

The DLT had to overcome several difficulties when establishing how they were going to measure and track participant outcomes from the RJRI program. The first challenge was to figure out what metrics the DLT wanted to use to measure the performance of each partnership and the overall performance of the RJRI program. Each RJRI partnership established their own outcomes and metrics in their award addendum, but the DLT wanted overarching metrics by which to judge the overall program. To determine these metrics, the DLT worked with the Harvard Performance Lab to establish short, medium, and long-term goals for the program. To measure these goals, the DLT decided to ask partnerships for and examine participant data (who enrolled), training data (who completed training), employment data (who was employed), employer-satisfaction data (were employers satisfied with the trainings, programs, and new workers), and overall sector data (what has changed or improved in the sector). To collect this data, the DLT asked partners to submit performance information between one and three months after the end of a training cohort or program implementation. Each partnership established their own performance metrics and reporting procedure in their individual addendum for additional factors.

Despite efforts, assessing impact on employer satisfaction and overall sector change proved extremely difficult to calculate. Many partnerships lacked the capacity to evaluate these factors and instead were just able to report basic metrics such as the number of people recruited and the number of people who enrolled and completed training programs. Given these challenges, to assess sector impact, the DLT decided to focus on employment as the key metric, since helping industry employers build their workforce was a key goal for RJRI. However, this metric proved difficult to track as well. Most partnerships did not have the capacity to track all participants after the completion of offered services, particularly given there is often a time lag between completing training and securing employment. The DLT struggled particularly with calculating if participants who were unemployed but became employed were employed in training-related positions or found unrelated work when time lags between training and employment existed. The DLT has been able to overcome these challenges mostly because enough time has passed for enough participants that they now appear on the wage record data housed at the DLT Unemployment Insurance Division from which they can verify employment data.

An additional barrier to program evaluation was that receiving training related employment only served as an effective metric for new workers. The DLT struggled to track the outcomes of RJRI for incumbent workers. It proved very difficult to assess how much impact RJRI programming impacted incumbent employees. Original metrics were established for collecting data such as the number of incumbent workers who received a pay raise or a promotion, but actually acquiring these data was all but impossible. The trail of various methods

to ascertain this information, including examining data from the Division of Taxation, failed to provide an accurate measure of the outcomes for incumbent workers.

In addition to establishing and tracking outcome measures, the DLT also had to establish tracking systems for individuals trained with federal funds. Per federal regulations, these individuals are required to be tracked for an entire year after they are registered in the federal system, regardless of if they completed or even entered training. As a result, the DLT worked to establish eligibility for federal funds only after a partnership started training to try and limit the number of individuals who expressed interest in training, were entered into the federal system, failed to start training, and then needed to be tracked unnecessarily.

In addition to federal tracking, the DLT also established a state tracking system to account for participants not funded by federal grants. Initially, the DLT used the EmployRI computer system to track participants, as it was the system already used by the DLT to track other program participants. However, the system was not flexible enough to record and track all data from RJRI. As a result, the DLT started working on developing a custom made RJRI tracking system to track RJRI participants.

Reporting and Reimbursement

Developing systems of reporting and reimbursement was key to the functionality of RJRI. Since RJRI is a demand-side program, each partnership had their own independent focus, programming, and budget. Because of this, the RJRI reporting system had to be more flexible than traditional reporting methods. To develop a reporting system, the DLT first worked to establish a standard reporting procedure for all partnerships. The Business Affairs department of the DLT worked with the RJRI program manager to create a standard reporting template that included all the information that the DLT required to reimburse the partnerships. The template was designed so that this information, which included activities, curriculum, staff costs, among other things, could be clearly filled out by the partnerships. This clarity of organization and inclusion then made it simple for the DLT to sort expenses internally and allocate the appropriate funds from RJRI's different funding sources. This template was also designed to include some limited flexibility, however. Each partnership was provided with their own version of this template that was customized for their particular activities. This customization primarily included the deletion of sections that did not pertain to the particular partnership's activities. As an example, a partnership that did not conduct youth engagement would not have a reimbursement form that asked them to report data on youth training. This flexibility and customization, although small, was an innovation by the DLT to make the reporting process shorter and easier for partnerships. A copy of this template is included in appendix A for this section.

Once a partnership had their reporting template, they worked with their grant advisor to establish a reporting plan. Partnerships could decide if they wanted to report quarterly or monthly, but had the flexibility to submit unusually large or pressing invoices at any time if necessary. To submit their reporting data, partnerships provided the DLT with a lead sheet, a filled-out template, and an itemized justification for each expense listed on the template. Many partnerships also submitted a full copy of all receipts, invoices, time-sheets, and other records of expenses with this report, though this was not required for all partnerships.

Once a partnership submitted their expense report, the DLT could return a reimbursement within two to three weeks. The actual return time depended heavily on the relative completion of

the expense report. Partnerships that had correctly and thoroughly reported their expenses were able to be reimbursed rapidly. This was not the case, however, if a partnership did not provide the DLT with a correct and complete report. In this case, the DLT would have to ask the partnership to resubmit their report, which delayed the reimbursement period. Initially, several partnerships struggled to fill out their templates and thoroughly justify every included expense. To assist with this process, the DLT took two steps. First, they edited their reporting template to highlight what information the DLT required. When partnerships still struggled, the DLT published a "Grantee Guide" that contained, among other explanations and points of clarification, definitions of eligible partnership expenses and reporting guidelines. This guide is also available in the appendix A.

Institutional Culture

One of the most substantial challenges the DLT faced in implementing RJRI was changing the institutional culture of the DLT. This challenge had multiple facets. First, some tension resulted from the introduction of a new director, new employees, and new ideas from a different state in 2015. While Director Jensen and his Maryland staff were mostly welcomed, both the new members and original Rhode Island members of the DLT struggled initially to learn the norms and procedures of working together. Second, once the RJRI team was picked, it faced some pushback from the rest of the employees of the DLT. The RJRI team was new and handpicked by Director Jensen, and had substantial access to the Director and the Governor. Additionally, the team was working on the DLT's newest and most publicized project. For those not on this team, there was a feeling of being left out that only went away after the newness of RJRI wore off.

This new team also faced internal pushback as they tried to change the traditional systems of contracts, reporting, and tracking. The DLT had established systems and protocols for these actions, and employees within the DLT had developed specialties in dealing with these matters. The RJRI team had to carefully work with these employees to ensure that their expertise was included but also to overcome their concerns about the new systems. For many employees, it was a matter of convincing them to let go of the status quo to try new changes.

Many employees also struggled with the demands placed on them to challenge and uproot existing norms. This was especially a challenge when trying to simplify the intake process. To do this, the RJRI team members were asked to justify every aspect of the system and challenge long-standing practices at the DLT. This was very difficult for some workers, especially those who worked with federal grants and workforce development previously and had experience and expertise in the old systems. It took a long time, numerous meetings, and Director Jensen's final decision-making to commit to these changes and convince people that changing procedure would be effective, necessary and that in some cases where there were compliance concerns, that the information could be attained another way.

The RJRI team faced tensions with the rest of the DLT, but also dealt with internal divisions and challenges. First, the RJRI team was composed of a diverse group of employees from the DLT Executive Office, DLT Division of Workforce Development Services, DLT Business Affairs, the State Workforce Investment Office, and the Governor's Workforce Board. These different groups had to learn to come together and work cooperatively, a process that was not always easy. Much of this cooperative work occurred initially in large meetings, which proved to be ineffectual, difficult to coordinate, and confusing. To address this, the RJRI team

adopted a scrum process, a technique utilized primarily in the start-up tech industry. With the scrum process, the large group of stakeholders is divided into smaller teams who work on individual components of larger problems. These teams report to a single, central person, and also report results and progress to the entire group at a single meeting. To aid in communication, the RJRI team created a set of standardized reporting documents that all teams used. Establishing this process made communication clearer and established a system of communication and accountability that everyone respected. In addition to the scrum process, the RJRI team utilized LEAN techniques to improve internal communication. Using these techniques, which included process mapping and standardization, helped to solve smaller problems that were making the team's work on RJRI difficult. Additionally, the RJRI team continued to hold monthly meetings to discuss the successes and challenges each team member was facing. These meetings, which maintained the organization and communication structures developed through the scrum process, allowed the RJRI team to collectively recognize and address the common problems that the program was facing. This strategy of team communication helped the RJRI team maintain consistency in its work with different partnerships, and helped the program develop collaboratively throughout the 2016 Implementation period.

Finally, workers struggled with the demands of RJRI. Working on the Governor's flagship economic development program, and implementing program on an accelerated timescale took its toll on workers. Employees of the RJRI team had to find a balance between working hard and overworking, and overcome nervousness over working closely with the Director and the Governor. Additionally, implementing RJRI took an enormous amount of time and effort on the behalf of numerous people, and it was effort that was largely challenging.

Looking Forward

While the initial development and implementation phase of the Real Jobs Rhode Island program is over, the program is continually evolving and improving. Learning from the successes and challenges of the development period, the RJRI team is working to expand the program and move its focus from internal development to external assistance and encouragement of partnerships. Further, the RJRI team is working to develop systems that improve the ease and efficiency of RJRI intake, reporting, and program implementation. Through this work, the DLT hopes RJRI can become what it was intended to be: an accessible, industry driven, sector-based workforce development strategy that helps lift the fortunes of the entire state.

Section 3: Addressing Sector Need and Innovation

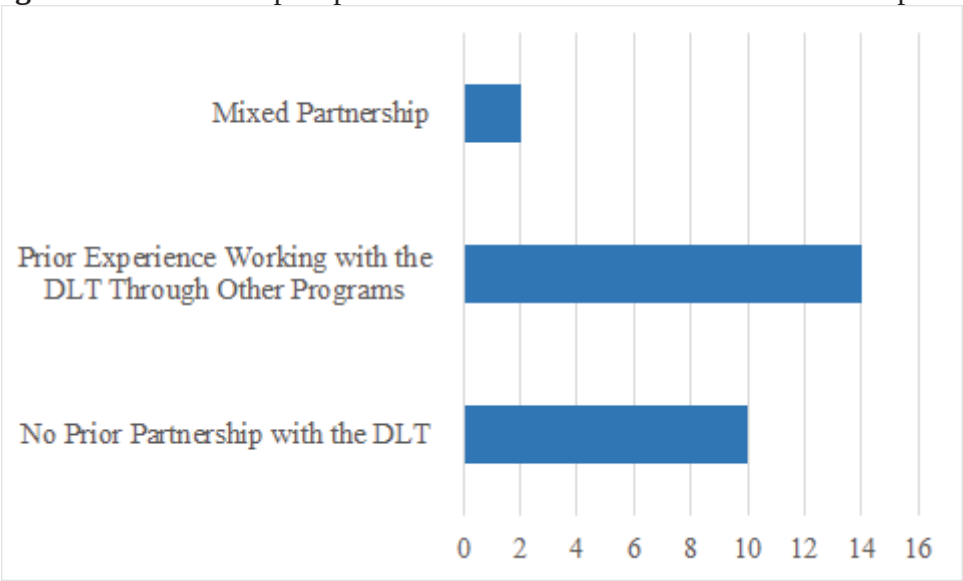
A central aspect of the RJRI program was innovating new programming to develop economic sectors in Rhode Island. This focus on innovation is critical to RJRI, as it was meant to push partnerships to develop new ways to serve industries in need of workers and workers in need of jobs. To encourage partnerships to seek innovative strategies, the DLT specifically asked each partnership to develop "industry-led, responsive and innovative training programs."[32]

In this section, we examine how partnerships innovated in the development of their programs and services. This examination includes a focus on the history of each partnership's prior experience with the DLT, how each partnership identified the needs of the sector it sought to serve, and the industry needs partnerships identified and served. This section also includes an analysis of the basis and extent of innovation of each partnership, and examines the challenges associated with innovating new programming.

Prior Experience with the DLT

Many, but not all, of the partnerships funded by the DLT in 2016 had some level of past experience providing state-funded workforce development services. The partnerships largely fell into three groups: those with no prior experience working with the DLT, those with prior experience working with the DLT through other programs or the Governor's Workforce Board, and partnerships with some members with experience and some members without.

Figure 3.1: Partnership Experience in State Funded Workforce Development



No Prior Partnership with the DLT

For some partnerships, this was because none of the organizations in the partnership had any prior experience with grant funding or workforce development training. Other partnerships

[32] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: *Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals*. July 31, 2015. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/ImpG/RJRIImpGrantSol0715.pdf

had experience in workforce development, but had never formally partnered with the DLT to deliver training or delivered DLT funded training. Some partnerships developed programs through the RJRI program only after outreach from the DLT, and still other partnerships formed only as the result of DLT outreach.

Prior Experience Working with the DLT Through Other Programs

Many partnerships worked with the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) to fund and deliver workforce development training prior to the start of RJRI. Other partnerships had worked directly with the DLT prior to the start of RJRI, and implemented training programs using DLT funds prior to the start of RJRI. All of these partnerships were formed before the beginning of the RJRI program, although many added sector partners and changed their approach to workforce development as a result of RJRI planning grants.

Mixed Partnership

Two partnerships included partners that had prior experience with the DLT through the GWB but the other partners did not. In the case of the Partnership for Real IT Jobs, the lead applicant came to Rhode Island from another state and had no prior experience with the DLT, but other partners had worked with the DLT before joining the partnership. Similarly, the convener of the Urban Apprenticeship program had worked with the DLT before, but the organization that served as lead applicant and training provider in the partnership had no prior experience with the DLT.

Identifying Industry Needs

In keeping with the DLT's directive for partnerships to create "industry-led, responsive and innovative training programs," partnerships worked first to identify the key needs facing their industry.[33] Most partnerships accomplished this with needs assessments. A needs assessment is a program evaluation strategy used to assess the needs of a target population and incorporate the perspectives of industry employers and workforce intermediaries (i.e., key informants) through focus groups, committees, interviews, surveys, and workshops, among other methods. Most RJRI partnerships utilized one or more of these techniques to conduct needs assessments for their particular industry. Other partnerships utilized government and industry research to inform program development. This research provided partnerships with data on the needs of their industry, and in some cases best practices of what could be done to address those needs. Finally, some partnerships also utilized pre-existing industry relationships created through prior workforce development efforts in the industry to gauge industry needs. These partnerships relied on feedback from known industry partners to understand the type and extent of needs in the industry.

A majority of partnerships (18) used more than one method to identify industry needs, and many relied on a combination of research and input from their industry to inform their program development. Only eight partnerships used only one method to identify industry needs. Further, the methods chosen to identify industry needs relied heavily on the individual composition of each partnership, and was impacted by such factors as prior experience with

[33] Ibid.

workforce development efforts or working with the industry, pre-existing connections within the industry, and level of knowledge about industry challenges, among other factors.

Figure 3.2: Methodologies of Identifying Sector Need

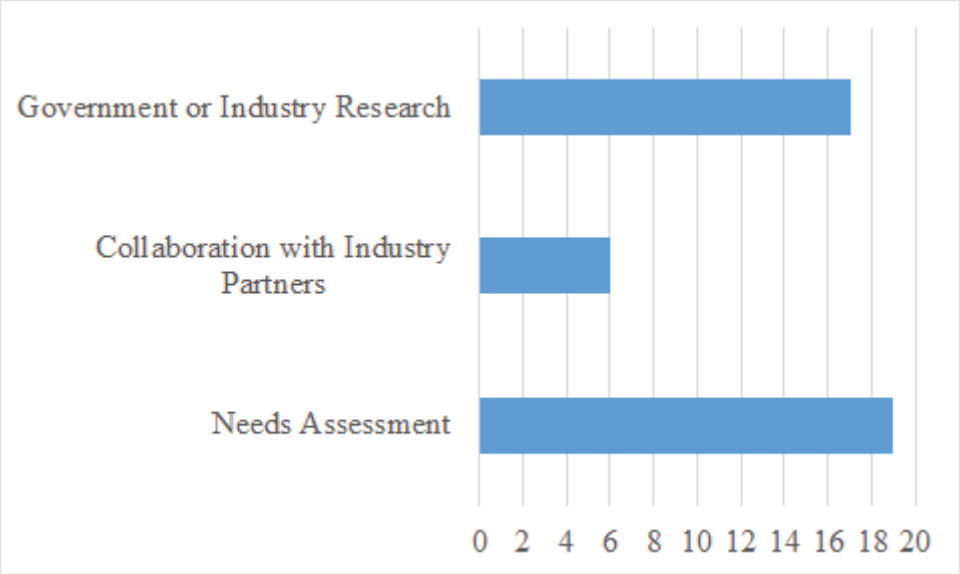
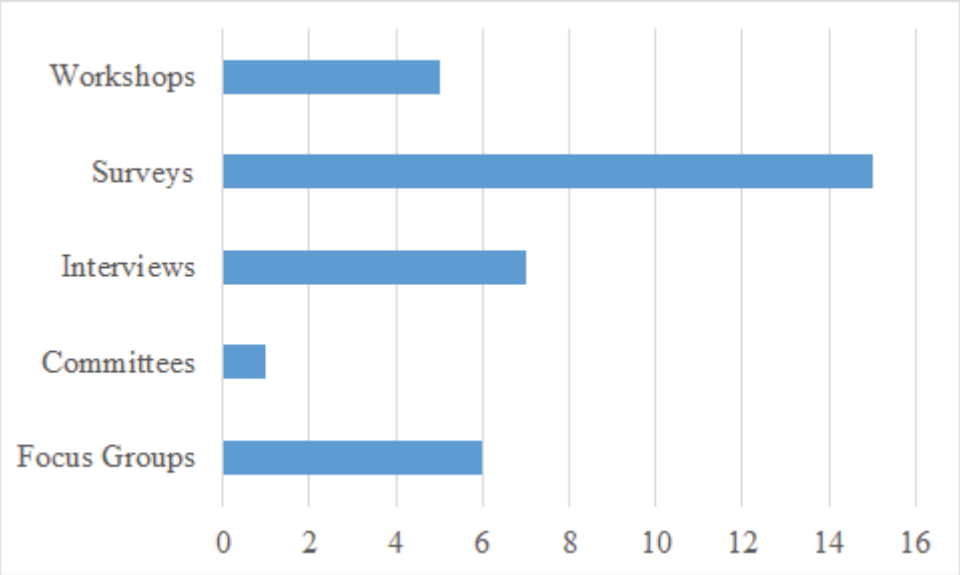


Figure 3.3: Methods Used to Conduct Industry Needs Assessment



Identified Industry Needs

By utilizing these methods, partnerships identified the central issues and needs facing the industry. The needs that each partnership identified fell into three major categories: factors relating to the industry and the economy, factors relating to training, and factors relating to the

workforce.[34] Although each partnership identified unique industry issues, many needs were similar across sectors, and nearly all industries identified needs in more than one category.

Industry/Economy

Nearly every partnership identified industry needs that were related to the sector and the state's economy. Many partnerships noted that their industry was anticipating growth in coming years, as a result of either the improving economy or positive industry trends. In each of these cases, partnerships noted that the sector did not have an adequate hiring plan, recruitment strategy, or pool of workers to harness a potential increase in demand. The lack of an available pool of workers also was identified as a key issue. Many industries cited negative perceptions of the industry and the pull of lucrative out-of-state opportunities drawing talent away from Rhode Island as core reasons for their workforce shortage. Partnerships also noted that a key barrier to growth for the sector was the high cost of recruiting and training new and incumbent workers. As a result of these combined factors, many partnerships found that numerous industry jobs were not being filled and that employers were ambivalent about expanding and hiring additional workers.

Workforce

Each partnership faced a unique workforce challenge, but all identified problems with their current workforce. Many industries had a rapidly aging workforce and a lack of younger, qualified, skilled, and interested workers ready to fill the void as the older workers retired. This lack of available and skilled workers also impacted industries experiencing high rates of employee turnover. Many industries cited limited language and soft skills, transportation and childcare challenges, and, most critically, a gap between the skills potential workers possess and the skills necessary for succeeding in the sector. Other industries struggled with a lack of professional development opportunities for incumbent workers that would enable them to move up the career ladder and allow less skilled, new workers to fill the newly vacant lower positions within the industry. Finally, some industries struggled with integrating women and minorities into sectors traditionally made up of white males, but, given the changing demographics of the state, recognized that they needed to reach new populations in order to fill open positions.

Training

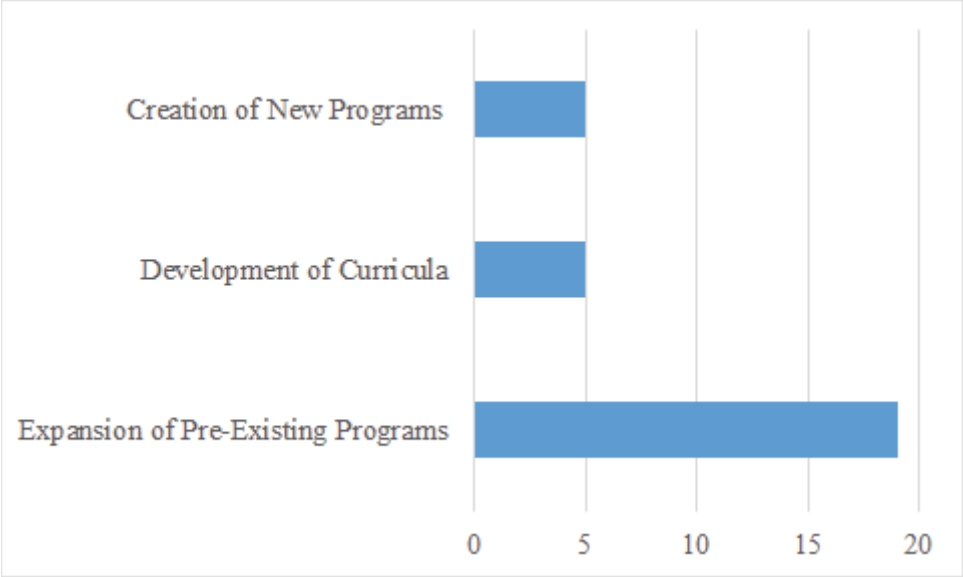
Nine of the 26 partnerships identified industry needs that were specifically related to the failings of current industry training programs to prepare workers for employment and growth in the sector. Many partnerships cited limited capacity in current training programs at least in part because of the limited availability of industry trainers. Many industries also described a lack of programs designed for incumbent workers to increase their skills and gain promotions. Still more industries identified challenges associated with training workers, only to have them leave the company to conduct training for other companies, states, or another industry.

[34] These categories, and the identification of the various industry needs that are encompassed in each category, were taken from information provided by partnerships in their 2016 RJRI application and in-person interviews.

Method of Innovation

Based on the assessment of industry needs, partnerships proposed to build their sector by expanding existing programs, creating new programs, or developing new curriculum. Several partnerships combined these approaches into a multifaceted program.

Figure 3.4: Program Innovation



Expansion of a Pre-Existing Program

For several partnerships, RJRI funding allowed them to expand and enhance workforce training programs that the partnership had originated under the GWB. Some examples of program enhancements: offering more training programs, expanding and formalizing partnerships both within and outside their original industry partners, serving a broader population of workers, or expanding trainings and services to serve employers and workers in a larger geographic area. Some partnerships took a different route, expanding and modifying existing national program models to fit Rhode Island's industries and economy.

Development of Curricula

Several partnerships focused primarily on the creation and design of curricula offered to participants during the program. For some partnerships, the 2016 implementation period was focused chiefly on the development of the curriculum. Others developed a new curriculum, then offered a training program featuring this curriculum. Whether or not a partnership implemented its new program depended on a variety of factors, including the size and composition of the partnership, the intent of the training program (i.e., skills training vs. training for a certificate), and the prior experience of the partnership in developing curricula and implementing training programs.

Creation of New Programs

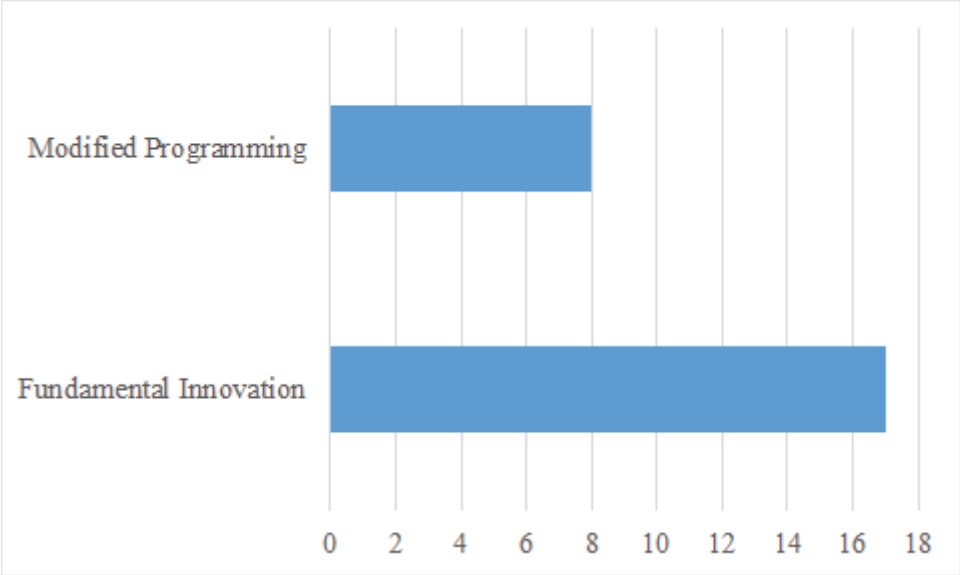
Many of these partnerships developed new programming to serve the needs of an industry that lacked formal programming for training. Other partnerships created new programs in order to reach new populations or industries. For several of these partnerships, the

development of a new training program began after the DLT asked them how it could facilitate the growth of their sector through RJRI.

Extent of Innovation

In order to fully understand each partnership's development of innovative programming and services during the 2016 implementation period, each partnership was evaluated on the extent of its innovation. Partnerships were deemed to have conducted "Fundamental Innovation" if they created a training program from scratch, fundamentally changed a pre-existing program, or formed a new partnership. In addition, partnerships that created new programs or altered existing programs to directly address industry needs were considered fundamentally innovative. Partnerships that expanded a pre-existing training program without meeting the criteria of Fundamentally Innovative programs were evaluated as programs that "Modified Programming." However, this designation does not mean that partnerships were not innovative, as every partnership innovated in some way during the 2016 implementation period.

Figure 3.5: Extent of Innovation for 2016 Partnerships



Seventeen partnerships were evaluated as having proposed a fundamental innovation. The Design Forward Partnership is a good example of a partnership that brought together parts of the industry that do not typically interact with one another. It created three original training programs that served three different populations in the design industry, and tailored each program to serve the needs of workers at all levels of the industry.

Eight partnerships modified programming. The Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program exemplifies this category. The lead applicant had a long history of offering apprenticeship programs in plumbing, pipefitting, and refrigeration, and used the RJRI program to expand into offering pre-apprenticeship programs for younger or less experienced workers from populations that had not historically been recruited for this profession. This partnership noted that while existing training programs were sufficient, there were not enough workers

coming through them to meet industry needs. As a result of its focus on a new population, it added a pre-apprenticeship training program that would ensure that participants were ready for the apprenticeship program, and was highly successful at reaching a new population with interest in the career.

Challenges

Partnerships identified few challenges with innovation during the 2016 RJRI implementation period. This was expected, given that the proposals for RJRI were required to address industry needs, and most of the partnerships received planning grants to develop programming and assess industry needs. By emphasizing innovation in the development of RJRI programming, the DLT attracted partnerships that successfully created innovative workforce development programming. However, partnerships did identify some challenges with innovation during the 2016 implementation process.

Lack of Prior Experience

For several partnerships, a lack of prior experience made the development of programming challenging. For some partnerships, a lack of prior experience working with the state made them hesitant to start working with the DLT, and they had some difficulty developing effective programming that could be funded by the RJRI program. Other partnerships had no prior experience with workforce development and struggled to develop innovative and effective programming. In addition, some partnerships had little prior experience working with the populations their RJRI programs were designed to serve and had challenges accessing and working effectively with these populations. Several partnerships were also initially apprehensive about partnering with a state agency. This hesitancy led them to struggle in uniting organizations to develop innovative programming.

Capacity Issues

A number of partnerships had unexpected capacity challenges that arose during the implementation period. These partnerships proposed innovative programming, but found that implementing the proposed programming would take more organizational capacity and planning than expected for the program to be successful in their industry. For some partnerships, this led to a restructuring and refocusing of their plan for the 2016 implementation period, while others were able to overcome this challenge and implement their program as planned.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices from the DLT for innovation emerged:

- Fund planning grants to help sectors build partnerships and assess industry need.
- Require proposals for funding to explain how the proposal addresses a verified industry need.

Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to help partnerships create innovative workforce development programming:

- Encourage experienced DLT partners to work with organizations, employers, and businesses interested in RJRI opportunities.
- Include a section addressing the ability of partnerships to deliver programming to help foresee capacity issues.
- Allow partnerships to apply for a second-round planning grant to assess and evaluate innovative programs and retool them to better meet industry needs.
- Encourage partnerships to present the ways in which they are innovating and how their innovation addresses sector needs at RJRI events. This may help other partnerships learn about ways of innovating that could fit their sector as well.

Section 4: Partnerships

A central objective of the RJRI program was to create and cultivate industry-led partnerships that could offer programming to advance the skills of Rhode Island's workforce and develop a pipeline of workers that could expedite sustainable sector growth. To facilitate sector partnerships, the RJRI program sought to identify, support, and help grow workforce intermediaries in key employment sectors. In this section we examine the partnerships formed by individual grantees and address the common challenges and successes faced by these partnerships. We also present best practices and our recommendations for future partnerships. This analysis is based on information provided during interviews with grantees and RJRI grant administrators.

Twenty-six partnerships were formed during the 2016 RJRI Implementation grant. Each partnership involved a group of employer partners, industry organizations, training providers, educational organizations, and other supporters. Each partnership was asked to include at least five employers from the target industry and representatives from two diverse entities, such as nonprofits, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, local governments, regional or local economic development entities, local departments of social services, labor unions, K-12 programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, and other training providers. Despite this direction, not all partnerships met the minimum requirements for partnership formation. There was wide variation in the numbers of partners across the various partnerships, ranging from four to 46. Some partnerships continued to add partners over the course of implementing their program.

Table 4.1: Number of Partners for Each Grantee Included in the Grant Proposal

Partnerships	Number of Partners
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership	15
Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program	8
Residential Construction Partnership	15
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program	4
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative	14
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership	24
Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island	6
Healthy Jobs RI	43
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership	14
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership	10
Healthcare Training Collaborative	7

MedTech Innovation Engine	20
Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership	31
Insurance Innovation Partnership	8
Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative	15
Aquaculture Training Partnership	22
Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership	11
Building Futures Partnership	12
Real Jobs IT Partnership	34
CNA Talent Network Partnership	14
Phoenix Partnership	9
Partnership for Real IT Jobs	11
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women	11
Design Forward Partnership	9
Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership	46
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island	11
Note: This number was calculated from the partners listed in each grantee's proposal and any additions mentioned in interviews. This calculation does not reflect the current status of each partnership, nor does it reflect every partner that joined or left partnerships during the 2016 implementation.	

Each of these partnerships was established by a primary grantee/lead applicant who oversaw initial partner recruitment and partnership formation. The primary grantee for each partnership was identified as the convener willing to coordinate the team of partners in pursuit of a common goal, to lead or assist in the development of program development and training activities, and to conduct ongoing management and administration of the program to meet performance targets and achieve goals. Twenty-one partnerships were led by workforce intermediaries (i.e., organizations that address industry needs while considering the needs of both employers and employees), and five of the partnerships were led by employer organizations. While each partnership's leadership was unique, the organization type of the primary grantee included:

- Industry Associations
- Training Providers
- Colleges/Universities
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Labor Unions
- Employers

Table 4.2: Primary Grantee by Organization Type

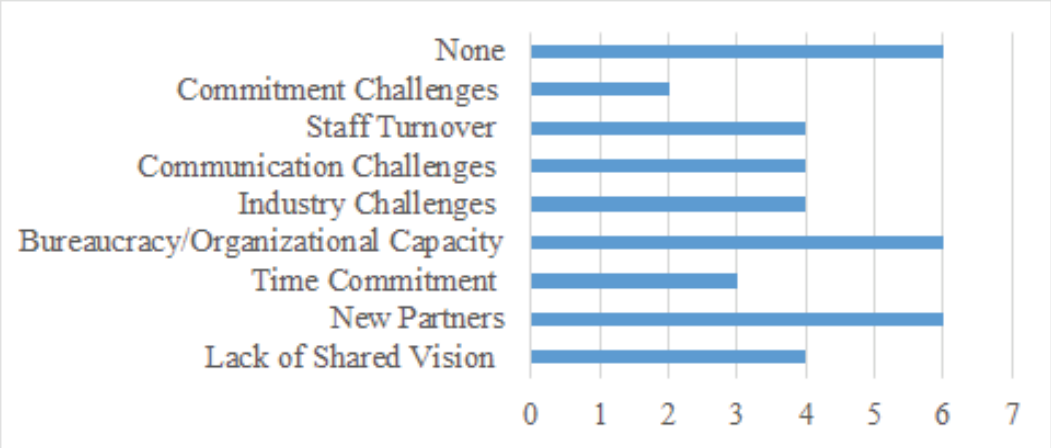
Partnerships	Industry Association	Training Provider	College/ University	Non-Profit Organization	Labor Union	Employer
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership	√					
Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program						√
Residential Construction Partnership	√					
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program		√				
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative				√		
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership	√					
Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island						√
Healthy Jobs RI			√			
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership				√		
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership						√
Healthcare Training Collaborative						√
MedTech Innovation Engine				√		
Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership	√					
Insurance Innovation Partnership	√					
Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative	√					
Aquaculture Training Partnership				√		
Construction Trades Skill-				√		

Up Partnership						
Building Futures Partnership				√		
Real Jobs IT Partnership				√		
CNA Talent Network Partnership					√	
Phoenix Partnership						√
Partnership for Real IT Jobs				√		
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women				√		
Design Forward Partnership				√		
Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership	√					
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island				√		

Partnership Challenges

Sector strategies are often challenging because they require partnerships across private, public, and nonprofit entities, which frequently have a history of distrust. Also, sector strategies bring together groups of employers that often view themselves as competitors.[35] In addition, working in groups to institute a large workforce development program is challenging. The following section discusses the most common challenges encountered by RJRI grantees in relation to their partnership activities.

Figure 4.1: Partnership Challenges



[35] Taylor, Colin. *Employer Engagement in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions*. 2011. Boston: Jobs for the Future.

Communication Challenges

Six partnerships struggled with communication. These partnerships had issues of miscommunication between partnership leadership and partners that led to confusion. For example, one larger partnership found it difficult to respond to and follow through on all requests from employer partners, and another partnership had difficulties with communication between the main partner and a subcontractor. In one situation, a breakdown in communication between an employer and training partner kept one training from happening. Four of the partnerships faced challenges with staff turnover among the main partnership organizations during the implementation grant year. The loss or change of key staff members resulted in a breakdown of communication between the lead applicant and partners for partnerships and setbacks in program implementation for other partnerships. For example, the two staff members at St. Antoine Residence who conceptualized and spearheaded the Healthcare Training Collaborative both left St. Antoine's during the 2016 implementation period, and one of the Healthcare Training Collaborative's partners eliminated the position of an employee who was the primary contact person between St. Antoine's and this partner. These occurrences greatly impacted the implementation of the partnership's training programs.

Lack of Shared Vision within the Partnership

Six partnerships struggled to establish and maintain a unified vision between all partners. Some partnerships, like the Construction Trade Skill-Up Partnership, struggled to agree on the obstacles facing their industry and disagreed over the best methods to overcome those obstacles. Other partnerships, like the CNA Talent Network, had to work to reconcile the differing opinions between major partners concerning the overall goals and purpose of their partnership. Finally, some partnerships that worked with diverse populations, such as the Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women, faced difficulties with cultural sensitivity and acceptance of new diverse employees among their employer partners.

New Partners

Six partnerships had difficulties identifying and working with new partners (meaning partners the primary grantee had never worked with before). The lead applicants of several partnerships, such as the Aquaculture Training Partnership, struggled to find new employer partners to work with the partnership. These lead applicants faced difficulties in convincing potential new partners of the value of proposed training and services and overcoming differing opinions within the industry about the proposed training model. These partnerships also had to help small businesses overcome a reluctance to work in collaboration with large companies and work with partners who had little prior experience in training a large number of workers. Other partnerships, like the Phoenix Partnership, faced difficulties in incorporating new partners into existing partnerships. Some partnerships struggled to balance an increased number of interests in partnership decision-making and found it hard to schedule meetings when the number of partners grew over time. Other partnerships struggled to expand their partnership across the state or across their industry due to a lack of effective connections.

Bureaucracy and Organizational Capacity

Six partnerships faced difficulties that resulted from working with bureaucracy both within and outside of their industry. Some partnerships, like the Rhode Island Financial Skills

Initiative, worked with higher education institutions to implement their programs and services but struggled with the bureaucratic requirements of those institutions. Other partnerships, like the RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative, underestimated the organizational capacity that was needed to successfully implement their programs and services, and struggled to meet the staffing, organizational, and bureaucratic challenges that arose during program implementation. In addition, partnerships found that some employer partners simply did not have the capacity to adapt their systems to assist with the training and hiring of training participants. Other partnerships struggled to meet all of the goals stated in their proposals due to organizational capacity issues.

Industry Challenges

Six partnerships faced challenges in working with their industry. Several, like the Aquaculture Training Partnership, had issues of competition between partners that hindered their ability to implement their training program. This included difficulties in identifying new employer partners that were competitors with other employers already in the partnership and concerns about training workers who might then leave and start their own companies. Two partnerships had employer partners who were unable to follow through on commitments to offer internships or to hire or train partnership trainees. Other partnerships struggled to convince all partners to adapt programs and services to meet changing industry needs. Some partnerships also had difficulty differentiating their programs from similar services being offered to their industry.

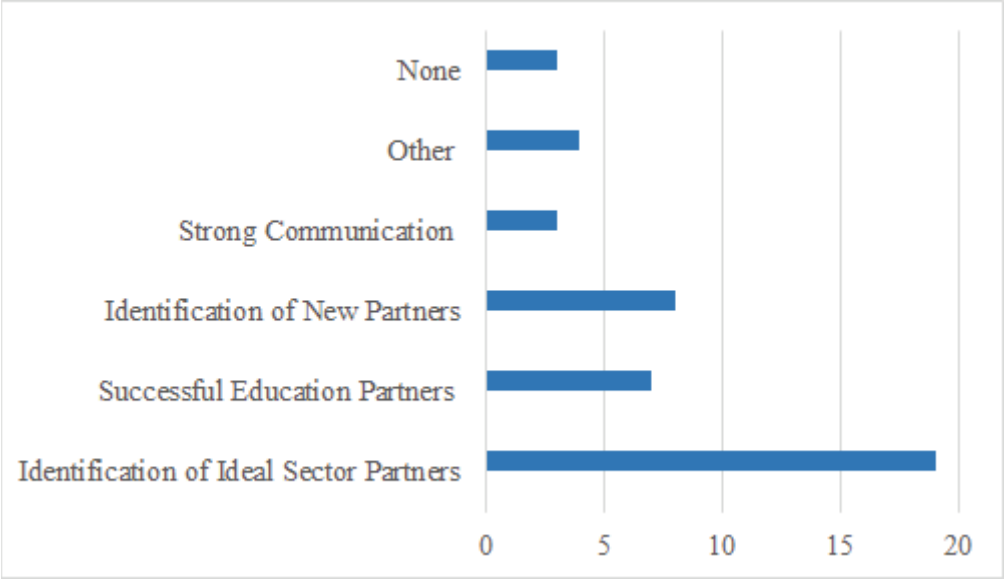
Time Commitment

Three partnerships found it challenging to fulfill the time commitment required to be a partner. This took several forms. For some partnerships, like the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, it was difficult to attract new partners to the partnership due to the time commitment and responsibility required. Others, especially those that worked with small businesses, like the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership, found that small businesses were hesitant to join partnerships because they were reluctant to spend time away from the workings of their company. In addition, several partnerships struggled to maintain regular partner attendance and participation at meetings and in other efforts, and several partners dropped out of the partnership as a result of the time commitment and effort required. Other partnerships overcame these issues by: planning ahead for meetings; compensating partners for time spent in meetings; clearly articulating expected commitment for planning meetings; inviting partners to meetings only if their specific expertise was necessary; rotating meeting locations to ensure equal obligations for travel times for all partners; clearly communicating the level of commitment expected from each partner in every step of the planning and implementation process; having employers commit in writing to hiring trainees upon completion; and ensuring commitment from top leaders of the employer partners.

Effective Partnership Strategies

Many RJRI grantees had successful and thriving partnerships even in the face of challenges. Here we describe the most prominent strategies employed across grantees who viewed their partnerships as successful.

Figure 4.2: Effective Partnership Strategies



Identification of Ideal Sector Partners

Sixteen partnerships were able to successfully identify and recruit strong industry and employer partners. These grantees found partners who shared the partnerships' overall vision, were willing and able to train workers for the industry, were able to quickly hire trainees into jobs, and were committed to the goals and work of the partnership. Some partnerships, such as the Marine Trades and Composites Partnership, were able to rely on strong, existing connections within their industry to recruit partners, while others, like the Design Forward Partnership, were able to take advantage of a cohesive and open industry culture to recruit partners. Other partnerships noted successes due to having identified a reciprocal relationship among partners (where each partner is able to help the other out in some way), which helped contribute to the sustainability of the training program. For example, in the Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program, the primary applicant, Claflin Medical Equipment, provided free or reduced rate services to the Rhode Island Free Clinic, and the clinic provided an environment for the apprentices to gain knowledge and skills.

Successful Education Partners

Seven partnerships identified and worked with education partners that were on board with the idea and enabled the partnership to successfully implement its training programs and services. Some partnerships, like the Aquaculture Training Partnership, worked with institutions of higher education that had the capacity to design and implement new curricula and train a large number of workers. Others, such as the Residential Construction Partnership, successfully partnered with state career technical education schools to raise awareness of their industry and create education to career pipelines. In addition, multiple partnerships worked with flexible education providers who were able to start trainings when partnership participants were ready to maximize the efficiency of the partnership's training programs.

Identification of New Partners

Numerous grantees created partnerships that expanded beyond industry limits and effectively connected employers, training providers, and industries that normally operate separately to work toward common goals. Some of these partnerships, which included the Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program, were able to easily find and incorporate new partners into their partnerships through successfully designed and implemented marketing campaigns. Others, like Healthy Jobs RI, connected organizations that did not usually work with their industry or traditionally functioned in separate silos from other companies. For some partnerships, such as the Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership, their innovative recruitment strategies helped connect industry organizations that never would have interacted before and led to new collaboration and work within the industry. In some sectors partnerships can work at cross-purposes by overwhelming employers with training options, but this can be overcome by coordinating and presenting all training options to employer partners.

Strong Communication

Four partnerships cited strong and effective communication as a key element that made their partnership a success. For several of these, such as Healthy Jobs RI, open communication strengthened trust between the partnership and the industry and encouraged more open collaboration. For others, like the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership, clear communication also helped increase trust and collaboration within the partnership itself. Some strategies for creating strong communication included: holding regularly scheduled meetings to get feedback on the programs and ensure partner engagement through the process; rotating meeting sites across industry partners to ensure equity in travel expectations; and using commitment letters to ensure ongoing commitment to the training program from employer partners.

Other Successes

Many partnerships used other successful partnership strategies. Some, like Healthy Jobs RI and the Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership, relied on a strong central leadership team to guide partnership activity. Others cited the flexibility of their partners in adapting to changes in industry needs and partnership training as a key strength. Partnerships like the Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program also cited the use of existing training programs as a source of success. In addition, partnerships like MedTech Innovation Engine asserted that their industry culture and connections improved as a result of mentor/mentee relationships built between partners.

Use of Workforce Intermediaries

One key successful strategy that bears emphasis, but was not discussed during the interviews, is the importance of having workforce intermediaries lead the RJRI partnerships. Workforce intermediaries are defined as any organization, including labor unions, non-profits, and dedicated industry associations, that assists its chosen industry while considering the needs of both industry employers and employees.[36] Because of their connections to the entire sector, they are able to facilitate relationships across employers, know the needs of employers in the

[36] Department of Labor. *Workforce intermediaries: Strategic connections for youth with disabilities*. (n.d.) https://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/workforce.htm

industry, and have the capacity to serve employees in the industry. Also, because they specifically help the entire sector, they can lead partnerships without the concerns of competition, overworked staff, and establishing connections within and outside the industry that impact companies who seek to lead partnerships. As such, while some employer-led grants were successful, others found it challenging to develop a sector-based training program due to a lack of connections with other employers and so a key strategy for success identified among many partnerships was working with or being led by a workforce intermediary.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices for partnerships emerged:

Related to the type of organization the main applicant represents:

- Work with industry workforce intermediaries that know industry norms, industry needs, and have industry connections.
    - allows the partnership to be efficient and actually serve industry needs as well as utilize networks to encourage partner recruitment and the hiring of trainees
- Use the lead applicant as an intermediary between trainers and employers to ensure effective leadership, communication, and collaboration.
- With larger partnerships, have two main contacts to manage inquiries and partnership requests.

Related to partnership meetings and commitment:

- Utilize a facilitator to write grants, facilitate meetings, and assist in organization and decision-making if the lead applicant is not a workforce intermediary and has little prior experience or capacity to effectively take on these duties.
- Employ effective strategies for planning partnership meetings. Effective strategies include:
    - planning ahead for meetings
    - compensating partners for time spent in meetings
    - clearly articulating expected commitment for planning meetings
    - inviting partners to meetings only if their specific expertise is necessary
    - rotating meeting locations to ensure equal obligations for travel times for all partners
- Identify effective strategies for ensuring partner commitment and maintaining participation. Effective strategies include:
    - clearly communicating the level of commitment expected from each partner in every step of the planning and implementation process
    - having employers commit in writing to hiring trainees upon completion
    - Ensuring commitment from top leaders of the employer partners
- Convene an advisory board to help with curriculum development, training implementation, and new partnership identification.
- Include employers in the recruitment and potential trainee assessment process to ensure employee fit and increase level of support among employers.
- Ensure partners have a shared mission and create a culture of collaboration within the partnership to continuously motivate partnership participation.

Related to partnership formation:

- Identify specific partners to meet the needs of the target population and the industry. Effective strategies include:
    - identifying multiple employer partners to provide trainees many options based on their skills and interests (when partnerships have multiple options or tracks within their training programs)
    - continuing to identify new partners to help with program sustainability
    - being open to unlikely partners and targeting multiple industries for partners
    - identifying partners with extensive networks and an existing social media presence
- Identify effective education providers. Effective education providers feature:
    - instructors with industry knowledge and higher education experience
    - the ability to design and execute training programs in close collaboration with businesses looking to hire new workers
    - the ability to create training programs to meet the needs of different components of the sector
    - the capability to be flexible with the payment and reporting needs of the program
- Help to identify partners within the grant that can reciprocally benefit one another.

Related to encountering barriers:

- Work with all partners to identify solutions to unexpected barriers and adapt plans if necessary.
- Ensure that partners are willing and able to be flexible in case of partnership adaptation to meet changing industry needs.
- When it becomes evident that a partnership lacks capacity, prepare to intervene and adapt the program so that the partnership can reorganize, build capacity, and adopt a strategic vision.
- Develop a unifying and inspiring mission for the partnership.

Recommendations

The Real Jobs Rhode Island Program focused on creating "industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the State's workforce, grow the State's economy and increase sustainable employment for working families." Successful partnerships are essential to the success of the RJRI mission. The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure the success of RJRI partnerships.

- Ensure that workforce intermediaries are the lead grantee when possible.
- Help identify industry leaders to lead the partnership when the industry does not have an existing workforce intermediary.
- Encourage the use of an outside facilitator when one employer partner is the main applicant or encourage them to route the program through an intermediary.
- Help identify valuable additional partners that could benefit the partnership and benefit from being in the partnership, while also finding a mechanism for streamlining processes so that the partnership is not overwhelmed in managing partnership requests and inquiries.

- Include main applicants that do not provide training programs themselves (and instead refer to other existing trainings) as sub-contractors for multiple other grants to enable these partnerships to focus on providing employee support services and less time on administrative issues.
- Ensure that grantees have the organizational capacity and an adequate plan to fulfill all goals listed in proposals.
- Provide aid to struggling partnerships. Such aid could include:
    - encouraging partnerships to work with higher education partners to help legitimize training and jobs within the sector
    - convening employer partners to educate them about issues and brainstorm potential solutions
- Connect successful employer and training partners with workforce intermediaries to assist in the organization and leadership of the partnership.
- Help grantees understand how to build workforce intermediary development and stabilization into their grants.
- Provide resources to expand the partnership to more employer partners to help with training recruitment and sustainability.
- Provide support for partnerships that experience major staff turnover within their leadership and ensure that the program is supported by the institutions (and the sector).
- Provide support to help establish connections and relationships for partnerships that are expanding geographically.
- Provide a template accountability function for main applicants to ensure that partners uphold commitments.
- Identify mechanisms for working with higher education institutions to help partnerships avoid/overcome bureaucratic challenges.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between partnerships so that they do not offer training programs within the same sector.
- Maintain a focus on employer partner needs and the financial needs of employers and trainees.
- Encourage partnerships to hold regular meetings to help ensure follow-through while also balancing the "asks" of industry so that partners don't feel overburdened by the time commitment.
- Help partnerships come together so that they do not offer similar/competing training programs within the same sector.

Section 5: Sustainability

A key factor in creating a sector-based workforce development program is sustainability of programming. In this section, we examine how partnerships created plans for a sustainable sector partnership of workforce and economic development. Partnerships were asked to describe in the their grant proposals their plans to "work towards the sustainability of the Partnership in the absence of state funding."[37,38] This section addresses the plans partnerships made for the sustainability of their workforce development programs, an evaluation of each partnership's likelihood of sustainability, best practices used by the partnerships evaluated to have a high likelihood of sustainability without state funding, and recommendations for improving future partnerships' likelihood of sustainability.

Likelihood of Sustainability

Based on our review of the grant application, addenda, and interviews with the lead applicant of the grant, we assessed the likely sustainability of each program without state funding. Those evaluated as "Likely Sustainable" provided strong plans for sustainability without state funding, had a vibrant and functioning partnership, and expressed confidence in the sustainability of both their programs and their sector partnership. Those evaluated as "Possibly Sustainable" fit multiple descriptions. These partnerships reported that only a portion of their programs could be sustained without state funding, offered plans for sustainability that relied on the continuation of state funding for several years to build capacity, had an unstable relationship with their sector partners but had plans to either change or maintain this relationship, relied on substantial changes in the industry in order to be sustainable, or presented a plan for sustainability that did not indicate the same high level of confidence, preparation, or thoroughness as those presented by partnerships evaluated to be "Likely Sustainable." Those partnerships evaluated as "Unlikely Sustainable" also fit a myriad of descriptions. These partnerships explicitly stated they would either be unlikely or unwilling to continue offering programs without state funding, had broken or failing relationships with their sector partners, or expressed a lack of interest in continuing their partnership in future years.

Overall, 13 partnerships had a strong likelihood of continuing either immediately or in the near future without state aid. For example, the Phoenix Partnership planned to become the primary, independent funder of its programming and establish a provisional structure for management and funding of its partnership in the absence of state funding. The core of its plan for sustainability centered on creating a partnership in which each member had a strong commitment to the goals and services of the partnership and was willing to help the partnership itself become the primary backer of the partnership's programing. Likewise, the Marine Trades and Composites Partnership, led by the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association, used RJRI money as a new funding source to continue and expand previously existing training programs. If it can no longer utilize state funding, the partnership planned to rely on the Rhode Island Marine

[37] In the context of this evaluation, "state funding" refers to all state workforce development funds, including funds dispensed through the RJRI program and other state workforce development initiatives.
[38] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: *Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals*. July 31, 2015. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/ImpG/RJRIImpGrantSol0715.pdf

Trades Association and utilize the funding sources that originally supported the partnership's programs to fund similar but scaled down iterations of its current programs. As a result, the partnership is highly confident in the stability and future sustainability of its programs and partnership. These partnerships, which are just two examples of numerous grants, exemplify the criteria of grants likely to be sustainable.

Five partnerships had plans that suggested they could possibly become sustainable without state funding. For example, the Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program worked with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) to integrate its Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist training into CCRI's curriculum and planned to connect program participants to CCRI credits and an associate degree program during training. However, the partnership is unsure whether its industry will continue to support the Data Scientist Training and employ program graduates, and, as a result, is unsure whether its entire program will be sustainable in the future. The Man Up 2 Careers Partnership is another good example. This partnership planned to create a manufacturing social enterprise business that provides jobs for its target population while also funding the partnership's programs and services. However, the partnership needs several years to build the funds, capacity, and organization to establish this business, and will be reliant on state funding during that period. As a result, this partnership could be sustainable if state funding remains available for multiple years, but is unlikely to be sustainable if state funding is unavailable in the near future.

Eight partnerships appear unlikely to continue without state financing. These partnerships were split between those that could not continue without state funding and others that were unwilling to continue without state funding. A good example of the former is the Healthcare Training Collaborative. This partnership was led by St. Antoine Residence, a private eldercare facility. Although St. Antoine's will continue to provide CNA training for its own employees, it did not wish to continue to pursue a partnership that would work with the healthcare sector at this time. In contrast, the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, led by Electric Boat, noted that it was unlikely to continue offering training programs and services without state funding. The partnership is strong, the programs and services are in high demand and will likely last with state funding, but Electric Boat is hesitant to absorb the cost of the partnership's programs and services into its budget.

Table 5.1: Likelihood of Sustainability

Partnership	Likely Sustainable	Possibly Sustainable	Unlikely Sustainable
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership	√		
Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program		√	
Residential Construction Partnership			√
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program		√	
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative	√		
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership	√		
Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island	√		

Healthy Jobs RI Partnership	√		
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership		√	
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership			√
Healthcare Training Collaborative			√
MedTech Innovation Engine	√		
Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership			√
Insurance Innovation Partnership			√
Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative			√
Aquaculture Training Partnership	√		
Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership		√	
Building Futures Partnership	√		
Real Jobs IT Partnership	√		
CNA Talent Network Partnership		√	
Phoenix Partnership	√		
Partnership for Real IT Jobs			√
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women			√
Design Forward Partnership	√		
Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership	√		
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island	√		

Plans for Sustainability

While each partnership presented a distinct picture of its relative sustainability, several themes dominated the plans. These are models that other sectors could utilize to sustain their programming. Several partnerships also plan to employ multiple approaches to ensure sustainability.

Fee for Service

Eleven partnerships planned to begin offering programming under a fee-for-service model in which companies interested in the program pay to have the program offered to new or incumbent workers, or where individuals interested in entering the field pay for programming. For example, the Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island planned to provide access to its programs and services for a fee that is paid by either individual employees or employers, while the Construction Trades Skill Up Partnership had been approached by

employers to expand its services to the wider construction industry. Other partnerships, such as the RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative**,** planned to ask its industry companies to pay to continue to provide programming to serve the entire sector. The CNA Talent Network Partnership planned to charge employers for tailored services for each employer's training needs.

Utilization of Colleges and Universities

Four of the sustainability plans included sustainable training programs offered through local colleges and universities. These partnerships worked with higher education institutions to build or reform curricula to meet the industry's needs. Some partnerships, like the Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program and the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership, integrated their programs into existing curricula at colleges and universities. The training could, therefore, be offered without the oversight of the partnership and without state funding as long as there is a steady stream of students interested in the career path and the universities continue to offer the courses. Others, like Healthy Jobs RI, planned to offer their programs as independent certificate courses housed within existing departments at colleges and universities. Finally, some partnerships, like the Aquaculture Training Partnership, worked with colleges and universities to design portions of its programs that were run in collaboration with the institutions and could be supported with university funds.

Other Funding Sources

Under this model, partnerships planned to rely on alternative sources of grant funding to maintain their programs and services. Some of the partnerships that proposed this plan, like the Marine Trades and Composites Partnership**,** had offered its programs and services under different funding streams prior to applying for RJRI funding, and planned to revert back to these sources of funding if they could no longer access RJRI funds. Other partnerships, like Design Forward and Man Up, Inc.**,** identified other sources of potential funding for their programs such as local foundation funds or federal grants, designed their programs with the requirements of these other funding streams in mind, and planned to apply for funding from these sources when they could no longer access RJRI funding or when restrictions from one funding source needed to be overcome by another source. Several partnerships, including Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership and CNA Talent Network, planned to be sustainable through a combination of funds from government and philanthropic organizations such as Community Development Block Grants and the United Way.

Entrepreneurial Endeavors for Self-Sustainability

This model describes those partnerships that developed a unique method of ensuring their sustainability. These methods usually were designed to develop an entrepreneurial enterprise to fund the partnership's programs and services. For example, the Aquaculture Training Partnership planned to run an aquaculture farm that will function as a training facility for workers and provide funds for the training by selling products produced by the farm. The Man Up 2 Careers Partnership planned to create a manufacturing social enterprise business that provides jobs for its target population while also funding the partnership's programs and services. While only two partnerships currently have a plan that includes an entrepreneurial activity, it is a promising model that is particularly well-suited for sustainability and can be adopted by other sectors.

No Plan for Sustainability

Two partnerships, the Healthcare Training Collaborative and the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, presented no real plan for sustainability. The Healthcare Training Collaborative is not planning to continue its partnership, and the lead applicant plans to offer its training programs to its own employees only. The Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership similarly does not have a plan to be sustainable, since it is very hesitant about continuing to offer training without state funding.

Other

Some partnerships offered other plans for sustainability not captured by the above themes and, as a result, do not clearly offer models that can be adopted by other partnerships. For example, the Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program planned to offer new programming that does not require RJRI funding but maintains the partnership's relevance to its industry and provides a reason for partner companies to continue working with one another. Other partnerships, like MedTech Innovation Engine, planned to alter the composition of its partnership and program offerings in order to become sustainable.

Table 5.2: Plans for Sustainability

Partnership	Fee for Service	Utilization of Colleges and Universities	Other Funding Sources	Innovation/ Entrepreneurship	Other or N/A
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership		√	√		
Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program		√			
Residential Construction Partnership	√				
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program					√
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative	√				
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership			√		
Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island	√				
Healthy Jobs RI Partnership	√	√			
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership				√	
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership			√		√
Healthcare Training Collaborative					√

MedTech Innovation Engine					√
Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership			√		
Insurance Innovation Partnership	√		√		
Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative	√		√		
Aquaculture Training Partnership		√		√	
Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership	√				
Building Futures Partnership			√		
Real Jobs IT Partnership					√
CNA Talent Network Partnership			√		
Phoenix Partnership	√				√
Partnership for Real IT Jobs	√				
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women					√
Design Forward Partnership	√		√		
Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership			√		
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island	√		√		

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices emerged.

Sector partnerships can be more confident in their sustainability if they:

- Have extensive industry buy-in and engagement in the creation, design, and implementation of programs.
- Engage industry employers in regular sessions to provide feedback on the success and usefulness of the partnership and develop plans for revising programming based on industry feedback.
- Engage a workforce intermediary or trade organization in a leadership role.
- Design very flexible programming models.
- Design programming that is eligible for sponsorship from other funding sources.
- Design programming that addresses a concrete industry need rather than programming that addresses unstable industry demands or issues that the industry is not invested in.

Recommendations

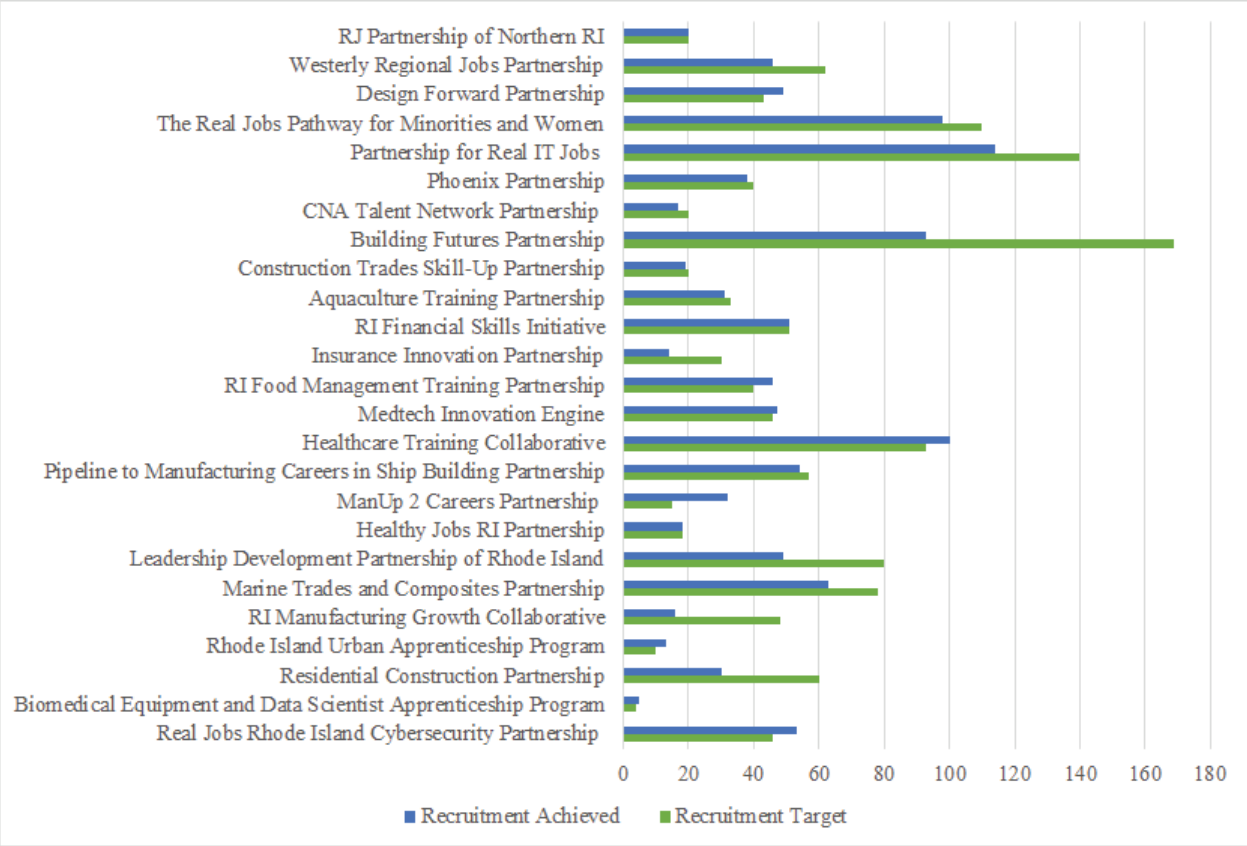
The Real Jobs Rhode Island Program piloted new approaches to workforce and economic development for the state that were intended to be sustainable if and when the program no longer had funding for workforce development. Partnerships encountered many challenges and successes while planning for and implementing sustainable programs. The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure the sustainability of future RJRI programming.

- Ensure programming is led by a workforce intermediary, and if a single employer is the lead applicant, identify a facilitator to help coordinate the partnership.
- Connect partnerships that are providing similar services so they can share ideas, work together, and avoid duplicating services in the same industry or geographic area.
- Where no sector-organization/workforce intermediary is available, continue to bring employers together to create a workforce intermediary that serves the entire sector.
- Strive to connect community organizations that work with un- and underemployed populations to partnerships that are experiencing difficulties recruiting for their programming. This will enable partnerships to identify potential employees for training as well as be able to better understand and overcome barriers that impede those populations.
- Connect partnerships with experienced, successful training providers that have served other partnerships well and can deliver programming needed by multiple sectors. This will potentially facilitate an alignment between training curricula and employer demand while increasing the likelihood of moving trainees from training to employment.
- Engage employers in a conversation or focus group about why some employers who appear to be benefiting from RJRI-sponsored programming seem uninterested in funding programming in the absence of state support.
- Facilitate discussions with partnerships about what motivates them to self-fund their programming and remain engaged in designing and reforming the sector's training programs.
- Encourage statewide discussions about why certain sectors are ambivalent about working to sustain and build sector economic growth and develop strategies to overcome this ambivalence.
- Ensure that out-of-state training providers have an established connection and familiarity with in-state employers.

Section 6: Recruitment and Outreach

In this section we examine the methods by which partnerships recruited participants for their programs. If RJRI and other economic development programs are successful and the national economy continues to improve, recruiting and outreach may become much more difficult. Overall, RJRI partners came very close to reaching their targets for recruitment in 2016. Partnerships set an overall goal of recruiting 1,333 workers into programming and 1,116 workers were successfully recruited into partnership programming. However, in the pilot year of RJRI, partnerships struggled with recruiting workers in a tight economy, as there were fewer people out of work. As a result, it is critical for sectors in need of workers to employ effective recruitment and training strategies and to think outside the box and rely on a range of strategies to identify and recruit potential workers for their industry. As we will discuss, it is particularly important that sectors create plans to recruit in communities and from populations with higher than average unemployment or underemployment, or who currently are employed in low wage, non-career jobs. In addition, sector partnerships will need to create effective "green housing" strategies to reach students still in school. This will also allow partnerships to reach and develop the next generation workforce before they become un- or underemployed. Many of the practices utilized by RJRI grantees can be adopted and employed in other industries that may face continued issues in hiring.

Figure 6.1: Recruitment Performance Metrics by Partnership



Recruitment Challenges

A number of RJRI grantees encountered considerable challenges in recruitment, outreach, and retention of participants. While many grantees had unique challenges, the following section discusses some of the most common challenges grantees encountered.

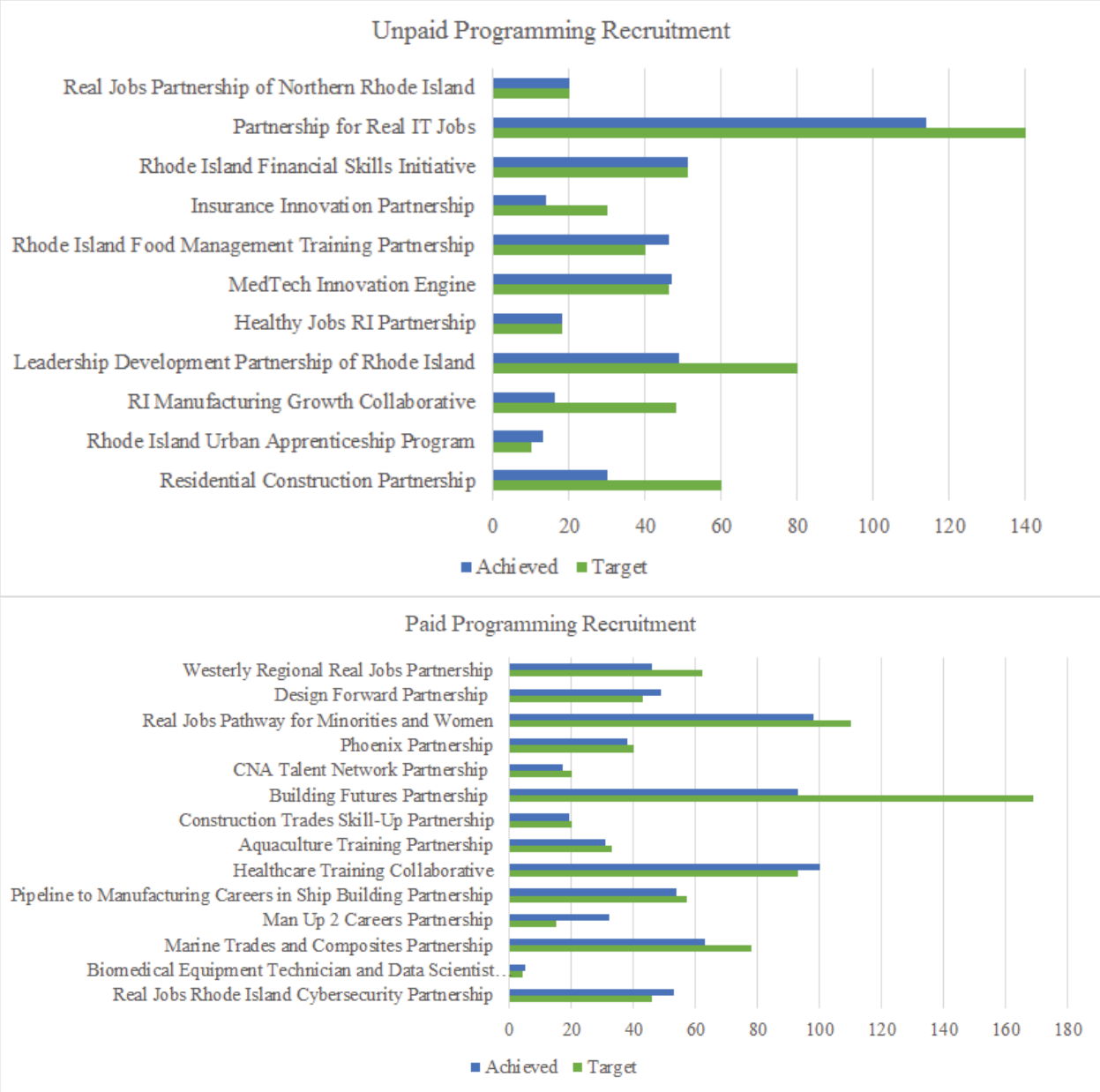
Trust and Understanding of Career-Pipeline Programs

Trust and a thorough understanding of the programs were crucial to the success of recruitment efforts. When either of these elements was lacking, partners and potential trainees became frustrated. The Real Jobs of Northern Rhode Island Partnership found that potential recruits often lacked understanding of careers and the career-pipeline process, which slowed recruitment. The Urban Apprenticeship Program, likewise, found that there was a lack of trust among participants that they would actually receive jobs after training. This was due to recruits not understanding how career-pipeline programs work. Some target communities also had little faith in government-run jobs programs, which decreased willingness to participate. Having "the face" of the program be an employer or community organization proved a good way to overcome barriers in trust and to educate potential recruits about how career pipeline training works.

Payment & Cost

Many people are hesitant to take on paying for a training program when there is no guarantee of a job at the end. Unlike a two- or four-year college degree, industry training programs do not always have the reputation for positive employment outcomes that make trainees feel it is worth it to invest scarce financial resources in a training program. As a result, several partnerships found that the cost of tuition was a barrier to recruitment. For example, the Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership attempted to offer financial incentives and keep tuition costs low. However, even with the reduced rate, recruits still were discouraged by the cost of the program. Programs that were not only free but also paid for participants' time were more likely to achieve better recruitment results. Across all the grants, paid programs achieved 88.3 percent of the total combined recruitment goals (recruiting a total of 698 workers into programming), compared with unpaid programs, which achieved 77 percent of their total combined recruitment goal (recruiting a total of 418 workers into programming).

Figure 6.2: Recruitment in Partnership Programming



Finding the Right Place and Time, for Recruitment

The logistics of finding the right place for recruitment was a very common challenge among many of the partnerships. Some partnerships relied heavily on the DLT's One Stop Career Centers for recruits, but with fewer people being laid off and more people working, in many instances this did not produce the number of recruits they had envisioned. In other cases, partnerships wish they had been able to utilize the One Stop Centers more than they did. Timing of recruitment activities also proved to be an important factor that was challenging for some grantees. For example, the Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program

had planned initially to recruit soon-to-be graduates from a partner organization program but found that many of the potential recruits already had jobs lined up for after graduation by the time they began recruitment activities. As a result, the partnership needed to adjust their recruitment timeline.

Veteran Recruitment

At least two partnerships encountered obstacles when recruiting veterans, their intended target population. Veterans were found to be a difficult-to-reach population, as many did not attend advertised veteran-specific events. Veterans often had family and part-time job responsibilities, so scheduling was challenging. The Aquaculture Training Partnership, in addition, realized that it needed to receive approval from the Department of Veterans Affairs to become a listed recognized trainer. This was important to ensure that the veterans received access to certain VA benefits. This is an important consideration for future grantees wishing to recruit veterans.

Incumbent Worker Recruitment

Incumbent worker programs faced unique challenges due to the scheduling constraints of incumbent workers and their employers. A number of incumbent worker programs encountered obstacles to recruiting due to the workload of currently employed individuals. Individuals working full time with family or other commitments outside of work often were reluctant or unable to add more hours to their already busy schedules. Other incumbent worker programs needed employers to allow workers to take time off during normal work hours, which would lead incumbent workers to potentially lose wages during participation or have to make up work at other times. All around, these issues prevented many incumbent workers from taking part in programming. Particularly when there was not a guarantee of an increased wage or other meaningful benefit on the other side, convincing employed individuals to invest in additional training was challenging.

Furthermore, incumbent worker programs found it difficult to convince incumbent workers of the mismatch between industry needs and their current skills. Particularly for individuals in successful careers, being told they lack skills and are in need of supplemental training was not welcomed by potential participants.

For incumbent worker training programs, the best recruitment comes through employers that can refer workers for additional training so that they can move up a career ladder. However, several partnerships found that employers in the sector did not fully understand or embrace the training and as a result were not effective recruiters.

Several programs faced a lack of interest among incumbent workers in moving “up the ladder” within a sector. DLT should consider evaluating the extent to which there are incentives for workers to actually increase their training and take a higher status job before funding future incumbent worker training programs. In many workplaces in the current economy, moving from a one position to the next position up the line (for example, floor worker to manager) comes with only a minor increase in pay. To the extent to which workers have to complete extensive training and take on many new responsibilities, minor pay increases may not be sufficient to motivate workers to pursue these paths. It would be helpful to have grant applicants be clearer about the financial benefits for workers who gain training and receive promotions both for DLTs consideration of the likelihood of success of the program but also so the grantee can make that information clear in recruitment.

Successful Recruitment Strategies

Twelve out of twenty six partnerships met or exceeded their recruitment goals. Partnerships pointed to specific practices that they saw as essential to their success.

Social Media and "Free" Media

Good advertising practices were essential to recruiting interested qualified candidates. Many grantees made use of social media, which allowed them to attract recruits at little cost and reach people who might be particularly interested in the training because they were visiting sites that were linked with interests in the field.

One partnership used a jobs website for recruitment and, while it was not a successful strategy to use the website for recruitment alone, pairing it along with a social media strategy may have improved its utility as a recruitment tool.

Particularly beneficial to some grantees was the use of news coverage of the industry or program to spread the word about the program. The DLT and the administration were helpful in these endeavors by holding press conferences and other events that would raise awareness through the media about the availability of programming. For example, Electric Boat, which ran the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, received widespread media attention after it signed a new defense contract and the administration and the company issued press releases and conferences to announce the news.

Career Days, Trade Shows, and Industry Networking Events

A number of grantees made use of specific events in order to recruit participants and were very successful. Partnerships targeting youth for "greenhousing" initiatives found Career Days held at schools and regional Career Readiness Fairs to be a useful mechanism for identifying youth interested in programming. Some partnerships, for example, the Residential Construction Partnership, used trade shows to demonstrate projects and recruit qualified and interested candidates who had an interest in the type of work offered by the partnership. Some also utilized industry networking events where people with interest in the field would gather for either social or technical reasons. For example, the Partnership for Real IT Jobs maintained a presence at industry networking events where people got together to code. Utilizing these events where people with a personal interest in the subject gathered proved to be very useful for identifying "good fit" recruits.

Connections with Educational Entities and Employer Partners

Many partnerships were able to leverage their relationships with community organizations and educational partners to recruit participants. The RJRI Cybersecurity Partnership was one such example. It hired a dedicated education outreach coordinator to connect with liaisons at colleges and universities. The partnership was able to work closely with educational institutions to establish a pipeline of potential recruits who could be guided towards the program. Several different partnerships were aided in their recruitment efforts by career and technical high schools. The Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, for example, was able to utilize career and technical institutes in forming an outreach campaign to students. This helped them with recruiting at little cost.

Employers served as great recruiters for several partnerships, particularly incumbent worker training programs. For example, the Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership was able to engage and recruit from a large variety of employer partners from different sectors. As a result of its activities, RIFMTP exceeded its initial recruitment goal.

Working with an Established Community Organization with Ties to the Community

Partnerships that were specifically aimed at recruiting new or more diverse populations than traditionally filled the field found that engagement with a community organization that was well established in serving the target populations helped build trust and aid recruitment within the target communities. A particularly good example of a successful partnership for expanding recruitment to a new, diverse population was the Urban Apprenticeship Program's alliance with Progreso Latino, which enabled the partnership to reach a target population that they had not reached before.

Other Recruitment Strategies

Utilizing diverse recruitment methods proved important. Several other factors were found to be contributors to successful recruitment. Simple word of mouth and cultivating a positive reputation aided a number of grantees in recruitment efforts. The Manufacturing Bootcamp found that by creating high quality training and producing high quality graduates, it could attract additional partners who proved valuable for program recruitment and expansion.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices for recruitment and outreach emerged.

- Incorporate or develop a standardized assessment to screen potential recruits for interest and fit in the program.
- Hire a recruitment coordinator to execute recruitment and outreach activities.
- Partner with a variety of community organizations with ties to the target community and consider partnering with innovative or outside the box groups that might have access to a hard-to-reach target population.
- Create a clear and effective "sales statement" about the program to communicate why people should participate in it.
- Attend multiple and varied events throughout the community.
- Hold consistent regular meetings to keep community partners and employers engaged in recruitment and outreach efforts.
- Advertise in a way that challenges pre-existing conceptions of the industry.
- When employing "greenhousing" strategies at universities and high schools, connect training modules to courses offered through the normal curriculum or major.
- Engage all partners in a discussion to identify the best times and locations for recruitment activities.

Specifically for incumbent worker trainings:

- Continually expand the number of employers involved to increase and continue recruitment.

- Focus on discussing training programs as "strengths based" training needs instead of focusing on the skill deficits of workers.
- Engage employers to make sure they see the program as beneficial and understand their role in referring workers.
- Identify or create networking events for the industry so that current employees can congregate and receive information about the training program.

Recommendations

The Real Jobs Rhode Island Program focused on creating “industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the State’s workforce, grow the State’s economy and increase sustainable employment for working families.” Successful recruitment and outreach is essential to the success of the RJRI mission. The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure success in recruitment and outreach of RJRI programming.

- Before approving a plan to recruit from a specific target group, make sure the grantee has taken the necessary steps to ensure success. Including a community organization with well-established connections to the target community (whether veterans or communities of color) is a good way to ensure that the recruitment will be successful both in terms of the formal steps that need to be taken to recruit that population and to ensure trust with the population.
- Require grant applications to include a section on how the grantee plans to recruit, what obstacles they expect to encounter, and how they plan to succeed in light of these obstacles.
- Encourage grantees to utilize "outside the box" strategies for recruitment of underemployed individuals, such as recruiting from places of recreation that may indicate an interest in the field.
- To the extent possible, facilitate partnerships in creating a standardized assessment to screen potential recruits for interest and fit in the program.
- Encourage more grantees to implement a “greenhousing” strategy to reach soon-to-be-graduates instead of relying exclusively on unemployed workers.
- Help partnerships identify community partners that may be able to help with the recruitment of the target population.
- Require grant applicants to specify the financial benefits of incumbent worker trainings to employees.

Section 7: Programming

In this section, we examine the methods by which grantees executed and implemented their programs under RJRI. Efficient and constructive implementation is essential to building budding sectors and sustaining and growing established ones. Many grantees used a holistic, multidimensional method of implementation, encompassing several different aspects of the industry and different target populations to grow or stabilize their workforce pipeline. We also examine the challenges and successful strategies for effectively implementing the partnerships' proposed content. Overall, RJRI partners successfully trained 920 participants. Of those successfully recruited into training, 81.2 percent completed training. One of the key aspects of RJRI that helped to increase the rate of success was that partnerships could amend their trainings through an ongoing improvement process. This flexibility was a large benefit to the partnerships and allowed them to learn from challenges and adopt effective practices to overcome them. Partnerships reported many positive outcomes from their programs, most notably that employer partners valued the programs and benefited from them and that many training programs led to employment and advancement opportunities for participants.

New Worker Programs

Training Types & Methods

New worker programs are essential for reducing unemployment and filling gaps in the workforce. Grantees implemented a total of 21 new worker programs. Such programs often must account for both specialized and basic skills. Program length generally fell into three categories: single or half day, multi-day, and multi-week programs. The majority were several (2-5) day programs or multi-week programs. Two were semester-long programs held at local higher education institutions.

More than half of all new worker programs implemented some form of testing or evaluation for potential candidates. The most common evaluations were basic language, reading, and math. A number of programs provided remedial education to those participants whose skills needed improving or incorporated it into training. One program executed an orientation session to teach potential candidates about the sector.

Two partnerships utilized "bootcamp" models of training new workers. Bootcamps involved accelerated training and building skills from the ground up, beginning with the basics.

Mentorship was incorporated into several new worker training programs. Mentors were experienced personnel who provided training and counseling to new employees or students. The Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program extensively and successfully utilized mentoring to train new workers. In contrast, the Healthy Jobs RI Program found it difficult to implement a mentorship program due to issues with identifying a reimbursement mechanism and concerns about responsibilities and roles between the mentors and mentees.

Eight programs—four each—utilized either an apprenticeship or internship model for new employees. Apprenticeships comprised several methods of learning and instruction, including traditional instruction and on-the-job training.[39] Internships also were meant to provide participants with experience and knowledge about sectors or careers. For example, the Pipeline

[39] For more information on apprenticeships, see United States Department of Labor. *Apprenticeship*. June 16, 2017. https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/training/apprenticeship.

to Manufacturing Careers in Shipbuilding Partnership worked to create an internship-to-employee pipeline. The partners hoped that their internship program would increase exposure of their industry to high school students and subsequently increase the number of people entering that industry.

At least four new worker programs incorporated other types of on-the-job training. On-the-job training allows for participants to train and learn as they perform the job. This type of training also can include elements of mentoring or classroom instruction, as was the case with the Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program. As well, it can provide hands-on experience that is gained through limited exposure to employers. For example, the RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative matched and placed participants with employer partners after participants completed the training modules. Participants performed various hands-on training exercises and took part in factory tours and other real-life work experiences. Participants received monthly coaching to ensure that they were meeting employer needs and expectations. This portion of the program allowed employers to familiarize themselves with participants before full employment.

Only two partnerships utilized online trainings, though many discussed adding online components in the future. Many grantees developed a la carte models of training. This allowed employers to choose or specify the training needed specifically for their workplace; it also allowed the partnerships to execute only what was needed and cut out unnecessary elements, which decreased the amount of time recruits would spend in training programs the employer did not require.

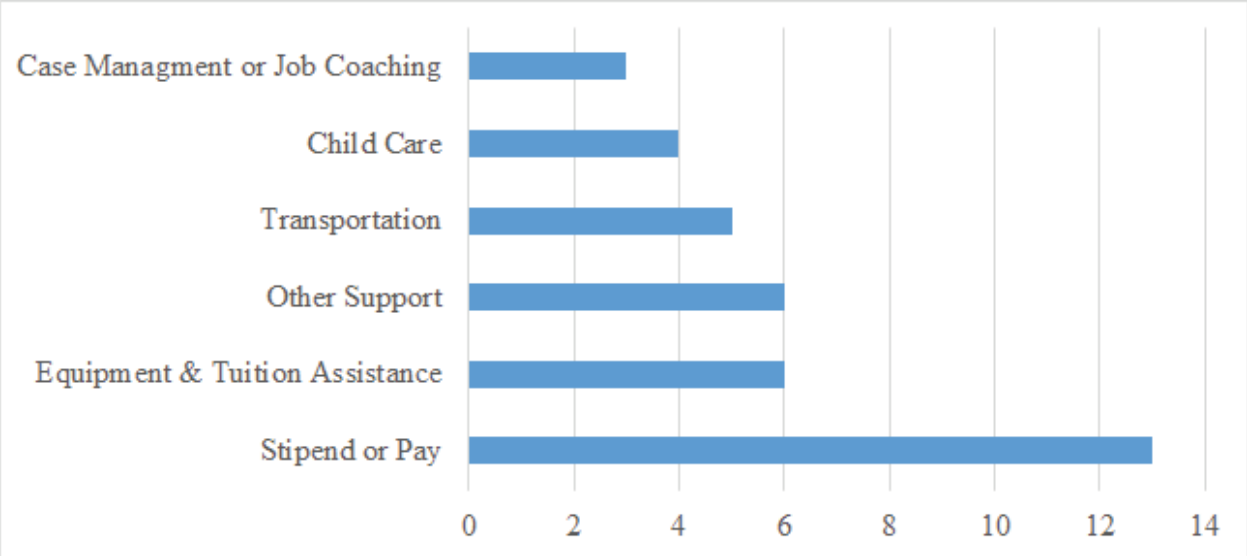
Many grantees conducted "greenhousing" efforts, which tried to increase exposure to the field among youth still in school. This approach is a way to develop a long-term pipeline of workers. Five grantees implemented some form of training or pipeline development that focused on youth. Youth populations included traditional and career and technical (CTE) high school students. For example, the Design Forward Partnership held a six-week-long program for 14-18-year-old students to increase their exposure to the design sector and improve their design skills, whereas the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership worked with the Rhode Island Department of Education to expand training opportunities at CTE schools to introduce Rhode Island's youth to the opportunities related to shipbuilding and the manufacturing trades. This meant bringing its education partners together to develop and deliver a curriculum modeled on the National Marine Education Council's national marine curriculum to high school students.

