Jobs-Plus

Lessons from the Evaluation:
The Employment Component

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Distinctive features of delivering employment services in Jobs-Plus

- Capitalizing on place
- Diversity of target group’s backgrounds and needs
- The role of partnerships
- Potential synergies with the rent incentives and community support for work
- The focus on saturation
“Capitalizing on place”

Locating job assistance on-site, where people live, was intended to facilitate engagement

Convenience, plus many informal opportunities to meet with, advise, encourage, and assist residents:

- Often on a “drop-in” basis at the Jobs-Plus office
- In the neighborhood (e.g., on a corner; at events)
- At residents’ homes

Staff closer to residents’ day-to-day lives

- More holistic understanding of family problems, support networks, and neighborhood conditions
Partnerships

TANF and WIA

• Collaborating partners, not just “referral partners”

Coordination of frontline service delivery

• In some cities, participation in JP satisfied TANF participation requirements
• Tried to minimize duplication of services or conflicting guidance
• Some joint training of staff across agencies
• Sometimes outstationed staff at JP office
• Flags in agency MIS to identify JP participants
Partnerships (continued)

Jobs-Plus and WIA One-Stops

• In some cities, strong coordination with One-Stops, but was not a substitute on-site JP program
• Some residents reluctant to use One-Stops
• In SIF, evidence of One-Stops’ reluctance to serve JP participants who were not “placement ready”
• Potential partnership affected by stability and strength of the One-Stop
• Senior WIA administrator commitment was key
Referral partnerships with many other service providers to address broad needs

• Education programs
  – For GED, ESL, community college
• Skills training programs
• Child care
• Health care
• Substance abuse treatment
• Domestic violence
• Immigrant service agencies
Full implementation sites (original demo) achieved substantial engagement

High “attachment rate” (Jobs-Plus MIS):

“Ever enrolled in JP or received rent incentives”

1998 cohort: 62% (within 4 years)
2000 cohort: 76% (within 2 years)

Doesn’t capture “informal” employment guidance or related assistance delivered at the development
Still, many residents would have participated in services anyway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2003 Survey Of Household Heads</th>
<th>How many participated in any employment-related activity within prior 12 months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jobs-Plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With help from any program/agency</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With help from program at PHA or housing development</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How else did Jobs-Plus add value?

Guidance may have been received differently; may have been reinforcing

• Coaches had personalized knowledge of residents’ families and community context
• Informal encounters; some home visits
• Flexible hours for meeting
• Sometimes accompanied participants to other agencies; brokering for them
• Employment assistance bundled with the inducement or rent incentives; reinforced with community support for work
Challenges

• Some residents weren’t convinced of value of Jobs-Plus services vs. what they were receiving elsewhere

• Difficulty engaging residents who were already working (and busy) in focusing on advancement

• Some drug problems, mental illness, domestic violence, criminal records
  – Program not equipped to deal with highly troubled residents
  – Partnerships with specialist service providers were essential

• Some reluctance to engage in a housing authority program; issues of undeclared income
Working in culturally diverse sites

Seattle and St. Paul: Many Southeast Asian and East African immigrant populations

Staff needed to learn cultural issues beyond language that could affect employment

- Attitudes toward women working and being in mixed-gender class and workforce settings
- Issues of domestic abuse
- Concerns about use of day care
- Concerns about teens’ acculturation and American values

Affiliations with culturally competent immigrant or ethnic service organizations become very important
On-site presence doesn’t guarantee sustained engagement; need persistent outreach

JP Enrollees at SIF Replication Sites

% receiving of any JP service or formal contact

(Doesn’t capture informal engagement)
SIF sites began taking a “building-by-building” approach

• “Taking inventories” of work status of all residents in each building and section of the development

• Using PHA data and staff understanding of the residents and character of particular buildings

• Plotting engagement strategies and marketing messages tailored to the individual buildings

• More challenging when vendors are the providers: Don’t have easy access to PHA data, and less of an on-site presence
Looking beyond “members’ numbers”

• MIS systems in the original demo and SIF replication focused on employment outcomes for Jobs-Plus “members”

• But as a saturation initiative, important to focus also on larger resident population

• Where possible, using housing authority 50058 data and even state UI employment records would provide a fuller picture of residents’ employment needs and progress