

Evaluation of Career Bridge: Preliminary Report

Presentation to Committee on Economic Resiliency and
Regional Relations, Seattle City Council

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Project Overview

- Preliminary Report – July, 2013
 - Preliminary analysis of implementation
 - Participant characteristics and outcomes – Cohort One
 - Cost Estimate
 - Program Challenges – current operations and for potential expansion
 - Early evaluation implications



Context

- Program in pilot mode
- Community members see a gap in services for target population
- Belief that embedding intervention within structure of community support will produce better outcomes
- Most participants reported facing barriers due to criminal history, housing, and transportation
- Program strongly supported by key stakeholders
- Employment focus but recognizing broader needs



Program Challenges

- Current implementation challenges
- Challenges if program is to expand
- Issues in several areas
 - Diffuse goals, target population
 - Management structure and staffing
 - Service delivery
 - Employment and training outcomes
 - Program costs



Program Goals and Target Population

- Employment focus, but array of broader individual- and community-level goals from various stakeholders
- Clarity of target population
 - Primarily serving African-American men with criminal backgrounds
 - Discussion of expanding target group
 - Need clearer eligibility criteria
 - Enrollment strategy potentially excludes more disconnected populations



Management Structure and Staffing

- Diffuse leadership model and unclear lines of responsibility
 - Creates consensus-driven, collaborative atmosphere
 - Limits ability to make quick, decisive decisions even for basic program functions
- Lack of case management capacity and expertise
 - Community sponsors not consistently knowledgeable or experienced
- Few community sponsors and implications for capacity



Service Delivery

- Inconsistent case management
 - Limited capacity
 - Unclear roles
 - Lack of expertise
- Need for consistent supportive services
 - Tie services to formal barrier assessment
 - Tension between direct support vs. referrals
- Support for retention and advancement
- Lack of explicit connection to education and training programs
- Time intensive model



Employment and Training Outcomes

- Some success in participant employment
- Survival jobs as first step in re-engaging participants in workforce
- Jobs are generally low wage, entry-level positions
- Lengthy time to placement
- Retention challenges
- Limited links to career pathway jobs
- Few education and training placements



Program Costs

- Cost analysis based on estimates
- Includes substantial startup and transition costs
- Substantial city staff involvement in direct program operations
- Considering opportunity cost
 - City staff time
 - Use of SJI funding



Moving Forward

- Clarify program goals and staffing responsibility
 - Program management
 - Case management
 - Role of sponsors
- Clarify target population
- Strengthen linkages to education and training programs
- Improve data collection to capture program participation and service delivery
- Evaluation Plan – September, 2013
- Final Report – July, 2014