Facilitating Training Participation and Completion for New Workers

Many new worker programs attempted to provide additional supports for participants of their programs. The most common support method was providing a stipend or pay to trainees. The CNA Talent Network Partnership, for example, provided a stipend of $375.00 to participants who successfully completed the 30-hour internship, whereas Electric Boat, the lead employer in the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, hired 75 percent of trainees before the start of training. This ensured that the majority of program participants received training-related employment after training completion and were able to afford to and were motivated to complete the training. Decreasing or eliminating program costs, including paying for some or all of the cost of training materials, training courses, and license and test fees, also was common. Transportation was an issue for many program participants, so a number of grants arranged carpools or bus passes and helped participants identify reliable forms of transportation.

Several grants implemented a similar tactic when dealing with the issue of childcare. They worked with participants to identify childcare services or resources to assist with this problem. For example, the Healthy Jobs RI program provided on-site child care services for program participants. A few grantees provided assistance with job placement when programs did not result directly in employment.

Figure 7.1: Services Provided for New Worker Trainings



Incumbent Worker Programs

Training Types & Methods

Fifteen partnerships provided training for incumbent workers. Multi-week programs were most popular, followed by short term, then multi-day programs. In most cases, employers referred incumbent workers. Pre-assessment of program recruits was performed primarily by employer supervisors to these training programs, but this was not true in all cases. In some instances, an intermediary offered programming and all incumbent workers in a sector without employer referral were welcome. For example, the MedTech Innovation Engine organized bi-monthly networking events to convene and recruit health and wellness entrepreneurs and businesses from all industries.

Many incumbent worker programs included a mentorship component that drew on senior members of the industry. The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island was able to use participants' incumbent worker status to their advantage when recruiting for its mentorship program. Supervisors and human resource officers in partner companies were responsible for selecting mentor program participants. Supervisors, therefore, were able to select the best fit for potential participation.

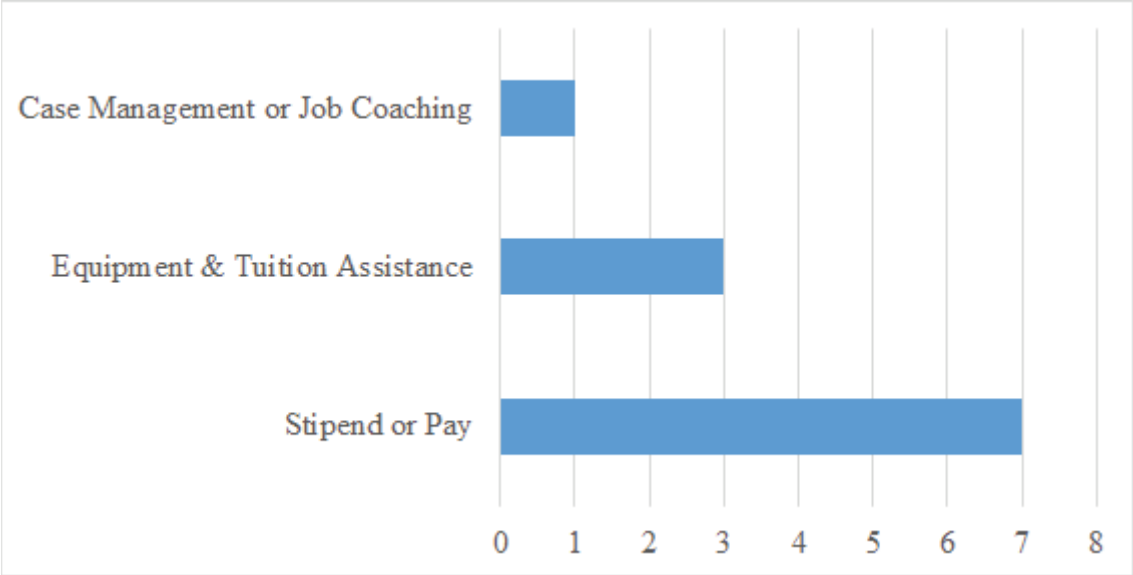
A la carte models and other forms of education for incumbent workers were utilized by six partnerships. The a la carte model in the case of the Food Management Training Collaborative allowed employers to request individual ManageFirst topics or other training programs that were most needed to benefit their business and employees.

Facilitating Training Participation and Completion for Incumbent Workers

Fewer supports were included to facilitate participation by incumbent workers. Some programs provided equipment and tuition assistance. Reimbursement of training costs was utilized by at least three incumbent programs. One example is the model utilized by the Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership (CTSUP), which charged a tuition fee of $750 for participation but organized incentives to make the training program accessible to those who could not afford tuition. Working with partner organizations, CTSUP offered conditional, partial tuition reimbursements to participants contingent on the participant's regular participation and completion of training milestones.

Case management was offered by the Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership to assist participants who struggled in training programs. Participants received help identifying and developing solutions to their challenges.

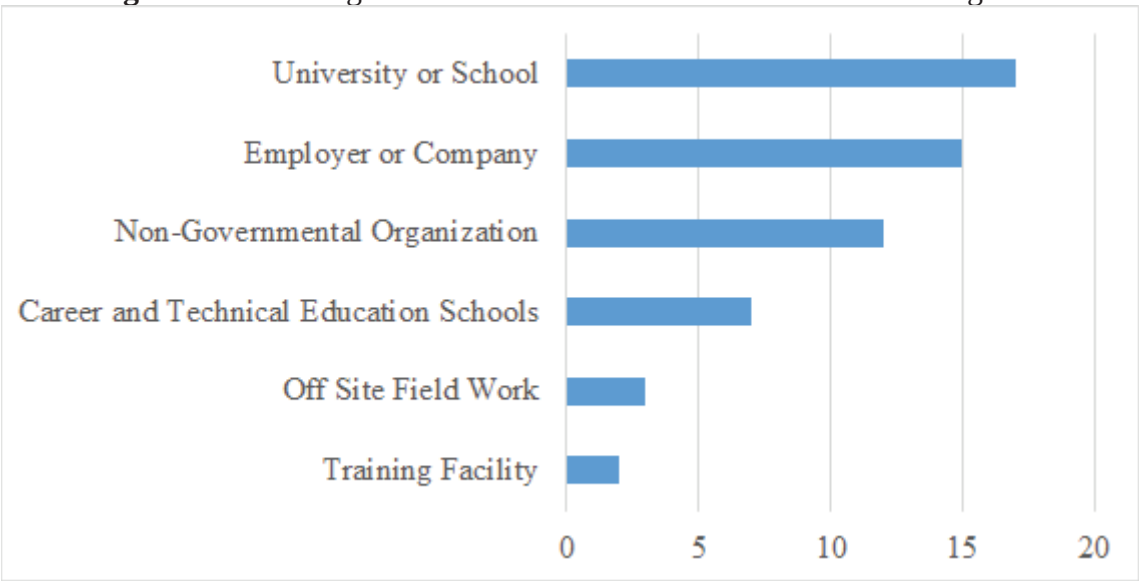
Figure 7.2: Supports for Incumbent Worker Trainings



Locations

Partnerships used a variety of locations to hold trainings or other activities. The most common locations for new and incumbent worker programs were local colleges, universities, and public schools. URI and CCRI were the most commonly utilized institutions of higher learning, although almost all of the universities and colleges in the state participated in at least one program. Career and technical education schools were involved in five partnerships. The second most common location was employers/businesses, often for on-the-job or in-house training. Two programs employed field work, in which trainees would gain training or experience through off-site participation that was neither an employer nor a school. For example, the Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program had participants help out/volunteer at one of the free clinics. Participants gained experience and the clinic received needed help. One program, the Building Futures Partnership, made use of a local union training facility.

Figure 7.3: Training Locations for New and Incumbent Worker Programs



Sector Development Programs

Infrastructure

At least 11 grantees took steps to implement or develop sector-building programs. Several partnerships worked towards developing beneficial infrastructure for their sector. Two programs created websites, which included online resource databases or job banks. Two developed new educational infrastructure. This included, in the case of Healthy Jobs RI, developing a new accredited program at Rhode Island College and, in the case of the Medtech Innovation Engine, creating an expert council to gather and disseminate knowledge. Additionally, the Medtech Innovation Engine worked to identify and implement appropriate technology and tools for ecosystem participants to track participants and measure the impact of the program.

Counseling Services

Two partnerships developed new counseling and advising programs for their industry. The Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership created a Contract Support Center to help its graduates execute and grow their businesses, along with assisting graduates in navigating standard business practices. The Medtech Innovation Engine developed an early stage feasibility check program to help entrepreneurs evaluate the feasibility of their business ideas and comply with regulations.

Building Intermediary Capacity and New Member Recruitment

Several grantees continued to recruit new members or partners and build intermediary capacity into their implementation program. Recruitment of new members is essential for partnerships that wish to expand their services. For example, the Partnership for Real IT Jobs made use of a “Company Relations Manager” as part of its program to work with and recruit

new employer partners. Several partnerships worked to develop the capacity to act as liaisons or intermediaries for other organizations and services.

Expansion, Improvement, and Administrative

A number of grantees outlined concrete steps to expand and improve their services. Two partnerships planned to conduct surveys to track progress and receive and respond to feedback. One sector intermediary needed to be fully supported and stabilized in order to provide training opportunities and pipeline development for a critical sector of the economy. This partnership hired a new executive director and revamped its executive board. The organization then hired a full-time director of development to create new programs that would serve the needs of the industry, all with the financial support of the DLT while the partnership underwent necessary restructuring.

Programming Challenges and Successful Strategies

Program Content

Though many successes occurred, partnerships commonly experienced challenges while implementing new programs. In many cases, given the flexibility of RJRI, partnerships were able to modify their programming in response, but some challenges were more difficult to overcome. Three programs encountered program participants who unexpectedly lacked essential or critical skills. For example, the Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program learned that many of its pre-apprenticeship participants did not have experience managing personal finances, which the partnership saw as preventing their effective transition to the workforce. Therefore, the partnership built in a personal finance literacy training program as part of the pre-apprenticeship training. Other partnerships, such as the Aquaculture Training Partnership, found that certain certification tests required reading or math skills that participants lacked, so the partnership adjusted its programs to incorporate such skills into the training.

Three partnerships found that it was necessary to reorder their program content to address the needs of their trainees. For example, the CNA Talent Network learned that providing "essential skills" training at the beginning, rather than throughout the training, was more beneficial for the trainees, as many of the skills learned (such as the importance of being on time) were also skills needed to complete the training. Likewise, the Cybersecurity Partnership designed its training program on the basis of skills that were required for Department of Defense (DOD) employment, but after learning that DOD had changed its skill requirements, the partnership was able to work with the grant adviser to modify its training program quickly on the basis of this new information.

Finding the right training length and underestimating the effectiveness of training also proved problematic. Partnerships wanted trainees to be well prepared and trained, but it often took more time than anticipated to achieve the desired level of proficiency. For example, the Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program underestimated the amount of one-on-one mentorship that would be required for trainees and found the mentorship aspect to be the most beneficial. As a result, the partnership adjusted its programming to add more mentors and a process where each apprentice rotated through different mentors, depending on which skills they were building.

One of the goals of RJRI was to allow sectors to adjust quickly to rapidly changing needs of the industry. However, several partnerships noted that even with DLT support, it was challenging to adapt at the pace at which the industry was changing. For example, the Medtech Innovation Engine found that the changing trends within the medical technology and healthcare industries made it difficult to stay abreast of the latest industry developments, which in turn made it challenging to provide technical assistance for entrepreneurs and businesses working to develop new products and services.

Bureaucratic hurdles also presented a challenge to adopting new training protocols through institutions of higher education. Several partners found that working with colleges and universities was a challenge and that it was difficult to get recruits into higher education programs with eligibility criteria and to compensate trainees due to institutional rules. Further, attempts to adapt curricula to overcome these challenges could not occur in time for them to be used. Some grantees also found that the training curriculums provided by their education partners were inadequate. This was the case, for example, with the Design Forward Partnership, which struggled to work with an education partner to deliver a business education module.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs faced several specific challenges with regard to implementation. Finding qualified and willing mentors was a difficult task. This issue was exacerbated as the number of program recruits, and therefore mentors needed, increased. Compensation and oversight of mentors also were problematic. In one case, a partnership discovered that employers did not have mechanisms in place to provide compensation or the needed supervision of mentors, which made the program difficult to oversee.

Participation, Attendance, and Completion

Many grants faced challenges with trainee participation, attendance, and completion, though the cause of the issues often varied. Participants sometimes found the training sessions financially burdensome, leading to attendance issues. Personal issues that could not be overcome resulted in recruits dropping out. We discuss these issues in more depth in the trainee barriers section of the evaluation.

One challenge that sectors have not figured out how to overcome is how to recruit for highly technical fields, such as the insurance industry. Some grantees found that program participants were intimidated by the scope and depth of the training material and left the program or did not enroll because they did not feel confident in their ability to learn it. As many professions in the United States have become more technical and complicated, it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine how to assess potential recruits for their ability and then ease them into training, so that those who do possess the potential to succeed do not leave because they feel overwhelmed by the material.

Successful completion of training programs also posed challenges for some partnerships. The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island found it difficult to ensure program completion due to a lack of buy-in/oversight from employer supervisors for on-the-job training programs. For some partnerships, this was due, in part, to the disruption that is caused on production lines when incumbent workers leave for training. Another program was forced to eliminate a planned training component when it could not reach agreement with employer partners on compensation issues.

One practice that many of the partnerships found useful in improving attendance and completion was compensating trainees and/or paying for training-related expenses. These monetary incentives generally consisted of stipends or payments to participants or payment of training-related expenses, such as assessments, tuition, fees, and uniforms. New worker trainees sometimes were paid during the internship component of the training (e.g., the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership), or the training offered a paid pre-apprenticeship program (e.g., the Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program and the Marine and Composites Partnership). Some partnerships, such as the Aquaculture Training Partnership, provided a stipend to participants while in the training, while others, including the Building Futures Partnership, paid for travel and provided a daily allowance. For the CNA Talent Network, the partnership paid for assessments, tuition, and fees for training participants who otherwise would not have been able to take part or complete the training.

For incumbent trainings, one partnership, the Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative, paid for training costs and offered the training during work hours so that employees could continue to be paid through their employer while at the training, while another, the Phoenix Partnership, paid for incumbent workers to attend the training to ensure that the employees would receive their full compensation. Some partnerships made compensation dependent on the completion of their program, while others provided compensation throughout the duration of the training. Overall, these various methods of providing payments to training participants contributed to higher daily attendance and overall training completion rates. However, some partnerships were not able to provide monetary rewards. The Medtech Innovation Engine, for example, instead provided free use of its workspace and other resources for training participants.

Scheduling

Scheduling trainings at a time that worked for participants was a frequent obstacle for many partnerships. Some of this was due to issues like available child care, as discussed in the trainee challenges section, but many other issues also presented challenges to scheduling. Training programs had to both ensure that participants were adequately trained and do it in a timely manner. Some of the programs, as a result, required a more rigid schedule than often was necessary. Such rigid schedules presented problems for participants who had to miss even a single class. These participants fell behind and sometimes were unable to make-up these classes, leading them to drop out. A rigid schedule also limited on-demand enrollment. Potential recruits often would have to wait until the next training session began, which sometimes was up to several months away. Other partnerships underestimated the time required to complete programs and had failed to schedule enough time to complete all the components. Timing the completion of trainings also was an important factor for some industries. If trainees graduated in a slow season for the industry, participants did not acquire a job for many months, or by the time the industry was ready to hire, participants had already found work in other industries.

Programs that had youth components found that the school year schedule could impact the success of the program and that it was important to consider that when planning. The Residential Construction Partnership realized that its program worked best when it started at the beginning of the school year rather than in the middle. The Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership also had issues with scheduling. Its original Biz Camp for high school students was planned for the two school breaks (February and Spring); however, students either were not interested in committing during these breaks or had other responsibilities. As a result, only one Biz Camp program was held. However, in the next round, Westerly Regional adapted by

working with schools to offer its program during the school day. This partnership found that it could hold in-school Biz Camp sessions during the student advisory period. To date, this has been more successful, and enrollment numbers increased significantly after this iteration.

Scheduling challenges also affected incumbent programs. It was important for grantees to ensure that employer partners could handle reduced staff and accommodate their workers while they trained. The Phoenix Partnership had to delay the start of its training to accommodate its employer partners. Additionally, the Phoenix Partnership found it difficult to navigate the varied scheduling policies implemented by its employer partners. For example, some had employees work before training while others did not, and scheduling for lunch breaks also varied across employers. Again, however, the flexibility of programming under RJRI allowed several grants to adjust their programs to meet the scheduling needs of incumbent workers after learning of constraints.

Training Program Logistics & Administration

Finding the ideal training provider was a problem for two grantees. One, the Healthcare Training Collaborative, had difficulty finding experienced training providers, since it was working in an unfamiliar geographic location far from its previous provider.

Two partnerships found that the training facilities they were utilizing did not adequately meet their needs. The Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership utilized CTE schools to deliver the curriculum but found that they lacked the infrastructure and equipment necessary to achieve this task. The Healthcare Training Collaborative discovered that the location chosen to provide an in-depth clinical experience for the trainees did not have the right type of environment to do so. The partnership later resorted to its old location, but this caused transportation issues for some of the participants.

Tracking participants' training progress and program completion for administrative needs created a barrier for the Real Jobs of Northern Rhode Island Partnership. This partnership utilized a competency-based training model. It found that this model worked better for trainees and was more cost effective overall, but this made it difficult to track participants, as the administrative systems in place were designed to track a more traditionally scheduled time-based training model. However, the RJRI program was flexible and encouraged the partnership to continue its work.

While the flexibility of the program allowed many partnerships to succeed after adjusting their programs, there were also several successes worth noting that were best practices from the start. Many programs met or exceeded their initial goals. For example, the Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program had 219 people complete its initial application process. From this pool, the partnership was able to recruit the best candidates for its Pre-Apprenticeship training. In the end, several partnerships overshot their original training goal. Many grantees were similarly able to achieve high levels of completion and participation in their programs.

Other partnerships found that piloting their training prior to full implementation proved beneficial. The Healthy Jobs RI Partnership piloted its behavioral health training prior to rolling it out more broadly; this strategy allowed it to make modifications to the curriculum and the training plan.

Practicality and Value

Many partnerships noted that the training they designed and implemented was meeting the needs of their sector and appreciated by employer partners. For example, the Real Jobs

Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership felt it was able to provide valuable real-world experiences to its interns by having them market their ideas to business partners, and the Healthy Jobs Rhode Island Partnership felt that the training content and infrastructure it developed was valuable and would have continued usefulness for the healthcare sector.

Some partnerships were able to tailor their training toward specific industry needs that would depend on the particular employer, and therefore were able to help many different employer needs within the sector. The Food Management Training Collaborative exemplified the ability to adapt its training to industry and employer needs. Its "a la carte" training model allowed employers to flexibly send incumbent workers to individual trainings based on the specific skills needed for advancement at their workplace. It also was able to hold some trainings as webinars, further increasing the flexibility of the model.

Creation of new programs, curriculums, and infrastructure by grantees led to advances in several industries. The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island received feedback from its sector partners that the manufacturing industry was advanced as a whole because of the implementation and creation of its customized leadership training curriculum. The MedTech Innovation Engine was able to implement a program that engaged regional entrepreneurs and produced a pipeline of entrepreneurs to industry partners. Formerly, no such program existed to fulfill this need in the medical technology sector.

Preparation

Training and sector building programs can help facilitate training completion by struggling trainees. Some programs were able to develop methods to further increase the success of their participants. For example, one way programs did this was by encouraging students to form study groups. The CNA Talent Network created a culture of support and encouragement among students, which helped the participants succeed in the program.

Proper screening methods to identify the best recruits and those most likely to succeed were extremely helpful to several partnerships, and most programs implemented some form of screening. Internships and training programs encouraged transition into employment and allowed participants to hone their skills before advancing to employment interviews.

Several programs helped to created and facilitate certification programs. These certifications allowed participants to be recognized for their training as well as to increase their hireability. The Healthy Jobs Rhode Island Partnership, for example, helped to establish a Community Health Worker certification for the state.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices for program implementation emerged:

- Provide opportunities for the application of training skills in workplace settings through on-the-job training programs and opportunities.
- Focus on depth of training over the number of trainees.
    - Hire training instructors with industry and educational experience.
- Create a culture whereby training participants support one another.
- Include essential skills/soft skills training as part of the first module of the training program.

- Conduct trainings in-house to avoid the additional administrative steps required at a higher education institution when a full degree is not required.
- Provide compensation for training participants and workplace incentives for mentors.
- Utilize employer partners to design and implement the training curriculum.
- Develop training curricula that can be tailored to employer needs on an "a la carte" basis.
- Build in training components of basic academics as needed (such as ESL, math, soft skills, tutoring).
- Pilot training programs before full implementation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of programming.
- Adjust programming to overcome challenges on an ongoing basis.
- Solicit feedback from training graduates to continuously update and improve training programs.
- Conduct post-evaluations with supervisors to see if the training had the desired impact.
- Assess the order in which modules are offered and re-order training curricula to better align with trainee needs and their application when relevant.

Recommendations

Successful program implementation is essential to the success of Real Jobs Rhode Island's mission to create sustainable jobs and develop local industries. The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure the success of future training programs under RJRI.

- Continue to allow flexibility so that grantees can adapt as they go to overcome challenges, or, if grantees discover that part of their funded proposal is no longer needed, funding can be shifted to other training needs.
- Encourage partnerships to hold training programs aligned with the time of year the sector does most of its hiring for sectors with seasonal fluctuations.
- Encourage the use of online instruction where possible and encourage partnerships to add online components for modules or classes that participants could not attend in person or to help make up missed content.
- Continue to allow partnerships to provide training stipends or incentives to those in training programs (new workers and incumbent workers).
- Work with employers to have a plan in place to avoid disruptions to production when incumbent workers are attending training sessions.
- For incumbent trainings, encourage or require partnerships to conduct post-training evaluations related to workplace productivity.
- Suggest that partnerships hold incumbent worker trainings on-site if possible, and if held off-site, have partnerships identify a plan for expectations regarding incumbent workers returning to work.
- For new worker trainings, encourage partnerships to 1) implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy that includes screening methods for identifying those most likely to succeed and 2) include a portion of the training that enables participants to complete on-the-job training elements to help improve trainees' employability.
- In sectors that are struggling to design and implement training programs, support partnerships in working to identify best practices from other states that could be used to meet industry needs.

Section 8: Trainee Challenges

If the economy continues to grow, finding workers will likely become more difficult, and industries interested in growing their workforce will need to be able to tap into populations with traditionally higher numbers of un- and underemployed workers. These populations may have significant barriers to workforce participation that need to be addressed in order to support economic growth. The most common challenges for trainees identified by the partnerships involved transportation, child care, affording training, soft and basic skills, and finding scheduling times that work for trainees. Learning from the successes and challenges of the 2016 RJRI grantees can provide lessons for future grantees to plan for and succeed in developing their workforce under similar conditions.

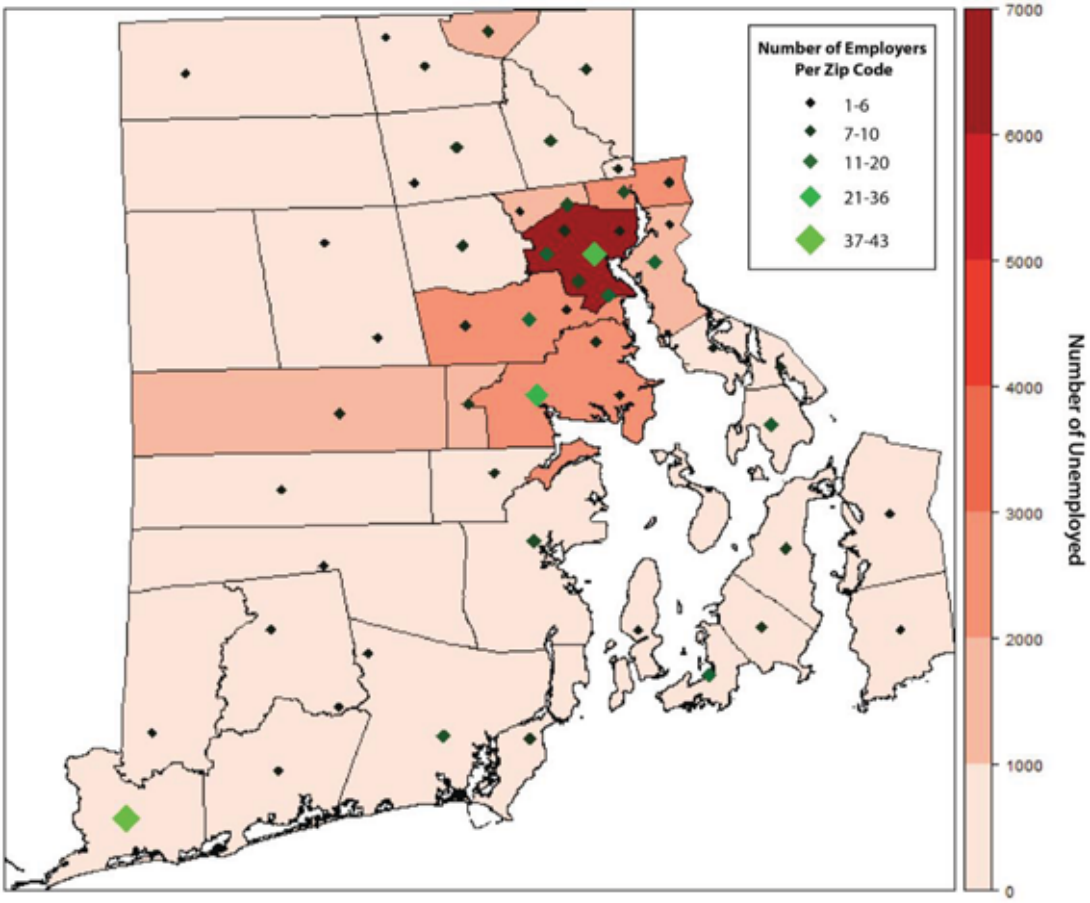
Transportation

Finding adequate transportation for employees and trainees was the most frequently encountered challenge reported by partnerships. What is known as the "spatial mismatch" exacerbated transportation issues for the partnerships and is likely to continue presenting a problem for partnerships in the future. The "spatial mismatch" refers to the misalignment of un- and underemployed populations, public transportation lines and availability of private transportation, and the location of job opportunities.[40] Figure 8.1 shows the cities with the largest unemployed populations compared with the location of RJRI employers. While employers are spread across the state, the vast majority of the unemployed population of Rhode Island is located in the urban core.

The issues relating to access to Quonset Point Business Park provide a good example of the spatial mismatch between the location of the un- and underemployed and employment locations in Rhode Island. The Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership and General Dynamics, one of the largest employers involved in RJRI, which plans to hire thousands of workers in the coming years, are located in the Quonset Point Business Park. Yet, there is no viable public transportation route to service the area, presenting a major barrier for the partnership and its trainees. To illustrate, consider a worker trying to commute from Pine Street in Providence (the location of OIC, a community-based organization with established ties to un- and underemployed populations in Providence) to Quonset Point. While this commute takes under half an hour by car, no public transportation route exists between these two locations. It takes an hour to ride RIPTA from Pine Street to the bus stop closest to Quonset Point, and from that stop, employees would need to walk for over an hour to complete the journey. If a shuttle between the bus stop and the actual employer locations could be established, it would be best if RIPTA also coordinated bus lines from Providence to align with the start and end times of shifts at Quonset Point businesses. Without additional attention to the inaccessibility of this location, there will likely continue to be considerable challenges to recruiting and retaining workers from the towns with the largest populations of un- and underemployed workers.

[40] Gobillon, Laurent, Harris Selod, and Yves Zenou. "The mechanisms of spatial mismatch." *Urban studies* 44.12 (2007): 2401-2427.

Figure 8.1: Unemployment by Town and RJRI Employers by Zip Code



While the challenge of accessing Quonset Point exemplifies the spatial mismatch, this was not the only partnership to face transportation challenges. Transportation barriers were common among the grantees. At least 17 of the partnerships faced some degree of transportation challenge in carrying out their plans. Trainees had trouble with both affording and utilizing public transportation given the time and expense of riding RIPTA from their homes to distant training and employer locations. In many cases, cars are required to access these locations given the limitations of the state's public transit system. As a result, transportation issues were rooted in a number of obstacles, including but not limited to inaccessible public transportation, lacking driver's licenses, and the expense of owning and maintaining reliable vehicles while unemployed or in low paying jobs. As one partnership noted, it started screening recruits by asking, "When you get in your car, do you pray that it's going to start?"

Some partnerships found ways to overcome transportation barriers, at least during the period of training. Several grantees provided stipends that allowed trainees to offset the costs of transportation when training was located on an accessible RIPTA route or when they owned a car. Others successfully overcame transportation issues by working with community organizations, such as Progreso Latino, Man Up, Inc., or the Education Exchange. In these instances, case managers worked directly with trainees to provide transportation assistance ranging from providing bus passes, to assistance obtaining a driver's license, to providing a van or other means of transport to groups of trainees in inaccessible locations. Staff at Man Up, Inc., for example, utilized their connections with the judicial and legal systems to help trainees from

multiple cities regain or obtain their driver's licenses. However, for partnerships that provided bus passes or vans, the trainees then needed help accessing employer locations after they had transitioned from training to employment.

Many partnerships did not anticipate the magnitude of transportation challenges trainees faced, which limited their ability to retain trainees who could not reach training locations. Several partnerships noted that recruits who were otherwise a good fit were prevented from entering the field due to transportation barriers.

Importantly, transportation was a challenge that was faced by both incumbent and new workers. The RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative and several others found that being accessible by public transportation made travel easier for participants even if they did not have access to personal transportation. Unfortunately, convenience of location is not always a reality for all partnerships and so, given the magnitude of this challenge, planning for limiting transportation barriers and accommodating transportation needs should be considered in any future training proposal. In addition, providing temporary transportation support once trainees exit training and are employed would limit this transition challenge for trainees who become employed.

Childcare

Finding short and long-term childcare as well as childcare in "off hours" when trainings were often held, such as weekends and evenings, presented a significant challenge to both partnerships and trainees. This issue is exacerbated by the amount of childcare available in Rhode Island and the high cost of it, which often outpaces wages for low income workers.

In the past decade, the cost of childcare in Rhode Island has increased dramatically, while the availability and accessibility of licensed caretakers has decreased. In 2006, the average weekly rate of childcare facilities was $127.92[41]. By 2015, this cost rose by over 18 percent to $151.04.[42] Meanwhile, household income in Rhode Island has stagnated. For individuals making $30,000 a year (well above the federal poverty line), at this rate child care can consume up to 33 percent of an individual's bi-weekly take home pay. In addition, the number of licensed childcare centers has decreased by 53 percent during that same period (from 1,812 to 971).[43]

However, childcare issues go beyond affordability. Partnerships seeking to accommodate childcare needs of trainees learned that facilities with openings required a long-term contract for permanent childcare positions and/or had long waiting lists. Many facilities have maximum hour restrictions, limiting the ability of those who currently are enrolled in childcare to utilize them for additional training outside of work. In addition, the number of daycare facilities offering weekend and evening services is very small. In 2015, only 2.2 percent of the childcare facilities statewide operated on Saturdays, and only 1.4 percent of facilities operated on Sundays.[44]

Nine partnerships sought to lower the barrier of childcare by utilizing alternative childcare arrangements or by providing childcare services onsite. Some provided childcare services for evenings or weekends when trainings were offered, while others worked with a community organization to provide these services. The Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship

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[41] Bodah, Matthew M. *Statewide Survey of Child Rates in Rhode Island.* 2006. p.15.
[42] Ibid, 16.
[43] Ibid, 3.
[44] Ibid, 9.

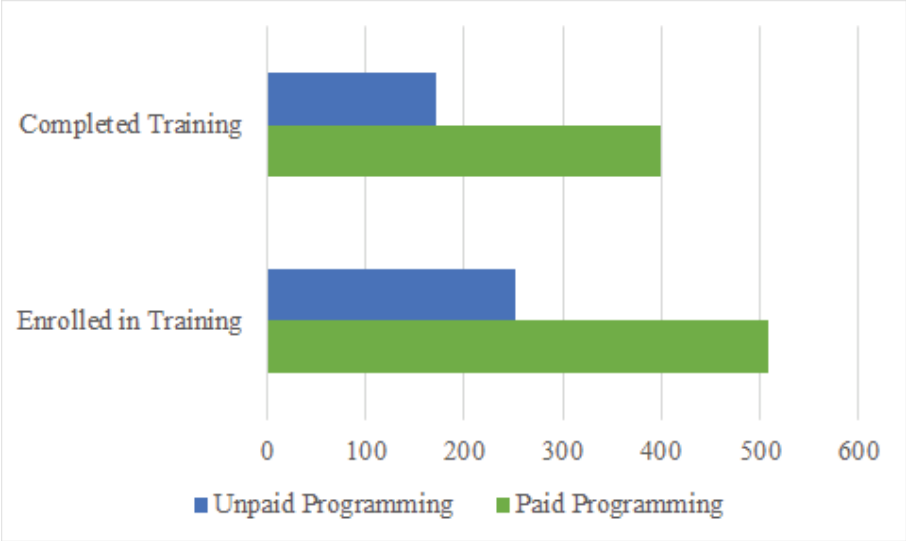
Program addressed this problem with the help of Progreso Latino, which has extensive experience dealing with similar issues and arranged daycare or reimbursement for participants needing those services. The Healthy Jobs Rhode Island Partnership provided onsite services by partnering with the Central Falls Parent College to offer daycare and tutoring for children while parents participated in training.

Future programs should include plans for coordinating with community groups to lower the barrier of childcare by providing onsite care or stipends to help with informal childcare. For partnerships training incumbent workers, training activities held during normal working hours increase the likelihood that childcare is addressed already and will not pose an obstacle to participation.

Training Affordability and Payment

Programs that paid a stipend or hourly rate to trainees in new worker programs not only were more likely to come closer to reaching their recruitment goals (as discussed in the recruitment and outreach section), but they also had more of their recruits complete training. In unpaid training programs, 68.1 percent of trainees who started the program completed it, but for paid programs, 76.4 percent of trainees completed their training. This is likely due to the fact that un- and underemployed workers often are not able to pay for extra expenses associated with participating in a training program or forego other wages in order to participate. Many people generate necessary income through informal means such as watching other people's children or helping out in other ways in order to make financial ends meet. While training programs are designed with long-term employment and economic stability in mind, trainees must nevertheless meet basic living costs while in training; as a result, paying or including a stipend for trainees during their time in training can improve the likelihood that interested and good fit workers can participate.

Figure 8.2: Training Completion Rates for Paid and Unpaid New Worker Training Programs



It was also a best practice to pay stipends to youth for participating in training programs. Partnerships noted that youth program recruitment and retention increased when payments were made. Many young people work to help support their families or may be tempted to draw income

through illicit sources or short-term jobs. Having financial incentives in place allowed youths to participate in the training program instead. Employment also lowers the likelihood that youths become involved in illicit activities and violence and, thus, to the extent that training programs provide financial incentives, they appear well worth the cost.[45]

Several partnerships found that providing stipends was money well spent, particularly for youths from economically-challenged families. For example, the Design Forward Partnership found that a stipend expanded its recruitment base and its completion rate. The partnership provided a $625 stipend over the course of a six-week program to young participants that offset summer employment needs.[46] While the stipend proved sufficient in the case of this program, making stipends equal to or greater than minimum wage may also be worthwhile to attract youths who otherwise need income to support themselves and their families during the summer.

Having a paid collegiate internship program while working with college students also creates secure recruitment pipelines for industries like cybersecurity that draw from a diverse student body. Recruiting interested students prior to the completion of training helped minimize gaps within pipelines. Similarly, recruitment was stabilized by having a paid collegiate internship program because industries do not rely on awareness programs or on working with under- or unemployed individuals to raise them to the level of education and ability required to work in the industry. Having a paid internship also provides opportunities to gain experience in the industry for economically disadvantaged students who need to pay for their education, which can prevent participation in internships and similar unpaid opportunities. The Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership, for example, provided a stipend that translated into an estimated $125 per week. Due to the stipend, students were able to supplement their incomes or reduce their work hours elsewhere to make time for the internship program.

Finally, incumbent workers faced potentially lost wages while participating in training that caused them to miss work. Paid incumbent training programs or agreements with employers to not count training as unpaid time off can be a good tool to offset this cost of participation. However, training programs that paid incumbent workers did not have higher completion rates among those enrolled in training compared with programs that did not pay trainees.

Other costs include necessary equipment and tuition in addition to the potential lost income associated with training participation. Seven grants at least partially, if not in full, covered costs associated with equipment or tuition needed to participate successfully in the training. This proved to be a best practice. For example, the Aquaculture Training Partnership provided equipment, specialized tools, and gear that trainees needed. Future grantees should follow this best practice and include essential equipment in their budgets, as the expense of purchasing gear may dissuade those who cannot afford the gear from participating.

Finally, decreasing or eliminating the cost of the training was seen as a meaningful way to increase involvement among good employees who could not afford tuition. The Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership offered incentives to training program participants, which helped them offset the cost of taking part in the program. Offering similar incentives in other industries will allow these programs to recruit participants who otherwise might not be able to afford the costs associated with the programs. With additional RJRI funding, the costs of tuition can be covered, removing a barrier that keeps individuals who cannot afford it from participating.

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[45] Heller, Sara B. "Summer jobs reduce violence among disadvantaged youth." *Science*. 346, no. 6214. 2014. p.1219.
[46] Participants attended the program for 20 hours a week, which means each participant earned approximately $5.21 an hour.

Pre-clearance Issues

Seven partnerships struggled with obtaining preclearance documents and accomplishing screenings such as background checks, health screenings, credit checks, and driver's licenses for training participants. For many other partnerships, the problem was pre-clearance timing. Pre-clearance issues need to be overcome earlier in the training period than they were among some of the partnerships. For example, the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership discovered that strict requirements were in place for defense industry employment. Recently, the national timeline for approving basic security clearance was extended from approximately one month to anywhere from six to nine months. As a result, training participants faced long gaps between the time they were interviewed and hired and the date that employment began. Further, in order to meet security clearance standards, participants required U.S. citizenship and no criminal record. These requirements limited the number of recruits participating in cybersecurity employment. This issue was addressed by asking that trainees apply for security clearances at the front end of their internship program rather than toward its conclusion, a best practice other partnerships should adopt.

Some of the preclearance issues were generated from misalignment between the target population and the clearance requirements needed for employment in the industry. For example, NRI did not anticipate that employees of the financial and banking industry required good credit histories in order to obtain jobs. This rendered most of its recruits ineligible for these employment positions. Thus, the NRI Partnership learned to ask for credit reports before training so that it could prevent individuals with poor credit histories from spending time in a training program that would not lead to employment. It also changed its target population to increase the likelihood of recruits passing these checks. Partnerships in the future should conduct necessary pre-clearance verification before training begins, at the very least, to ensure that participants are employable in the field and to shorten the time spent finding employment after training.

In addition, it is important to carefully identify the match between the recruitment target population and the clearance items needed. For example, partnerships targeting the unemployed but nevertheless requiring a good credit history are likely to experience challenges due to the often difficult credit histories of those who are unemployed.

However, it is also important for the DLT to consider pursuing legislation or working with employers to limit the use of credit histories and background checks for employment. Studies have shown credit checks can both unfairly limit the ability of minorities to participate in these fields due to predatory lending practices that tend to affect minority communities disproportionately[47] as well as create a "financial death spiral" for the unemployed: when people lose their jobs or have a period of underemployment, they often go into debt and receive a hit to their credit rating. Thus, such individuals are subject to a "Catch-22": they cannot establish their credit without a job, but they are prevented from getting a job due to their credit history.[48]

DLT also should make employers aware of the challenges of specific clearances. For example, a background check is a common preclearance that employers use to weed out applicants. While criminal background checks are used to help employers reduce a number of

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[47] US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. *Statement of Chi Chi Wu, Esq. National Consumer Law Center*. Meeting of October 20, 2010 - Employer Use of Credit History as a Screening Tool. https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/10-20-10/wu.cfm#fn6

[48] Glater, Johnathan D. "Another Hurdle for the Jobless: Credit Inquiries." *New York Times.* August 6, 2009. https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/07/business/07credit.html?pagewanted=all

unwanted outcomes from hiring including legal liability, risk of theft, and other threats to workplace and public safety, flaws in the criminal background check process are known to undermine their value and accuracy as well as prevent suitable job candidates from securing employment. As a result, employers may limit their candidate pool unnecessarily, and people posing no risk to the public may be unnecessarily barred from employment.[49] Given the societal consequences of allowing people to remain unemployed after incarceration, DLT would be well-served to help employers determine whether background checks are achieving their desired results or if they could be refined to include only those who pose a risk to the public. For example, The Aquaculture Training Partnership (ATP) employed criminal background checks only to screen for specific crimes like theft, which was a longstanding problem in the aquaculture industry. This allowed the ATP to screen for crimes specific to industry concerns without excluding potential employees based on minor or inapplicable infractions. The ATP used this method primarily as a method to encourage self-reporting, however, and only ran background checks on a small number of participants.

It also may be useful for some grantees to consider a "green housing" initiative targeting high school or college students. Fields requiring background checks and health screenings may especially benefit from this strategy. Youths are less likely to have encountered situations that prevent a successful clearance than adults who have been under- or unemployed for a considerable period. While this is true across the board, it is particularly the case for security, health, and financial clearances. On this negative side, this approach would limit the ability to put currently un-and underemployed people back to work, while on the positive side, it could prevent future generations from becoming un- or underemployed.

Soft Skills

The fact that many recruits lacked soft skills and "essential skills" was another major obstacle to successful completion of the training and integration into the workforce. While this obstacle was particularly prevalent among youth, even skilled and experienced workers struggled. Many lacked soft skills, especially regarding attendance, social media, and technology use. Appropriate cell phone use was identified as a major obstacle by grantees. Several industry partners noted that incumbent workers and new workers alike do not use cell phones appropriately and lack other "soft skills," which reduces productivity and affects an employer's bottom line. For example, one partner noted, "I was at a job site yesterday... for twenty minutes. There wasn't a minute I walked by one of those three guys that they weren't on their phone. It's an issue. It's a big issue." Using training modules that incorporate the testimonials of industry professionals about appropriate conduct, technology use, and other topics relating to soft skills may benefit both trainees and the productivity of the entire sector.

It is also likely that cell phones will be incorporated into the everyday practices of industries, and so it will be important for training participants to learn what acceptable uses of technology on the job are. A soft skills training curriculum incorporating these topics may, therefore, benefit both training participants and grantees. A standardized online training or in-person training delivered by a single entity would allow partnerships to streamline the delivery of this training.

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[49] Denver, Megan, Garima Siwach, and Shawn D. Bushway. A New Look at The Employment and Recidivism Relationship Through the Lens of a Criminal Background Check. *Criminology* 55, no. 1. 2017 p. 174-204.

The timing of soft skill training also is important. Having essential skills and soft skills training early on allows trainees to have and practice these skills prior to the start of their training or internship. This would allow them to practice the skills during training and gain experience and comfort with the skills before starting employment.

Providing ESL, math, English, communication, and writing practice to help trainees shore up their skills and be ready for participation may be necessary for some fields. The Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program, for example, found that many applicants interested in the pipefitting industry lacked English proficiency. The partnership plans to implement a stronger ESL program to help future applicants.

Case Management

Trainees coming from disadvantaged populations or having been out of work for a long time often face unforeseen challenges. Several grantees found that having case managers, funded by the DLT, who helped trainees succeed in training and after transitioning to the workforce was essential to the success of their program. Case managers should work closely with training instructors to identify needed supports and ensure that participant's transition to the workforce. As the economy grows and employers begin recruiting workers from underserved populations, case management is likely to be essential to help these workers be successful. In cases where recruits drop out, partnerships would be well served by performing focus groups of these individuals to identify why they choose not to complete the program to make sure it was due to "bad fit" and not case management or other supports (such as transportation or childcare) that could have been provided.

Scheduling

Thirteen partnerships struggled with scheduling and determining how to handle missed training sessions. Alternative scheduling techniques could include moving training modules online or allowing a specific number of make-up sessions online. Moving some modules online or holding makeups online would allow incumbent or already-employed workers flexibility with family commitments that may otherwise limit their availability for additional training. Partnerships may need to work closely with educational partners when trying to improve training flexibility. For example, the CNA Talent Network Partnership, which partnered with CCRI, became frustrated and felt that CCRI's policies were too inflexible and not designed to facilitate success among their target population. The Partnership found CCRI's absentee policy particularly cumbersome. If participants encountered childcare or other issues that prevented attendance, no mechanism existed at CCRI to allow them to make up the classes.

Incumbent workers and workers with other jobs often had many time constraints. Partnerships targeting these groups found it useful to find the optimal time, place, and day for holding trainings by surveying participants.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, the following best practices for recruitment and outreach emerged:

- Provide support for transportation, including offering bus passes and/or shuttles and helping to gain or reinstate driver's licenses.
- Provide stipends or wages to training participants, interns, and apprentices to offset the costs of participation, transportation, childcare, and meeting basic needs.
- Provide gear or supplies needed for successful program completion at no cost.
- Provide onsite childcare as much as possible, and provide assistance with childcare when it is not possible to offer it onsite.
- Reduce or eliminate the costs associated with assessment, tuition and related fees, licensing, and other participation-related expenses.
- Provide remediation in math or language instruction as needed by the industry.
- Provide wrap-around services with social service agencies and/or community organizations to help trainees complete training and effectively enter the workforce.
- Work with employer partners to allow incumbent workers out of work for training purposes and provide training during work hours so that employees can continue to be paid through their employer while in a training program.
- Conduct pre-screening before training begins to ensure participants are employable in the sector before participating in a training program.

Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure trainee success in RJRI programming.

- Ensure that grantees have a plan for addressing transportation and childcare obstacles.
- Engage RIPTA in developing transportation options to large employers and sector hubs that currently are not served by existing routes.
- Decrease or eliminate the cost of training programs as much as possible to increase participation among those who cannot afford fees.
- Facilitate a discussion between institutions of higher education and businesses that rely on the workers produced in their training programs (e.g., CNA programs, cybersecurity programs, etc.) to ensure that the screening protocols for the institution make sense given the needs of the industry and are not overly cumbersome to potential recruits.
- Encourage partnerships to develop online options for eligible training modules to accommodate those who are unable to attend in person.
- Suggest that partnerships incorporate soft skills training into their training modules, particularly a module on proper technology and cell phone use.
- Work with employers to determine if pre-screening protocols are absolutely necessary to the industry or if they are posing a barrier to successful hiring and sector growth.

Section 9. Transition from Training to Employment

A central goal of the Real Jobs Rhode Island program was to create "sustainable employment" for workers through skills training.[50] This meant that many partnerships needed to focus on preparing participants for the transition from training to full-fledged industry employment, a process that was marked by both challenges and achievements. An examination of the challenges, achievements, and best practices of the transition from training to employment for new workers can serve as an effective tool for understanding and improving future iterations of the RJRI program.

The RJRI program allowed partnerships to emphasize one or more aspects of sector development, including training new workers, upskilling incumbent workers, and developing an industry workforce intermediary. This flexibility across grants meant that not all partnerships focused on training new workers: 19 of the 26 total partnerships focused on training new workers in the 2016 implementation period. Here we look at the challenges and achievements of those programs that aimed to place new hires with sector employers.

Of those 19, successful placement of trainees in training-related employment varied greatly, from 6 percent to 100 percent. Overall, at the time of this writing, 56 percent of those trained in the RJRI program in 2016 were employed in training-related jobs.

Figure 9.1: Number of Participants Successfully Trained, Target Number of Employed Participants, and Successfully Employed Participants

Challenges

Not all partnerships experienced challenges with the transition from training to employment. In fact, three of the 19 partnerships that trained new workers had no stated challenges with this transition during the 2016 implementation period. These partnerships all

[50] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: *Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals.* July 31, 2015. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/ImpG/RJRIImpGrantSol0715.pdf

met, or came close to meeting, their stated goals for participant employment, and utilized many of the strategies and best practices described below. However, the remaining partnerships experienced challenges in transitioning their trainees from training to employment.[51]

Program design challenges

The challenges associated with overseeing the successful transition from training to employment for nine of the 19 RJRI partnerships that focused on training new workers were caused by the design of the partnership's program. A number of partnerships designed training programs that ended before industry employers began hiring new workers, leading to a gap of time between training and employment. This gap caused challenges for trained workers, who lacked a stable source of income and benefits for an indeterminate length of time while they waited for employment and for employers, since some trainees ended up choosing to work in other fields because positions were available immediately.

Other partnerships required prospective employers to pay a fee upon successful placement of workers in permanent positions. Prospective employers hesitated to pay this fee and, therefore, were reluctant to hire program graduates. Other partnerships trained workers and then later learned that trainees lacked a prerequisite required for industry employment. The training program was not designed to screen participants to ensure that these prerequisites were met and, consequently, several program graduates were not placed in employment. In other cases, partnerships did not ensure prior to training that industry organizations planned to hire program graduates in the short term, causing some trainees to enter a weak job market.

One partnership, the Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership, included an internship component in its training program to assist graduates in obtaining employment, but it did not mandate the completion of the internship and, consequently, participants who did not complete the internship struggled to find training-related employment.

At least two partnerships recruited workers with no prior experience in the partnership's industry but learned after the training that employers did not want to hire workers without prior industry work experience. This poses a problem for industries when workers cannot enter the industry without industry work experience and cannot get industry work experience without being hired into the industry. This was a challenge faced by the Insurance Innovation Partnership, for example, because the industry it served was unexpectedly reluctant to hire workers with no prior experience. The CNA Talent Network also experienced challenges with this issue. Some industry partners would not hire CNA trainees unless they had six months of experience in the healthcare industry, and not all participants had enough prior experience in the industry to meet this requirement.

Industry challenges

Eight partnerships experienced industry-related challenges while placing trainees in employment. Some partnerships trained workers for an industry that was not hiring new workers at the completion of training, or lacked the revenue to immediately hire a large number of similarly skilled workers. The Building Futures Partnership faced this challenge when the construction project that the partnership was specifically training its participants to work on ended earlier than expected. After this project ended, the partnership struggled to find other

[51] Challenges were evaluated based on personal interviews conducted with partnership leaders and grant managers at the Department of Labor and Training. The challenges discussed in this section, therefore, reflect the information provided by the partnership and the DLT, and are not the result of analysis by the investigators.

large-scale construction projects that were looking to hire new workers. Other partnerships created training that did not meet the industry's needs, or taught skills that were not utilized in industry jobs. For example, the Rhode Island Manufacturing Growth Collaborative trained workers to fill basic entry level jobs, but after the training found that its industry was then seeking to hire technically trained workers in higher-skilled positions that required additional training or experience. The misalignment of training curriculum with industry needs made it difficult for trainees to find permanent work in the industry.

Some partnerships focused on training workers to acquire key industry licenses that enabled the workers to be hired within the industry, but then discovered the existence of a time gap that occurred after the completion of a licensure examination and the delivery of that license. This challenge was faced by the Healthcare Training Collaborative, which had planned to take advantage of the healthcare industry's temporary CNA licenses to get program graduates employed quickly at the end of training. However, at the completion of training, the partnerships learned that several industry partners were highly reluctant to hire workers with a temporary license.

Pre-clearance issues

As described in greater detail above in "Trainee Challenges," several partnerships struggled to help their trainees obtain pre-clearance documents and screenings such as background checks, health screenings, credit checks, and driver's licenses prior to the start of employment. For many other partnerships, it was an issue of pre-clearance timing. In these cases, trainees did not start the pre-clearance screening process necessary for employment in their industry until after the start of training. As a result, training participants faced long gaps between the time they were interviewed and hired and the date that employment began. Other partnerships struggled with misalignment between the target population and the clearance requirements needed for employment in the industry. For example, as discussed elsewhere, the Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island did not anticipate that employees of the financial and banking industry required good credit histories in order to obtain jobs. Because of this, the partnership recruited participants without checking their credit history. This resulted in trainees being unexpectedly ineligible for industry employment at the conclusion of training.

Participant challenges

The challenges associated with participants are discussed above in the Trainee Challenges section, but one partnership specifically faced acute participant-related challenges pertaining to the transition from training to employment. The Man-Up 2 Careers Partnership worked primarily with individuals exiting incarceration and re-entering society and the workforce. This population struggled to gain employment due to a variety of factors related to their lack of supportive families and social networks, their struggles adjusting to new living and employment environments, and recidivism, among other factors. These factors affected the ability of trainees to earn and maintain sustainable employment in the manufacturing and marine trades industry.

Successful Strategies for Transitioning Trainees into Employment

Although partnerships faced many challenges related to the transition from training to employment in the 2016 RJRI implementation process, they also utilized several strategies that helped them successfully transition their trainees into gainful employment in the sector.

Bridging the gap between training and employment

Some partnerships helped participants bridge the gap between the end of training and employment by planning trainings whose endings coincided with industry hiring periods, ensuring that industry companies would be seeking new employees. Other partnerships worked to hire trainees in industry jobs prior to the start of training, which removed any gap between the end of training and the start of employment. This was successfully executed by the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership, which hired all training participants at the start of training.

Providing post-training services

Several partnerships helped their trainees transition from training to employment by providing them with post-training services. Some partnerships subsidized the payroll of trainees for a period of time after training to make the hiring of the trainees more enticing and less risky for industry employers. Others provided case management services that helped trainees find employment. For some partnerships, these services focused more on helping participants find jobs, while other partnerships worked on preparing trainees for the interview process by providing them with such supports such as appropriate clothing.

Implementing industry-valued training programs

Many programs helped their trainees transition from training to employment by providing them with training that was valued by the industry. Trainees that were trained by these partnerships received the skills and information necessary to be successful in the industry. As a result, industry employers were eager to hire trainees at the conclusion of training. Many partnerships paired effective training with careful participant selection and screening, which ensured that most trainees accepted into the training program would be interested and prepared to enter their industry at the completion of training. When correctly applied, this screening prevented partnerships from training participants who were unwilling or unable to find industry employment at the end of training.

Connecting trainees with employers

Several partnerships helped their trainees transition from training to employment by connecting trainees to employers during the training program. Many partnerships accomplished this by connecting participants to on-the-job training, internships, or apprenticeships as part of the training program. Other partnerships held events during, or at the conclusion of, the training program where industry employers and leaders could meet trainees and understand the training program they were undertaking, while trainees could network with potential employers. Still other partnerships networked with industry employers on the behalf of trainees to help employers consider hiring program graduates.

Best Practices

Based on the experiences of the partnerships involved in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant, several best practices for the transition from training to employment emerged:

- Temporarily subsidize the payroll of employers to ensure a smooth transition from training to employment.

- To the extent possible, hire training participants on a provisional basis before they actually enter training.
- Ensure that training programs fill an important gap between existing training and employment needs.
- Plan the completion of trainings to coincide with industry hiring seasons to avoid long gaps between training and employment.
- Hold industry social events during training that allow participants to network with employers.
- Allow training participants to apply skills during workplace site visits.
- Design internship programs that are not optional, thus avoiding the underutilization of these internships by program participants.
- Maximize the use of on-the-job training and internships to expose employers to trainees.
- Provide comprehensive case management services to training participants after the completion of training to help them find and attain industry-related employment.
- Evaluate participant performance and employer satisfaction after the training to assist in the continuous improvement of the training program.
- Vet training participants before entering employment to ensure that they are a good fit for the industry.
- Conduct pre-screening before training begins to ensure that participants are employable in the sector.
- Identify the match between the recruitment target population and the clearance items needed for employment in an industry.

Recommendations

Successfully transitioning program participants from training to employment is essential to the success of Real Jobs Rhode Island's mission to create sustainable jobs. The following are the key recommendations for the Department of Labor and Training to ensure the success of this transition.

- Evaluate whether the sector needs workers in the short term (when training programs are being offered) or needs workers for the long-term sustainability of the industry.
- Provide financial incentives for employers to take on recent trainees or create an incentive program to offset costs associated with hiring new employees.
- Convene industry partners to consider ways to minimize the disruption to production when participants are being trained.
- Showcase employers that successfully integrate employees of color and women into the workplace so that other partnerships can learn from their successes.
- Learn how other industries with internship and apprenticeship programs develop the training capacity to support interested job prospects so that these insights can be shared with those industries lacking the training capacity for these initiatives.
- Encourage partners with low rates of employment after training to assess how they can make their training program more attractive to employers.
- To the extent possible, work with all state agencies and administrative units to ensure that licensure exams for RJRI partners are offered regularly.
- Develop a model paid internship, apprenticeship, or training program that can serve as a template for employers aspiring to facilitate easier transitions into employment.

- Assist partnerships in making sure industry partners are committed to hiring trainees prior to the start of training.
- Ensure that partnerships have a clear understanding of the hiring or internship prerequisites of employer partners.
- Assist partnerships in condensing training programs when possible, especially when such condensing is necessary for training to be completed within industry hiring windows.
- Provide employer partners training that describes the barriers and needs of marginalized populations, and connect employer partners with resources to help them overcome these needs.
- Overcome participation barriers by paying for accident insurance to minimize risk for employers and training programs.
- Work with employers to determine whether pre-screening protocols are absolutely necessary to the industry or if they are posing a barrier to successful hiring and sector growth.
- Encourage partnerships that are serving industries that require credit checks, background checks, and health screenings for employment to consider "green housing" initiatives.
    - These initiatives target high school or college students who are less likely to have experienced situations that prevent successful clearance of these barriers and are, thus, more eligible for employment.

Table. 9. 1. Transition to Employment Metrics for New Workers[52]

Partnership Name[53]	Completed Training	Target Employed	Employed
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership	40	3	8
Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program	4	4	3
Residential Construction Partnership	30	40	20
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program	12	10	7
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative	16	48	10
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership	49	33	42
Healthy Jobs RI Partnership	16	18	2
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership	N/A[54]	10	14
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership	46	34	33
Healthcare Training Collaborative	57	60	43
Insurance Innovation Partnership	7	20	5
Aquaculture Training Partnership	25	24	10
Building Futures Partnership	61	45	34
CNA Talent Network Partnership	9	20	7
Partnership for Real IT Jobs	30	40	4
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women	41	30	20
Design Forward Partnership	31	10	2
Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership	43	40	19
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island	13	15	13
Totals	530	504	296
Percent Employed of Trained	56%		
Percent Employed of Target Employed	59%		

[52] The data in this figure represents metrics pertaining to new workers, including the number of new workers that completed training, the target employment goals for new workers, and the number of new workers who were employed after training. This data does not include incumbent workers.
[53] The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island, MedTech Innovation Engine, Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership, Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative, Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership, Real Jobs IT Partnership, and Phoenix Partnership did not train new employees, and thus did not deal with the transition from training to employment.
[54] The Man-Up 2 Careers Partnership referred participants to other RJRI training programs, and thus did not have any participants complete training. However, it did refer 14 of its trainees to other RJRI partnerships, and all of those referrals received training-related employment.

Section 10: Evaluation of the Department of Labor and Training

In this section we discuss the partnerships' views of the mission of RJRI and their overall experience with it, the challenges and strengths of the program, their interactions with DLT staff, and their recommendations for improvement. Overall, the partnerships reported positive experiences with the program, but some key features of the program were highlighted for improvement and for ensuring the maintenance of good relationships between the DLT and sector partners. We also include here our recommended changes to RJRI procedures that we identified while evaluating the program.

Program Mission and Overall Assessment

When partnerships were asked to assess the overall program, the words that they used most often were "flexible" and "responsive." A number of grantees also described the program as "open," "encouraging," and "business friendly." Partnerships also felt as though the program allowed the DLT to become more active partners with businesses in developing the sector and the economy and that the DLT encouraged them to adopt new programs, think outside the box, and develop innovative ideas. In addition, grantees highlighted several aspects of RJRI as positive features by noting that the program allowed them to learn about opportunities across the state for workforce development funding and programming, while also networking with other agencies and business leaders.

Several grantees also mentioned the mission of RJRI as part of their positive experience. Three primary features were the most commonly highlighted elements of the mission that partnerships appreciated: the focus on long term sustainability in building a future workforce, the ability of employers to work in teams and the focus on connecting employers within a sector, and the spotlight on expanding and building new programming guided by employer input. In addition, other partnerships noted that they appreciated that the program seemed to be working to reduce duplication in programming and responded quickly to employer needs.

The partnerships also noted that by actively bringing stakeholders together across organizations, funding all parts of proposals, and helping with recruitment, the DLT helped them to achieve their goals. In particular, partnerships appreciated the DLT's efforts to bring employers and community organizations together while also bringing to the table other government agencies that supported their efforts.

To the extent possible, the DLT should continue to assemble other government agencies and community organizations while also actively recruiting new businesses to work with partnerships.

DLT Personnel

DLT personnel received very high marks from the partnerships. Not one partnership negatively assessed DLT staff or its leadership. Twenty different partnerships described DLT grant advisors as helpful and supportive. Others used words like "engaged" and "flexible," and praised DLT staff for responding quickly whenever a partnership had a question. It became evident from our conversations with the partnerships that a positive administrative culture had

been established at the DLT and that a strong sense of mission was instilled among members of the staff implementing RJRI. Moreover, many of the grants noted how important it was that the grant advisor seemed honestly interested and enthusiastic about their industry. On several occasions partnerships mused over whether the grant advisor wanted to be a member of their industry, given their level of commitment and excitement for sector programming. For example, one partnership commented that the advisor "seems like she has a general excitement and interest in our participants. She comes to events, comes to meetings. They have all been very, very amenable. I think it really reflects how excited and engaged they are over there [at DLT]."

Another grantee described how one grant advisor had assisted with some of the more arduous aspects of the grant, describing her in the following way: "She is like sunshine, and fresh air, and caffeine. She's wonderful and she bends over backwards. And she does all of these things, thank God. Because if we had to do that, I would go out of my mind."

Some of the grantees praised the willingness of grant advisors to come to the partnerships instead of insisting that all meetings and interactions happen at the DLT. In the words of one grantee, "if something needs to be signed or delivered or anything, [the grant advisor] will physically come out and pick it up from us. I've never seen that before, and that is absolutely fantastic."

These positive interactions with DLT staff gave the partnerships faith that the grant advisors believed in their mission and were committed to building the industry and putting people to work. This faith translated into a lot of trust and positive feelings toward the entire program and agency, causing the partnerships to feel as if they were part of a team with DLT staff. As one partner put it, "I've never experienced anything like it…. we're on the same team at the end of the day. It's not like state versus provider. I'm really happy with the staff."

The only shortcoming related to DLT staff that was mentioned in our interviews occurred when grant advisors made decisions early in the grant process that were overruled by DLT leadership. This caused a few partnerships to be unsure whether they could trust the decisions made by the grant advisors. However, this usually was pointed out as a matter of growing pains, as the DLT temporarily working out its policies and procedures, and one that had become less of an issue overtime.

DLT should continue to foster a culture of supportive excitement between its staff and the partnerships to keep these positive assessments. This culture generated a lot of good will and excitement and a general reassessment of what is possible when teaming with government from employers and industry experts.

RJRI Events/Meetings

RJRI grantees were required to attend bi-monthly technical assistance/information exchange meetings. Several grantees identified the meetings as important for creating networks, learning about programming, and keeping everyone on the same page as program requirements changed. One of the grantees described it as "taking several miscellaneous silos across the state and bringing everyone together." The meetings also allowed DLT staff and leadership to listen and respond to the concerns of grantees.

Yet, many grantees bemoaned that they were not informed about these required meetings until after having an active contract with the DLT. For them the meetings were a major time commitment, particularly when commuting to the DLT's offices, which, for some, meant spending half of a work day traveling. The grantees did not hesitate to propose some suggestions about future meetings while describing their experiences. These suggestions included having thematic discussions. One partnership expressed an interest in having one of the meetings focus on strategies for successful recruitment "because we encounter the same situations...the same barriers." Others suggested holding fewer meetings and/or holding them less often but for a longer period of time. This would allow the same amount of information to be shared but decrease the time spent traveling to the meetings.

Paperwork and Reporting

Paperwork and reporting were by far the largest challenge for the partnerships. The partnerships noted that both the amount and the changing nature of the paperwork required for the proposal application, reporting, expenditures, enrolling participants in training, and gaining reimbursement were major barriers to participation in RJRI. All grantees understood that reporting was necessary for transparency, funding, and accountability, and many grantees explicitly expressed that a taxpayer-funded program should receive rigorous scrutiny and have stringent reporting standards. Yet, through our interviews we learned from grantees that reporting and invoicing caused major headaches that can be prevented by taking proactive steps. In particular, the program would be well served by being mindful that changing reporting and paperwork requirements at such a rapid pace may create bottlenecks for grantees attempting to implement programming. Any program delivering government-funded grants no doubt will involve paperwork and reporting requirements, and so we suggest that the DLT leadership and staff consider either minimize changes to paperwork and reporting requirements to the extent feasible, be more transparent with grantees about why paperwork and/or reporting requirements are changing while also explaining to them the additional time burden of making the change, and allow for adjustments to timelines or other expectations to account for the additional administrative effort involved when there are changes in protocol.

Trainee Participation Information

The DLT greatly decreased the information that was necessary for partnerships to report on individual participants. The first intake form was so extensive that it dissuaded participants from enrolling and was overly burdensome on partnerships. To address this, the DLT reduced the form to just one page of information to ease the burden of enrolling participants. Partnerships saw this change as a positive one that demonstrated to them the DLT's responsiveness to their concerns. However, several partnerships felt uncomfortable collecting and being responsible for storing even the information on the shortened form. Some partnerships would have liked DLT staff to attend recruitment/training sessions for the collection and security of Social Security

numbers and information considered to be sensitive and difficult to collect from trainees concerned about their privacy. Others wished this information could be entered online instead of on paper.

Financials

The vast majority of partnerships spent significantly more time than they expected reporting either for performance metrics or for reimbursement. While the partnerships acknowledged the importance of transparency and reporting, they also explained that the level of paperwork and documentation required for RJRI was far greater than for other programs. Several partnerships explained that they were not compensated for time spent on paperwork and documentation and that it interfered with other program responsibilities, required the hiring of new staff, or caused them to dedicate many hours to these activities despite lacking the organizational capacity to do so.

Several partnerships felt that if the DLT had explained the type of information required at the outset of the program, they would have saved countless hours. Some of the partnerships recounted how they submitted paperwork based on their past experiences with the DLT, but later were told to provide documentation they no longer were able to collect. Several of these partnerships explained that this resulted in unnecessary lost revenue. The lead partners experiencing this were especially concerned that approaching their partners for additional information caused them to look unprofessional.

Even at the end of the first year, at least four partnerships remained confused about what was and was not reimbursable through the DLT. Additionally, the partnerships suggested that, although the DLT's flexibility concerning financial reporting was appreciated, having a reporting schedule that could be used for planning purposes would improve the process of grant implementation.

Performance Metrics

Each grantee was required, as a condition of receiving a RJRI grant, to set specific performance benchmarks. In the original RFP, the DLT sought to "review the progress of program design and development and achieved outcomes and performance metrics... at minimum, on an annual basis."[55]

Some partnerships were unable to track performance metrics that were included in the addenda for evaluation. This led to confusion over how to evaluate partnership programming, which lessened the utility of the addenda for reporting and decreased the ability of the partnership to use the performance metrics in the addenda for self-evaluation or for tracking their progress. One partnership felt that the performance metrics did not accurately capture the work that its partners were doing. Another struggled to collect performance metrics relating to the wages and career advancement of incumbent workers, which did not allow it to measure program effectiveness for the first year, but it nevertheless developed a tracking system to determine program effectiveness for the following year. Future performance metrics should include only ones that can and will be tracked by either the DLT or the grantee and should be chosen after discussion with the grantee about how the metrics will be tracked.

Another element of the performance metrics that requires attention is that the training metrics did not allow training participants to "drop out" of programming without harming

[55] Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training: *Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals*. July 31, 2015. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/ImpG/RJRIImpGrantSol0715.pdf

partnership efforts to meet performance benchmarks. Performance metrics often aimed to have the same number of workers enrolled and completing training. For example, a grant would aim to enroll ten individuals and to have all ten individuals complete training. While this may seem intuitive, part of the objective of most partnerships was to increase retention by allowing trainees to gain exposure to the industry in order to learn whether it was a good career choice for them. This increases employee retention by decreasing the number of trained individuals who enter the field only to find out they dislike working in the sector. However, performance metrics that do not acknowledge attrition related to these factors increases pressure on partnerships to keep training participants in the program even if a) the partnership would be just as well-served without them, and b) the trainee could enter a different training program that better aligns with his or her career interests. Future performance metrics should acknowledge the goal of assessing job fit through the training program and aim to recruit more workers for training than the target for completion.

Proposal Process and Grant Structure

Many partnerships expressed that the six month funding structure was not working for their organization and that they felt misled by the original Request For Proposals[56] and grant awarding with regard to the length of the contract. Several partnerships interpreted the RFP as guaranteeing 2-3 years of funding, only to be informed later that it would only be for approximately six months. Under Section 1.4 of the RFP (Grant Duration), the document stated, "The grant period for a Real Jobs Partnership is for up to five years, from November 16, 2015 through November 15, 2020. The Partnership will initially be authorized for three years, until November 15, 2018, with an option to renew for an additional two years. Funds will be reauthorized on a yearly basis based upon annual approval, and allocations will be based on available funds and performance of the workforce training plan." Most of the grantees submitted proposals and budgets for two three-year projects, but once the addenda were submitted, most projects were approved for only six months to a year. While grantees supported being able to modify programming and "pitch" new ideas and new programming, the insecurity introduced by such short-term funding agreements left grantees ill at ease, particularly for staffing and long-term strategic planning decisions.

Although several grantees felt the addenda process was helpful in capturing metrics and the real purpose of the programming, they also noted that it would have been easier if the RFP had simply been clearer and in the format of the addenda. At least one grantee felt they spent an inordinate amount of time, longer than any grant they ever had previously, on their proposal, just to have it discarded and redone in the form of the addenda. The fact that the original proposals were designed for multiple year programming only added to the confusion about the funding program lasting for just six months.

The grant modification process, on the other hand, was widely regarded as a good innovation and one allowing the partnerships to respond to the needs of businesses far more effectively and in a timely manner.

Also, some of the partnerships that had Governor's Workforce Board funding prior to receiving RJRI funding were especially concerned about future DLT funding lines, specifically regarding the Governor's Workforce Board, and did not fully grasp how the two DLT programs were related.

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[56] *Ibid*.

Changes Implemented at DLT

Grantees supported and applauded several of the changes implemented by DLT over the course of the 2016 implementation year. These included the faster pace of reimbursement, the ability to modify programming to meet goals, and the development of the grant guidebook. The effort to streamline processes and forms, like the intake form mentioned above, was the most common element noted by partnerships about how working with the DLT had improved over the course of the year.

The Role of Partnerships within the RJRI Program

A few grantees felt forced into partnerships and that the sector plan was not always consistent with small "pitches" for programming conducted for a single employer by a sector intermediary. Moreover, the role of the lead grantee in sponsoring new "pitches" also was controversial. While some liked the ability to run new programming through their organizations at a different place, others expressed that it made them feel ill at ease putting their organization's name on something they were not actually responsible for implementing. The DLT may want to readdress the limits on forming new partnerships outside of the formal grant process to avoid having partnerships feel obliged to sponsor programming they are not running directly, or help interested employers identify other partnerships to work with.

Recruitment Confusion

Several grantees were confused about the role of the One Stop Career Centers in recruiting and wanted more help from DLT in putting them in touch with un- and underemployed workers. One grantee suggested notifying people receiving unemployment or whose unemployment had recently expired through the mail about RJRI training opportunities, noting that the DLT has those records but the partnerships do not. DLT could and should also work with the various state departments overseeing social services utilized by the un- and underemployed to notify recipients of state aid about available training opportunities.

Uncompensated Elements of Programming

Partnerships noted that the planning grants were very helpful for developing the partnerships and creating initial program designs. However, after that original proposal, any new program design or modification was created without compensation. One grantee noted that "you can't develop something that's customized in five minutes. I mean you have to spend a good amount of time. It takes ten hours of development to deliver one hour of training." Earmarking additional money for development/retooling or the ability to apply for a second planning grant after each round of implementation is one possible solution for this issue, particularly when the sector demands building more customized training modules, or making major modifications to trainings to meet industry needs.

Reimbursement

Several grantees were impressed at the fast rate at which DLT financially reimbursed the partnerships for training costs. When financial reimbursement began taking longer, however, these grantees started growing concerned about their cash flow as it became harder to sustain their operating costs. More than one partnership found this to be especially difficult when they needed to identify immediate funding sources to deliver the training so that they could be reimbursed by DLT later. However, the attempt by DLT to streamline reimbursement to the shortest period possible given federal guidelines and thereby facilitating partnerships "keeping the lights on" should be retained and improved if at all possible.

Facilitating Sector Strategy and Evaluation

Partnerships wanted DLT to help them be more strategic in their efforts, develop strategies for sector intermediaries and organizations to work together instead of competing for resources, and bring more employers on board. Several grantees hoped that the initial investment in employer recruitment that was made prior to the awarding of the RJRI grants would continue and bring more employers into existing partnerships.

Lack of Clarity about Support for Intermediary Support and Development

The Request for Proposals includes a section about the importance of the Workforce Intermediary. However, the ability to apply for financial and other support for workforce intermediaries was not clear in the RFP. This type of capacity building is not listed in Section 2.4 as an eligible expense and is not included in section 2.2 where the purpose of implementation grants is described. As a result, while some grantees received significant and necessary support to build capacity, other Workforce Intermediaries felt as though they needed the support but did not understand that they were eligible to apply for it. This may have been due to the RFP's language, which stated "While Real Jobs Rhode Island can and seeks to fund costs associated with capacity building (e.g. administration, capital costs, etc.), payments will be made largely or entirely on the basis of achieving specific outcome targets." Future RFPs should be clearer about DLT's interest and willingness to invest in the development of Intermediary capacity.

The Healthcare Industry

In the healthcare industry, two partnerships set out to provide training for participants to become CNAs. CNAs are important members of the healthcare team, as they provide much of the direct care to residents in long-term care settings and to patients in hospitals, and these positions enable individuals to enter the healthcare industry pipeline, which can lead to higher paying jobs with more responsibilities and additional training over time. Unfortunately, however, CNA positions are low-wage positions (typically paying about $12 an hour) that involve many responsibilities and demands, including extensive training and certification requirements, long hours (often in the evening or overnight and on weekends and holidays), and the need to provide patient-centered, compassionate care in sometimes challenging and stressful environments. As a

result, recruitment is difficult and staff turnover is high, which is costly for organizations and contributes to negative patient outcomes.

While the need within the industry to identify and retain CNAs is high, the two grantees within this sector struggled to identify RJRI-funded training programs that were sustainable. These partnerships experienced multiple difficulties in recruiting and retaining participants due to the lack of capacity to pay attractive wages, difficulties with potential trainees' passing required health tests and aptitude assessments and navigating the bureaucracy surrounding these issues, challenges in finding childcare that met trainees' needs, and transportation barriers. Further, these two partnerships struggled with staff turnover within their own organizations and within partner organizations that made implementation challenging. Finally, the need for a strong sector intermediary that served entities state-wide within healthcare became particularly apparent to the partnership whose lead applicant was an employer.

Due to the difficulties within these partnerships, we suggest that RJRI continues to identify ways to help the healthcare sector fill CNA positions, as this will continue to be a need in Rhode Island. Rhode Island anticipates that by 2030, there will be 100,000 more older adults than in 2010,[57] and currently the Ocean State has the highest proportion of adults 85 or older in the U.S.[58] (the population most likely to require extensive health and long-term care). We recommend that DLT work with key partners from the healthcare sector to determine how to improve the working conditions and the pay for CNAs, who are essential employees within the healthcare sector. One idea would be for DLT staff and healthcare administrators to have an open forum or focus group with a facilitator where issues and ideas are discussed to identify what can be done within the industry and with support from DLT to improve working conditions and pay for CNAs. We also suggest that RJRI work with the state legislature to revise the Rhode Island Promise scholarship to enable RI residents to complete the CNA training tuition free even though the participants may not gain an associate degree. The demand for these positions and the many barriers to entry and retention should put CNAs in a special category that justifies incentivizing the program. Additional monies and support also should be allocated for recruiting and retaining participants in these programs.

Best Practices

Based on the activities conducted by the Rhode Island DLT and changes implemented by the agency during the 2016 RJRI implementation grant cycle, several best practices emerged:

- Actively recruit businesses to participate.
- Focus on long-term sustainability of economic sectors and employee success.
- Bring other government agencies and community organizations together and actively recruit new businesses to work together with partnerships.
- Allow partnerships to modify their budget and activities as they receive feedback about how the programs are working and what they need or do not need compared with what they had proposed.
- Be flexible, responsive, and open to sector ideas and constraints.

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[57] State of Rhode Island, Division of Planning, 2013, http://www.planning.ri.gov/planning-areas/demographics/data/population-projections.php

[58] Subcommittee of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council. *Age-Friendly RI, Aging in Community Final Report*, June 2016, http://agefriendlyri.org/reports.html

- Treat businesses and trainees as clients and customers, not recipients.
- Encourage new and innovative ways of thinking about sector workforce development.
- Facilitate sectors learning about opportunities across the state for workforce development funding and programming, and help them network with other agencies and business leaders.
- Respond quickly to partnership questions and requests.
- Maintain a culture of enthusiasm where staff members are genuinely interested in the health and success of the sector.
- Send staff to grantee/employer offices to conduct meetings.

Recommendations

Based on the partnerships' feedback about working with DLT and our own evaluation of the processes utilized in the 2016 RJRI implementation grant cycle, we recommend:

- Revise processes, reporting, and financials to:
    - ensure that partnerships understand the costs of participation before submitting applications;
    - provide reporting requirements that allow digital entry of intake or send a DLT staff member to conduct intake at partnership events;
    - minimize changes to protocol and processes adopted during a grant period;
    - make sure reporting requirements are stated explicitly up front and create a manual for how to report so that partnerships know what is required for reimbursement before programming begins;
    - be as predictable as possible regarding the time required to deliver financial reimbursement;
    - institute a reporting schedule for grantees; and
    - lengthen the agreement structure for funding to allow participating organizations to plan for longer than six months.
- Revise the design of performance metrics to:
    - include only performance metrics that can and are going to be tracked by either DLT or the grantee; and
    - include projections for program attrition in performance metrics so that the goal for recruiting into a program and the goal for completing a program are not identical.
- Revise the Request for Proposals to:
    - be clearer about the length of the funding versus the length of the partnership;
    - mirror either the addenda format or the case study format to reduce the need for the additional time required and the frustration involved in converting proposals to the addenda format.; and
    - be clearer about the DLT's interest and willingness to invest in the development of intermediary capacity.
- Be up front with grantees about what ways DLT can and cannot help with recruitment.
- For partnerships targeting unemployed people, facilitate a way to find the unemployed by using DLT databases and sending letters/emails to those who have recently been on unemployment or who are known to be out of work.

- Make sure attendance at grantee meetings is included in the Request for Proposals and either reduce the number of grantee meetings or allow for virtual participation.
- Allow partnerships to receive a second planning grant to evaluate, develop, and retool programming, or allow for compensation for this process within the implementation grant. Alternatively, incorporate funding for program evaluation into each grant to allow grantees to assess what is working/not working in their program.
- Within the healthcare sector:
    - work with key partners in the healthcare industry to determine how to improve the working conditions and wages for CNAs, given their essential nature in the healthcare industry but wage-induced high attrition rates; and
    - work with the legislature to request an extension of the Rhode Island Promise program at CCRI to enable Rhode Island residents to complete the CNA training tuition free even though the participants may not gain an associate degree.

Section 11: Methodology

The URI team utilized case study methodology to meet project objectives. The team included Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz (Principal Investigator), Skye Leedahl (co-investigator), and Aaron Ley (co-investigator), along with student researchers Bridget Hall, Kristin Sodhi, and Marissa DeOliveira, overseen by the principal investigator (PI) and co-investigators (Co-Is). The PI, Co-Is, and student researchers formed the research team for this analysis. The project had four key objectives: 1. Complete case studies for each of the 26 grantees awarded a 2016 RJRI implementation grant; 2. Conduct an overall evaluation of the RJRI programs based on the 26 case studies; 3. Complete an evaluation of DLT efforts in implementing and administering the RJRI program based on grantee feedback; and 4. Conduct an institutional history of the internal challenges facing program evaluation at the DLT. To meet these project objectives, the research team conducted a comprehensive literature review of the academic, government, and trade publications on sector workforce development programming; conducted in-person interviews with key staff from RJRI grantees; reviewed program materials; and met with DLT grant advisors. In completing the case studies, we also reviewed outcomes measures (quantitative data) provided by DLT as reported by the grantees. To complete the overall evaluation of the RJRI program and of DLT efforts, we conducted extensive qualitative analysis of the case studies. The narrative below presents specific methods used to complete project tasks within each section of the report.

Case Studies

The Co-Is along with the help of the student researchers completed 26 case studies, one for each of the partnerships that received an RJRI implementation grant during 2016. To write the case studies, we utilized information from in-person interviews and program materials. To form the areas for evaluation of the case studies, the PI and Co-Is developed a semi-structured interview guide reviewed by the DLT RJRI leadership. The interview questions are listed below. Prior to conducting the interviews, the research team reviewed the proposals and addenda (contracts) for each grantee and wrote summaries of the grants to acquaint ourselves with each of the partnerships.

From November 2016 to November 2017, the Co-Is conducted in-person interviews with key staff from the main applicant for each grant. The two Co-Is divided up the interviews, and each researcher was responsible for completing 13 interviews. We utilized purposive sampling and selected the key staff from each partnership after consulting with the DLT grant advisors. The grant advisors provided contact information and suggested months for the interview based on implementation progress. Overall, one in-person interview was completed with each grantee. Several grantees required one or more follow up interviews.

To recruit the staff for the interviews, one Co-I went to a DLT RJRI event to present to the grantees. At this meeting, the URI researcher introduced the evaluation and informed the grantees in attendance that we would be contacting staff from the main applicant for each grant. Following this meeting, student researchers began calling and emailing the grantees to arrange in-person meetings. The initial contact person for the grant decided whether he/she would be interviewed solely or if multiple people would be in attendance during the scheduled interview

time. See Table 11.1 below for a delineation of the number of people interviewed in person for each grant.

The two Co-Is met with partnership representatives at their locations across the state (see Table 11.1 for a listing of the various communities we visited). We scheduled each interview for 1 and a half hours, and each interview took 1-2 hours. To begin each interview, the Co-I reviewed informed consent procedures (IRB Approval and Consent documents are below). Those interviewed were informed that the last portion of the interview about DLT administration would be confidential and not included in the case studies, and the information reported only in the aggregate within the report. Interviews were audio-recorded. In two instances, interviewees declined being audio-recorded, due to the privacy concerns of one participant and technical/scheduling issues for another participant. In these instances, the interviewer took extensive notes and followed up with the interviewee as needed to address any gaps.

Following each interview, the interviewer wrote down notes in a pre-designed case study template that included information from the proposal and addenda. This information included the primary headings of the case studies (e.g., Industry Need, Sector Need, Partnership Formation, Implementation Activities, etc.). This helped to ensure that we did not miss key details about the interview and that we were able to quickly and easily jot down information that would be pertinent to the writing of the case study. Audio recordings were sent to Rev.com to be transcribed. The research team also conducted follow-up interviews as needed with the main grantee. These follow-up interviews took place in person, over the telephone, or through email conversation, depending on information needs and availability of the staff.

One student and one Co-I drafted each case study. The student/Co-I main drafter was the same as the Co-I who conducted the interview. We began with a basic template that included the main sections of the case study. To write the case study, the student investigator worked with the Co-I responsible for the interview to review all the materials associated with the grant, including the proposal, addenda, interview transcription, notes and audio, and any other relevant information. After drafting the first few case studies, we refined our template to also include sub-headings for the Successes and Challenges sections (e.g., Partnerships, Recruitment, Trainee Barriers).

The team's process for writing each case study involved multiple steps: 1. Utilize the agreed-upon key sections for each case study; 2. Incorporate any information from the interviewer's notes following the interview; 3. Include information from the implementation grant proposal narrative, addenda, numerical outcomes tables with data from DLT, and any supplementary material provided by the grantees based on the sections of the study (beginning with the first section, "Sector Need," and working through each section); 4. Add information from the transcript; 5. Finalize the draft of the case study for review by the PI and make notes on any missing information; 6. Receive and address feedback from the PI; 7. Correspond with the grant staff to answer any remaining questions (through either phone calls or email exchanges); 8. Send the case study to the grant advisor to answer any remaining questions and fill in remaining case-specific elements of the performance metrics tables; 9. Correspond and meet with the grant advisor(s) to incorporate the answers to any remaining questions and to verify performance metrics; 10. Finally, the PI reviewed the case studies to check for language consistency, grammar, and clarity. These steps involved substantial contribution and oversight from the PI throughout the process. The inclusion of multiple researchers enhanced the rigor and trustworthiness (including credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability) of the data and the analysis process.

Performance Metrics

Performance metrics for each grantee were collected and reported by the Department of Labor and Training for its internal grant-tracking purposes. The URI team did not collect any data related to the performance metrics independently. The PI and a student researcher determined the performance metrics included in the case studies and analysis based on the addenda each grantee set up after its contract with the DLT had been awarded. Each grantee set its own performance metrics in consultation with DLT grant managers. All performance metrics set in the addenda were included in the case studies. Although almost all partnerships determined targets for recruitment, training, and employment, most partnerships also included additional metrics specific to their sector. These included but were not limited to employee retention, career advancement, partners added, reduced recidivism, and increased wages.

The DLT reported recruitment-, training-, and employment-related performance metrics to the URI team in mid-2017. All information in the case studies and analysis includes only data from programs planned for the 2016 implementation year, although some 2016 programs were completed a few months into 2017 due to delays in implementation. After each case study was completed, the research team confirmed with DLT grant managers that the metrics matched their current reporting system's data and confirmed non-standard performance metrics data. This was necessary because some data changed as time progressed, such as the number of trainees employed or retained. By verifying data with DLT, we reported the most up-to-date information possible about the success of the partnership in its stated goals for 2016. Thus, the performance metrics reflect the data available at the time of writing. Several performance metrics were still being collected and therefore were not able to be collected and are noted as such in the case studies.

Analysis

Once the case studies were complete regarding content, we began our analysis of the overall program. We utilized each case study, or each grant, as the unit of analysis. We then identified a list of research/evaluation questions that guided our analysis based on the questions developed for the interviews. All case studies were entered in NVivo software, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based information for deep analysis of large volumes of data. In NVivo, we coded the case studies to correspond with the major sections of the final report, including Innovation, Partnerships, Recruitment and Outreach, Implementation/Programming, Trainee Challenges, Transition from Training to Employment, and Sustainability. For example, for Partnerships, we coded all information from the Partnership sections of each case study as well as the Partnerships sub-sections from Successes and Achievements and any information from Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Recommendations related to partnerships. We then assigned each section to a team made up of the PI or a Co-I and a student researcher.

After the information was organized based on major sections of the report and subsections, our analysis followed several stages. First, we used an open-coding process, in which we identified themes across the case studies. We did not have preconceived codes; rather, we allowed themes to emerge from the data. After all themes from the sub-sections were

identified, we then categorized them based on commonalities.[59] One faculty researcher (the PI or a Co-I) coded each major section and its sub-sections. Then, a second faculty investigator went through each document to examine the codes and disagree or agree with the first researcher's coding decisions. In cases of inter-coder disagreement, the two researchers discussed and came to an agreement. We utilized this process for the purpose of investigator triangulation to increase the credibility and validity of the findings. This also enabled us to calculate inter-coder agreement. Intercoder agreement/reliability was high across the sections at 84.81 percent.[60]

The only deviation from this process was in two cases. First, we used the Sustainability section as a template to test our research process. This section was coded by the entire research team, and then we discussed anywhere our codes disagreed and used this section to formalize a process for all other sections. Second, the Programming section was coded first by a student researcher, with the PI as the secondary coder.

Once all documents for a section were coded by two of the PI/Co-Is and checked by a student researcher, the student researcher drafted an outline for the section to cover the themes identified in coding for the faculty investigator in charge of the section to review. Once the faculty investigator approved, the student researcher drafted the section and the two investigators (always including the PI) edited it for accuracy, consistency, and language.

Two sections of the report contain evaluations of individual partnerships by the research team. In the Sustainability section of the report, each partnership also was evaluated on the likelihood that it would be sustainable without state funding. This evaluation was based on the plans presented by each partnership during the 2016 RJRI implementation period and the partnership's own statements regarding its sustainability and strength. This determination does not take the current status of the partnership into account, nor does it include the influence of outside factors, such as state funding decisions. This information was collected from each partnership's 2016 Implementation Grant application and interviews with partnership leaders.

Similarly, each partnership was evaluated on the extent of its innovation in the Innovation section of the report. This evaluation was based on the partnership's own statements of its innovation and the programs and services implemented by each partnership in 2016. The tables in the analysis were created using either the performance metrics reported to the research team but aggregated for specific questions that were identified in the analysis (for example, did paying grantees increase the likelihood of program completion?) or by compiling the number of partnerships that mentioned a certain challenge (for example, the number of partnerships citing transportation challenges).

DLT Evaluation

Each interview included an anonymous section regarding the partnership's experience working with the DLT over the course of the 2016 implementation year. These questions were intended to identify what the department was doing well and where it needed improvement. During the case study writing, the Co-Is created a separate document including comments on DLT and answers to questions about working with DLT and wrote paragraphs reflecting the overall assessment of the DLT from the partnership perspective.

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[59] Creswell, J. W. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* (1998). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
[60] Saldana, J. *The Coding manual for qualitative researchers.* (2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Second, using the interview questions from sections 7 and 8 of the interview guide, the PI coded answers in Nvivo for themes under the headings in the questions (overall challenges and help, DLT staff, reporting procedures, etc.) using an open coding process. Codes were developed by identifying themes in the answers (e.g., "helpful," "frustrating," "time consuming," "improved") and coding them in Nvivo. The codes were refined over time and checked multiple times to ensure that previous information was coded to reflect any new codes that emerged throughout the analysis process. Once the list of codes was complete, the PI then produced counts for each code in Nvivo to get an aggregate assessment of the major challenges and benefits of working with the department.[61] Once coding was complete, a student researcher along with the lead PI for the section outlined and drafted the analysis. The Co-PIs then compared their notes from the interview transcripts to the outline to identify any disagreements in interpretation. These disagreements were discussed, and the transcripts revisited to make sure the research team all agreed on the interpretation and analysis.

Third, with assistance from a course of program evaluation graduate students learning about qualitative analysis, one Co-I with specific expertise in the health workforce arena as a former CNA examined challenges specific to the healthcare sector partnerships that provided training programs for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). Following discussions among the research team, we identified this training area as one that encountered many barriers in meeting its goals and as an area of continued, growing need for Rhode Island. Therefore, we specifically targeted this area to identify common challenges and identify potential solutions.

[61] *Ibid*.

Table 11.1: Partnership Interview Information

Partnership Name	# of People Interviewed In-Person	Interview Location
Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership	1	Middletown
Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program	1	Warwick
Residential Construction Partnership	4	East Providence
Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program	3	East Providence
RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative	1	South Kingstown
Marine Trades and Composites Partnership	1	Bristol
Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island	3	North Kingstown
Healthy Jobs RI Partnership	1	Providence
Man Up 2 Careers Partnership	1	Providence
Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership	1	Westerly
Healthcare Training Collaborative	1	Woonsocket
Medtech Innovation Engine	2	Providence
RI Food Management Training Partnership	2	Cranston
Insurance Innovation Partnership	1	Warwick
RI Financial Skills Initiative	2	Providence
Aquaculture Training Partnership	1	South Kingstown
Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership	1	Providence
Building Futures Partnership	1	Providence
Real Jobs IT Partnership	1	Providence
CNA Talent Network	2	Providence
Phoenix Partnership	1	Woonsocket
Partnership for Real IT Jobs	1	Providence
Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women	3	Providence
Design Forward Partnership	1	Providence
Westerly Regional Jobs Partnership	3	Westerly
RJ Partnership of Northern RI	2	Woonsocket
Total Number of People Interviewed In-Person	42	

Guided Interview Questions for Case Studies

Section 1: What they set out to do (brief summary of their grant proposals)

- Prior to interview, read grant proposal narrative and the addenda and type up a 1-2 paragraph summary of the goal of the grant and the basic programming.

Section 2: Why they set out to do it (summary of the justification for the proposal—challenges of finding workers in this field and existing training programs in the past)

- 1 paragraph summary generated from the grant proposal narrative/addenda

WALKING TOUR QUESTION (e.g. general interview—eliminate questions from below that the person covers during general impression)

Can you tell me generally about your experience with your Real Jobs Rhode Island training program?

Section 3: Innovation: How training programs prior to this one were different (if there were training programs)? Or where the idea for the training program came from (e.g. no training programs exist).

· Q1. Have you offered training programs in the _____ (insert sector name) sector prior to being funded by DLT's Real Jobs Rhode Island grant?

If YES:

- Have any of those previous efforts been funded or assisted by DLT?
- How does this training program differ from those you offered before?

§ Probe: larger scale? Different partners? Different training protocol? Different recruitment population?

- Are you running any other training programs at the same time as this one?

§ How do those differ from the RJRI funded training program?

If NO:

- You indicated you have not run training programs before this one. How did you decide that a training program would be a good endeavor for your organization?
- How did you identify that training was needed in your sector?
- Was training for the sector being offered by other organizations before you applied for this grant?

If yes:

- Are they still offering that training program?
- How does your training program differ from what was/is being offered by other organizations?

Section 4: Process: How they decided to apply, how they formed as a sector

- Q2. How did you first hear about the RJRI funding availability?
- Q3. Were the sector collaborators already a formal group prior to applying for funding?
- Probe: How did you form the sector partners (workplace intermediaries, business partners, educational institutions, etc.)

If YES:

- Had you worked together on projects before, if so what were those projects?
- Were there any barriers to getting the partners to work on this project together?

IF NO:

- Who brought the sector together for the first time?
- Can you describe how that went?
- How did you decide who would be involved from the sector in this particular grant?
- Were there any challenges of getting the sector together to talk about training?
- Probe: what were those challenges?
- Probe: how did you overcome those challenges?
- Q4. When did you decide to apply for funding from DLT?
- Q5. Was there anything that made you unsure about applying for funding or anything that made you not want to apply for funding?
- Q6. What made you decide to apply for RJRI funding?

Section 5: Strengths and Challenges of grant implementation

- Q7. What was the biggest struggle/challenge implementing this grant?
- Q8. How did you deal with/overcome this challenge?
- Probe: What other challenges/struggles have you experienced implementing this grant? And how did you overcome these?
- Q9. What was the biggest success in implementing this grant?
- Probe: What other successes do you feel you have had?
- Q10. What strategies have worked well in collaborating with the sector partners?
- Q11. Were there any challenges to working together as a sector?
- Probe: What partners ended up being most involved? (please describe who was most involved)
- Probe: Were there any partners that were particularly hard to work with or who you expected to be more involved than they were? (please describe)
- Q12. You set out to recruit _____ (insert target population from grant). Were there any challenges you faced recruiting this population?
- Q13. Were there any unforeseen challenges you experienced in recruiting participants into the program?
- Q14. What were the recruitment strategies you employed that worked particularly well?
- Q15. Were there any challenges related to personal or family issues for the trainees?
- Probe: childcare, transportation, cultural competencies, language, work ethic, financial
- Did you provide any support to help overcome these challenges?
- Q16. Were there any skill deficiencies in your target population that you had not foreseen needing to train for? (please describe)

IF YES:

- Did you incorporate anything into your training program to compensate for this? (if so, please describe)
- Q17. You set out to train ___[fill in number of people], did you reach your goal?

IF NO:

- Can you describe why you think you were unable to achieve your goal?

- Q18. If you were to remake this sector plan from scratch, what would you do differently (e.g. things you would include that were not originally included, or things you included that you would not include again)?
- Q19. Your grant said that your goals for this program were to _____[insert here from the grants], Do you feel like this program met those intended goals? (please elaborate)
- Q20. Have you begun any additional training programs since first getting a RJRI award? (please describe if yes)

Section 6: Sustainability

- Q21. How sustainable do you feel this training program is?
- Q22. Do you plan to continue this program without the funding from the state? (e.g. once RJRI is done)
- Q23. Do you have confidence that your organization can sustain its broader mission? And is there anything DLT could do to help? (Possible probes: For example, in the marine trades- will they be able to keep this going? Are certain components, such as courses, institutionalized?)

Before beginning next section, state "This next section is completely anonymous and will not be included with your case study. It is going to be part of an aggregated examination of how DLT is doing in supporting grantees and administering grants. Please answer honestly and know that your answers will not be traced to your grant. "

Section 7: Benefits and challenges of working with DLT

- Q24. Can you tell me how it has been to work with DLT on this grant? (general probe)
- Q25. What would you say was the largest challenge of working with DLT?
- Q26. Was there anything about working with DLT that made it harder to achieve the goals of the grant?
- Q27. Was there anything about working with DLT that helped you achieve the goals in the grant?
- Q28. Were there other things you have not spoken about so far that you found difficult in working with DLT?
- Q29. Were there other things you have not mentioned so far that you found beneficial about working with DLT?
- Q30. In the future, what could DLT do to make it easier for sector grantees to run their grants?
- Q31. Were there any problems you had with the way reporting was set up?
- Q32. Was there any support you could have used from DLT that you were not provided with that would have made achieving your goals easier?
- Q33. For future grantees, would you recommend they apply for the Real Jobs grants? Why or why not?
- Q34. How was it working with your grant administrator?

Section 8. ONLY For those who have run DLT programs before (see question 1 probe)

- Q35. Many changes have occurred at DLT over the last few years, given you have worked with them in the past on these projects, would you say it has gotten easier or harder to work with DLT on training programs?

- Q36. Is there anything in specific that they used to do that they do not anymore that you think they should bring back?
- Q37. Is there anything specifically that they are doing differently now that you think they should make sure to continue doing?
- Q38. Would you say working with DLT has improved or gone downhill while you have been working with them?
- Q39. One of the changes that DLT attempted to make when designing RJRI was to make the process more flexible than training programs in the past. Would you say that it was more flexible? If so, was that flexibility helpful? (please explain)
- Q40. Did you understand why you were being asked to report the information DLT required in the addenda process? How did you feel about how much information you reported?

GENERAL END: Is there anything else you'd like to mention or you think I should know about your program or DLT?

Institutional Review Board Approval and Consent Documents

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
DIVISION OF RESEARCH
AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

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FWA:	00003132
IRB:	00000599
DATE:	June 15, 2016
TO:	Shanna Pearson, PhD
FROM:	University of Rhode Island IRB
STUDY TITLE:	Real Jobs Rhode Island Evaluation
IRB REFERENCE #:	906032-3
LOCAL REFERENCE #:	HU1516-183
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Revision
ACTION:	APPROVED - UPDATED
EFFECTIVE DATE:	June 15, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE:	June 14, 2017
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # *6*

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this research study. The University of Rhode Island IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50 & 56.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate **Appendix S - Event Reporting** for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements must be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office. Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years after the project ends.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office by June 14, 2017. Please use the **CONTINUING REVIEW FORM** for this procedure.

If you have any general questions, please contact us by email at researchintegrity@etal.uri.edu. For study related questions, please contact us via **project mail through IRBNet**. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

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Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document unless the signature requirement has been waived by the IRB.

Matthew Delmonico, Ph.D., MPH
IRB Chair

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THINK BIG WE DO™

Title of Project: Real Jobs Rhode Island Evaluation

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

You have been invited to take part in a research project described below. The researcher will explain the project to you in detail. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, the person mainly responsible for this study, will discuss them with you. She can be reached at 240-602-7426.

We have been contracted by the Department of Labor and Training to evaluate the Real Jobs Rhode Island program. As part of that evaluation, we are interviewing each grantee about their recruitment process, their interactions with DLT, and their program experience. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete and will be recorded. Part of the interview will contribute to a case study regarding the grant you conducted. A second part, regarding your interactions with DLT, will be a confidential evaluation based on all the grantees experiences with DLT.

What will be done:
During the interview we will ask you a range of questions about the differences between this program and previous programs, your recruitment process for trainees, how coordinated the partnership was, and your experience working with staff at DLT. The interview will be recorded.

Risks or discomfort:
We do not anticipate any risks based on this research.

Benefits of this study:
The goal of this study is to learn about how the Department of Labor and Training can better serve grantees in the future. In addition, the case studies from this evaluation will help other states learn about ways to facilitate sector partners to train for a productive American workforce. Although there may be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researcher and state government may learn more about supporting business partnerships to train future employees.

Confidentiality:
Your name will not be used in any publications. Your answers about your training process and your partnership will be included in the case study about your partnership. For the information about DLT interactions, your answers will be completely confidential and not associated with your partnership. None of the information will identify you by name. All

records will be maintained on password-protected files on an internal server. No names will be included with the files.

Rights and Complaints:
If you are not satisfied with the way this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints with Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz at 240-602-7426, anonymously if you choose. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

By agreeing to an interview, you are implying that you 1) are at least 18 years old; 2) have read the consent form and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and 3) that you consent to participate in this study and to be audio recorded.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this research!

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
1511 Pontiac Avenue,
Cranston, RI 02920

APRIL 2018 REPORT

Faculty:
Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, *Principal Investigator*
Skye Leedahl
Aaron Ley

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Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership (RJRICP), led by the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA), was formed to heighten awareness of the cybersecurity industry's workforce recruitment needs, communicate those needs to the academic community, and deliver programs that aid small businesses associated with the cybersecurity industry in bringing ideas to market. Specifically, the RJRICP was formed for the following reasons:

- The industry needed to train 400 incumbent employees for new cyber-related certifications within a two-year period and seventy new cybersecurity workers within the year.
- Employment of information security analysts was projected to grow 37 percent over a five-year period.
- Over eighty percent of Rhode Island companies had future plans to hire cybersecurity personnel.

These needs meant that employers were unable to pursue additional opportunities and fill vacant positions due to the lack of skilled employees.

II. Grant History

SENEDIA, a non-profit organization that represents defense industry businesses, initially formed in 2002 in response to base realignment initiatives in Rhode Island. It had already been involved with previous initiatives undertaken by the DLT through the development of internship programs and through the Governor's Workforce Board Partnerships (it formally became a partner with the Governor's Workforce Board in 2010). The organization's past experience working with DLT and the opportunity to fund a proposal that met the industry's workforce needs caused the organization to apply for grant funding to train cybersecurity workers. The primary difference between this grant and past grants was that this one offered an opportunity to develop an expanded training program that allowed SENEDIA to extend internships to more

people than in previous grants.

III. Goals and Objectives

The RJRICP was developed to increase awareness of the industry's needs by recruiting potential workers, communicating needs to the academic community, and helping small businesses bring new ideas to market. In order to accomplish these objectives, the RJRICP established five specific goals associated with five specific modules.

1. Increase awareness about the industry's cybersecurity needs and opportunities.
    - The RJRICP designed a Cybersecurity Awareness Training module to fulfill this goal.
2. Execute a cybersecurity Core Competency Assessment that assists sixty unemployed workers, veterans, and students.
    - The RJRICP designed a Core Competency Assessment module to fulfill this goal.
3. Execute a specialized Cybersecurity Certification Training program to reach 288 under- or unemployed individuals and deliver them the skills needed to qualify for federal and commercial jobs.
    - The RJRICP designed a Cybersecurity Certification Training module to fulfill this goal.
4. Expand experiential learning opportunities through a Cybersecurity Internship Program to 24 students, veterans, and nontraditional job seekers.
    - The RJRICP designed a Cybersecurity Internship Program module to fulfill this goal.
5. Create a council of industry and academic mentors, along with online resources, to help bring mature concepts to the marketplace.
    - The RJRICP designed a Cybersecurity Ideas and Product to Market Council and Resources module to fulfill this goal.

IV. Partnerships

SENEDIA is a trade organization of companies that, having worked together many times since its foundation in 2002, are affiliated with the defense industry. When SENEDIA learned about the Real Jobs funding opportunities, it applied for and received a Real Jobs planning grant, which was used to convene the RJRICP. While executing its planning grant, SENEDIA distributed an online survey to the defense, manufacturing, hospitality, finance, and healthcare industries, as well as the Providence, Northern RI, and Newport County Chambers of Commerce to assess their cybersecurity personnel needs. SENEDIA used the results of this study to partner with academic, non-profit, and industry partners so that the industry's needs could be met through the delivery of training programs. Finally, the RJRICP formed a Steering Committee and an Advisory Committee to act as its governing bodies. The RJRICP Steering Committee was created under the direction of SENEDIA's Executive Director to oversee the strategic plan for program implementation and outcomes. Partners also nominated individuals to participate on an

Advisory Committee, tasked with providing input and feedback from industry partners not directly involved in the implementation process.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance	Lead Applicant: Convener of the RJRICP; Director of programs oversaw the implementation of the training modules.
Dell SecureWorks	Committed 80 hours of time from staff experts toward training per year; committing to hire five trained and certified program participants yearly; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan and assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
PURVIS Systems	Committed 20 hours of time from staff experts toward training per year; committed to hiring two trained and certified program participants yearly; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan and assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
Raytheon Company	Committed 50 hours of time from staff experts toward training per year; committed to hiring five trained and certified program participants annually; provide access to conference space; provide data analysis, on-the-job training, and supplies; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan and assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
Rite Solutions	Committed 80 hours from staff experts toward training per year; committed to hire five trained and certified program participants annually; provide access to conference space and laboratory facilities; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan; and assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
SEA Corporation	Committed fifty hours of staff time, ten hours of faculty time and 25 hours from staff experts per year; committed to hire five trained and certified program participants annually; provide access to conference space and laboratory facilities; participate in regular

	meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan; and assessing the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
Roger Williams University	Provide access to its online Bridge platform to serve as a method of information sharing and connectivity between partnership members; faculty/administration time; actively participate in the Cybersecurity Internship Program.
University of Rhode Island, Brown University, New England Institute of Technology, Bryant University, Johnson and Wales University	Committed faculty/administration time; participate in the Cybersecurity Internship Program.
Maritime Cybersecurity Center	Offer the Cybersecurity Awareness Training module; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan; assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
Community College of Rhode Island	Help design and execute training modules that lead to certifications in relevant cybersecurity fields; lead the Cybersecurity Certification Training module on its Newport campus; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan; assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.
LaunchCode	Help develop and implement the Core Competency Assessment module; participate in regular meetings to assist in the implementation of the training plan; help refer candidates to modules; assess the needs of the cybersecurity industry.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

A variety of strategies were used to launch implementation of the grant. A social media campaign was combined with information sessions at high schools, veterans' fairs, and career outreach fairs to recruit prospective cybersecurity industry candidates. SENEDIA also employs a career outreach coordinator who recruits candidates, sponsors industry-academic roundtables so that universities can meet the staffing needs of the cybersecurity industry, and maintains liaisons at the universities so that prospective interns can learn of internship opportunities. Recruits that are interested in defense industry careers are guided toward an online competency assessment developed by LaunchCode so that trainees are guided into the appropriate program that meets their level of competency. SENEDIA RI member companies pledged to hire at least thirty training program graduates for open positions in their industry, while the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Newport Division committed to hire a minimum of 38 training program graduates.

During implementation, the RJRICP conducted regular meetings with sub-grantees and partners to assess progress and receive feedback. Program success was measured by surveys of participants and training providers, participant follow-up after completion to measure career trajectory and success, monthly meetings by the Steering Committee, and quarterly meetings by the Advisory Committee.

Table 2: Training Module Overview

Name of Module	Training Provided	Duration
Module One: Cybersecurity Awareness Training	Increased awareness about the needs and opportunities connected with the Rhode Island cybersecurity sector. Training was derived from the current National Security Career Awareness program, developed from a Governor's Workforce Board grant, modified to focus on cybersecurity. Training included awareness training and outreach to Rhode Island cybersecurity careers, the role of cybersecurity in small businesses, and cybersecurity needs in academia.	One hour
Module Two: Core Competency Assessment	Assisted potential workers in identifying the experience, education, information, and training needed for success in a cybersecurity sector career. Delivered LaunchCode's technical assessments through the application process for Dell SecureWorks. Became an online assessment to gauge the abilities of potential workers for certification training, internship programs, or referral to other industries.	Twenty to Thirty minutes
Module Three: Cybersecurity Certification Training	By targeting under- or unemployed workers, this module sought to increase the number of applicants that have the correct certification to work at a higher level in the cybersecurity sector. This training used CCRI-developed modules aimed at both incumbent workers and under- or unemployed prospective workers. After completion, CCRI evaluated module participants for prior learning experience and, where applicable, connected this experience so that applicants were awarded college credit to be used toward the completion of a certificate or an Associate's Degree program.	Five days
Cybersecurity Internship Program	Expanded experiential opportunities for potential workers to gain insight into, and experience in, the cybersecurity sector. This program was initially developed under the Governor's Workforce Board training grant funds in 2013. The program allowed students to receive training and experience toward a future career in the cybersecurity industry while still working toward their degree. Internships were offered in the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and selected interns received a $1,500 stipend ($1,300 from grant funding and the rest from	Twelve weeks

	the intern's sponsoring company) for their participation.	
Cybersecurity Ideas and Product to Market Council and Resources	Designed to advise companies and students on how to develop ideas into marketable products or services, and launched an online resource center with accessible resources from the Rhode Island and national cybersecurity sectors. This relied on mentors from the cybersecurity industry to form a Council of Industry and Academia Mentors on Cyber IP (Intellectual Property) that helped guide development and connect mentees with mentors and resources.	One to Two hours

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Collaboration with CCRI

Participants at CCRI were placed in jobs before finishing their degrees and their new employers in some cases covered the cost of their tuition. Further, CCRI, which is now seeking NSA certification for its cybersecurity degree, and can now can offer cybersecurity training without continuous oversight from SENEDIA.

Open communication

The RJRICP kept lines of communication among all partners open at all times and without intermediaries. This openness fostered and maintained a spirit of trust and collaboration within the partnership, and was key to its overall strength.

Recruitment

Robust and varied recruitment efforts

The RJRICP used multiple methods of recruitment to attract quality candidates. It held career outreach fairs, hired and utilized an education outreach coordinator to connect with liaisons at colleges and universities, and established a strong social media presence.

Recruitment through colleges and universities

The RJRICP established close connections with colleges and universities to gather recruits. It specifically worked with members of these institutions with knowledge about the cybersecurity industry and its educational subject areas. This allowed the RJRICP to establish a pipeline of potential recruits who could be guided toward the Cybersecurity Internship Program.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of technical communication skills

The RJRICP found that an unexpected number of participants lacked technical communication skills once they began the training process. The RJRICP responded by developing and integrating a course into its internship program where participants learned how to write a concise white paper and to orally communicate complex material in under a minute to a superior.

Training

Success of participants

Interns worked with one of the business partners to bring the product ideas of the interns to market using the services of the Cybersecurity Ideas and Product to Market Council and Resources module. This helped to further improve the quality of training for interns.

High completion rate of rapid certification training

Although the RJRICP initially sought to introduce the Rapid Certification Training to a larger pool of Department of Defense (DOD) workers, it exceeded its goal of certifying twelve workers by certifying thirteen of its fourteen recruits.

Transition from Training to Employment

High completion rate and job placement rate of cybersecurity internships

The RJRICP successfully targeted 28 participants for its internship program despite only having a recruitment goal of 24. Of those 28 participants who enrolled in the program, 26 completed it and five of those completing the program were placed in related employment, exceeding the RJRICP's goal of placing three employees in training related employment.

Encouraging program completion

The RJRICP worked specifically with the participants in the Cybersecurity Internship Program to ensure that interns were completing both their schoolwork and internship requirements. Further, the RJRICP worked with its partner companies to ensure that interns either received a job offer with the company they interned with or introduced them to the hiring process at other partner companies.

Other

Expansion of training

SENEDIA has extended the internship program beyond the field of cybersecurity and has used the DLT "pitch" to begin an internship training program in the area of undersea technology.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-01 Real Jobs RI Cybersecurity Partnership (RJRICP)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Cybersecurity Internships - 2016	1/1/16	3/31/17	24	28	24	26
Rapid Certification Training - 2016 (Job Seekers)	1/1/16	12/31/16	6	7	6	6
Rapid Certification Training - 2016 (Incumbents)	1/1/16	12/31/16	6	7	6	7
Direct Job Placements - 2016 (Job Seekers)	1/1/16	12/31/16	0	3	0	3
Undersea Technology Internships - 2016/2017	9/1/16	9/30/17	10	11	10	8
Total Participants placed in related employment- Cybersecurity Internship Program					3	8
Other Objectives						
Awareness Presentation to Potential Future Workers					15	17
Awareness Presentation to Small Businesses					6	6
Total Participants recruited/assessed- Cybersecurity Rapid Certification					60	101

Total Participants Receiving certifications-- Cybersecurity Rapid Certification					TBD	3
Total Participants placed or retained in related employment- Cyber Security Rapid Certification					TBD	8
IP to Market Mentorships					2	2

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Finding the time to collaborate

The RJRICP found that time was the biggest obstacle to collaboration among industry partners. Many of its partners are small businesses that cannot afford to sacrifice substantial periods of time without it taking away from attending to their own matters. The RJRICP addressed this challenge by minimizing time commitments required for participation by member partners and finding convenient times to schedule meetings that did not interfere with small business hours.

Recruitment

Department of Defense security clearance

Strict requirements are in place for defense industry employment. Recently, the national timeline for approving basic security clearance was extended from taking one month to taking anywhere from six to nine months. As a result, training participants faced a long gap between the time they were interviewed and hired and the date they could start work. Further, participants must be US citizens and must have no criminal record to meet the government's security clearance standards. These requirements limited the number of recruits that could participate in cybersecurity training. However, this issue is being addressed by asking companies that are sponsoring interns to encourage trainees to apply for security clearances when the internship program begins. That way if the company wants to hire the intern as a full time employee at the start of their internship, the intern will either have received the security clearance or will be close to receiving one.

Outreach to veterans

Veteran outreach proved to be challenging for the RJRICP given its perception that veterans tend not to attend veterans' fairs. For those veterans participating in the training programs it can be challenging to make accommodations for the part-time jobs that they already hold and for their family-related responsibilities. Yet, the RJRICP overcame these challenges with veterans by being flexible with internship hours and offering a stipend.

Trainee Barriers

While RJRICP discussed no particular achievements in relation to overcoming trainee barriers, its training completion rate was very high.

Training

RJRICP discussed no particular achievements in relation to overcoming the training provided. However, in all but one of the training programs RJRICP trained more individuals than it originally planned for.

Transition from Training to Employment

RJRICP discussed no particular achievements in relation to transitioning trainees from training to employment. However, it placed more people into employment than it originally aimed to.

Other

Alterations in industry skill requirements

When SENEDIA designed the RJRICP's five modules, it did so on the basis of the skills that the DOD had proposed for its employees and contractors. On the basis of financial considerations, DOD scaled back its originally proposed skill requirements needed for employment in the defense industry. This decision occurred after SENEDIA had already written its grant on the basis of the original skill requirements, requiring SENEDIA to modify its plans for grant implementation. The RJRICP worked with its grant advisor to modify the grant, specifically Module Three, which was created around DOD skill requirements. The RJRICP adjusted Module Three from an independent module with its own trainees to a training module provided to interns in the Cybersecurity Internship Program. Interns now received five days of Cybersecurity Bootcamp training and the CCRI-developed evaluation, both of which were valued at roughly $2000. While the content remained the same, the targeted training audience was adjusted as a result of this modification. The RJRICP also modified how many people it aimed to train due to the DOD skill requirement changes. Module Two increased from a target of 60 participants to 101 participants, while Module Three changed from a target of 288 participants to 36 interns who received the certification training, while Modules Four and Five stayed the same.

VIII. Sustainability

The RJRICP has high expectations for the sustainability of its training program. First, the internship program will most likely be sustainable without DLT funding, especially since the state recently won a four year grant that will deliver $1,500 stipends to interns ($1,300 paid by state and $200 by industry). Additionally, the skills assessment program on the website is sustainable without grant funding as it is run by LaunchCode, though the RJRICP and employers must still absorb the cost of administering the program. The industry-academia roundtables will be sustainable, as they are very popular in the industry and the minimal costs associated with them are covered by in-kind contributions by roundtable member groups. Further, the certification training offered in Module Three that was incorporated into the internship program can be separated from the internship and offered to new recruits and incumbent workers who want to increase their skills on a limited basis in the future if the internship loses state grant funding. Further, the RJRICP is confident that the industry mentorship currently offered by the formal committee will continue informally if the program dissolves because informal mentorship has always been a facet of the industry. SENEDIA plans to facilitate this mentoring by offering professional development classes for former interns, developing a professional network of former interns, and increasing pipeline efforts in state K-12 schools.

Finally, the RJRICP is hopeful that cybersecurity training in Rhode Island will be sustainable even if the RJRICP itself dissolves. CCRI, which is now seeking NSA certification for its cybersecurity degree, now can offer cybersecurity training without continuous oversight from SENEDIA. If this development continues, CCRI can offer training similar to the trainings offered by the RJRICP without RJRICP assistance or oversight.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lesson was learned by the RJRICP in executing its training program:

- Prepare for changes in industry demand and allow for flexibility in training programs to account for the changes.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the RJRICP:

- Provide a weekly stipend to participants in the collegiate internship program to stabilize recruitment to the program and the industry as a whole while also expanding access to training programs for students who need to pay their way through school.
- Provide a standardized competency assessment to program recruits to direct interested potential participants into the right training modules, and identify those who are not suited for a career in the industry prior to their participation in the training.
- Work with a dedicated education outreach coordinator to connect with the industry and the industry pipeline, and facilitate recruitment.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the Real Jobs Rhode Island Cybersecurity Partnership, the following recommendation is suggested:

- Allow for flexibility to change implementation plans so that partnerships can respond and adapt to new industry needs.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program

Prepared for:

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Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries, including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist Apprenticeship Program (BET & DS), led by Claflin Medical Equipment, was designed to address a training gap and identify qualified people to fill equipment and information technology positions within the healthcare sector. Claflin Medical Equipment applied for and received an RJRI planning grant to develop the BET & DS Program. As part of the planning grant, Claflin conducted a survey, completed interviews, and held a roundtable discussion to aid in identifying issues and training needs within the industry. Based on the survey's findings, the BET & DS Program sought to address several realities within the healthcare industry, including:[1,2,3]

- The healthcare sector was the fastest growing industry in Rhode Island between 2000 and 2010 (growing 18.8 percent) and employed about 16 percent of the population. In 2013, hospitals accounted for nearly 6 percent of all jobs in the state.
    - As an example of growth in the biomedical field, the total sales of Claflin Medical Equipment are expected to increase from $37 million to $60 million annually.
- In Rhode Island, Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist positions are in high demand, and positions are often unfilled for long periods of time (49 months).
    - Over the next 10 years, there are expected to be 122 job openings labeled "Medical Equipment Repairers" in Rhode Island. Of these openings, 65 will be new job openings, and 57 will be due to incumbent worker turnover and retirements.

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[1] Greenwell, K. (2015, August). Labor Market Information Unit/ DLT. \A. Rome, Interviewer) Kate Greenwell provided data specific to the healthcare industry in RI, in biomedical and IT sectors, specific to job attributes and projected growth in the sector.
[2] Advancing Safety in Healthcare Technology. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.aami.org
[3] Industry Statistics Portal. (n.d.). Retrieved from Business Data from the US Census Bureau http://www.census.gov

        - Demand for Data Scientists is expected to grow by 10 percent over the next decade.
    - Medical equipment repairers earn between $45,000-$72,000 annually.
    - Most employers would strongly prefer to hire skilled workers rather than train them, but the pool of these workers in Rhode Island is extremely small.
    - The biomedical industry has faced difficulty finding available workers.
- Rhode Island lacks any form of institutional training for these programs, and many employers lack the means to train such workers.
    - Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist positions often go to job seekers from out of state with the needed specialized knowledge and skills. Massachusetts has training programs; therefore, many Rhode Island jobs go to residents of Massachusetts.
    - Companies that do conduct training often have difficulties conducting training in-house, and there is no training standardization within the industry.
    - Medical technology training takes at least two years, and this period is quite expensive because companies must pay trainees a living wage to ensure retention.
    - Turnover of trainees is an issue, and training costs are high. When an employer loses a trainee, it can cost the employer anywhere from $60,000-$70,000 in sunk training costs.
    - The majority of those who are hired into this industry lack certification and a college degree, so they still require one to three years of intensive on-the-job and academic training, and many young workers lack the maturity to be successful even with training.

To address these issues, the BET & DS Program specifically targeted companies that hire individuals for Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist positions, including healthcare organizations that employ staff directly and those that contract with third party providers. Biomedical Equipment Technicians install, inspect, maintain, repair, calibrate, modify, and design biomedical equipment and support systems to adhere to medical standard guidelines. They also educate and advise staff and other agencies on safe clinical application of biomedical equipment. Those who are qualified to be Data Scientists have certifications and experience in installing hardware, network equipment, and software applications and in managing the intersection of information technology and business operations. Overall, the training program worked to create a sustainable pipeline of well qualified local job seekers who would be available to fill jobs in the biomedical sector.

II. Grant History

In 2015, the DLT contacted Claflin Medical Equipment about the DLT grant program and encouraged Claflin to apply because DLT believed Claflin would be a good fit for this initiative. The CEO of Claflin was intrigued by the idea, and involved the Director of

Operations, who served as a liaison to the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). Claflin hired a grant writer who helped complete research and identify potential partners. The grant writer facilitated meetings among the partners of the grant and was instrumental in putting together the application for the RJRI planning and implementation grants. This group, including Claflin, CCRI, Year Up, and hospital partners, had never before worked together, and there had never been a formal relationship among them. However, in 2015, a Year Up student was employed as an apprentice at Claflin, and Claflin was impressed with the quality of this employee. This success gave Claflin the idea to partner with Year Up for the RJRI grants.

III. Goals and Objectives

The BET & DS Program was specifically developed to address Rhode Island's need for training for Biomedical Equipment Technicians and Data Scientists positions. The apprenticeship program included on-the-job training and community college courses to ensure that apprentices have the required skills to ultimately obtain industry certifications. The BET & DS Program sought to:

1. **Develop and implement an apprenticeship program for Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist positions.**

Specifically, BET & DS sought to meet the following recruitment and training objective:

- Recruit, train, and place four participants in apprenticeship programs (two in Biomedical Equipment Technician apprenticeships and two in Data Scientist Apprenticeships).

IV. Partnerships

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Claflin Medical Equipment (CME)	Lead Applicant: responsible for designing and executing the workforce training plan; acting as fiscal agent; enrolling Year Up graduates in custom CCRI classes; holding laboratory training and orientations.
Claflin Company	Responsible for managing the apprenticeship training for all Data Scientists; enrolling Year Up graduates in custom CCRI classes; holding laboratory trainings and orientations.
Year Up	Responsible for providing pre-apprenticeship training; developing workplace readiness skills in recruits; recruiting participants for the BET & DS Program.
CCRI	Responsible for developing curriculum; holding classes; supporting apprentices in their studies; creating two new degree concentrations for apprentices.
Rhode Island Free Clinic	Responsible for supervising and hosting year three apprentices in their second year of on-the-job training; inviting other apprentices and trainers to visit, tour, and hold discussions at the Clinic.
VA Medical Center	Responsible for providing supervision and guidance to year-three apprentices in their second year of on-the-job training.
South County Hospital	Training site host; responsible for providing supervision to year-three apprentices in their second year of on-the-job training.
Sturdy Hospital	Responsible for providing supervision and guidance to year-three apprentices in their second year of on-the-job training.

V. Implementation Activities/ Processes

Goal #1: Develop and implement an apprenticeship program for Biomedical Equipment Technician and Data Scientist positions.

Recruitment & Pre-Screening

Apprentices were recruited from the Year Up program. Year Up is a program that prepares young people who are unemployed to enter the workforce and train them in the skills they need. The Year Up program has a rigorous application process for recruiting young adults ages 18-24 with economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are currently not enrolled in a postsecondary education program. The program pays each participant to complete the program and requires participants to meet expectations while in the program. Each cohort of individuals in this program completed the Year Up program during year one (Module 1).

At the end of year one of the Year Up program, the BET & DS Program completed a presentation to the soon-to-be graduates of the information technology (IT) track. Program representatives explained the job to them, asked them to submit a job application, an essay, and a reference check, and then completed short interviews with every applicant from Year Up who was interested. The following characteristics were identified by partners as key to being successful in the positions: an interest in technology; motivated to improve their career and advancement of their education; good workplace habits; basic knowledge or interest in math and science; and desire for a career that allows for growth and advancement. Following the interview, about ten finalists were invited for a lengthy interview on-site, and four candidates were offered a position in the BET & DS Program, two for the Biomedical Technician program, and two for Data Scientist program. The students then graduated from the Year Up Program and moved to the BET & DS Program.

Training & Apprenticeship

A professor from CCRI worked with the BET & DS Program to create the curriculum for the Biomedical Technician and Data Scientist tracks. The professor helped to ensure credits could be granted through CCRI for on-the-job training so that the BET & DS program could streamline the process as much as possible and ensure the apprentices were not required to take extraneous courses.

The overall idea of the program was for apprentices to complete on-the-job training and mentoring over the course of two years, and to attend courses at CCRI with the goal of receiving an associate's degree. To implement the program, apprentices first participated in a six-month long orientation hosted by Claflin Medical Equipment and Claflin Company, based on whether individuals were doing the BET or DS programs (Modules 3 & 4). The orientations covered specifics of the industry and taught basic skills needed in field work. The orientation also allowed for further screening of the candidates to assess their job readiness. During this time, apprentices were paid $16 per hour for 40 hours per week, with the RJRI funding paying for 50 percent of the costs and Claflin Medical Equipment paying the other 50 percent.

In addition to their on-the-job training in year one, apprentices also began coursework at CCRI, ideally taking mostly weekend and night courses (Module 2). Apprentices' tuition, fees, and books were paid for through the RJRI grant. The Biomedical Equipment Technicians were enrolled in the Applied Science Technical Studies- Biomedical Technician program (Module 5). The Data Scientist apprentices were enrolled in the Engineering Systems Technology (ETST) program (Module 6). Classroom instruction was aimed at developing and improving skills in problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and mathematics.

After the completion of the orientations, the apprentices were then paired with an experienced and certified mentor to "shadow and assist" in both field and lab work. Senior employees provided mentoring and support to the individuals in the program, and the individuals gradually gained enough knowledge and skills that they were able to complete jobs on their own. Throughout years one and two, apprentices progressed towards their BMET and IT certifications at an individualized pace (Module 7). Biomedical Technicians were paired with a BMET certified senior technician for a minimum of one year, and they assisted and observed their mentors. After six months, the apprentices began supervised independent hospital work as well as continued workshop work. During this period they also honed their skills in preparation for the Certified Biomedical Equipment Technician (CBET) exam. A Biomedical Equipment Technician Apprentice must earn at least an Associate's degree and have worked full time for two years in order to take the CBET exam.

The Data Scientist apprentices also progressed towards obtaining various IT certifications in a similar manner (Module 8), and were paired with an experienced mentor to observe and assist. After six months, the apprentices began more supervised independent work at partner hospitals and the Rhode Island Free Clinic. They also continued work at Claflin Company's workshop during this time.

For the rest of Year One, the apprentices were paid $16 per hour for 40 hours per week when working with their mentors. By year two, the industry partners were expected to pay the salaries. By this point, the BET & DS Program expected that their investment in each apprentice would break even beginning in year two, meaning that their salary could be covered through contract work arranged through normal business operations.

Assessment & Trends

The BET & DS Program planned to conduct a semi-annual survey to assess progress towards goals and periodically update labor department statistics to keep current with labor trends.

Table 2: Training Module Overview

Modules	Skills Addressed
Module 1: Year Up Workforce Training Provider: Year Up	Job Readiness, familiarity with basic technology (hardware & software).
Module 2: CCRI Associate's Degree Part I Provider: Year Up/CCRI	Theoretical knowledge analytic & problem-solving skills.
Module 3: Biomedical Equipment Technician (BMET) Orientation Provider: Claflin Medical Equipment	Understanding of and competency in basic job functions of BMET.
Module 4: Biomedical IT Technician (BMITT) Orientation Provider: Claflin Company	Understanding of and competency in basic job functions of IT Tech.
Module 5: CCRI Associate's Degree Part II (for BMETs) Provider: CCRI	Theoretical knowledge; analytic & problem-solving skills.
Module 6:CRI Associate's Degree Part II (for BMITTs) Provider: CCRI	Theoretical knowledge; analytic & problem-solving skills.
Module 7: BMET Apprenticeship Provider: Claflin Medical Equipment	BMET 1; BMET 2; BMET 3; CBET Certification.
Module 8: Data Scientist Apprenticeship Provider: CCRI	6-7 IT Certifications.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

New and effective partner organizations

The BET & DS Program found the Rhode Island Free Clinic, an initial business partner, to be an excellent placement for apprentices to gain experience. Claflin had never partnered with anyone before this program, but Claflin now has a close relationship with the Rhode Island Free Clinic. Claflin provides some free or reduced rate services for the Rhode Island Free Clinic, so in turn, the Rhode Island Free Clinic is more than willing to provide an environment for apprentices to gain knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the partnership with CCRI worked very well and produced positive results in terms of curriculum development, courses, and degree completion for the apprentices. Finally, the partnership with Year Up has proved invaluable as well. Year Up is very flexible with meeting the BET & DS Program's needs, and this partnership has also benefited Year Up as it allowed them create a new curriculum and attract new students to the program.

Recruitment

Ability to meet recruitment and completion goals

The BET & DS Program highly valued the partnership with Year Up for finding high quality, dedicated program participants. During the second class, there were no drop-outs, and Claflin believed it found good matches for the positions.

Trainee Barriers

Helping active students complete their degrees

When apprentices were not able to take a full load of classes at CCRI, the BET & DS Program worked with the individual to ensure they could at least take one course each semester. This extended the amount of time in school, but the trainees were able to continue making progress in obtaining their degree.

Training

Incentives program helped motivate participation

Claflin implemented a department incentive program that is performance-based for mentors in the program, and participating in mentorship for the BET & DS Program is included as part of that incentive program. Overall, mentors liked participating in mentorship as they felt they were getting assistance or help on their job by having a mentee. Mentees gradually worked towards full independence as they gained more experience. When the apprentices became fully independent Claflin could begin billing for the work they provided, increasing the value of the apprentices to the company.

Transition from Training to Employment

Program apprentices transitioned to employees quickly

The BET & DS Program found that the Biomedical Technicians became “employees” of the company rather quickly. For example, the first group of Biomedical Technicians were viewed by year two of the program as assets to the company, meaning Claflin was already able to bill for services provided by these apprentices.

Table 3: Performance Metrics

IG-02 Biomedical Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship (BET & DS)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Apprenticeship - Cohort 1	4/1/2016	12/31/18	4	5	4	4
Employed after Apprenticeship					4	3

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Convincing industry employers to join the partnership

The BET & DS Program had difficulty convincing hospital partners to support the program. Claflin wanted the apprentices in the BET & DS Program to have outside experience beyond Claflin, but finding partners willing to allow this proved challenging. Partners that stated they would participate sometimes ended up participating less than expected. In one case, this was due to a point of contact person retiring.

Difficulties working with the VA Medical Center

Claflin had intended to work with the VA Medical Center, but due to administrative hurdles in the VA system, implementing apprenticeships for any length of time at the VA proved difficult.

Recruitment

Difficulty establishing an effective recruitment process

One of the biggest challenges noted by the BET & DS Program had to do with figuring out the recruitment process. The process was quite involved and was critical to the success of this training program. As described, the BET & DS Program identified program participants through the Year Up program. When recruiting the first cohort of participants, the timing was an issue, and the BET & DS program did not start recruiting participants until after many of the Year Up soon-to-be graduates had already found job placements. During this first cohort, two of the four people recruited dropped out of the program because it was not an ideal match between employee and employer. While the BET & DS program was able to find other recruits in this situation, it learned that there appears to be an optimal time to start recruiting participants so that all Year Up students can consider working at Claflin. This would allow Claflin to recruit from the best candidates rather than getting in too late and potentially losing out. Therefore, when recruiting for the second cohort, the BET & DS program conducted its recruitment presentation earlier and was able to identify four excellent matches for the program.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Several students had transportation difficulties, but these challenges were overcome as the students started earning paychecks to assist them in repairing or purchasing vehicles.

Training

Underestimating training length and effectiveness

The amount of one-on-one training and mentorship required for each apprentice was one challenge identified by Claflin. Claflin did not anticipate the amount of time needed for training.

Overall, Claflin found that having one-on-one mentor support was the most effective for ensuring that each apprentice gained the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore, adjustments had to be made to the program to ensure that each apprentice got as much one-on-one support as needed.

Lack of mentors

Making sure each apprentice was paired with an experienced mentor was challenging as the number of apprentices increased. Claflin worked to identify more senior-level technicians able to provide support. The program is now set up where each apprentice rotates through different senior-level people depending on which skills they are building.

Transition from Training to Employment

No means for billing for Data Scientists program

While the BET & DS program found those who were training as Data Scientists to provide helpful support to their mentors, the program was not able to bill for services for the Data Scientist position. The data scientist program does not have direct, revenue-generating jobs like the biomedical technicians do, so it is less clear if the program is working well.

VIII. Sustainability

Claflin views the Biomedical Technician program as highly sustainable and sees a strong future for the Biomedical Technician program. The sustainability of the data scientist program has yet to be determined because it is more challenging to identify whether or not the company is benefiting from it. Claflin has identified projects where Data Scientists are able to help make projects more efficient, but also has identified projects where things are done less efficiently because extra time is spent on training. Claflin has stated an interest in expanding the apprenticeship program to benefit other industry employers.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the BET & DS Program in executing this training program:

- Partnering with the Rhode Island Free Clinic proved to be a mutually beneficial partnership that was highly effective.
- Recruitment for the for the BET & DS Program needs to align with Year Up graduation timelines in order to ensure all Year Up graduates know about this program when learning about other opportunities.
- Apprentices may have difficulties with taking a full course load at CCRI while also working full-time through the BET & DS Program.
- The success of the training program for Biomedical Technicians is more easily recognized than the program for Data Scientists.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the BET & DS Program:

- Provide funding for the apprentices while in the training and apprenticeship program.
- Ensure one-on-one mentorship is provided.
- Provide workplace incentives for mentors who take part in the program.
- Enable apprentices to adjust timelines for completion of their degrees at CCRI when they are unable to take a full course load.
- Identify partners that can provide mutually beneficial services to one another. For example, the Rhode Island Free Clinic served as a training site, and Claflin provided free or reduced services to the Rhode Island Free Clinic in exchange.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges of the BET & DS Program, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Identify additional partners that might also value free or reduced services in exchange for apprenticeship placements (mutually beneficial partnerships).
- Encourage this partnership to work with CCRI and former/current apprentices to identify the most effective modes (online vs. in-person) and days/times (day, night, or weekend courses) for providing and completing coursework.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Residential Construction Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Residential Construction Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public-private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) seeks to educate, inform, and advocate on behalf of the residential housing industry and its consumers. As part of its planning grant, RIBA reached out to over 3,000 industry contacts through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews to learn about the training and employment needs of its industry partners. As a result of the survey, RIBA learned that:

- Workers in residential housing construction are growing older. The economic recession also caused many construction workers to leave Rhode Island. Thus, as the economy improves, the construction industry will require new employees to fill positions. The partnership planned to fill these positions by focusing specifically on younger workers and the Latino community.
- Incumbent workers do not have training programs that help them learn the project management skills needed to advance their careers within the sector.
- The partnership found that its employers' largest need was employees trained in carpentry.
- A high percentage of workers in the residential building industry lacked sufficient English language skills to work with customers or receive industry certifications.

II. Grant History

RIBA has a long history of working in collaboration with the state of Rhode Island through its involvement in educational reform, permitting reform, and consulting on issues relating to environmental protection. When the state required continuing education for contractors, RIBA instituted a statewide program to make educational offerings available so that contractors could meet those mandates. Yet, this is the first time that RIBA has been involved as a partner with the state on executing a grant, and the trainings associated with this grant differ from previous trainings in that they are larger and offer more specific technical training.

III. Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the Residential Construction Partnership's (RCP) training program was to promote and create lifelong opportunities for those entering the residential construction industry while at the same time restoring the aging workforce and solving short and long-term labor shortages through better recruitment and training. The RCP sought to help fill training centers by increasing recruitment and using promotional strategies; providing real world experiences for participants of existing training centers; aligning curriculum with industry needs by including employer feedback into training curricula; and assisting training program graduates with job placement. The RCP also hoped its training would allow incumbent workers to earn additional skills and certifications to enhance their employability. The RCP targeted younger workers and the Latino community for this training and had three primary goals in delivering it:

1. Provide residential construction training opportunities to participants in Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools and encourage the standardization of CTE school curriculum.
    - After the RCP established a relationship with CTE schools, the RCP planned to institute an outreach strategy that supported industry career fairs, public project initiatives for students, more job-site internships, and the rebranding of industry careers.
2. Help connect workers with jobs in the residential construction industry.
3. Create an online jobs bank that will allow workers and employers to connect with one another.

IV. Partnership

RIBA was already a formal organization representing the residential construction industry prior to being funded by RJRI and so it was in a unique position to easily bring together its industry partners. Even though the formal organization had been together for some time, there had been very few collaborative efforts until RIBA began executing a planning grant. When RIBA solicited feedback from industry employers and became aware of workforce needs it reached out through its existing member relationships to learn more about responding to industry demands, and the RCP formed shortly thereafter. The partners who were most involved were Arnold Lumber, Andersen Windows, RI Lumber Building Materials Dealers Association, and the RCP's education partners.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Rhode Island Builders Association	Lead Applicant: Responsible for working with CTE schools to standardize curriculum; coordinating the creation of the RCP Job Bank database.
Coventry CTE, Cranston CTE, East Providence CTE, New England Institute of Technology (NEIT), Newport CTE, Providence Career & Technical Academy, Cariho CTE, Warwick CTE, Woonsocket CTE, Youth Build, Davies CTE, MTTI	Primary training providers; responsible for recruiting and training students in the residential construction industry.
Rhode Island Lumber Building Materials Dealers Association (RILBMDA)	Responsible for providing insight into industry needs; helping modify training curriculum to fit industry needs; advertising open positions on the RCP Job Bank database.
Milenio Latino Institute	Responsible for providing insight into industry needs; helping modify training curriculum to fit industry needs; advertising open positions on the Job Bank database.
RI Building Officials Association	Responsible for providing insight into industry needs; helping modify training curriculum to fit industry needs; advertising open positions on the Job Bank database.
Providence Revolving Fund	Responsible for providing insight into industry needs; helping modify training curriculum to fit industry needs; advertising open positions on the Job Bank database.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

To execute its workforce development plan, the RCP proposed to create five new positions that were overseen by RIBA's Executive Director. These positions included a project manager to oversee grant implementation; one employee in charge of working with the training centers to deliver industry-driven curricula; one employee in charge of working with employers; a job placement specialist; and a full-time coordinator that is responsible for ensuring that construction workers who lack sufficient English language skills have access to training programs and targeted educational programs (e.g., ESL courses, Spanish OSHA, etc.). These positions were later not funded, and the RCP's plan was scaled back to include the creation of an industry job bank, the standardization of CTE curricula, and the placement of workers into internships and employment.

Creation of an industry job bank

The RCP worked to create an industry job bank. The RCP's goal was to create a website that stored information about job seekers and employers and connected hiring employers to job seekers. The RCP also planned for this platform to be user-friendly for industry members and easily facilitate the advertisement of job listings in the state's residential construction industry. With these goals in mind, the RCP launched the job bank in 2016 with a domain name of RCWPJobs.com. The job bank uses data from all partners to create a databank where employers can view profiles of interested workers and workers can view job postings in the residential construction industry. It includes tools like an announcement feature alerting participants of opportunities for internships, a resume builder, a calendar of events, a dedicated email address for each participant, and access to information from the Department of Labor and Training, RJRI, RIBA, the National Association of Homebuilders, and other industry partners. The site also has resources regarding training, certifications, registrations, licensure, wage statistics, and testimonials.

Building a pipeline

This phase of the RCP's training efforts involved working with CTE schools to tailor NCCER-based certification so that it is standardized across CTE schools and tailored for the Rhode Island construction industry. The NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) curriculum was designed by national industry professionals to fit industry needs and offers standardized training and credentialing instruction. By working with CTE schools, the RCP envisioned adjusting course offerings and tailoring the training so that it filled the skills needs of industry employers. The RCP identified employers who were hiring and matched those employers with the participants completing CTE training programs. The RCP also used a two-part tree house display, a collaborative effort among over 20 CTE schools and over 280 students, during the 2016 Rhode Island Home Show to generate excitement and enthusiasm among employers about the student talent at the CTE schools. Participants and employers would also have access to the online jobs bank.

Direct employment placements and internships

The RCP worked with employers in the residential construction industry to help place CTE graduates and job seekers into open jobs in the industry. These graduates and job seekers were recruited through CTE schools, the Rhode Island Home Show, the job bank website, and interpersonal meetings with members of the RCP. Once the RCP identified the job seeker, the RCP acted as an intermediary between the job seeker and industry employers to help the job seeker obtain an open position in the industry. The RCP also acted as an intermediary between CTE students and industry employers to set up internships for interested students on an individual basis.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Solid early vision

The RCP had a clear vision of what type of training it wanted to offer and how it wanted to implement that training from the start of the partnership. Because of this clear vision, the RCP brought in partners who shared its dedication and goals.

Effective promotion

The RCP was very effective in spreading awareness about its program. Through presentations and collaborations with CTE partner schools, the RCP believes that it increased program awareness and interest in an unusually effective way for a new program.

Robust pre-existing industry connections

RIBA had long standing connections with members of the industry, which helped it unite the RCP quickly and easily. It also helped the partnership connect with the most involved and influential members of the industry at the start of the RCP without having to spend time figuring out who the most influential companies were.

Recruitment

Home show recruitment

The RCP was able to use the Rhode Island Home Show as an effective recruitment venue for its training programs. The Home Show also acted as a venue for the CTE students associated with the RCP to demonstrate projects and training to potential new program recruits. One of the most lauded projects was the tree house display, which was a collaboration among CTE schools that required components constructed at each of the CTE sites to be brought together as a whole project at the Rhode Island Home Show.

Trainee Barriers

The RCP did not discuss any achievements with trainee barriers.

Training

Enrollment and Completion in CTE Program

The RCP achieved high enrollment and graduation from its CTE programs. The RCP had hoped to achieve a twenty percent increase in enrollment and graduation from the programs, and while percent increases were not quantifiable after the completion of the 2016 implementation period, 138 students enrolled in one of the RCP's high school programs and 281 students graduated from a program.

Transition from Training to Employment

The RCP did not discuss any achievements with the transition from training to employment.

Other

Program expansion

The RCP is pleased with the success of its high school programs, and is planning to start expanding its outreach into middle schools. The partnership hopes that such expansion raises awareness about career and technical education and increases enrollment in its training programs in those schools. Additional CTE programs have expressed interest in joining the training programs, and the RCP is seeking to expand its efforts to include these schools.

Home Show CTE showcase

The Home Show CTE student showcase was one of the most successful aspects of the RCP's programs. All students who participated learned valuable lessons about planning and cooperation, and were able to apply their lessons to a hands-on project, and received positive feedback on their work from the community. Further, the project engendered a strong sense of motivation and pride in the students about their work, and helped to boost their confidence and connection to their construction work.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Difficulties communicating between the RCP and the industry

The RCP had firm goals for its training programs and firm ideas about what the residential construction industry needed to improve. However, these ideas did not always match up with the goals of industry employers, and there was difficulty communicating and finding common ground among these differing ideas. As a result, some employers submitted individual training plans to the DLT to meet the needs they saw in the residential construction industry instead of relying on the existing industry partnership.

Recruitment

The RCP did not discuss any challenges with recruitment.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of transportation

The RCP found that many of the recent graduates from its training at CTE schools lacked a means of transportation. This made it harder for the RCP to secure job placements for participants after graduation. The RCP is addressing this issue by covering the costs of transportation for these students until they can secure a permanent job.

Training

Starting the first round of training in the middle of the school year

The first round of the RCP's work with its CTE partners began in the middle of the school year instead of the beginning. This made it difficult to fully engage with the students.

Transition from Training to Employment

Soft skills deficiencies in industry recruits

The RCP found that many of the young people recruited into the construction industry lacked the discipline and skills needed in the industry. The RCP was especially troubled by the inability of many young people to show up on time for class, work full days, and stay off cell phones for an entire work day.

Other

Usage of the job bank website

The RCP successfully created the job bank, but has not seen dramatic changes in the industry's hiring practices as a result of the website. A core reason for website's lack of impact is a lack of internet literacy or a desire to use the internet as a recruitment tool among industry employers.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-03 Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RI Builders)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Adult Direct Placements - 2016 (Job Seekers)	3/1/16	12/31/16	40	20	40	20
Student Internship Placements - 2016	3/1/16	12/31/16	20	10	20	10
Adults Employed					40	20
Other Objectives						
Number of employers registering with the job bank					800	Ongoing
Website Views					TBD	Ongoing
Job/Internship connections made through the job bank website					TBD	Ongoing
Students recruited into construction CTE program					20% increase	138*
Students graduating from construction CTE programs					20% increase	281*

*Percent increase was not possible to track, but 138 CTE students enrolled and 281 CTE students graduated.

VIII. Sustainability

The RCP expected that grant funding would be required for a number of years before the program could reach a level of sustainability independent of DLT funding. The RCP expected to rely less on DLT funding after each successive year of funding. The RCP's online jobs bank was considered as one potential revenue source to meet program funding needs, but the RCP also recognized elements of its program that will continue without DLT funding. For instance, the RCP expected that once a workforce pipeline had been generated through the CTE schools that funding would no longer be needed and that the CTE schools would continue to promote without funding.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by RCP in executing its training program:

- Many students who participate in CTE programs intend to go to college or pursue other jobs outside of the curriculum presented in CTE schools. It may be worthwhile to make sure to target those who are truly interested in a construction career.

X. Best Practices

The following best practice was utilized by the RCP:

- Utilize the prior experiences of partnership leadership to provide insight into industry norms and needs as well as connections with industry partners.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the RCP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Embed a module in the CTE schools about workplace etiquette and soft skills that utilizes testimonials from members of the industry.
- Incorporate training about appropriate workplace cell phone use into the soft skills training curriculum.
- Arrange access to public transportation, carpools, or other transportation assistance to students who do not have access to transportation.
- Conduct conversations about workplace expectations between trainees and hiring employers to ensure newly hired employees are satisfied in the industry and industry employers are satisfied with their employees.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program (RIUAP) was formed by Local 51 Plumbers and Pipefitters and the Mayforth Group to address the longstanding underrepresentation of women and minorities in the plumbing and pipefitting industry and to develop a long-term solution - an apprenticeship pipeline - to respond to the anticipated need for fresh talent in the industry to replace the currently aging and retiring workforce. The plumbing and pipefitting industry had for many years relied on the families of current workers as a pipeline for talent, but that recruitment strategy was no longer addressing the industry's skills needs nor was it addressing the longstanding underrepresentation of women and minorities employed by the industry. RIUAP, therefore, targeted limited income and under- or unemployed workers for a good paying industry where the mean annual wage is $53,920. The Rhode Island DLT has identified plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters as a set of high demand jobs and the United States Department of Labor has projected the industry to grow 21 percent from 2012 to 2022. Despite the anticipated growth of the industry, studies have shown that skills gaps remain and a critical need exists for talented minorities with both technical and professional skills.

II. Grant History

Local 51 Plumbers and Pipefitters is a Rhode Island trade union that offers apprenticeship programs in plumbing, pipefitting, and refrigeration. It is also an organization that tends to avoid workforce training programs because of restrictions that are typically tied to public grant funding. With very few restrictions in place as a condition of receiving state funding, the RJRI program became an attractive funding source for it. While Local 51 does not have a history of partnering with the State of Rhode Island, the convenor, the Mayforth Group, has extensive experience coordinating workforce development programs with Governor's Workforce Board grants. RIUAP represents the first time that Local 51 has reached out to urban communities to

place candidates in a pre-apprenticeship program.

III. Goals and Objectives

The overall objective of RIUAP was to produce a talent pipeline to meet the immediate employment requirements in the professional trades by preparing talent for an already existing five-year paid apprenticeship program. To do that, RIUAP planned to connect people of color and under- or unemployed individuals in urban cities with high skill, high demand, and high wage jobs in the plumbing, pipefitter, and steamfitter trades where the current workforce is aging and retiring at a rapid pace. RIUAP did this through a pre-apprenticeship program which was designed to prepare training participants for placement in the career pathway of an apprenticeship. Specifically, the partnership set out to:

1. Recruit 210 participants and place 10 to 15 of those participants into a pre-apprenticeship program.

IV. Partnerships

In 2013, the Rhode Island Black Business Association sponsored a summit on urban and community economic development that focused on connecting urban youth to workforce training programs. After this summit was held, New Commons, Mayforth Group, and Urban Ventures formed RIUAP and began identifying ways to fill skills gaps in jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree. RIUAP applied for grant funding because it knew that doing so would allow it to reach out to communities that are underrepresented in the trades. To RIUAP partners, it simply made sense to build a partnership among urban communities and the unions, and with the economy improving, the need for an urban-based workforce development strategy was becoming even more evident. Some partners knew about funding opportunities because of participation in past programs and having held positions on the Governor's Workforce Board.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Local 51 Plumbers and Pipefitters	Lead Applicant: Responsible for providing training at its 20,400 square foot training facility and directing a pipeline of apprentices to private industry trade partners; acting as fiscal agent; program management; delivering status reports; establishing target industry participation.
Mayforth Group	Convenor and project manager responsible for overseeing team coordination, program design process, and program implementation.
New Commons	Responsible for working directly with community partners and Local 51 to design and implement a case management system to provide support services to participants during training.
Progreso Latino	Responsible for providing support services to participants during pre-apprenticeship phase; targeting community engagement and outreach; recruitment; pre-screening and assessment.
Urban Ventures	Responsible for providing support services to participants during pre-apprenticeship phase; targeting community engagement and outreach; recruitment; pre-screening and assessment.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Meetings of community stakeholder organizations were convened to brief them about the initiative and develop a recruitment pool. The Mayforth Group then executed a recruitment plan where an orientation meeting was held with the first group of recruits. Upon implementation of the recruitment plan, support services, including Adult Basic Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) were delivered by Progreso Latino to program participants. Potential applicants were also offered math instruction, soft skill instruction, and industry exposure before beginning the application process.

Prior to being placed in the pre-apprenticeship program, participants needed to successfully pass a math test at the sixth-grade level. Applicants successfully passing the test participated in an interview that determined if they were prepared for the pre-apprenticeship program. After successfully completing the interview process, participants were trained in the six week pre-apprenticeship program by Local 51. Those finishing the program were then placed into five year paid apprenticeships with partner organizations.

The pre-apprenticeship training curriculum was designed to give training participants hands-on experience learning a skill set leading to a career pathway. The 110 hour (2.5 week) training curriculum involved a discussion of the extensive history of the pipe trades and how apprenticeships are used to provide training participants with the skills necessary to have a career in the trade. The initial segment, called Your Heritage and Future in the Pipe Trade, took place over eight hours and focused on history and background of the pipe trades, the purpose and function of union trades, benefits of membership to a union trade, and the benefits of an apprenticeship as a means of starting a successful career pathway. The next segment provided training in current safe work practices while using industry tools, tool selection, use, maintenance, and care. The training primarily focused on the use of hand tools, electrically powered tools, pneumatic power tools, and power actuated tools. Instruction for the segment was provided through classroom work, manufacturer demonstrations, and hands-on shop work. Participants then received OSHA 10 training, which focused on recognizing and preventing trade-specific safety hazards. The fourth training segment provided a review of basic mathematical concepts, instruction in taking measurements with industry tools, and in industry-specific math skills. Finally, the final segment of training covered the science of psychology and how to recognize and handle psychological issues that arise in the workplace. This portion of the program focused on topics such as job training, self-esteem, development of interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, ethics, diversity training, and stress management.

VI. Achievements

<u>Partnerships</u>

Working with experienced partners

Having a partner like Mayforth Group with extensive experience working with diverse communities was helpful because it had developed trust with people of color. Further, the Mayforth Group had extensive experience with grants and training programs. Finally, the

organization had a pre-existing plan to develop career training and exposure in urban areas, and this vision made it easier to collaborate and support the goals of the union's training program.

Recruitment

Interest among target recruitment populations

Another success identified was the number of women and people of color showing interest in the trades sector. A diverse group of people were given exposure to opportunities with the union and that was made possible due to the relationships RIUAP had with Progreso Latino and Urban Ventures.

Significant turnout at recruitment events

RIUAP hosted two orientation sessions to raise awareness and recruits for its training program, and several hundred people attended the sessions. At these sessions, RIUAP dispelled concerns and confusion about the training program and the government's role in the training program. As a result of these sessions, RIUAP fulfilled its initial recruitment goals.

Trainee Barriers

Achieving stated goals

RIUAP designed this training program to encourage potential workers to overcome skill, experience, education, awareness, and training barriers to be active members of the plumbing and pipefitting industry. RIUAP members consider these goals to have been successfully fulfilled.

Transportation and daycare

Some program participants struggled to arrange the daycare and transportation necessary for their participation in the training program. RIUAP addressed this problem with the help of Progreso Latino, which has extensive experience addressing similar issues and was able to arrange daycare and transportation services or reimbursement for those services for participants. Because of this connection, a substantial number of participants and prospective participants received transportation and daycare services from Progreso Latino. For some participants, Progreso Latino was also able to offer skills training and industry exposure that was aimed at improving the job prospects of prospective RIUAP trainees.

English as a second language and English for speakers of other languages

Many of those interested in the training program, and some of the program participants, did not speak English as their first language. Others were in the process of learning English. RIUAP overcame this challenge by collaborating with Progreso Latino, which offered English classes for interested participants and encouraged class participants with the skills necessary to communicate in the workplace to apply for RIUAP's training programs.

Training

Helping participants gain certifications and qualifications to improve their careers

RIUAP felt that its program was very successful in helping participants improve their hireability into a career in the trades. A specific example was given of a refrigeration apprentice who worked two jobs to support his family both in the US and in Africa. He had skills and experience working on refrigeration in Africa and found work in the same field after arriving here. Yet, his skills were being underutilized because he did not have the necessary certifications to perform maintenance on equipment. RIUAP believes his participation in the training program will help him gain the industry legitimization he needs to advance his career.

Fulfilling initial recruitment goals

Due to RIUAP's recruitment efforts and orientation sessions, there was substantial interest in its training program and the partnership experienced high recruitment numbers for the early phases of the application process. Of the 273 people officially inquiring about the program, 243 people used the initial support services offered by the partnership, 219 completed the application process, and 210 completed the math exam. However, out of these interested recruits, RIUAP only recruited thirteen participants into the Pre-Apprenticeship training. This low recruitment was intentional, however, as it prevented the industry from being oversaturated with unneeded workers.

Transition from Training to Employment

Program graduate placement

Despite the fact that program graduates were union trained, RIUAP succeeded in convincing its partner organizations to hire its trainees. This was due to RIUAP only including union contractors in its partnership because union contractors are obligated to hire union members.

Other

Positive feedback from program graduates

RIUAP received positive feedback on its programs from program graduates. Graduates indicated that they were very happy with the training, training outcomes, the training instructor, and the support they received from RIUAP while in the program. RIUAP also succeeded in reaching out to a large number of graduates from the pre-apprenticeship program to learn about ways to improve the program. This commitment to following-up with program participants helped RIUAP gain information on how to improve its services for future participants.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-04 Rhode Island Urban Apprenticeship Program (Local 51)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Pre-Apprenticeship Training - 2016 (Job Seekers)	4/18/16	6/3/16	10	13	10	12
Total Participants placed in training related employment					10	7
Other Objectives						
Total Participants who received and completed supportive services through Progreso Latino					30+	27*
Interviews with participants who completed the Pre-Apprenticeship program to ask about the process. What worked? What didn't work?					5	12

*Plus math boot camp for those needing help and organized a group of 7 workers for a trip to NEIT and their advanced manufacturing program.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

The RIUAP did not discuss any challenges with partnerships.

Recruitment

Overcoming issues of trust within communities of color

RIUAP was challenged to convince communities of color to have trust in the workforce development program. Many participants of color are unsure about government-sponsored programs and some did not understand the concept of an apprenticeship, which caused depressed recruitment among this population. However, the partnership's overall recruitment was intentionally low to avoid saturating the industry with unneeded workers.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of advancement due to English speaking skills, math skills, and soft skills

A number of program recruits were non-native English speakers and as such lacked the proficiency in writing and speaking English needed for industry jobs. These individuals did not advance because of their lack of English proficiency and, as a result, the partnership plans to offer a ramped up ESL program before the math test and interview process to help future applicants.

Training

Unexpected skills gaps

RIUAP learned that many of the pre-apprenticeship participants do not have experience managing personal finances and so the partnership built in a personal finance literacy training program as part of the pre-apprenticeship training.

More investment in soft skills and other skill gaps

RIUAP found the application process challenging due to having to turn away a number of otherwise qualified candidates who performed poorly during the interviews. The partnership was confident that several more participants would have been accepted if there had been more resources to improve soft skills.

Transition from Training to Employment

Gap between end of pre-apprenticeship training and start of apprenticeships

Many graduates of the pre-apprenticeship training wanted to enter into industry apprenticeships after completing training, but faced a gap of two months between the end of pre-apprenticeship training and the start of apprenticeships. This created an awkward gap in employment for these program participants.

Other

Developing unified goals

The partners found that forming a partnership for the first time with groups that have no history of working together brings new challenges because each partner comes to the partnership with different mindsets. For instance, the partnership learned that there is a misconception about apprenticeships being a short-term "job" when it is really a long-term career choice. RIUAP overcame this challenge by having journeymen plumbers attend orientation and pre-apprenticeship training meetings to stress the apprenticeship program as a career.

Communicating the scope of training

Another challenge RIUAP faced was communicating to participants that they were embarking on a career and not a short-term job. One way the RIUAP was able to overcome this challenge was to bring in journeymen and apprentices to stress that this a long-term career and not just a job.

VIII. Sustainability

RIUAP expects the program to be sustainable if it can extend it to incorporate a training component for welders. The training facility has unused capacity to deliver welding training, but it would require establishing a relationship with an employer needing welders. RIUAP plans to work with Skills RI to develop this training. As a training partner, Skills RI will fund the training and work with program graduates to place them in training-related employment. Adding this training will help keep the program relevant to the industry.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lesson was learned by RIUAP in executing its training program:

- Non-native speakers recruited into the training program often did not possess the level of proficiency in writing and speaking English needed for industry jobs.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by RIUAP:

- Offer support services such as math and English proficiency for participants recruited from underserved populations.
- Have an experienced grant coordinator act as partnership convenor.
- Work with an experienced community-based organization with the ability to assist underserved populations to address transportation and childcare issues.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of RIUAP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Offer program recruitment and orientation meetings in multiple locations around the state to bring awareness of training programs to different populations and make it easier for people to attend meetings.

- Offer a stipend or other paid training opportunities to pre-apprentices enrolled in the program.
- Provide additional services in English proficiency, math training, and soft skill training for program participants.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Rhode Island Manufacturing Growth Collaborative

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Rhode Island Manufacturing Growth Collaborative

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public-private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The RI Manufacturing Growth Collaborative (RIMGC) grew from a partnership between the RI Research Foundation/Polaris Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Association (RIMA) through their participation on the Governor's Workforce Board's Manufacturing Industry Partnership. They examined Rhode Island's manufacturing industry in hopes of developing industry workforce development efforts. Although no such efforts were established through the Manufacturing Industry Partnership, the RI Research Foundation/Polaris MEP and RIMA continued working through RIMGC to establish one. These partners used the insights drawn from the Manufacturing Industry Partnership, along with data generated by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and their own surveys and knowledge of the industry to find that:

- Manufacturing is a diverse industry with a substantial presence in Rhode Island.
    - The industry provides 42,000 jobs to Rhode Islanders, and, according to RIMGC, these jobs offer an average wage as high as 25 percent more than the average wage of other private sector jobs.
- The industry workforce is rapidly aging and retiring.
    - An aging and retiring workforce means that industry knowledge needs to be passed on from current retiring manufacturing workers to new workers.
- Large percentages of manufacturing employees speak English as a second language, complicating training and recruitment efforts.
- New and potential employees share similar skills gaps, notably:
    - Performing math and reading skills above a middle school level, and understanding plant safety, quality control, and the good manufacturing practices of the manufacturing environment.
- The obstacles to employment for new and potential employees include:

    - A lack of transportation, computer skills, writing skills, English speaking skills, job readiness skills, and the ability to complete employment and benefit forms.
    - The ability to pass a drug test when employers require clean drug tests before hiring.
- The industry lacks candidates who are qualified and willing to fill low- and non-skilled positions in the manufacturing industry.
    - Identifying, recruiting, and hiring candidates has become a burden for industry employers.

II. Grant History

The Rhode Island Research Foundation Polaris MEP (Polaris) is an independent group whose mission is to improve the manufacturing industry in Rhode Island by making companies stronger, more competitive, and more profitable. As a Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), the group is federally sponsored and supports manufacturers with assistance in developing and executing efficiency programs, lean manufacturing quality systems, and facility layouts. Prior to forming RIMGC, the group worked with RIMA on the Governor's Workforce Board's Manufacturing Industry Partnership. As part of this partnership, Polaris and RIMA first heard about the RJRI program from DLT Director Scott Jensen and agreed to apply for a planning grant to form a RJRI partnership. The new RIMGC used the planning grant to research skills gaps and employer needs in the industry, and to identify the Manufacturing Boot Camp model as RIMGC's solution to these needs.

III. Goals and Objectives

In general, the goals of RIMGC were to create industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the state's workforce, grow the state's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families. More specifically, RIMGC wanted to increase the employability of under- or unemployed populations and prepare them for careers in the manufacturing industry. To achieve this goal, RIMGC planned to develop a basic skills, job training, and assessment center that provided employers in the manufacturing industry with pre-screened and pre-trained employees who were identified for their commitment to long-term success and employment in the industry.

IV. Partnerships

RIMGC was formed by Polaris and RIMA. Both organizations had extensive experience working with employers in the manufacturing industry, and relied on those prior partnerships to form RIMGC.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

University of Rhode Island Research Foundation dba Polaris MEP	Lead Applicant: Responsible for providing the day-to-day grant management and developing a project plan; scheduling, budgeting, and describing team responsibilities; utilizing partners to ensure best use of training resources; establishing program objectives and identifying industry needs.
University of Rhode Island	Responsible for assisting with Curriculum Development.
Rhode Island Manufacturers Association	Industry partner involved in the planning and facilitation of manufacturing "bootcamps."
Rhode Island Marine Trades Association	Responsible for providing input and ideas on program curriculum and implementation; interviewing applicable graduates for positions; combining recruitment and referral efforts from its own workforce development programs with this partnership; providing information and consultation; and committing to act as a training provider when applicable.
Electric Boat, ChemArt Company, Yushin America, Pilgrim Screw, Taylor Box Company, Hexagon Metrology, Admiral Packaging, Guill Tool	Employers: Responsible for bringing hiring demands to RIMGC so that "bootcamp" training could be tailored toward their needs; communicating the value of the program to other companies in the state to increase program exposure; providing input and ideas on program curriculum and implementation; interviewing applicable graduates for positions.
IYRS, We Make RI	Responsible for assisting with the planning and facilitation of bootcamps, and supporting the partnership with programs and resources as requested.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

RIMGC executed a manufacturing "bootcamp" training program to fulfill its training goals, and targeted under- or unemployed individuals and low income populations, as well as populations that traditionally face barriers to employment. To recruit within these populations, RIMGC utilized the RI DLT, the Business Workforce Center, and NetWORKri to post flyers and to seek recruits for meeting the manufacturing industry's needs. RIMGC also engaged with local workforce investment boards, local economic development organizations, local unemployment offices, local veterans' groups, local recruiters and staffing agencies, as well as schools and colleges to recruit for the program. The recruits that were targeted for training had household incomes below the federal poverty line and met at least one of the following characteristics: a single parent; a transient living situation; a criminal record; a minimal support system; receiving federal/state assistance; a former foster child; lacking a high school diploma or GED; or having no training or education beyond high school. These factors were self-reported by participants during the screening process. However, RIMGC generally targeted the unemployed population and did not exclude potential recruits if they did not fit into any of these categories. After potential recruits were identified, they underwent a screening process that established if the candidate was an adult and eligible to work in the US. Recruits were also asked to complete a registration form, pass a drug screening test, submit to a background check, and complete a basic aptitude test for skills in basic math, English, and soft skill competencies. Candidates were also interviewed to test their interest, willingness to participate, capability, and to identify any possible barriers to employment.

The program, modeled after the Maryland MEP Manufacturing Bootcamp, began in July 2016 and lasted for a period of six weeks. RIMGC ran three bootcamp sessions once every fourth month, with each session recruiting and training 15 to 20 participants. Each session was initiated and delivered by RIMGC in collaboration with the hiring manufacturing company that committed to interviewing program graduates upon completion of the training. For each bootcamp, RIMGC learned from partner companies whether new positions would be opening. RIMGC then recruited and offered a version of their training program modified to fit the specific needs of the company. Program graduates were then hired to fill the open positions at the company. As part of this implementation process, RIMGC planned to identify training providers as part of the recruitment phase. For the initial sessions, We Make RI delivered the training programs. The curriculum and implementation of the training program began during the first two sessions as "pilot" programs that were adjusted on the basis of feedback from employers, candidates, and workforce partners.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Module	Curriculum Delivered
Program Overview	Set program expectations; provided screening, assessments, and program overview.
Basic Employability and Workforce Skills	Built the soft skills of candidates by focusing on basic job skills, reading and comprehension, math, and computer skills.
Basic Manufacturing Skills	Provided a baseline of knowledge about the manufacturing environment, including safety, basic manufacturing skills, "lean manufacturing" strategies, and quality.
Maintenance	Taught participants about the need for basic maintenance and provided instruction in how to complete basic maintenance.
Problem Solving and Teams	Taught strategies for working in teams, conducting basic problem solving, and basic communication skills.
On-the-Job Experience	Provided various hands-on training exercises, plant tours, and real life work experiences.

RIMGC focused primarily on training high quality workers rather than training a high number of graduates and, therefore, expected that nearly 50 percent of trainees would not complete training. Successful program graduates received a certificate of completion from Polaris. Once the participants completed the established modules, they were matched with an employer to complete on-the-job training. This placement allowed participants to improve their understanding of the work environment and allowed the employer to become familiar with the participant. During the placement process until being fully employed by the company, participants received monthly coaching for up to six months to ensure that they were meeting employer needs and expectations.

If participants were particularly skilled or successful, they were invited to continue training in advanced program modules, such as welding and forklift operation. As a result, these participants had to forgo income for a longer time, but were well-trained to apply for and receive higher paying jobs once they completed training.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-05 Rhode Island Manufacturing Growth Collaborative (Polaris MEP)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Manufacturing Bootcamp - (3 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	4/11/16	12/16/16	48	16	48	16
Total Participants Recruited for training					60	16
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					48	10
Total Participants retained in training-related employment after six months					TBD	Not tracked
Other Objectives						
Baseline Assessment of Skills and Capabilities					TBD	16
Starting salary and benefit information for candidates placed in employment					TBD	10
Employee evaluation of program					TBD	Not Conducted
Total Participants to earn an industry-recognized credential					TBD	14
Employer evaluation/satisfaction of program					TBD	Not Conducted

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

RIMGC did not discuss any achievements with partnerships.

Recruitment

Employer engagement

Several manufacturing companies were initially hesitant to work with RIMGC due to concerns over cost and program organization, but after the program began, the industry was impressed by the quality of the training and the competency of program graduates. Because of these positive outcomes, companies began to contribute to the program and to hire program graduates in their companies.

Trainee Barriers

Accessible transportation

The bootcamp training location was easily accessible by public transportation, which made it easy for program participants to travel to training even if they did not have access to personal transportation.

Training

RIMGC did not discuss any achievements with training.

Transition from Training to Employment

High placement rate

Despite confusion arising between RIMGC and partner corporations about the training skills needed for bootcamp participants, many training participants who completed training were placed with a partner manufacturing company at the conclusion of the program. A small number of program graduates were not placed in jobs after training, but RIMGC attributes this to personal issues with the individual graduates, such as a lack of desire to actually work in the manufacturing industry or family issues.

Other

Collaboration within the industry

Numerous workforce development programs are currently underway in the manufacturing industry, which has caused manufacturing companies to be overwhelmed by the number of programs that are offered by different partnerships. RIMGC overcame some of these challenges by working with the lead organizations of partnerships like the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (RIMTA) to learn about RIMTA's partnerships so that RIMGC could present all training options to industry employers.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Engaging community groups

RIMGC hoped to reach out to community groups and programs to enhance recruitment, but this did not always make successful connections. In particular, RIMGC struggled to engage with Progreso Latino and Skills for Rhode Island's Future for recruitment. RIMGC struggled with recruitment partners primarily because it did not have the funds or the capacity to fully engage with recruitment partners. In future years, RIMGC included more funds and dedicated more time to recruitment, increasing its ability to connect and engage with recruitment partners.

Recruitment

Engaging with veterans

RIMGC was not able to engage with the state veteran population to the extent planned. The veterans' group RIMGC worked with initially underwent a shift in leadership during the implementation period, making it difficult for RIMGC to work with them.

Difficulty with recruitment

Overall recruitment was the biggest challenge for the grantee. RIMGC struggled to find people who were willing to attend training and seriously follow through with employment in the manufacturing industry. RIMGC attributes at least some of this lack of interest to a better job market and to the lowered unemployment rate. To address this issue, RIMGC worked with new and additional recruitment partners, like community groups, and utilized DLT One-Stops. However, RIMGC only recruited 48 out of 60 planned participants for the training program.

Challenges of working in a new state environment

RIMGC struggled initially to coordinate a training partner who came from outside of the state. We Make RI was an organization that had operated elsewhere outside of Rhode Island, and had to be acclimated to the Rhode Island economic environment while providing training.

Difficulties with Outreach

RIMGC struggled to identify recruits to fill training slots without financial incentives in place, yet other industries have recognized that filling industry hiring needs requires a comprehensive plan for outreach that includes describing the positive benefits of a career in the industry. RIMGC might consider improving its outreach to under- or unemployed workers so that they are aware of opportunities in better paying manufacturing jobs. If low-paid incumbent workers are given these opportunities for training in an industry with a higher level of pay, more people might sign up for the training. In addition, developing a training for incumbent workers so that they can fill higher-level positions that require additional skills, might present opportunities for unemployed workers to fill the entry-level positions that are left by incumbent workers to fill the higher-level positions. Once these entry-level positions are filled, the newly

hired workers will later have the same opportunities to improve their training as the workers before them, thus creating a cycle of opportunities for both under- and unemployed workers.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Several bootcamp participants could not arrange transportation to training sessions and job placements. To address this issue, RIMGC worked with community groups to arrange group transportation, and worked individually with participants to identify public transportation routes to training.

Training

RIMGC did not discuss any challenges with training.

Transition from Training to Employment

Miscommunication about training for jobs skills

Despite initial agreements to hire program graduates, many partner employers did not hire graduates at the end of training. This was by virtue of miscommunication between RIMGC and the employers. Participating employers were seeking technically trained employees while RIMGC was training participants to be entry-level employees with basic skills training. This miscommunication was resolved, however, and partner employees hired some program graduates after later bootcamp sessions.

VIII. Sustainability

Due to the industry's close partnership and commitment to RIMGC's training program, RIMGC has confidence that the Manufacturing Bootcamp will be sustainable without state funding. To fund the program, RIMGC is planning to ask employee partners to pay for a bootcamp tailored to each company's needs. RIMGC hopes this will encourage companies to remain directly involved in the creation and implementation of the bootcamp, while also hiring program graduates and funding future bootcamp opportunities.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by RMGP in executing their training program:

- Future programs should engage partners from a broader sector of the manufacturing industry, like textile and device employers, to broaden the applicability of the training program.
- After providing compensation for program participants during the 2017 implementation phase, RIMGC saw a marked improvement in the success of their recruitment efforts and quality of program participants from the 2016 implementation phase which did not include a stipend.

X. Best Practices

The following best practices were utilized by RIMGC:

- Offer bootcamps to only manufacturing companies that were hiring entry-level and low-skilled positions to minimize the amount of time spent without pay while transitioning to a career in the manufacturing industry.
- Hold trainings in a location easily accessible by public transportation.
- Prioritize the quality of trainees rather than the number of trainees, and focus on graduating participants who are skilled and knowledgeable.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of RIMGC, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Develop a comprehensive recruitment strategy for under- or unemployed populations.
- Develop a training plan for entry-level incumbent workers so that they can fill higher-level positions that require additional skills and to create a career ladder within the sector.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Marine Trades and Composites Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Marine Trades and Composites Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Marine Trades and Composites Partnership (MTCP) was designed to attract and retain skilled workers in the marine trades industry through training programs for both potential and incumbent employees. The MTCP was formed by the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (RIMTA) and numerous companies in the marine trades industry, including Bristol Marine, Confident Captain/Ocean Pros, Goetz Composites, Gowrie Group, Hunt Yachts, IYRS, Jamestown Boatyard, Motoring Technical Training Institute, New England Boatworks, New England Institute of Technology, Nicholson Yachts, Old Port Marine, Resolute Racing Shell, Ship to Shore, Symmetrix Composite Tooling, US Watercraft, and Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston.

After surveying marine trades and composites businesses as part of its planning grant in 2015, RIMTA estimated that industry members were planning to hire between 1,600 and 2,000 workers over a three year period in response to planned retirements and the expansion of the industry in Rhode Island. Filling these needs would be especially critical, because RIMTA had learned from a 2014 economic impact and skills gap study of the marine trades industry that wages in the industry, at $46,776, tend to be higher than the state average. Also, businesses in the industry account for $325 million in payroll. RIMTA responded by designing a training program to address common skills gaps, expand recruitment efforts, and increase retention of skilled workers. Specifically, the MTCP was formed for the following reasons:

- The marine trades and composites industry faced a shortage of qualified, skilled labor.
- The marine trades and composites industry labor force was growing older and beginning to retire.
- Rhode Island's youth was not informed of opportunities in Rhode Island's marine trades and composites industry. Potential workers and talent, therefore, were not being drawn into the labor pool, which interfered with the industry's efforts to grow a more skilled and qualified workforce.

II. Grant History

RIMTA was founded in 1964 and is located in Bristol, RI where it seeks to advance Rhode Island's recreational boating industry by representing over 300 companies. It is also the lead organization for the Composites Alliance of Rhode Island, which seeks to position Rhode Island as a national leader in the marine and composites industry. RIMTA has set itself apart from many other industry sectors by employing among its leadership team workforce development professionals who have steered the organization toward addressing the workforce development needs of the recreational boating industry. The focus on workforce development means that the association has a long history of partnering with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training and other nonprofit organizations to institute training programs that meet the needs of the marine trades sector. These past initiatives included a Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) grant to conduct an industry skills gap study, the development of a youth workforce training program, and an industry skills development initiative that provided incumbent worker training needed to increase the industry's productivity. As part of its execution of a RJRI planning grant, the MTCP held several focus group sessions with members of the composites and recreational boating industry to learn more about the future workforce needs of the marine trades and composites industries. This allowed RIMTA to, for the first time, design Pre-Apprenticeship Training, Carpentry Apprenticeship Training, and Incumbent Worker Training programs around the specific needs of the marine trades and composites industries.

III. Goals and Objectives

In order to address industry-wide skills gaps, expand recruitment efforts, and increase retention of a talented workforce, the MTCP established two specific goals for this training program.

1. Establish training opportunities that prepare workers for current jobs in the marine trades and composites industry.
    - As part of this goal, the MTCP offered Carpentry Apprenticeship Training, marine and composites Pre-Apprenticeship Training, Launch Tender program, and Incumbent Worker Training programs.
2. Expand outreach and create pipelines to increase recruitment into the marine trades and composites industry.
    - As part of this goal, the MTCP planned to increase public outreach efforts and expand "greenhousing" activities: industry development programming targeted at young potential workers in secondary and postsecondary education.

IV. Partnerships

RIMTA has a long history of bringing its many diverse partners together to learn about

the workforce development needs of Rhode Island's recreational boating industry. Bringing these industry representatives together is challenging, but RIMTA's member engagement strategies allow its members to socialize, network, and meet through annual events and gatherings. These gatherings have also proved to be a fruitful way to learn about the industry's needs and recruit partners for the MTCP.

The MTCP's partners include organizations that are responsible for skills training (training partners) and employers. Its key training partners were Confident Captain, New England Institute of Technology, IYRS, Gowrie Group, and MotoRing Technical Training Institute (MTTI), while its key employer partners included Bristol Marine, Goetz Composites, US Watercraft, and New England Boatworks. These key groups were the MTCP's guaranteed partners who participated in all rounds of training. Other partners were not involved in all rounds of training, only working with the MTCP for specific trainings or for certain rounds of training. The MTCP has found that its training partners are equipped to deliver the type of targeted training that is necessary for employees to succeed in the industry and its employer partners are able to deliver necessary feedback about the training programs to make sure they effectively address industry skills gaps.

As the main applicant, RIMTA coordinated training and industry needs and subcontracted with its training partners and employers to design a program to train and create a pipeline for trainees to enter into employment.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Rhode Island Marine Trades Association	Lead applicant: Responsible for acting as fiscal agent; coordinating training components; compiling employer workforce needs through direct communication and recruitment; screening and placing trainees and potential employees; leading marketing and communication efforts; implementing the training plan; reporting and tracking outcomes.
Confident Captain	Training provider for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program and Launch Training program; Responsible for providing Workboat Handling and Dockside Seamanship Training through experiential learning; administering the Safe Boaters Exam; offering First Aid/CPR training.
Gowrie Group	Training provider for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program: Responsible for providing OSHA 10 training; administering the OSHA 10 test for certification; issuing OSHA 10 credentials.
IYRS	Responsible for developing the program design; leading recruitment for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; developing curriculum for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; participating in the RI Marine Trades High School Advisory Committee; training provider for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; providing experiential learning for basic skills in carpentry, composites, basic wiring and mechanics, systems, and intro to sailing and sailboats; hosting tours of its Newport and Bristol Campuses; working with RIMTA on a marketing plan to help promote careers in the marine and composites industries; participating in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings; offering to provide incumbent worker and group training as necessary.
Motoring Technical Training Institute (MTTI)	As a training provider for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program, responsible for developing and delivering training in welding and trailer service and repair; collaborating with RIMTA on a marketing plan to help promote careers in the

	marine and composites industries; participating in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings; offering to provide incumbent worker and group training as necessary.
New England Institute of Technology	Responsible for helping develop the program design and curriculum for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; participating in the RI Marine Trades High School Advisory Committee; training provider for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; developing and delivering training in winterization and commissioning, customer service, forklift and travel lift operation, industry measurements and calculations, blueprint reading, machining, and CNC (Computer Numerical Control) exposure; introducing students to SAMI (the Shipbuilding and Advanced Manufacturing Institute); hosting tours of its Warwick and East Greenwich campuses; working with RIMTA on a marketing plan to help promote careers in the marine and composites industries; participating in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings; offering to provide incumbent worker and group training as necessary.
US Watercraft	Responsible for acting as the primary training provider for the Carpentry Apprenticeship Training program by implementing a registered apprenticeship program in the finish carpentry trade; hiring and mentoring Carpentry Apprenticeship Program participants; providing experiential learning job shadow opportunities for Pre-Apprenticeship Training program participants; connecting graduates of the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program to paid work experiences and/or employment; and participating in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings.
Bristol Marine, Goetz Composites, Hunt Yachts, Jamestown Boatyard, New England Boatworks, Nicholson Yachts, Old Port Marine, Polaris MEP, Resolute Racing Shell, Ship to Shore, Symmetrix Composite Tooling, Maritime Solutions, Freedom Boat Club,	Employers provided at least one of the following: training through experiential learning for the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program; job shadowing opportunities; connection of graduates of the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program to paid work experiences and/or employment; promoted careers and opportunities in the Marine Trades and

Kellogg Marine Supply, Sail Newport, Brooks Marine Group	Composites Industry; participated in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings; and took part in Incumbent Worker Training.
Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston	Responsible for providing outreach to urban youth about opportunities in the marine and composites industries; supporting recruitment, assessment, and pre-screening for Pre-Apprenticeship Training program or continuing exploration into the Marine Trades and Composites industry; providing case management and transportation assistance to the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program for participants; participating in Real Jobs Implementation Grant planning and implementation meetings.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal #1: Establish training opportunities that prepare workers for current jobs in the marine trades and composites industry.

The MTCP created three training programs to assist in closing the industry skills gap, recruiting potential employees, and retaining talented workers. These programs were designed to give current and potential employees the skills needed to succeed in the marine trades and composites industry, including "cross-industry" skills that suit the common needs of many employers in the industry. The MTCP anticipated that workers completing the training would become more employable and provide the sector with the skilled and competent workforce needed to grow. These programs were the Carpentry Apprenticeship Training program, the Marine and Composites Pre-Apprenticeship Training program, a Launch Training program, and the Incumbent Worker Training program.

The Carpentry Apprenticeship Training program was designed to establish a successful apprenticeship program in the marine trades and composites industry. Partners predicted that the program's success would allow small companies to become more accustomed to apprenticeship programs despite the commonly held view that apprenticeship programs lead to unionization. Many small companies have been resistant to these types of trainings in the past because they do not want to be associated with unions. By introducing a successful apprenticeship program that trained valued new members in the marine trades and composites industry without unionization, the MTCP hoped small businesses would start to view apprenticeship programs in a more positive light. Participants in the Carpentry Apprenticeship Program, which lasted over a four-year time period, were hired and mentored at US Watercraft. Through a combination of 7,500 hours of job training and 500 hours of classroom training, participants were trained to be marine cabinet makers. Participants were taught the basics of boat building and interior construction, which allowed participants to gain skills in lofting, calculations, and safety. Participants also studied the interior fitting of boats, the use of specialized machinery, how to finish timber, and how to correctly laminate and join timber. Further, they learned how to build and install wooden marine furniture by acquiring skills in timber selection, machining, interpreting plans, and knowledge of glues and adhesives finishing.

The marine and composites Pre-Apprenticeship Training was designed to combine classroom time, hands-on projects, and job experience to train new employees in marine trades and composites. Prior to receiving RJRI funding, the Pre-Apprenticeship Training was established through a GWB Innovation Grant and has since been offered by RIMTA for many years. The RJRI Implementation Grant differs in that the GWB grant entailed goals and objectives that were designed by DLT, while the RJRI grant allowed RIMTA to meet with industry members, assess the needs of the industry, and then design a training module that meets the specific needs of the industry (e.g., if a specific need for sailmaking arises, then RIMTA can tailor a training module around that specific industry skill). The execution of the RJRI Implementation Grant required that it be implemented in two sessions, with one involving eight

recruited participants by February 2016 and beginning in June of that year, and the other recruiting 10 participants by June 2016 and beginning in July 2016. The program targeted adults, some of whom came from the minimum security prison population, who could lift over 50 pounds of weight and were comfortable working with their hands. A particular emphasis was placed on recruiting participants through Rhode Island high schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, vacation camps that were held by local organizations, and by outreach through the state's community colleges. The long-term recruitment strategy for the MTCP is to continue its strategy of "greenhousing" so that youth outreach continuously occurs.

Participants in this program were provided the following skills training: carpentry and wooden boatbuilding, marine systems, bottom painting and varnishing boats, welding, trailer repair and maintenance, boat detailing, shrink wrapping boats, engine repair and maintenance, winterization and commissioning boats, customer service skills, sailboat basics and operation, measurements and calculations, fork and travel lift with hands-on application, hauling and rigging boats, and sail making and repair. Trainees also worked towards the following skills: workboat handling and dockside seamanship resulting in a US Coast Guard Boaters Safety Card; forklift certification; OSHA training resulting in certification earned; First Aid and CPR training resulting in certification earned; and work readiness training in preparation for the National Career Readiness Credential (NCRC) exam. Program participants also received the following employment-related services: job shadowing placement; industry tours; soft skill training; wrap-around case management services; job search and placement assistance; assistance with the creation of an individual employment plan; individual career counseling; short-term prevocational services; internships and work experience; and work preparation activities. All participants received a daily stipend up to $20 and at the conclusion of training, graduates received an industry-recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion from RIMTA.

The Launch Training program aimed to teach program participants how to safely and legally operate a launch boat, and provide participants with the skills needed to obtain the proper licensure to operate a launch in Rhode Island's waters. To qualify for participation, interested recruits needed to submit a written application, sit for an interview with RIMTA and Confident Captain, the program's training provider, and provide written evidence of their ability to pass a drug test and meet United States Coast Guard standard physical requirements to be able to safely operate a boat. The MTCP planned to have no more than 15 participants take part in this program.

The Launch Training program consisted of five days of training held at the Confident Captain offices in Middletown, RI. Program participants received the 16 hour United States Coast Guard (USCG) launch tender course, an eight hour USCG first-aid and CPR course, and a 16 hour safe boating course provided by the Rhode Island Department of the Environmental Management (RIDEM). As part of their training, participants took an exam proctored by RIDEM regarding boating safety and a FCC Marine Radiotelephone Operator's Exam. Participants also received assistance compiling and submitting applications for a USCG boating license and

Transportation Worker Identification Credentials. The MTCP reimbursed participants for the cost of the application and issuance fees for these licenses, and for the cost of a drug test and the USCG physical examination. At the conclusion of training, Confident Captain arranged a networking event with program graduates and representatives from local marinas and yacht clubs who were in need of launch drivers to help facilitate the placement of program graduates into training-related employment.

The Incumbent Worker training program planned to address lifelong learning needs, enable employees to move up the career ladder, and help companies to remain on the cutting edge by training employees in new skills. RIMTA has executed Incumbent Worker Training programs with its partner companies for many years and received funding through RJRI funds, GWB Express Grants, and On the Job training funds. The program began in February of 2016, and 11 workers were trained by their respective companies until October 2016, while another cohort of workers were set to be trained in October 2016 and to conclude their training by December 2017. Employers who wanted to participate in this training program submitted program applications to RIMTA, who evaluated them based on their stated goals, available funding, and their impact with respect to the number of training participants who were eligible for a raise or promotion after completing training. Employer trainings were not limited only to the employees of that company, however. All industry employees could attend any offered incumbent worker training with their employer's assent. Employers provided a mix of off-site classroom training and onsite training that allowed participants to gain a variety of skills. The goals and contents of these trainings varied from employer to employer, but all training was done with the goal of filling a skills gap in the industry, and giving participants opportunities for wage increases and promotions. To ensure that these goals were met, the MTCP attached a stipulation to the Incumbent Worker Training funds that employers accessing the funds must promise to promote or increase the wages of a certain percentage of their trainees.

Goal #2: Expand outreach and create pipelines to increase recruitment into the marine trades and composites industry.

The MTCP sought to improve outreach by expanding recruitment and creating a more robust pool of potential employees by directly engaging its target populations. The MTCP enhanced pre-existing "greenhousing" efforts offered by RIMTA by working with vocational-technical high schools, public high schools, and institutions of post-secondary education like the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) to align educational programming with the needs of the marine trades and composites industry. The MTCP recruited students for early training programs and raised awareness about the marine trades and composites industry. This was done through two methods. First, the MTCP worked with the state Department of Education and six schools across the state to introduce a marine trades and composites industry-certified career tech curriculum to its students. Second, the MTCP increased "greenhousing" efforts in state high schools and vocational-technical high schools to give students more opportunities for industry

internships, tours, and networking. These efforts made it possible for interested students to develop the skills necessary to work in the marine trades and composites industry while in high school, attend CCRI to complete their training, participate in an industry apprenticeship program, and become employed after receiving a degree. These programs are formed through connections with a teacher, guidance counselor, or program coordinator at each school. The MTCP usually tries to work with individuals with connections to the industry who understand its needs and goals so the MTCP will not spend time teaching and tailoring these things to the school's program leader. Also, these programs target entire school districts, not single schools, so there is continuity of funding, understanding, and curriculum throughout the district's administration and schools. The MTCP plans to reach an average of 200 students per year with general industry exposure, and narrows that population down to between 65 and 75 students who are connected with paid work opportunities in the industry.

Further, the MTCP planned to conduct outreach to the general public, students, veterans, adults with English as their second language, and community sailing programs to raise more public awareness of the marine trades and composites industry. The MTCP conducted this outreach through a variety of methods, including a summer boat building "vacation camp," an advertising presence at boat shows and industry employer career days, hosting guest speakers, and facilitating tours in industry companies and manufacturing facilities. While recruiting, the MTCP targeted adults who were seeking non-traditional employment, had at least an eighth grade math and reading level, could solve problems, were able to work as part of a team, and were able to work with their hands.

Finally, the MTCP planned to work with the University of Rhode Island to execute a marketing program to introduce young people to a different aspect of the marine and composites industry. This program centered on the Providence Boat Show, and introduced participants to marketing concepts and practices used by industry professionals. The goal of this program was to introduce students who were more interested in academic, service, or marketing fields to the white collar side of the industry.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Responsiveness and partner engagement

One of the key achievements of the MTCP came as a consequence of the flexibility and efficiency of the RJRI program. As the lead organization, RIMTA designed its program by focusing on the immediate needs of its industry partners. This allowed RIMTA to be more responsive to its employer partners, and to demonstrate both its own responsiveness to industry concerns and the responsiveness of its government connections.

Recruitment

Recruitment at minimum security prisons

The MTCP pointed to its successes in developing relationships with minimum security prisoners as a key recruitment strategy for the marine trades and composites labor pool. The MCTP was asked by the Governor's Workforce Board to work with the ACI and ManUp to recruit within this population, but mostly worked with the ACI. The MTCP was able to recruit from this population because the industry, and especially the manufacturing companies in the industry, are willing to work with former inmates and people with criminal records. The MTCP made additional plans to cultivate its relationship with the ACI by developing and executing a composites training program inside minimum security prison facilities to prepare inmates for jobs once they are released. The MTCP is currently searching for an instructor to start this program.

Greenhousing success

The association also succeeded in developing its "greenhousing" strategy to reach out to youth they are aware of employment opportunities in this sector. The MTCP both worked directly with schools and recruited students for training programs and summer programs at public events like the Providence Boat Show and the IYRS Career Day. The MTCP's recruitment efforts have extended into Community and Technical Education programs, institutions of higher education, and local youth day camps.

Recruiting at IYRS's Career Day

The MTCP consistently recruited interested students into its training programs and youth "greenhousing" programs with a presence at the IYRS Career Day. This event is usually held on a Saturday, and the MTCP has found that this attracts students and their parents who are serious about pursuing a career in the marine and composites industry.

Trainee Barriers

The MCTP did not discuss any achievements with trainee barriers.

Training

Incumbent worker training and advancement

During the recession, the MTCP focused its efforts on building a robust Incumbent Worker Training program and has continued to execute that program under the RJRI program. Of the 15 participants targeted for entry into Phase I of this program, 8 were enrolled and 6 completed the training program. The MTCP attached a stipulation to the delivery of the training funds that employers promote or increase the wages of employees completing this training.

Transition from Training to Employment

Employee placement

Of the 20 participants enrolled in the 280-hour Pre-Apprenticeship Training only two dropped. To date, 13 of the 18 who remained in the Pre-Apprenticeship Training program have

been employed. The high completion and placement rate is likely due, in part, to paying trainees for completing the training.

Reimbursing partners for the payroll of new hires

The MTCP also knew from its relationship with employer partners that the risk associated with hiring new employees was a key barrier to developing the marine trades and composites workforce. In response, the MTCP integrated an incentive program as part of its Implementation Grant which subsidized the payroll of new employees for four months in order to reduce the uncertainty of hiring new workers. RIMTA's combination of rapport with its partners and in-depth knowledge of skills needs within the industry played a key factor in giving employers the confidence needed to hire workers who completed Pre-Apprenticeship Training.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

The MTCP did not discuss any challenges with partnerships.

Recruitment

Recruitment

One of the key challenges described by the MTCP was developing a workforce and recruiting participants as the economy became stronger and fewer people were actively looking for work. This challenge led to the adoption of a long term "greenhousing" strategy and outreach to minimum security prison populations. So far these approaches have been successful and it is expected that the combination of exposing Rhode Island's youth and under- or unemployed populations to employment opportunities in the marine trades and composites industry will allow the MTCP to continue meeting the employment needs of the marine trades and composites industry.

Trainee Barriers

The MTCP did not discuss any challenges with trainee barriers.

Training

The MTCP did not discuss any challenges with training.

Transition from Training to Employment

The MCTP did not discuss any challenges with the transition from training to employment.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-05 Rhode Island Manufacturing Growth Collaborative (Polaris MEP)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Goetz Training - Phase 1 (Incumbents)	2/22/16	11/2/16	15	8	15	6
Goetz Training - Phase 1 (New Hires)	2/22/16	11/2/16	5	10	5	8
Goetz Training - Phase 2 (Incumbents)	10/3/16	12/30/17	20	1	20	1
Goetz Training - Phase 2 (New Hires)	10/3/16	12/30/17	5	12	5	12
Launch Training (2016)	4/18/16	6/30/16	12	11	12	11
Marine Pre-Apprenticeship Training (2016)	7/11/16	8/26/16	10	10	10	9
Composites Pre-Apprenticeship Training (2016)	11/14/16	12/15/16	10	10	10	9
Carpentry Apprenticeship	3/20/16	12/31/18	1	1	1	1
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					33	42
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn an industry recognized credential					25	31
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					17	29
Total Participants promoted due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					8	4
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					8	4

VIII. Sustainability

The MTCP specifically developed its programs with the goal of making them replicable, expandable, scalable, and sustainable. The partners anticipate the sustainability of the MTCP because the features of the programs make them eligible for funding under other state funding streams. Numerous sources of funding for these programs outside of RJRI include the Employer Training Provider List, Veteran Credit Funds, or the nascent Rhode Island Promise Scholarships program. Even with these sources of funding available, however, the MTCP considers its training programs more effectively funded through the flexibility of programs like RJRI. The alternative sources of funding are aimed to promote worker development and hireability, while RJRI funding allows the MTCP to fund programs that focus on meeting the skills needs of industry by training employees. Although the MTCP's training programs can be sustained without RJRI funding, future programs may lack the robust features of today's program that is targeted toward industry needs. Since the primary goal of RIMTA is to respond to the employment needs of partners within the marine trades and composites industry, the MTCP expects to sustain relationships with its many industry partners regardless of whether RJRI funding is delivered to the MTCP.

IX. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the MTCP:

- Offered compensation to Pre-Apprenticeship program participants so as to minimize attrition and help offset the costs of participation.
- Subsidized the payroll of new employees for four months in order to reduce the uncertainty and cost to employers of hiring new workers.
- Operated with RIMTA, an industry workforce intermediary, as its lead applicant, allowing the MTCP to work on behalf of employers across the industry without the pitfalls that might be associated with a competitor in charge of workforce development.

X. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for the MTCP, the following recommendations for RJRI are suggested:

- Implement a recruitment strategy to reach the target populations that were described in the initial grant proposal (e.g., veterans, ESL speakers, etc.) or develop connections with the prison population more formally by bringing in a community organization with connections to these populations into the MTCP or by finding an instructor to deliver training at the ACI.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public-private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island (LDPRI) participated in the Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI) program to develop leadership training for the state's manufacturing industry. The partnership was initially formed by Toray Plastics and Astro-Med and various other companies in the manufacturing industry, including Taco Comfort Solutions, Teknor Apex, and Nordson EFD. The LDPRI also included the University of Rhode Island's (URI) Center for Human Services, URI's College of Continuing Education, and the Rhode Island Manufacturing Association. The partnership was formed for the following reasons:

- Employees in the manufacturing industry have the technical skills necessary to excel at manufacturing duties, but lack the leadership training and soft skills necessary to be successful supervisors or managers. As such, many companies struggled to find and retain skilled leaders, such as supervisors and managers, among their own employees.
- The lack of leadership skills among newly promoted leaders caused them to become frustrated and unhappy with their jobs and so they returned to hourly work or left their company entirely.
- The manufacturing industry faced substantial skills gaps among its employees that prevented them from being prepared for first-line management.
- Manufacturing industry leaders were retiring and were not being replaced.

II. Grant History

Toray Plastics was the lead applicant for the LDPRI's Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI) grant application. The company is a developer and manufacturer of plastics technology located in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. Toray Plastics has participated in numerous state government sponsored workforce development grant programs before, including the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) Express Grant program, Incumbent Workforce Grant program, the Paid Internship

for RI College Students - RI Work Immersion program, and the Workforce Partnership of Greater RI's On the Job Training Grant program.

During the planning stage conducted under a Real Jobs RI planning grant, Toray Plastics and the newly formed LDPRI worked with the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association to conduct an industry-wide survey of needed competency areas in the Rhode Island manufacturing industry. They discovered through the survey that many industry employers were confident that enough qualified employees existed to meet the demands of the fast-growing manufacturing industry. Further, the survey identified numerous Human Resource issues within the manufacturing industry, including: excessive turnover; a long recruiting time due to a lack of qualified candidates; a lack of assessment tools to quickly identify skills gaps; the excessive costs and inconveniences associated with existing training programs; a lack of internal or external trainers; and a lack of formal career development plans for employees. Lastly, the survey identified the following skills gaps in the manufacturing industry: a lack of consistent training for incumbent workers across the industry; a lack of worker knowledge in manufacturing management; a lack of computer skills; and a lack of communication, leadership, and coaching skills among workers. As a result, the partnership focused its training program on delivering conflict resolution skills, leadership skills, and skills related to transitioning from peer to leader.

III. Goals and Objectives

The LDPRI established two specific goals that were designed to prepare emerging leaders for first-line leadership positions, support and retain first-line leaders in the manufacturing industry, and support the manufacturing industry through an imminent period of growth and expansion:

1. Create a comprehensive, competency-based leadership training program to train incoming or inexperienced employee leaders.
    - The partnership designed this program to provide employees with new career-enhancing skills and companies with skilled new leaders to help manage their businesses.
2. Recruit and train senior leaders to act as industry mentors for new leaders.
    - The partnership offered a Mentor Training Program to fulfill this goal.

Both of these goals were designed to enhance employee development and succession planning. Through these leadership training programs, the LDPRI expected to both increase the skills and success of industry employees and help increase retention, thus keeping newly skilled workers employed within the industry. Additionally, the LDPRI expected that equipping incumbent workers with enhanced management and leadership skills would allow companies to promote within and, therefore, increase the number of entry-level positions available to newly recruited workers.

IV. Partnerships

The LDPRI is composed of industry partners, professional associations, and training providers. Toray Plastics spearheaded the founding of the partnership out of its desire to develop a leadership training program for its own employees. Toray Plastics used the DLT's RJRI internet directory to connect with Astro-Med, another company in the manufacturing industry that was interested in developing a leadership training program.

Once Toray and Astro-Med decided to collaborate on a leadership training program together, they both began working with URI's Center for Human Services to develop a curriculum. The original partner companies were joined by Taco Comfort Solutions, Teknor Apex, and Nordson EFD. This partnership then worked with the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association to execute an industry-wide needs survey. Finally, URI's College of Continuing Education TALENT Project Team, in collaboration with URI's Center for Human Services, were chosen to deliver a customized training curriculum that addressed the specific needs of leaders in the manufacturing industry.

While the planning and implementation process was underway, two partners stopped attending meetings and participating in implementation efforts, causing the number of partners involved in the LDPRI to decline. Yet, the remaining partners consisting of Toray Plastics, Astro-Med, Taco Comfort Solutions, the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association, and URI remained committed to the program, and through their shared vision were able to make the partnership a successful one. The remaining partners understood that in order to preserve this core partnership and to minimize the amount of time each partner spent on the training programs, meetings needed to be limited. Partner meetings were held once per month and were limited to a few hours, while the rest of the planning and communication required to execute the grant occurred over phone and email. In 2017, the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association left the partnership due to internal reorganization, but the partnership expanded to include Dominion Diagnostics as an additional partner employer.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Toray Plastics	Lead Applicant: Responsible for referring participants to the training program and offering access to the company's Innovation and Development Center for training; acting as Lead Applicant and Fiscal Agent, including the duties of managing and documenting grant expenditures, disbursements, submitting financial reports for the grant, managing the grant, and all aspects of implementation.
Astro-Med Inc. d/b/a AstroNova (Astro-Med)	Responsible for referring participants to the training program; using the Innovation and Development Center for training; attending regular meetings to assess and plan implementation.
Taco Comfort Solutions	Responsible for referring participants to the training program; using Innovation and Development Center for training; attending regular meetings to assess and plan implementation.
University of Rhode Island College of Continuing Education	Responsible for assisting in the design and implementation of competency-based leadership and mentoring training programs.
University of Rhode Island Center of Human Services	Responsible for project management; leading the development of a strategic plan; monitoring deliverables and results; promoting communication with partners and stakeholders; setting agendas for partner meetings; facilitating meetings; troubleshooting conflicts.
Rhode Island Manufacturers Association	Responsible for acting as convener and participant manager; orienting participants to the training program's curriculum and goals; assisting in participant intake and follow-ups; administering needs assessments and evaluations; developing and implementing individual employment plans for participants; supporting participants in their current jobs; coordinating and facilitating job preparation services; managing the employer partnerships; managing meetings; providing counsel on the implementation of the grant and its curriculum.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal #1: Create a comprehensive, competency-based leadership training program to train incoming or inexperienced employee leaders.

The LDPRI designed the Leadership Training Program to fulfill the goal of training incoming or inexperienced leaders in competency-based leadership. This training was designed to provide both employees with career-enhancing skills and employers with potential leaders to help manage their companies. The training was also designed to train employees with the qualifications needed to be prepared for promotion and advancement in the manufacturing industry.

This program was specifically designed to serve "emerging leaders," a category that includes recently appointed leaders, potential leaders, or current leaders without any formal leadership or management training. The LDPRI allowed each partner company to decide which type of emerging leader would be receiving training. The selection of program participants was made possible through a participant screening tool based on a leadership competency framework developed by Korn Ferry International. It identified the core characteristics of employees with leadership potential so that the LDPRI could identify the best candidates for program participation. Since supervisors and Human Resource officers in partner companies were responsible for selecting program participants, this tool enabled supervisors to select and screen employees for potential participation in the Leadership Training Program or the Mentor Training Program (described below). Selected candidates were paired with a mentor upon starting the program, and were encouraged to meet with and learn from the mentor throughout the training program. Participants also received a mix of on-the-job training, classroom training, and mentoring that covered six modules over 12 weeks.

After completing the program modules, participants worked with their supervisors and mentors to design and execute an on-the-job training project at their company to reinforce the lessons taught in the program and received a Level 1 Leadership Certificate from URI after completing the program. This certificate also confers continuing education credits from URI to program graduates.

Table 2: Leadership Training Program Modules

Module	Curriculum Delivered
Understanding the Supervisory Role	Prepared participants for the transition from being a peer worker to being a supervisor.
Command Skills	Prepared participants for basic leadership, crisis management, and how to deliver unpopular news.
Managing and Measuring Work	Demonstrated how to set and communicate expectations, organize work, assign tasks, monitor progress, and track feedback.
Planning	Cultivated project management and team organization skills.
Motivating Others	Prepared participants for leadership and mentorship roles with their employee teams.
Managing Conflict	Participants learned how to recognize and defuse conflict, while also removing themselves emotionally from rising conflicts.

Goal #2: Recruit and train senior leaders to act as industry mentors for new leaders.

Execution of the Leadership Training Program required the recruitment and training of senior leaders to serve as mentors for training participants. To fulfill the goal of recruiting and training mentors, the LDPRI created the Mentor Training Program, which allowed training participants to learn from mentors outside of their own companies. In addition to the mentoring function of the program, another key component of the mentoring program was to create a broader Manufacturing Industry Leadership Mentoring Network with graduates from the training program.

Candidates for the Mentor Training Program were selected by supervisors and human resource officers from within their own companies. Over a period of six weeks, selected participants received 18 hours of training, six hours of support from a certified executive coach prior to being assigned a mentee, and were asked to mentor emerging leaders for up to a year. At the conclusion of training, mentors received a Leadership Mentor Certificate from the University of Rhode Island.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Program growth

The original training focused on manufacturing companies, but has now expanded to include companies that are indirectly related to manufacturing, such as jewelry companies. The LDPRI's extensive marketing and recruitment efforts included reserving tables at conferences and industry events, as well as sponsoring luncheons for companies that led to increased interest in enrollment among both companies and employees. With interest in the Mentor Training Program growing so rapidly during the first training session, the grantee added an additional cohort of mentor trainees to meet the demand.

Recruitment

Leadership training program graduates

While the Leadership Training Program recruitment lagged behind the expected performance goals of the LDPRI, 26 out of 27 participants who were recruited for training completed it and gained an industry-recognized credential, as well as continuing education credits.

Mentor training program support

The Mentor Training Program recruited 22 out of the expected 40 participants. There appears to be strong program buy-in among industry leaders. Of the 22 participants recruited into the program, all of them graduated from the program and received a certificate from URI for their participation. The certificate also conferred continuing education credits from URI to program graduates.

Trainee Barriers

The LDPRI did not discuss any achievements with trainee barriers.

Training

Program flexibility

The sector partners agree that the manufacturing industry was advanced as a whole because a customized leadership training curriculum was designed by URI that allowed individualized training to be made available to participants.

Transition from Training to Employment

The LDPRI did not discuss any achievements with the transition from training to employment.

Other

Utilizing feedback

Partners sought feedback to make changes and improvements to the program after each step of the training process. The partners believe that adapting the program would not have been possible without the curriculum's flexibility. On the basis of feedback from trainees, the partners made mentors available earlier in the training process so that emerging leaders were given greater access to mentorship resources during their training. Feedback from participants has been positive, especially with respect to the quality of the instructors delivering the training program.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island (IG-08)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Mentoring Training & Practicum (2 cohorts) (Incumbents)	4/20/16	9/30/16	40	22	40	22
Leadership Development (2 Cohorts) (Incumbents)	6/8/16	12/22/16	40	27	40	26
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn a Certification					TBD	48*
Total Participants promoted due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					TBD	Ongoing

*All Leadership and Mentoring & Practicum participants who completed the program received certification as well as University credits.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Difficulty expanding the partnership

The LDPRI faced significant difficulties in expanding the partnership. First, it sought out human resources departments as a point of contact in potential partner organizations, but found that most human resources departments were simply too overloaded with responsibilities to help make such connections. These departments were also constrained by their senior management's willingness to give the LDPRI the time and flexibility to help with the training program. Further, during the planning phase, the sector partnership met weekly and each partner was called upon to do a significant amount of planning and implementation work. Some partners believe that the high workload kept other companies from joining the LDPRI. The LDPRI struggled identifying companies that shared its commitment to leadership training and this may have prevented the LDPRI from expanding beyond its original partners.

Partner attrition

During LPDRI's implementation of the training programs, some partners stopped participating at meetings and in implementation efforts. As a result, these partners were asked to leave the partnership. The remaining partners chose not to work with the companies that lacked the commitment and the time required to build and maintain the program.

Recruitment

Leadership training recruitment

The partnership entered the implementation phase of the grant with high recruitment expectations, but struggled to convey the vision of the training program to others and to secure the participation of businesses. The LDPRI also learned that getting referrals of qualified participants from supervisors was challenging. This was due to supervisors not having the time to commit to learning about the program and institute a screening process of their employees. Due to confusion about the desired outcomes of the program and requirements of training participants, some of the initial referrals were not well-suited for training and needed to be removed from the program. This caused the partnership to fall short of its intended goals for the training program.

Mentor training recruitment

Recruiting individuals to participate in the mentoring program proved to be a challenge for the LDPRI because potential mentors already have demanding responsibilities and time commitments. Employers hesitated to send supervisors to mentor training because doing so meant that they would lose their supervisors to mentor training. These elements restricted the recruitment of possible mentor trainees.

Trainee Barriers

The LDPRI did not discuss any challenges with trainee barriers.

Coordinating mentors and mentees

Mentors from the Mentor Training Program were typically salaried, while mentees from the Leadership Training Program worked at an hourly rate. This made the scheduling of meetings between mentors and mentees difficult. This separation between mentor and mentee was further compounded by the fact that mentors completed training before being matched to a mentee, causing an awkward gap in the program for the mentors.

Participant time constraints

The LDPRI found that many participants hesitated to leave their jobs for the training sessions, especially when accommodating the training sessions required employers to modify shift schedules. Some program participants traded shifts with other workers so that they could attend training, but no official stipend existed for either of the training programs. Participants also experienced added pressure because they were required to miss no more than two sessions of the training. The partnership tied this strict requirement to the lower than expected enrollment of its training programs.

Training

Ensuring program completion

Ensuring that program participants completed their post-program on-the-job training proved challenging for the LDPRI. This portion of the training was guided by the participant's mentor, but completion of the requirement depended on the cooperation and enforcement of the participant's company supervisor. The LDPRI found that this portion of the training was not being completed by many participants. As a result, the LDPRI will be changing the structure of the training program by holding a graduation ceremony where participants are given their certificates after a three month period of on-the-job training that is overseen by mentors and program instructors. The LDPRI is also altering the on-the-job training portion of the training program to require a capstone project and presentation so that it can monitor the completion of the program.

Transition from Training to Employment

The LDPRI did not discuss any challenges with the transition from training to employment.

VIII. Sustainability

The partners expressed confidence in the sustainability of the program. The LDPRI's plan is to transition from a free service funded by RJRI grant funding to a tuition-based structure where employers pay a fixed price to have their employees trained. The LDPRI already knows

the per-person cost of training, and will execute a fundraising campaign so that employees from small businesses are able to receive scholarships to offset the cost of leadership training. The partnership's plan is to convene an advisory board consisting of representatives from the industry, the original partners, training providers, mentors, and training participants to assist in the transition and in the development and performance monitoring of the program, which can be sustainable even without RJRI funding.

Further, the LDPRI believes the program will be sustainable due to the program's overall vision. The partners strongly believe that all Rhode Island companies should develop leaders that are prepared to steer their industries into the future and the LDPRI's training program provides a model for how this can be achieved. The partners argue that allowing leaders from different companies to mix with one another, exchange ideas, and learn best practices will be critical to the long-term health of the manufacturing industry. The Mentor Training Program will make this possible by establishing a culture of lifelong learning in the manufacturing industry which will help experienced leaders learn new techniques and skills while also serving to revitalize their passion and interest in manufacturing by introducing them to the new faces of the industry.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the LDPRI in executing its training program:

- Offering additional trainings for employees who occupy the middle ground between "emerging leaders" and "mentors."
- Training mentors and mentees at the same time, in the same place, and on the same day in order to allow more convenient meetings that meet the scheduling needs of both groups.
- Relying on alumni of the Mentor Training Program to share their experience with the LDPRI with their peers and recruit them to the LDPRI's training programs.
- Spreading out training sessions to allow for more time to absorb the information that was made available through the training program.
- Introducing an online component to the Leadership Training Program so that participants who miss classes can review the material.
- Moving the graduation ceremony to after participants have completed their on-the-job training to encourage program completion.
- Modifying the on-the-job training portion of the training program to require a capstone project and presentation so that completion of the program can be monitored by the LDPRI.

X. Best Practices

The following best practices were utilized by the LDPRI:

- Rely on direct supervisors of partner companies to select program participants to enable companies to train employees that had promotion potential.

- Maintain a committed core of partners that can focus on common goals, strategically make adjustments that make the fulfillment of these goals possible, and hold each of the partners accountable for individual effort.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for the Leadership Development Partnership of Rhode Island, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Provide financial incentives for employees who need time off to participate.
- Establish a dedicated employer liaison within the partnership to help program participants negotiate time off or shift changes with their employer.
- Create safeguards against the possibility of trainee attendance problems caused by offering training materials online. Such safeguards could include:
    - Only offering online content in certain points in the curriculum to encourage attendance at a smaller number of in-class trainings where in-person training is absolutely critical.
- Assist partnerships in establishing a leadership team that can continuously monitor the performance of sector partners and allow the partnership to be more accountable and flexible in the execution of workforce development grants.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Healthy Jobs RI Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Healthy Jobs RI Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Healthy Jobs RI (HJRI) partnership led by Rhode Island College (RIC) was created to fulfill the changing needs of the healthcare sector. The HJRI partnership identified several issues facing the healthcare sector:

- The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training projected that paraprofessional health workers were one of the most rapidly growing labor categories in Rhode Island and that these jobs pay a middle wage while not requiring a college degree.
    - As of 2013, the average annual wage for healthcare and social assistance jobs was $42,540 ($50,309 for ambulatory jobs, $56,803 in hospitals, $28,476 in nursing and residential care facilities, and $21,152 for social assistance jobs).
- The current trend within the healthcare industry is shifting towards a more holistic "whole person" approach that integrates physical and behavioral health care and focuses more on preventive and community healthcare.
    - The passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2009 shifted the healthcare industry towards prevention, which expedited the need for workers skilled in behavioral health training and allowed for the reimbursement of community healthcare workers.
- Mental health problems and substance abuse rates in Rhode Island are some of the highest in the country, leading to a critical need for behavioral and community health workers.
- As of January 2016, Rhode Island's Medicaid agreement stipulated that "all workers in mental health agencies [must] receive specialized training in behavioral health."

Further, a 2013 survey of industry partners conducted by the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) with RJRI planning grant funds found that:

- There is a high demand for paraprofessional healthcare workers in the state's healthcare industry.

- The healthcare industry faces difficulties hiring, retaining, and advancing skilled paraprofessional healthcare workers.
- There is a lack of soft skills such as time management, clear and professional communication, problem solving and critical thinking among new hires in the industry.
- The workforce is changing as older workers beginning to retire and are being replaced with new workers, many of which are bilingual or speak English as a second language.
    - The partnership hopes to fill the gaps left by retiring workers with newly skilled workers from groups that have not traditionally been recruited for these jobs.
- Industry employers are not in a position to help new workers who struggle with personal issues, such as transportation, childcare, domestic issues, literacy and language challenges, medical issues, and other issues that impede their ability to be successful in the workplace.

Given the demands and challenges to this industry, the HJRI training program was designed to provide entry-level workers with necessary skills and competencies to enter and advance in healthcare careers and to prepare new and incumbent workers to work in community-based and integrated healthcare environments. The HJRI partnership worked to create a career pathway program that enabled workers to continuously gain skills and knowledge and advance in the healthcare sector.

II. Grant History

Rhode Island College (RIC) has been receiving DLT funding for over 20 years. RIC has received funds for their Medical Assistant, bookkeeping/accounting, and insurance training programs. In 2015, after a faculty member from RIC saw the request for proposals (RFP) for the RJRI planning grant, RIC faculty and staff members wrote a grant application together and formed the HJRI partnership with the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) to help with planning grant needs. The partnership planned to allocate much of their resources in 2016 towards system building. This would consist of building and optimizing the foundations of HJRI's program, including the development of curriculum before proceeding with large scale execution. The HJRI also strengthened its partnership with the Central Falls Parent College through the RJRI initiative.

III. Goals and Objectives

The HJRI partnership was specifically developed to address Rhode Island's need for 1) healthcare workers trained in behavioral health, 2) individuals trained and certified as community health workers, and 3) reduced staff turnover. The partnership worked to increase the skills of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) by providing them specialized training and to provide middle wage jobs to workers who lack a college degree. The HJRI partnership sought to:

- Develop and implement behavioral health trainings to enhance the skills of both incumbent healthcare paraprofessionals and unemployed trainees.
- Develop and implement trainings for community health workers that is certified through the Development of Health.
- Develop and implement a peer mentoring program to support new hires in the workplace to reduce staff turnover.

As part of this, the HJRI partnership worked to:

- Expand the current education and training offerings at the Central Falls Parent College.
- Educate and train a workforce to meet current and future needs of a changing healthcare landscape.
- Create jobs and career advancement opportunities for Rhode Island residents.
- Improve care delivery and reduce the overall cost of care.
- Provide care that better reflects and meets the needs of the surrounding communities.
- Improve patient outcomes.

Originally, the HJRI partnership sought to meet the following training objective:

- Provide behavioral health training to 100 healthcare students as part of their training curriculum.

However, after discussing their implementation goals with the DLT, the HJRI partnership decided to focus on developing curriculum for behavioral health training and community health worker training in 2016 to ensure that their program would fulfill their goals and provide quality training to program participants.

IV. Partnerships

The HJRI partnership brought together a variety of industry employers within the healthcare sector as well as other partners to help with referrals, training content, and industry expertise. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Rhode Island College (RIC)	Responsible for designing curriculum, materials, and instructional content; acting as a support to the industry in responding to needs; providing a space for trainings and meetings; leading and participating in committees.
Gateway Healthcare, Community Care Alliance	Responsible for assisting with curriculum development; providing training and opportunities; recruiting applicants through the organization's network; providing training and meeting areas; providing skilled instructors; conducting interview training for program participants; facilitating the establishment of the mentorship program with industry partners; hiring qualified participants.
Care New England, Gateway Healthcare, Chartercare, South County Hospital	Responsible for providing incumbent workers to participate in the programs; recruiting, training, hiring, and supporting program participants; working with RIC to develop training programs that enhance the skills of the workforce to meet changing industry needs.
Nalari Health	Responsible for providing exposure to healthcare technology and the training needed to effectively integrate it into various models of care; providing incumbent workers to participate in the programs; recruiting, training, hiring, and supporting program participants; working with RIC to develop training programs that enhance the skills of the workforce to meet changing industry needs.
Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals	Responsible for serving on the Partnership Advisory Committee and the Curriculum Development Committee.
Central Falls School District	Responsible for recruiting participants; providing training/classroom space; serving on the Recruitment and Partnership Advisory Committees.

Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI)	Responsible for conducting preliminary assessment of healthcare needs; organizing meetings; providing meeting and training space.
Town of North Providence School Department	Responsible for recruiting under- or unemployed parents as participants.
Rhode Island Department of Health	Responsible for helping ensure that training curriculum matched certification needs; providing internship opportunities; serving on the advisory committee.
Saint Antoine Community (another RJRI grantee)	Responsible for developing specialized training certificate programs for incumbent CNAs to advance their careers; serving as a pilot site for the behavioral health training.
The Substance Use and Mental Health Leadership Council of RI	Responsible for serving on the Partnership Advisory Committee and the Curriculum Development Committee; co-sponsoring Behavioral Healthcare training events; contributing to the Workforce Training Plan.
Rhode Island Welcome Back Center	Responsible for participating in ongoing program evaluation; promoting programs in the community; providing recruitment support and cross-referrals; assisting with increasing the number and engagement of employer partners; assisting, as needed, in establishing standards for developing articulation agreements and linkages among healthcare employers.
RI Council of Community Mental Health Centers	Responsible for participating in the Curriculum Committee.
Aquidneck Island Adult Education, Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, Central Falls Even Start, Community Action Partnership of Providence, Community College of Rhode Island, Comprehensive Community Action Programs, Cranston Alternate Education, Crossroads Rhode Island, Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, Eastbay CAP, Education Exchange, English for Action, The Genesis Center, Goodwill Industries, Institute for Labor Studies & Research, Literacy Volunteers of East Bay,	Planned to help with participant recruitment.

Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, Pawtucket School Department, Adult Education Professional Development Center Progreso Latino, Project Learn, Project RIRAL, Rhode Island Department of Corrections, Rhode Island Indian Council, South County Community Action, Tri-Town	

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

The HJRI partnership formed several committees to oversee the implementation of its training programs, and the committees were tasked with representing the interests of key stakeholders, developing curriculum, and conducting or assisting with various assessments. The Steering Committee received input from the Partner Advisory Committee/Board. Membership of the board included representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Health, and the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). Table 2 details the main committees and their primary functions.

Table 2: Committees of the HJRI Partnership and their Functions

Steering Committee	Coordinate grant and partnership activities; compile data and reports; monitor sub grantee training schedules and invoices; monitor overall grant expenditures; oversee recruitment, employee support, retention and advancement; and oversee curriculum development (headed by RIC faculty) sub-committees.
Partner Advisory Committee/Board	Respond to the findings of the annual partnership survey; adapt the annual survey to respond to member concerns and satisfaction with partner activities; provide formal input into the development of the annual comprehensive plan through the Executive Committee; approve pilot studies; contribute to periodic assessment of the Workforce Training Plan; recommend training content.
Executive Committee	Direct the partnership and its organizational structure to respond to industry input; ensure employer partners are engaged and industry requirements are fulfilled; develop an overall project schedule; create timelines and feasible goals for projects; track performance and deliverables.

Goal #1: Develop and implement behavioral health training to enhance the skills of both incumbent healthcare paraprofessionals and unemployed trainees.

Curriculum Development

The HJRI partnership worked with industry partners and the Department of Health to identify curriculum needs for behavioral health training. As part of the Institute for Education in Healthcare at Rhode Island College, the HJRI partnership engaged faculty teaching credit and non-credit classes related to health in order to put together the curriculum for the training. The partnership developed a training with five modules that can be tailored depending on employer needs (e.g., introductory vs. more advanced), employee type (e.g., CNA vs. Medical Assistant) and type of organization (e.g., hospital vs. long term care).

Pilot Training

The HJRI partnership initially conducted a pilot training for the behavioral health curriculum using Saint Antoine Residence's CNA training program as the pilot site. The partnership also planned to work with Stepping Up, another RJRI partnership, to implement behavioral health training through Stepping Up's CNA program. However, this particular partnership was not successful, and the HJRI partnership stopped working with Stepping Up by the end of 2016. Following the success of the pilot trainings, the training plan decided upon by the HJRI partnership was to have two faculty members available to provide the training by contract. The training could be standalone or integrated into CNA or Medical Assistant trainings. The employers will market the benefits of the training programs by emphasizing career opportunities, opportunities to gain continuing education credits and credentials, and scheduling incumbent workers in such a way that they could attend training sessions without losing hours or income.

Future Implementation

Regarding future implementation of behavioral health training, the HJRI partnership plans to have employer partners discuss their training needs at the monthly meetings. Then, the employers will work with the HJRI partnership to provide a behavioral health training for their employees based on needs identified by the employer. For recruitment into the behavioral health training, the HJRI partnership, through its members, plans to utilize its existing recruitment pipeline and screening infrastructure that reaches a range of incumbent workers, and unemployed workers from ready-for work to vulnerable populations with a variety of challenges. Specifically, the HJRI partnership hopes to rely on the Central Falls Parent College to assist with recruitment and screening for its programs.

During the implementation grant year, the HJRI partnership also worked to develop the infrastructure to offer the behavioral training as a 30-hour certificate course with credit for students at RIC. The HJRI partnership focused on implementing the behavioral health training as part of a plan to provide stackable credentials for employees, meaning an accumulation of professional development opportunities that provide a supportive career ladder. These stackable

credentials will include credit bearing classes and certificate programs and are structured for new and incumbent workers to receive soft and hard skills training to ensure workers have the skills and competencies to meet patient needs in home and institution-based sites across the continuum of care (from acute care to long term care).

To continue expanding the program, the HJRI partnership planned to continue surveying industry employers on a yearly basis to assess the industry's talent and skill needs. Further, the HJRI partnership planned to meet with the Advisory Board quarterly to review the training programs and results, and to identify and discuss ongoing industry needs.

To ensure participant and partner satisfaction, the HJRI partnership planned to have its Curriculum Committee survey employers after the completion of training sessions to evaluate partner satisfaction with training and to assess the performance of recent program graduates. These surveys would also provide the HJRI partnership with ideas for how to improve and expand their training. Further, HJRI planned to have every participant take a pre- and post-test before and after their training to assess the training, and planned to develop an assessment for the behavioral health skills training for incumbent workers to enhance the certificate training.

Goal #2: Develop and implement training for community health workers that is certified through the Development of Health.

Curriculum Development

To develop the community health worker curriculum, a curriculum committee was formed to facilitate development. This committee was led by the director of RIC's Center for Addiction and Behavioral Studies and developed in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health. The Department of Health also assisted in ensuring courses met certification needs. The HJRI partnership additionally wanted to ensure it was not duplicating any content with the Peer Navigator training, which is a program through the Rhode Island Department of BHDDH. The community health worker training was developed for new and incumbent employees, but focused on new employees expressing a desire to work as Community Health Workers. This curriculum was also developed around the idea of stackable credentials.

Recruitment

For the community health worker training, the HJRI partnership worked to identify unemployed individuals through many avenues. The recruitment sources included: RIC's Outreach Program, One-Stop Centers, trainees from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, students who enrolled and were completing RIDE-funded adult education programs, veterans and refugees identified through RIC, graduates and parents of the Central Falls School District, and word-of-mouth. The North Providence School District also participated in recruitment, specifically for under- or unemployed parents. The RIC Outreach Program has a long-standing relationship with local One Stop Career Centers that made recruitment through the One Stop Career Center System possible.

Training & Trainee Supports

Central Falls Parent College served as the pilot site for this training. Having already partnered with one another for two years prior to grant implementation, Central Falls Parent College had provided RIC's work readiness training in the past, so it served as the pilot program for the community health worker training. The Parent College recruited training participants from among its members, and provided daycare and tutoring for children while parents took part in the training. For Year Two of the grant, the plan was for training to be held conjunction with the Westerly Education Center (a workforce development center).

Goal #3: Develop a peer mentoring program to support new trainees in the workplace to reduce staff turnover.

The partnership attempted to implement a peer mentoring program for new trainees to improve staff retention. This need was communicated by the industry partners. The Community Care Alliance was a major driving force behind this program. The idea for this program was based on RIC's successful Learning 4 Life program, a program in which social work graduate students and high-level undergraduate students mentor students considered at high-risk of dropping out of college by helping them address non-academic issues such as homelessness or a lack of food. The peer mentoring program idea was also based on an existing model called "Gateway's support/mentoring program," a model that had shown to be successful in improving retention rates among high risk employee groups. The HJRI partnership wanted to translate the successes of these programs to help entry-level paraprofessionals in the healthcare sector, where there is high turnover, and utilize Medical Assistants who had been in their jobs for at least a year to help new workers with issues, such as a lack of transportation or childcare.

Therefore, the plan for this program was to give mentors who had been on the job for at least one year training and compensation. Mentors were to be assigned to trainees early in the program to help identify potential trainee obstacles quickly and provide referral to support services and coaching. Furthermore, mentors were to provide continued support through the recruitment hiring process, and they would assist trainees with professional development and continued career success. Once new trainees were employed, these new employees would be assigned a new mentor at their place of employment to continue receiving personalized support.

However, the development of the peer mentor training program did not happen. Due to issues with identifying a reimbursement mechanism and concerns about responsibilities and roles between the mentors and mentees, the HJRI partnership did not move forward with the development of this program.

VI. Achievements

<u>Partnerships</u>

Strong Leadership Team

The HJRI partnership noted that it has an excellent leadership team, and that this team of three people worked well together in putting together the grant application. This has also translated to effective day-to-day operations.

Strong and Connected Partnership

Collaborations between healthcare industry partners and the sector partnerships have also been a major success for the HJRI partnership. Gateway Healthcare, Care New England, and the Community Care Alliance (that has an existing CNA training) have been particularly strong partners. Industry partners remain committed to hiring at least 70 paraprofessionals. Overtime, communications between RIC and other partners has improved. This has promoted enhanced collaboration on various projects and initiatives.

Expanding Partnership

The list of partners in the HJRI partnership has continued to expand throughout the duration of the program. The assisted living industry is one such example. The assisted living industry had a need for behavioral health training, as they are seeing increased behavioral health issues among residents, and this industry is now actively involved.

Productive Relationships with the Central Falls School District Parent College

The partnership between the Central Falls School District and RIC has also been especially productive. This is one of the few partnerships in the U.S between a school district and a higher education institution. In the past, RIC collaborated with them to create the Parent College that offers various courses. Due to their partnership, the Central Falls School District was able to serve as a pilot site for the HJRI community health worker training. Being a part of the HJRI partnership has led to additional, much-needed funding for the Parent College, so this is viewed as a mutually beneficial partnership.

Positive Results from Training

The HJRI partnership also led to educational and experiential benefits for both incumbent healthcare workers and students at RIC. Some healthcare workers have now taken leadership classes at RIC to further their career, and students at RIC have had the opportunity to help organizations write policy due to the new partnerships between RIC faculty and healthcare organizations. This sharing of new ideas, opportunities and connections has been lauded as a success by the HJRI partnership. Finally, because the RJRI grant brought faculty and staff from RIC together to work on curriculum development, those involved from RIC noted that the many health programs at RIC are starting to work better together.

<u>Recruitment</u>

Diverse and Successful Recruitment

Recruitment through the Parent College went well. Their strong partnership with the Central Falls School District enabled them to quickly and easily recruit participants for the initial community health worker training and achieve their recruitment goals.

Trainee Barriers

Services Offered to Trainees

At the Parent College, childcare and meals were provided during the community health worker pilot training to facilitate greater participation. This worked very effectively for overcoming child care barriers, and the meals helped to create the trainings as part of a family event.

Training

Development of a Standardized Curriculum

The major success of the HJRI partnership has been the development of a standardized curriculum for the behavioral health training and the community health worker training. Both the content and the new connections that were made during its development were hailed as major achievements for this program.

Industry-Tailored Training Program

The HJRI partnership excelled in assessing the skills gap of the healthcare industry and was therefore able to tailor the behavioral training content to meet the needs of each employer. This is seen as having long-term value. The partnership hopes that having the various modules available will enable them to utilize whatever content is the most helpful to meet various employer needs.

Successfully providing new services to the industry

Although the HJRI partnership did not fully implement training programs in 2016, its implementation efforts did result in positive outcomes and new services for the industry. As a result of its efforts, healthcare students at Rhode Island College and incumbent workers in the healthcare industry will have access to behavioral health training. Further, the HJRI partnership helped to establish a Community Health Worker certification for the state of Rhode Island, and will start training industry employees to be able to obtain that certification in coming years.

Transition from Training to Employment

The HJRI partnership did not discuss achievements related to the transition from training to employment, as it was too early in the training development and implementation phase to note successes related to employment of trainees.

Other

Conducive Regulatory Environment

With the implementation of the ACA and its enhanced focus on preventative care as well as the increasing realization among healthcare providers about the need for behavioral health training, this made the development of the behavioral health training for healthcare workers possible. The ACA also allowed for community health care workers to be reimbursed, which enhanced the need for the training and expediency in which the training could be developed. In the past, others have tried to create behavioral health trainings or community health worker trainings, but were not successful. This regulatory environment helped encourage the success of the HJRI partnership's training programs.

Table 3. Performance Metrics

IG-09 Healthy Jobs RI (RIC)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Community Health Worker Training (Job Seekers)	10/25/16	3/8/17	18	18	18	16
Total Participants Employed					18	2
Participants receiving Behavioral Health training	9/2016	4/20/2014		39	39	39
Other Objectives						
Participants receiving Community Health Worker certification	Beginning 2017				TBD	6
Employer Mentorships	Beginning 2017				TBD	Did not occur
Participants recruited and trained through Central Falls Parent College						Unknown
Employer Feedback						Ongoing
Improved Retention/Reduced Turnover						Ongoing

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Difficulty Communicating Between Partners

As the program expanded, the list of partners also grew. Responding to all the needs, which included big and small requests, was difficult. The partners worked to identify common needs and goals, but communication was sometimes an issue. Rather, it was not the initial communication/connection that was problematic, but following through and "managing the next step" that was challenging and time-consuming. Communication with St. Antoine's was especially poor on both sides. This led to a total breakdown in communication, and as a result the planned behavioral health training at St. Antoine's was dropped. RIC additionally had some difficulty effectively communicating with their healthcare partners about training length. RIC had developed a full semester training course as was standard in the college setting, but this was an issue because several partners had envisioned a much shorter program and having incumbent workers train for a full semester is difficult to schedule.

Recruitment

Difficulty Recruiting Incumbent Workers

Selling the idea of a training program to incumbent workers initially was an issue. The partnership learned that workers do not want to be told they lacked knowledge and therefore needed supplemental training. Therefore, employers found it helpful to state that the training was an investment that could help the employee advance his/her career path rather than a deficit-focused program.

Trainee Barriers

Personal Barriers and Lack of Mentorship.

The mentorship program had issues with implementation; therefore, trainees did not have access to mentors for support as initially proposed. Employers identified several issues that often arose including transportation, child care, literacy and language challenges, and medical issues.

Training

Difficulties Implementing Peer Mentor Program

Financial reimbursement of mentors and role challenges became the major barriers that kept the peer mentor program from actually happening. The reality was that bigger healthcare institutions could not figure out a way to pay the mentor. There was not a reimbursement mechanism for doing this, and healthcare organizations were not willing to pay for programs like this because it was not reimbursable and was not feasible due to union considerations. Further, healthcare organizations could not find a way to integrate supervisors into the peer mentor program. From the institution's perspective, the supervisor(s) had to be involved in order to

oversee the peer mentor and/or the new worker, but they could not establish how this would work and what the oversight would be. At one point, in an attempt to streamline the program, the institutions suggested having the supervisors be the mentors, but this was against the original intent of having peer mentors. Employers were also met with resistance from employees who did not want a coworker to be their mentor. In the end, it was too complicated to figure out the payment process and the supervisor role in this program, so the program did not come to fruition.

Other

Allocation of Resources

The HJRI partnership was ambitious in scope. The partnership initially found that it had tried to do too many things at once and were spread thin. The partnership decided to try to play to its strengths and focus on what had been working well.

VIII. Sustainability

Overall, there is an increasing need for community health workers, as these workers are viewed as important for ensuring that individuals with disabilities and older persons can continue to live in the community and not over-utilize emergency services. Rhode Island also views community health workers as those who can help with Health Equity Zones, "food deserts," etc.

The program leaders believe the training program is sustainable without DLT funding because employers find the trainings valuable. The greatest uncertainty lies with the future of the ACA. Changes to the ACA could endanger the sustainability of the program, particularly because the ACA provides reimbursement for services provided by those designated as community health workers. Though the community health worker position is not a new one and training and implementation of these positions have been discussed in the healthcare field for decades, the fact that the ACA enables the community health worker position to be reimbursable ensures the continued need for the community health worker training. Therefore, without state funding, the training program may still be sustainable if the community healthcare worker position remains reimbursable because employers may then be willing to spend the money to train workers. The program also aims to remain sustainable through migration to RIC's Institute for Health Education after the first year. This will provide a permanent home for the program and allow access to RIC resources.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the HJRI partnership in executing this training program:

- Consistent meetings with industry partners can be productive and beneficial for curriculum development, recruitment, and sustainability purposes.
- Managing an ever-growing list of partners and their requests can be a time-consuming, challenging task.

- Entry-level employees, such as CNAs, are often apprehensive about having a co-worker as a mentor.
- How you "sell" the training to employees matters, and can change their willingness to take part. For example, describing a training program as an investment rather than as a way to obtain knowledge in an area where employees are lacking worked well in obtaining buy-in from employees.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the HJRI partnership:

- When coming from a larger higher education institution, include strong leadership and faculty and staff members from across the college who can take responsibility for the grant. This partnership included three leaders, which was a small enough group to get things accomplished, and also represented enough of the college to be able to make decisions and convene multiple stakeholders.
- Have two main program contact individuals to manage inquiries and partnerships.
- Provide meeting agendas ahead of time so that organizations can send the right staff to the meeting. The HJRI partnership was able to successfully and continuously engage industry partners in the partnership activities because industry partners found value in helping to design the curriculum and identifying ways to utilize the curriculum that was developed.
- Continue to identify new partners. Continued partnership growth can help with sustainability of the training programs.
- Build on already successful partnerships first and then expand. The HJRI partnership worked with the Central Falls Parent College to conduct a pilot training.
- Provide pilot training before finalizing the training plan.
- Provide meals and childcare on-site for training participants.
- Develop curriculum that can be tailored as needed for industry partners.
- Encourage training participation by discussing how the training is a career investment rather than a training needed due to lack of knowledge.
- Capitalize on policy needs. Timing the development of this training program with the implementation of the ACA has enabled this partnership to continue to move forward.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the HJRI partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Ensure recruitment and training goals are established ahead of time to avoid confusion about the intended goals of the training program.
- Encourage partnerships to follow a standardized format to fully understand development, recruitment, and implementation plans across different programs. Trying to do three

separate programs at once may have been detrimental to this partnership and difficult for RJRI to keep track of.

- Encourage partnerships to utilize language in their grant proposals and marketing strategies that focuses on strengths-based training needs and programs versus deficit-focused needs and programs. As the HJRI partnership learned, describing training as an opportunity for employees rather than a training to fulfill a knowledge gap proved beneficial and is something that could be benefit other partnerships.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Man Up 2 Careers Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Man Up 2 Careers Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Man Up 2 Careers Partnership (MU2CP), with main applicant Man Up, Inc., was designed to prepare low income, incarcerated men and women of color for high-growth jobs in the manufacturing and marine trades sectors. Man Up, Inc. was founded with a mission to address the lack of opportunity for men of color in Rhode Island. This organization specifically targets both youth (ages 17-19) and adult (18+) men of color who are currently incarcerated. Man Up, Inc. works with these individuals because these men face a wide range of barriers to career-track employment upon leaving incarceration, such as:

- Having a criminal background
- Mental illness
- History of substance abuse
- Long history of unemployment/unstable employment history
- Low literacy/numeracy skills
- Unstable housing

By training Man Up, Inc.'s target population and expanding to include formerly incarcerated women, MU2CP sought to address critical workforce and skills gaps in the manufacturing and marine trades industries. Specifically, MU2CP sought to address several issues within this sector including:

- Manufacturing companies often find it difficult to identify qualified employees (i.e., candidates are often underqualified, not workforce-ready, lack necessary basic skills, and lack any hands-on experience).[1]

[1] The Manufacturing Workforce: A Developing Crisis. Frost & Sullivan. 2013. http://mlc.frost.com/forms/TheManufacturingWorkforce

- Manufacturing jobs often go unfilled due to a lack of skilled professionals, even during times of high unemployment.[2]
- The manufacturing industry is facing an aging workforce, and impending retirements will increase the number of vacant positions.
- Few educational programs exist to support manufacturing industries.
- Manufacturing companies need more employees with welding and mechanics skills.
- In Rhode Island, the marine trades and manufacturing industries have significant current and projected employment needs, and as a result, require a substantial number of properly trained individuals.

MU2CP's primary objective was to train employees to meet industry-specific demands by providing workforce development services that equip incarcerated individuals of color with the skills and credentials necessary to attain high wages, diverse and viable employment options, and further educational opportunities.

II. Grant History

Man Up, Inc. began program design and planning in 2011 and started providing services to its target population in 2013. By 2014, Man Up, Inc. was registered as an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The organization has been financed through a variety of public and private sources, including grants through the state legislature, Delta Dental of Rhode Island, the cities of Pawtucket and Providence, and United Way. In 2014, Man Up, Inc. received a 2014 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant from the city of Pawtucket, and in 2015, received funding from the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB).

Man Up, Inc. did not apply for a planning grant because they did not learn about RJRI until after the deadline, but its implementation grant was successful. Man Up, Inc. became connected to the various business and educational partners (i.e., New England Institute of Technology/SAMI, RI Marine Trades Association, RI Manufacturers Association, Building Futures, RI Construction Training Academy, Electric Boat, Craftmasters Construction and Amos House) on the RJRI grant through the GWB, and the director of DLT encouraged formalized partnerships, such as the use of memoranda of understanding (MOUs), which helped to sustain these partnerships.

III. Goals and Objectives

MU2CP was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current and projected workforce needs in the manufacturing and marine trades industries by training low-income, incarcerated individuals of color to succeed in available positions with the employer partners upon their release. A long-term goal of MU2CP was to reduce the overall rate of recidivism. By participating in this program and receiving training linked to a good middle-

[2] Workforce Imperative: A Manufacturing Education Strategy. Society of Manufacturing Engineers. 2012. www.sme.org/workforceimperative

class job, Man Up, Inc. believed the individuals would be less likely to return to the corrections system. MU2CP worked to meet the following goal:

1. Recruit, support, train, and identify employment for low-income, incarcerated individuals of color in the highly-skilled manufacturing and marine trades industries.
    - As part of MU2CP, Man Up, Inc. provided participants with intensive case management and support services, and implemented and executed a workforce training plan that consisted of the development of individual employment plans, individual counseling, career planning, workforce readiness training, remedial education, vocational training, financial literacy services, and job placement assistance. Participants also received college readiness training.

Specifically, MU2CP sought to meet the following objective:

- Refer 15 participants from ex-offender populations to training programs.

IV. Partnerships

MU2CP brought together industry employers, vocational training providers, a remedial education provider, a workforce-readiness training provider, and support service providers. Man Up, Inc. also participated in broader initiatives such as the White House's My Brother's Keeper initiative. The employer partners provided key input into the design of all elements of the proposed Workforce Training Plan, including input on training gaps and jobs anticipated to have significant openings in the coming years, selection of the training programs offered, input into specific skills taught through the training programs, participant selection criteria, and the services to be offered to support ongoing participant success. Each of these partners were included because they had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Man Up, Inc.	Responsible for fiscal management; intensive case management oversight; recruitment and screening of individuals into the training program; access to supportive services (including mental health care, stable housing, substance abuse treatment and mentoring); job placement activities; collaboration with training providers and employers; developing workforce training plans tailored to each participant's needs.
Alternative Educational Programming Inc.	Responsible for offering remedial education to participants with low literacy/ numeracy scores to improve their skills in critical areas within the target industries, such as mathematics; offering college readiness training to select participants if it is part of the individual employment plan; provided access to the Community College of RI CNC Machinist Boot Camp, Machinist Certification Program, and Engineering Technology Associate's Degree Program; facilitated information sessions to ManUp, Inc. clients regarding their college entrance.
Shipbuilding/ Marine Trades and Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) at the New England Institute of Technology	Responsible for working with staff from Man Up, Inc. to identify, screen, and provide training services to eligible participants referred to the SAMI program; offering 10-week training programs in machining and welding; providing job placement opportunities to these individuals through the provision of high quality occupational training activities.
Rhode Island Marine Trades Association, Rhode Island Manufacturer's Association, Providence Plan Building Futures, Amos House	Available to provide training programs for participants depending on individual needs and career aspirations.
Craftmaster's Professional Contractors, Pezzuco Construction , RI Carbide Tool Company, Office Recycling Solutions, General Dynamic/Electric Boat	Responsible for providing internships and employment opportunities for those who complete the training programs.
Rhode Island Training School, Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution	Responsible for providing social workers who refer potential candidates to MU2CP.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1: Recruit, support, train, and place low-income, incarcerated individuals of color into the manufacturing and marine trades industries.

Provide participants with intensive case management and support services.

Man Up, Inc. recruited potential participants for this program through the Rhode Island Correctional system. Specifically, the Rhode Island Training School (youth detention center) and the Adult Correctional Institution referred individuals to the program, and some participants learned about Man Up, Inc., through the judiciary system, word-of-mouth, probation offices, and re-entry coordinators. Man Up, Inc. provided case management services, which began at intake with an initial in-depth interview that gathered details regarding the participant's work history, skills, barriers, and career aspirations. Information from the interview was used to help each participant develop a Workforce Training Plan that outlined the training and support services that would help the participant achieve his career goals.

Participants met with case managers weekly for 12-15 months, both while they were incarcerated and after they exited the correctional system. Case management sessions included a review of progress and goals, as well as life skills training on topics including punctuality, anger management, workplace communication, teamwork, and problem solving. The individuals in the program were expected to meet goals, objectives, and benchmarks from their Workforce Training Plan while in the program, and their case managers talked with them every week to help with completion. Case Managers also supported participants after placement into employment, providing ongoing support for both the participant and the employer to further the participant's opportunities for success.

Because a majority of the individuals in the target population face mental health challenges that can impact their ability to succeed in training and employment, Man Up, Inc. coordinated with a licensed mental health counselor to provide mental health counseling for participants who needed services. In addition, because these individuals often face additional barriers to employment success, Man Up, Inc. helped with or organized referrals to community providers for other supportive services, including housing (sober living houses, Section 8/subsidized housing, transitional living programs), substance abuse treatment (outpatient treatment, AA/NA meetings), food resources (food banks), legal services, transportation (bus passes, assistance with obtain driver's licenses and car registrations), and other resources as needed. Case managers maintained small caseloads, allowing them to work intensively with each participant to address their individual needs.

Implement and execute a workforce training plan that consists of workforce readiness training, remedial education, vocational training, and job placement.

Remedial Education

Remedial education was provided by Alternative Educational Programming (AEP) to address basic skills gaps amongst the target population, such as to help them prepare for

successful manufacturing careers by providing remedial math that is required to succeed in the machining and welding trainings. The training covered the following topics:

- Remedial English, including academic and conversational English to prepare students for post-secondary education and teach the skills required for workplace communication;
- Remedial Math to prepare students for entrance into post-secondary education and vocational training programs that require math skills;
- Financial aid education to help students identify and apply for appropriate financial aid for post-secondary education; and
- Post-secondary education options, including a review of local colleges and the programs offered and assistance with completing applications.

Work Readiness Training

Man Up, Inc. was responsible for coordinating the work readiness training for program participants. Training was conducted by John Gomes, a certified National Workforce Readiness Certificate trainer with extensive training experience. Training was provided to participants while they were incarcerated, preparing them for success once they exited their facility. The Workforce Readiness Program provided training based on the ACT KeyTrain Suite for WorkKeys Skills – a workforce readiness preparation program designed to prepare individuals to sit for and pass the exam to secure a National Workforce Readiness Certificate. Topics covered included:

- Applied mathematics, including basic mathematical operations relevant to the workplace, and setting up and solving complex work-related math problems;
- Locating information, including, how to find information presented in common workplace graphics, as well as where to look for commonly needed workplace information, and;
- Reading for information, including techniques for reading and understanding documents commonly found in the workplace, and determining the relevance of written information to work-related tasks.

Vocational Training

The Shipbuilding and Marine Trades and Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) in partnership with the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) offered 10-week training programs in welding, shipfitting, and machining to participants affiliated with Man Up, Inc. The SAMI programs provided both classroom and hands-on training that led to industry-recognized credentials in careers (i.e., machinist, welding, shipfitting certificates of completion; OSHA 10 certification) identified as in high-demand by the employer partners. This program turned out to be the best training option for many of the participants because it started a new program every eight weeks, and after finishing the training, the individuals could be hired right away. Because many other training programs only hold trainings once a year, which is not ideal for this target

population (which ideally needs to start training and gain a job soon after they finish work readiness training), the SAMI/NEIT program worked well to help participants meet their goals.

Participants also had access to training provided by four other training providers with whom Man Up, Inc. maintained referral relationships through their participation in the GWB. Participants were referred to these providers based on their individual needs and career aspirations. These training providers were Amos House (culinary training), Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (marine trades training), Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (manufacturing training), and Providence Plan Building Futures (construction training). Some participants took part in the training through Amos House, but not at other training providers during the first year of implementation.

If the participants completed the training program they started and met their various goals and objectives on their Workforce Training Plan, they became eligible to receive a stipend given out once a year (usually towards the end of December). While many of the participants already had a job by this point, this stipend was welcomed to help pay for various bills, such as car registrations and down payments, which are often critical for job retention.

Job Placement

Job placement was provided jointly by Man Up, Inc. and SAMI. Man Up, Inc. and SAMI both had strong relationships with the employer partners included in MU2CP, and both maintained job placement relationships with additional employers outside of the partnership. SAMI facilitated the execution of job placement services for all individuals who completed their training programs, and extended those services to RJRI participants. Man Up, Inc. supported SAMI in their job placement efforts, and worked to connect participants with additional employers through their own networking efforts. One participant did not require training, and he was placed for employment in a construction company due to previous work experience and also began taking classes at CCRI. Man Up, Inc. remains connected to former participants and involves them in its continuing efforts. For example, the organization has former trainees who serve as board members for Man Up, Inc., asks former trainees to serve as mentors for current participants, and posts success stories of former trainees (with permission) on its website to help inspire current and future trainees.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Training Timing

Working with SAMI provided training opportunities that ensured the individuals in the program secured employment. SAMI's schedule of offering courses every eight weeks was critical to ensuring participants could start a training program quickly once they were ready to start.

Widespread Interest

MU2CP was able to attract a wide variety and number of partners from different sectors of the economy. By working with sectors that were actively looking for employees, MU2CP attracted partners who were interested in working with them and hiring trainees.

Recruitment

Met Recruitment Goals

MU2CP was able to meet its target for recruitment. One strength it cited was that the program received referrals through the correctional system, the judiciary system, word-of-mouth, probation officers, and re-entry coordinators. The program had a strong reputation and was therefore able to use a large community to find eligible trainees.

Trainee Barriers

Effective Case Management Services

Every participant in this program encountered many personal and social barriers. However, case managers had small caseloads and were able to provide extensive services to ensure that participants completed training programs and found a job. The case managers also conducted frequent and extensive assessments, which worked well in placing participants in the right type of training programs for their skills and personalities.

MU2CP found that identifying placements for some participants in residential facilities was helpful to ensure participants were thriving. Having case management and being in a focused environment was beneficial for ensuring success because participants in these environments did not have to worry about "putting a roof over their heads or putting food on the table," and the participants were better able to focus on their personal development, workforce training, and careers rather than basic survival.

Training

Participant Interest in Continuing Education

Individuals in the program had a strong desire to take part in higher educational opportunities. For example, one of the men was interested in a job in the welding industry. Man Up, Inc. worked to connect him with an engineering program within higher education, and this helped him get credits toward an engineering degree while he was completing the training program.

Transition from Training to Employment

Met employment goals

Nearly every participant who completed the training program found employment.

Ability to provide additional support services

MU2CP was able to support trainees by providing them with additional services that helped them become more employable. Specifically, it provided trainees with services and tools

that would help them obtain jobs, such as clothes for a job interview. These services helped trainees obtain training-related employment after the end of the training program, and helped remove barriers that would have prevented otherwise skilled and prepared candidates from obtaining employment. The DLT's funding was instrumental to providing these services, as it covered the cost of these usual support services.

Other

Connections to legal services

Man Up, Inc. had effective connections with the federal courts system in Rhode Island and with the Roger Williams University Legal Defense Clinic. These connections were critical for helping participants to restore driver's licenses and getting criminal offenses expunged, which can be major barriers to obtaining employment.

Support from multiple funding streams

Man Up, Inc. found that it worked well to have both United Way and RJRI funding at the same time because both organizations were supportive of their endeavors. Man Up, Inc. was also able to braid funds from both organizations to cover all aspects of its training program, and use the funds to complement each other by covering gaps created by funding restrictions.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-10 Man Up 2 Careers Partnership (MU2CP)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Referred to Training (Job Seekers)	3/15/16	12/31/16	15	32	15	14
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					10	14
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					15	Ongoing
Total Participants that receive life skills training					15	47
Total Participants that receive College Readiness training					TBD	0
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn college credits					TBD	7
Total Participants that earn OSHA 10 credential					TBD	8
Total Participants that earn NCRC					TBD	0
Reduce Recidivism among Recruits					TBD	Ongoing

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Confusion over target population

Some of the training and employer partners were difficult to work with due to continued lack of knowledge and understanding of the target population.

Recruitment

MU2CP did not discuss any challenges with recruitment.

Trainee Barriers

Reluctance to hire trainees with criminal backgrounds

Another challenge identified by MU2CP was that some of the employer partners on the grant would not employ individuals with a criminal background. For example, Electric Boat, as well as other regional entities with defense contracts, could not offer participants from the program a position due to government regulations regarding the hiring process. In general, MU2CP found that many employers were reluctant to hire someone who had been incarcerated despite their training and qualification simply due to social stigma surrounding people with convictions and criminal records.

Transportation

Finding adequate transportation was particularly challenging for many of the individuals in the program. Some of the participants had lost their driver's licenses for various reasons, and some of them needed help navigating the legal and financial issues to get them back. For example, one man was unable to get his driver's license because he owed thousands of dollars in unpaid parking tickets. Staff at Man Up, Inc. were able to utilize their connections with the judicial and legal systems to help this man work with judges from multiple cities to forgive or reduce the parking tickets.

Training

Long time between offered trainings

Many partners only held their training programs once per year, which was difficult for individuals who were ready to begin a training program based on their identified abilities and interests, but had to wait or select another training program that started sooner.

Transition from Training to Employment

Overcoming social challenges

The most pressing challenge conveyed by MU2CP dealt with the physical/social/ environmental challenges encountered by participants that made it difficult for this population to establish successful careers. After leaving incarceration these participants entered physical

environments that were not conducive to a normal work schedule, and those in the participant's familial and social networks were often not in support of the training program requirements and the trainee's decision to become a career employee. For example, contrary to traditional workforce participants, some participants have been on a career path, but then recidivate and/or lose a job by engaging in illegal activities.

Other

Connection to state scandals

Throughout its planning and implementation processes, MU2CP worked with Alternative Educational Programming Inc., an organization where former state representative Raymond E. Gallison Jr. worked prior to his departure from the organization in May of 2016. At the time of his departure, Mr. Gallison was under federal investigation for numerous financial crimes that resulted in his resignation from the General Assembly and his later arrest and conviction. As a result of its connection to Mr. Gallison, MU2CP underwent a period of strict scrutiny from the DLT, the press, and the public to ensure that none of the MU2CP RJRI grant money was improperly managed by Mr. Gallison. A 2016 investigation by the DLT found that no grant money was improperly managed by MU2CP as a result of its connection to Mr. Gallison. However, MU2CP did experience delays in implementing its program due to these issues.

VIII. Sustainability

Man Up, Inc. believes the MU2CP training program is highly sustainable and strongly desires to take its program model nationwide because it believes it has found a system that works for helping individuals of color secure employment. Man Up, Inc. continues to apply for various state and foundation grants to fund its organization in the short-term. Man Up, Inc. has several long-term strategies in place to ensure the sustainability of its services in the absence of State funding. For example, Man Up, Inc. developed a business plan for a social enterprise business that provides contract manufacturing services, which would provide employment opportunities for people of color in machinist and welding positions while generating revenue to support case management and supportive service endeavors. When writing the initial RJRI implementation grant proposal, Man Up, Inc. was speaking with several local and national employers to discuss subcontracting components of this social enterprise business. The idea was that this business could generate reliable, unrestricted income to support the activities of Man Up, Inc. including those that are part of the Real Jobs Partnership.

Further, due to the aforementioned barriers facing the target population for this program, Man Up, Inc. would like to seek funding to start a Residential Training Academy. This would help alleviate the potential impacts of negative social and physical environments while in the training program. Man Up, Inc. believes this would help the individuals better succeed in finding and sustaining employment.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following includes lessons learned by this partnership:

- Provide extensive case management, assessment, and support services to training participants who are formerly incarcerated.
- Identify training programs that accept and train participants throughout the year.
- Develop connections in the judicial and legal systems to overcome barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face in securing employment. The issues that individuals previously in the criminal justice system may face upon re-entry to the community can be quite complicated, and they often require assistance navigating the complicated state and local systems to ensure they will be successful in completing training programs and holding employment.
- Address issues related to social and physical environments (for example, housing programs) of training participants who are formerly incarcerated.
- Provide transportation to training and to employment while formerly incarcerated individuals establish credit and savings that can allow them to have stable self-funded transportation.
- Identify barriers to employment in the training sector prior to beginning training, such as the need for criminal background checks, to ensure program participants have the ability to be employed in the sector upon completion of the training program.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by MU2CP:

- Provide highly qualified case managers with low caseloads to provide wrap around services that meet the complicated, diverse needs of the target population.
- Provide ongoing case management that follow individuals while incarcerated and after they exit the system.
- Work with the court system and legal support services to aid trainees with legal issues that continue to be a barrier to employment and to help identify potential participants.
- Provide support for transportation issues, including offering bus passes and helping to reinstate driver's licenses.
- Continuously improve assessments to ensure trainees are placed in the right type of training.
- Utilize former trainees as board members, to serve as role mentors for participants, and interns for Man Up, Inc. to gain professional skill.
- Provide mental health counseling as part of services.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of MU2CP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Institute pre-screening for employment that includes all requirements for working in the field (such as background or credit checks) to ensure the requirements can be met upon completion of training.
- Provide some type of training on the barriers and needs of marginalized populations, such as people of color, who have been a part of the criminal justice system, to training and employer partners who are less familiar with these challenges.
- Provide support and training program services to trainees' support networks would help ensure successful training completion and job retention for people of color who were formerly incarcerated.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

Electric Boat (EB), a division of General Dynamics, is one of the largest defense contractors in the world and is Rhode Island's largest employer. Its long history of shipbuilding experience means that EB manages complex programs and manufacturing projects, including being recently awarded contracts to build Ohio Replacement Class ballistic-missile submarines and two Virginia Class Submarines per year. EB formed the Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building Partnership (PMCSBP) because these contracts posed a projected need of 10,000 jobs over a ten year period. As part of its planning grant, EB held five working group sessions with industry employers to identify sector needs, skills gaps, transportation issues, screening of applicants, and the current and future pipeline to fill positions in the shipbuilding industry. Through this process, the partnership found that:

- High-paying manufacturing jobs in the shipbuilding industry were going unfilled due to a lack of qualified candidates.
- Industry requirements needed to be better aligned with the training offered by career and technical education schools and training institutions.
- Transportation in the Quonset Point Industrial Park was a challenge for over 200 companies and 10,000 workers.
- Pre-employment screening of job candidates posed barriers due to security clearances and work readiness.
- There existed an overall negative perception of shipbuilding and manufacturing careers as dirty and dangerous.
- Ongoing incumbent worker training was not meeting the needs of employers.

To address these barriers for the shipbuilding sector, EB formed PMCSBP.

II. Grant History

EB was founded in 1899 and has a long history of experience as both a ship builder and as the largest employer in Rhode Island. It also has extensive experience with grant programs being offered by the State of Rhode Island, including Incumbent Worker Grant Programs and Innovative Partnership grants offered by the Governor's Workforce Board. However, EB's past programs focused on specific populations, while its RJRI grant program with PMCSBP offers more general industry training. Without having to focus on targeting specific populations with the RJRI Planning and Implementation Grants, PMCSBP was able to develop a strategic plan that covered all of the projected training needs of the industry. As a large employer, EB executes numerous training programs that are funded through a variety of grants, including incumbent worker training, OSHA-required training, and training programs for Massachusetts residents.

III. Goals and Objectives

PMCSBP responded to the anticipated demand of its recently awarded contracts by setting a strategic goal of creating a pipeline of workers into the shipbuilding industry and by training workers to meet projected industry needs in maritime trades. PMCSBP articulated two specific goals to meet this anticipated demand:

1. Expand high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to build a pipeline into careers at EB.
    - PMCSBP worked with the Rhode Island Department of Education and CTE programs to develop a curriculum derived from the National Maritime Education Council.
    - PMCSBP planned to institute a marketing strategy to advertise opportunities in shipbuilding and manufacturing careers.
    - EB expanded its summer internship program.
2. Make training programs available in the maritime trades that will respond to anticipated demand.
    - Partner with New England Institute of Technology's (NEIT) Shipbuilding and Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) to create workforce training programs in maritime welding, machining, shipfitting, and robotics.
    - Partner with CCRI to create workforce training programs at the Westerly Education Center in maritime sheet metal, maritime pipefitting, and maritime electrical.

IV. Partnerships

As the lead partner in PMCSBP, EB had always maintained relationships with its industry and education partners prior to RJRI funding, but never in a formal way. The partnership between EB and its education partners, however, has grown closer now that EB is able to use its funding to hire workers prior to them participating in the training programs being offered by CCRI and NEIT. Prior to the RJRI funding, NEIT predominately delivered training and produced graduates that were later hired by EB, but now the relationship has grown to

include CCRI, which is able to deliver instruction at the Westerly Education Center. The relationship that has grown between these partners was important because EB lacked the space to deliver the training needed to meet its anticipated demands.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Electric Boat	Lead Applicant: Responsible for the day-to-day grant management and reporting; development of a comprehensive plan; development of a timeline for executing the grant; budgeting; participant and partnership management; execution of the internship program.
Guill Tool, Toray, Applied Radar, Polaris MEP, and VR Industries.	Responsible for helping to develop feasible transportation plans and designing curricula.
New England Institute of Technology	Responsible for training participants in maritime welding, machining, maritime shipfitting, and maritime sheet metal.
Community College of Rhode Island	Responsible for training participants in pipefitting and maritime electrical.
Rhode Island Department of Education and Career and Technical High Schools in Coventry, Cranston, Providence, Woonsocket, and Lincoln	Responsible for developing a robust training plan to be instituted in CTE schools based on National Maritime Education Council curriculum.
Rhode Island College	Responsible for developing a marketing and outreach plan to expand awareness of Rhode Island's ship building careers.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Phase 1: The Pilot Program

Prior to instituting a large-scale training program that promised the employment of hundreds of workers trained, PMCSBP began by instituting a small-scale training program that aimed to train a cohort of 57 workers through a summer internship program and through training programs instituted by NEIT in the areas of maritime welding, machining, and robotic welding.

Phase 2: Large-Scale Training Program

Goal #1: Expand high school CTE programs to build a pipeline to careers at Electric Boat.

PMCSBP worked with the Rhode Island Department of Education to expand training opportunities at CTE schools to introduce Rhode Island's youth to the opportunities related to shipbuilding and the manufacturing trades. This meant bringing its education partners together to develop and deliver to students a curriculum modeled on the National Marine Education Council's national marine curriculum. After designing the curriculum, PMCSBP planned to purchase textbooks to aid in the delivery of the customized curriculum.

Still, PMCSBP expected the success of the CTE programs to hinge on the ability to fill seats in CTE classrooms and to change perceptions of the industry among parents, educators, and students, so it envisioned a comprehensive marketing strategy to generate interest in shipbuilding and manufacturing careers. The partners agreed that shipbuilding and manufacturing careers are negatively perceived by students and parents, so PMCSBP partnered with Rhode Island College to develop a strategic marketing and outreach effort to generate more interest in these career opportunities. PMCSBP's chief interest for this endeavor was to educate students and their parents about major career paths in shipbuilding and manufacturing, stress the safety and cleanliness of modern manufacturing work, and emphasize that workers can make a comfortable income working in manufacturing and shipbuilding careers.

Another key part of PMCSBP's strategy in creating a pipeline of careers was to institute a six week summer internship program with EB to allow fifteen high school student interns to receive exposure to careers in shipbuilding and manufacturing. These interns were to be paid $14.14 per hour.

Goal #2: Make training programs available in the maritime trades that will respond to anticipated demand.

The delivery of training programs to meet industry demands occurred through EB's partnership with NEIT at its East Greenwich campus and with CCRI at the recently built Westerly Education Center. PMCSBP sought to recruit students, the under- or unemployed, veterans, and skilled workers. PMCSBP recruited through its own veterans' network, through help from the RI DLT, and by its partnership with Skills for Rhode Island's Future, a public-private partnership between the Providence Chamber of Commerce and the RI DLT. Training modules were designed to correspond with anticipated industry demands.

PMCSBP also knew that the success of the training program depended on the ability of participants to arrive at their training destinations. This was especially crucial for the summer internship program delivered by EB at Quonset Point. Transportation posed longstanding problems for employees and business in the Quonset Point Business Park because no viable public transportation routes exist to service the area. PMCSBP wanted to engage employers and employees to develop a proposal for addressing these challenges, but later did not, because the Quonset Point Development Corporation was said to be close to completing a study on the transportation issue. As a consequence, PMCSBP chose not to use its funding to duplicate what was already being done by Quonset Point Development Corporation and chose, instead, to pull back its funding for this part of the grant.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Name of Module	Training Provided
Ship Building Internships	Designed to attract and expose students to careers in the shipbuilding industry; interns, identified through CTE schools and participating in this six week summer internship, were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Maritime Welding	Provided through the New England Institute of Technology's (NEIT) Shipbuilding/Marine Trades Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) program; participants received training in maritime welding; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Machining	Provided through NEIT's SAMI program; participants received training in machining; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Maritime Shipfitting	Provided through NEIT's SAMI program; participants received training in maritime shipfitting; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Maritime Pipefitting	Provided by CCRI at the Westerly Education Center; participants received training in maritime pipefitting; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Maritime Electrical	Created in partnership with CCRI's Westerly Education Center; participants received training in maritime electrical; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Robotic Welding	Provided through NEIT's SAMI program; participants received training in Robotic welding; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
Maritime Sheet Metal	Created in partnership with CCRI's Westerly Education Center; participants received training in maritime sheet metal technique; participants were paid at an average rate of $14.14 per hour.
CTE Maritime Training	Training program customized and delivered by CTEs and modeled on the National Marine Education Council's (NMEC) national maritime curriculum; PMCSBP planned using Real Jobs funding to purchase textbooks for CTE schools.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

PMCSBP did not discuss any achievements with partnerships.

Recruitment

Cost-saving outreach strategies

PMCSBP originally proposed to conduct a marketing campaign to attract potential employees to the training program. However, the CTE schools in Coventry, Cranston, Providence, Woonsocket, and Lincoln executed an outreach campaign to students that filled the programs without having to use the funding that was allocated toward marketing. PMCSBP was then able to roll the funding that had been earmarked for the marketing strategy into training funds by requesting a modification of the grant. This modification of funding helped PMCSBP train the unexpectedly large number of program participants it recruited in 2016.

Utilizing prior networks and relationships

PMCSBP has a dense network of veterans, and has formed a relationship with another public-private partnership called Skills for Rhode Island's Future which refers under- or unemployed participants to it. These prior connections helped PMCSBP receive robust referrals to its programs from multiple sources.

A lead organization with a positive reputation

EB is a very well-known employer with a good reputation in Rhode Island and received widespread media attention due to the signing of new defense contracts. As such, there has been no shortage of workers referred to PMCSBP's programs, although some of the most recent referrals have fewer skills than earlier referrals.

Trainee Barriers

Offering targeted remediation in math competencies to overcome barriers to success

PMCSBP found that many program participants lacked the skills and competency in mathematics needed to be successful in the industry. PMCSBP knew that such deficiencies were common in its targeted populations, and addressed the issue through classroom remediation.

Training

Exceeded participation goals

One of the most important successes was EB's hiring of 390-400 employees who began training with NEIT and CCRI. Due to this collaboration, PMCSBP exceeded its participation goals at the time of this interview.

Hiring before training

EB, the lead partner of PMCSBP, hired 75 percent of trainees before the start of training.

This ensured that the majority of program participants received training-related employment after training completion. In the initial phases of grant implementation, PMCSBP was working with NEIT's SAMI Program and the RJRI Program, and fifteen percent of trainees that EB would have hired from PMCSBP training were hired through that partnership. After this program ended, however, EB increased the percentage of trainees hired before the start of training to 90 percent.

Fulfillment of enrollment goals

The first phase of the training program proved to be a success. PMCSBP enrolled 54 out of the 57 participants it initially set to enroll. Of those 54 participants enrolled in the training program, 53 completed the training program. Of the 35 job seekers PMCSBP expected to complete the training, 34 successfully gained training-related employment in the program by the end the program. All seven of the incumbent workers participating in the training completed it, while all twelve of the summer interns completed their internship.

Providing financial support to training participants

All training participants were financially supported throughout the training program. EB, the lead applicant, hired 75 percent of trainees before the start of training, and provided them with wages and benefits as part of their employment. The remaining 25 percent of trainees received similar funds and benefits through other funding sources.

Transition from Training to Employment

The transition from training to employment was made seamless by hiring workers prior to training them. For instance, the 34 workers successfully finding employment did so easily because they were first hired by an industry partner and then paid while completing their training.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Working with untested partners

One challenge was working with partners who were new to the training program. One of the partners that was responsible for delivering training was not prepared for the number of participants who would be involved in the training program, but that problem was resolved after the Office of Postsecondary Education hired additional support.

Working with a new curriculum

PMCSBP faced some challenges instituting the new National Marine Education Council's (NMEC) national maritime curriculum at CTE schools. The CTE schools that the partnership worked with were accustomed to working with the NCCER-based (The National Center for Construction Education and Research) curriculum, and were unfamiliar with the new

curriculum.

Convincing small businesses to use the training program

PMCSBP believed that industry employers, especially small businesses, may have been deterred from participating because they were intimidated by the size of the partnership's other members. PMCSBP also worried that if small businesses only needed one or two employees trained then training programs would not meet the enrollment criteria to allow the training program to be offered.

Recruitment

Recruitment of under-skilled workers

Many of the employees who were referred to PMCSBP were semi-skilled, and did not possess all the skills needed for participation in the training program. PMCSBP anticipated this issue, however, and knew that additional training challenges would emerge with its newer recruits who were shown to have fewer skills. PMCSBP is incorporating strategies to address this issue into its future training programs.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Many employees faced transportation issues and struggled to arrive at the Quonset Point Business Park. The Quonset Development Corporation (QDC) received funding to conduct a study about transportation to the area, so PMCSBP pulled back its request for funding and diverted it elsewhere. For EB, a transportation plan is critical because it struggles to bring interns and new hires to company facilities and so the company does not always have its internship program at capacity. Transportation for employees to attend NEIT does not present a major barrier, although transportation to the Westerly Education Center remains an obstacle.

Childcare

Some employees faced issues with arranging childcare during the period of the training.

Training

Strict starting and ending dates for training

PMCSBP found being tied to a starting and ending date for the training programs challenging. If an immediate demand arises for a training program, the start of that training program may have already begun or may have already ended (however, one of the programs - machining - was open enrollment).

Rushed implementation timeline

PMCSBP felt rushed during the process of getting everything up and running to execute the grant. Having all of the instructors lined up prior to grant implementation would have made

everything run smoother, and this could have only been accomplished with more time for the implementation process.

Ability to deliver CTE curriculum

Despite the fact that CTE schools were adept at keeping their classrooms at capacity, PMCSBP learned during the course of program implementation that these programs lacked the infrastructure and equipment to appropriately deliver the curriculum.

Transition from Training to Employment

PMCSBP did not discuss any challenges with the transition from training to employment.

Other

Planning for unknowns

Writing a plan for grant implementation was a challenge in light of the fact that there are some parts of the implementation process that are impossible to learn until the grant is being executed. PMCSBP, for instance, had spent a lot of time developing a marketing plan when it became evident that one was not needed after the CTE schools so successfully signed up students for their programs.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-11 Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building (EB)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Maritime Welding NEIT - (4 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	5/23/16	10/21/16	33	33	33	32
EB Summer Internships - 2016	6/27/16	8/26/16	15	12	15	12
Machining NEIT (2016) (Job Seekers)	9/26/16	11/18/16	2	2	2	2
Robotic Welding NEIT (2016) (Incumbents)	10/31/16	11/18/16	7	7	7	7
Total Participants Placed in related employment (maritime welding training)					32	31
Total Participants Placed in related employment (machine training)					2	2
Other Objectives						
Total Participants receiving certificates (maritime welding training)					28	32
Total Participants receiving certificates (machine training)					2	2
Total Student Enrollment in specified CTE programs			TBD	TBD		Insufficient Data
New CTE Programs						8

VIII. Sustainability

It is hard to say whether or not the program will be sustainable without RI DLT funding. The decision to continue with such a capital-intensive training program will require a company like EB to take a hard look at this investment if the state chooses to end funding.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by PMCSBP in executing their training program:

- There is an industry-wide need for leadership development and supervisory management training, and PMCSBP plans to make these types of trainings available in the future.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by PMCSBP:

- Hire training participants prior to their training and provide them with sustainable wages and benefits.
- Use the statewide publication of new contracts and labor demand as a marketing tool for training programs.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of PMCSBP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Create and utilize a formal recruitment and marketing strategy that is directed at changing the perceptions of careers in the industry.
- Work with the Department of Transportation to facilitate and ensure a transportation solution for the Quonset Point Business Park to make the employer accessible for workers without private transportation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Health Care Training Collaborative

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Health Care Training Collaborative

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Health Care Training Collaborative (HCTC) was developed to address issues relating to the recruitment and retention of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and other specialized health care professionals in the eldercare industry. Saint Antoine Residence received an RJRI planning grant, and the HCTC was formed by Saint Antoine Residence, Genesis Center, Tockwotton on the Waterfront, and CareLink and its 31 member agencies when applying for the RJRI implementation grant. The training was designed to advance the knowledge, experience, and skillsets of unemployed, disenfranchised, and incumbent workers in order to address the urgent and impending demands of an aging population. Specifically, as identified through surveys of CareLink members and employees, there were several shortages in the eldercare industry that this partnership sought to address:

- In the healthcare sector, there is a shortage of CNAs across the spectrum of eldercare services including services in adult day care, home health care, assisted living, skilled nursing, and hospice. Eldercare employers such as Saint Antoine Residence have found that finding entry level employees who have the physical ability to perform the duties necessary in these positions *and* who demonstrate professional behavior, work ethic, and other soft skills is increasingly difficult.
- Turnover among frontline workers, such as CNAs, is high, and this is a "critical cost driver for the long term care industry, affecting the fiscal health of providers, the quality of care that long term care consumers receive, and the efficiency of resource allocation within the public payer system."[1] The partnership thus sought to increase retention of entry-level CNAs.
- Most healthcare positions require licensure, certification, or postsecondary education, and

[1] Dorie Seavey. October 2004. "The Cost of Frontline Turnover in Long-Term Care".

the growing complexity of healthcare delivery requires continuous upgrading of skills to meet industry requirements. More training was seen as key to career advancement within the healthcare sector.

- There is a projected shortage of healthcare professionals, specifically physical therapists (PTs) and nurse practitioners (NPs), with geriatric training and clinical experience.

II. Grant History

For 11 years, Saint Antoine Residence ran a training program to fill positions within its organization in Northern Rhode Island (encompassing Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield, and Woonsocket), and experienced great success with its trainees (95% completion rates, 100% job placement statistics). The Saint Antoine Residence training program is based on the best practices of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Before the unrolling of the RJRI planning and implementation grants, it had received United Way funding (for six to seven years), Rhode Island Foundation funding, and Governor's Workforce Board funding. Saint Antoine Residence first partnered with CareLink, a management services organization that provides services to non-profit post-acute and aging care providers in Rhode Island, to form the HCTC. The intention of the RJRI collaboration was to replicate previous training programs conducted in Northern Rhode Island for Saint Antoine Residence in the Providence area to increase the number of people trained and to serve the larger eldercare sector.

III. Goals and Objectives

The Healthcare Training Collaborative was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the healthcare industry to meet the current and projected workforce needs for eldercare services. This insufficiency was addressed by HCTC through three primary goals:

1. Recruit, train, and support currently un- and under-employed, low skilled individuals to become certified nursing assistants (CNAs).
    - As part of this goal, HCTC sought to ensure participants in the CNA training programs are making informed choices about their career, understand the challenges and opportunities of a career in healthcare, and have an enhanced level of knowledge and preparation before entering the healthcare sector;
2. Recruit and train incumbent CNAs to become nursing assistant specialists for growing eldercare needs, specifically targeting specialization in Alzheimer's and Dementia, Restorative Aid, Lead Mentor, and Behavioral Health;
3. Recruit and train pre-graduate nurse practitioners and physical therapists at the state's colleges into geriatric health care service delivery.

Specifically, HCTC sought to meet the following recruitment and training objectives during the 2016 year:

- Recruit 120 participants for CNA training.
- Provide 60 participants with CNA training & place them in training-related employment.

- Provide 12 current CNAs with Nursing Assistant Specialist training.
- Provide four pre-graduate NPs or PTs with internships in eldercare facilities.

IV. Partnerships

The HCTC included a broad array of partners, long-term care providers, organizations that promote education and training opportunities for community members, a member service organization for health care and long term care organizations, and public universities. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Saint Antoine Residence	Responsible for providing CNA training in compliance with Department of Health Regulations; assessing and screening candidates for the training program; providing personal case management in partnership with the Genesis Center for CNAs for up to six months after employment, including the referral to Genesis Center services; paying for background checks, immunizations, CNA license application and testing fees; and all financial budgetary, and program outcomes.
Genesis Center	Responsible for providing a case manager, assessment/intake coordinator, and soft skills instructor for the CNA trainees; assisting Saint Antoine Residence in the recruitment phase of the CNA training program by referring appropriate candidates; providing office and classroom space & necessary equipment; implementing and administering financial literacy workshops; providing family assistance program services for participants as needed.
Tockwotton on the Waterfront	Responsible for identifying and engaging a nurse to become the training program's instructor; providing the facility for CNA training classes and clinical rotations; employing (first priority) graduates of the CNA training.
CareLink	Responsible for identifying CareLink member agencies to employ graduates from the CNA training program; locating agencies to host incumbent CNAs interns enrolled in the CNA Specialist program and employ those who graduate; overseeing the internship for pre-graduate nurse practitioners and physical therapists.
University of Rhode Island (URI)	Responsible for providing pre-graduate NPs and PTs for the internship program.
Rhode Island College (RIC)	Responsible for developing and providing certificate courses for incumbent CNA's receiving specialized training who want to advance their careers to different aspects of the healthcare sector.
Stepping Up, UNAP RIH Education Fund	Responsible for supporting the grant and providing industry insight; helping make the program into a registered apprenticeship program; working together with HCTC to ensure a qualified healthcare workforce.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1. Recruit, train, and support currently un- and under-employed, low skilled individuals to become certified nursing assistants.

Recruitment & Pre-Screening

Genesis House, NetworkRI Career Centers, Community Care Alliance, and the RI Department of Human Services made referrals of low skilled un- or under-employed individuals to HCTC for training in the CNA program. Referred potential trainees were required to successfully pass the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) by achieving a score of six (i.e., sixth grade level in reading and math) or above. If they did not achieve a score of six, they were referred to Genesis House for remedial work, after which they could reapply.

After passing the test, potential trainees were interviewed to identify whether or not they were fit for the position and to ensure the adequate acquisition of resources (e.g., transportation, childcare) to successfully complete the 10 week training program.

Training

Once accepted, the trainees took part in two weeks of work readiness "soft skills" training, six weeks of CNA training, and a two-week clinical rotation on a unit. The proposal originally specified that trainees would receive the on-site training at Tockwotton on the Waterfront; however, residents of this facility did not have high enough acuity levels (meaning high intensity of nursing care required) to provide an in-depth clinical experience for the trainees. Therefore, the HCTC decided that the trainings would be held at Saint Antoine Residence, and thus, trainees were required to utilize public transportation or a personal vehicle to get to the facility during the two weeks of clinical rotations.

Job Placement

Successful graduates of the program were given assistance through Saint Antoine's staff and the Genesis Center in obtaining licensure and locating employment opportunities.

Goal #2. Recruit and train incumbent CNAs to become nursing assistant specialists for growing eldercare needs, specifically targeting specialization in Alzheimer's and Dementia, Restorative Aid, Lead Mentor, and Behavioral Health.

In relation to the nursing specialist trainings, HCTC executed trainings in Alzheimer's and Dementia and Restorative Aid, with trainings held at Saint Antoine Residence. For the behavioral health and mentor trainings, Rhode Island College had planned to utilize current or develop new curriculum, and the partner organizations would identify incumbent CNAs to attend. However, HCTC was less successful with the planned behavioral health and mentor trainings, because the partnership with Rhode Island College did not come to fruition due to inadequate class sizes and other curricular issues. HCTC was able to contract with Community Care Alliance, as part of the Healthy Jobs for Rhode Island RJRI grant, to supplement a behavioral health training component into the existing new CNA training to address the

additional behavioral health challenges in eldercare.

Goal # 3. Recruit and train pre-graduate nurse practitioners and physical therapists at the state's colleges into/for geriatric health care service delivery.

The Nurse Practitioner and Physical Therapy program was implemented as planned by URI in conjunction with CareLink agencies. During the Spring and Fall 2016 semesters of the grant, HCTC had planned to provide $1,000 stipends to the trainees. The HCTC had two NPs enrolled, and both completed the training. There was significant interest and need, so the $1000 was appropriated into four distinct internships worth $250 each. Two people enrolled in PT training, and one person completed the training. The PTs completed one internship per semester and were awarded a $500 stipend each semester at its completion.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Flexible Industry Partners

The partners in the Healthcare Training Collaborative were all flexible and adaptive to the changes made during the implementation of the training program. This directly contributed to the success of the program, as it enabled training to continue despite obstacles.

Recruitment

Strong Recruitment

The partnership was able to meet its recruitment goals for both the CNA and the Alzheimer's and Dementia, Restorative Aid, Lead Mentor, and Behavioral Health Training Programs.

Trainee Barriers

Ability to Learn from Industry Workers and the Industry Environment

This training was originally conceptualized as an avenue to locate employment opportunities for the individuals involved, but beyond that, being a part of the training provided the individuals an opportunity to observe and work in a professional learning environment. Many of the individuals taking part in the CNA trainings had never worked in any type of professional work environment; therefore, working alongside physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals was seen as instrumental in providing individuals a work experience that they would not have had otherwise. As such, the trainees were able to learn the demands of a professional workplace and how professionals in the industry interact with patients/residents.

Training

Fulfilling Goals of the Training

A major success for this partnership, particularly considering the many barriers encountered, was that the HCTC was able to recruit and train three cohorts of approximately 20

CNAs at Tockwotton.

Transition from Training to Employment

Successful Program Graduates

Many of the CNA trainees chose to participate in additional training, such as that required for CMT or LPN certification. Several training program graduates participated in and graduated from CMT school and at least two went to on become fully licensed.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

Healthcare Training Collaborative (IG-12)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Nurse Practitioner or Physical Therapist Internship	2/8/16	12/1/16	4	4	4	3
C.N.A. Training (3 Cohorts) (Job Seekers)	4/1/16	12/8/16	60	67	60	54
LPN/RN Training (Job Seekers)	8/30/16	12/31/17	6	6	6	Ongoing
Certified Medical Technician Training (Incumbents)	9/1/16	12/30/16	3	3	3	3
Nursing Assistant Specialists (Alzheimer's/Restorative aid) (Incumbents)	9/12/16	11/5/16	6	6	6	6
Nursing Assistant Specialists (Documentation) (Incumbents)	9/21/16	9/28/16	11	11	11	11
Nursing Assistant Specialists (Restorative Aid) (Incumbents)	10/19/16	10/26/16	3	3	3	3
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					60	43
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					60	Ongoing
Employed after LPN training					6	Unknown*
Other Objectives						
Total Participants promoted due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Improved retention (decreased turnover) of CNAs as compared to professionals that did not participate in this program					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants that earned an industry recognized credential					60	72

*The partnership relationship between HTC and DLT ceased while the LPNs were finishing their training. As a result, job placements for LPN training were not reported to DLT.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Staff Turnover in Partner Companies

The Development Director at Saint Antoine Residence, and the Project Director for the training programs and Operations Manager at Saint Antoine Residence, conceptualized the program and wrote the proposal. However, both left the organization during the beginning of the 2016 grant cycle. The current Project Director was hired in April of 2016.

CareLink also experienced staff turnover during the grant period in a number of positions that impacted both job development opportunities for the trainees and continuity for the programs. Specific to the HCTC, CareLink eliminated the Job Development position, and this person had been the primary contact person for the collaborative. This made working closely with CareLink more difficult, as they went through three different contact persons during 2016, and job placement for CNAs was also more difficult than anticipated.

Lack of a Sector Intermediary

Because Saint Antoine's was a single employer expanding its training for other employers, it did not have a good network of employers to rely on to develop this as a sector-based training. Without a sector intermediary to connect with others, the HCTC experienced difficulties in developing a training for other employers. It did not have the other employers fully on board in creating the expanded training program, which made it difficult to meet its goals.

Recruitment

Difficulty Attracting Recruits to Low Wage CNA Jobs

A few years ago when the economy was sour, individuals seeking CNA training were often turned away due to the increasing influx and demand for training by unemployed individuals. As the economy has recovered, recruitment for CNAs has become a more difficult task due to the low wages that accompany the employment position (currently CNA median wages in Rhode Island are approximately $12 an hour). Because demand in the healthcare industry is drastically increasing, numerous facilities will offer bonus incentives for CNAs or nurses and allocate significant amounts of their budget to recruit for their open positions, yet facilities still struggle to find individuals to fill these positions. Due to low rates from Medicare and Medicaid for facilities that provide services to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, facilities are unable to offer a more attractive wage to their employees, which is a major barrier to recruitment and retention of employees.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Recruits would often have to make decisions on whether they could attend the training based on the availability of adequate transportation. One of the questions that HCTC

incorporated into its initial interviews with recruits was, "When you get in your car, do you have to pray that it starts?" This type of question assisted the accrual of specific knowledge to fully understand the challenges potential trainees may encounter in arriving to the training site or clinical rotations.

Utilizing public transportation for training purposes was also difficult. Providence trainees had to get to Saint Antoine Residence for the clinical rotations, which ran from 3:30-9:30pm. The bus line had a shortened route by 9:30pm that did not reach Saint Antoine Residence, so the only pick-up available required individuals to walk on unsafe roads and a large hill after dark. There were similar challenges depending on where each individual lived.

Childcare

Childcare was also a major obstacle for successful completion of the training program and subsequent employment. To attempt to overcome this issue, the case manager connected trainees with the Department of Human Services to identify childcare supports. However, the Genesis Center, which helped trainees identify needed supports, found it difficult for many individuals to locate practical childcare options, given it was only a 10 week training program and the uncertainty regarding when and where their eventual employment might begin. In addition, most qualified childcare centers require lengthy application processes and commitments, and many are not open after 5:30.

Difficulty Meeting Participation Requirements

As described, the Genesis Center was tasked with the bulk of the recruitment responsibilities for the grant. However, identifying potential trainees who could score at least a six on the TABE test proved to be very difficult. Most recruits scored between one and four. As a result, the HCTC started accepting individuals with scores close to a six who were deemed fit based on their interviews. HCTC discussed that it was somewhat unknown why the applicants had more knowledge inadequacies than it had encountered before, but the limited English language knowledge of foreign language speakers was thought to be a potential reason.

Further, there were also issues with the immunization requirements. Some of the potential trainees had exposure to Tuberculosis that showed up on their tests, and the length of time it took to administratively handle these issues with the labs took a lot of time. HCTC were able to expedite some of the tests due to one of the CNA instructors' connections (who eventually left for another opportunity) at a lab.

Training

Turnover with Training Instructors

The CNA instructor position also encountered turnover issues. The first cohort of CNA classes were held with the intended instructor, but the second cohort of CNAs had three different CNA instructors due to a variety of personal reasons. For the third class, HCTC advertised for the position with the understanding that the funding from RJRI could only be guaranteed through

December 2016. Despite numerous complications with the position, HCTC received five resumes and were able to fill the position for the commencement of the third class. However, as a subsequent result of this complication, HCTC was unable to ascertain continuity across trainings. In similar situations in the past regarding finding CNA instructors, Saint Antoine Residence had an alternative instructor to substitute for the designated period of time for trainings held at its facility, but this was not the case for the new extension into Providence (primarily at Tockwotton on the Waterfront), because it had not yet developed long-standing relationships with people and entities in this region who could easily fill in when needed.

Low Acuity Levels at Tockwotton on the Waterfront

A major training challenge encountered by this partnership was that Tockwotton on the Waterfront, as originally planned, did not have high enough acuity levels (meaning high intensity of nursing care required) among its residents to provide an in-depth clinical experience for the trainees. Therefore, the HCTC decided that trainees would complete the clinical part of their training at Saint Antoine's Residence, which made transportation to this site more difficult for trainees who mostly lived in Providence.

Difficulty in Curriculum Development

HCTC had difficulties partnering with Rhode Island College, which had committed to developing advancement opportunity courses for incumbent CNAs. When Rhode Island College was unable to offer courses due to inadequate class sizes and other curricular issues, the HCTC was able contract with Community Care Alliance as part of the Healthy Jobs for Rhode Island RJRI grant. This enabled the HCTC to supplement a behavioral health training component into the existing new CNA training to address the additional behavioral health challenges seen in eldercare. However, while HCTC successfully identified alternative solutions, it was never able to fully offer the CNA specialist courses as intended.

<u>Transition from Training to Employment</u>

Lack of Full Time CNA positions in Partner Companies

The training-to-job pipeline was not as smooth as intended, given that CareLink facilities did not offer full-time CNA positions. CareLink members stated that there was a distinct need for CNAs and that full-time positions with benefits were available, yet during the implementation period, CareLink members did not provide assistance with job placements, and many of the facilities that were willing to hire only offered per diem rates, not full-time positions with benefits.

Differences in Partner Hiring Policies

In contrast to most facilities, Saint Antoine Residence was willing to hire new CNAs on a temporary license. In Rhode Island, the process for becoming a CNA includes a period in which trainees have a temporary nursing assistant license after completing a training program, but are

required to pass written and skills exams before receiving a full nursing assistant license. In hiring those with temporary licenses, Saint Antoine Residence provides CNAs with full-time job opportunities that include benefits, and once they are fully licensed, they receive a one dollar per hour wage increase. These available positions convey to many trainees that training for a CNA license is either a viable job opportunity or offers employment opportunities in the healthcare sector after training. However, HCTC learned during the implementation of training at Tockwotton that most other facilities were not hiring CNAs on a temporary license. Therefore, it became harder to place CNAs in jobs when trainees encountered a significant waiting period between training and job placement.

VIII. Sustainability

The likelihood of sustainability was unclear. St. Antoine Residence was engaged in a discussion regarding the broader mission of the organization and the HCTC. The difficulties addressed above led Saint Antoine Residence to question the time and effort of continuing to conduct CNA training and outreach in the Providence area and providing training for the larger sector.

By January 2017, the grantee had abandoned its partnership with Tockwotton, due to the effort and time required for successful implementation of the training program. St. Antoine's also suggested that the mission of training employees for the entire sector would be better served by a different type of organization that is not responsible for managing and locating qualified employees for its own organization. Regarding sustainability of current training programs, Saint Antoine Residence is fully equipped and plans to continue its training ventures in Northern Rhode Island that existed prior to the RJRI and HCTC partnership.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the HCTC in the implementation of its training programs.

- If this partnership was to design this training program over again, knowing what it knows now, it would have focused on quality over quantity and tried to bolster existing programs. HCTC would have focused on locating partnerships within Northern Rhode Island, and not tried to expand to new jurisdictions.
- Focus more training time on soft skills training, such as appropriate use of cellphones and social media in the workplace, or how to handle workplace confrontation and conflict.
- Condense the training to help people complete the program and find jobs more quickly.

X. Best Practices

The following best practice was identified by the HCTC.

- Work with partners to adapt training plans and overcome barriers.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for the HCTC, the following recommendations for RJRI are suggested:

- Identify an intermediary that can bridge the successes of the Saint Antoine Residence CNA training with other long-term care facilities. Saint Antoine Residence must meet its own business needs before working to meet healthcare sector needs, so trying to recruit and place employees at other organizations (which may be competitors) is a conflict of interest for this grantee.
- Ensure grantees who experience major staff turnover within the grant staff leadership can utilize no-cost time extensions or another mechanism to help new leaders become acquainted with the organization, the partnerships, and the RJRI grant without feeling the pressure of meeting deadlines set by predecessors. Having additional time with the RJRI grant advisor to formulate new plans and build new relationships may be beneficial to ensuring continuity of grant plans.
- Provide additional support to grantees who propose expanding their training to a new area where established relationships and connections may not exist. Grantees may underestimate the amount of time it takes to meet people, network, attend consortium meetings, and meet patient/resident needs, and these types of relationships and experiences can help to ensure a pipeline is created to ensure successful training, internships, and job placements.
- Strengthen the accountability function for partners on the grants. When partners do not uphold commitments, providing support to grantees by reaching out to partners and engaging them in a discussion about their commitments and issues with follow through may increase the extent to which employers uphold commitments and remain engaged.
- Work with the RI Department of Health to offer more Nursing Assistant exam times and locations. At present, Nursing Assistant licensing exams are offered at the Lincoln, Newport, and Warwick campuses of CCRI.[2] Offering additional exam times and locations may help to ensure that newly-trained CNAs do not experience a significant time lapse between finishing their training and full-time employment, since most facilities are not willing to hire CNAs on a temporary license.
- Provide resources for transportation and childcare. Future grants, particularly for low income, entry level jobs should include money for transportation and childcare. This may need to come in a variety of forms, such as childcare vouchers or assistance with informal childcare (babysitters) or offer on-site childcare for the trainees.

[2] RI Department of Health. 2017. http://www.health.state.ri.us/licenses/detail.php?id=232.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

MedTech Innovation Engine

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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MedTech Innovation Engine

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The MedTech Innovation Engine (MTIE), led by Social Enterprise Greenhouse (SEG), was created to develop a sustainable curriculum for medical technology (medtech) entrepreneurs and to foster collaboration between medtech companies, hospitals, governmental partners, and universities. According to research by the Kauffman Foundation[1] (an organization dedicated education and entrepreneurship), high-tech startups are key drivers of job creation within the United States, and facilitating development and success of local medtech entrepreneurs is seen as essential in the medtech industry.

MedMates applied for and received a RJRI planning grant, and as part of the planning grant, MedMates created a database of government, hospital, university and private sector businesses and organizations related to the medtech field. MedMates also conducted a needs assessment with industry members, which included conducting surveys and holding events, roundtables, and discussions with sector partners. Finally, MedMates reviewed the current research about the medtech industry.

During the planning grant stage, MTIE found evidence that the medtech industry is one of the fastest growing sectors across the nation with an average salary of $42,778 and that high technology start-up companies are a key driver of job creation throughout the United States.[2] In Rhode Island, over 4,000 people are employed in medtech jobs, and the medtech industry generates an estimated $759.2M in revenue annually for the state.[2]

However, several challenges face the medtech sector in Rhode Island. Primarily, MTIE found that:

- Compared to neighboring states, Rhode Island has fewer higher paying jobs and a lower innovation capacity.[3]

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[1] http://www.kauffman.org/~/media/kauffman_org/research%20reports%20and%20covers/2013/0B/bds tech startsreport.pdf
[2] AdvaMed http://www.lifechanginginnovation.org/jobs-by—state
[3] Bloomberg, STEM Report Card

- Local medtech companies are not aware of existing resources and programs that could potentially benefit them.
- Industry members and entrepreneurs stated that there were infrastructure and resource barriers and a need for technical assistance to help medtech entrepreneurs and businesses succeed.

Given these issues, MTIE proposed to design and provide a training program for medtech industry entrepreneurs to help them gain an understanding of the innovation pipeline including learning how to develop products, how to bring products to the marketplace, and how to bring production to scale.

II. Grant History

The MedMates organization was first formed in 2013. In 2015, MedMates received a RJRI planning grant to conduct a needs assessment in the medtech industry and then proposed the creation of MTIE for the RJRI implementation grant. The Director of MedMates approached Social Enterprise Greenhouse (SEG), a non-profit organization comprised of business and community leaders that provides technical assistance to entrepreneurs and businesses, about collaborating on the RJRI grant. These two organizations had never previously collaborated before, but they had been in contact during an information session in the planning grant phase. Following discussions, SEG planned to work as a subcontractor on the grant and run an accelerator program because it had previously implemented a similar program with a broader focus and had previously worked with the DLT implementing this type of program.

During the initial implementation phase of MTIE, the Director of MedMates left unexpectedly. At the time, she communicated that MedMates would not have the capacity to handle the RJRI grant; however, the MedMates board expressed a desire to continue to run the grant. After some grant re-structuring, SEG took over primary responsibility for the activities of the grant while continuing to work as a subcontractor for MedMates. In doing this, SEG decided to focus its efforts on the broader category of health and wellness rather than specifically medtech. SEG identified health and wellness as an area of need after working on social ventures across industries and decided to focus its energies in areas where the need was most critical and where the state has existing assets that make it viable to respond to those needs. SEG had previously been involved with other organizations providing support to entrepreneurs, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Betaspring, RevUp, and Small Business Administration programs. However, SEG had never implemented such a comprehensive program like the one designed for the RJRI grant.

III. Goals and Objectives

MTIE was designed to create an innovation pipeline (meaning learning how to develop products, bring the products to the marketplace, and scale the products) of “do well do good” health and wellness entrepreneurs and businesses. The training program worked to provide these

entrepreneurs and businesses with technical assistance including ideation, formation, and implementation as well as to create jobs in Rhode Island and positively impact the lives of people. The creation of MTIE involved two training and support goals with multiple sub-goals:

1. Create a community to help connect entrepreneurs with industry experts to gain an understanding of the innovation pipeline.
    - Build and convene a health and wellness advisory group.
    - Convene and recruit health and wellness coaches and advisors.
    - Develop technology infrastructure to track recruitment and participation of entrepreneurs/ventures and coaches/advisors.
2. Provide technical assistance, training, and support to healthcare entrepreneurs and businesses at multiple stages within the innovation pipeline.
    - Develop and deliver early feasibility checks.
    - Develop and offer customized health and wellness 101 workshops.
    - Customize and execute a health and wellness accelerator program.
    - Organize later stage health and wellness huddles.

The main focus of MTIE was the creation of connections and networks between entrepreneurs and industry experts. The experts volunteered and donated their time as they were passionate about the needs of the healthcare industry. MTIE focused on empowering individuals at any stage in the innovation process to become successful entrepreneurs.

Specifically, MTIE sought to meet the following training objectives:

- Provide early stage feasibility checks to 10 participants.
- Provide health and wellness 101 workshops to 20 participants.
- Provide the accelerator program to 12 participants.
- Provide later stage health and wellness huddles to 4 participants.

IV. Partnerships

MTIE brought together a variety of industry employers within the healthcare and medtech sectors as well as other partners to help with recruitment and funding. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities and contributions.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Social Enterprise Greenhouse	Responsible for leading the implementation of MTIE; conducting trainings; convening meetings; developing curriculum; recruiting participants; providing meeting space.
MedMates	Initial lead applicant for MTIE: responsible for overseeing the implementation of the health and wellness 101 workshops.
Aspiera Medical, RI BioScience Leaders	Responsible for providing mentorship and assisting with curriculum development.
Neighborhood Health Plan RI	Responsible for assisting with curriculum development on topics related to health insurance.
Brown University, HealthID Profile, Inc, Sproutel, Synchronized Sales, Ximedica, LLC.	Responsible for providing mentorship; assisting with curriculum development; providing advisory board participants; recruiting participants.
RI Business Plan Competition	Responsible for providing funding and training assistance.
RI Science and Technology Advisory Council	Responsible for providing funding for the development of the curriculum; providing grants to defray the cost of applying for federal small business awards; providing matching funds as needed for small businesses aiming to increase the visibility of these programs.
Partnership for Greater Providence	Responsible for identifying needs within the city of Providence to assist with job creation.
Optimity Advisors, Delta Dental, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Harvard Business School Alumni Association of Southeastern New England, YMCA, Brown University, University of Rhode Island	Responsible for participating in various training programs; providing support to MTIE on the advisory board or as industry experts.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

MTIE worked to create a community that would support and train health and wellness entrepreneurs and businesses in navigating the innovation pipeline. To achieve its two goals, MTIE implemented several programs.

Goal #1: Create a community to help connect entrepreneurs with industry experts to gain an understanding of the innovation pipeline.

Health and Wellness Advisory Group

The purpose of the Health and Wellness Advisory group was to bring needed industry expertise, meaning those with expertise in medtech or health and wellness, to the SEG network to assist with curriculum development and mentorship of entrepreneurs. MTIE initially worked to hire a project manager and then to create the Health and Wellness Advisory Council. This council included members from many different organizations including: the YMCA, the Patient Voice Institute, South County Health, Optimity Advisors, RI Health Center Association, Delta Dental, and the Hospital Association of RI.

SEG then worked with the advisory council to create programming for entrepreneurs at various stages. The end goal was gathering external knowledge to disseminate to entrepreneurs and business ventures. SEG, along with the advisory council, held a monthly convening meeting, helped to implement the accelerator program, and conducted the health and wellness huddles. The advisory group included more than 60 members.

Health & Wellness Coaches and Advisors

MTIE organized bi-monthly networking events to convene and recruit "do well do good" health and wellness entrepreneurs and businesses from all industries. For example, in 2015 SEG held an Aging 2.0 pitch competition, and the momentum from this conference prompted MTIE to plan a "silver economy" conference. These events served to recruit volunteers with expertise and knowledge in the medtech and health and wellness sectors. These volunteers then assisted with the accelerator program, curriculum development, and mentorship. The end goal was to build an ecosystem that would support and foster the growth and development of entrepreneurs and their ideas or businesses.

Technology Infrastructure

MTIE worked to identify and implement appropriate technology and tools to track participants and measure the impact of the grant. MTIE planned to track metrics on engagement, services accessed, venture growth, and job creation. MTIE began to develop this infrastructure during the implementation grant year and considers this to be a multi-year process.

Goal #2: Provide technical assistance, training, and support to healthcare entrepreneurs and businesses at multiple stages within the innovation pipeline.

Early Stage Feasibility Checks

The Early Stage Feasibility Checks program was guided by input from MedMates leadership and the Health and Wellness Advisory Council. The program targeted "pre-start contingency" entrepreneurs. This program was designed to provide early stage entrepreneurs and start-up companies an opportunity to discuss the feasibility of their business ideas and regulatory compliance for assistance early in the process with two to four industry experts. SEG planned on offering at least 10 early stage feasibility sessions in 2016. SEG's Program Manager executed the program delivery.

Customized Health & Wellness 101 Workshops

This program was focused on helping entrepreneurs turn ideas into action. The customized health and wellness 101 workshops were designed to help assess feasibility of enterprises as well as provide access to business planning tools and industry expert mentoring services. Finally, a project consultant developed and delivered medtech specific workshops geared towards pre-startup companies. Those who completed the workshops were encouraged to take part in the accelerator program.

Health & Wellness Accelerator Program

The 12-week Health & Wellness Accelerator Program, in partnership with Brown University's Social Innovation Initiative, ran from September through December 2016. The accelerator program provided mid-stage entrepreneurs and start-up businesses with knowledge and networking opportunities to take their business ideas to the next level. The 12-week program included weekly four hour in-person workshops, coach meetings, and online modules. MTIE utilized already existing general business development content, and a project consultant helped develop health and wellness specific content for the accelerator program. Importantly, after the accelerator program ended, many of the entrepreneurs and industry expert volunteers continued to come to the SEG space to meet to discuss ideas.

Later Stage Huddles

The later stage huddles focused on supporting later stage ventures and were held in collaboration with Harvard Business School Alumni Association of Southeastern New England. The original idea for 'huddles' came from an entrepreneur who had been through some of the early stage programs but wanted continued support for his business. The huddles were implemented as a three-hour strategy session where entrepreneurs met with a coach who provided insight into opportunities and challenges related to product/service development as well as provided network support, management advice, and technical assistance. Then, MTIE hosted a secondary three-hour meeting where small groups of industry leaders, consultants, and advisors discussed the strategic need for the product or service with the entrepreneur and made a plan for moving forward. The goal was to have at least four huddles.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Building of community

MTIE feels that the biggest success of this grant has been the building of community between entrepreneurs and industry experts. MTIE accumulated a vast network of volunteers willing to help with various programs (e.g., advisory council, coaches, feasibility checks, an accelerator program, workshops, huddles). To assess program outcomes on business success or job creation at this point would be premature, but according to MTIE, the impact of creating the infrastructure for entrepreneurs to turn ideas into reality has been successful.

Effective partnerships with higher education institutions

MTIE's various partnerships with other organizations and industries have been a strength of the grant. MTIE has included partners from Brown University and the University of Rhode Island (URI), and found these partnerships to be very effective and productive for curriculum development and recruitment. For example, at Brown Medical School, one class worked to incorporate human-centered design thinking to solve problems in healthcare. The medical school students shadowed clinicians in the hospitals and formulated project ideas. For their final presentations, SEG identified judges for a competition, and the winners received an SEG prize package of working in SEG's physical space and having priority access to the advisory network. SEG also participated in various activities, such as a Health Hack-a-thon with URI, which has contributed to success for the training programs. The URI College of Nursing is also considering integrating entrepreneurial curriculum into the nursing programs so that nursing students can be empowered to think about innovative solutions for meeting healthcare needs.

Recruitment

Volunteers

MTIE has been highly impressed by the caliber of people involved on the advisory council as volunteers. According to MTIE, many of the leading minds in healthcare actively participated in the training program activities, and were incredibly generous with their time. These volunteers had a strong desire to give back and were very passionate about seeing entrepreneurs be successful.

Ability to unite across the sector

MTIE was able to bring entrepreneurs and experts together in ways that were not possible prior to the RJRI grant. Through the grant activities, MTIE was able to build a community of entrepreneurs and industry leaders mostly using word-of-mouth.

Trainee Barriers

Regulations, changing trends, and lack of resources

MTIE acknowledged that the industry can be difficult to navigate due to regulations, changing trends, and a lack of resources. To assist with this, expert volunteers assisted inexperienced entrepreneurs. Further, MTIE made an effort to survey participants to find the optimal meeting time to reduce as many barriers to meeting as possible.

Training

Quality training

Through feedback surveys and discussions with participants, MTIE has found that the curriculum developed with the help of industry experts has been excellent. One notable example was the 12-week accelerator program developed in partnership with Brown University's Social Innovation Initiative. MTIE believes its programming is now the most comprehensive program providing technical assistance to entrepreneurs at various stages in the region, and providing these programs has brought a more diverse pipeline of entrepreneurs to SEG than it had previously.

Ability to meet goals

MTIE exceeded its goal numbers on feasibility checks, 101 workshops, and accelerator program participants. MTIE found that that the early stage feasibility checks were one of the services most needed by the sector. Furthermore, the advisory council had more than 60 members, and at least 55 business ventures were served during the first year.

Volunteer efforts resulted in program success

SEG also had remarkable success with its expert volunteers assisting entrepreneurs. The accelerator program alone had about 130 coaching hours completed at no cost. One successful example included an entrepreneur who collaborated with a high-level staff person at Women & Infants Hospital. This entrepreneur then proceeded to obtain a grant for her ideas. MTIE continued to be impressed by the number of expert volunteers who continued to meet with entrepreneurs after the programs had ended. According to MTIE, this continued to happen because the expert volunteers were passionate about helping the entrepreneurs succeed.

Transition from Training to Employment

This program was not an employment program, but focused instead on developing Rhode Island's industries; therefore, MTIE did not discuss achievements related to the employment of training participants.

Other

Creation of physical professional spaces

MTIE also worked with Delta Dental, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Optimity Advisors, and Ximedica. Providing a place for the entrepreneurs to convene in a professional workspace has been a strength of the grant. If a new entrepreneur or start-up business does not have a

professional physical space to meet for a conference, an individual meeting, or to hold an online conference call, this can be a barrier to success. Therefore, having the SEG space available has been very effective for bringing people together.

Program flexibility

MTIE valued the flexibility within the RJRI grant and found it could make effective changes to its programs based on what it learned in executing the various programs.

Table 2. Performance Metrics

IG-13 Medtech Innovation Engine (MedMates)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Early Stage Feasibility Checks (2016) (Incumbents)	2/2/16	12/15/16	10	32	10	32
Later Stage Huddles (2016) (Incumbents)	2/2/16	12/15/16	4	4	4	4
Med-Tech 101 Workshops (2016) (Incumbents)	2/2/16	12/15/16	20	3	20	3
Health & Wellness Accelerator (2016) (Incumbents)	9/15/16	12/15/16	12	8	12	8
Other Objectives						
Community Building- Number of DLT Events					12	14
Community Building- Number of Event Attendees					500	237
Community Building- Number of new health coaches					25	62
Community Building- Number of H&W strategic partnerships					5	13
Pipeline Vitality- Number of Ventures Engaged					20	62
Venture Growth- % Revenue Growth					10%	Not Tracked
Jobs FTE's and Jobs					20	103

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Staff turnover and grant re-structuring

MedMates experienced a leadership change in the initial phase of the grant. When the director of MedMates left her position, SEG took over and restructured the program. MedMates was not often an active participant in this process. The former leader of MedMates was SEG's main point of contact. The leadership restructuring resulted in miscommunication between SEG and MedMates about implementation responsibility. Although SEG led the grant restructuring, SEG remained subcontractors on the grant rather than taking over as the main applicant.

Recruitment

Recruiting for the Accelerator Program

MTIE had difficulty recruiting for the accelerator program, but it was able to recruit eight out of its stated goal of 12. One of the biggest challenges to recruitment was that many entrepreneurs in this industry need significant money upfront for research and development. If programs cannot provide or promise money, they will seek funds and services elsewhere because it is becoming a standard to provide funding as prizes to winners to assist with research and development. According to MTIE, many entrepreneurs "jump from accelerator to accelerator mainly because of the money." While MTIE provided the use of the SEG space for a year and networking opportunities for the accelerator program, the fact that it has not been able to provide monetary prize packages to entrepreneurs has been limiting. For example, MTIE lost some participants to a Massachusetts program called "MassChallenge" because it awards money for research and development to entrepreneurs.

Trainee Barriers

Entrepreneurs reluctant to commit time to training

MTIE found that recruiting entrepreneurs can be challenging and requires attending events in-person and speaking at corporations. One particular challenge has been convincing entrepreneurs and businesses to commit time to participate in the huddles, and MTIE found that some entrepreneurs were not willing to take time to attend meetings due to other priorities. To address time challenges, MTIE conducted surveys to identify the most convenient days and times for participants to meet.

Training

Lack of pre-existing resources

SEG had no previous experience with the medtech sector and little experience with health and wellness, and it quickly learned there are no pre-existing resources for identifying what companies and organizations are involved and what they do. As part this grant, MTIE has forged many partnerships and worked to connect multiple entities within the medtech and healthcare sectors.

Rapidly changing trends

Rapidly changing trends within the medtech and healthcare industries makes staying abreast of the latest happenings in the industry on a daily/weekly basis difficult and also makes it challenging to provide technical assistance for entrepreneurs and businesses.

Confusion over organization functions

There was also "brand confusion" about what SEG does compared to other related entities, such as MedMates, within the healthcare industry. This has and continues to provide confusion among interested parties and is a challenge SEG plans to work on in the future.

Transition from Training to Employment

This program was not an employment program but focused instead on developing Rhode Island's entrepreneurs; therefore, MTIE did not discuss challenges related to the employment of training participants.

Other

Managing a large and busy grant program

SEG, through its involvement in the RJRI grant, feels it has tapped into an area of great need and interest within the industry. The biggest challenge of this grant was finding enough hours in the day to do all the things SEG would have liked to do and also meet with all the key players. Having to set priorities and avoid burn-out among staff was important.

VIII. Sustainability

SEG felt the activities and programs it implemented was sustainable. However, SEG felt that the MTIE partnership itself was not sustainable due to conflicts with partners, MedMates specifically. SEG believes that it could successfully continue to implement its program activities as lead applicant. SEG's list of industry expert volunteers continues to grow, and it believes that there are ample opportunities for additional partners to be added to the list. SEG has stated that there is an interest from Blue Cross Blue Shield and Delta Dental to possibly fund continuing programs. SEG believes there is a lot of momentum in this program, and sees continued opportunities as making this program very sustainable.

SEG also aims to continue leveraging university partnerships. SEG feels that remaining flexible is important, and plans to continue to morph and expand the programming based on needs of entrepreneurs and businesses. One goal for the coming year of the grant is to become more involved with key players in hospitals and other health care providers. SEG feels that it has a great board of directors that does not limit the organization , and therefore now has plans to expand the model to assist entrepreneurs and business ventures in the environment and education industries under the umbrella of their "do well do good" social enterprise mission. SEG has found that it has taken on a greater role in helping to educate businesses on what it means to be a

good corporate citizen. SEG finds this expanded mission to be very exciting and feels that it is meeting needs and tapping into the willingness of industry experts to give back.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by MTIE in executing this training program:

- There is a high amount of willingness of industry experts to donate their time to help entrepreneurs.
- In the exciting, growing, ever-changing industries of medtech and healthcare, there are multiple opportunities to become involved in new ventures, but ensuring staff are not overworked can be important to ensuring the long-term sustainability of training programs.
- Providing prizes for programming would help with recruitment in order to maintain competitiveness with similar out-of-state programs.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the MTI Partnership:

- Convene an advisory board to assist with curriculum development and training program implementation.
- Continue to identify new partners.
- Have a mission of "do well, do good" to help encourage and motivate industry experts to provide assistance to entrepreneurs for no charge.
- Identify industry experts willing to donate their time to entrepreneurs and create networks of entrepreneurs and industry experts.
- Attend meetings and events throughout the community to recruit for training programs.
- Provide a physical space to enable connections to be made between entrepreneurs and industry experts.
- Provide multiple different avenues for getting people involved at the different stages of entrepreneurs (from early-stage entrepreneurs to people with existing businesses).
- Provide a program that can be modified and improved over time based on previous experiences.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the MTI Partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Identify mechanisms, perhaps through other agencies and/or public-private ventures, which could provide or partner to provide incentives or prize money for entrepreneurial contests and programs.

- Continue to be flexible and enable partnerships to learn from mistakes and try something new to improve programs over time.
- Particularly within the healthcare sector, help RJRI grantees with marketing their companies and programs to ensure entities know about available services and are not confused when multiple organizations provide similar, but different, programs.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Rhode Island Food Management Training Partnership (RIFMTP) was established by the Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA) in collaboration with its sister organization, the Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation (RIHEF). RIHA received an RJRI planning grant, and the RIFMTP was designed to address the lack of leadership training programs for mid-level employees in the hospitality industry for the RJRI implementation grant. This partnership sought to address the following specific industry challenges:

- Over the next decade, the food cluster industry in Rhode Island is anticipated to experience strong growth.[1, 2]
- Employers in the food cluster industry face a deficit of skilled workers to fill management and supervisory level positions.
- Restaurants currently have difficulty retaining qualified, highly motivated employees because of a lack of opportunity for advancement and training. The turnover rate for employees in the restaurants and accommodations sector is high (63%) compared to the private sector overall (42%).[3]

To assess specific training needs, RIHA conducted one-on-one interviews and held six focus groups with more than 12 employers and 43 employees as part of its planning grant activities. Employers identified that specific training was needed for incumbent employees in the following areas:

- Managing and forecasting profitability.

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[1] Actions for Economic Development, *Highlights 2014,* http://www.rifoodcouncil.org/sites/default/files/CommerceRI_Highlights_Report_0.pdf#overlay-context=resources

[2] National Restaurant Association, *State Statistics 2015. http://www.restaurant.org/News-Research/Research/State-Statistics*

[3] National Restaurant Association, *Economist's Notebook: Hospitality Employee Turnover Rose slightly in 2013,* March 20, 2014

- Managing team members.
- Managing information flow.
- Complying with legal requirements.
- Customer service.
- Managing a food and beverage program.
- Ensuring food safety and sanitation.
- Alcohol law.
- Conflict resolution and crisis management.

Employers stated that mid-level positions were identified as the most difficult to fill, because potential incumbent employees that could have been promoted required more training and skill development than employers were equipped to provide. Frequently, and out of necessity, employers would promote employees to mid-level positions who lacked the technical and skills training they needed to be managers and supervisors. Promoting employees without adequate knowledge often compromised the work environment, leading to difficulties in hiring and training entry level employees and often resulting in high turnover and poor morale within the organizations. Employers also reinforced the need for owners and managers to understand how to better assist employees in their career paths and how to adapt to the training needs of the new generation of workers.

Employees of the food cluster industry also indicated a need for training and skills development that included building resumes and taking part in interviews, career exposure, internship opportunities, supervision coaching, practical learning experiences, mentorship options, and interactive coursework. Employees discussed that few educational opportunities existed for those who desired to be promoted because few universities offered professional development opportunities within the food cluster industry, and tuition costs were often not manageable for a majority of the incumbent employees.

II. Grant History

Prior to RJRI, RIHA/RIHEF received grant funding from DLT as an industry partnership, and they also received funding through the Governor's Workforce Board for 10 years prior to their involvement with RJRI. These grants enabled them to build the "foundation" of their organizations. Through these DLT grants, RIHA/RIHEF built relationships with all of the employers and education partners included on the Partnership's RJRI grant. As a result, they were well-positioned to carry out both a planning grant and an implementation grant because they had an established partnership of employers and training organizations. RIHA/RIHEF has offered other trainings in the past, such as food safety and alcohol trainings, and they have also worked with high schools to implement programs for high school students in which students can receive certification for working in the food and hospitality industry.

III. Goals and Objectives

In order to meet the insufficient supply of managers in the food cluster industry the, Rhode Island Food Management Training Program established one goal for this training program.

1. Provide professional development, training, resources, and knowledge for career advancement to mid-level incumbent workers.
    - As part of this program, RIFMTP assessed applicants, helped to design individual employment plans, and provided training and support services.

Specifically, RIFMTP sought to meet the following recruitment and training objective:

- Recruit and provide 40 incumbent participants with training and support services.

IV. Partnerships

Members of the partnership were selected for participation based on their knowledge and experience in developing training and educational programs for incumbent workers; education in the food cluster industry and willingness to assist in the development of comprehensive professional development program for mid-level professionals in the food cluster industry; and the needs of employers and employees of the food cluster industry. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Rhode Island Hospitality Association	Responsible for all instruction and training for the entirety of the program; tracking student performance.
Rhode Island Hospitality Education Foundation	Responsible for all instruction and training for the entirety of the program; tracking student performance.
Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI)	Responsible for expanding their existing culinary arts/food service curricula from a certificate program (CCRI) or a four-year program (JWU) into a formal two-year accredited Associate's Degree program affiliated with RIFMTP; hosting training programs at its Warwick location (CCRI).
Hope and Main Incubator Kitchen	Responsible for providing classroom space to the Partnership and help to identify the emerging professional development needs of the food cluster industry; assisted in recruiting additional employers and employees.
RI Hospitality Education Foundation, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, Chelo's Hometown Bar & Grille, Chez Pascal, Gregg's Restaurants & Pubs, Harbor Lights, Hotel Viking, Lucia Italian Restaurant, McGrath Clambakes, Meritage Restaurant, Ocean House, Omni Hotels & Resorts, Packaging & More, Panera Bread, Providence Marriott Hotel, Pt. Judith Country Club, Regan Communications, Simone's Restaurant, T's Restaurants, Tallulah on Thames, Vanderbilt Grace, Wyndham Garden Providence, Johnson & Wales University, Community College of Rhode Island, Workforce Solutions of Providence Cranston, Providence Cranston Workforce Investment Board	Responsible for referring employees to the training program.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1: Provide professional development, training, resources and knowledge for career advancement to mid-level incumbent workers.

Participant Identification and Action Plans

The RIFMTP identified participants from hospitality employer partners, human resource managers and directors, past Hospitality Training Academy graduates, assisted living and nursing home facilities, and business owners from the Hope & Main incubator kitchen. The plan for the screening process for applicants to the RIFMTP included attendance at an information session, a formal application, a letter of intent, a current resume, and a minimum of two recommendation letters from current or past employers. Once the applications were reviewed, a formal interview was scheduled with the Manager of Workforce Development and a volunteer group of employers. The final step was an orientation session followed by acceptance into the training program.

The RIFMTP adopted the Food and Beverage Service Competency Model as the measurement tool for identifying skill levels. Every incumbent worker designed an action plan, in conjunction with the hospitality career coach, tailored to their specific skills needs in order to improve behaviors that would facilitate opportunities for promotion. The partnership conceptualized the need for an additional action plan that would be used to build on the participants' accomplishments and further develop their skills and behaviors. The initial plan was for assessments to be conducted throughout the training program and beyond to track participant's career growth following their graduation from the program.

Training Program

Initially, the RIFMPT planned for each participant in the program to complete training in order to earn ManageFirst certification, endorsed by the National Restaurant Association. RIFMPT utilized the ManageFirst curriculum, a nationally accredited, competency-based training program that certifies a set of core competencies defined by the restaurant, foodservice, and hospitality industries as critical for success.[4] To receive the ManageFirst certification, individuals must pass participate in training, pass four Core Credential Topic Exams and one Elective Topic Exam, and document 800 hours of paid or unpaid industry-related work experience.

The four core credential topics include:

- Hospitality and Restaurant Management.
- Controlling Foodservice Costs.
- Hospitality Human Resources Management and Supervision.
- ServSafe Food Safety.

[4] ManageFirst was developed by the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) with the collaboration of over 400 restaurant, foodservice and hospitality experts, and after a rigorous 18 month Job Task Analysis to identify the industries core competencies.

The options for elective topics include:

- Hospitality Accounting, Purchasing, Customer Service, Principles of Food and Beverage Management, Bar and Beverage Management, Hospitality and Restaurant Marketing, Nutrition, and ServSafe Alcohol.

The theory behind this type of incumbent training was that helping current employees advance in their careers within a company opens up entry-level jobs for new workers, creating a career ladder for employees within the food cluster industry. RIFMTP and employers jointly funded participants/employees to take part in the training program. Having RIFMTP share the cost helped limit the financial barriers for employers. The training required for the ManageFirst certification generally costs about $4,500. RIFMTP initially asked for employers to pay $750 of the cost of the training for their employees, but eventually changed it to $250 to accommodate budget limitations.

RIFMTP provided the ManageFirst Curriculum certification as delineated in its RJRI implementation proposal to one cohort of five individuals. The Community College of Rhode Island provided space for the RIFMTP to hold the training program.

However, after encountering large barriers to recruiting people into the first cohort, RIFMTP altered its program to allow employers to request individual ManageFirst topics or other training topics that were needed to benefit their business and employees. For example, the impetus for changing to the new model (described as the "a la carte model") came after one employer requested that five of their employees take the Hospitality and Restaurant Management class, another employer asked for the ServSafe alcohol class within the ManageFirst curriculum, and another employer requested training for their employees on controlling food service cost. RIFMPT changed its training program model to provide training topics upon employer request or based on industry needs, and participants could enroll in a single class at a time, with some classes held in-person and some online. In the case of the controlling food cost training, RIFMTP provided a webinar on this topic using curriculum from another nationally-recognized program. Trainees who took one class were not required to take part in the screening protocol or attend an information session.

Employer Engagement

To engage in the RIFMTP, employer partners referred their own employees to the training program, supported their employees once accepted into the program, and attended networking events and graduation ceremonies. For each participant, employers designated a supervisor or manager to mentor and to assist the participants in applying the knowledge from class and textbooks to their current jobs. This mechanism was designed to provide feedback on the student employee's performance and help to identify where further development would be needed. Over time, RIFMTP identified that the program has multiple levels in which employers can be become engaged. Some employers send many employees for their trainings, while others

do not send many employees but do make contributions towards the culinary programs, hire students from the programs, and send managers to RIFMTP-related networking events.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Creation of New Industry Connections

A major achievement of this RJRI grant has been the creation of new networks and the opportunity for RIHA/RIHEF to continue to be a part of the workforce system, including the Providence/Cranston Workforce Board or the greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Board, and other various partnerships and groups that come together to improve the hospitality system within Rhode Island. These types of opportunities have led to a breadth of diverse projects. For example, RIHA/RIHEF staff attended a meeting in which they were connected with a representative from the Department of Health. This connection later led to a joint project in which RIHA/RIHEF conducted a training about the norovirus, and another project with Department of Health staff provided trainings on food safety inspections and audits to food service employees.

Furthermore, the RIFMTP enabled RIHA/RIHEF to continue their role within the sector as the convener of new partnerships by creating a culture of community within the food cluster industry. Thus, the ability to open doors for themselves and others was communicated as a worthy venture for the grantee, and that without RJRI funding, this would not have been possible.

Recruitment

Recruiting Incumbent Employees

The RIFMTP had success recruiting from employer partners and at networking events for incumbent worker trainings. RIFMTP was able to recruit from multiple types of organizations, including hospitality employer partners, human resource managers and directors, past Hospitality Training Academy graduates, assisted living and nursing home facilities, and business owners from the Hope & Main incubator kitchen. As a result of its activities, RIFMTP exceeded its initial recruitment goal.

Ability to Expand Training Partners

This model also allowed RIFMTP to expand its training opportunities to serve employers outside its initial partners. For example, RIFMTP became involved with healthcare industry employers, such as assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals, who need additional training for their food service workers. Although, these types of food service workers are not considered part of the food cluster industry, they often need the same types of training as restaurants and hospitality organizations. Partnering with these types of organizations was noted by RIHA/RIHEF as an unexpected but pleasant partnership, and one that could only grow over time.

Trainee Barriers & Training

Adaptability

One particularly successful element of this partnership was its ability to quickly adapt the training program to changing employer demands. For example, as desired by employers, RIHA/RIHEF initially proposed a lengthy 3-4 month ManageFirst certification program for employees. However, by the time the grant was actually funded and ready to implement, RIHA/RIHEF quickly learned that the lengthy program was no longer needed among employers. Incumbent worker training was still desired, but industry employers were unable to send their employees to a training program that required employees to train for approximately 10 full work days. Instead, particular employers expressed a desire to have their workers complete specific types of training, such as hospitality and restaurant management, and so they were willing to send their employees for the amount of time required to complete a specific class/module. As a result, RIFMTP developed an "a la carte" training model in which employers could flexibly send incumbent workers to specific trainings based on the specific skills needed for advancement at their workplace.

Flexible and Responsive Training Design

RIFMTP provided training for employers that was flexible and responsive to a changing business climate. For example, RIFMTP facilitated an active shooter training because hotels and restaurants are interested in training their employees on how to handle these types of situations, and it has also been involved in cyber-security training because when providing a Wi-Fi connection for their guests, restaurants and hotels need training on how to safely offer these services to guests while also protecting their own security.

Training Attendance

RIFMTP found that holding some trainings as webinars was helpful for ensuring employees could be trained without having to attend an in-person training during a time they might be working.

Transition from Training to Employment

This grant was specifically designed for incumbent employees already employed at these companies. As a result, all participants were already employed.

Other

Comprehensive Reporting System

The RIHA/RIHEF utilized a system of reporting objectives and outcomes for every project, event, and program that they conducted. Using this system enabled them to identify best practices and areas that were in need of revision or discarding based on short-term and longer-

term experiences. During implementation of the RIFMTP, this enabled RIHA/RIHEF to quickly adapt their training program when they encountered barriers.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

The RIFMTP did not identify any partnership challenges.

Recruitment

Length of the Training Program

The amount of time that it would take for an employee to successfully complete the training program created a recruitment barrier. This was such a barrier that the RIFMTP was forced to restructure and re-conceptualize its training plan. The reality was that many employers were unable to send employees to the 3-4 month training program, and during this time, continue to pay them while also paying someone to complete the work of the person at the company (e.g., a restaurant). When many companies are only operating on slim profit margins, employers found that they were unable to send employees to the full training program. Small businesses are currently finding that it takes about five years to become successful, so during those initial five years (when they often need the most support and training), it can be nearly impossible to take employees "off the floor" to attend a training.

Slow Start to Recruitment

The RIFMTP had difficulty recruiting participants to the training program initially. It took the advocacy of program graduates to increase the recruitment numbers of subsequent cohorts.

Trainee Barriers

Overcoming Personal Barriers

Multiple training participants had to overcome personal barriers like lack of adequate day care or transportation to attend training sessions. These barriers were pronounced due to the partnership's focus on training incumbent workers. However, the partnership overcame this challenge by working with each participant to resolve their individual issues.

Training

Difficulty Gaining Necessary Participant Information

RIFMTP experienced obstacles in obtaining Social Security numbers and wage-related information from each of the training participants. A majority of training participants would skip that particular portion when completing the required form and as a direct consequence, the grantee would not receive reimbursement from RJRI for expenses related to these individuals, which was a serious constraint for them in terms of resources. In the food industry, RIHA/RIHEF explained that one program, ServSafe, had been sued for asking for people's

Social Security numbers due to identity theft, amongst other concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality, and therefore, many employees/participants were not willing to provide this information. Overall, RIFMP stated that it understood why it was required, but found the policy to be incredibly prohibitive and were having a difficult time determining a potential solution.

Training Cost

Employers found the cost of the training to be prohibitive. Though the RIFMTP was able to reduce the cost of the training program to be RIHA/RIHEF $250 for employees, many employers found even this amount to be too much.

Transition from Training to Employment

This grant was specifically designed for incumbent employees already employed. As a result, all participants were already employed.

Other

Complex and Challenging Industry Regulations

The number of governmental regulations within the hospitality and food cluster industry is increasingly challenging, and employers spend large amounts of time working to ensure they are meeting all of the various regulations, which can make it difficult to send employees to take part in training.

Difficulty Meeting Recruitment Goals

Although RIFMTP was unable to meet the recruitment and training objectives for its program as initially proposed, the grantee did find the flexibility and room for innovation afforded to them through the RJRI grant process to enable RIFMTP's success in meeting important industry goals and employer needs. The table below details the number of trainees who took part in the various RIFMTP trainings during 2016:

Table 2. Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-14 RI Food Management Training Partnership (RI Hospitality)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
ManageFirst - (2 cohorts) (Incumbents)	4/11/16	12/30/16	40	46	40	43
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn a credential--Other					40	38
Total Participants that earn a credential--ManageFirst Professional Credential					35	5
Total Participants promoted due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training					TBD	Ongoing

VIII. Sustainability

RIHA/RIHEF has extensive relationships with state and local agencies, and they believe these relationships will be critical in garnering funding for the RIFMTP once funding from RJRI has elapsed. RIHEF has in the past received grants from the American Express Foundation, the Governor's Workforce Board, the Industry Skills Development Initiative, the National Emergency Grant, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the On-Ramps Career Pathways Grant, the Rhode Island Commodores, and the Rhode Island Foundation. Industry partner funding from RI DLT has also been particularly beneficial in enabling the partnership to afford salaries, keep the lights on, and have the various supplies it might need to successfully implement the program, so without that funding, the sustainability of this partnership may be questionable.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the RIFMTP in implementing its training program:

- Companies and businesses, particularly those that operate on slim margins, are small, and are in their first years of business, may be unable to participate in a program that requires workers to be off the floor during work hours. These employers may not be able to afford the costs associated with paying for the training, paying the employee during the training, and paying another employee who is covering the trainee's shifts.
- When cost-sharing is involved to pay for training costs, ensure employers can afford the amount suggested, or identify a tiered system based on business size or yearly income. One possibility would be to develop scholarships for new and small businesses.

X. Best Practices

The following best practices were utilized by the RIFMTP in implementing its training program:

- Create a culture of community within the industry to help cultivate new partnerships between all involved. This can lead to innovative projects and initiatives between even the most unlikely partners.
- Include employer partners as much as possible in training development and execution and allow training programs to change rapidly based on employer needs and constraints.
- Tailor curriculum offerings based on each employer's business and staffing needs.
- Be open to partners outside the traditional sector participating in trainings.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for the RIFMTP, the following recommendations for RJRI are suggested:

- Provide support to partnerships that have difficulties getting Social Security numbers or other identifying information from trainees. These partnerships need to be reimbursed for everyone who receives training, so if this is the reason why RJRI will not reimburse

trainees, RJRI should provide support when enrolling participants. This is to ensure that trainees understand the importance of providing this information or understand how their information will and will not be used, so that they feel safe in providing this information.

- Continue to enable RJRI grantees to adapt their training to meet employer needs. This approach ensured that the RIFMTP could be successful even when encountering major recruitment challenges.
- Send a RJRI representative to do the intake or offer intake online so that the trainees are working with a government entity to provide their social security numbers instead of a business.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Insurance Innovation Partnership

Prepared for:

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Insurance Innovation Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Insurance Innovation Partnership (IIP) was developed by the Independent Insurance Agents of RI (IIARI) Association in conjunction with industry partners and business partners who are members of IIARI. The partnership sought to address several issues within the financial and insurance sector, including:

- The demands of an aging workforce.
- The inability of businesses to attract new talent to the industry.
- A shortage of licensed insurance professionals.
- A lack of training or education programs with pathways to employment.

The average age of a U.S. insurance agent is 59, which means that one in four agents is expected to retire within the next five years. Rhode Island currently has a significant shortage of licensed insurance professionals as well as a lack of potential employees to fill these positions, as the cost, time commitment, and general anxiety about successfully completing the licensing exam are often deterrents to prospective employees. Given that approximately 1,400 people are employed by about 138 insurance agencies in the state, the sector was in need of filling many jobs that should open in the next few years.

In working closely with business partners and analyzing data gathered in focus groups and committee meetings, IIP identified a set of specific challenges that needed to be considered when designing its training program:

- Positions in the insurance industry require a unique set of qualifications, including basic math, computer, and other office skills; customer service skills; a state-issued professional insurance license (which enables them to sell and service property, casualty, life, health, disability and/or long term care insurance); and industry knowledge gained through experience and continuing education.
- The insurance industry has not adequately presented itself as a lucrative career, and employment in the field is not connected to a specific secondary education program, which means the industry lacks a pipeline of future workers to fill open positions.

- Individuals are often not willing to outlay the time (and money) needed to study, train, and pass the state licensing exam without being guaranteed a job opportunity once it is completed.
- The current expectation in the industry is for employers to pay for otherwise qualified candidates to be licensed. While large Rhode Island companies, such as Amica and Metropolitan Life, have the resources to recruit and train employees, independent insurance agencies often have higher training requirements and far fewer resources. Therefore, these agencies are reluctant to take on new employees because they may not recoup their investment if a candidate does not work out.
- Independent insurance agencies have an average of 11 full-time employees and no training department. While larger agencies may only require employees to learn one company's insurance product and software, independent insurance agencies often have to learn multiple companies' products and software in order to service all of the agencies' available products and companies.
- Once licensed, insurance professionals often seek additional industry recognized designations and training to gain more understanding of various niche insurance products. These designations represent experience and superior insurance knowledge that demand a higher salary for employees who hold these designations (for example wages that increase from $15 to $22 per hour).

Recognizing the needs of the insurance industry, the mission of IIP was to create a sustainable program that:

- Generated awareness of the opportunities and advantages of working in the independent insurance industry.
- Attracted individuals with the unique characteristics required to work in the industry.
- Allocated the appropriate funds to conduct the initial training and licensing of qualified candidates.
- Provided opportunities to obtain industry recognized designations and training that was identified as essential by the partnership members.
- Kept insurance jobs in Rhode Island.

II. Grant History

IIARI had heard from member agencies in Rhode Island for over a decade of the need for a training program within the insurance industry. As a result, the board of directors created a special education committee to help develop the curriculum and gather support from association members. This committee met regularly and requested that IIARI apply for the Real Jobs Rhode Island grant opportunity after hearing about it through media outlets. Prior to writing the RJRI grant proposal, IIARI had hired a consultant to assist in developing the curriculum, and had begun discussing how a program might work with the New England Technical School. IIARI did not have a classroom itself, so IIARI attempted to find possible spaces and decide how (e.g.,

online, in-person) and when to provide some type of training. The RJRI grant aligned with its goals and because this particular grant was focused on new hires, IIARI focused most of its energy for the implementation grant on identifying and training new potential employees to the industry. All members for this partnership served on the current IIARI board, so while this group had not worked on a grant project before, they did have extensive experience working together on the board and related activities.

Prior to this grant, IIARI provided training to help incumbent employees receive the necessary training to become licensed. The typical process for this was for independent agencies to hire agents and then send these individuals to the IIARI insurance licensing and designations trainings. However, IIARI had never provided a training program that involved recruiting new people to the industry and training them in order to take positions within agencies. When initiating the grant process, IIARI acknowledged that it did not set out to resolve all problems relating to training needs in the insurance sector, but it did want IIP to begin addressing the shortage of insurance agents within the region.

III. Goals and Objectives

IIP was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the employment needs of an aging insurance workforce. Emphasis was placed on attracting new talent to the industry as well as training the existing workforce. The IIARI tailored this program to recruit unemployed individuals, specifically targeting veterans and high school or college graduates to the insurance industry.

IIP worked to meet the following goals:

1. Execute training designed to lead to employment in the insurance industry and provide select participants with job search and placement assistance, individual counseling, and career planning.
    - As part of the partnership, these services were designed to guide the participant in making informed choices regarding their career, understanding the challenges and opportunities of a career in insurance, improving retention and reducing turnover among program graduates and providing participants with an enhanced level of knowledge and preparation before the onset of their career.
2. Implement incumbent working training options to retain employment or advance careers within the industry.

Specifically, IIP sought to meet the following objectives:

- Provide 40 participants with training designed to lead to employment in the insurance industry.
- Provide 10 additional participants with training designed to retain employment or advance careers in the insurance industry.

- These 10 additional participants were: incumbent workers referred to IIP by member employers; graduates from IIP's initial training who are looking to further their instruction; or new participants.

A long-term goal was determined that as the needs of the industry evolve, so would the content in the training program. The sustainability of this program was directly tied to the ability of the partnership to measure the effectiveness of the training program, identify additional aptitudes of participants and graduates, and update the training program to meet the evolving needs of the independent insurance industry.

IV. Partnerships

The partnership brought together industry employers and a training partner because they had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Independent Insurance Agents of Rhode Island (IIARI)	Lead Applicant: responsible for grant management, training plan implementation, and participant management; recruiting participants; developing and providing training content to participants; hiring trainers; executing the training plan.
inVest	Responsible for providing the training materials and curricula for the Insurance 101 and Insurance 201 training modules.
Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island, Butler & Messier, Inc., Paquin Insurance Agency, Inc., Mansfield Insurance Agency, Inc., Lezaola Thompson Insurance, Inc., Interstate Insurance Finance Company	Responsible for providing support to the training program and employment opportunities for those who complete the training programs.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1: Execute training designed to lead to employment in the insurance industry and provide select participants with job search and placement assistance, individual counseling, and career planning.

Recruitment Efforts

IIP targeted its recruitment efforts towards unemployed general office employees, veterans, and high school/college graduates. The partnership worked with NetworkRI, local schools and universities, other grant recipients, and its own group partners to clearly define the basic qualifications of the candidates desired. Then, to recruit individuals, IIP held a recruitment event at the Department of Labor and Training, which helped identify 11 interested job candidates. As part of its recruitment efforts, the partnership also utilized Trusted Choice marketing capabilities to spread news on media outlets about the partnership, how the insurance industry is growing, and the benefits of working in the insurance industry.

Screening and Pre-Training

After applying, candidates were then screened by themselves, the program administrator, and a potential employer. As part of the screening, candidates completed the Insurance 101 self-study module on their own, and they took the Caliper personality exam to determine fit for the program and industry. The Insurance 101 module put together by inVEST provided candidates with basic insurance information and information about the different career opportunities within the insurance industry. This was designed to give candidates a uniform baseline of insurance knowledge as well as the opportunity to decide which position in the agency they would like to pursue, or if a job in an insurance agency was right for them. Next, the program administrators conducted an interview with the candidate in which qualifications were reviewed, and candidates were provided feedback on how they should prepare for their next interview with a potential employer. The interview with a potential employer provided them with real world interview experience, and the employer helped the program administrators decide if the candidate was a good fit for the industry. IIP paid for all screening and training programs for job candidates. For the participants, 40% had bachelor's degrees, 40% had Associate's degrees, and 20% had high school diplomas. IIP connected with the Real Jobs Training Program of Northern Rhode Island as part of the partnership. The plan was to send anyone who needed computer skills training to their program.

Training Program

Once selected into the training program, candidates took part in the Property & Casualty Pre-Licensing training to help them pass the state licensing exam, and IIP hired a trainer to execute the training. IIP also paid trainees' training and licensing costs, but no stipends were provided to participants during the training program. If participants did not pass, the program administrator would review results with students and develop a strategy for additional training.

Once licensed, students received one week of office simulation training, in which they received on-the-job training to understand the daily operations of an insurance agency. Based on their skills assessments, interviews, and a candidate's career goals, candidates chose a career track as either a Customer Service Representative (CSR) or a Sales Producer (i.e., agent). Then, the module simulated what a new-hire's experience would be on the day they started at a new agency. Each student had a full-time workload of simulated files for one week. CSRs were partnered with Sales Producers, and each group was given a list of pending renewals that they were responsible for; a number of clients to correspond with over the phone and via email regarding certificates of insurance, change requests, billing questions, or claims questions; and clients to call for new-business requests.

As the week progressed, the students were expected to work more independently, so they could learn how to manage multiple priorities, practice their written and verbal communication skills, and gain additional customer service skills. Employer partners were given scripts/scenarios and acted as clients for the week. In addition, the Insurance 201 module, developed by inVEST, was used to enhance and expand upon the topics the students experienced in the office simulation module. Last, IIP worked with independent insurance agencies to identify full-time employment for students.

After running the initial program as proposed in the implementation grant proposal, IIARI had a difficult time placing individuals in insurance positions. By the Fall of 2016, IIP identified it would need to modify its current plan, as the agencies seemed intent on finding people with experience in the industry. Therefore, IIP worked with DLT to identify a new process, which it began implementing before the end of 2016. For this, IIP gathered resumes using indeed.com from interested people and then passed along promising resumes to agencies interested in hiring. The idea was that independent insurance agencies could review the resumes and decide who would be a good fit, and then these identified individuals could be trained through the RJRI program.

In executing this new process, IIP did identify 70 promising resumes from interested individuals. Unfortunately, this new process did not produce any new trainees because the agencies were still uninterested in this pool of candidates due to their lack of industry knowledge and experience working in the geographic region of the agency. IIP was able to train one family member of an insurance agent who was unemployed and taking unemployment (and qualified for the program), but this was not a model it wanted to replicate.

Goal # 2: Implement incumbent working training options to retain employment or advance careers within the industry.

The partnership planned to administer Certified Professional Insurance Agent (CPIA) trainings and Accredited Customer Service Representative (ACSR) training courses for incumbent workers in the sector. Once licensed, both Sales Producers and CSRs are required to complete 24 hours of continuing education (CE) every two years. Instead of fulfilling the CE

requirements by taking generic courses available online, many Sales Producers and CSRs choose to pursue industry designations like CPIA or ACSR to gain experience in their specific insurance discipline, learn how to utilize their insurance knowledge to be successful, and acquire necessary institutional/industry knowledge. Therefore, the CPIA and ACSR trainings provided by IIP were to serve as a mechanism for graduates of the IIP training program as well as incumbent workers to receive two industry designations that have been identified as the most valuable to help advance employees in their careers. The RJRI grant covered the expenses for incumbents who were advancing their careers by pursuing a designation.

IIP executed the ACSR Personal Lines training during 2016, but did not offer the other planned trainings. IIP decided to focus on the Personal Lines training because most of the agencies are small in size and focus primarily on personal lines.

Overall, the training modules utilized to complete the two partnership goals were designed to address the three specific skills candidates need for success: 1) get candidates licensed, 2) provide candidates training needed to be employed in an independent insurance agency, and 3) provide graduates of the program as well as incumbent workers with two industry designations. There were a total of seven training modules included in the IIP RJRI program. The chart below discusses the specifics of each.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Insurance 101 (5 business days)	Provided by InVEST with plans to offer this module twice a year. This training was designed to expose candidates to the insurance industry and risk management. The training reviewed five chapters from the inVEST textbook: Introduction to Insurance (foundation of insurance with focus on key terms); Managing Risk (risk and risk management); Marketing & Selling Insurance (basic business concepts of marketing and selling); Insurance Agency Operations (basics of business planning and the various job functions in an agency including the use of computers to expose students to day-to-day operations).
Property and Casualty Pre-licensing (5 business days)	Provided by IIARI with plans to offer this module twice a year. This training provided information on property and casualty insurance including personal and commercial lines and state laws and regulations required for completion of the RI producer's exam, Following successful completion of this training module, participants would take RI state licensing exam.
Office Simulation (5 business days)	Provided by IIARI with plans for offering this module to be offered twice a year. This module included on the job training designed to prepare participants for what the day-to-day activities of their position would be.
Insurance 201 (5 business days)	Provided by InVEST with plans for offering the module twice a year. The remaining chapters of the InVEST textbook were taught, including these seven topics: issues in auto insurance; personal auto policy; determining the price of personal auto insurance; property insurance for homeowners and renters; homeowners' insurance; business owners' policy; life and health insurance.
Certified Professional Insurance Agent (3 business days)	Provided by IIARI. The program was developed by the American Insurance Marketing and Sales Society as a series of three one-day seminars. Topics include developments of effective business development plans; specifies tools for analyzing customer needs; and fulfilling the implied promises contained in the insuring agreement.

Accredited Customer Service Representative (ACSR) Personal Lines (5 business days)	Provided by IIARI. This module covered the following topics: homeowners' insurance; personal automobile insurance; personal lines related to coverages; agency errors and omissions; and professional development/account management. The ACSR designation is an intermediate course that fulfills continuing education requirements but can help incumbent workers acquire institutional/industry knowledge.
ACSR Commercial Lines (5 business days)	Provided by IIARI. This training provided practical and relevant customer service skills and technical insurance knowledge. The Commercial Lines track covered commercial property insurance; commercial liability insurance; commercial automobile insurance; commercial lines related to coverages; agency errors and omissions; and professional development and account management.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Committed and Engaged Partners

A major achievement for IIP was the presence and commitment of a strong group of partners that were highly engaged. Each partner involved in the grant was willing to dedicate the time to meet and discuss the training program plan. Furthermore, the board of directors for IIARI was dedicated to executing a training program to meet industry needs, and IIP believed it had the "right players" involved for working to address industry challenges.

Recruitment

Effective Recruitment Strategies

Many of the recruitment strategies, including a recruitment event at the DLT and through indeed.com, worked quite well for identifying interested candidates.

Trainee Barriers

IIP anticipated challenges related to finding participants with adequate computer skills, but did not end up identifying any candidates who lacked necessary computer skills. Further, because IIP targeted individuals who were unemployed, the individuals were willing and able to commit the time necessary to complete the training program.

Training

Effective Program Design

IIP was pleased it went through the process of designing and executing a training program. IIP has learned a large amount of information, previously unknown, about the industry through the RJRI program, and it believes that this program has elevated the conversation by making stakeholders more cognizant of the insurance industry's issues.

Although the grantee was unable to meet the enrollment and training objectives for its program as initially proposed, it gained a deeper understanding of the industry-specific challenges related to recruitment, training, and job placement. Further, IIP and its various partners did not want to abandon the training program as it found value in the training content and approach.

Transition from Training to Employment

Successful Program Graduates

The initial seven people who took the training program were eager to demonstrate their value to the agencies, and IIP was able to identify employment in insurance agencies for four out of the seven trainees. One specific individual was doing extremely well in his new job and had been very successful even within the first year of employment, so much so that the agency now features him in advertisements for the agency.

Other

Ability to Adapt

IIP displayed the ability to adapt its program and innovate in response to the challenges it faced. This was exemplified when IIP faced difficulties in getting employers to hire certified trainees who lacked experience. IIP decided to go to employers and have recruits hired before they completed their training. This removed some of the risk on both sides as employers knew what they were getting in an employee, and IIP had a more concrete guarantee of employment for their trainees.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-15 Insurance Innovation Partnership (IIARI)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Insurance Career Training - (2 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	2/29/16	6/30/17	20	8	20	7
ACSR Personal - Cohort 1 (Incumbents)	3/10/16	11/10/16	10	6	10	6
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					20	5
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					20	Ongoing
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn a credential					25	13
Total Participants promoted due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training					TBD	Ongoing

NOTE: Insurance Career Training includes a cohort from 2017 because they had to alter their plans, which caused them to fall behind with having 2 cohorts in 2016.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Difficulty in Shifting Perspectives About Training Model

The members of IIP revealed they needed the proper time and resources to educate the current agencies about how to confront the need for new workers in the insurance industry and garner buy-in from agencies to receive new potential employees to help grow the industry. IIP discussed a particular need to shift the perception of the insurance agency's principal Sales Producers. IIP would like to help the agencies realize the value of taking on an intern or an apprentice and find a model for doing this that is sustainable and provides avenues for interested individuals to become gainfully employed.

The partners described that the process of accruing industry-specific knowledge did help to elevate the conversation and ensure people are more cognizant of the current industry shortages and barriers for new employees. IIP does predict a crisis for the industry, in which the industry could experience 60 percent of its workforce retiring and few people in Rhode Island ready to fill the vacant positions. Furthermore, the current trend is for agencies to consolidate (e.g., in 2007, there were 168 agencies with 1400 employees, but as of 2017, there were only 138 agencies employing 1400 people), which could hurt the industry and not help in meeting the demand. Therefore, the partnership is currently working on initiatives to help meet the human resources needs of their independent insurance agencies.

Lack of Staff

IIARI itself struggled in implementing this grant because it did not have staff who could focus primary energy on the RJRI grant. After several personnel adjustments within the organization, IIARI and the DLT agreed that IIARI should suspend its RJRI grant until it could hire some additional staff who could focus more attention on this project.

Lack of Industry Interest

IIP faced a lack of interest for the incumbent worker training in the industry. As a result, it only held a single incumbent worker training.

Recruitment & Training

High Attrition Rates

While IIP noted that the training program was well-received by those who completed the program, the attrition rates from the pre-screening process that includes Insurance 101 training to the end (i.e., licensing) were problematic. For those who dropped out of the training program, IIP noted the scope and depth of the material was too much for these individuals. IIP found that trainees often become intimidated and decide not to move forward with the training because they learned that: 1) insurance industry is very complicated and requires a lot of in-depth knowledge about different insurance products and companies, and 2) running an insurance agency requires

being a small business owner who is responsible for running an office, doing customer service, and hiring and supporting employees.

Dropouts & Problem Student

During the first cohort of insurance training, one student became problematic. This student projected an overly negative and fatalistic tone leading to other students becoming discouraged. Two students dropped out as a result. There were no procedures in place to remove this problem student. Eventually the problem student dropped out as well.

Trainee Barriers

Overcoming Negative Industry Perception

The perception of the insurance industry posed an impediment to completing IIP's outlined goals and objectives. As evidence of this, when presentations were held, large numbers of people did not show up, and after beginning the pre-screening and training process, many individuals left the program. IIP stated that it could sell the idea of an insurance position because it is a career with a high degree of financial stability, however, once interested individuals learned about the complicated nature of the insurance industry, they often did not move forward with the program or withdrew their interest. Therefore, IIP found that it was necessary to convince potential employees that working in insurance is a lucrative career and that society values insurance agents. However, continued work may also be needed to ensure the curriculum properly eases individuals into the industry and assists them in understanding what is required to be successful.

Transition from Training to Employment

Difficulties Convincing Agencies to Hire Program Graduates

Convincing insurance agencies to hire and employ new trainees proved to be a major challenge for IIP. After training the first six participants, IIARI struggled to find employment for them. The agencies were mostly interested in finding people with experience in the insurance industry; having a license was not enough. The agencies desired potential employees who understood the various management systems and were not willing to engage non-experienced individuals in their agencies. A major hiring barrier that IIARI identified was due to independent agencies contracting with a variety of companies with whom they sell their insurance products. Because no particular standard of how to work with each company exists, each company has distinctive processes and management systems that the agents and CSRs need to learn and fully understand. Agents want someone who understands these various processes and systems rather than having to train someone who is completely new to the industry.

Additionally, most of the agencies (about 75% in RI) are rather small, having six or fewer employees, and each agent and CSR tends to have a multitude of responsibilities that extend beyond the initial job description. As such, the smaller the agency, the more the employees are

required to do. Therefore, the current staff did not have time to properly train participants while also serving new and current customers. New trainees are essentially seen as a "drain" on the agency, and most agencies are not in a position them unless that person aligns with the agency's skill levels, industry knowledge, and its current needs.

Lack of Predictability in the Insurance Industry

The insurance industry is not predictable. Needs for employees suddenly arise due to an employee moving or finding a new job opportunity or a death, so planning ahead for potential open positions is difficult. Further, the industry is aware of the need for new workers, but there is not rapid growth in the industry at the present time. Therefore, agencies are currently making due with their current number of employees and not prioritizing the training and mentorship required for future staff.

VIII. Sustainability

Due to current industry challenges and a lack of staff at IIARI, sustainability of this current training program was questionable. A key coordinator of the program is no longer working for IIARI, creating additional hurdles. However, the need for a training program in the industry is increasingly evident, so if there was an opportunity for IIARI to re-conceptualize and alter the program, IIARI conveyed that it would develop a training program that would include a component that educates the agency owners about the value of mentoring a new employee. Potential topics would discuss the patience and engagement required for new individuals to thrive in the industry. In the future, IIARI may work to identify key agencies willing provide a higher level of commitment to the program to implement and execute a pilot program in which individuals are hired and trained. It could use the success stories from this/these particular agency or agencies to convince other agencies of the value of investing time and energy into programs of this variety.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by IIP in executing this training program:

- "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink." For IIP, perceptions of industry demands (i.e., lack of time for supporting new employees in learning complicated systems) by employers and a lack of willingness to change behavior kept even the most well-intentioned business partners from being willing and able to hire individuals that met the licensing requirements.
- The insurance industry does not have an internship or apprenticeship model that works for bringing in new employees.
- The curriculum and current presentation of material related to the insurance industry may be too complicated or not presented adequately to convince potential employees they could pass the licensing exam.

- Have employer partners to sign some form of guarantee that they will hire when the training is over.

X. Best Practices

This best practice was utilized by IIP:

- Work closely with business partners to continuously identify challenges and execute training programs.

XI. Recommendations

Given the number of potential openings in this industry, and the high degree of knowledge and certification needed by these potential workers, investing in this sector remains important. The following recommendations are suggested for RJRI:

- Work with IIARI to convene a group meeting or retreat with independent insurance agencies that helps to educate them about issues related to employing new individuals as well as brainstorm potential solutions for how to prioritize, mentor, and support new employees as a way to ensure long-term sustainability of their businesses.
- Partner with an institution of higher education that has a business school to develop an education program that leads to a career in the insurance industry. This would help legitimize the field and provide opportunities for higher education students to consider a career in the insurance industry early in their careers. If these students could attain their insurance industry credentials while in their undergraduate program, it could increase retention.
- Institute a paid internship or apprenticeship program with business partners and provide stipends for individuals to help offset the costs of training. This may help to convince participants to stay in the training even though the material is complicated, and this would allow businesses to gain experience with the potential employee at minimal cost and allow the potential employee to gain the hands on experience needed to gain employment in the industry.
- Ensure the training curriculum meets the education and motivation levels of participants. Partnering with a higher education institution (as suggested above) would allow for curriculum to be developed (i.e., major, minor, or certificate program) that could ease individuals into learning about the in-depth insurance industry needs as well as the information necessary for running a business.
- Provide monetary incentives to employers willing to mentor and support newly trained individuals and/or offset the costs of new hires for a transitional period to help companies be willing to take on new employees.
- Encourage independent insurance companies to identify ways for agents to continue to receive residual income upon retirement. This may help convince existing agents to retire earlier or in stages, which would enable new agents to come into the agency.

- Help IIARI better target potential recruits (for example, through business programs at the local colleges) and a more thorough education/screening process to ensure ideal candidates are identified for the training.
- Work with independent insurance agency organizations in other states to identify best practices that could work in Rhode Island to help educate existing, recruit new employees, and provide training and licensing assistance. The depths of the challenges encountered by IIARI for helping training participants get jobs may require an outside consultant to step in and provide suggestions for IIARI and DLT to continue to work to meet this industry's needs and ensure jobs are not lost to other states once agents and CSRs at the agencies to begin to retire.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative (RIFSI) developed by the Rhode Island Bankers Association (RIBA) sought to address several issues within the banking industry of the financial and insurance sector. The finance and insurance industry is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the economy and is projected to see over a 10.5 percent increase in employment by 2022.[1] In Rhode Island, banks are among the largest employers in the state of Rhode Island, currently employing over 10,000 people, providing nearly $500 million in taxable compensation paid to RI employees, and proving to be an area of growth for the future.

RIBA received an RJRI planning grant, and through partnership meetings and a survey of banking members, identified the following workforce challenges within the region that could hinder growth and success if not properly addressed:

- An aging workforce without sufficiently trained replacements.
    - Many current bank employees began their careers in formal commercial lending programs, which were common in the banking industry in the late 1990's. However, as budgets shifted, many bank consolidations and mergers occurred, and many bank headquarters moved out of state, leading to commercial lending programs being discontinued or moving to other markets (e.g., Boston).
    - Therefore, as the current workforce has aged, banks have identified they no longer have a pipeline of emerging talent in Rhode Island with the requisite skills including credit and risk analysis; loan structuring and pricing; knowledge of commercial credit products; sales and negotiation skills; presentation skills; and oral and written communication skills, to replace the workers who retire.
    - RIBA employer partners, including national and local banks both large and small, had on average 80 job openings per year.

[1] RIFSI cited the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training in its Implementation Grant proposal.

- The industry lacks credit-trained personnel, particularly those with knowledge of commercial lending.
    - Survey data from banks showed that commercial lending was the top training need for employees.
    - Through partnership meetings, banks identified that employees were often unaware of how banks made money or how the banking industry worked. This was seen as a problem as banks attempt to fill bank management or management training positions, and hire recent college graduates for junior level positions.
    - Retention for employers was also an issue. Due to the lack of comprehensive industry-wide training programs, some banks have attempted to make up the difference by providing in-house training on an informal basis, sometimes at great expense to the bank (both in time and financial resources). However, market demand has caused a turnover within these ranks due to wage premium (meaning the degree to which high-skilled workers are paid relative to low-skilled workers) and has made retaining employees challenging.

Therefore, the mission of RIFSI was to create a sustainable program that brought together 14 banks and the industry's trade association to provide the sector with the appropriate training resources needed to remain successful. The purpose of these training modules was to expand the pool of job candidates who have an understanding of the industry, and to open up opportunities within the banking industry for incumbent workers, recent graduates, as well as under- or unemployed workers.

II. Grant History

RIBA had never received grant funding for a training program prior to the RJRI planning grant. To learn about the RJRI program, RIBA received a phone-call from a member at the Department of Labor and Training informing them about the RJRI training initiative and encouraging them to brainstorm with bank members to identify any potential training needs. After identifying the need for incumbent worker training in commercial lending to fill some of the needed higher-level positions that were available, the bank members also noted that entry-level training would be needed to fill positions that opened once incumbent workers advanced. In putting together the training plan for the RJRI implementation grant, RIBA decided to partner with the University of Rhode Island (URI) because it wanted assistance with curriculum development and other academic processes. RIBA did have some apprehension about partnering with the state, as it saw potential difficulties with a state/private partnership (e.g., how private sector moves at a much quicker pace than the public sector, the need to complete many administrative tasks when working with the government). However, the interest of the various bank members, the need for the training of the employees, and the excitement about the new venture propelled them to apply. Further, the standard for training of employees in the finance industry was to take online modules through national associations, so Rhode Island banks saw

the need for an in-person training that enabled content to be regionally-specific and for networking to occur.

III. Goals and Objectives

RIFSI was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current employment needs in the banking industry and to provide training in a centralized place so that individual banks would not have to do their own separate training for each employee. The partnership established two goals for the training program, both designed for incumbent workers:

1. Implement training on the Fundamentals of Banking.
    - The module was designed to ensure new employees, students, and entry-level workers (e.g., bank tellers) would have a better understanding of the banking industry to help them with entry-level positions.
2. Implement training on the Fundamentals of Commercial Lending.
    - The partnership aimed to create a pool of candidates who could successfully analyze and make sound credit decisions using financial accounting, financial statement analysis, and cash flow analysis.

The two training modules were specifically designed to address the workforce demands of RI banks by expanding the pool of job candidates who have an understanding of the industry. The first semester of the program in 2016 was intended as a pilot program for incumbent bank employees on the fundamentals of banking and commercial lending. RIBA planned to utilize feedback provided by the partners in the first semester to help refine the program for the second semester and open up enrollment in the program to also include college students, recent college graduates, and under- or unemployed individuals.

Specifically, the Rhode Island Financial Skills Initiative sought to meet the following objective:

- Recruit no less than 50 total individuals to participate in training activities.

IV. Partnerships

The partnership worked to bring together industry employers as well as post-secondary education partners because it had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Rhode Island Bankers Association	Lead Applicant: responsible for overseeing the partnership and the training program; convening the partners to review and evaluate the success of the program; ensuring that members were actively engaged in the program and planning process; working collaboratively with URI to provide training space, manage instructor selection and compensation, and ensure that an adequate number of students were enrolled; overseeing the course credit process for students completing the training; administering certificates to those students who successfully completed the modules.
University of Rhode Island (URI)	Responsible for ensuring that space was made available for the courses; managing instructor selection, compensation, and textbook selection; ensuring that an adequate number of students were enrolled in the program; overseeing the course credit process for students completing the training; administering certificates to those students who successfully completed the course.
Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI)	Responsible for providing space on the Warwick campus to hold trainings.
Bank of America, BankFive, BankNewport, Centreville Bank, Citizens Bank, Coastway Community Bank, Freedom National Bank, Home Loan Investment Bank, Savings Institute Bank and Trust, Santander Bank, Washington Trust, Webster Bank	Responsible for sending employees to one or both training modules and providing financial assistance to employees completing the training after the spring 2016 session; attending at least one class during the spring 2016 session for evaluation purposes; providing mentoring, support, and resources to employees attending the program; participating in the mock credit committee for the Fundamentals of Commercial Lending; considering opportunities for employee advancement or hiring of individuals who attended these modules.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Recruitment

Recruitment for both modules occurred as planned, with bank partners fulfilling their commitments to send employees to the trainings. For the second semester of the training, RIFSI planned that URI, DLT, and other entities would also send individuals to participate in the training, but this did not occur, and therefore, RIFSI encountered difficulties in filling courses during the second semester. For the training modules, the partnership specifically sought the following characteristics for participants:

- Existing bank employees, sponsored by a bank, who were seeking higher-level job opportunities.
- Graduates (or candidates for graduation) of college or university degree programs who were seeking employment in the Rhode Island banking industry (such candidates may be past or present interns at a bank and sponsored by the bank, or were recommended by a college or university faculty member).
- Currently under- or unemployed professionals seeking a career in the banking industry and who were recommended for, or can demonstrate an aptitude and commitment to the program (pre-screening would be performed by one or more bankers associated with this program).

Training Content & Implementation

Regarding the curriculum, the sector partners convened to decide what should be included. Meetings occurred with all partners, and decisions were made about what was important to be included in the training program. For the Fundamentals of Banking and the Commercial Lending trainings, URI helped with the administrative processes related to selecting textbooks, finding meeting space, registering students, and processing tuition payments. URI was also going to pay some of the costs for the instructor using funds from student fees for the course. The trainings were held at the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) Warwick campus. RIFSI found that offering the class from 3-6pm was better than 6-9pm because this was during normal work hours and did not require people to come during family time. Employees received their normal pay while attending the training. RIFSI paid for the training for each student during the first semester, and the plan was for employer partners and other outside funding sources to pay for costs in the second semester. Each training module and its specific learning objectives are listed below.

Goal # 1: Implement training on the Fundamentals of Banking.

During the Spring semester of 2016, two Fundamentals of Banking trainings were held, and during the Fall of 2016, one course was held. The Fundamentals of Banking module provided students with an overall understanding of banking and the banking industry, with an emphasis on the generalized knowledge and skills necessary to move upward or into the industry. Students, who were incumbent workers, were exposed to the basics of: what a bank is

and how a bank operates; what kinds of products or services are offered by banks and bank subsidiaries; how a bank competes and generates revenue and profits; how banks are structured and regulated; and risks associated with banking and how banks manage those risks. Upon successful completion of this course, students were able to:

- Demonstrate improved communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Demonstrate a general understanding of the banking industry, its history and competitive position within the larger financial services industry.
- Demonstrate a typical bank business model, the structure of its balance sheet and how it makes money.
- Describe risks associated with banking and how risks are managed and mitigated.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the elements of a banking operation, including its commercial and consumer business lines and how the products and services offered by a bank are delivered into the marketplace.
- Describe generally the regulatory environment in which a bank operates, who the regulators are and how they regulate.
- Describe some of the challenges facing the banking industry in an ever-changing marketplace, both in the United States and globally.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the general concepts, terminology, and language of banking.

Goal #2: Implement training on the Fundamentals of Commercial Lending.

During Spring 2016, one Fundamentals of Commercial Leading training was held, and during Fall of 2016, one course was offered. The Fundamentals of Commercial Lending training module was created to provide students with an overall understanding of the basics of commercial lending and credit. The instructor interviewed participants prior to them enrolling in the course to ensure they would be successful. Participants were exposed to the analytical and decision-making techniques needed to make sound credit decisions using financial accounting, financial statement analysis, and cash flow analysis. Students received instruction in credit structuring, credit support, collateral evaluation, compliance and lending, and current regulatory reform in the industry.

In addition to classroom work, students were expected to not only master the curriculum, but to also apply their knowledge in case studies and ultimately in a mock credit committee presentation. Upon successful completion of this module, students were able to:

- Demonstrate proficiency in analytical skills for evaluating credit.
- Demonstrate professional writing skills.
- Demonstrate strong excel skills for worksheets and analysis.
- Demonstrate an ability to identify and evaluate sources of loan repayment.
- Demonstrate the ability to assess the competency and depth of management of a potential borrower.
- Describe basic credit service and other business ratios and explain their impact on credit decisions.

- Understand business and industry risk analysis in the context of making a lending decision.
- Show proficiency in understanding cash flow analysis within the context of making an appropriate lending decision.
- Show proficiency in interpreting corporate financial statements.
- Demonstrate proficiency to structure deals effectively.
- Understand how to source loans through effective networking and business development.
- Understand, interpret and adhere to lending policies, procedures and the ever-changing banking regulatory environment.

Students who completed each of the courses (and received a grade of "C" or better) were awarded three credits at the University of Rhode Island (pending University approval protocols) and a Certificate of Completion issued by the Rhode Island Bankers Association. Certificates awarded with distinction were given to students who receive a grade of "B" or better.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Collaborating with a Large Number of Partners

RIFSI noted a major success of the training program was getting over 20 banks and commercial lenders, all considered competitors, to work together to develop the curriculum for this training and send employees to the training. Another success of collaboration was when RIFSI was faced with the issue of defining what a “credential” was or looked like in the industry, and RIFSI was able to successfully create and define an industry recognized credential/certificate. This credential entailed receiving the credit for the courses completed at URI.

Recruitment

Meeting Recruitment Goals

RIFSI was successful in meeting the recruitment and training objectives for its program as initially proposed. Recruiting training participants through banking partners proved to be the best strategy for this partnership.

Trainee Barriers

Few Trainee Difficulties

RIFSI experienced very few difficulties regarding trainee barriers. Training participants had adequate transportation, and because the training was offered during work hours, daycare and other family supports were already addressed. Further, RIFSI did not encounter difficulties regarding skills deficiencies for training participants in the Fundamentals of Banking course.

Pre-Training Phone Calls

For the Fundamentals of Commercial Lending course, the instructor made phone calls to participants if there were any questions about whether they were prepared for the advanced material provided as part of the training. Because of this, only one participant in the Fundamentals of Commercial Lending during the first semester struggled with the advanced material discussed in the training.

Training

Positive Feedback and Duplication

A major achievement of this RJRI grant has been the positive feedback both from attendees and partners regarding the content of the training. Two of the URI instructors received positive feedback from the participants including the suggestion that, "all HR [Human Resources] staff should take the Fundamentals of Banking training so they have a more broad understanding of the industry." The training content exceedingly met the needs of the industry so much so that a regional training provider seemed to utilize the same exact content to develop its own training program.

Successful Training Provider

Further, the consultant employed at URI who helped to develop the commercial lending training and had a lot of experience in the banking industry was highly praised, and RIFSI believes he contributed to the well-received curriculum for the commercial lending module. Related to this and as evidence of the interest in the curriculum content, only a couple of individuals dropped out of the training.

Transition from Training to Employment

Nearly all training participants were incumbent workers, so RIFSI did not discuss any achievements with the transition of trainees to employment.

Other

Outside Funding

RIFSI has been highly successful. This success has allowed RIFSI to attract outside sources of funding from the banking industry. With a diversified source of funding, RIFSI has already made great progress in year 1 towards a fully self-sustaining model.

Table 2. Performance Metrics

IG-16 RI Financial Skills Initiative (RI Bankers)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Fundamentals of Banking	2/4/16	5/11/16	30	31	30	30
Fundamentals of Commercial Lending (Incumbents)	2/4/16	5/11/16	20	19	20	17
Fundamentals of Commercial Lending (Job Seekers)	9/8/16	12/15/16	1	1	1	1
Employed After Training					1	0
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn a certificate					40	48
College Credits Attained					40	Unknown
Total Participants promoted due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training					TBD	Ongoing
Employer Satisfaction Survey					TBD	Unknown

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Difficulties Partnering with URI

RI Financial Skills experienced a number of obstacles in partnering with URI. Partially, this challenge was due to the discrepancies in speed and efficiency in comparing private industry with higher education. Issues surrounding registration and tuition became time-costly obstacles for the partnership, which lead applicants to spend more hours performing administrative functions on the grant than originally anticipated. URI also did not possess the ability to process payment from the federal government to compensate for the tuition of a participant who was unemployed. In the end, this barrier required the grantee to borrow the money needed to pay for the student, including late fees assessed by URI, from DLT. The grantee was still assessing a means to wave these acquired late fees. Further, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with URI never came to fruition due to bureaucratic challenges in getting the contracts out to instructors, so URI could not pay the instructors without contracts. RIFSI ended up asking the DLT for RJRI grant funds to cover the instructor costs. URI could not provide the DLT with an enrollment list due to privacy laws. Another administrative issue was that URI would not award credit to students who did not matriculate. Several students took the courses at URI but did not matriculate and were not awarded credit. Lastly, providing the class within the URI structure meant the partnership had to meet minimum enrollment requirements, so when the partnership encountered recruitment issues during the second semester, RIFSI had to work diligently to fill the open spots in the class, and these difficulties caused them to question the sustainability of the training program. RIBA is only a part-time organization, and the staff had to spend many hours problem-solving how to handle the various challenges it had in working with URI.

Difficulties Communicating With DLT

RIFSI encountered challenges when communicating with the DLT about enrollment metrics. RIFSI had been documenting participants who eventually dropped out as successfully enrolled. The DLT did not agree with RIFSI about this classification and therefore did not count dropouts as enrolled. RIFSI had also been under the impression that RJRI would be able to pay for the second semester of training. RJRI was not able to provide additional funds for the fall semester of 2016 and therefore suggested an incumbent worker training grant.

Recruitment

Lack of Recruitment from Partners

The partnership faced a lack of recruitment from any entity besides the banks who had committed to sending a certain number of employees. For the second semester of 2016, RIFSI had planned that URI students would take the training, that DLT would know individuals who were unemployed who could take the training, and that underemployed individuals would be interested. However, this never came to fruition.

Trainee Barriers

Training Hours

One of the partners had originally suggested evening trainings; however, RIFSI found that employees, many of whom had young families, preferred taking the training during work hours. This is why RIFSI chose to offer most of the trainings from 3-6pm. One issue discussed by RIFSI was that some employees in the trainings mentioned that their bank required the trainees make up the hours they missed while they were at the training, and one employee requested that trainings be offered on Saturdays to avoid having to up make up hours. Other banks were more flexible and did not require employees to make up hours while they were at the training.

Training

Unpopular Training Providers

One of the training providers who is no longer employed by URI was not received well by the attendees. There were some questions that he was unable to answer, and participants had to rely on more senior-level attendees (e.g. students) to try to answer some of the questions during the training.

Transition from Training to Employment

Nearly all training participants were incumbent workers, so RIFSI did not discuss any challenges with the transition of trainees to employment.

VIII. Sustainability

Following the first year of implementation, the grantee was quite concerned about sustainability. RIBA does not think that its bank members will have enough people to be able to provide the training at URI more than once per year. RIBA had proposed that state funding would help the partnership to launch the pilot of its program in the spring of 2016. The bank partners then met to discuss options for funding the program after the first session in the spring, and have discussed employer sponsorship of participants as a means of sustaining the program for the future. RIFSI expects that banks who are not members of the RIBA will pay the required fee per student should they choose to send their employees to the training program, and that through the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, recent college graduates and unemployed/underemployed individuals might receive funding in order to participate. To aid in long-term sustainability of the banking industry, RIFSI does suggest that active recruitment of college students and college graduates would be an important next step in changing perceptions about banking as a viable career, which would help in filling the vacant positions in the coming years.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by RIFSI in executing this training program:

- Implementing new curriculum within higher education institutions requires multiple bureaucratic steps and is an often time consuming and lengthy process.
- In the future, consider providing in-house training at bank partners to avoid the additional administrative steps required at a higher education institution.
- Recruitment for trainings beyond banking partners can pose challenges.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by RIFSI:

- Develop curriculum in consultation with banking partners and consultants from higher education institutions.
- Hire instructors with a great deal of experience in the banking industry who are connected with institutions of higher education and have experience in teaching.
- Pay for training costs for participants.
- Work with bank partners to allow employees out of work for training purposes and provide training during work hours so that employees can continue to be paid through their employer while at the training.
- Provide training in the late afternoon/early evening for incumbent banking employees to ensure the training does not interfere with family time.
- Recruit training participants from banking employer partners.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the RIFSI program, the following recommendations are suggested to RJRI:

- Provide assistance to help recruit individuals to take the trainings (e.g., hold an information session/recruitment at DLT or within higher education institutions).
- More closely partner with banks, particularly larger banks with many employees, to ensure more employees take the training.
- Provide the training at banks or in close proximity to participating banks to increase recruitment numbers.
- To get college students interested in the modules, help connect the training modules to actual college courses and/or with an internship in the banking industry.
- Work directly with higher education institutions to develop plans for avoiding late fees when they are awaiting federal or state reimbursement and consider working out a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with these institutions in advance so that training partners can avoid experiencing bureaucratic challenges when implementing the training program.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Aquaculture Training Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Aquaculture Training Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Aquaculture Training Partnership (ATP) was created to train new workers to acquire the skills necessary to be successful employees in the aquaculture industry. The ATP was formed by The Education Exchange, and included numerous aquaculture industry partners, including the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, Cedar Island Oysters, Behan Family Farms, East Beach Farms LLC, Matunuck Oyster Farm, Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative, American Mussels, Walrus & Carpenter, American Mussel Harvesters, Salt Pond Oysters, Jamestown Oyster Co., and Watch Hill Oysters. The ATP also included Roger Williams University, Chariho High School, the Coastal Institute at URI, Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, the Welcome House of South County, the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, Families Learning Together Through Literacy of Westerly Public Schools, and the Town of South Kingstown. Specifically, the ATP was formed for the following reasons:

- The aquaculture industry had grown at a rapid pace and experienced 30 percent annual growth over a fifteen year period, adding new farms and jobs in Rhode Island. Yet, a lack of qualified and skilled candidates existed to fill the new positions that were created by the industry's expansion.
- The aquaculture industry demands high sanitation standards and strict adherence to health codes because of the raw seafood that is consumed at establishments related to the industry. A single mistake or oversight can potentially cause severe economic consequences for Rhode Island's entire aquaculture industry. Therefore, the ATP expected that training of new employees in food safety and industry best practices would minimize the possibility of accidents occurring in a quickly expanding industry.
- The aquaculture industry suffered from high rates of employee turnover. Many employees left old positions to form their own companies after the industry expanded and had grown more profitable.

II. Grant History

The Education Exchange is a 501(c)(3) adult education and training nonprofit in Washington County, Rhode Island. Founded in 1978 and incorporated as a nonprofit in 2003, The Education Exchange offers programs and training in GED preparation, English for non-native speakers, citizenship classes, digital and financial literacy, job readiness, essential skills, and industry certifications. It also receives funding from the Rhode Island Department of Education, as well as grants and donations from a variety of other sources.

In 2015, the members of The Education Exchange identified the aquaculture industry as one that promised opportunities due to the industry's continued economic expansion. The Education Exchange approached Dr. Bob Rheault, a leader and pioneer in the Rhode Island aquaculture industry and the founder of the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, to form a training partnership that filled skills gaps in areas demanded by industry partners. With his guidance and direct assistance, The Education Exchange identified 12 potential partners and eventually selected eight original partners to form the ATP. The ATP began small, but it grew in size and scope as industry members grew more comfortable with the lead applicant and one another.

The Education Exchange designed training programs by using Real Jobs RI Planning Grant funds to host meetings with industry leaders that were announced via email and phone. The meetings were held after work hours and those participating received dinner and a stipend for their participation. It was at these meetings that companies gave The Education Exchange insights about industry skills gap shortages that were later incorporated in a survey that was used to identify statewide industry needs. The Education Exchange then used the results of the survey to articulate training goals and to develop training in support of meeting those goals.

After deciding on the focus of the training programs, the fledgling partnership formed three committees: an Educational and Advisory Committee, a Recruitment and Outreach Committee, and an additional Advisory Committee specifically focusing on career pathways. The Educational and Advisory Committee was responsible for identifying education strategies and designing a curriculum to meet the skills gaps that were identified by employers through the industry survey. The Recruitment and Outreach Committee recruited participants and industry partners, while also identifying potential employment barriers of participants and ways to overcome them. Finally, in addition to the Advisory Committee's focus on the industry's entry-level career pathways, its tasks included avoiding the ATP's duplication of services with Rhode Island's federal Sea Grant program, which offered training for potential business owners and farmers in the aquaculture industry.

III. Goals and Objectives

The ATP's goal was to design a training program that filled industry skills gaps and provided career pathways to new entry-level workers who are trained to understand the industry's challenges and are effective from day one. To achieve this objective, the ATP established the following specific goals:

1. Identify and address critical skills gaps and strategies for success within the industry workforce.
2. Collaborate with institutions of higher education to avoid any duplication of services while assisting participants in career growth and mobility.
3. Train new or underskilled workers while providing opportunities for additional training and wage increases for incumbent workers.

IV. Partnerships

The Education Exchange was the Lead Applicant for the ATP. While a variety of partners became involved in the partnership, some were more involved than others, especially East Beach Farms, Cedar Island Oysters, the Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative, and Behan Family Farms. These core partners were involved from the beginning of the planning phase throughout the grant's implementation, helped recruit other companies into the ATP, helped hold on-site demos, consistently hired program graduates, and offered overall assistance and support to the ATP.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

The Education Exchange	Lead Applicant: Implementation Grant fiscal agent; responsible for overseeing and providing all training; providing transportation to training and job placement; providing work gear; serving on the Executive Committee; consulting the Educational Advisory Committee; liaison to industry partners; screening and selecting participants; assisting with job placement; and providing program oversight and management.
East Coast Shellfish Growers Association	Partnership Convener: Responsible for teaching selected training modules; evaluating participant performance; serving on the Executive Committee; consulting the Educational Advisory Committee; acting as liaison to industry partners; screening and selecting participants; assisting with job placement; and providing program oversight and management.
Cedar Island Oysters, Behan Family Farms, East Beach Farms, LLC, Matunuck Oyster Farm, Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative, American Mussels, Walrus & Carpenter, American Mussel Harvesters, Salt Pond Oysters, Jamestown Oyster Co., and Watch Hill Oysters	Potential employers that supervised interns: responsible for training and supervising at least two on-site program participants and evaluating their performance; interviewing participants to fill vacancies; and hiring qualifying participants; agreeing to send a collective representative to the ATP Executive Committee.
Roger Williams University	Education consultant and advisor.
Michael Jarret	Educational consultant and liaison to Chariho Public Schools for classroom space: responsible for referring potential participants.
Coastal Institute	Educational consultant, educational adviser, and member of the Educational and Advisory Committee.
Literacy Volunteers of Washington County	Responsible for providing volunteer tutors; educational consultant; educational advisor;

	recruiting and screening participants.
The Town of South Kingstown	Consultant, advisor, and in-kind donor: responsible for helping introduce potential interested stakeholders and community partners to the partnership; assisting with recruitment; assisting with coordination of meeting space; providing mapping resources and other town documents related to local coastal ponds to help facilitate development.
Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale	Responsible for assisting with recruitment, initial screening, and referral of potential participants; providing discount work clothing and interview attire to participants, if needed.
Jonnycake Center of Westerly	Responsible for assisting with recruitment, initial screening, and referral of potential participants; offering to provide classroom space, if needed.
Families Learning Together Through Literacy of Westerly Public Schools	Responsible for assisting with recruitment, initial screening, and referral of potential participants; offering to provide classroom space, if needed.
Welcome House of South County	Responsible for assisting with recruitment, initial screening, and referral of potential participants.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Program implementation began with a rigorous recruitment strategy. The ATP engaged The Welcome House, The Education Exchange, The Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, and Literacy Volunteers of Washington County to recruit for the program, while also encouraging the other partners and consultants to recommend the participation of current employees. Target populations included the under- or unemployed, and those with experience working outdoors, with a special focus on fishermen, farmers, contractors, veterans, Narragansett Indians, and recent high school graduates in Washington County.

The application process for recruits included two interviews, a physical test, and an extensive medical history questionnaire. The East Coast Shellfish Growers Association and The Education Exchange conducted the initial application process and were assisted by the ATP's student services coordinator, industry partners, and adult education and social service providers. The screening process sought to identify disqualifying criteria, while qualified candidates were able to swim, were physically fit, had no serious medical history preventing physical labor, and had no recent serious criminal record (shellfish theft is an industry-wide problem). The partnership assessed physical fitness in the first round of training by asking if the applicant was able to lift up to 50 pounds, and then verified the participant's physical ability in person by requiring the applicant to lift and carry a 50 pound bucket. This was done to ensure that applicants could meet at least a minimum physical standard. Applicants completed Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) tests to assess their reading and math levels. The Education Exchange, Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, and Families Learning Together through Literacy used the test results to provide additional support on the basis of educational levels, educational goals, and career goals of selected participants. These groups also worked with selected participants who did not have a high school diploma or a college degree to provide them the services and assistance necessary to start a GED or college program.

Once participants were selected for the training program, they were given access to the Education Exchange's Student Services Center, which gave students support in applying for state subsidized daycare and food assistance programs. It also supplied information to identify transportation options, food pantry locations, and other community services. Eligible participants earned a daily stipend equal to the minimum wage ($9.60 per hour) that was contingent upon attendance and participation at training sessions.

The training program was planned to provide participants with the basic skills and certifications needed to find employment in the aquaculture industry. Classroom training was held at the Education Exchange's offices in Peacedale, RI, and despite offers of classroom space from partners, never expanded beyond that area. Hands-on training, however, occurred on-site with industry employers. The following is a description of each training module provided.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Name of Module	Training Provided	Duration
Essential Skills	Instruction in teamwork and collaboration, enthusiasm and positive attitude, communicating effectively, problem solving, conveying professionalism, and career planning. As the first module, this portion of the training was an additional screening tool that identified participants unfit to continue specialized training.	20 hours
Boating and Safety Skills	Gave participants instruction in basic boating safety, rules, etiquette, and navigation. Specific skills covered included vessel approach in windy conditions, basic knots, how to safely tie up vessels to other boats and docks, setting anchors, and safely maintaining equipment. Participants completed the RI Boating Safety Practice Test as part of this module, and were encouraged but not required to take the RI Boating Safety Test at the end of training. Passage of the practice test was not required to complete the module.	10 hours
Boating Tools and Maintenance	Gave participants instruction in how to operate basic tools involved in shellfish cage and bag manufacture and repair; the operation of wire cutters, wire benders, hog-ring tools, and pneumatic hand tools; operation and troubleshooting of outboard motors; and safe operation and maintenance of common machinery used in the aquaculture industry.	10 hours
Basic Shellfish Biology and Farming Technique	Gave participants instruction in shellfish feeding, reproduction, and growth; methods and steps used to culture shellfish; potential health hazards associated with shellfish harvest and consumption; regulations in shellfish harvest and delivery; Department of Environmental Management (DEM) tagging and record keeping requirements; and the ramifications of failing to uphold regulatory standards. This training also fulfilled the standards of training required by the DEM for all licensed shellfish harvesters.	6 hours
Basic Shellfish	Gave participants instruction in the basics of grading,	5 hours

Dealer and Shipper Skills	sorting, culling, and packing oysters; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) risk management; FDA Standard Sanitation Operation Plan (SSOP) instruction; and record keeping and regulatory requirements of shellfish dealers.	
ServSafe Kitchen Manager Certification & Food Handler/Shucking	Gave participants instruction in food safety; classic shellfish and oyster preparations; how to clean and sanitize effectively; and how to safely and quickly shuck oysters and clams. Participants completing the module received a ServSafe Kitchen Manager certification.	24 hours
Optional: ServSafe Alcohol Certification & Shellfish Wine Pairing	Gave participants instruction in alcohol service laws; how to accurately describe characteristics of oysters and shellfish to restaurant customers; how to identify and describe the grape and region of common wines; how to pair oysters and shellfish with common wines; and how to describe these pairings to restaurant customers. Module completion resulted in participants receiving a ServSafe Alcohol certification.	5 hours
On-Site Training	After completion of all other modules, participants interviewed for job placement, were assigned a training partner, and spent two days at three different aquaculture farms with different methods of farming. Participants spent one day with a shellfish dealer, and one day in a restaurant where participants were exposed to all aspects of the aquaculture industry.	65 hours

The training program took place on a full time work schedule over four weeks and each participant's success was measured by his or her completion of rubrics at the end of every module. Successful participants were given assistance in submitting applications and resumes to industry employers in the focus area of the participant's choice.

Achievements

Partnerships

A strong partnership

Although trust was not widespread during the formation of the partnership, the education providers carefully worked to gain the trust of industry leaders. Now the ATP's training programs have become well-respected and well-liked by its industry partners, which contributes to the overall success of the training program. The training program is also working well with employers. The ATP cited the enthusiasm of employers for the training program and the trainees, and the program has now become a way for employers to find employees when positions open. Particularly helpful to the industry is having a "place to call" when employees are needed rather than having to extensively recruit on their own for potentially untrained recruits. In the long term, this allows employers to invest more in their workforce and less on recruitment.

Recruitment

Partnering with nearby organizations

The ATP found that partnering with the Jonnycake Center and the Welcome House was an effective way to identify good candidates for participation in the program. Both were within walking distance of The Education Exchange which also helped ensure that participants found through these entities could also reach the training location. The ATP found that making flyers available in the Jonnycake Center and advertising in a free newsletter that was circulated to local residents were both instrumental in helping the partnership reach its recruitment goals.

Fulfilled recruitment goals

The ATP successfully recruited 30 participants into industry training, 25 of whom completed training and 10 of whom were placed in training-related employment upon completion of training. During the program's first run, most recruitment came from identified recruitment partners like the Johnnycake Center and the Welcome House. However, in subsequent rounds of training, the ATP expanded its recruitment efforts to include advertising on Facebook, in newspapers, and on Channel 10 News.

Trainee Barriers

The ATP did not discuss any achievements with overcoming trainee barriers.

Training

Improved and targeted screening processes

Initial screening of applicants for pre-existing health conditions, access to transportation, and physical ability did not receive the seriousness it deserved in the recruitment process. As a result, several participants encountered health and transportation issues that prevented them from fully completing training or participating in work during the trainings. Further, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and the criminal records of some participants were revealed only after they had begun training. The ATP responded to this challenge by significantly expanding screening and adding a physical test to the application process. One particular success of the partnership was in being able to develop a screening process based on specific criteria of employers that were more specific than common practices. For example, criminal background checks are commonly utilized to screen employees but also exclude good employees based on minor or old criminal convictions. The criminal background checks employed in the training program, therefore, screened for specific crimes like theft, which is a longstanding problem in the aquaculture industry. This allowed the ATP to screen for crimes specific to industry concerns without excluding potential employees based on minor or inapplicable infractions. The ATP used this method primarily as a method to encourage self-reporting, however, and only ran background checks on a small number of participants.

Transition from Training to Employment

The ATP did not discuss any achievements with the transition from training to employment.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-17 Aquaculture Training Partnership (Education Exchange)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Aquaculture Career Training - (2 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	4/4/16	9/9/16	32	30	24	25
ServSafe for Incumbent Workers	4/4/16	9/9/16	8-10**	1	TBD	1
Total New Participants placed in training-related employment					24	10
Total New Participants retained in training-related employment					10	12
Other Objectives						
Total New Participants that are prepared for the DEM Boating license					32	4*
Total New Participants that earn ServSafe Kitchen Manager certification					32	25
Total New Participants that earn ServSafe Alcohol certification					24	23
Total Incumbent Workers promoted due to training					TBD	1
Total Incumbent and New Workers receiving an increased wage due to training					TBD	Unknown

*The DEM boating license was dropped from the program, and one is not needed if born before 1985.
**Number of spots available. This measure was only necessary if the employer partners choose to use the available seats.

VI. Challenges

Partnerships

Hesitant partners

Members of the industry initially hesitated to participate as partners and to help design a training program because they thought doing so would open their operations to competitors and, therefore, expose their trade secrets. Additionally, some employers in the past had experienced training workers who left to start their own businesses; if this happened due to a sector training, it could increase competition in the sector for a limited set of goals. The ATP responded to this initial reluctance by offering dinner and a stipend of roughly $200 for industry participation in the planning process, while also promising that no individual trade secrets would enter the training modules.

Recruitment

Accessing target populations for recruitment

The partnership was specifically interested in reaching both un- and underemployed workers (which it successfully reached through its partners), but also reaching displaced fisherman, contractors, farmers, and, specifically, veterans. The ATP was unable to reach these specific populations through its recruitment efforts and its partner organizations, although the failure to do so did not affect its overall effort to reach its numerical recruitment goals. One challenge in regard to veterans specifically was that the ATP was not executing a training program that was approved by the VA, and so any veterans enrolling in the program would not have access to the same VA benefits they would otherwise be able to access in VA-approved training. The ATP is nevertheless confident that the outdoors training that is provided through its program will be a particularly good opportunity for veterans struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Thus, ATP is working with Apprenticeship RI to be listed as a recognized trainer with the VA, and the partnership remains committed to recruiting the target populations originally identified for recruitment.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of appropriate gear

The ATP found that training providers and on-site employers lacked essential water gear for participants during the on-site training component, which was discovered after planning and budgeting had occurred. This oversight forced the ATP to purchase gear at a cost to itself since it had not originally budgeted for outdoor gear. Given that the gear was necessary to complete training, the ATP's purchase of the gear allowed the partnership to complete the training program.

Issues with transportation

The ATP accepted applicants without reliable transportation into the training program assuming that they would find transportation into work, use the money earned through the

training program to purchase transportation, or would utilize a van the ATP planned to lease to provide transportation to training sessions and internship responsibilities. However, the DLT was not able to fund the lease of a van due to state and federal funding regulations. Further, due to limited public transportation routes that serve Southern Rhode Island, not all participants had access to public transportation. To overcome these challenges, the ATP paired trainees without access to transportation with trainees that had transportation access to increase the ability of trainees to complete the program. The ATP later submitted a separate pitch that allowed them to be reimbursed by the DLT for gas mileage used in transporting trainees.

Training

Training timing

During the first round of training, shellfish farmers announced to the ATP that they would be hiring employees at some time around Labor Day. To align with the industry's hiring plans, the ATP planned to complete the first round of training to coincide with Labor Day. When the training finished, however, it became apparent that the companies no longer planned to hire additional workers after having completed their hiring earlier that spring. This led to fewer employment opportunities for participants who completed their training that fall and caused the ATP to revisit the training program's timeline so that it could be completed in time for spring hiring.

Assault during on-site training

One training participant was assaulted by the owner of an aquaculture business. This caused the ATP to end its relationship with that employer.

Education of trainees

The ServSafe Kitchen certification program requires seventh grade reading and eighth grade math. This was an unforeseen challenge in reaching the ATP's target population. The ATP had not accounted for the additional expense of providing participants with the educational support needed to complete the certification, but it responded to this challenge by incorporating additional education support into the training budget for future programs with the DLT.

Lack of certificate attainment

No participants took part in ServSafe Alcohol Training or received a certificate, and only one incumbent worker received the training and certification for the ServSafe Kitchen Manager program. These results were far below what the partnership expected for these programs, especially since the ATP believed these certifications would enable participants to compete for restaurant jobs if they were unable to find employment in the aquaculture industry.

VII. Sustainability

The ATP expects to sustain the program through its plans to lease a training farm on

Point Judith salt water pond where training programs will continue and oysters will be harvested and sold to the Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative. Profits will then be earmarked for future training programs. Under this plan, the ATP expects to operate independently from the DLT in five years. As this independent effort continues, the ATP also envisions expanding its services and training to aquaculture businesses in Northern Rhode Island.

The ATP is also hopeful about the future of its training programs as a result of positive feedback it has received nationally. Its partnership is the first of its kind in Rhode Island and in the United States. The ATP received positive feedback from members of the national industry during a trip to Washington D.C, and has interpreted the positive attention as evidence that the program is serving a real need in the aquaculture industry. Other states have expressed interest in adopting the ATP's model. This reaction gives the partnership hope that its model will be supported both in Rhode Island and nationally in the future.

Finally, the ATP is confident in the program's sustainability due to its relationship with the Coastal Institute. The ATP also worked with the Coastal Institute and the Rhode Island Sea Grant to modify Roger Williams University's aquaculture curriculum. The ATP's current training programs focus on participants who want to be employed in aquaculture companies, while the newly modified training focuses on entrepreneurs desiring to launch aquaculture companies. The ATP wants to unite both curricula and connect graduates of both training programs, which will strengthen the aquaculture industry on the whole.

VIII. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the ATP in executing its training program:

- Work with industry employers to ensure that training is aligned with industry hiring timelines.
- Budget for gear and materials for participants.

IX. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the ATP:

- Purchase accident insurance for participants as part of the training to minimize the risk to industry employers of hosting training participants for on-site training.
- Identify and work with well-known industry leaders to bring industry partners together and unite the partnership.
- Conduct an extensive pre-training application process to reduce the pool of applicants to a group with a high likelihood of success in the aquaculture industry.
- Provide a stipend for program participants.

X. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the ATP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Locate classroom trainings near public transportation drop-off locations, assign applicants with transportation issues to employers located closest to transportation points, or develop individualized plans to help trainees get to employer locations.
- Develop a method to accommodate transportation needs after completing training and gaining employment at least during a transitional period as the employee is able to save money for sustainable transportation.
- Form relationships with bait and tackle shops for fishermen and local farm organizations, particularly in areas with high under- or unemployment, to help outreach efforts to recreational fishermen, farmers, and others who have experience working outdoors.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Construction Trades Skill-Up Partnership (CTSUP) was formed to help small contractors grow and compete in Rhode Island's thriving construction industry. The West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation (WEHDC), the Rhode Island Black Contractor's Association, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, Providence Revolving Fund, Coast Modern Construction, ACR Construction, Gilbane Building Company, Youthbuild Providence, KITE Architects, the Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies, and the City of Providence all were responsible for the partnership's formation.

The WEHDC was the lead agency forming CTSUP and did so for the following reasons:

- Small contractors in Rhode Island's construction industry had little experience or formal training in running small businesses, preventing contractors from bidding on larger contracts allowing them to grow.
- Large contractors were struggling to find small contractors with the professional skills needed to work on larger projects.
- A shortage of qualified and skilled contractors meant that large contractors only gave four percent of their contracts to minority and women-owned businesses. rather than the 10 percent required by state law.
- A shortage of qualified and skilled contractors placed the construction industry at risk of not meeting demands that were anticipated to arise as part of industry-wide trends, such as the adoption of green building technologies.

II. Grant History

The WEHDC is a community development agency that has served the West End of Providence since 1970. It has extensive experience in community and housing development, managing small and large construction projects, and maintains strong relationships with members of the non-profit development community, local contractors, and partners that deliver

construction training. Its experience also includes managing the CLEARCorps lead remediation program from 2003-2011, which required training its staff and AmeriCorps participants how to recognize and mitigate lead hazards in buildings.

The WEHDC's participation through CTSUP represents the first time the organization has worked with the Department of Labor and Training. WEHDC applied for and received a Real Jobs Planning Grant in 2015, which it used to host four workshops that brought industry leaders together to generate ideas about designing and implementing a workforce training program. Participants in these workshops, who were compensated for their time, discussed how to design a curriculum tailored to industry-wide conditions, the different capabilities of small contractors and large contractors, and the value-added of a training program.

III. Goals and Objectives

CTSUP established two goals:

1. Eliminate the barriers to business expansion faced by small contractors.
    - CTSUP trained small contractors with the business skills necessary to increase their ability to both hire and be hired, and to improve their ability to bid for and receive larger or publicly funded construction projects.
2. Help meet the business and professional development needs of small contractors.
    - CTSUP established a Contractor Support Center to provide business incubation and ongoing professional development for small contractors.

IV. Partnerships

WEHDC formed CTSUP through its extensive network of associates known in the construction industry, by referrals of industry leaders that came recommended due to their construction expertise, and by interested members of the construction industry who wanted to create jobs. These partners included non-profit developers and associations of traditionally underrepresented workers who shared their expertise and perspectives on the challenges of employment and development in the construction industry. CTSUP initially began with 10 members but grew in number as its partners identified additional participants that contributed unique insights about the special challenges of Rhode Island's construction industry.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

West Elmwood Housing Corporation	Lead Applicant: Responsible for grant management and oversight of the training plan implementation; recruiting a Construction Trades Skill-Up Program Coordinator to lead all aspects of program implementation.
Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies	Responsible for developing and executing the training program curriculum; recruiting program instructors; providing a space for classes at the university's Providence campus; advising the grantee on how to develop the course into an in-person/online hybrid.
Providence Revolving Fund, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, Black Contractors Association of RI, ACR Construction, Gilbane Building Company, and Coast Modern Construction	Responsible for participating in quarterly meetings to plan and review progress in the training program and its curriculum; committing to hiring program graduates; developing back-office support so that graduates of the Training Program could use business incubation services.
City of Providence	Responsible for participating in quarterly meetings to plan and review progress in the training program and its curriculum; contributing funds to the partnership; helping sponsor the Contractor Support Center.
Youthbuild Providence	Responsible for participating in quarterly meetings to plan and review progress in the training program and its curriculum; developing back-office support so that graduates of the Training Program could use business incubation services.
KITE Architects	Responsible for participating in quarterly meetings to plan and review progress in the training program and its curriculum; committing to hiring program graduates; developing back-office support so that graduates of the Training Program could use business incubation services.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal #1: Eliminate the barriers to business expansion faced by small contractors.

CTSUP planned to eliminate barriers to business expansion by building the business skills and professionalism of small contractors. The pursuit of this goal established a culture of continuous improvement in the construction industry that helped small contractors improve their business skills and allowed them to seek out larger contracts. By increasing the capacity of small contractors to compete for larger projects, CTSUP anticipated that large contractors would develop greater confidence in the skills and professionalism of small contractors, thus improving the overall performance of Rhode Island's construction industry from top to bottom. Participation in the Training Program allowed small contractors to learn the administrative and financial skills necessary to grow strong and effective businesses, which, in turn, created opportunities for larger jobs.

The Training Program was designed to train 20 participants, divided into two cohorts of ten. CTSUP expected that 16 of 20 participants would complete the Training Program. Each cohort received 150 in-class and online training hours over a nine-month course held at the Providence campus of the Roger Williams University School of Continuing Education. The first cohort began in September of 2016 and ended in June of 2017, while the second cohort planned recruitment and enrollment dates of July and August of 2017, with an anticipated start date of September 2017. The Training Program was designed around a strict schedule that did not interfere with peak construction times, and its success was measured by completion of the program and the skills that were gained by participants through the curriculum. Participants were screened through Roger Williams University to ensure they had the skills needed to engage with the curriculum at the level it was taught.

Each participant was charged a tuition fee of $750 for his or her participation, but CTSUP organized incentives to make the training program accessible to those who could not afford tuition. Working with partner organizations, CTSUP offered conditional, partial tuition reimbursements to participants contingent on the participant's regular participation and completion of training milestones, like completing a business plan or working towards a new state certification. These incentives were created not only to make the training program more accessible, but to encourage participant attendance and effort.

The Training Program consisted of a five module curriculum to develop the skills necessary to manage a successful construction business. Instead of focusing on a few critical skills in depth, it delivered an overview of the full range of skills that are necessary to achieve success in the industry. It covered client management and customer service, business development, business administration, project management-based skills, and legal and construction contracts. The client management and customer service module helped participants learn strategies and techniques to cultivate and keep long-term clients, and addressed such topics as building relationships, negotiating, understanding client needs, conflict resolution, and client management software. It also exposed participants to topics like mentoring, business plan development, strategic planning, marketing and promotions, resources and tools, and

networking. The business administration module taught participants how to run their businesses more efficiently, and delivered content relating to payroll, human resource administration, personal finance, industry certifications, insurance and bonding, workers' compensation, and business administration software. The project management-based skills module aided participants in identifying and creating methods for managing projects and the skills needed to manage the entire construction process. This module addressed topics such as estimating, project management, plan reading and due diligence, vendor relationships, construction delivery models, code changes and industry trends, and using project-based software. The module was also designed to develop business skills in responding to requests for proposals, requests for quotation, and requests for information. The final module covered legal and construction contracts and taught participants the basic legal skills needed to handle small legal matters on their own and to identify when it was necessary to hire professional legal support. This module included topics like terms and language, compliance, standardized documents, change orders, American Institute of Architects contracts, and legal software.

Goal #2: Help meet the business and professional development needs of small contractors.

In order to meet its second goal, CTSUP established a Contract Support Center. The Contract Support Center is a business incubation center for Training Program graduates. When participants have successfully completed their training, graduates are provided with expert administrative support by the Contract Support Center so they have the capacity to execute their new administrative and financial plans. The Center also builds on the culture of mentorship and professional development that began with the Training Program by continuing to engage industry leaders in training and mentorship for contractors. These support services allow small contractors to incorporate new methods of doing business and fully evolve into the types of contractors who can successfully compete with larger firms.

The Center, which opened in November 2016, was scheduled to operate for a year, was designed to address the needs of the 16 participants completing the Training Program. In its business administration role, the Center helped clients with billing and accounts payable, file maintenance, invoicing, payroll, bookkeeping, submitting bids, managing appointments and scheduling, assisting in setting up professional e-mail accounts, and organizing communication. Its professional development services included bringing in speakers and making arrangements so that instructors and peer mentors were able to work with clients.

Implementation Oversight

The programs and services delivered by CTSUP were overseen by a partnership program coordinator. Working under the WEHDC Real Estate Development Department, the program coordinator managed partnerships, implemented the plan, established the Contractor Support Center, convened partners for ongoing review and development, and worked with Roger Williams University to develop and adapt a curriculum based on the needs of the construction industry's partners. The creation of this position allowed WEHDC to remain involved in the

programs it helped to create, while also ensuring that a dedicated coordinator was able to keep the program viable.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Positive reaction from the industry

Participants and industry leaders spoke positively about the program, which CTSUP interpreted as a sign of success. Participants had spoken of learning valuable skills from knowledgeable instructors, while industry leaders identified the curriculum as a strength of the training program. Industry partners also praised the program's emphasis on skill development as a factor that helped participants meet the qualifications to become better businessmen.

Recruitment

Strong recruitment

Of the 10 participants that were expected to enroll and complete the program, CTSUP succeeded in enrolling eight participants in training, while seven completed the training program. The second cohort enrolled 11 out of an expected 10, and was not completed by the time this analysis was compiled.

Relying on industry members to supply recruits

CTSUP relied on its industry partners to direct recruits to this training program. This helped CTSUP fulfill its target recruitment goals and ensured that those who participated in training were deemed by the industry to receive the most benefit from training.

Trainee Barriers

The time burden of delivering training to business owners

Time was the largest obstacle for trainees. The training program was geared toward business owners who experienced a lot of demands for their time, but the partnership was able to arrange class offerings so that they were delivered during off-peak construction season.

Transition from Training to Employment

Delivering a valuable service

CTSUP recruited and trained a cohort of small contractors who functioned at a higher level and competed for larger bids and more jobs upon completing the program. Of the eight participants attending the training, seven successfully completed it. CTSUP anticipates that the skills delivered to graduates through the program will allow participants to build capital and to

look at their businesses through different perspectives. Further, the program enabled participants to build relationships with industry leaders through networking and mentorship. The Contract Support Center helped to connect graduates of the training program with mentors in the industry to continue the graduate's progress in the industry. Having a robust personal network in the construction industry is critically important for receiving additional contracts and gaining experience working with larger companies.

Other

Recognizing and serving all aspects of small contractors

The training program was successful in filling a substantial gap in the construction industry. Other programs had existed to enhance the business skills of contractors, but they were sporadic and not accessible to all workers. This program offered a way to coordinate a large-scale training opportunity that could be standardized and accessible to workers across the various facets of the industry. It also recognized small contractors as both employers and employees. This allowed the training program to enhance the skills of the contractors in both of their roles.

Expansion into the industry

CTSUP received positive feedback on its training program design from other stakeholders in the wider construction industry, and was approached by these stakeholders to expand the program to serve more members of the industry. CTSUP is currently in talks to expand the scope of its program to serve this need. The grantee views this as confirmation that its program is well-constructed and has shown positive outcomes for its participants and collaborating partners.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-18 RJRI Construction Trades Skill-Up (West Elmwood Housing)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Business Skills for Construction Trades - Cohort 1 (Incumbents)	11/14/16	4/20/17	10	8	10	7
Business Skills for Construction Trades - Cohort 2 (Incumbents)	9/1/17	02/22/2018	10	11	10	TBA*
Other Objectives						
Increase in number of employees they can now bring on due to growth & ability to manage business					3	Ongoing
Increase in the value of contracts					15 percent growth	Ongoing
Increase in average length of contract as measured before and after graduation.					TBD	Ongoing
Increase in the number of bids submitted					8	Ongoing
Percent of bids awarded					TBD	Ongoing
Net company revenue growth					TBD	Ongoing
*The second cohort was not complete at the time this report was written.						

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Agreeing on causality

A key challenge was getting sector partners to agree on the obstacles that stood in the way of small contractors achieving success in the construction industry. Some partners identified a lack of opportunity and access to larger bids as the greatest challenge facing small contractors. These partners believed the best solution was to relax the standards of large bids and give small contractors loans to enable them to take on larger jobs. Others, including the WEHDC, believed that the lack of business acumen presented the main obstacle to the success of small contractors. Without being able to run a business effectively, these partners believed that no amount of access or opportunity could help these contractors succeed. In their view, success could be achieved by training contractors to secure loans independently. Despite the initial challenges of overcoming this divide, CTSUP agreed to focus on improving the business skills of small contractors as an overall sector strategy that would have positive effects spreading throughout the sector.

Recruitment

Recruitment and retention

The project's implementation consumed most of CTSUP's time and focus and it was during this phase that recruitment was not emphasized. Although participants were offered financial incentives and low tuition, recruits remained discouraged by the cost of the program and the time commitment posed by a mostly evening, classroom-based program. As a result, CTSUP retained eight out of eleven participants throughout the training program. To address this challenge, CTSUP plans to have an increased focus on marketing and advertising in the future to draw in more candidates, as well as a greater focus on the program's rules in order to increase retention.

Trainee Barriers

Program cost

Although CTSUP considers the fee for its training to be reasonable ($750 per participant), it found that the cost of the program dissuaded some industry contractors from participating.

Training

Ensuring participant attendance

It was challenging for CTSUP to reduce the burden of training sessions on participants. Even though classes were held after work hours in Providence and classes on Saturday were limited, some participants were not able to attend all training sessions due to various personal reasons. Yet, no widespread issues like lack of access to transportation existed. CTSUP, therefore, sought to limit absences by attaching tuition reimbursements to consistent attendance.

By doing so, CTSUP found that absences were mostly limited to situations where participants had prior commitments, illnesses, or family emergencies. CTSUP also plans to modify its training so that it delivers courses on the basis of student electives so that participants can choose their trainings.

Transition from Training to Employment

Other

Lack of time

The DLT's strict schedule added stress for CTSUP and forced the industry partners to accept a program that required more development to meet the needs of industry partners. With more time to develop the program, CTSUP could have spent more time in discussion with industry stakeholders to learn more about gaps in the industry. This was a challenge that CTSUP nevertheless overcame by putting its "nose to the grindstone" and focusing on the timely development and implementation of its program.

Unexpected staff turnover

Early in CTSUP's implementation process, a contractor hired to manage the grant left the partnership. This person had the most intimate knowledge of the details of the grant, and the personnel who took over this position had to spend time becoming familiar with the different aspects of the program and its implementation. However, after this new staff member became familiar with the grant, the implementation process was able to continue smoothly.

Revision of performance metrics

The performance metrics used to measure the success of CTSUP's training programs do not accurately reflect its industry and the work that its partners are doing. The DLT is working with CTSUP to modify these performance metrics to ensure that they accurately reflect the partnership's efforts in future years.

VIII. Sustainability

CTSUP expects the Contract Support Center portion of its program to be sustainable without RJRI funding. Currently, RJRI funds allow graduates to receive the Center's services without cost, but its services can be given to other businesses who did not participate in the program for a fee. If the Center provides services on a fee-for-service basis, then it can earn enough income to operate independently.

While the Contract Support Center offers the possibility of sustainability without RJRI funding, the Training Program is too costly to be run without outside funding, even if the projected future income from the Contract Support Center is used as a funding source. If funding can be secured, CTSUP views the training program as a very successful, sustainable, and flexible program.

In the future, CTSUP also plans to offer different training programs that build on the

progress of the initial training program. With continued financial support from DLT, CTSUP plans to offer training in leadership and management so that participants succeed in their new roles as business supervisors and can learn about recruiting and maintaining talented employees. CTSUP also plans to implement a program that focuses on business financial profiles in order to develop lines of credit with supply houses and banks that enable small contractors to take on bigger jobs. With these other programs, CTSUP envisions participants applying the tools and skills gained in the initial training program to become more efficient and effective businesses.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by CTSUP in executing its training program:

- Dedicate more time in discussion with stakeholders to refine the program and its goals prior to implementation.
- Implement a flexible curriculum that offers elective-like options to allow participants to opt-out of training areas where they already have strengths and focus more closely on topics that will allow them to improve.

X. Best Practices

The following best practices were utilized by CTSUP:

- Compensate industry partners for time spent in planning meetings.
- Invite industry partners to implementation meetings only when their specific expertise is necessary.
- Clearly communicate the time commitment expected of each industry partner.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for CTSUP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Help other industry partnerships offer incentives to training participants to help offset the cost of participating in the training program.
- Offer additional funding or financial aid to cover per-person training fees for those who cannot afford the tuition.
- Delegate specific funds for compensating industry partners for attendance at planning meetings in all planning grants for small and new businesses to help incentivize industry participation in other partnerships.

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REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Building Futures Partnership

Prepared for:

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Building Futures Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Building Futures Partnership (BFP) formed to deliver skills to workers in response to the specific needs of a known project with a known start date, especially with regards to safety and skill training for large-scale energy infrastructure projects in Rhode Island. In particular, the BFP found that:

- Specific industry needs often arise during the planning of large-scale infrastructure projects. Building Futures, the lead applicant, learned that current apprenticeship programs were not designed to address the forecasted future training needs of sustainable energy infrastructure construction projects.
- Studies that described trends in Rhode Island's construction trades industry found that entry level workers lacked the right skills for employment; the current workforce was retiring and not being replaced; an adequate system to recruit and prepare future workers did not exist; young adults viewed construction careers negatively; and that there was inadequate employer participation in training the future workforce.
- A 2013 study of the construction industry's economic impact in Rhode Island found that it supported 29,916 jobs and was responsible for roughly eight percent of the state's gross domestic product and 3.75 percent of the state's employment. The industry continues to have a significant impact on the Rhode Island economy and is expected to grow at a rate of roughly 27 percent by 2022.
- It was anticipated that there will be more non-residential construction industry jobs with the expansion of natural gas pipeline construction. The Interstate Natural Gas Association of America anticipates the construction of 60,000 miles of gas pipeline to be laid in the next 25 years across the entire United States, with at least two pipeline projects proposed for Rhode Island in coming years.

II. Grant History

Building Futures has extensive experience executing Department of Labor-funded training programs, having worked with the DLT since 2007. The BFP is currently offering pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship placement programs through Apprenticeship RI, a part of the American Apprenticeship Initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor. Building Futures also has extensive experience delivering other training programs, such as welding certification, home building construction training, and the building of low income affordable housing with a labor force of trainees working in small crews with a foreman. It was through its relationship with Deepwater Wind that Building Futures became aware of a specific skills need for safety training to help construct the Block Island Wind Farm, the nation's first offshore wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island.

III. Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Building Futures grant was to provide job seekers in its existing pre-apprenticeship program, as well as incumbent workers in the building trades, the skills needed to complete jobs efficiently with practices grounded in knowledge of relevant, established safety standards. After examining the projected future of the Rhode Island construction industry, the BFP planned to offer safety and skills trainings required for workers on most large-scale energy projects. It hoped that program graduates would leave training prepared to enter apprenticeship programs and benefit their employers through knowledge of safety regulations, improved worker safety, and reduced construction site accidents. To achieve this, the BFP aimed to meet three specific goals:

1. Train 50 new and incumbent workers in Maritime Safety.
    - Program graduates would then be trained to be valuable additions to the team constructing the Block Island Wind Farm.
2. Train 40 new and incumbent workers in Safe Rigging Practices.
    - This training would be applicable to multiple projects and open to both Building Futures graduates and those recommended by the Building and Construction Trades Council.
3. Train 54 new and incumbent workers in Scaffold Safety.
    - Building Futures planned to integrate this training into its existing pre-apprenticeship training programs.

IV. Partnership

The Building Futures initiative began in 2007 with funding from the United Way and the Governor's Workforce Board. Originally part of "The Providence Plan," Building Futures became an independent not-for-profit corporation in 2016. Its industry partners are a formal part of the "Building Futures Council," which holds quarterly meetings. These partners include Brown University, the City of Providence, union representatives, and several large commercial construction industry employers. Building Futures first heard about the RJRI funding opportunity because of its prior relationships with DLT through the RI Governor's Workforce Board.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Building Futures	Lead Applicant: Responsible for project management including managing activities, logistics, outreach, coordination, and design of workforce training plans; delivering Scaffolding Awareness Training program.
Iron Workers Local Union 37	Training partner responsible for delivering Safe Rigging Training module.
Confident Captain	Training partner responsible for delivering Maritime Safety Training module.
Gilbane Building Company, Cardi Corporation, Shawmut Design and Construction, Brown University, H. Carr & Sons, Equality Construction, Rossi Electric Company, Deepwater Wind	Responsible for participating in the BFP Council; meeting quarterly on current and upcoming needs for construction services; approving the strategic priorities of the BFP on an annual basis; ensuring organizational efforts were aligned with industry priorities.
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, BuildRI, Rhode Island AFL-CIO, Liuna Local 271	Responsible for participating in the BFP Council; meeting quarterly on current and upcoming needs for construction services; approving the strategic priorities of the BFP on an annual basis; ensuring organizational efforts were aligned with industry priorities.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

The BFP delivers a pre-apprenticeship training program that provides math skills training, strength and dexterity training, tools and machinery training, problem solving training, and safety training. The BFP added the safe rigging practices and scaffolding modules to improve the employability of pre-apprentices. In order to deliver these programs, the BFP worked with outside vendors to deliver the maritime safety and safe rigging trainings, while the scaffolding training was delivered through the existing pre-apprenticeship program. As it was a new training, pre-apprenticeship participants could opt out of participating in this module. However, since both the scaffolding and rigging training programs were offered as part of the pre-apprenticeship training, many training participants in the pre-apprenticeship program took part in both training programs.

The BFP proposed delivering Maritime Safety training to participants through a five day training program to be delivered by Confident Captain. The BFP coordinated with Deepwater Wind to learn of its specific needs for trades workers. After Deepwater Wind requested a specific trade, the BFP recruited previously laid-off trades workers by reaching out to trade unions, who would then find training participants among its membership. Most training participants recruited in this way came from the electricians' and the ironworkers' unions. This program trained participants in personal survival and in responding to emergencies. Participants also learned about personal safety and social responsibility, fire prevention, first aid, and CPR. After successfully completing the course, participants received a Basic Sea Survival Certificate and were qualified to work on the Block Island Wind Farm. The BFP planned to offer three rounds of this training and train 50 workers for the Deepwater Wind project, but was only able to complete two rounds of training because the Deepwater Wind project started sooner than the partnership expected. Throughout the BFP's collaboration with Deepwater Wind, it was unable to procure a project schedule from the company.

The introduction to the Safe Rigging Practices training was delivered to training participants who were recruited through the BFP's existing pre-apprenticeship program. Pre-apprentices choosing to participate in this training took part in a two day hands-on training program delivered by the RI Ironworkers Local 37 Union at its training space in East Providence. This training introduced participants to rigging, hardware, tools, devices, procedures, precautions, and how to prevent rigging hazards.

The Scaffolding Awareness program was an eight-hour-long training that was delivered to participants in the BFP pre-apprenticeship training program. Since the program was already embedded in the pre-apprenticeship training curriculum, no additional recruitment was needed to reach out to participants. Those participating in the eight-hour-long training delivered by Building Futures were given an overview of scaffolding. They learned about major scaffolding components, stability, guardrail requirements, platform requirements, stairway concerns, awareness of hazards, fall and electrocution protection, and OSHA certification. Program participants were provided with reimbursement for travel to training sessions and a $25 per day training allowance.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

The BFP did not identify any achievements pertaining to the partnership.

Recruitment

Flexible program

Since the training delivered by this program is more general than other programs, program participants received a training that could be taken anywhere and applied to a wide range of careers. The BFP considered the applicability of the certifications to be a strong advantage of the program and is confident that it helped sell the program to potential recruits.

A firmly established partnership

The BFP had been a longstanding partnership that was led by Building Futures, so it did not have to spend time on partnership formation or building trust with each of the partners. Further, with prior construction industry experience, the BFP understood the norms of cooperation and collaboration between management, labor, and customers. This prior organization and knowledge proved to be a strong asset to the BFP.

Trainee Barriers

Building community

The BFP prioritized making personal connections with trainees. One of the grant writers has a 30 year background in social services and, as a result, there is a social service mentality in the BFP. The BFP's operations manager kept in touch with past workers, emotionally supported workers, and helped them overcome personal challenges so that, according to the staff, participants could become better workers. Through their capacity as a case manager, the operations manager also provided social services to training participants and was extensively involved in the day-to-day interactions with training participants

Training

The BFP did not identify any achievements pertaining to the training.

Transition from Training to Employment

Working on a prestigious state project

The BFP was proud that several graduates of its programs were hired to work on the Deepwater Wind project. This project was well publicized as the first offshore wind farm in the United States, and BFP graduates were able to work on this prestigious state project.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Unexpected changes in leadership

The BFP was formerly a part of The Providence Plan, a non-profit organization which closed its doors soon after the BFP began its grant implementation efforts. As a result, the BFP formed into a new, independent non-profit and moved its offices concurrently with the implementation of its training programs. This rapid change led to a period of growing pains for the BFP, which, in turn, increased the difficulties of implementing its training programs.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices

Since this program was developed from an existing training program funded by the DLT, the BFP did not execute a formal recruitment strategy because most recruits came via word-of-mouth efforts by training program alumni. When it came to the maritime safety program, however, recruitment was achieved by reaching out to trade unions to identify laid off union workers. Given that the BFP did not meet its recruitment objectives, the execution of the informal recruitment strategy fell short of reaching recruitment goals.

Duration of training

The maritime safety program was held over a number of weeks, and, therefore, finding workers to participate in the training program posed a challenge because it required identifying laid off tradespeople who could attend all day training sessions that were offered during the workday. Due to the fact that only two organizations are certified to deliver the training and the training is delivered in a swimming pool unavailable on the weekends, the training cannot be delivered during weekends when it would be less likely to interfere with work responsibilities.

Trainee Barriers

Childcare

On occasion, some program participants, especially for the pre-apprenticeship program, would face challenges related to childcare during training. When that happened, the Building Futures program manager worked with the training participant to apply for Department of Health Services funding for childcare and would help them find a slot for childcare services.

Transportation

Many workers struggled to find transportation to trainings. Further, many did not have a driver's license, which was a requirement for participation in some of the training sessions. Transportation also created a significant obstacle in finding employment after training. The BFP addressed this problem by distributing RIPTA tickets to workers in need and assisting some workers in regaining their licenses.

Lack of math skills

The BFP found that many participants lacked basic math skills needed for construction. The individual in charge of managing the program provided remedial math help to participants in need.

Training

Working with an outside vendor

The BFP did not complete the last maritime safety training because Deepwater Wind had already finished building wind turbines before the workers could be trained to work on the project. Not knowing when these turbines would be constructed complicated the process of planning to have the third module of training completed in time so that workers could participate in the construction project. Further, the BFP struggled to communicate effectively with Deepwater Wind. The BFP also planned to offer scaffolding and rigging training but the relocation of the BFP and its training facilities into a new building meant that the trainings were not delivered on the original schedule. After Building Futures moved its offices and training space to the new location, trainings were delivered and are now well-established.

Transition from Training to Employment

Low number of participants receiving training-related employment

The BFP trained 82 individuals across all of its training programs. However, only 34 of these participants were later employed by the industry (to date). Although the BFP did not provide an explanation for this low employment number, it may have been a result of the miscommunication between the BFP and Deepwater Wind during the training implementation period.

Other

Underestimation of the time and effort needed for implementation

The grant writer did not anticipate the amount of time that was required to offer this training, especially the maritime safety training, and had not built in enough time to plan for the training. Further, implementation of the training program involved some unanticipated needs, such as the purchasing of safety gear.

Miscommunication between the DLT and the BFP over funding

The BFP utilized Real Jobs funding as one funding source out of many to fund its overall efforts. Initially, the DLT and the BFP miscommunicated about how to properly use Real Jobs funding to deliver its training programs. However, the DLT worked with the BFP to establish a system of funding specific programs and specific participants in order to fund the BFP's efforts while meeting its own reporting and funding requirements.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-19 Building Futures	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
STCW-95 Marine Safety (Incumbents)	3/11/16	12/31/16	50	30	50	30
Rigging Safety (Job Seekers)	3/11/16	3/31/17	40	20	40	18
Scaffolding Safety (Job Seekers)	3/11/16	3/31/17	54	25	54	26
Pre-Apprenticeship Training (Job Seekers)	9/9/16	6/30/17	5	5	5	5
Graduate Home Building (Job Seekers)	9/6/16	10/13/17	20	13	20	12
Total Participants placed in training-related apprenticeship or employment- Scaffolding Safety Training					30	10
Total Participants retained in training-related employment- Scaffolding Safety Training					20	Ongoing
Total Participants placed in training-related apprenticeship or employment- Rigging Safety Training					10	18
Employed after Pre-Apprenticeship Training					5	2
Employed after Graduate Home Building					20	1
Total Participants retained in training-related employment- Rigging Safety Training					10	Ongoing

Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn an industry recognized credential- Rigging Safety Training					38	18
Total Participants that earn an industry recognized credential- Marine Safety					48	30
Total Participants promoted due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)- Marine Safety					TBD	Ongoing
Total participants receiving an increased wage due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)- Marine Safety					TBD	Ongoing
Grant Totals						
Total number of individuals trained						82
Total number of individuals employed						34

VIII. Sustainability

The BFP is replicating its pre-apprenticeship model in other sectors and several programs that are funded through grants are running in parallel with this program. If there is a need in the state, the BFP is confident it can offer training with adequate financial support from the state. The pre-apprenticeship program and scaffolding training can continue without state funding, however, since they are both offered separately from RJRI funding.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the BFP:

- Make sure partners give an accurate timeline for when large-scale projects will be starting and finishing to avoid misalignment of trainings and on the job experience and employment opportunities.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the BFP:

- Provide program participants with reimbursement for travel to training sessions and a per day training allowance.
- Hire a full-time case manager to provide social services to training participants.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the BFP, the following recommendations are suggested to RJRI:

- Offer a higher stipend to training participants to encourage attendance at training sessions.
- Partner with an adult education provider or hire a support services coordinator to provide tutoring in skills that program participants lack.
- Implement a formal recruitment strategy that connects with social service agencies or non-profits that have experience working with and recruiting from under- and unemployed populations to access more workers, or with state CTE schools to fulfill recruitment goals.
- Work with employers to see if they are willing to pre-hire training participants in the training program to increase the rate of employment after training and the likelihood of employer partners communicating the timeline for when they need workers.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Real Jobs IT Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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Real Jobs IT Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Real Jobs IT Partnership (RJITP) was designed to address skills gaps and to build a more comprehensive pipeline of education and training programs in the Internet Technology (IT) sector. The RJITP was formed by Tech Collective (TC), an IT and bioscience industry association that was established in 1997, along with partners from numerous industry employers and training providers as sector partners.

The IT sector is a core Rhode Island industry that is expected to experience continued growth. TC cited research from the 2015 Cyberstates report from CompTIA, a national IT industry organization, showing that Rhode Island supports over 20,000 tech occupation jobs and this number is projected to continue growing. In 2015, the DLT reported that the average collective wage of $79,226 in IT jobs is nearly double the private sector average wage. TC maintains an Advisory Council where it learned, along with the results of an industry skills gap survey, that industry employers struggled to find talented applicants to fill positions. The skills gap study found that only 65 percent of employers considered their IT talent base to be adequate and that all IT positions were marginal or difficult to fill at least half the time (except for desktop support). Furthermore, 76 percent of employers expected to expand their businesses over the next three to five years and 70 percent reported that it was harder to fill mid-level positions than it was to fill entry-level positions. Companies wanting to fill these positions were interested in developing soft skills, project management skills, leadership skills, business skills, and the ability to see the "big picture" among their employees, but many of the small businesses that make up the IT industry did not have the capacity to institute the continuous learning opportunities that would be necessary for them to be successful in a rapidly changing ecosystem.

Further, because of the importance of the tech industry to Rhode Island's economy and the skills gaps that currently prevent this industry from reaching its full potential, the DLT identified a need for a functioning workforce intermediary as a critical sector need. Workforce intermediaries provide training and create employment pipelines for entire sectors, not just single companies. These intermediaries are also essential to the creation and maintenance of industry-

wide talent pools and networks that can strengthen the sector as a whole. Through the intervention of a workforce intermediary, the tech industry would be able to effectively address all of its sector needs and skills gaps in a way that assists sector growth and stability. As such, the DLT recognized the importance of supporting workforce intermediaries like TC to enable them to perform this essential role.

II. Grant History

TC was established in 1997. Its mission is to "inspire, engage, educate, and employ via two main focus areas of Workforce Development and Industry Building."[1] Since 2004, TC had received more than $12 million from federal, state, and private sources, including Governor's Workforce Board grants, the Real Jobs Planning Grant, and the Ready to Work/Tech Force RI grant through the state's Workforce Investment Boards.

Through the Real Jobs Planning Grant, the RJITP learned about a number of challenges facing industry employers, including the challenges of finding talent with business skills to fill mid-level positions. The RJITP applied for a Real Jobs implementation grant to begin addressing these issues. The RJITP planned to offer five modules that would help incumbent workers gain increased technical, management, and soft skills and increase their employability in mid-level positions in the industry. These modules, which included learning how to Install, Configure, Manage VMware vSphere: v6.0, Application Development for Microsoft SharePoint 2010, an ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) Foundation Certification, Management for IT Professionals, and Project Management Certification, were to be taught by various education and employer partners, and would have been filled with recruits from a variety of industry partners. The RJITP hoped that funding for this training program would be sourced in part from a tuition paid by trainees and in part by funding from the DLT and the RJITP.

However, after awarding the initial approval for the Implementation grant, the DLT found that TC's structural limitations and challenges were severe enough to prevent successful implementation of its proposal. Despite these challenges, the DLT recognized the importance of having a workforce intermediary in the tech industry. The core purpose of the RJRI grant is to provide sector economic development to the various sectors of Rhode Island's economy, and the DLT viewed the stabilization of the tech industry's workforce intermediary as key to the technology sector's economic development. As a result, the DLT agreed to work with TC to stabilize its organization and to help it get to a place where it could support the tech industry as well as provide the services originally proposed in the RJITP grant application.

III. Goals and Objectives

The RJITP established two general goals to address both the needs of the technology industry and the need for a strong workforce intermediary. These goals were as follows:

1. Develop a strategic plan for the organization that enables the organization to successfully

[1] Real Jobs RI July 2015 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals, TC Appendix B, 5

work both independently and with other organizations to provide support and services to both new and incumbent employees.

- As part of this general goal, the RJITP planned to:
    1. Develop a strategic roadmap for TC's future development.
    2. Redesign and revitalize TC's Executive Board.
    3. Stabilize TC's finances.

2. Serve as the fiscal agent for the P-Tech (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) Employer Liaison.

IV. Partnership

TC, the lead applicant, was formed in 1997 to create an educational and workforce development program for Information Technology and Bioscience in Rhode Island. As part of the RJITP, TC planned to facilitate collaboration among employers, training providers, higher education, government, and economic development organizations. These various interests were expected to participate as part of an "Industry Advisory Council" to ensure that training programs were meeting the needs of employers.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Tech Collective	Lead Applicant: Responsible for maintaining fiscal responsibility; committing staff to programmatic activities; coordinating training and facilitating meetings of the Industry Advisory Council and subcommittees; tracking training participants through the online Training Management System; tracking the results of training through post-training surveys.
Bryant University, Executive Development Center; Community College of Rhode Island; New England Institute of Technology; Rhode Island College - Adult Education PDC; itSM Solutions; LaunchCode; New Horizons	Higher/Continuing Education and Training Providers: responsible for delivering modules relating to training.
AIPSO; Amica Insurance; Atrion Networking Corporation; Brave River Solutions; Computer Associates; Envision Technology Advisors, LLC; IGT; OSHEAN; Rhode Island Quality Institute; Secure Future Tech Solutions; United Natural Foods, Inc.; Worldways Social Marketing; Center for Women and Enterprise; MedMates; Start Up Community of Rhode Island	Industry Employers and Entrepreneurship Groups: Planned to be responsible for participating in surveys, interviews, and focus groups to provide information about current employer needs and ways to address them; suggesting, providing feedback on, and verifying that training programs are industry-recognized and will prepare participants with desired credentials, technical skills, business skills, and soft skills; committing staff to participate in initiative activities as part of the Industry Advisory Council.
Chariho Career and Technical Center; Coventry High School; Rhode Island Department of Education; Rhode Island STEM Center; Warwick Area Career and Tech; Junior Achievement of Rhode Island; pathidi; Providence After School Alliance (PASA); SkillsUSA Rhode Island.	K-12 Education and Youth Programs: Will work with the RJITP to streamline and strengthen the pathway for participants to attain IT education and employment.
Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island; Opportunity@Work.	Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Partner: Responsible for helping to promote TC programs and helping connect TC with individuals seeking training and/or employment in IT; connecting RJITP to data and resources available through DLT, Labor Market Information, and the One-Stop Career Center System.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal #1: Develop a Strategic Plan

The goal of developing a strategic plan for TC was at the heart of the Real Jobs IT Partnership. The RJITP hoped to use the process of developing a plan, as well as the strategic plan itself, to strengthen TC and enable it to increase the capacity to successfully function as a workforce intermediary for the tech industry. In order to achieve this larger goal, the RJITP established a series of smaller goals that focused on multiple aspects of the organization.

The first goal of the RJITP was to create a strategic roadmap for the future development of TC. This roadmap would establish the vision of TC, how it planned to cooperate with other industry and workforce development organizations, how it planned to assist in the formation of a pipeline for the tech industry, and described the services it would offer to most effectively serve the industry while avoiding a duplication of services with other, existing workforce development organizations. The creation of a roadmap was also meant to establish concrete goals for TC to assist in its effort to build greater capacity. Essentially, the RJITP hoped this process would allow TC to determine what it wanted to be and how it would achieve that goal.

As part of this goal, TC identified the services it would provide to the tech industry. These services were as follows:

- Coordinate and promote private sector involvement in the workforce-investment system.
- Provide industry and labor market intelligence to the workforce development system.
- Work within the industry to encourage partners to engage in professional development.
- Advance the marketing of TC's mission and the value of its mission.
- Inform and advise RI's educational and grant organizations about the current and projected workforce needs in the sector.
- Coordinate data analytics efforts between providers and recipients of the data.
- Assist the DLT with the development of RI's workforce development systems by utilizing new methods and funding sources to support and improve TC's initiatives.
- Provide advice on the design and implementation of new training programs.

To achieve these goals, TC adopted several specific steps. Under the leadership of a new executive director and a revamped executive board, the organization hired a full time director of development. This director would be responsible for recruiting partner companies and working with program staff to develop programs that would serve the needs of the industry while also attracting and retaining members. TC also worked to re-evaluate its membership structures. As part of this process, TC changed from a previous focus on employer memberships to a focus on acting as a hub for both companies and employees in all stages of career development and all areas within the tech industry. By switching to a people-focused membership structure, TC hoped to help new employees, incumbent employees, and companies receive the training and services needed to be successful in the tech industry.

The RJITP's second goal was the revitalization and restructuring of TC's board. The

RJITP hoped that the restructuring would draw new companies to the board and that the new members would only include those who were actively working to further TC's goals and, thus, make the overall organization accountable. One industry leader joined as Chairman of the Board to oversee and lead this process. Under his leadership, TC's existing board was dissolved and industry members wishing to join the new board, whether formerly a part of the old board or not, were interviewed. A new board of twelve industry members was formed as part of this process.

The RJITP's third goal was to restructure and stabilize the finances of TC. When TC applied for an implementation grant, it lacked the financial stability and solvency to support successful training programs. The DLT worked directly with the chairman of TC's board and its executive director to develop lines of credit with local financial institutions, hire a full-time accountant to handle accounting and billing, consolidate TC's debt, and establish a repayment plan to resolve its debt. These efforts were directly aimed to support the financial structures of TC so that it could achieve enough stability to begin offering workforce development programs. As part of this work, the DLT also worked with TC to establish future sources of funding for the organization. TC identified membership dues as a viable source of future income, and incorporated this understanding into its future plans for membership growth and cultivation.

Goal #2: Serve as the fiscal agent for the P-Tech Employer Liaison

The second goal of the RJITP was to establish TC as the fiscal agent for a P-Tech employer liaison. P-Tech (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) is a national program whose Rhode Island iteration is managed by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation. The RJITP planned to have the P-Tech liaison at TC represent the business sector of the technology industry in TC's efforts relating to education. This employee would work in this capacity to assist in the development of a K-12 and higher education program aimed at helping students attain an associate's degree in Computer Science. This liaison would coordinate mentorships between P-Tech students and members of the industry. As part of this goal, the RJITP worked with both TC and the P-Tech liaison to ensure that the liaison was fully incorporated into TC's staff and projects. This allowed the P-Tech liaison and TC to be aware of the projects on which the other was working, to fully collaborate with one another, and to share connections and services to advance their projects.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Recruiting an Industry Leader

The RJITP utilized the assistance of a key industry leader who volunteered to lead TC's capacity-building process. This industry leader was key in restructuring TC's board, recruiting new board members and organizational partners, co-signing lines of credit, consolidating and restructuring the organization's debt, and championing the new vision of TC. This person's participation was crucial to the success of this grant's implementation.

TC did not discuss any achievements related to recruitment, trainee barriers, training, or transitioning trainees to employment because TC did not implement a training program in 2016.

Other

Achievement of goals

TC successfully achieved its goals from this grant. It hired new employees who now oversee the organization's finances and development efforts, stabilized its finances, and established a new strategic plan. These developments will allow TC to provide training and other development needs for the IT sector.

Ability to refocus on training

The RJITP's efforts to increase the capacity and sustainability of TC were successful enough to allow TC to begin refocusing on delivering training programs. TC started to examine where it best fit in the tech industry pipeline and plans to deliver support services to women and girls in technology. TC has also started working with the national non-profit Opportunity@Work on its Tech Hire initiative and its General Assembly Web Development Immersive, and participated in industry discussions to improve cybersecurity in the private sector.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Recognizing the difficulties of rebuilding an organization

The RJITP, and especially the RJITP's leadership, underestimated how difficult it would be to rebuild TC, and was initially discouraged. It overcame this, however, with support from the DLT and its strong belief in its mission to have a strong workforce intermediary in the tech sector.

Coordinating services with other organizations

Multiple organizations exist in Rhode Island to serve the state's tech industry. TC worked with the DLT and these organizations to prevent duplication of services. TC also learned the best ways to share its services and utilize the services of these other organizations to maximize the services offered to the members of the tech industry.

TC did not discuss any achievements related to recruitment, trainee barriers, training, or transitioning trainees to employment because TC did not implement a training program in 2016.

Other

Independent Competency

After the initial DLT intervention, TC was able to develop a strategic plan for its organization without substantial oversight from the DLT. The DLT did provide guidance and

assistance in some instances, but TC primarily built up its organization, mission, and strategic plan independently.

VIII. Sustainability

The overall goal of this grant was to provide TC with the structures needed to become sustainable without DLT funding. Through this grant, TC stabilized its finances, restructured its board, brought industry leaders to the board, and established a strategic plan to build capacity and stability. These developments should enable TC to operate as a successful workforce intermediary without DLT support.

IX. Lessons Learned

TC identified no specific lessons learned during the 2016 implementation process.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the DLT and TC in this implementation process:

- Recognizing and supporting the value of a functional workforce intermediary in the technology sector.
- Embracing capacity building and being flexible to retool proposals.
- Working with the DLT and government leaders to effectively identify and utilize sector partners to develop and stabilize a necessary workforce intermediary.
- Connecting private sector leaders who can assist in establishing or building workforce intermediaries with partnerships.
- Ensuring grantees have the fiscal and structural capacity to handle the trainings they propose before funding RJRI proposals.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the Real Jobs IT Partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Require an assessment of an organization's capacity and ability to implement proposed programs in the application for RJRI funding.
- Assist sector workforce intermediaries or partnership lead applicants in developing the necessary resources to develop their organization and their partnership before applying for money for training programs.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

CNA Talent Network Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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APRIL 2018 REPORT

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CNA Talent Network Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

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I. Sector Need

The CNA Talent Network Partnership (CNA TNP) developed by the United Nurses and Allied Professionals Rhode Island Hospital (UNAP RIH) Education Fund and the Stepping Up program, sought to address several issues within the healthcare sector. During the RJRI planning grant process, Stepping Up conducted focus groups, surveys, and interviews, with more than 1,600 health care organizations, employers, and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) to learn about training needs in the healthcare sector. Through this effort, the CNA TNP found that the major challenge to growth and success in the health care and long-term care sector was a lack of essential soft skills in newly licensed CNAs. Specifically, organizations noted that many CNAs lacked the appropriate personal and workplace behavior, cultural awareness, diversity, and professionalism necessary to be successful in a wide variety of clinical settings. Industry professionals saw this skills-gap as leading to both lower quality patient care and a higher turnover rate among CNAs, which hurts employee retention and employers' ability to expand and be financially stable.

The following considerations were also identified as related challenges:

- CNAs will be the #1 growing occupation out of the 50 fastest growing occupations in Rhode Island until the year 2022.[1]
- CNAs remain the critical link in the continuum of care and work in all clinical settings, including acute care, long-term care, home care, and hospice care.
- Essential skills are particularly critical to the CNA position because of the highly interpersonal nature of the profession.
- Graduates of Stepping Up's CNA training program have an average starting wage of $12.14 per hour and a 77% job placement rate.
- Employers have identified these skills as lacking in many of the CNAs they hire:

[1] *Top 50 Occupations with Largest Growth: 2012-2022*. Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. Web. 1 Oct. 2015

- Managing stress and multiple priorities.
- Coming to work on time and when scheduled.
- Actively listening, following directions and accepting feedback.
- Resolving conflict and working as part of a team.
- Problem-solving and decision-making.
- Dealing with patients that have dementia, substance abuse, and mental health issues.
- Understanding the job requirements, including the need to work weekends and second shifts.

The CNA TNP identified that changing the current approach and strategies for CNA recruitment and training could address these issues. Therefore, the mission of the CNA TNP was to design a training program that would develop well-trained, qualified CNAs to meet the needs of the growing healthcare sector and would reduce employee turnover.

II. Grant History

Prior to receiving RJRI funding, Stepping Up and the UNAP RIH Education Fund represented the healthcare sector in the State of RI as the industry partner for the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB). Stepping Up received multiple healthcare training grants in the past, such as those from the GWB and a Living Rite grant, in which they provided job readiness training for people seeking a pathway to employment in healthcare through their Healthcare Career Pathways Program or Registered Nurses (RNs) who were under- or unemployed, or wanted advanced training.

Stepping Up found out about the RJRI funding opportunity during a GWB meeting and at a press conference that it attended related to its GWB affiliation. Stepping up successfully applied for and received a RJRI planning grant, and utilized many existing relationships to develop the employer partnership list for the RJRI training program. These relationships formed from working together on past grants and initiatives and through RJRI planning grant activities. As part of planning grant activities, RJRI staff encouraged Stepping Up to work with two other RJRI healthcare sector partners, the Healthy Jobs RI partnership, and the Healthcare Training Collaborative partnership, which already provided a training program for CNAs. These partnerships worked to identify a training plan that worked for all three partnerships but were unsuccessful due to differing needs and priorities. Stepping Up decided to work with CCRI as an education partner because CCRI already had a CNA training. CCRI was willing to modify its existing training to meet the needs of the RJRI grant.

III. Goals and Objectives

The CNA TNP was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet current employment needs. Emphasis was placed on providing soft skill trainings to supplement the already existing CNA certification training offered by Stepping Up. The target population

for this training program was individuals who were under- or unemployed and/or those with low income who are considered low-skilled job seekers. The CNA TNP set out to:

- Provide training, education, career coaching, and support services for low skill under- or unemployed job seekers and workers so they may work as CNAs for healthcare and long-term care organizations.

As part of this, the CNA TNP worked to:

- Bolster the process for CNA recruitment to ensure that candidates have a realistic idea of what a CNA encounters on the job before entering certification training.
    - This involved employers participating in candidate interviews to determine their suitability for the work and allowing prospective CNA candidates to tour their facilities.
- Provide career advising, case management, and wraparound services for CNA candidates, prior to completing their training, to address barriers to steady employment before they were hired.
    - This was designed to lower recruitment costs and improve retention for the employer, while improving the individual's ability to maintain employment.
- Utilize employer-identified skills gaps to create a supplemental curriculum for use during CNA training, as a complement to clinical instruction.
    - This curriculum was designed to ready the trainees to enter the workforce professionally prepared.
- Provide at least 60 hours of clinical training for CNAs.
    - This was included to ensure that CNAs gained a broader understanding of the duties and expectations of the job and had substantial practice with their clinical skills.
- Create a CNA apprenticeship program, which would be developed in year one and implemented in year two.
    - The apprenticeship would provide CNAs with an opportunity for continued personal and professional growth. New health care apprenticeship models include certifications in geriatric care, restorative care, advanced care, dialysis technician, behavioral health, and dementia care. An apprenticeship program would provide a career pathway for CNAs that would provide upward mobility with increased wages as an incentive to continue with their employer.
- Create a CNA association, which would be developed in year one and implemented in year two.
    - This association would help to standardize essential skills instruction for CNAs, and provide professional connections, mentoring opportunities, workshops, recognition, message boards, and opportunities to share concerns and expertise.

Specifically, the CNA TNP sought to meet the following objective:

- Provide 20 individuals with training designed to lead to employment in the healthcare industry.

IV. Partnerships

The partnership brought together a diverse set of stakeholders including education providers; acute care, long-term care and home care employers; Workforce Investment Boards; community based organizations; unions and job seekers. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Stepping Up	Lead Applicant: Responsible for providing case management support for program participants in need of wraparound services; providing career assessments and working with trainees to develop their individualized career pathways; providing support during the clinical portion of the training, during which the CNA trainees first practiced their clinical skills at a healthcare facility; provide job retention counseling and addressing barriers that arose during the newly-hired CNA's probationary employment period; providing essential skills component of this training.
Community College of Rhode Island	Responsible for providing use of their facilities, clinical instruction, and reporting assistance; assisting with increasing the number and engagement of employer partners; identifying students requiring additional supports; providing recruitment support and cross-referrals; providing TABE test and Medical Questionnaire component; hosting industry-related information sessions for students and/or inviting Stepping Up to career fairs and related functions; providing assistance with sending out skills gap surveys as needed to employer partners; promoting program in the community as well as other participation in/ awareness of workforce development programs.
The Genesis Center, Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, Connecting for Children and Families, West Bay Community Action Program, Family Resources, the WARM Center, Workforce Solutions	Responsible for recruiting potential candidates from Rhode Island's underserved communities for CNA training; providing access to wraparound services when possible that complemented the case management by Stepping Up staff.
Coventry Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Elmwood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Home Care Assistance, Pine Grove Health Center, Westview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Responsible for providing employment opportunities for graduates of the training program; participating in recruitment, candidate selection, training, and post-training activities which included clinical rotations, mock interviews, employment opportunities, and utilizing career advising services; providing feedback on the technical and essential skills portions of the training modules; hosting tours and information sessions of the facilities.

V. Implementation Activities/ Processes

Goal # 1: Provide training, education, career coaching and support services for low skill under- or unemployed job seekers and workers so they may work as CNAs for healthcare and long-term care organizations.

To address its goal, the CNA TNP developed a comprehensive implementation plan that met the needs of employers while also maintaining the integrity of the CCRI CNA program. Employers were enthusiastic about the training idea because it reflected employer demand.

Recruitment and Pre-Screening

The following recruitment and pre-screening activities were used to identify participants for the training program:

- Applicants were referred to the program through employers, pre-CNA programs, community-based organizations, GED programs, and youth centers.
- Community-based organization partners assisted with recruiting candidates from communities with high unemployment rates.
- The CNA TNP organized pre-employment facility tours and interviews with employers, career advisors and instructors to determine job suitability and ensure that candidates were knowledgeable about the role of the CNA before committing to training.
- Each applicant completed a pre-test and pre-screening assessments, including a barriers assessment, writing sample, formal application, and TABE testing. For the pre-test, candidates also had to score at least an 8th grade level on a reading test and pass a medical questionnaire; this was required to meet CCRI's Continuing Education standards.
- Applicants had to supply a current immunization record, high school credential, and a clean state background check.
- Stepping Up worked with its network of community-based organizations to identify child care and transportation resources (such as bus passes) and other needed supports (such as clothing and other basic necessities) for the trainees.

Training Program

CNA Training Module

At CCRI, trainees received Department of Health-approved training on clinical skills provided by CCRI instructors. This training involved 92 hours of classroom/laboratory learning and 32 hours in a nursing facility, for a total of 124 hours. In this module, CCRI tracked CNA classroom training and clinical hours, and administered the licensing test at the end. Trainees also had to pass examinations and demonstrate an ability to perform manual skills throughout the training. Trainees completed at least 100 hours of training, including no fewer than 20 hours of clinical training, as required by the Department of Health. Stepping Up provided support to trainees during the clinical portion of the training. Tuition for the program was $855, including

a textbook, a workbook, a stethoscope, and a blood pressure cuff for each student, with related fees of $224 per student, including a pre-test fee, CPR class, CPR textbook, state licensing fee, state testing fee, and state BCI. As part of the CNA TNP, students received scholarships that covered the tuition and fees to attend the CNA training.

Essential Skills Module

In conjunction with the clinical skills curriculum, a work skills instructor from Stepping Up provided 28 hours of essential skills training that took place for half of the day on Fridays. As part of the Essential Skills Module, trainees completed formal assessments, such as pre and post testing on essential skills, and informal assessments, such as in-class question and answer sessions. Trainees also received an industry-recognized certification called "Through the Customer's Eyes," which is offered through the National Seminars Training. The trainees were expected to attend all classes related to essential skills, and to participate in all in-class activities.

Career Advising and Case Management Module

Stepping Up also provided 21 hours of career advising and case management support for trainees to help participants address barriers in their lives that impeded completion of the training program. As part of this module, a career advisor provided career assessments, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment (a personality assessment that helps people gain insights about themselves and how they interact with others to improve their communication, learning and work style) and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (a measure of an individual's degree of belief that they can successfully complete tasks necessary to making significant career decisions). The career advisors also worked with trainees to develop individualized career pathways action plans. The trainees were expected to attend at least 80% of all sessions in the Career Advising and Case Management module, and to actively participate in class activities.

Post-Clinical Hours Work Experience and Employee Retention Module

Stepping Up staff met with employers and hiring managers to coordinate appropriate clinical and employment placements for participants based on employers' preferences and the long-term career goals of trainees. At this point, the CNAs had to pass the skills test as part of the licensing process so that they could receive a temporary CNA license while they prepared to take the licensing test. Employers agreed to hire the newly trained CNA's and provide a 30-hour internship experience for those with a temporary license (the probationary employment period). Following internship placement, the career advisor provided job retention counseling and addressed barriers that arose during the newly-hired CNA's probationary employment period. The newly-hired CNAs also received interpersonal skills coaching and information about workplace conflict resolution, and completed action plans. The CNA TNP provided a stipend of $375.00 to participants who successfully completed the 30-hour internship, and internship assessments were completed for each individual. Finally, Stepping Up provided job coaching for

new hires throughout their probationary period based upon feedback from their immediate supervisor.

The following table details the training content for each module provided by the CNA TNP.

Table 2. Overview of Training Modules

Module	Training Content
Certified Nursing Assistant Training Module *(124 hours)*	Topics covered included: ● Basic nursing skills. ● Resident's rights. ● Vital signs. ● Social services. ● Basic rehabilitative services. ● Personal care skills. ● Safety and emergency procedures.
Essential Skills Module *(28 hours)*	Topics included: ● Team building. ● Career exploration. ● Essential skills in the workplace. ● Listening. ● Passive, aggressive, and assertive communication. ● Time management. ● Body language. ● Cultural diversity. ● Ethics. ● Conflict resolution. ● Customer service skills (with credential). ● Job application, online job search, LinkedIn profiles. ● Resume, cover letters, memos, and thank you letters, networking, mock interviews. ● Assessments: MBTI, Career Values, Motivated Skills, National Career Readiness Credential. ● Medical terminology and vocabulary. ● HIPAA—Privacy law, sexual harassment, and stress management.
Career Advising and Case Management Module *(21 hours)*	Career Advising topics included: ● Personality and Career Assessments. ● Work Experience Reflection activities. ● Mock Interview Skills. ● Goal Setting. ● Preparing for Work Experience. Case Management topics included: ● Overcoming employment barriers. ● Strategic action planning. ● Referrals and connections to outside agencies working with students. ● How to avoid burnout as a CNA. ● Role playing.
Post-Clinical Hours Work Experience and Employee Retention Module *(Varies by employer- probationary periods range in length)*	● Internship/Work Experience supported by a stipend. ● Interpersonal job coaching. ● Workplace conflict resolution. ● Focus groups.

Support Following Employment

Once a CNA was formally hired, employers shared with Stepping Up the hourly wage and hours worked per week. Stepping Up followed newly-hired CNAs for a period of at least six months, tracking changes in pay rate, hours worked per week, job title, and benefits. Employers also reported any behavioral or competency issues that occurred with the CNA. This allowed for the employer to arrange a meeting between the CNA and their CNA TNP career advisor to provide employment counseling.

Future Program Planning

The CNA TNP also explored other ways to professionalize the CNA workforce. As part of the RJRI grant, the CNA TNP worked to develop an apprenticeship program in conjunction with Rhode Island Hospital that would train individuals who want to advance from a CNA to obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) license. As part of this, the CNA's would be able to add stackable specializations to their credentials by taking part in an acute care boot camp or in learning specialty skills in operating room (OR) procedures, intensive care unit (ICU) procedures, neurology, and/or gerontology.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Specific Focus on Partners in Providence

The CNA TNP worked quite extensively with roughly 25% of the employer partners on the original list of 20. The program found it only worked to place individuals in settings in Providence, as this is where most of the trainees lived and transportation was an obstacle for many trainees. The CNA TNP also tended to work with its most responsive partners and built closer relationships with certain partners, such as Rhode Island Hospital.

Recruitment

Successfully Utilizing Recruitment Strategies

The CNA TNP found that receiving referrals for training participants from its network of community-based organizations was very successful. It found that word-of-mouth and posting a flyer on Facebook pages were effective recruitment strategies for meeting its goals. Its goal was to recruit 20 participants and it was able to reach 17 with these strategies.

Trainee Barriers

Overcoming Personal Barriers through Effective Case Management

The CNA TNP encountered many individual triumphs among the CNA trainees throughout the process. All of the trainees who completed the program had to overcome many challenges to complete the training program, including one person who experienced homelessness during the training. Others encountered barriers such as job loss, legal issues,

childcare issues, and transportation issues. The partnership was able to provide bus passes, books, equipment, uniforms, and footwear to participants to help ensure their success. It also helped people get passport photos if need be, which was necessary for those who did not have a driver's licenses but needed photo identification to apply for a CNA licenses. The CNA TNP credited the extensive case management and support services provided by Stepping Up and community-based organization partners for helping trainees be successful.

Effective Essential/Soft Skill Training

Having the essential skills training as part of the clinical skills training was noted as a strength of the CNA TNP training program for overcoming trainee barriers. Some of the trainees were seemingly skeptical of the essential skills component when they signed up for the training, but after they were employed, some noted that it was a valuable that component of the training. For example, at one of the post-employment evaluations, former trainees discussed how helpful that component of the training ended up being for their career.

Training

Supportive Culture for Trainees

Stepping Up encouraged the formation of study groups and created a culture whereby trainees helped out one another and encouraged each other throughout the program. Trainees studied together and communicated with the instructor about questions they had before quizzes. The trainees also provided one another with emotional support, which was beneficial for those with children or other jobs.

Internship Training

Having the internship component of the training was discussed as a strength of the grant; it helped provide the vital bridge for the trainees between training program completion and employment. Some trainees pursued employment at the places in which they completed their internship, while others learned that the particular facility was not a good place for them.

Transition from Training to Employment

Including CNA Licensure in Training

The CNA TNP noted that the biggest success in implementing the grant was getting trainees licensed and employed as CNAs. The partnership noted that of the ten people who completed the training, all of them received their CNA license. Furthermore, eight people are currently employed as a CNA and one person is a firefighter. The CNA TNP considered the one person currently employed as a firefighter as one of the success stories because he was an individual that had an issue on his background check from many years ago. CCRI was willing to enroll him in the training, but they could not guarantee who could get a license, as that would be decided by the Department of Health. In the end, and with coaching from Stepping Up, this

individual did successfully obtain his CNA license, went on to become a firefighter, and is currently in an emergency medical technician (EMT) training program.

Other

Though the CNA TNP experienced success with its training program, it was unable to meet the recruitment and training objectives for the program as initially proposed. The table below details the number of participants who took part in the various trainings during 2016:

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-22 CNA Talent Network (Stepping Up)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Enhanced C.N.A. Training - (2 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	4/11/16	7/26/16	20	17	20	9
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					20	7
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					20	Ongoing
Other Objectives						
Total participants that earn an industry recognized credential					20	9
Improved retention (decreased turnover) of CNAs as compared to professionals that did not participate in this program					TBD	Ongoing
Employer satisfaction					TBD	Ongoing

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

CCRI Testing Policies Acted as a Roadblock to Trainee Success

One of the major challenges to implementing this grant was working with CCRI due to their extensive testing and attendance requirements, which made it difficult for CNA trainees to be successful. For example, CCRI had numerous policies involving testing. There was a pre-test that cost $25, and trainees had to pass the test in order to enroll in the class. The test was only offered on specific dates, which was challenging for some potential trainees, so Stepping Up worked to offer additional tests at their site when there were not enough options. Unfortunately however, many individuals did not pass this test, which included a reading test and supplying medical information, and therefore, enrollment numbers were adversely affected.

Beyond the pre-test, once accepted into the program at CCRI students were administered quizzes periodically that they had to pass. If a person did not score at least a 70% on a particular quiz, they were also asked to leave the program. When someone did not pass a quiz and was forced to leave the program, this proved detrimental to the emotional stability of the other participants. The training participants had become a support network for one another, so losing one of the members was distressing. This required additional emotional support to encourage the other trainees to continue with the program. In addition, if a trainee missed two days of the training (up to 8 hours) due to, for example, personal sickness or the illness of a child, there was no mechanism in place to have participants make up the missed days, so some participants were asked to leave the program because of missing training. However, if a program participant was able to graduate from the CCRI program, they became highly sought after in the industry, because the industry recognized the rigor of the CCRI program and knew graduates of that program were highly skilled and qualified.

Lack of Shared Vision Among Partners

Overall, Stepping Up noted that the biggest challenge to this partnership was that the two entities (Stepping Up and CCRI) did not share the same mission and vision for the CNA TNP. Stepping Up felt it wanted to fully support trainees so they could be successful but felt that this did not align with the policies at CCRI. Stepping Up recognized that many of its recruits came from very disadvantaged backgrounds and had to overcome many barriers in order to make it to training each day, such as family-related and transportation barriers. Stepping Up's end goal was to see the participants obtain employment. CCRI wanted to educate individuals in how to be a CNA, but did not share the same goal of seeing these specific individuals succeed in the program and obtain employment, or understand the extent of the needs and barriers of the population interested in this career path. Stepping Up felt that CCRI's policies were too inflexible and not designed to facilitate success among individuals interested in becoming CNAs.

Lack of Industry Input into Training Program

The CNA TNP impaneled an industry group during the planning process for its training programs, but used the panel as a means of receiving employer feedback on its plan to train CNAs rather than as a tool to identify specific challenges and deficits in the industry. As a result, the CNA TNP's training program overlapped with other CNA training programs in the healthcare industry and did not reflect specific industry needs and concerns.

Recruitment

Complicated Recruitment Process

While the various recruitment and pre-screening activities helped to ensure interested, qualified individuals took the CNA training, the many requirements and issues that came up caused Stepping Up to have to communicate back and forth with potential candidates quite often. This ultimately meant that a lot of people got "lost in the shuffle" during the recruitment and pre-screening phase of the training program. For example, as discussed, CCRI required that applicants pass a pre-test before enrolling in the CNA class. Many of the seemingly qualified students missed passing the test by a couple of points. The applicants could re-take the test, but this required them to have to schedule another testing day and pay for the test again. Stepping Up paid for the first test because RJRI would reimburse the costs for those who actually enrolled in the training, but were unable to pay for the second test because it had not included that in the budget. For other applicants, some of them had issues with their medical checks, such as having up-to-date immunizations, which caused them to have to schedule appointments or identify resources. Because of these extra steps required of applicants and sometimes embarrassment from applicants, people would lose interest or drop out of the program.

Inability to Recruit from One-Stops

The CNA TNP communicated its frustration that it could not recruit directly from Rhode Island's One Stop Career Centers System because it felt their ideal training program candidates would have already been screened by the counselors employed at the One Stop Centers.

Training

Difficulty Scheduling Facility Tours

The CNA TNP found that coordinating facility tours for all potential candidates was challenging to schedule.

Desire to Teach Essential Skills First

Through feedback from training participants, the CNA TNP also learned that providing the essential skills training earlier in the training, rather than throughout the training, would be more beneficial for the trainees, as many of the skills learned (such as the importance of being on-time) are skills needed to complete the training.

Lack of Utilization of Case Management Services

The CNA TNP found that many trainees would not utilize the case management services even if the case manager made herself available during training breaks because the trainees were already in the training program and did not think additional support was needed during that time.

Inability to Run All Proposed Programming

The CNA TNP halted its plans to implement a CNA Apprenticeship after its first year. Through conversations with the DLT, the CNA TNP realized that the wages associated with the CNA profession were too low to create a tiered wage structure that apprenticeships rely on. As such, a CNA apprenticeship program would not be able to effectively compensate its participants, and the planned programming was dropped.

Trainee Barriers

Personal Barriers

Some trainees encountered personal issues, such as having sick kids and no childcare options. This caused them to have to miss classes at CCRI. Two of the participants ended up dropping out of the program because they had more than 8 hours of not being in class for these reasons.

Strict Curriculum Structure Prevented Flexibility

Related to this, when the CNA TNP tried to be flexible when trainees encountered barriers, the nature of the curriculum was structured so that it made it quite difficult to help students catch up after missing class. In some cases, the only option was to allow trainees to take the class again once the next cohort started, but this was not ideal for timing purposes.

Transition from Training to Employment

Hiring at Hospitals

The CNA TNP also encountered a barrier related to the involvement of acute care hospitals, who supported the grant, but experienced difficulties learning how to hire RJRI trainees. CNA workers are required to have six months of work experience in healthcare before being hired, which caused challenges in placing participants into employment.

Other

Staff Turnover within the Lead Applicant's Organization

Stepping Up experienced rapid turnover of executive directors during the implementation of the CNA TNP's training programs. This lead to a lack of direction and consistency within the organization and its implementation efforts.

Lack of Organizational Direction

Stepping Up was originally run with direct input from the chairman of the Rhode Island Hospital's United Nurses and Allied Professionals (UNAP) board. Once he left the UNAP

board, other board members did not provide the same level of guidance on Stepping Up's organizational direction. As such, the organization, which had vastly expanded its organizational mission in the years prior to this member's departure, suffered from a lack of organizational direction and guidance from outside the organization.

VIII. Sustainability

Depending on how substantial the return on investment is for employer partners, the partnership plans to discuss employer contributions in providing training and explore other funding sources. Further, the CNA TNP believes that individual elements of the essential skills training can be customized to meet individual employer needs and could be provided for a fee to potentially finance this project in future years. In the future, Stepping Up plans to work with a different educational partner, one that ideally shares its vision for the program, and is also going to work more closely with the LifeSpan health system, Rhode Island Hospital, HomeFront Healthcare, and Rhode Island College to develop the CNA apprenticeship program. Stepping Up has received additional funding through Building Futures (part of a United Way grant) and in partnership with CVS Health to implement a pharma-tech training program.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the CNA TNP in executing this training program. It may be helpful to:

- Provide its own training program (not in conjunction with an existing program) so that the curriculum could be structured in ways that do not limit participants in successfully completing the program.
- Hire a tutor to help students who experience difficulties in passing quizzes or tests throughout the training program and allow students to retake tests and quizzes after having worked with a tutor.
- Bring in guest speakers who work as CNAs to talk about their experience rather than scheduling facility tours for potential training candidates.
- Provide the essential skills training early on in the training curriculum rather than spreading it out throughout the training program so that trainees can apply the essential skills to the remainder of the training.
- Have the case manager work more closely with the instructor to learn barriers the students may be encountering.
- Have the case manager provide or assist in providing the essential skills component of the training.
- Work with acute care hospitals to better understand their employment requirements for CNA's and help to identify training program mechanisms to address training and employment barriers in these healthcare settings.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the CNA TNP:

- Utilize extensive pre-screening activities prior to conducting the training to ensure that participants can be employed in the healthcare sector, such as interviews, assessments, immunization checks, and background checks.
- Recruit from a wide network of community-based organizations that serve low income populations.
- Identify resources to assist trainees with child care, transportation, and other supports prior to trainees taking part in the training program.
- Pay for assessments, tuition, and fees for CNA training program participants.
- Create a culture of support and encouragement across the trainees.
- Provide clinical training in conjunction with essential skills training.
- Provide case management and career advising throughout the training program using a standardized yet flexible plan to the meet needs of participants.
- Identify mechanisms to overcome time barriers between training program completion and employment that, if not addressed, could hinder actual employment in the sector (e.g., internship with a stipend offered while CNAs hold a temporary license).
- Continue to provide participants with job coaching and helping with workplace issues following employment.

XI. Recommendations

Given the number of potential openings in this industry, and the high degree of knowledge and certification needed by these potential workers, investing in this sector remains important. Based on the successes and challenges of the CNA TNP, the following recommendations are suggested to RJRI:

- Work with CCRI to better understand their reasons for standards regarding test mandates and if possible, help them identify plausible adjustments that may better meet the needs of under- or unemployed low-skilled individuals.
- Continue to enable partnerships to be flexible with their training programs to respond to the needs of employers.
- Continue to pay for the assessment, tuition and related fees, and licensing costs required for training participants, as these costs are quite substantial and would limit training enrollment and participation, and for stipends to participants during the internship, as this helps ensure a successful transition between training program and employment.
- Help training partners identify online options for participants who miss a class or are forced to miss class for an extended period due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Help partnerships better understand policies regarding one-stop centers and/or help partnerships identify how they can utilize one-stop centers for recruitment.
- Identify best practices utilized in states that have invested in CNA training programs.
- Invest heavily in helping the healthcare sector identify innovative solutions to address CNA shortages across healthcare and long-term care organizations.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Phoenix Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Phoenix Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Phoenix Partnership, led by Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc., was designed to strengthen the Rhode Island economy through the development and implementation of a training program that addresses the core issues currently facing Rhode Island manufacturers. The Phoenix Partnership sought to address several issues within this sector including:

- Manufacturing companies have open positions but often find it difficult to identify qualified employees.
    - Three million manufacturing jobs over the next decade across the United States will likely need to be filled. The current skills gap is suggested to result in two million vacant jobs nationwide.[1]
    - Candidates are often underqualified, not workforce-ready, lack necessary basic skills, lack any hands-on experience, have difficulties in handling the demands of a direct labor job, and do not understand the industry.
- Manufacturing appears to have strong growth potential in the United States.
    - Nearly 25% of manufacturing companies project growth of more than 10% in the next five years. 50 percent of companies plan to increase U.S. based production jobs by at least 5% in the next five years. [2]
    - Manufacturers report the most significant business impact of the talent shortage is their inability to meet customer demand.[1]

Recognizing these sector issues, the Phoenix Partnership received an RJRI planning grant and worked to identify the skills gaps and issues in the Rhode Island manufacturing industry. The Phoenix Partnership surveyed manufacturing companies to understand training priorities, worked with the Rhode Island Manufacturing Association (RIMA) to better understand broad

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[1] The Manufacturing Institute & Deloitte (2015). The Skills Gap in US Manufacturing; 2015 and Beyond. Web, 20 Sept. 2015.

[2] National Association of Manufacturers (2014), Overcoming the Manufacturing Skills Gap: A Guide for Building Workforce Ready Talent in Your Community. Web, 20 Sept. 2015.

industry needs, and organized a series of planning meetings among employer partners to discuss training needs. The training priorities identified through these efforts included:

- The need to address individual and structural barriers to providing training, such as:
    - Excessive turnover of new employees due to a lack of manufacturing knowledge.
    - Long recruiting time for new employees due to a lack of readily available qualified candidates.
    - Lack of an assessment tool to identify critical skills gaps.
    - An aging workforce and few new employees to fill open positions following retirements (i.e., lack of an employment pipeline).
    - Barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare) and excessive costs of sending employees to training programs.
    - Lack of internal and external trainers available to provide training.
    - Lack of a consistent training curriculum that can be utilized by all manufacturers.
    - Lack of accessible public transportation for new employees.
    - Having many employees who speak English as a Second Language.
    - Lack of formal career development plans for individual employees.
- The need to train for specific skills in incumbent workers:
    - Knowledge and utilization of "Lean Manufacturing," including the Lean philosophy and Lean tools.
    - Leadership, communication, and coaching skills (critical to advancement).
    - Computer literacy.

Based on these identified needs, the partnership worked to train newly hired and incumbent manufacturing workers in Lean Manufacturing, which is a program for continuous improvement that helps to improve productivity by reducing waste, reducing product defects, and empowering employees. The training program was designed to decrease turnover and increase productivity in the manufacturing sector within Rhode Island.

II. Grant History

Prior to receiving the RJRI planning grant, Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc. had received DLT funding through the Incumbent Worker program, which is training program designed to provide employees with training on a specific skill or competency, and requires a 50% match from the company for every aspect of the training. The training provided by the Phoenix Partnership through the RJRI grant was designed to provide current employees with a broader base of knowledge about manufacturing. The different organizations involved in the Phoenix Partnership had never worked together prior to applying for and receiving the RJRI planning grant. The group of partners came together after the President of Hyman Brickle & Son suggested to one of the staff members that they put together a grant for the RJRI program. The RJRI grant seemed particularly promising to them because they heard that if they were approved and funded for the program that it would be much easier to get approved for future grants. They

recruited companies to take part by examining lists of companies and asking those with whom they had prior relationships if they wanted to join in the effort. Ideally, they wanted to include manufacturing companies across the state. They also worked with the New England Employer's Association to learn more about companies to include in the initiative. Once they had selected the initial group, they organized bi-weekly meetings to discuss the grant plans, first for the planning grant, and eventually for the implementation grant. The meetings were held at different locations each time, and often they met at the RIMA headquarters due to its central location.

III. Goals and Objectives

The partnership was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current and projected workforce needs in the manufacturing industry. The Partnership worked to train newly hired and incumbent workers to meet the demands of their workplaces and to prepare them for advancement within their companies by increasing their knowledge and utilization of Lean Manufacturing. Lean Manufacturing is a program for continuous improvement that helps to increase workplace productivity by reducing waste, reducing product defects, and empowering employees. Though employers are often at different stages regarding implementation, Lean Manufacturing is viewed as a best practice within the manufacturing field, so generally employers understand the value of training employees on Lean practices.

The goal for the Phoenix Partnership was to develop the Manufacturing Center of Excellence (MCE), which would be the umbrella organization encompassing all training programs and courses. The MCE would be a resource for companies and workers to develop innovative training solutions to support industry growth and best practices and ensure that recent hires and incumbent employees are equipped to meet the needs of RI manufacturers. This center would assist regional employers in filling more positions, sustaining employment, and increasing internal career advancement.

The Phoenix Partnership worked to meet the following goal:

1. Design and implement a training program to address three different levels of skill sets (basic, intermediate, advanced) that cover gaps in manufacturing knowledge and competencies.

Specifically, the Phoenix Partnership sought to meet the following objective:

- Provide 40 participants with the contents of the training program and additional support services (e.g., childcare, transportation) as needed.

IV. Partnerships

The Phoenix Partnership brought together a variety of industry employers within the manufacturing sector as well as other partners to help with referrals, training content, and industry expertise. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc.	Lead Applicant: Responsible for leading training efforts; coordinating partners to design and implement the three-level training program; ensuring the curriculum was developed in a manner that is consistent with the needs of all employer partners, employees, and the industry at large.
Aspen Aerogels, Bouckaert Industrial Textiles, Becker Manufacturing Company, Vibco, Inc.	Responsible for identifying employees for participation in the training series; providing insight into training needs at their respective organization; overseeing participant management of their own employees; conducting post-training and on-the-job evaluations (designed by the Phoenix Partnership) in order to monitor how the training impacted worker performance in practice.
Rhode Island Manufacturing Association	Responsible for spreading the word of the training program to other manufacturing employees; working to be the administrative home for the Manufacturing Center of Excellence.
Polaris MEP	Responsible for developing training program based on training needs; providing instruction for program series (Module 1).
New England Institute of Technology (NEIT)	Responsible for developing training program based on training needs; providing instruction for program series (Module 2-5); providing training space for Manufacturing Essentials series; conducting site visits to the partners' manufacturing facilities.
Employers Association of the Northeast	Responsible for providing industry outreach and expertise regarding the training program for incumbent workers that would benefit companies; assisting with employee career growth.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

The partnership hired a facilitator to help write the grant proposal and run the industry partner meetings. The content for the specific training modules was initially outlined by the industry partners for the Phoenix Partnership during its meetings and was based on industry experience as well as an audit of best practices in manufacturing training courses. Five different companies (Hyman, Brickel, & Son, Inc., Aspen Aerogels, Bouckaert Industrial Textiles, Becker Manufacturing Company, and Vibco, Inc) participated in the development of the trainings. After the initial outline was created, the specific curriculum development for incumbent workers was completed by the training partners, Polaris MEP and the New England Institute of Technology. The University of Rhode Island (URI) Office of Strategic Initiatives conducted the evaluation for the Phoenix Partnership, in which URI staff member helped design the surveys and analyzed the results.

Goal # 1: Design and implement a training program to addresses three different levels of skills sets (basic, intermediate, advanced) that cover gaps in manufacturing knowledge and competencies.

Recruitment & Pre-Screening

The five employers within the partnership referred their own employees to the training series. Employers (supervisors and managers) were responsible for screening and selecting the employees for the training series. Each employer partner signed an "Employer Commitment Letter" that stated its commitment to enable employees to attend the training during work hours.

Training Series

As the first step for the MCE, Year 1 of the RJRI grant focused on the development and implementation of a training series called "Manufacturing Essentials." The Manufacturing Essentials training included a series of five classes: 1) Introduction to Lean Manufacturing, 2) Safety Practices and Procedures, 3) 5 S (Sorting, Setting in Order, Shining, Standardizing, and Sustaining), 4) Quality, Reducing Errors/Defects, and 5) Standard Operating Procedures and Productivity. This was 10-week training that met for four hours once a week from 8:00am-12:00pm at NEIT located in East Greenwich. Costs for curriculum development and any materials and supplies needed for participants were paid for through the RJRI grant. Through the RJRI grant, the Phoenix Partnership also paid for employee time at a rate of $12/hour for eight hours to attend the Manufacturing Essentials training.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Module	Skills and Abilities Gained
1) Manufacturing Essentials: Lean 101 Polaris MEP	• Correctly identify eight types of wastes experienced within the industry. • Identify, diagnose, implement and document using Lean tools to strategically grow business through continuous improvement. • Understand how to contribute to a Lean Journey within an organization to create a foundation capable of supporting advanced tools such as cellular manufacturing, pull production strategies and visual factory.
2) Manufacturing Essentials: Safety Practices and Procedures New England Institute of Technology	• Correctly identify personal protective equipment based on hazard analysis. • Identify the impact of ergonomics on workplace safety. • Demonstrate comprehension and use of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). • Identify and implement basic lockout/ tagout needs and procedures. • Identify the various components of Behavior Based Safety.
3) Manufacturing Essentials: 5 S New England Institute of Technology	• Identify and implement five levels of Sorting. • Identify and implement five levels of Setting in Order. • Identify and implement five levels of Shining. • Identify and implement five levels of Standardizing. • Identify and implement five levels of Sustaining.
4) Manufacturing Essentials: Quality, Reduction of Error/Defects New England Institute of Technology	• Differentiate between Building Quality vs. Inspecting Quality. • Demonstrate an understanding of variation (E.g., Funnels, X&R Charts).

	● Use of necessary tools (Ex. scales, tape measures, calipers). ● Demonstrate comprehension of quality requirements (Ex. reading and understanding a document or blueprint).
5) Manufacturing Essentials: Standard Operating Procedures & Productivity New England Institute of Technology	● Demonstrate understanding of, and ability to execute, Standard Operating Procedures. ● Show comprehension of Operating Equipment Effectiveness (OEE). ● Predict how actions and strategies in OEE impact the bottom line. ● Use an Hour by Hour Chart. ● Demonstrate comprehension of why Standard Operating Procedures matter in ensuring predictable results.

The first class (Manufacturing Essentials: Lean 101) was provided by Polaris MEP at the NEIT location; classes 2-5 were provided by NEIT. The lesson plans were designed to provide hands-on training and to specifically relate to the work environment. The companies wanted the training to be interactive and engaging and included homework the trainees could bring back to the workplace. For example, during the 5 S class, training participants would take before and after pictures of their workspaces to demonstrate the organizational learning objectives. Participants had to complete all modules in order to graduate and could miss only one class during the course of the training series. In addition to post-module testing through the training provider and student evaluations of the course modules, each employee who completed a module was evaluated (on the job) by their employer, using a standard evaluation created by the partnership, to ensure the evaluation was consistent throughout the industry.

The Phoenix Partnership initially planned to run two cohorts through the Manufacturing Essential training series simultaneously, but decided this was not sufficient to maintain the appropriate threshold of employees needed to ensure productivity at the companies. Therefore, it held one cohort of 20 training participants at a time. The partnership wanted each training to include no more and no fewer than 20 participants.

During the first implementation year of the grant, the Phoenix Partnership developed a plan for the two additional training series, the Manufacturing Development Series and the Advanced Manufacturing Series, which would be rolled out over the next couple of years. The plan for these intermediate- and advanced-level trainings was to offer employers more in-depth training for their employees to meet their developing workforce needs. The idea of these trainings would be that once employees have successfully completed the Manufacturing Essentials series, intermediate and advanced courses could be taken “a la carte” as selected by their employers. This would help ensure that employees are focused on obtaining skills that are most relevant to the needs of their employers, both in their current positions, and in more advanced roles. The Phoenix Partnership, through the RJRI grant, planned to pay for 50% of employee time at a rate of $13/hour for eight hours for all Manufacturing Development Series modules, with the other 50% paid for by employers.

Additional Support

Trainees were offered transportation and childcare services to facilitate access to the training series. All of the modules were intentionally offered during working hours, and employees were compensated for their time by their employers (who could receive reimbursement through RJRI). To execute the training process, employees in need of childcare had the option of utilizing a site specific day care facility or receive reimbursement for child care services up to $20/hour for the first child and $10/hour for each additional child. While the majority of the employees were taking classes during their normal working hours and did not need childcare services, many of the manufacturing partners operate on multiple shifts, and the Phoenix Partnership was dedicated to ensuring that all employees had an equal opportunity to

benefit from the training modules. Reimbursement for transportation was offered based on miles traveled at a rate of $.54 per mile and some employers organized ride-sharing options among participants or encouraged them to identify alternative forms of travel for which they would be reimbursed.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Effective Meeting Strategies

The Phoenix Partnership found that rotating the planning meetings to different companies was helpful so that every company had similar experiences and expectations for the amount of time partners were away from their sites.

Successful Training Curriculum

The Phoenix Partnership was particularly pleased with the presentation of the training curriculum by instructors at NEIT and Polaris MEP, so it planned to continue its partnership with these groups.

Employer Partner Buy-In

Overall, the Phoenix Partnership was proud of the employer partner involvement in the development and implementation of the training program. Leaders of the companies were involved with and committed to the training program, and this helped to ensure successful recruitment and that training content pertained to current employer needs. The use of "Employer Commitment Letters" helped to ensure ongoing commitment to the training program from the employer partners.

In addition, the Phoenix Partnership identified several new employer partners which expanded its partnership list. This increased its ability to move workers from training to employment. Expanding the sector partnership was key to creating an efficient training to employment pipeline.

Recruitment

Meeting Recruitment Goals

The Phoenix Partnership was able to recruit participants for its training series without problems. The employees were interested in taking the training, so the partnership did not experience difficulties in meeting its targeted enrollment goals.

Trainee Barriers

Most training participants did not encounter any consistent barriers that kept them from successful completion of the training series. The partnership noted that one training participant was unable to complete the training program due to family issues, but this was identified as an outlier.

Training

Successfully Meeting Training Outcomes

Overall, the Phoenix Partnership believed it met its intended goals and objectives. The curriculum was successful, and employees appreciated learning the content that was presented and how it connected directly to their work practices. The partnership was dedicated to changing the curriculum as needed to reflect employer demand. As part of their evaluation strategies, employers found that workforce productivity for employees who took part in the training improved. The partnership found that the RJRI training seemed to help newer employers most whereas the previously-funded Incumbent Training worked better for employees having been around for many years but needed specific skills or a competency to improve their productivity or move to a new position within the company.

Transition from Training to Employment

This grant was specifically designed for incumbent employees already employed at these companies. As a result, all participants were already employed.

Other

Hiring a Facilitator

Hiring a facilitator to help write the grant and help to facilitate meetings and decision-making was identified as a strength because the person hired was not an employee of the companies so was able to provide helpful, unbiased suggestions to the partnership. In addition, the partnerships brought in specialists to consult as needed.

The partnership came close to meeting its enrollment and completion goals. The table below details the number of participants who took part in the various trainings during 2016:

Table 3. Performance Metrics

IG-24 Phoenix Partnership (Hyman Brickle)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Manufacturing Essentials - (2 cohorts) (Incumbents)	9/7/16	2/1/17	40	38	40	36
Other Objectives						
Total participants that received OSHA 10 card					40	33 (3 participants already had a card)
Total participants that earned academic credits					40	37
Total participants promoted due to training					40	Ongoing
Total participants that received increased wages due to training					40	14
Additional Partners added					TBD	5

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Partner Coordination

The biggest challenge of the grant was related to the coordination of getting all five partner companies on board, ensuring each company had someone to attend regular meetings, and tailoring the training to meet the needs of companies (e.g., different competencies of Lean, different opinions). As such, scheduling and holding meetings with all the partners also proved to be difficult. For example, one of the smaller companies that was involved had to miss multiple meetings during the first year, so the partnership saw less participation from this company than others. While the coordination of companies was a challenge, the Phoenix Partnership also found this to be an incredible strength in that it was able to pull everyone together and design a training program that worked for employees at all five companies, and regularly adjusted the program based on employer and employee needs.

Convincing Industry Employers to Join the Partnership

Hyman Brickle & Son, Inc. also found it challenging to convince some of the interested partner companies of the benefits of the training using the Lean model. The companies who were already utilizing the model were easier to convince than the companies who had no immediate understanding of the process. However, once information was shared, the group seemed to converge quite easily on the need and importance of the training.

Recruitment

Broadening Language Requirements

The partnership mentioned that employees in the initial training series were required to speak English because the training was only provided in that language. Thus, a future idea determined by the partner members was to design materials in Spanish due to the influx/prominence of employees who are native Spanish speakers and who may benefit from learning the material in their native language to guarantee full acquisition.

Trainee Lack of Ability to Complete the Full Training Series

Another challenge of the grant was identifying employees who could take part in the full training series (four hours, once a week for 10 weeks). The training was held during work hours, thus it required employees to be away from their job for half a day each week during the training series. Convincing supervisors to allow their employees to take time off (essentially sacrificing short-term productivity) to attend the training proved to be difficult for recruitment efforts.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Some participants had difficulties with locating viable transportation options because the training was held in a different location from their employment. Though NEIT is quite centrally

located within the state, this still required participants to identify transportation to areas with which they were less familiar. However, the partnership was able to work with participants to identify viable options so that this would not impede successful program completion.

Training

Implementing Both Cohorts

The Phoenix Partnership had initially proposed to complete two cohorts during the first year of the grant (with the second cohort starting two weeks after the first), but the partnership was forced to delay starting the second cohort because it needed to make sure there were not too many employees away each week from the production line. Member companies were not able to sacrifice any more employee hours than could be required for one cohort of participants. Therefore, the partnership decided to only hold one cohort at a time, and wait to start the second cohort after the first cohort had graduated.

Navigating Training Logistics

One challenge dealt with employees navigating between time at the job and time at the training on the actual day of the training. For example, some employers required employees to come to work before going to the 8:00am training, whereas other employers did not have this expectation. Lunch expectations were also challenging because companies had to determine expectations regarding the amount the time employees were allotted for lunch, and as a result, the partnership experienced issues relating to the coordination of lunch policies between the various partner companies. Each company had to identify these logistical issues and come up with a plan that all employees understood.

Transition from Training to Employment

Navigating the Shift from Traditional to Lean Manufacturing

The reality of the Lean Manufacturing model is that it requires a cultural shift from the traditional model of manufacturing. This model requires employees to maintain a clean, organized work environment, while also requiring an in-depth use of metrics, analysis, and supervisor observation. Employees have stated that maintaining their position at their respective company is more difficult because the Lean model requires employees to think in new ways. Therefore, while this model may improve job retention, some employees consider it too demanding. Therefore, the partnership learned the importance of identifying employees that are the right fit for the jobs and providing career development options for them regardless of their career stage.

Other

Although the Phoenix Partnership set out to increase the wages of and career advancement of incumbent workers, initially there was no system available to track which

participants received wage increases or promotions in year one so tracking program effectiveness was difficult for this period. A tracking system was implemented in year 2.

VIII. Sustainability

The Phoenix Partnership's intent is to operate the MCE well beyond the granting period. To this end, the partners have agreed on a provisional structure for management and funding of the MCE in the absence of continued state funding. RIMA has been identified as a possible management partner for the MCE. The Phoenix Partnership has made it a priority to ensure ownership of the developed curriculum modules (after an initial one to two year period of exclusivity) in order to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the training program. This ownership will keep the costs to employers down, when there is no longer funds for reimbursement of wage hours and employee training costs.

Furthermore, the partnership envisions a funding model in which multiple manufacturing industry employers pay a fee for membership to the MCE partnership, in order to benefit from the training services offered, and then continue to pay for employee training on a per employee basis, estimated at cost of $112.50 per employee, per class, well below the average pricing for industry training classes. As the membership in the MCE increases, through promotional efforts of RIMA (with support from the metrics from the program evaluation), the cost of management of the MCE will continue to decrease per member. The Phoenix partners will also seek funds for the MCE from philanthropic and private institution interested in bolstering employment, manufacturing, and economic development in Rhode Island.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the Phoenix Partnership in executing this training program:

- Design training materials in Spanish to ensure Spanish-speaking employees can take part in the training series
- Send the newest employees to the Manufacturing Essential training series because they seemed to benefit more from the training content.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the Phoenix Partnership:

- Have meetings at different sites to accommodate schedules and ensure all companies have similar obligations regarding travel time.
- Ensure commitment from the top leaders of the employer partners through meeting involvement, training content relevant to employer needs, and the use of commitment letters.
- Hire a facilitator to write the grant and facilitate meetings and decision-making processes.

- Provide funding through the grant to pay for employee time while at the training program to ensure employees receive full compensation and help employers recruit for the training.
- Conduct post-evaluations for participants with their supervisors to help see if the training actually had an impact on workforce productivity.
- Ensure direct connections between work environment/practices and the training content.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the Phoenix Partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Provide resources to expand the RJRI training program to include new companies and individuals in the training series. This would help address workforce needs in the manufacturing sector and build upon the successes in this program.
- Encourage partnerships to utilize a facilitator when one employer partner is the lead agency. This was a positive strategy for this partnership when working with other employer partners, some that would be considered competitors. The facilitator allows for companies to be less concerned about employee "poaching".
- Encourage employers to have a plan in place to avoid disruptions to the production line when employees are away at training, such as allowing another worker to pick up the hours.
- For incumbent trainings, ensure evaluations include a post-evaluation related to workplace productivity.
- Continue to provide resources for transportation, childcare, and tuition-related expenses to overcome any barriers to program completion for participants.
- Facilitate grantees to develop materials in the primary languages of the employees, such as Spanish, to ensure that participants who speak languages beyond English can participants in the trainings. This might include partnering with a Latino service agency who could also potentially bring new recruits to fill any pipeline issues.
- When partnerships want to develop centers, such as the Manufacturing Center of Excellence, ensure larger initiatives properly budget to ensure they have the support and resources needed to meet these larger goals.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Partnership for Real IT Jobs

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Partnership for Real IT Jobs

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Partnership for Real IT Jobs (PRITJ) was formed to support the growth of technology talent in Rhode Island. Specifically, it sought to address the following needs:

- Rhode Island faces a shortage of information technology employees.
- According to a survey conducted by Tech Collective (TC), only 65% of employers reported their IT talent base was "adequate" for filling positions. TC also found that these employers reported it difficult to fill positions in the IT sector, especially positions related to software development, business analysis, programming, and web design.
- When companies traditionally recruit, they often seek job candidates with college-level degrees and work experience, even though they are not always the credentials that are needed for the jobs, leading to expensive recruitment processes for companies.

II. Grant History

Opportunity@Work is a Washington D.C. based non-profit that seeks to help communities implement TechHire initiatives. TechHire is a 2015 federal initiative to streamline the technology industry and focus it on skills-based labor, and Rhode Island has been involved in implementing this initiative as the nation's first TechHire state. In an effort to help Rhode Island implement TechHire strategies, Opportunity@Work worked to unite LaunchCode, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in St. Louis, MO, to grow new technology talent and TC, a Rhode Island-based technology industry workforce intermediary, in a RJRI partnership focused on unifying and streamlining the technology industry. As an out of state entity, LaunchCode did not have experience with the DLT or grants through the Rhode Island state government, but its other partners, especially Opportunity@Work and TC, were both familiar with grants in Rhode Island.

III. Goals and Objectives

The original objective of the Partnership for Real IT jobs was to create a support system to introduce new technology talent to employers in Rhode Island. In pursuit of this objective, the PRITJ sought to meet the following goals:

1. Place 250 technology apprentices with at least 100 companies over three years.
    - Specifically, the PRITJ sought to place forty apprentices in year one, ninety in year two, and 120 in year three.
2. Convert at least eighty percent of apprentices to full-time employees.
3. Partner with fifty companies in year one and at least 100 companies by the end of year three.

The PRITJ later modified its training program so that it was less focused on the delivery of an apprenticeship program and focused part of its program on the delivery of "bootcamp" training. Its goals included:

1. Recruit 595 participants to complete an online skills assessment through LaunchCode's website.
2. Recruit and deliver training to 100 participants in CS-50x boot camp training.
3. Place forty participants into 90-day IT apprenticeships.

IV. Partnership

It was clear to the PRITJ that training programs were needed in Rhode Island because many potential employees possess strong skills but lack the necessary credentials to be placed with local companies. Tech Collective and Opportunity@Work were already familiar with the work of LaunchCode in other states (like Missouri and Florida) and they thought the framework delivered by LaunchCode elsewhere would be beneficial if executed in Rhode Island. The DLT was perhaps the most important participant in uniting the PRITJ, as it brought all of the partners together at a technical assistance meeting where the program and reporting requirements were outlined. It was at this meeting that different partners exchanged information and ideas for future collaboration.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

LaunchCode	Lead Applicant: Responsible for assisting Tech Collective in creating apprenticeship opportunities with industry employer partners; creating and running an application process for these apprenticeships; helping to place applicants in apprenticeships; engaging in program recruitment through digital marketing; conducting outreach to education providers; attending networking events; working with local organizations; offering its CS50x program to interested participants.
Opportunity@Work	Responsible for referred registrants on the national TechHire.org website to LaunchCode as a preferred provider to technology apprenticeship opportunities; referring eligible candidates to LaunchCode's apprenticeship program; acting as the main liaison between the partnership and the DLT.
Tech Collective	Responsible for creating apprenticeship opportunities with employer partners; referring graduates of its coding bootcamp to LaunchCode's online application for apprenticeship opportunities.
SENEDIA	Responsible for training and certifying cybersecurity talent; referring graduates of its fast-track computer programming education program to LaunchCode's online application for apprenticeship opportunities.
Amica, Atrion, Citizen's Bank, CVS, Purvis Systems, ShapeUp, OpenWorks Group	Responsible for acting as an apprenticeship training site for program participants.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

LaunchCode initially sought to pursue a goal of placing 250 apprentices with companies through a five part implementation plan. That plan later changed so that the PRITJ sought to have 595 participants complete an online skills assessments, enroll 100 participants in a CS50x bootcamp, and place 40 apprentices with Rhode Island technology companies. To advance these efforts, the PRITJ set out to build a pipeline of candidates to the apprenticeship program, work with education and training partners to deliver fast-track education programs to the community, evaluate and verify candidate skills prior to apprenticeship placement, recruit and engage employer partners, and place apprentices with its employer partners.

Building a pipeline of candidates to the apprenticeship program.

LaunchCode planned to hire a Candidate Recruitment Manager to recruit candidates through digital marketing, participate in community outreach to education providers, attend meetup events and networking events, and form partnerships with local organizations, such as the Providence Public Library, to supply the necessary credentials to under-qualified job applicants to make them employable. The PRITJ was specifically interested in recruiting from local colleges and universities, as well as local veteran's organizations, but its recruitment population reflected a wide range of participants from both targeted and non-targeted populations. Those involved in the PRITJ, as well as online education providers, were asked to refer their own graduates to LaunchCode's online application so that they were aware of apprenticeship opportunities.

Working with education and training partners to deliver fast-track education programs to the community.

The PRITJ also planned to work with IT education providers and the higher education community to identify candidates for the apprenticeship program. In addition to the programs that were already being offered by SENEDIA and Tech Collective, LaunchCode offered CS-50x bootcamp training, which combined a free online programming course offered by Harvard with in-person class sessions, mentorship, and group projects. The bootcamp training was a sixteen week program that met twice a week from 5:30pm-8:30pm at the University of Rhode Island's Providence Campus. In addition to offering the CS-50x training to a planned 100 participants, the PRITJ planned to form relationships with higher education institutions so it would have feedback about best practices for student selection and to share information about the skills that IT employers are seeking.

Evaluating and verifying candidate skills prior to apprenticeship placement.

LaunchCode assesses the skills of prospective employees through a two-part evaluation process prior to placing prospective apprentices with companies. The first part of its evaluation occurred through its website, where it allowed participants to complete a coding test, aptitude test, and an open-ended questionnaire that measured past work experience and motivation in

computer programming. Candidates who did not score high enough on this initial test were directed to other services where they could pursue educational opportunities that could help them score higher if they decided to re-apply (e.g., SENEDIA's cybersecurity training, Tech Collective's computer programming courses, the Providence Public Library's Rhode Coders program, and other online platforms). The candidates who passed the initial stage of the evaluation process took part in a Skype interview where their coding knowledge and soft skills were assessed. Candidates who needed improvement on their interview skills were provided with career coaching and then encouraged to interview with employers for apprenticeships when they were prepared for the interview. Candidates passing the Skype interview were paired with companies to complete 90-day apprenticeships.

Recruiting and engaging employer partners.

To recruit and engage industry employers, LaunchCode planned to directly recruit IT companies through its Company Relations Manager. This Manager would explain LaunchCode's apprenticeship model to the companies, help them identify barriers to hiring new employees, encourage companies to register open positions in its database to help match their companies with apprentices, and help to minimize the perception of risk that comes with hiring new employees by allowing companies to test new hires through the apprenticeship program.

Placing apprentices with employer partners.

The PRITJ planned to place forty participants into ninety day apprenticeships in the IT sector. LaunchCode's Company Relations Manager identified candidates who were screened through both phases of the interview process and arranged for them to interview with companies that were hiring. The PRITJ envisioned placing candidates into personalized apprenticeships where participants were able to learn skills that addressed common industry skills gaps. Ideally, apprentices would learn to program in languages used by the company, effectively use the company's software, learn company specific technologies, practice planning and organizing skills, engage in problem solving, and develop soft skills. Once an apprentice was placed with a company, the Company Relations Manager solicited feedback from both the company and the apprentice to address any additional needs that arose.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Forming community relationships

The PRITJ was able to form a relationship with the Providence Public Library which started a coding club called Rhode Coders to help new programmers get into the field. This program changed its curriculum to better address the needs of potential program applicants, and broadened awareness of the program in the community.

Making strong industry connections

The PRITJ formed relationships with companies that hired multiple apprentices. These relationships were valuable to the strength of the program and helped show the value of the program's outcomes

Recruitment

Use of networking events

Recruiting was improved by attending meet-up events and other networking events where people meet to code together in their free time.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

Classes were held in downtown Providence, and the PRITJ was concerned that transportation would pose a barrier to participants who lived outside the city. This challenge was easily overcome, however, by the PRITJ providing participants with bus passes using grant funds.

Training

Achieving recruitment goals

The PRITJ successfully enrolled over 100 candidates into the CS-50x bootcamp training (109 officially enrolled), with 26 participants completing the training and earning certificates. However, only five of those 26 that completed the training program enrolled in an apprenticeship, and only four completed their internship. A high number of those earning certificates were placed in an apprenticeship program.

Transition from Training to Employment

The PRITJ did not discuss achievements related to the transition from training to employment.

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Working in a competitive industry

One of the challenges of partnering with other organizations in the highly competitive technology industry is knowing the right amount of competition and collaboration to tolerate. During the initial phases of program development, Launch Code felt other companies were wary about the PRITJ's training because the companies viewed it as a threat to themselves. Further, Launch Code perceived the Rhode Island technology industry as having a "survival of the fittest" attitude. Launch Code was worried that this competitive atmosphere hurt the collaborative environment, but conversations with DLT helped the partners overcome some of their ultra-competitive tendencies.

Unclear partnership leadership

Because LaunchCode, Opportunity@Work, and TC all had influence over the direction of the partnership, partnership leadership was unclear and inconsistent. Further, there was a lack of effective communication between the partnership leadership that caused confusion over partnership direction and program implementation. The lack of communication and unclear leadership between the lead organizations impacted the partnership's industry partners, who were unsure who to approach with problems or who had authority to make decisions.

Recruitment

Gap between program goals and program applications/completion

The PRITJ expected to receive interest from 595 participants interested in completing the online skills assessment but only received 470 applications. Several participants also began the skills assessment but did not finish it. Further, the PRITJ had a targeted recruitment number of forty participants to take part in the apprenticeship program, yet only five enrolled and four completed the apprenticeship program. This was due to the PRITJ's challenge of receiving commitments from employers to take on apprentices that were identified through the online coding assessment and skype interview process.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of proper equipment

Some participants lacked the proper equipment, like a computer or a laptop, to take part in the training. One way that this barrier was overcome was by reaching out to URI to loan computers out to students.

Difficult application process

Getting into the program was harder than participants thought, and many were not able to pass the first stages of the application process. The PRITJ does not view this as necessarily a bad thing because employers demand highly skilled coders, and a strict application process ensures participants have adequate skills.

Training

Having a non-Rhode Island-based lead organization

There were some challenges with offering training programs as an organization that came from out of state. The organization was heavily reliant on local organizations to advise it on what to expect in terms of outcomes and it might have changed how the timeline was structured based on its current experience. A lot of these challenges were overcome by having a healthy dialogue with DLT and utilizing its assistance.

Lack of industry support for apprenticeships

The Rhode Island technology industry was not used to utilizing apprentices in its workforce pipeline, and as a result did not understand the apprenticeship model the PRITJ hoped to utilize. Further, industry companies had little interest in taking on apprenticeships, and were highly reluctant to pay the $5,000 placement fee for taking on an apprentice. This lack of interest and support resulted in the PRITJ only placing four apprentices with technology companies instead of the planned 40.

Apprenticeship model incompatible with state government hiring regulations

Since private sector technology employers were reluctant to participate in the apprenticeship program, the PRITJ worked with the DLT to place apprentices in state technology positions. However, existing labor laws and hiring procedures were incompatible with the apprenticeship model, and prevented the PRITJ from placing apprentices in state positions.

Impostor syndrome and lack of soft skills

Many program participants lacked soft skills and had "imposter syndrome" (i.e., thinking they are not good enough for a position or will be discovered to be a fraud even when they are high-achieving). One way the PRITJ is seeking to overcome this challenge is by developing a mentor program that allows them to build confidence by building strong projects with a professional in the field.

High rates of dropouts

One of the key challenges were the high number of people dropping out of the CS-50x program. The PRITJ successfully recruited 109 participants into the program, yet only 26 participants completed the training. While recruitment was successful because of a strong recruiting and social media campaign, many of the participants dropped out of the program due to the rigor of the program and the fact that the program lacked a support structure for candidates lacking the necessary skills for the training.

<u>Transition from Training to Employment</u>

Receiving commitments from Rhode Island employers

The biggest challenge faced by the partnership was receiving commitments from employers to take on apprentices. The LaunchCode model identified candidates to pair with companies and paid those candidates $15 per hour during the apprenticeship period, but when those candidates are placed into positions companies are required to commit to paying a $5,000 placement fee. While there was support for programs like this elsewhere in the country, there was not similar enthusiasm for the model in Rhode Island.

<u>Other</u>

Lack of Flexibility

Launchcode is a national organization with a fixed model for their work in the technology

industry. The organization was highly reluctant to change their model to fit Rhode Island's unique economic environment, and could not easily adjust to their inability to implement the apprenticeship program. This lack of flexibility was further compounded by the fact that LaunchCode representatives working in the PRITJ on behalf of LaunchCode were reluctant to modify their organization's model without authorization from the organizational hierarchy.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-25 Partnership for Real IT Jobs (LaunchCode)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
CS50x Training - Cohort 1 (Job Seekers)	5/9/16	9/15/16	100	109	65	26
Apprenticeships (Job Seekers)	1/7/16	3/10/17	40	5	40	4
Total Employed after apprenticeships					40	4

VIII. Sustainability

As part of LaunchCode's plan for sustainability, it expected to be fully sustainable by the fourth year of operation and without funding from the DLT. The PRITJ planned to use the $5,000 conversion fee (for apprentices that are placed into full-time jobs) fund its operation. Given this fee is not compatible with most employers in Rhode Island, the PRITJ's sustainability is unclear. However, LaunchCode intends to keep operating in Rhode Island without DLT funding.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the PRITJ in executing its training program:

- Executing a program in a new state can pose unexpected challenges for meeting goals.
- Creating more conservative performance benchmarks or beginning trainings earlier in the year might increase awareness of the training program in the broader community.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the PRITJ:

- Provide public transportation passes to trainees needing transportation assistance.
- Provide necessary materials, like laptops, for trainees in need.
- Giving participants a chance to receive individualized training and on-the-job experience makes it easier to gain post-training employment.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the PRITJ, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Follow-up with participants who dropped out of the program to learn why they left and develop solutions to mitigate participant drop out.
- Add a module to teach technically skilled but soft-skill deficient participants the basic soft skills needed in the industry workforce.
- Include the cost of providing transportation and materials assistance to participants into the original proposal budget.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

The Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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The Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries, and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Real Jobs Pathway for Minorities and Women (Hire Path Program), implemented by the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Rhode Island (OIC), was designed to provide workforce readiness training for underserved populations. This program focused on providing workforce readiness training pathways for people of color and women to obtain employment in the marine trades, construction, and green industries sectors. This grant served individuals statewide, but targeted Wards 8, 9, 10 and 11 in Providence where there are the highest concentrations of minorities, and where unemployment rates range from 15.5 to 26.5% (compared to 12.9% for the city of Providence as a whole and 8.5% for the State of Rhode Island)[1].

To implement the Hire Path Program, the OIC partnered with the New England Institute, Providence Career & Technical Academy, Electric Boat, Thielsch Engineering Welding School, RISE Engineering, Ace Mattress, the Providence Foundation, and Amos House. Through RJRI planning grant activities, the industry partners identified multiple job openings within the next 24 months in the following occupational categories:

- Operatives: Couriers ($22,880 annual salary), Installers ($29,120 annual salary), Lighting technicians ($31,200 annual salary), Residential energy efficiency technicians ($31,200), and Warehouse staff ($29,120 annual salary).
- Administrative support workers: Administrative assistants ($30,160 annual salary).
- Technicians: Field technicians ($27,040 annual salary).
- Craft workers: Electrical apprentices ($29,120 annual salary).

Some of these businesses had state and federal contracts that required meeting goals related to employing more women and minorities; as a result, companies hoped to fill at least 20 percent of available positions with women and/or people from racial and ethnic minority groups.

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[1] Unemployment statistics from the 2015 5-year American Community Survey, 2010 Census tracts. Age 16+ via Data Spark.

The broader goal of this grant went beyond attaining jobs for underserved populations. The OIC mission focuses on providing low-income people the tools and support needed to overcome socioeconomic inequality. Therefore, as part of this mission the Hire Path Program focused on creating systems change that generates "hiring pathways" for minorities and women in sectors that have been heavily dominated by a White workforce.

II. Grant History

OIC originated as a small task force developed in 1967 in response to the civil rights movement, and over the next 18 years, transformed into the primary community development center in Providence and the larger region of Rhode Island. The organization has served the Rhode Island community in responding to pressing urban needs and helping people of color gain skills in order to obtain jobs and be successful.

Until 1992 when it closed due to economic challenges, OIC received broad national and local funding support including the United Way, the Rhode Island Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, federal and state governments, and major Rhode Island corporations. For example, OIC received a grant through a Green Jobs Program from former Mayor of Providence David Cicilline, and this was viewed as a breakthrough program for OIC in determining the processes for referral, training, and job placement. OIC designed the Real Jobs Rhode Island training program based on the successes of the Green Jobs Program.

In 2009, a group of volunteers, driven by community need, began taking steps to reestablish OIC, and in July of 2010, OIC became operational due to persisting under- or unemployment in urban neighborhoods within the broader region and to contribute to the future of economic development in the state. The RJRI grant program was one of the only training programs that fit with its training program vision, so OIC saw it as a good opportunity for the organization. OIC received an RJRI planning grant that helped them gauge current job needs, and developed the Hire Path Program to respond to those needs.

III. Goals and Objectives

The Hire Path Program sought to create a unique employment training program that developed marketable, sought after skills in industries that have both available positions and that pay living wages. Since job training programs often result in low-skilled/ low-compensation positions that, while part of a career pathway, require substantially more training and on-the-job experience before employees reach sustainable wage levels, the Hire Path Program partnership aimed to provide skills that allowed for immediate employment in positions that provide wages high enough to sustain a family and that also have growth opportunities and a level of job security.

The Hire Path Program was therefore established with the following goal:

- Prepare and refer people of color and women to training programs in marine and energy-related trades that lead to long-term employment opportunities at living wages.

As part of this, the Hire Path Program worked to:

- Support the strategic workforce development planning underway that is related to the demographic trends in Rhode Island.
- Create a steady pipeline of candidates of color and women for training in marine and energy related trades.
- Provide a pathway to employment that offers a living wage to candidates of color and women.
- Broaden and strengthen employment opportunities for people of color and women to new industries and to higher wages.
- Provide work readiness services to ex-offenders and the long term unemployed for employment.

Specifically, the partnership sought to meet the following objective:

- Provide work readiness training (two cohorts annually) and refer 110 people to employer partner training.

IV. Partnerships

Through industry research and outreach, OIC identified the construction, energy, and marine trades as target areas for employment. The partnership brought together a variety of industry employers in the marine trades, construction, and green industries as well as other partners to help with referrals, worker readiness, and employment because the partners had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population and ensure successful employment. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC)	Responsible for conducting intake interviews and assessments for identification of skills and employment interests; developing and providing workforce readiness training program; referring participants to appropriate further training opportunities; recruiting participants through its network of community contacts; assisting candidates in finding available internship and employment positions and if needed finding alternative worksites for those who completed internships.
Electric Boat, Thielsch Engineering/ RISE Engineering, Providence-Cranston Workforce Investment Board, ACE Mattress, Amos House	Responsible for participating in recruitment efforts to bring interested candidates into the program; collaborating to develop a pipeline of industry career-readiness education and training programs; sharing information about employer skills needs, hiring requirements, and other factors that would enable the workforce and education systems to effectively respond to employer needs; providing feedback to the program; identifying existing employment and internship opportunities; considering job ready applicants for vacant positions and long-term employment.
Providence Foundation	Responsible for informing members of the initiative; encouraging members to provide job placement opportunities.
Providence Technical & Career Academy	Responsible for referring parents and families to the training initiative.
RIPTA	Responsible for providing expertise regarding training content.
New England Institute of Technology (SAMI program)	Responsible for providing training to participants as necessary.
Workforce Solutions	Responsible for referring and assess clients to the training program; developing an individual employment plan for each referral.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1: Prepare and refer people of color and women to training programs in marine and energy related trades that lead to long-term employment opportunities that pay living wages.

Recruitment & Pre-Screening

The Hire Path Program implemented a communications plan that guided its outreach efforts. This included communication with the Providence Career Technical Academy (PCTA), community-based organizations, women's organizations, churches, community leadership, elected officials from the four targeted wards, and social media.

Once individuals were referred to or expressed interested in the RJRI program, all potential participants completed a two-page intake assessment to gather information about their skill levels and employment interests. Once they finished the assessments, the Hire Path Program scheduled an hour-long appointment at the OIC with each person for further assessment and an interview. As part of the assessment (four to five pages long), the Hire Path Program utilized the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) test (assessment of basic skills for those with lower education) and the Harrington O'Shea interest inventory (career interest assessment). During the interview, the OIC staff asked the applicants about their capabilities, hardships, and needs. This helped the program learn if the applicant needed additional referrals before taking the workforce readiness program, such as English as a second language. For example, applicants needed to be able to fully understand the training in English before taking part. The interview component also helped to learn if an applicant had special skills, as this helped the Hire Path Program in placing individuals with a particular training program; and helped in determining if an applicant required additional supports to take part in the training, such as bus passes or clothing. If an applicant was not qualified, had drug or mental health issues, or did not have an interest in one of the identified industries, the Hire Path Program redirected them to other human service organizations, such as the Providence Center, or other businesses seeking their skills and motivation.

Workforce Readiness Training

After the assessment, all applicants were provided with basic labor market information and career guidance. If they were interested in continuing to work with OIC after receiving those services, participants could take part in the workforce readiness training program. This was a two-week program that ran Monday-Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm. In this program, participants were coached, engaged, and empowered to become capable and competitive candidates for employment. This training also provided participants opportunities to complete mock interviews with human resources from Rhode Island companies, develop a job search plan, and learn

financial aspects of being employed. During the training, participants worked on resumes and cover letters and gained workplace knowledge.

The workforce readiness training enabled the Hire Path Program to not only see trainees in action in class, but also to assess if participants were punctual, were comfortable interacting with others, and if they were listening. This allowed OIC to determine if each individual was "workforce ready." By the time individuals finished the workforce readiness training, the OIC staff wanted to be confident that each individual was ready to be referred to one of its industry partners.

The following chart displays the topics covered during the training period.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Training Activities
Development of a job search plan, identification of resources, facilitation of mock interviews, development of employment portfolio, understanding the RI workforce, and financial aspects of being employed
Topics Covered
Pitching yourself; developing your network; working cooperatively; using effective collaboration skills; accepting criticism; benefits of diversity; learning to listen; effective communication; handling constructive feedback; social media communication; electronic etiquette; the value of punctuality and reliability; work ethic; setting priorities; responding to/caring for customers; avoiding demotivation; creating a personal action plan; creativity self-assessment/improving creativity; identifying fallacies/questioning beliefs; fact vs. opinion; inductive and deductive reasoning; cultivating creativity and innovation; problem-solving; resolving/dealing with conflict; understanding the Rhode Island workforce; leadership style

Job Training, Internships, & Job Placement

Once individuals completed the workforce readiness training and received the "OIC stamp of approval," OIC then worked with interested program graduates to place them in a training program within a sector of interest to the individual that made sense based on their skills and aptitudes, including welding, manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, construction, financial services, healthcare, or information technology (e.g., NEIT (SAMI), Thielsch Welding School, on-the-job training at RISE Engineering, Providence Career and Technical Academy). These existing trainings consisted of instructional curriculum and hands-on experience in the marine trades and energy trades. Candidates who took part in the Thielsch Welding School training, a program administered by the Providence-Cranston Workforce Investment Board, received stipends of $70 per week for six weeks. Theilsch trainees also received support from OIC to encourage their completion of the program.

Candidates who successfully completed training advanced to complete industry-based internships at either industry/training partners or another appropriate job. Following successful internships, candidates were eligible for available employment at the industry partners or to be assisted by the Hire Path Program in finding alternative work sites based on their individual needs.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Identification of New Partners

In implementing the RJRI grant, OIC continued to identify new employer partners, such as Johnson & Johnson, from within Rhode Island, which helped improve its list of potential placements for individuals who complete their workforce readiness training programs. OIC staff increasingly became involved in job growth initiatives targeted towards hiring more minorities in Rhode Island. This was seen as a strength regarding the sustainability of this program.

Recruitment

Successful Recruitment Practices

The recruitment efforts used by the Hire Path Program were successful in identifying participants. Its members purposefully did not take part in more recruitment efforts because it did not have the capacity to include more potential trainees. The pre-screening and assessment process, particularly the interview portion, was beneficial for identifying individuals' level of workforce readiness, needed supports, and appropriate training program referrals.

Trainee Barriers

Ability to Address Individual Personal Challenges

Being able to provide services and supports as needed to individuals was critical to the success of training participants. The personal and family challenges among each training participant were many, and varied greatly across participants. The Hire Path Program's ability to

tailor programming and identify resources from community partners to meet individual needs was critical to providing this training program. For example, with one applicant during the interview, Hire Path Program staff learned he had a Civil Engineering degree from Haiti, so they knew he could benefit from a more advanced training program so that companies could utilize his skills. In other cases, OIC worked with the Clothing Collaborative to find suits, coats and other professional clothing as needed.

Training

Focus on Quality over Quantity

The OIC staff was confident its workforce readiness training helped adequately prepare individuals for employment, and candidates stated how helpful training tasks were to program staff following employment. The OIC wanted every job candidate that completed the workforce readiness training to be viable candidates for employment (i.e., have the right skills, good attitudes, arrive on-time) because it did not want any individuals to tarnish the reputation of its training program. It strongly believed in the value of its reputation, so it focused efforts on ensuring every participant was prepared for employment. As such, it focused on the quality, and not quantity, of training program participants and graduates.

Transition from Training to Employment

Completing Training

Of the eight participants who completed the workforce readiness training during the first cohort, all were successful in completing training programs and finding employment.

Other

Ability to Persevere Through Challenges

The OIC's ability to persevere in implementing its training program was noted as a strength of the partnership. Even when OIC encountered many people and organizations who doubted them, it continued its endeavor to run the organization and run the RJRI training program. OIC's mission to change people's lives and provide opportunities for families to advance themselves is commendable. OIC wanted people from its programs to find opportunity beyond just sustaining themselves.

Table 3: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-26 The HIRE Path (OIC)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Referral to Training (Job Seekers)	3/15/16	4/29/16	10	8	10	8
Referral to Training and Career Services (Job Seekers)	7/15/16	3/10/17	100	90	50	33
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					30	20
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					TBD	Ongoing
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that are referred to additional industry-specific training					TBD	Unknown
Total Participants that exit public assistance (when applicable)					TBD	Ongoing

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Resistance to Cooperation

The staff believed that many of the challenges they faced stemmed from the reality that entities tend to operate within their silos and have their own self-interests that often do not align with the OIC and the Hire Path Program's missions. This was especially true of new partner organizations, who needed time and assistance to figure out the best ways to work with the Hire Path Program. The Hire Path Program staff recognized that systemic change across the business sector was extremely important to the success of this grant, but that this was not easy.

Difficulty Incorporating Minority Recruits into the Industry

With most of the employer partners, the Hire Path Program staff discussed that they might hire one or two people of color, which was a good starting point, but not enough to confidently state that a pipeline between the training program and the employer had been developed. Further, when one person was hired, this did not mean that every member of the staff at the organization was welcoming to this individual in such a way that the person continued working there over the long-term. As a result of these types of instances, this partnership discussed the need for cultural sensitivity training among employees and a deep understanding of administrators and supervisors to comprehend some of the challenges of new employees being, for example, the only black individual in a predominantly white workforce. Businesses that are working to improve workplace diversity through hiring may also need to ensure that supervisors and current employees are supportive and open to diversity.

Recruitment

Inability to Serve Large Populations for Recruitment

The partnership deliberately did not advertise its services because it had not felt that it could handle the likely influx of people requesting assistance. It knew the people were out there and had ideas of how to recruit, but felt it was currently meeting the needs of those who came to them through word-of-mouth and did not think they could expand to serve additional populations.

Trainee Barriers

Obstacles with Employment Requirements

Several individuals involved in the training program had difficulty fulfilling common employment requirements. The areas in which trainees faced the most difficulties were background checks, drug screenings, and skill deficiencies. Electric Boat required background checks to meet federal requirements, so this made it difficult for some participants to take part in their training. Further, a couple of individuals lacked basic computer skills, such as email and typing, and this made it difficult when, for example, a person needed to attach a resume or cover letter to an online application.

Perception of Education as an Expense, Not an Investment

The Hire Path Program noted a need to market the importance of educational opportunities to poor families who may see education or training as expensive and time-consuming rather than an investment, and thus may deem a training program, for example, not worth the time and money for their family members. These types of perceptions often kept potential applicants from moving forward with or completing the training program.

Difficulty Convincing Employers to Accommodate Minority Recruits

The Hire Path Program staff also discussed the need for employer partners to recognize, understand, and then accommodate some of the personal challenges, such as transportation issues, that made it difficult for minority populations to be successfully employed at their organization. Program staff discussed that it takes time, creativity, attitudinal change, and dedication within an organization to truly diversify its workforce, and the reality was that most organizations did not fully recognize or have the capacity to address these issues. The partnership mentioned that some key players helped with these issues, such as the minority business enterprise, which among other things, helps Black and Latino contractors build their capacity, but as a whole, many Rhode Island employers were/are not fully committed to investing in and working with employees of diverse cultures.

<u>Training and Transition from Training to Employment</u>

Difficulty Translating MOUs into Successful Hiring Programs

The program staff discussed that having a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a partner working to diversify its workforce was certainly a first step to identifying employment, but having the MOU did not necessarily mean that the partnership would immediately flourish. As an example, with Electric Boat, OIC staff had multiple meetings in an attempt to establish a pilot program for getting minorities and women hired, and even though positive relationships between the two organizations were developed, the pilot program never came to fruition due to various barriers.

<u>Other</u>

Lack of Cash Flow

On a day-to-day basis, the OIC had cash flow challenges, and were only able to employ one full time and two part-time employees. While OIC felt its current team of staff was strong, it did find its cash flow challenges to be a major barrier to making progress for the Hire Path Program.

Lack of Funding for Capacity Building

The OIC indicated it had limited capacity to work towards making systemic change. While the RJRI grant provided money for training and services, the grant did not provide funding

for capacity-building in order to introduce a new demographic into the workforce. For example, the OIC staff discussed a need to hire additional staff to embark on strategic planning, goal-setting, and implementation. They mentioned that it was difficult to get funding for those operations.

Difficulty Fulfilling High Community Expectations

The OIC also discussed that the community has set high expectations based on OIC's past successes, and while the community reputation of the OIC could also be seen as a strength, the reality is that the OIC did not have the capacity to fulfill those high expectations. Therefore, the OIC worked to balance expectations and capacity such that it did not over-promise or let individuals down.

VIII. Sustainability

OIC believes its program is highly sustainable and greatly needed; however, OIC does not believe its efforts could continue without funding from the city and state. The OIC has been working with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly, looking at the restoration of a block grant program of community service programs that would be managed by the Department of Education. The Hire Path Program utilized the implementation grant year to refine their system of intake, assessment, workforce readiness training, and referrals to training programs and employment. It did this to prepare for major investment in future years for helping larger numbers of their target populations find employment. OIC stated that hundreds of people could utilize a training program like this, but it needed to ensure there was a workable system in place prior to completing larger recruitment efforts.

In the future, the OIC believes that a staff of five or six people would be ideal, including the current staff of a CEO, Project Manager, and Office Manager. It also determined that having one staff person dedicated to development, such as grant writing, and one staff person dedicated to community engagement, such as recruitment and marketing, would be best for moving forward with true systemic change.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the Hire Path Program in executing this training program:

- While training and partnerships can help minorities obtain jobs in traditionally white fields, these efforts do not address the workplace culture that may be unwelcoming to minorities. Future grants may be well served by building in a training component of diversity appreciation for business partners.
- Capacity issues can prevent organizations from fulfilling their missions.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the Hire Path Program:

- Identify multiple employers to provide many options for individuals based on their skills and interests.
- Continue to identify new partnerships and to foster older partnerships to ensure continued focus on the hiring of women and minorities in employment areas typically held by White men.
- Utilize extensive pre-screening and assessment procedures, including an in-person interview, when enrolling individuals in the training program.
- Ensure the workforce readiness training is competency based (e.g., develop or improve cover letters, hold mock interviews).
- Ensure that each training participant is "workforce ready" and proudly communicate to employer partners and others what getting the training program stamp of approval means.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the Hire Path program, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Provide some type of funding for partnerships focused on systems change about building a diverse workforce to help them educate employers and families.
    - Consider identifying existing resources, such as through the AmeriCorps program, to help this partnership go around the state and educate businesses about how to truly work towards having a diverse workforce and to educate families about the value of education.
    - Identify (or work with an educational entity to develop) curriculum about unequal opportunity across racial groups and difficulties of being an employee of color or a woman in a traditionally White male workforce in such a way that it does not create further rifts between groups of people (something similar to what has been commissioned by the African American Policy Forum about Unequal Opportunity and Race).
    - Consider partnering with organizations, such as those found on the Rhode Island Society for Human Resource Management (https://ri.shrm.org/diversity-resources), in the next round of funding to develop diversity training for employers in Rhode Island.
- Identify employers that provide successful integration of employees of color and women and utilize these companies/organizations to help other entities develop similar best practices.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Design Forward Partnership

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Design Forward Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

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I. Sector Need

The Design Forward Partnership (DFP) was formed to strengthen and support the design sector by increasing exposure to the industry, while helping professionals gain necessary business skills and develop their careers. Through an online survey of 49 respondents, a focus group with twenty participants, and five individual interviews funded by a RJRI Planning Grant, the partnership specifically found that:

- Companies in need of design professionals were seeking employees that possessed strategic skills, visual and verbal communication ability, creative problem solving skills, and business acumen in addition to technical design skills.
- Ninety-two percent of those surveyed wanted to hire locally, but 56 percent of those respondents reported a gap between the skills they sought in applicants and the actual skills of local designers.
- The design sector is not recognized as a major economic driver, yet it has a ubiquitous presence in numerous other industries, such as manufacturing, defense, and the marine trades.
- Demand for the skills of the sector is rapidly growing, but young talent trained at institutions such as the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) are leaving the state for jobs in larger cities causing a “brain drain” in the design sector.
- Independent design contractors want to grow their businesses but lack the business skills and staff support to do so. Further, without competent employees handling their client base, small contractors are unable to dedicate the time and effort necessary to grow their businesses.

II. Grant History

DESIGNxRI is an organization seeking to promote the state’s design industry to attract business opportunities and grow design jobs in the state. It formed in 2012 and features a partner committee structure that includes representatives from all disciplines of the design industry (e.g.,

architecture, graphic arts, etc.) as well as a traditional board of directors. The organization's partner committee members include the American Institute of Architects RI (AIAri), American Institute for Graphic Arts RI (AIGA-RI), American Society of Landscape Architects-RI (ASLA-RI), Industrial Designers Society of America RI (IDSAri), International Interior Design Association (IIDA), and American Society of Interior Designers New England (ASIDNE). The organization also frequently partners with RISD and the City of Providence on its initiatives.

DESIGNxRI hesitated to establish a program with Real Jobs funding because it did not have prior experience working with the unemployed population and was unsure how a government-funded training program could meet the needs of the design sector. After learning more about the RJRI program, however, DESIGNxRI recognized a need for professional development in the design field and applied for, and was awarded, a planning grant. The planning grant, which allowed the partnership to conduct a survey, form an industry focus group, and conduct individual interviews, brought industry partners together to assess the skills needed in the design sector workforce. The resulting feedback allowed the partnership to design training programs and to seek input and feedback about the training programs through RISD, acting as the partnership's education consultant, to help guide the training programs to final form.

III. Goals and Objectives

The DFP's goal was to strengthen and support the design sector through skills and career development. It wanted to ensure that existing designers were adapting to emerging trends, emerging designers had access to the support and training needed for success, and that future members of the design sector were aware of the various design career pathways and the skills needed to pursue them. To achieve these aims, the DFP specified three goals:

1. Cultivate a talent pipeline of high school-aged students and educate them early about their potential to hone creative skills into future high-paying jobs.
    - The DFP's Advance Design Talent program was created to address this goal.
2. Reach design talent early as students graduate from college and retain talent in Rhode Island by revealing local professional work opportunities and growing the professional skills of post-graduates.
    - The DFP's Post-Graduate Design Fellowship was created to address this goal.
3. Support designers already in their careers to meet the fast changing needs of the sector.
    - The DFP's Career Exploration Program was created to address this goal.

IV. Partnership

DESIGNxRI had extensive prior experience working with companies and contractors in the design industry, and reached out to these partners during the planning grant phase to seek feedback on program design. Taylor Box Company, Orange Square, DownCity Design, Ximedica, and Bradford Soap Works were all part of this initial planning team, and stayed on as members during the implementation phase. In addition, KITE Architects, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island, and RISD Continuing Education joined the DFP for the implementation phase.

Bradford Soap Works played perhaps the largest role of all of the partners. Prior to joining the Design Forward partnership, it was already working with DESIGNxRI to train a cohort of designers in company-specific packaging design and strategic design skills that could be applied to careers with the numerous companies affiliated with Bradford. Its involvement in the DFP was an example of the value of independent design consultants to companies and the value of skills training to possible participants.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

DESIGNxRI	Lead Applicant: convenor and project manager: responsible for ensuring project completion and providing fiscal management and oversight; providing participant and partnership management; leading recruitment efforts for both employers and employees.
DownCity Design	Responsible for leading the development and implementation of training modules; helping identify training instructors.
RISD Continuing Education	Educational consulting partner; advisor for training modules: responsible for providing advice in the development of the curriculum and trainings; identifying training instructors.
Taylor Box Company, Orange Square, Bradford Soap Works, KITE Architects, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Ximedica.	Responsible for helping create the training programs; sending employees to trainings; agreeing to host design fellows.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

The DFP designed three training programs to fulfill its stated goals. Each program addressed a separate aspect of the design sector and served different worker populations. However, the DFP planned meetings and workshops that brought training participants from all three programs to the same place, which created a sense of connection between the training programs and offered all participants mentoring, networking, and socializing opportunities.

The first program was the Advance Design Program, which was aimed at incumbent workers, specifically mid-career design professionals (those anywhere between their second or third year as a professional to those firmly established as industry leaders). It aimed to improve the professional skills of program participants, such as business, presentation, and facilitation skills. From its employer partners, the DFP drew participants who were asked to complete a self-assessment of their design skills and a questionnaire that gauged their interest in skill development and participation in the training program. Participants accepted into the four month training program met once a month for trainings, and at other times for social and peer mentoring. The program curriculum contained modules on presentation, facilitation, user experience, and Design Thinking for Innovation, a methodology used to solve complex problems and to find innovative solutions for clients.

The second program was the Post-Graduate Design Fellowship, also known as the Emerge program. This program was designed to entice a cohort of ten new, young designers to remain in Rhode Island after graduation for a one-year position with a participating employer partner. However, the DFP modified its plan to focus on professional development seminars offered once monthly for five months because it was not yet confident in being able to place interns with companies. The Emerge program also enabled young designers just breaking into the field to gain experience and access to mentors. To recruit for this program, the DFP relied on its connections with Rhode Island's colleges and universities, including RISD, Roger Williams University, Rhode Island College, the University of Rhode Island, and Johnson and Wales University. Interested applicants completed an online form and their design portfolio underwent screening by industry partners. Selected candidates were then invited to take part in an initial interview. During the interview, candidates completed a test that assessed their on-the-spot design skills and filled out a questionnaire about their interest in the fellowship. Those who were chosen as Fellows also met monthly for professional development seminars that addressed communication and presentation skills, legal advice for emerging designers, innovation through the Design Thinking process, user-centered design, business development and budgeting, professionalism and prioritization, facilitation skills, giving and receiving feedback, and portfolio design.

The final training program, the Career Exploration Program, also known as the Explore program, targeted 14-18 year-old students to increase their exposure to the design sector and improve their design skills. The DFP relied on DownCity Design's connections with local high schools to identify program recruits, and chose participants based on their answers to written questions about their interest and/or experience in design or other creative fields. Selected

students participated in a six-week summer program that focused on graphic design, industrial / product design, and architectural design in three two-week, 40-hour programs where participants were provided a $625 stipend to offset summer employment needs. The program was designed primarily to introduce participants to concepts and skills in design rather than teach technical skills. For the graphic design portion, participants learned about graphic design careers, the elements and principles of graphic design, and were introduced to Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Editor. For the architectural design portion, students received an overview of careers in architecture and were taught about the design process, site mapping and precedent studies, drawing conventions, and prototyping. Students were also introduced to Google SketchUp Pro. Finally, the industrial design portion taught students about industrial design careers, the design process, precedent studies, idea generation and sketching, and prototyping. The section also included an introduction to SolidWorks 3D modeling software. Participants concluded each training subject with projects for their professional portfolio.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Established convenor

DESIGNxRI is an organization that has been involved in the design sector since its creation, and had established partnerships in the design sector long before forming a Real Jobs partnership. Its prior connections and experience made it easier for the organization to reach out to employer partners, tap into the real needs of the sector, and to arrange meetings with employer partners.

Close relationship with sector partners

DESIGNxRI's close relationship with its sector partners made engagement and cooperation within the partnership very easy. Further, DESIGNxRI fulfilled its goal of expanding the partnership by adding KITE Architects, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island, and RISD Continuing Education to the implementation phase of the partnership.

Recruitment

Strong recruitment

The DFP has not experienced difficulties recruiting program participants, despite the fact that most of its participants had waited until the deadline to enroll. The DFP attributes this procrastination to last minute decision making by employers who struggled to decide whether to send employees to training and which employees would be sent. The DFP also exceeded its recruitment goals for all three programs as a result. Recruitment for the Advance Design Program was so successful that the DFP had more applicants than available spaces in the training program. The successful recruitment for this program was due, in part, to DownCity Design's relationship with the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Providence school system.

Individual outreach

The DFP sought out schools and companies one-by-one to form relationships. As a result of this individual attention, the DFP formed stronger ties with these partners and relied on them for consistent recruitment.

Exceeding recruitment goals

The DFP met and exceeded its recruitment goals for all three of its programs, recruiting eighteen participants for the Advance Design Program, thirteen for the Design Fellowship, and eighteen for the Explore program. The 49 recruited participants across these three programs exceeded the partnership's planned recruitment total of 43 participants.

Trainee Barriers

Workday training

The Advance Design Programs were primarily offered during the day, which allowed participants to receive a work release from their employers to attend the training while suffering no serious consequences for missing work. The DFP partly attributed this employer cooperation to the fact that training was offered at no cost due to RJRI grant funding. Thus, the DFP's training offered a way for employers to upskill their workers at no cost. Further, the DFP noticed that employers were genuinely excited about supporting the DFP and their employees through training programs.

Offering a stipend for summer training

The Career Exploration Program offered a stipend of $625 to its participants as a way to offset wages that were forfeited from the traditional summer work that participants may have otherwise pursued. Since the training serves many low-income students, this was a significant factor in attracting interested recruits to the program and maintaining students in the program once accepted.

Training

Participants trained

The DFP experienced no attrition among participants who took the training. Of the 49 participants enrolled across the Advance, Explore, and Emerge training programs, 49 participants completed them. This exceeded the partnership's planned completion total of 43 graduates.

Positive feedback from program participants

The DFP has received extensive positive feedback from a survey it distributed to program participants. Participants who completed the survey reported having felt empowered and having gained valuable skills due to the training. The DFP views this feedback as a critical sign of the program's success.

Transition from Training to Employment

The DFP did not discuss any achievements pertaining to the transition from training to employment.

Other

Collaboration within a diverse industry

The DFP's training programs helped to bring together different parts of the design industry that do not usually intersect to help create and implement its training programs. The DFP believes this helped the design sector work together and realize the value of learning from the diversity of the industry.

Table 2: Performance Metrics

IG-27 Design Forward (DesignxRI)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date for All Cohorts	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Design Industry Training: ADVANCE (Incumbents)	5/13/16	8/12/16	15	18	15	18
Design Industry Training: EXPLORE (Youth)	7/5/16	8/12/16	18	18	18	18
Design Industry Training: EMERGE (Interns)	11/9/16	3/24/17	10	13	10	13
Participants that enter employment after EMERGE training					10	2
Other Objectives						
New Employer Partners					6	6

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

The DFP did not discuss any challenges related to its partnerships.

Recruitment

The DFP did not discuss any challenges with its recruitment.

Trainee Barriers

The DFP did not discuss any challenges related to trainee barriers.

Training

Underdeveloped placement strategy for the fellowship

The DFP wanted to place fellows with companies for a year of training, but felt that its placement efforts were not adequate to fully support both the companies and the trainees. As a result, the DFP modified the Fellowship program by removing the internship portion of training and focused instead on offering workshops and professional development in five sessions.

Absences

The DFP faced challenges regarding program attendance. No formal incentives were established for attending class sessions even though missing one training session amounted to missing a good portion of the training content. The DFP is designing make-up sessions to mitigate this issue, and will promise participants a certificate of completion at the conclusion of training.

Developing an appropriate curriculum

The DFP struggled to work with an education partner to deliver a business education module. Despite several attempts to revise the curriculum, the content delivered did not meet the DFP's expectations.

Transition from Training to Employment

Implementing new skills

Program graduates are pleased with the strategic skills they learned in the DFP's training programs, but have reported that there is no room to use these new skills in the workplace. Graduates have found that despite the sector's stated interest in strategic, business-oriented workers, most design work is still skill and outcome-oriented. The DFP plans to conduct more industry outreach to help companies learn how the new skills of these workers can be maximized.

Other

Staff capacity

The DFP struggled implementing the training programs with its current level of staffing. The staff of DESIGNxRI was responsible for project implementation on top of managing their other responsibilities, finding themselves overwhelmed during the implementation process.

VIII. Sustainability

The DFP modeled the structure of its training programs after successful programs in other industries, and designed the program to be sustainable on funding streams other than RJRI, such as local foundation support or federal grant funds. To that end, the DFP believes that if the program is successful and proves valuable to the sector in its first three years, sector employers will contribute funds or pay training tuition to support the continuation of the programs after RJRI funding ends. The DFP also believes that local foundation support or federal funding will also be forthcoming if the program proves to be a success.

Further, the DFP has plans to expand its training program to a wider audience. Starting in 2017, individual modules of the Advance Design Program will be opened to interested members of the industry as individual professional development seminars.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the DFP in executing its training program:

- Offer business-focused training to meet a new industry need for businesses and contractors trained in business skills.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the DFP:

- Incorporate social events into training to increase exposure of trainees to sector professionals and introduce companies to a talented new hiring pool.
- Target training programs at multiple populations and tailor the program to fit the different needs and skills gaps of each of these populations.
- Address needs at all levels of the industry, not just on training or attracting new workers.
- Include employers in the application process to give employers more control over who they train and solidify support for the DFP and its training programs.
- Offer a stipend for summer work to encourage participation and reduce barriers to participation for lower-income students.
- Retain the contact information of potential applicants who were unable to participate in the first round of the program and reach out to them during the next round of recruitment.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the Design Forward Partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Hire a dedicated program director to oversee implementation through the partnership.
- Offer hybrid or online learning opportunities to program participants so that participants can still receive course content in light of absences, or so that the delivery of the curriculum is more flexible.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership

Prepared for:

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Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership (WRRJP) was established by the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, Education Exchange, the Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, and 17 sector partnerships, including non-profit and for-profit organizations. Citing Westerly's high rate of unemployment (7.5 percent in 2015), this project described itself as an "employer-led regional approach," specifically designed to reduce unemployment in the Westerly region.[1]

This partnership, with Westerly Public Schools as the lead applicant, received an RJRI planning grant, and as part of the grant, conducted focus groups and interviews with 110 employers in the Westerly region. Employers identified that the primary skills lacking among unemployed, underemployed, and undereducated (high school diploma or less) applicants included:

- **Soft/essential skills.** This included time management, initiative/self-motivation, problem-solving, customer service, negotiating, and appropriate personal cell phone use skills. This was determined to be the highest priority critical skill gap for current employees and applicants.
- **Digital literacy skills.** Employers needed candidates who could effectively use the Microsoft Office Suite software (particularly with spreadsheet and word processing skills) and who had email, file management, database, and basic troubleshooting skills.

Additionally, using survey data from the regional employers, the following statistics conveyed the importance of the WRRJP training program:

- 75 percent of employers identified there was a skills gap between the jobs they had available and the candidates applying.
- 40 percent of employers planned to hire additional employees within the next 12 months.

[1] RI Department of Labor and Training. 2016. http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus/town/westerly.htm.

- 64 percent of employers indicated that it was very difficult to fill job vacancies.
- 45 percent of employers indicated it was critical to their survival and growth to fill open positions within their organizations.

Overall, the partnership's primary objective was to train individuals in the region and provide local employers with "digitally-literate employees with professional attitudes and the essential skills necessary to work well with clients, coworkers and management."[2]

II. Grant History

The WRRJP provided the first opportunity for the partners on the grant to work collaboratively on a project to benefit their community. The three primary partners on this grant were the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce (OCCC), the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, and the Education Exchange. The OCCC learned about the RJRI planning grants from a direct email sent to the executive director by the DLT. After the OCCC inquired about the opportunity, DLT conducted an information session at the OCCC to pitch the idea for the RJRI program, which approximately 20 businesses attended. Initially, the OCCC, which represents 800 employers, and the Education Exchange were both interested in applying for a RJRI grant, and when they learned that each entity was planning to apply, they came together with Westerly Public Schools to form the WRRJP and submit an application for the planning grant (which they received) and eventually the implementation grant. None of the primary partners had put together an extensive training program in the past; however, the Educational Exchange had previously conducted a brief soft skills training for those working towards their general education diploma (GED).

III. Goals and Objectives

The Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current and projected workforce needs. This insufficiency was addressed by WRRJP through the following goals:

1. Implement a six-week Work Readiness and Digital Literacy training program to be held twice annually.
    - As part of this program, the WRRJP worked to provide participants with:
        - An initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities and support services as needed.
        - Job search and placement assistance.
        - Development of individual employment plans.
        - Short term pre-vocational services, including resume writing, interview skills and word readiness skills.
        - Internships and employment experiences linked to careers.

[2] Page 1, Proposal

    - Workforce preparation activities.

2. Execute two, week-long Biz Camp programs designed for high school students.
    - The partnership worked to provide high school students (ages 15-17) with an informal course (no credits, no requirements) that offered a broad overview of essential skills sought by a cross section of industries in the region. The program was intended to provide a foundation of soft skills, digital literacy skills and job seeking preparedness strategies that would align students with employer expectations, thereby helping better prepare students for the available jobs in the region.

Specifically, WRRJP sought to meet the following recruitment and training objectives:

- Provide 40 participants with Work Readiness and Digital Literacy training.
- Provide 20-30 youth participants with Biz Camp training.

IV. Partnerships

Successful sector-driven job training strategies must include businesses/employers that need workers and can identify the training needs of their workforce vacancies as well as workplace intermediaries who can reach, recruit, and train potential workers. The WRRJP included a broad array of partners, such as non- profit organizations that promote education and training opportunities and provide additional services such as food and clothing assistance for community members, and multiple businesses within the region. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce	Lead Applicant: responsible for implementing Biz Camp for high schools students; providing classroom space for the essential skills training module; recruiting participants; providing initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, and abilities of potential participant; offering support services as needed as well as job search and placement assistance; facilitating development of individual employment plans, short-term pre-vocational services, internships and work experiences linked to careers, workforce preparation activities; ensuring training providers were registered on the state eligible training provider list.
Jonnycake Center of Westerly	Responsible for employing and supervised a Case Manager; providing classroom space for the digital literacy training module; providing additional classroom space when available for other training modules; assisting in case management for participants; compiling a detailed log of the support services trainees require to ensure their success.
Education Exchange	Responsible for employed the instructor of and supervising the Essential Skills Training Module and Work Readiness and Resume Boot Camp Module; developing curriculum for the Essential Skills Training Module and Work Readiness and Resume Boot Camp Module; providing transportation for WRRJP through its van when available.
Literacy Volunteers of Washington County	Responsible for employing all independent contractors needed to facilitate the Digital Literacy Training Module; supervising and overseeing all aspects of the Digital Literacy Training Module; providing additional literacy support to all participants identified during screening; providing the NorthStar Digital Literacy Assessment for candidates and trainees; providing standardized computer-based reading and math Assessments as well as the BEST Plus assessment for English as a Second Language candidates.

Westerly Hospital, Washington Trust Company, Darlington Fabrics/Moore Company, Westerly Public Schools, Ocean Community YMCA, Ocean House, Paddy's Beach Club, Grey Sail Brewery, Valenti Toyota, Servpro of Washington County, Hauser Chocolatier, Professional Planning Group, Hoyt, Fillipetti & Malaghan, Operation Stand Down RI, Families Learning Together (WPS Family Literacy), Westerly Public Library and Wilcox Park, Westerly Economic Development Commission, Apple Rehab of Watch Hill, BioTech Pest Controls, Bridge Restaurant, McQuade's Marketplace, Sea Spray Inn, The Journey, Tower Street Community Center, Uptown Salon, United Builders Supply, Westerly Animal Shelter, Windjammer, Westerly Town Hall, Frank Olean Center, Golden Years Assisted Living, Westerly Cooperative Gallery, TJ MAXX, Westerly Education Center, ELMS Assisted Living, Pier 1 Cleaners, Coastal Laundry, Shoreline Painting, Mia's Café, Randall Realtors, H&R Block, Cappazano Olive Oil	Responsible for helping to administer the trainings; providing internship and employment opportunities for trainees.

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal #1: Implement a six-week Work Readiness and Digital Literacy training program to be held twice annually.

The WRRJP recruited, trained, and supported currently un- and underemployed, low skilled individuals in enrolling in its workplace preparation programs. Local non-profit organizations, including the Johnnycake Center of Westerly, the Education Exchange, Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, WARM Center, and Westerly Public Schools, that work closely with un- and underemployed adults in this region served as important referral sources. A total of 40 referred potential applicants per session took part in a testing and screening process that included a Digital Literacy self-assessment, Learning Styles Inventory, Trainee Contract, Multiple Intelligences Inventory, O*NET(R) Computerized Interest Profiler, one-on-one interviews with a business and industry-led screening committee, and successful completion of state proctored standardized Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Reading and Math assessments. A total of 20 candidates per session were accepted as trainees. However, if candidates obtained less than a CASAS score of 230 in math or 236 score in reading, they were recommended to one or more of the Adult Education Partners for one-on-one or small group tutoring, GED prep-classes, or other programs specifically designed to help the individual improve their English or Math proficiency. If the individual's scores improved, they were eligible for the next scheduled training.

Upon the culmination of the screening and testing portion, applicants took part in a five-week program including Orientation, Essential Skills (Module 1), and Digital Literacy (Module 2), followed by a one-week, employer-led, Work Readiness and Resume Bootcamp (Module 3). The specific focus of Module 3 was to provide resume writing, interview skills, and advanced customer service skills sessions conducted with partner business owners, managers and human resource representatives. The training program used for the WRRJP was loosely based on the successful healthcare industry Stepping Up RI Program.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Module	Overall Topics	Specific Focus
Module 1: Essential Skills	Teamwork and collaboration; enthusiasm and positive attitude; communicating effectively; problem solving; conveying professionalism; and career planning	Understand the value of collaboration to the workplace; learn strategies for creating and maintaining a positive mental attitude; learn importance of being specific, non-verbal communication, asking clarifying questions, and following directions; gain familiarity with strategies for conflict management, handling constructive feedback, and making ethical decisions to enhance perception of self as a professional and extend idea of professionalism in context with work attitude, teamwork, and problem solving; introduce students to career planning process and related resources.
Module 2: Work Readiness and Resume Bootcamp	Resume writing; interview skills; and advanced customer service	Learn the standard components of a job application and when each is appropriate to use; learn how to communicate with the employer to demonstrate they have the skills, background, and ability to do the job and that they can successfully fit into the company and its culture.
Module 3: Digital Literacy	Introduction to Microsoft 2010 and 2013 and components of Microsoft 2012 (Excel, PowerPoint, Microsoft Word) as well as Google Doc and Spreadsheets	Gain basic knowledge of and ability to use business word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation graphics applications and understand the basics of relational databases and the importance of accuracy and consistency in data input; learn best practices for file and email management, cloud technology, and digital device installation and management; gain familiarity with Skype and Google Hangouts to conduct business meetings; enhance one's ability to use online meeting management tools such as Doodle.

Trainees also achieved NorthStar Digital Literacy Certification in up to seven modules, which included: Basic Computer, World Wide Web, Windows 7, Using Email, Word Processing, Social Media, and Spreadsheets.

When trainees fulfilled their Trainee Contract, they were directed to interviews for current job openings, an up to 6-week internship or, if applicable, industry specific certification programs such as QuickBooks followed by internships. Trainees who were identified as struggling to maintain the mandatory essential skills outlined in the Trainee Contract, were provided with resources to overcome identified barriers.

Trainee stipends were paid on a weekly basis if benchmarks outlined in the Trainee Contract were met. For the internship segment, the WRRJP paid $9.60 per hour for 30 hours a week for the first three weeks of the internship, and the employer paid a minimum of $9.60 per hour for the remaining three weeks of the internship. All trainees were supervised and provided with a mentor within the business. The WRRJP Education Coordinator worked closely with the trainees and employers to identify concerns and provide specific remedial support as needed. A case manager was also available to assist training participants in overcoming any personal or family issues that hindered success in the program, such as finding transportation, obtaining childcare, getting appropriate clothing, or securing a bank account.

Goal #2: Execute two, week-long Biz Camp programs designed for high school students during February and April vacation, 2016.

As part of an innovative addition to the implementation phase of the grant, the WRRJP developed a program for high school students, ages 14 or older, who did not intend to attend college, entitled Biz Camp. During the one-week, 40-hour training program, the high school students in Biz Camp received Essential Skills training, technology certifications, and received daily homework. They also had the opportunity to participate in worksite visits and short-term internships of one to two weeks or day-long job shadow experiences. The internships and job shadow experiences were custom-matched between the students and the industry of their choice/interest.

The WRRJP planned to provide Biz Camp twice in 2016 during February and April school vacations. This program was initially designed to include only Westerly High School students, but opened enrollment to other Rhode Island schools when the program encountered recruitment difficulties. The WRRJP's business partners, as potential future employers, worked closely with the students in this program. The program included role playing and group and panel discussions to help formulate a foundation of what makes a good employee, thereby better meeting the needs of area employers. Trainers who have the education to teach these skills and the personality to keep the students engaged were specifically sought out for this program. For most of the segments, two to three different industries were present and either the President or the Human Resources director of those companies administered the lessons. There was also an additional field trip aspect wherein students received the opportunity to visit some of the

workplaces, such as the Hauser Chocolatier factory and the Ocean House restaurant, and apply concepts discussed in training. The Education Exchange provided a van to help BizCamp students get to field sites.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Industry-led Development and Implementation

According to the main partners on this grant, the idea for this training program was tied to the needs of the region's businesses, and the training program content in both programs were well-received by businesses and trainees. Employers highly valued the training program, and wanted to provide internships and hire trainees. According to the partnership, businesses were "...willing just to be involved because they see the long-term potential" in that young adults would learn the material and then have lifelong skills that could later benefit the businesses in the area. The WRRJP effectively facilitated communication with its partners when facing issues and barriers. The WRRJP also expanded its sector partnerships to include more employers and have been able to attain high levels of engagement among the partners. This expansion and engagement was critical to creating a seamless transition from training to employment.

Connecting Usually Separated Organizations

The WRRJP partners also discussed how this partnership was a unique opportunity for the region because it connected organizations that were used to working in separate "silos." The WRRJP found strength in its unity and valued each other's contributions.

Recruitment

Using Extensive Networks to reach Recruits

This partnership included the OCCC with connections to many employers, educational organizations who worked closely with the school district, and the Jonnycake Center that had access to social services and served low income individuals and families. This is often a difficult population to serve, but the WRRJP was able to be successful in this area. The WRRJP found its extensive networks and vast social media presence to be a contributing factor to its success, which helped in recruiting trainees and, over time, getting businesses increasingly involved.

Trainee Barriers

No specific achievements related to trainee barriers were discussed by this partnership.

Training

Achieving Training Objectives

The Work Readiness & Digital Literacy Training recruitment and training objectives were nearly achieved, and only one individual who enrolled did not complete the training. Although not as many students attended the Biz Camp as originally proposed, the WRRJP stated

that the curriculum content was well received. In addition, all students who took part in the Biz Camps have secured employment and accrued the soft skills necessary to be successful in the workplace.

Frequent Updates based on Feedback

For both training programs, the WRRJP worked to continuously update the training content and mode of instruction based on lessons learned, including confiscation of cell phones as needed, which contributed to the success. Students in the programs were engaged and excited when taking part in the program, and those involved in executing the trainings could see the personal growth in participants over the span of the program. The WRRJP viewed participants' excitement in learning and the personal growth of participants as some of the grant's biggest successes. The WRRJP was also committed to its programs. For example, on the basis of previous iterations of the program, the WRRJP reworked the Biz Camp program several times. This persistence paid off and eventually led to a successful program.

Transition from Training to Employment

Nearly half of the Work Readiness and Digital Literacy training participants identified employment following the training. For the BizCamp program, some trainees completed short term internships, and some trainees went directly into the job market. Overall, many trainees made connections through Biz Camp that resulted in summer jobs.

Other

Support of Town Government

Furthermore, the WRRJP was, according to the three main partners (OCCC, Education Exchange, and Jonnycake Center of Westerly), a "huge source of pride for the town." It was important to the town government to see that the state saw the Westerly region's workforce needs as a priority. This has been a motivating factor for partners to continue to work together and to implement this training program. Overall, the WRRJP stated its success can be attributed to the incredible buy-in across businesses and with government officials.

Table 3. Performance Metrics

Westerly Regional Jobs Partnership (IG-28)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Work Readiness & Digital Literacy Training (2 Cohorts) (Job Seekers)	3/14/2016	8/12/16	40	37	40	36
BIZ Camp (Goal: 2 Cohorts)	2/15/2016	4/22/16	20-25	9	TBD	7
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					40	19
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					10	Ongoing
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn an industry recognized credential					10	36
Total Participants promoted due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					TBD	Ongoing
Total Participants receiving an increased wage due to training (Incumbent Workers Only)					TBD	Ongoing
Total students in BIZ Camp Program that earn certificate					20-30	7
Total BIZ Camp students that improved digital literacy skills					20-30	7
Total participants that exit public assistance (when applicable)					TBD	Ongoing
Total NorthStar Basic Computer Skills Certificates earned					36	32
Additional Partners Added					TBD	33

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Challenges with Time Commitment for Involved Partners

Although the WRRJP continues to expand its employer partnerships, the required time commitment has posed a threat to the success of the grant implementation for all entities involved because each is running their own operations (e.g., business, non-profit organization) while taking part in this training program. Attracting and acquiring new and diverse partners has been advantageous to this training program, but simultaneously makes scheduling particularly difficult. The WRRJP has found that scheduling at least three subsequent meetings at a time has helped in maximizing participation among the partners.

Communication Difficulties with Employer Partners

One issue the WRRJP encountered was miscommunication about hiring and internship commitments. Employers had initially offered to either hire or provide internships for trainees. Employers initially fell short when it came time to fulfill these commitments. The WRRJP worked to gather data and information to help identify the causes of these problems. The WRRJP was able to discuss and rectify these issues with partners and through better communication, guaranteed that employers successfully held up their commitments.

Recruitment

Difficulty Meeting Recruitment Goals in Originally Targeted Populations

The partnership had planned to include only Westerly high school students in the BizCamp training, but when it encountered recruitment challenges, the WRRJP expanded to include all Rhode Island schools. Unfortunately, it still had difficulties identifying 20 students, so for the first cohort of Biz Camp, the WRRJP included 7 students. While the original Biz Camp was planned for the two school breaks (February and Spring breaks), it turned out students were either not interested in committing during these breaks or had other commitments. As a result, only one Biz Camp program was held. While the WRRJP had a difficult time finding enough RI students to meet its goals, students from Stonington, Connecticut wanted to register for the program but could not because RJRI does not provide funds to assist Connecticut residents.

Trainee Barriers

Transportation

The WRRJP experienced difficulties in finding an agency willing to provide transportation for the Biz Camp participants to attend site visits. There were a number of partners involved who had vans, but did not have the proper insurance and certification and so they were not willing or able to take on the liability. The Education Exchange was able to provide its van when it was not being used for the other RJRI grant it was involved with, but this

may not be a sustainable venture because the insured operator of the van was already committed to extensive managerial tasks within the organization.

Identifying Training Time

The WRRJP found it particularly difficult to identify a lengthy period of time in which at least 20 high school students from Rhode Island schools could attend a week-long training. The grantee originally tried to administer the week-long training during the school's scheduled February break, but encountered issues identifying enough students to meet its goals. To address these challenges, the WRRJP first tried scheduling the second training during other school breaks, at night, or over weekends rather than over the scheduled April break. However, the WRRJP found it difficult to coordinate and schedule due to other activities and commitments of the students (e.g., sports, clubs, after school activities). Therefore, initially the grantee was unable to meet its target goals for enrollment in the Biz Camp program. However, the WRRJP changed its approach to the Biz Camp program to implement it during school hours to allow for greater participation. The WRRJP found that it could hold in-school Biz Camp sessions during the student advisory period. To date this has been more successful and enrollment numbers increased significantly after this iteration.

Background Checks

Getting the necessary background checks required at some of the internship sites sometimes took longer than anticipated. This was especially pertinent in the healthcare industry, which requires full background checks that can take several weeks to complete.

Training & Transition from Training to Employment

Issues with Internships and Site Visits

The Workforce Readiness and Digital Literacy Training Program faced several obstacles, especially in regard to the internship portion of the curriculum, which may have impacted job placement success. Some students opted out of the internship for a variety of reasons. For example, there were not as many internship sites as there were students, and the internship placements were not always a good match with the students' needs or aspirations. In addition, students were not required to complete an internship in order to graduate, so some chose not to take an internship.

Fulfilling the Internship Stipend

The program's intent had been for the RJRI grant to pay for 50 percent of the internship and for employers to pay the other 50 percent. However, there were employers unable to fulfill that obligation. For example at the hospital in Westerly, the human resources department had categories for volunteers or for employees, but they did not have an option to pay interns half of the amount stipulated.

Lack of Experience Handling Money

Some students who received their internship payment had little to no experience handling money, so the WRRJP identified staff from partner organizations to help them to secure bank accounts and deposit checks.

VIII. Sustainability

The WRRJP saw the Workforce Readiness and Digital Literacy training as highly sustainable, but questioned the sustainability of Biz Camp. The WRRJP planned to apply for additional funding to supplement and grow its innovative workforce training program through local Community Development Block Grants, state and national foundations, local charities, and municipalities. An example of this effort to secure blended funding for the WRRJP's training is the recently applied for Episcopal Charities ServSafe grant. Further, there is a new program, called Fresh Start, that is a partnership between the Jonnycake Center and the local food bank where they work on individual case plans to define their goals and successes. The WRRJP is seeing that Fresh Start participants are likely candidates for the RJRI program, and Johnnycake has roughly 3,000 individuals who pass through its doors seeking services. The partnership believes that capitalizing on these types of opportunities is critical for the continued success of the training program.

The grantee also plans to continue to apply for RJRI funding because it believes there is an increasing need for Adult Education training, and there may be specific jobs in which some advanced training could be provided to continue to support those who take part in the WRRJP trainings. The grantee would also like to return to the business community and identify additional opportunities for employment.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the WRRJP in implementing its training program:

- Identify employer partners' requirements for internships in advance, such as criminal background checks. The lesson is to inquire with businesses about employee requirements during the design phase of the program in order to anticipate issues that trainees may need to address to before starting their internship. For example, background checks could be conducted as part of the process of enrolling participants in training if they indicate they are interested in a field that requires an extensive background check. This could reduce the time lag between the completion of the training and the beginning of an internship and could increase retention of students for the internship component.
- Ensure the students in the training program include the internship portion of the training as part of the Trainee Contract rather than as an option for them after completing the in-person training portion of the program.
- When working with youth who will be paid for participation in the training, build in training time to help the students learn about getting a bank account and managing

money. This came up because trainees were provided incentives to complete the training, and many of trainees did not know how to manage their money.
- Schedule meetings far out in advance to ensure maximum participation/attendance at meetings and training events from all partners involved on the grant.
- Anticipate challenges in scheduling trainings around high school student schedules.
- Continue to identify and recruit new employer partners.

X. Best Practices

The three main partners (OCCC, Education Exchange & Jonnycake) had admirable intentions regarding the purpose of the grant. This enabled them all to come together to achieve their goals. These best practices were utilized by the WRRJP:

- Have a partner that has access to a social service department that serves unemployed, underemployment individuals and provides access to services, such as food, clothing, and household vouchers. This partner can provide a nice connection between providing services and suggesting recruitment to the training program.
- Have a case manager and an education coordinator who is able to navigate personal challenges and help with various tasks, such as driving to the bank and providing transportation.
- Design and execute training with extensive involvement by businesses looking to hire new workers. Businesses were surveyed to identify the needs, help decide training curriculum, and conduct the trainings. The partnership also visited work sites with training participants so they could practice what they learned in classes through real-life examples and related what they learned to practical applications.
- Use multiple community partners with extensive networks and social media presence.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the implementation successes and challenges for the WRRJP, the following recommendations for RJRI are suggested:

- Identify best practices from programs across the country for providing training to high school students or consider partnering with schools to incorporate the Biz Camp curriculum as part of school programming.
- Consider partnering with Connecticut so that WRRJP could provide training opportunities for both Rhode Island and Connecticut job-seekers.
- Provide a van to grantees or ensure the entities with available transportation can utilize their vehicles to transport RJRI trainees as needed. Encourage them to incorporate waivers that trainees could sign or another mechanism to ensure that entities do not avoid offering transportation for liability reasons.
- Ensure that employer partners are at the table at the beginning of the partnership and are clear about their commitments to providing internships and employment.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island

Prepared for:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
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Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Real Jobs Partnership of Northern Rhode Island (NRI Partnership), initiated by the main applicant Connecting for Children and Families (CCF), was designed to provide competency-based training that met the goals, skills shortages and gaps, and real-time job opportunities for banking, insurance, call centers and bookkeeping/accounting jobs within the finance and insurance sectors in Rhode Island. This partnership targeted under- or unemployed individuals in northern Rhode Island, particularly the regions of Woonsocket, Pawtucket, and Central Falls, because these individuals tend to have a lower education level compared to the traditional worker pipeline.

The need for this partnership was identified through Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) data on *2022 Occupational Projections* indicating these key issues:

- The financial services sector is one of the largest employers in the state.
- The jobs in highest demand for individuals with a high school diploma are Customer Service Representatives in banking and insurance, paying an hourly wage up to $16.50 an hour.
- Bookkeeping and accounting clerks rank fifth in the top 10 with high demand in the banking and insurance industries as well as across the small business community, paying up to $18.21 an hour.
- While the job openings were mostly entry-level positions that require a high school diploma or GED, with additional training, these positions can lead to higher-paying positions and a career path within the financial services industry.

The NRI partnership additionally conducted interviews and surveys with regional employers within the sector to isolate the explicit skills gaps it was encountering among applicants, as well as the minimum core and occupational competencies needed for critical positions. It found that:

- Employers validated the need for specific training to maintain and guarantee a pool of qualified candidates who would not only obtain entry-level jobs but would also be interested and invested in a career path.
- Employers identified that even though they receive a high volume of applicants for available positions, it was increasingly difficult to find qualified entry-level call center representatives.
- Employers acknowledged the lack of job readiness soft skills (e.g., professionalism, appearance, interviewing skills, career awareness, customer service orientation, initiative, written and verbal communication, ability to follow instructions, adaptability, problem-solving) and math/reading skills among the majority of applicants for their positions.

Therefore, the NRI partnership was fashioned as a collaborative project between employers and industry partners as a mechanism and potential solution to ensure an appropriate pipeline of qualified candidates into these positions and additionally compensate family-sustaining wages to individuals without a college degree.

III. Grant History

The Connecting for Children and Families' (CCF) Center for Financial Success initially received funding from DLT seven years ago, through the Governor's Workforce Board. The Center is responsible for implementing training programs that target financial literacy, financial counseling, and income tax assistance, in addition to offering food pantry services to the broader region. CCF became aware of the Real Jobs Rhode Island program as a result of this previous DLT participation and relationship building. The CCF was formerly a member of a pilot project related to bookkeeping skills that was noted to have been successful according to the various performance metrics of completion rates, employment acquired, and higher education opportunities. This encouraged its excitement to build upon these improvements in future endeavors.

CCF saw the RJRI planning and implementation grants as an avenue to expand its efforts and include the business community in ways it had not previously. Thus, it partnered with the North Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce due to its numerous connections to businesses and nonprofits in the area as well as with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) and Roger Williams University to assist with the educational training components to develop the NRI Partnership. It also planned to work with the RJRI Insurance Innovation Partnership.

IV. Goals and Objectives

The NRI Partnership was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current and projected workforce needs in the financial industry. To address this need, the NRI Partnership planned to train under- or unemployed individuals to meet the demands of their workplaces and prepare them for advancement within their companies.

The Real Jobs of Northern Rhode Island Partnership worked to meet the following goal:

1. Implement the Northern Rhode Island Career Academy and provide competency-based training that supports under- or unemployed individuals to gain skills and real-time job opportunities in banking, insurance, call centers, and bookkeeping/accounting.

Specifically, the NRI Partnership sought to meet the following objective:

- Provide training for 60 participants and additional support services as needed.

IV. Partnerships

Through industry research and outreach, the NRI partnership identified the financial industry as the target area for employment within the region. Therefore, the partnership brought together a variety of industry employers in the sector as well as secondary education partners because they had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population and ensure successful employment. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities.

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

Connecting for Children and Families (CCF)	Lead Applicant: responsible for designing and providing the curriculum and instruction for some of the training modules; serving as the fiscal agent for the NRI partnership; establishing and coordinating the project management team, project leadership, and partner cooperation; overseeing and managing project implementation; identifying and recruiting program participants; providing Case Management and Employment Plans for each participant.
Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Roger Williams University, Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, Innovative Insurance Partnership	Responsible for developing customized training and curriculum for various modules; developing and implementing pre- and post-assessment of trainees; embedding opportunities for trainees to practice competencies in a simulated or real environment; tracking student progress.

Amica Insurance Company, Bank of America, Citizens Bank, Navigant Credit Union, Pawtucket Credit Union, Innovex	Responsible for developing mechanisms to connect with, recruit, and/or interview training participants for job vacancies; committing to interviewing successful training participants who met the minimum educational, background check, and skills requirements; hiring qualified candidates; providing feedback on trainees hired; providing data to describe career advancement patterns for workers who completed the program.

V. Implementation Activities/ Processes

Goal # 1: Implement the Northern Rhode Island Career Academy and provide competency-based training that supports unemployed and underemployed individuals to gain skills and real-time job opportunities in banking, insurance, call centers, and bookkeeping/accounting.

Recruitment & Pre-Screening

To determine eligibility and suitability for the NRI Career Academy training program, the NRI Partnership conducted a formal intake assessment with each candidate. A core component of participant recruitment was screening for "career fit," meaning those participants who saw themselves entering and advancing in the financial services sector. During the pre-screening process, NRI Partnership gathered information about each participant's suitability for the program, their motivation for participating, how their employment/career plans aligned with the program, the extent that they had undertaken career exploration, and practical matters, such as the likelihood of the applicant attending regularly, participating fully, and completing their individualized training plan through the NRI Career Academy. All applicants also completed a background check. The NRI Partnership also worked to assess potential barriers to participation, such as child care, transportation, financial barriers to employment due to public assistance, ability to work/citizenship, or immigration barriers. In the case of any challenges, the NRI Partnership identified strategies for resolving barriers or referring the candidate for further assessment and linkage to services they needed. Any pre-screening costs were paid for through the NRI Partnership.

Assessment Process

Once participants were screened and determined to be a good fit for the NRI Career Academy, participants were required to participate in a comprehensive assessment. Participants were expected to meet a minimum level of functional ability in math and language arts to ensure

they could benefit fully from the planned activities. Employer partners had identified the following specific characteristics as important for successful employment:

- High school diploma or GED,
- Interest in financial services subjects, and
- A minimum level in the ACT KeyTrain Career Curriculum assessment of level 3 in math and a minimum level 4 in reading (the equivalent of 5th grade in math and 8th grade in reading).

Employer partners stressed the importance of going beyond reading comprehension when assessing the literacy level of candidates and looking for their ability to apply math concepts and use information gleaned from text in a work context. For that reason, the partnership decided not to use the Comprehensive Adult Student Systems Assessment, known as CASAS. Instead, the partnership utilized ACT WorkKeys assessments, which offers a valid and reliable assessment tool of applied math and reading, and ACT KeyTrain, which offers a pre-assessment and online training program that trainees can use to prepare for the assessment.

The assessment involved a measurement of a participant's baseline skills and a deeper dive into career fit through interest and aptitude inventories and personality scales and career coaching. During this skills assessment, the NRI Partnership also assessed the candidate's ability to succeed in the program. Candidates with skills gaps that were too wide to address successfully through the program were referred to other programs. For the in-depth assessment, the skills assessment process included the following steps:

- Complete an interest inventory.
- Complete the DISC workplace profile.
- Assess for career fit in finance and insurance industry.
- Identify the appropriate occupational track.
- Resume review and mock interview.
- Business writing ability.
- MS Office (MS Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint) – PROVE IT assessment administered by the Department of Labor and Training's One Stop Career Center in Woonsocket.
- Customer Service Orientation – PROVE IT assessment administered by the Department of Labor and Training's One Stop Career Center in Woonsocket.

Training Series

The NRI Partnership designed the NRI Career Academy using a competency-based approach that matches participants with the specific training components that they need to obtain an entry-level job in the financial services sector and allows for individualized learning while accommodating multiple learning styles and levels of engagement. Using this 'a la carte' model allowed employers to choose trainings based upon specific skills needed, which resulted in a systematic and organized approach that created a more efficient pipeline into employment.

Trainees have been satisfied because they are only required to take the classes most suited to enhance their specific skills. Training time for each trainee varied due to the highly customized nature of this training model.

The training partners for the program included the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Roger Williams University, and CCF. Regarding specific curricula development, CCRI utilized curriculum from the American Banker Association modified to meet the needs specified by the industry partners, and all training partners designed and/or modified curricula to meet the needs of the employer partners. The Bookkeeping and Accounting curriculum was modified during the implementation phase based on input from small businesses in northern Rhode Island that had specified a need for bookkeeping and accounting clerks. The following chart depicts the modules, the training provider, and a summary of topics covered.

Table 2. Training Module Overview

Core Skills	
Applied Math and Reading (16 hours) *Connecting for Children and Families* **Math:** Solve problems that require multiple types of mathematical operation (e.g., addition, multiplication, fractions, conversions, percentages, averages, ratios, rates); ability to understand context, interpret, and solve word problems. **Reading:** Identify main ideas and clearly and unclearly stated details; understand and interpret context; choose the correct meaning of a word & understand workplace jargon; practical application of materials taught; choose what to do when changing conditions call for a different action (follow directions that include "if-then" statements).	***Soft Skills Training (32 hours)*** *Connecting for Children and Families* Professionalism; responsibility/dependability; working with others; verbal communication; following rules; adaptability; conflict management; problem-solving; initiative; organizing and planning (time management); appropriate use of social media; financial skills literacy.
MS Office (10-30 hours) *Connecting for Children and Families* Learn to navigate and appropriate use the functions of Microsoft Word, Outlook, and Excel. These functions include (but were not	***Business Writing (15 hours)*** *Connecting for Children and Families* Understand the audience for their written document; construct a clear, succinct letter with a beginning, middle, and closing; write in

limited to): Creating a new document, enter text, and save it; open and edit existing documents; create and edit tables, format and print documents, envelopes, and labels; compose and send an email message, learn to reply and forward a message, add and save an attachment; schedule appointments and events; format cells, rows, and columns; use simple arithmetic functions in formulas; print worksheets and workbooks.	complete sentences; use acronyms appropriately; use appropriate grammar; write appropriate emails; use email etiquette; spell correctly.
Resume Writing (4 hours) *Connecting for Children and Families* Understand the purpose and use of a resume; understand the different types of resumes; build a strong resume that showcases their skills and experience; update and customize their resume for specific employers and open positions.	***Interviewing Skills (16 hours)*** *Connecting for Children and Families* Ability to research the company, the interviewer, and the position; anticipate questions and prepare responses; dress appropriately; use appropriate verbal and body language; prepare to respond to interview questions; effectively explain gaps in their resume or challenges in their employment history; answer common questions asked in interviews and elements of a strong response; ask good questions; exit the interview and follow up after the interview.
Occupational Trainings	
Call Center Basics (16 hours) *Roger Williams University* Pace of work, type and variety of calls, and overall expectations; role in a call center; how each individual in the call center affects the success of the operation; how individual agents can have a positive impact on service to the customers and the work environment of their co-workers; how individual and overall call center performance is measured; correct techniques for greetings, closings, holds, transfers and callbacks; master voice	***Sales Essentials (12 hours)*** *Roger Williams University* Complete sales process; approach people in the correct and appropriate manner; act as a consultant for customers; listen for customer and prospects needs; educate customers and prospects on possible solutions (including up-selling); use proven strategies to close sales; maintain customer information; use relationship management techniques to generate sales.

tone and inflection to boost effective communication on each call; control calls and know how to regain control for better agent handling times.	
Customer Service Essentials (14 hours) *Roger Williams University* Display the right attitude; appropriately greet customers; use courtesies, etiquette and positive language to make each customer contact smooth and pleasant; actively listen to (and empathize with) customers; determine customer needs; identify customer specific solutions and services (and makes appropriate referrals); Communicate clearly; "read" a customer's current emotional state and body language; identify difficult customers; handle unhappy, angry, irritating and abusive customers; reach mutually satisfactory compromises; address or resolve customer challenges and complaints; follow-up on open customer issues or promises.	***Banking and Cash Handling Basics (16 hours)*** *Community College of Rhode Island* Transactional accounts (checking);financial assets (savings accounts, bonds, stocks, mutual funds) and the importance of long-term financial goals and growing wealth; cost of borrowing; credit reports and scores and how they affect borrowing; identity theft and fraud; missing pieces in a customer's banking relationship; how to accept checks, cash, and other forms of payment from customers and prepare specific types of funds, including traveler's checks, savings bonds, and money orders; perform reconciliation procedures for a cash drawer or account; count and balance cash drawer with accuracy; perform basic to advanced mathematical calculations.
Bookkeeping and Accounting (150 hours) *Connecting for Children and Families* Collect and monitor information; analyze and solve problems; maintain confidentiality; conduct oneself in an ethical manner; use relevant computer applications; check and verify source documents such as invoices, receipts, computer printouts; allocate and post financial transaction details to subsidiary books; transfer data to a general ledger; reconcile and balance all accounts; draw up financial statements (trial balance, income statement, balance sheet); track and maintain inventory records; maintain internal control systems; manage accounts payable and accounts receivable; prepare checks, payments and bank deposits; prepare and process payroll; comply with relevant reporting requirements.	

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

High-Level Education Partners

One of the greatest successes of the program was attributed to having great educational partners. The lead applicant, CCF, noted that participants appreciated being exposed to college-level instructors and higher quality trainings. Furthermore, it was also noted that the industry/employer partners had a good pulse on the business community; they were highly engaged in the NRI partnership, all of which served to strengthen the training program and curriculum.

Recruitment

Effective Use of One-Stop Career Centers

The NRI Partnership effectively utilized the Rhode Island's One-Stop Career Center System to help administer participant assessments, and developed a new partnership with the Woonsocket Public Schools, and have worked to develop relationships with other school departments in northern Rhode Island.

Recruitment through Woonsocket Public Schools

The NRI Partnership found success in working with Woonsocket Public Schools to recruit individuals for the training program. This collaboration worked well since the NRI partnership is based in Woonsocket, and potential training participants have children who attend school in Woonsocket.

Trainee Barriers

Growth of Participant Confidence

One major success the partnership noted was the fact that many trainees who initially lacked confidence seemed to improve significantly and "come out of their shell" over the course of the training. The ability for trainees to elevate confidence in themselves and their skills was evident, particularly during role-playing exercises and mock interviews.

Facilitating Participants in Overcoming Personal Barriers

For those who completed the training, the NRI Partnership helped to overcome many personal and family barriers. This training program gave participants a chance for employment in jobs that provided a living wage and provided skills and opportunities beyond what may have been otherwise possible for these individuals.

Training

Flexible Training Model

The competency-based model used for the training program allowed for maximum flexibility for the participants so that individuals who only had minor skills gaps could advance

more quickly to the interview stage with potential employers. Participants identified as having greater skills gaps had the opportunity to participate in more of the training components before they were interviewed for a job opening.

Effective Training Curriculum

Overall, the training curriculum worked well and the partnership found that the call center module helped training participants find jobs.

Transition from Training to Employment

Placement in Training-Related Employment

The NRI Partnership was able to successfully place most training participants in employment. The partnership noted that receiving phone-calls regarding participants' job placements was extremely rewarding and provided NRI evidence of their success.

Other

Ability to Adapt

The NRI Partnership displayed a strong ability to adapt its program to overcome challenges. This skill was exemplified when the partnership utilized existing recruits who faced barriers in the banking industry. The partnership provided recruits with training for jobs that did not have these obstacles. This worked well for those who participated.

Table 3. Performance Metrics

IG-29 Real Jobs Partnership of Northern RI (CCF)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Finance, CS & Insurance Academy - (3 cohorts) (Job Seekers)	4/4/16	6/24/16	20	20	15	13
Total Participants placed in training-related employment			20	20	15	13
Total Participants retained in training-related employment			20	20	15	13
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn an industry recognized credential					15	13
Percent Achieving Competencies						100%
Total Participants that exit public assistance (when applicable)					TBD	10*
*Number of trainees employed who were on public assistance. Exit from public assistance is anticipated as a result of employment.						

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Explaining Program to Upper-Level Management

The NRI partnership's initial partners were very excited about the training program, but had to convince upper-level management in its partner companies to get on board with participating in the training program. Despite this time obstacle, however, upper-level management generally supported the NRI Partnership's training program.

Recruitment

Difficulty Recruiting Committed Trainees

The major challenge identified by the NRI was related to recruitment and retention of participants in the program. NRI's initial recruitment strategies consisted of flyer advertising and a small amount of in-person recruitment sessions. This initial strategy did not produce the desired recruitment outcomes and were later altered to use more aggressive strategies. Further, because the target population for the NRI training program has less education, less knowledge about career jobs, lacks problem-solving skills, and often encounters many family barriers, the grantee had a difficult time identifying people willing to fully commit to the program, and also had a difficult time keeping people in the program, mostly due to family and financial issues (e.g., child care, getting another job, lack of follow through).

Identified Recruitment Locations

NRI hoped for a significant number of recruits to come through the Department of Labor and Training's One Stop Career Center. However, despite holding presentations at the One Stops, these efforts did not amount to many referrals.

Trainee Barriers

Lack of Childcare

Lack of childcare was stated as the biggest barrier encountered by trainees. Though most of the children of training participants were in elementary or middle school, the individuals in the program still required before/after school childcare. In addition, the current systematic issues with DHS made it very difficult for participants to be able to enroll in the program because people lacked SNAP benefits, childcare subsidies, and other family supports. The NRI Partnership worked diligently with each individual to "think outside the box" to identify informal supports to help with childcare, but it remained an obstacle.

Training

Difficulty Retaining Program Participants

The NRI Partnership discussed difficulties in retaining training program participants and how it lost participants at different phases (including referrals, admittance, enrollment, and graduation) due to personal circumstances, such as childcare issues.

Administrative Challenges due to Flexible Model

While the competency-based model is considered a best practice and is more cost effective than other training approaches, this model does make it difficult to structure administrative systems to track participation because the systems are designed to track trainings with a set schedule over a certain amount of time. Therefore, if someone exits the program early, even if the reason made logical sense based on individual competency, the system would recognize that person as 'incomplete' for the program. Regardless of these administrative barriers, the NRI was encouraged by RJRI to move ahead with its plan in order to meet the needs of employers and program participants.

<u>Transition from Training to Employment</u>

Credit Scores

An unexpected impediment that was not anticipated was related to the need within the financial and banking industry for employees to have good credit histories in order to obtain jobs. This rendered most recruits ineligible for these employment positions. Thus, the NRI Partnership learned to ask for credit reports earlier on in the process so that it could better anticipate any participants who may have difficulties acquiring jobs in that industry. For those who were interested but who they knew would have trouble, they would conduct financial counseling to help them improve their credit scores. Most often the reality is that credit scores do not quickly change, so many interested participants would have to move on to another possibilities.

VIII. Sustainability

The sustainability of the NRI Career Academy is probable. Although the NRI Career Academy utilized a model with a primary focus on entry-level jobs in the financial services sector, it has the potential to expand to address industry needs in many other sectors and for a wide variety of job vacancies. The NRI partnership displayed the ability to adapt and innovate when faced with obstacles, and this is a skill that is essential to long term sustainability and growth. The NRI Partnership noted that partners contributed more than $33,000 in in-kind resources. The Leadership Team, has begun discussions of financial contributions in the form of corporate sponsorships of specific training modules as well as instituting membership fees as the Partnership's reputation for innovation grows.

The NRI Partnership also noted that it will be working in close alliance with the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Board to share information regarding mutually beneficial goals for both employer partners and trainees. Furthermore, the partnership has committed to identifying supplemental state and federal resources that can be used to support the training of participants in the program including TANF and WIOA. The NRI partnership has taken steps towards expanding in Westerly RI. Lastly, the NRI partnership proposed to establish robust relationships

with the One-Stop Centers in northern Rhode Island to act as referral mechanisms for potential participants into the NRI Career Academy.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following lessons were learned by the NRI Partnership in executing this training program:

- The competency-based model for providing the training program was a useful tool.
- For jobs that require a credit check for employment, provide credit reports prior to the training program to ensure trainees do not take part in the training for a job in which they could not be hired.
- Recruit training program participants utilizing school system resources.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by the NRI Partnership:

- Work with higher education institutions to develop curricula and provide training modules to training participants.
- Develop curricula that utilizes the competency-based model and is tailored to meet employer needs.
- Work with school districts to recruit training program participants.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of the NRI Partnership, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Provide a stipend or other monetary incentive for training participants to cover costs and help with recruitment and ensure participants will remain in the program rather than identify other paid employment opportunities.
- Encourage the NRI Partnership to recruit high school seniors who are about to graduate but who do not plan to attend college for their financial trainings. High school seniors are far less likely to have bad credit and therefore would pass any credit checks, and this could also be a good first job into a career ladder for those individuals.
- Provide resources for childcare. This may need to come in a variety of forms, such as childcare vouchers or assistance with informal childcare (babysitters) or offer on-site childcare for the trainees.
- Better facilitate how RJRI partners will work together, such as specific roles and joint activities, if that is a goal within the sector. We suggest this because this partnership planned to work with the Insurance Innovation Partnership, but this did not come to fruition.

- Help the NRI establish partnerships with other community and neighborhood groups that may be able to identify/recruit individuals who would benefit from this training model and fit well with this employment sector.

Appendix A

Original Intake Form

Real Jobs RI Application Form Cover Sheet and Document Checklist

This Application Form must be completed in full, signed, and returned along with copies of supporting documentation. You must also return the Department copy of the Equal Opportunity Notice.

These Supporting Documents are Required of Everyone

✓ You must submit a **copy** of **one document from each** of the below categories with your application:

- ❑ Proof of Age
  - Valid Driver's license
  - Valid State-Issued ID
  - U.S. Passport
  - U.S. Birth Certificate
  - DD214

- ❑ Proof of Social Security Number
  - Social Security Card
  - W2 (if full social security number is shown)
  - DD214

- ❑ Work Authorization
  - Valid Driver's license & Social Security Card
  - U.S. Passport
  - U.S. Birth Certificate
  - Alien Registration Card
  - Naturalization Certificate

These Supporting Documents are Only Required if They Apply to You

✓ Public Assistance Verification - Must be dated within the last 6 months and show your name:

- ❑ Most Recent SNAP Award letter
- ❑ Most Recent TANF Award Letter
- ❑ SSI Award Letter
- ❑ Other Public Assistance Records/Printouts

✓ Unemployment Verification

- ❑ Separation Notice/Letter from Employer
- ❑ Unemployment Insurance Determination Letter
- ❑ Spouse's Notice or Determination Letter (if displaced homemaker)
- ❑ Business Closure Documents (if formerly self-employed)

✓ Veteran Status Verification

- ❑ DD214
- ❑ Military Records

✓ Proof of Residency – if your Driver's License address is different than your current address:

- ❑ Anything showing your name and current address (example: a utility bill)

RJRI Participant Application Form

Please ensure that all required documentation is attached. PLEASE PRINT ANSWERS

A. INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

Date:

Last Name	First Name	MI	Social Security #	
Residential Address	City	ST	Zip	Date of birth:

Mailing Address if different than residential address: If Mailing Address is the same as the residential address check here: ☐

Address: _____ City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Primary Phone ( )	Cell Phone ( )	E-mail:

Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female **Marital Status:** ☐Single ☐ Single/Head of Household ☐ Married ☐Widowed ☐ Divorced

Alternate Contact Information (*If possible, list someone not living with you.)*

Last Name: _____First Name:_____Relationship: _____Phone: ( )_____

Address: _____City: _____State:____ Zip: _____ E-mail_____

Authorized to work in the U.S.: ☐ Citizen of US or US Territory ☐ US Permanent Resident ☐ Alien/Refugee Lawfully Admitted to US

If not a Citizen: Alien Registration #_____Expiration Date_____(*mm/dd/yyyy)*

Ethnic Origin ☐ Hispanic/Latino heritage ☐ Not Hispanic/Latino

Race *(Optional) May check more than one:* ☐ Black/African American ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native ☐ Asian ☐ Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ I do not wish to disclose

Have you registered with Selective Service? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐ Exempt from Registration

All **adult male** U.S. citizens and immigrants residing in the United States (except for men born **before 1960**) are required to register with Selective Service by their 26th birthday in case of a crisis requiring a draft. Registration and proof of registration can be found at www.sss.gov

Are you homeless? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If English is not your native language or you live in a community where English is not the dominant language, do you have difficulty reading, writing, speaking or understanding English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a disability? *(Optional)* ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I do not wish to disclose

If answered "yes" to Disability one of the below must be selected:
☐ Physical impairment ☐ Mental impairment
☐ Both a physical and mental impairment ☐ I do not wish to disclose

B. EDUCATION INFORMATION

Education Level (Check your highest education level completed)

☐ No grades completed
☐ Highest school grade (1-11) completed: Grade: _____
☐ 12th Grade Completed but did not receive diploma or equivalent
☐ Certificate of attendance/completion (Disabled Individuals)
☐ General Equivalency Degree (GED)
☐ High School Diploma
☐ College or a Technical or Vocational School –
☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years
☐ Vocational School Certificate
☐ Associates Degree ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree
☐ Doctorate Degree ☐ Specialized Degree

School Status

☐ Not Attending Any School
☐ Attending High School, Junior High, Middle or Elementary School
☐ Attending an Alternative High School
☐ Attending College or a Technical or Vocational School

Last School _____

Dates: From _____To _____

Have you been notified or are receiving a Pell Grant?
☐ Yes ☐ No

C. MILITARY SERVICE

Are you in the military, a veteran or the spouse of a veteran? ☐ Yes ☐ No If YES, continue to answer questions 1-4

1. Are you a Transitioning Service Member? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If YES, indicate Transitioning Type: ☐ Within 24 Months of Retirement ☐ Within 12 Months of Discharge: Projected Discharge Date: _____

2. Have you attended a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Workshop within the last 3 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Have you served on active duty in the armed forces and were discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable?
☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Are you the spouse of a veteran who has a total service connected disability, is Missing in Action, captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, is a Prisoner of War or who died from a service connected disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered YES to Question 2 or 3, continue to enter the information below about your (or your spouse's) military service.

Eligible Veteran Status:	**Are you a Disabled Veteran?**
☐ Yes – served for less than or equal to 180 days ☐ Yes, Eligible Veteran ☐ Yes, Other Eligible Person ☐ No	☐ Yes, Disabled ☐ Yes, Special Disabled (Greater Than 30%) If Yes, Indicate Disability Percentage ___ % ☐ No **Are you a Campaign Veteran?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Served more than 1 tour of duty: ☐ Yes ☐ No Tour Dates*(mm/dd/yyyy)*:

D. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Current Employment Status ☐Working Full Time ☐Working Part Time ☐Not Working ☐Never Worked ☐Other *Explain)*_____

Have you recently received a Notice of Termination of Employment or Military Separation? ☐Yes ☐ No

Have you been notified of an impending layoff? ☐ Yes ☐ No Projected Date of layoff: _____

Are you collecting Unemployment Insurance? ☐Yes If not RI, indicate state_____ ☐ No ☐ Pending ☐ Exhausted Benefits

Are you a displaced homemaker? (i.e. an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who has been dependent on the income of another family member(s) but is no longer supported by that income(s) and is un(der)employed) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were you recently self-employed but unable to maintain self-employment due to a natural disaster or economic conditions? ☐Yes ☐ No

Migrant/Seasonal Worker – Have you worked on a farm or as a migrant/migrant food processor at least 25 days in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes ☐ No - If YES, Class: ☐ Farmworker ☐ Migrant ☐ Migrant Farmworker
Type of Qualifying Farmwork: ☐ Agricultural Production and Services ☐ Food Processing Establishments

Do you belong to a Union? ☐ Yes: List Union and Local_____ ☐No

E. OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE(S), CERTIFICATE(S) & DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION

Occupational Certificate/License	Issuing Organization	Issue Date	State	Country

Do you have a valid Driver's License? ☐ Yes ☐ No - If YES, in what State? _____ Type: ☐ Regular ☐Commercial ☐ Permit

Class: ☐ 10 - Private Vehicle ☐ A - Tractor Trailer ☐ B - Straight Truck ☐ C – Bus

Endorsements: ☐ Hazardous Waste ☐ Motorcycles ☐ Tankers ☐ Double/Triple Trailers

Restrictions: ☐Air Brakes ☐School Bus ☐Class A, except bus ☐Class A, except tractor trailer double/triples ☐ Private/Chauffeur's

F. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

WORK HISTORY #1 - CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB

Employer Name	Start Date: *(mm/dd/yyyy)*	End Date: *(mm/dd/yyyy)*		
Address	City	State	Zip	Country
Job Title	Wage: $_____ ☐ Hour ☐ Day ☐ Week ☐ Month ☐ Year	Hours Worked Per Week		

Reason for Leaving: ☐ Lay-off ☐ Terminated/Fired ☐ Better Opportunity ☐ Still Employed ☐ Resigned/Quit ☐ Job Ended ☐ Retired ☐ Other

Duties

WORK HISTORY #2

Employer Name	Start Date: (mm/*dd/yyyy)*	End Date: *(mm/dd/yyyy)*		
Address	City	State	Zip	Country
Job Title	Wage: $_____ ☐ Hour ☐ Day ☐ Week ☐ Month ☐ Year	Hours Worked Per Week		

Reason for Leaving: ☐ Lay-off ☐ Terminated/Fired ☐ Better Opportunity ☐ Still Employed ☐ Resigned/Quit ☐ Job Ended ☐ Retired ☐ Other

Duties

G. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

In the last 26 weeks, have you or anyone in your household received or have been determined eligible to receive any of the following:

TANF	☐Yes	☐No	If receiving TANF, are you within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Food Stamps (SNAP)	☐Yes	☐No	
SSI	☐Yes	☐No	
SSDI	☐Yes	☐No	
General Assistance	☐Yes	☐No	

H. FAMILY & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Are you single, separated, divorced or a widowed individual who has primary responsibility for 1+ dependents under the age of 18? ☐ Yes ☐ No

List each person in your household, including yourself, who is related to you by blood, marriage or adoption. For each member, list the Source of Income (such as gross wages, pensions, social security, rental income or alimony) and the amount for the last 26 weeks.
Do NOT include child support, unemployment, worker's compensation or public assistance amounts.

Name (First & Last Name)	Relationship	Date of Birth	Source of Income	Amount (Last 26 weeks)
SELF	N/A			$
			TOTAL LAST 26 WEEKS INCOME	$

I. APPLICANT ASSURANCES & RIGHTS

The information on this application is true to the best of my knowledge. I realize that any false statements that I know I made may cause this application to be rejected, or if I am enrolled in a program, may result in my termination and possible prosecution. I also understand that I am not guaranteed employment or any services which the Department of Labor and Training administers.
I understand that netWORKri is a partnership of agencies that provide employment and training services. This form and all my communications with netWORKri contain confidential information, including my social security number, and I understand that the information I provide to netWORKri may be shared with partner agencies for the purposes of employment and training services only. Any form of distribution, copying or forwarding or use of this information for other than its intended purpose is strictly prohibited and may be in violation of State and/or Federal law. I authorize release of this information to netWORKri Partner Agencies.
If qualified for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, I agree to allow netWORKri staff to verify any information I provided on this application to determine my eligibility for possible participation. I have read, understand, and received a copy of the Grievance Procedures outlining my right to file a written complaint regarding any aspect of the WIOA program.

NOTE: By enrolling in Real Jobs RI, participants will be automatically registered with EmployRI.org. EmployRI.org is Rhode Island's free public online job service database that offers a complete set of employment tools for job seekers.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____ *(mm/dd/yyyy)*

***** FOR OFFICE USE ONLY *****

Dislocated Worker: ☐ Yes ☐ No **Low Income:** ☐ YES ☐ NO **WIOA Eligible:** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Partnership:			
☐Aquaculture Training ☐Biomed Equipment and Data Scientist Apprenticeship ☐Building Futures ☐CNA Talent Network ☐Design Sector Planning ☐Health Care Training Collab. ☐Healthy Jobs RI	☐Insurance Innovation ☐IT Real Jobs Partnership (Tech Collective) ☐Leadership Development Partnership of RI ☐ManUp2Careers ☐Marine and Composites Real Jobs Partnership ☐Medtech Innovation Engine	☐ Real IT Jobs (LaunchCode) ☐Phoenix ☐Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building ☐Real Jobs Partnership of Northern RI ☐RJRI Cybersecurity ☐Residential Construction Workforce Partnership	☐RI Manufacturing Bootcamp ☐RI Urban Apprenticeship ☐RI Financial Skills Initiative ☐RI Food Management ☐RJRI Construction Trades Skill-Up ☐The HirePath (OIC) ☐Westerly Regional

CLIENT / PROGRAM:	**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Status**	
	☐Neither Claimant nor Exhaustee ☐Exhaustee State Issuing Benefits _____ ☐Claimant (Referred by WPRS) ☐Claimant (Not Referred by WPRS) Date of Actual Qualifying Dislocation *(mm/dd/yyyy)* _____ ☐ UI Pending	☐Wagner-Peyser ☐SP NEG – Date of Participation _____ ☐WIOA Incentive – Date of Participation _____ ☐Governor's Set-Aside –Date of Participation _____ ☐JDF – Date of Participation _____ ☐Other (please specify):_____ Date of Participation: _____

Application Reviewed by: Staff Name_____Date:_____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS THE LAW

It is against the law for this state agency and recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases:

Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation or belief and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or his or her participation in a WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

THE RECIPIENT MUST NOT DISCRIMINATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity;
- Providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such program or activity; or
- Making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with such a program or activity.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION

If you think you have been subjected to discrimination, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either:

1.) **The recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer, Department of Labor and Training, or**
2.) **Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210.**

If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center (see address above). If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you do not have to wait for the recipient to issue that Notice before filing a complaint with CRC. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90 day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after the day on which you filed your complaint with the recipient).

If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

FOR INFORMATION, OR TO FILE A COMPLAINT, CONTACT:
Angelyne E. Cooper, EO Officer
Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, R.I. 02920
Phone: (401) 462-8897 TTY via RI Relay 711

The Department of Labor and Training is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

DEPARTMENT COPY
PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN WITH ENROLLMENT PACKET

I certify that I have been furnished a copy of the "Equal Opportunity is the Law" Notice, and the Notice has been discussed with me.

_____ _____
SIGNATURE DATE

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PROCEDURES FOR FILING GRIEVANCES/COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE REAL JOBS RI PROGRAM

You are applying to participate in activities related to the Real Jobs RI program. These activities are funded, in whole or in part, through the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and/or the state Job Development Fund (JDF). You are guaranteed the right to file a complaint regarding any aspect of the WIOA/JDF program. Further, no one may penalize you in any way for exercising your right to file such a complaint. You must follow the procedures described below if you feel you are being denied your rights.

PROCEDURES FOR FILING GRIEVANCES/COMPLAINTS ABOUT WIOA/JDF PROGRAMS

1. All grievances/complaints must be filed within one year of the alleged violation.

2. A written complaint detailing the specific grievance must first be prepared and submitted to the following individual:

   Executive Director
   Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island
   Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
   1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 72
   Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

   The written complaint must include the following information:
   a) Your name, address, business and home telephone numbers;
   b) A description of you grievance/complaint;
   c) The regulations or policies violated, if known;
   d) The date(s) of the alleged unfair act(s); and
   e) The name(s) and address(es) of any other(s) involved in the situation.

   The Executive Director will issue a decision within 30 (thirty) days of the filing of the complaint.

3. If you are not satisfied with the decision you receive from the Executive Director and you wish to file an appeal, you must do so within ten (10) days. You must send the written appeal to the following individual:

   Director
   Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
   1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 72
   Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

   The Director (who is also the State WIOA Liaison Officer) will issue a decision within sixty (60) days from the date you originally filed your grievance/complaint. The decision will include information informing you whether an additional appeal is available. The Director's decision is final for anyone whose participation in the Real Jobs RI program was funded through the state Job Development Fund.

4. If your participation was funded through federal resources, and if you are still not satisfied, you may then file a final appeal with the Secretary of Labor at the following address:

   Secretary of Labor
   U.S. Department of Labor
   200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20210

The Secretary of Labor will render a decision within 120 days after the filing of the grievance/complaint.

PARTICIPANT COPY
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Revised Intake Form

Participant Enrollment Package

The Real Jobs RI Program is supported by a combination of state and federal funds.
Participants must enroll in the program to receive grant-supported services.
Please complete the attached form, then return it along with copies of supporting documents.

Proof of Identity and Work Authorization is REQUIRED

This requirement may be satisfied through the submission of **copies** of any of the following documents:

- ❑ Social Security Card AND Unexpired Government- or School-Issued Photo ID
- ❑ U.S. Birth Certificate AND Unexpired Government- or School-Issued Photo ID
- ❑ U.S. Naturalization Certificate
- ❑ Unexpired U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport Card
- ❑ Unexpired Alien Registration Card (Green Card)
- ❑ Unexpired Employment Authorization Card (with photo)

For a complete list of documents that will satisfy this requirement, refer to USCIS Handbook M-274, Part 8.
https://www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf

Real Jobs RI Participant Enrollment Form

REAL JOBS Rhode Island

*** * * FOR PARTNERSHIP USE ONLY * * ***

PARTNERSHIP:	
Participant Type:	☐JOB SEEKER or NEW HIRE TRAINEE ☐INTERN/FELLOW ☐ INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINEE
Activity Enrolled in:	
Activity START DATE: / /	**Activity END DATE (or estimated):** / /

Please print clearly. Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are REQUIRED.

TODAY'S DATE: / /

***Last Name:**		***Social Security #:**	– –
***First Name:**		***Date of Birth:**	/ /

Enter Street Address (if you are homeless, check here ☐):

Enter Mailing Address if different from Street Address:

***Street Address:**		**Mailing Address:**	
***City/State/Zip:**		**City/State/Zip:**	
***Phone #:**		**E-mail Address:**	

***Are you a U.S. Citizen?** ☐ Yes ☐ No (if No, please provide your A# _____-_____-_____ and Expiration Date ____/____/____)

***Are you registered with the Selective Service?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐ Exempt ☐ I don't know

***Are you a Veteran?** ☐ No ☐ Yes (if Yes, please submit a copy of your DD214)

***Educational Background**

Highest Grade Completed:

☐ Did not complete high school (Last Grade Completed: _____)

☐ High School Diploma ☐ General Equivalency Degree (GED)

☐ Attended *some* College or Vocational School (non-degree holder)

☐ Vocational School Certificate ☐ Associate Degree

☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ PhD

Are you attending school or training currently? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, where? _____

Race ☐ I do not wish to disclose

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Black/African American

☐ Asian

☐ Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

☐ Native American or Alaskan

Ethnicity ☐ I do not wish to disclose

☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Not Hispanic/Latino

Gender ☐ I do not wish to disclose

☐ Male

☐ Female

English Language Learners (ELL) ☐ I do not wish to disclose

Do you consider yourself an English Language Learner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

***Employment Status**

Are you authorized to work in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you currently working? ☐ No ☐ Yes (full-time) ☐ Yes (part-time)

→ **If Yes, have you been notified of an impending layoff?** ☐ No ☐ Yes (Projected Layoff Date: _____ Employer: _____)

→ **If Yes, do you consider yourself UNDER-EMPLOYED (i.e. current employment is not permanent OR is not commensurate with education, skills, or previous earnings)?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were you previously dependent on a family member's income and are no longer supported by that income? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*[Initial] _____ The information on this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

*[Initial] _____ I certify that I have received a copy of the Equal Opportunity and Program Grievance Policy. I understand my rights and the process for filing an Equal Opportunity or Program complaint.

*[Initial] _____ I understand that by enrolling in Real Jobs RI, I will be automatically registered with EmployRI.org - Rhode Island's free public online job service database that offers a complete set of employment tools for job seekers.

***Applicant Signature:** _____ ***Date:** _____

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OR TO FILE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMPLAINT, CONTACT:

Angelyne E. Cooper, EO Officer
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, R.I. 02920
Phone: (401) 462-8897
TTY via RI Relay 711

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Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 72
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The written complaint must include the following information:

a) Your name, address, and telephone number(s);
b) A description of you grievance/complaint;
c) The regulations or policies violated, if known;
d) The date(s) of the alleged unfair act(s); and
e) The name(s) and address(es) of any other(s) involved in the situation.

The Executive Director will issue a decision within 30 days of the filing of the complaint.

3) If you are not satisfied with the decision you receive from the Executive Director and you wish to file an appeal, you must do so within ten (10) days. You must send the written appeal to the following individual:

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Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 72
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

The Director (who is also the State WIOA Liaison Officer) will issue a decision within 60 days from the date you originally filed your grievance/complaint. The decision will include information informing you whether an additional appeal is available. The Director's decision is final for anyone whose participation in the Real Jobs RI program was funded through the state Job Development Fund.

4) If your participation was funded through federal resources, and if you are still not satisfied, you may then file a final appeal with the Secretary of Labor at the following address:

Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

The Secretary of Labor will render a decision within 120 days after the filing of the grievance/complaint.

Reporting Template

REAL JOBS RI GRANTEE EXPENDITURE REPORT

THIS SECTION IS FOR RI DLT USE ONLY		
GRANT ADVISOR REVIEW (REAL JOBS RI STAFF)		
To the best of my knowledge, this Expenditure Report reasonably reflects the work of this Grantee this payment period.		
Date Received:	Date Reviewed:	Grant Advisor Initials:
PO Number:	Invoice Number:	
Comments:		
DEPARTMENT APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT (DLT BUSINESS AFFAIRS)		
Authorization is Given to Disburse: $		
Comments:		
Department Authorized Signature:		Date:

I. GRANT & FISCAL AGENT INFORMATION

Grant Number:		Fiscal Agent:	
Lead Applicant:		Fiscal Agent Name:	
Project Name:		Fiscal Agent Phone:	
Project Budget:		Fiscal Agent E-mail:	

II. EXPENDITURE REPORT

Below please itemize all Real Jobs RI related expenditures that your Partnership incurred during the report period. Columns A and B are already completed. Columns E and F will autocalculate. Please enter information into Columns C and D only.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Category/Item	Total RJRI Approved Budget	Expenditures THIS PERIOD	Expenditures Previously Reimbursed	Cumulative (C + D)	Remaining (B - E)
Project/Program Management Costs					
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
Enhanced Career Services/Participant Management Costs					
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
Direct Training Costs					
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
Youth Engagement/CTE Activity Costs					
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
Administrative Costs					
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
				$0.00	$0.00
TOTAL	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

I certify that the expenditures and information submitted are true and accurate and conform with the terms of the Implementation Grant Award Agreement. I further certify that all disbursement requirements as provided for in the award agreement are satisfied.

Fiscal Agent Authorized Signature	Date