
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

2003 Survey Of Household Heads

How many participated in any employment-related activity within prior 12 months?

	Jobs-Plus	Comparison	Difference
With help from any program/agency	57.6	45.5	12.1***
With help from program at PHA or housing development	30.5	13.4	17.1***

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

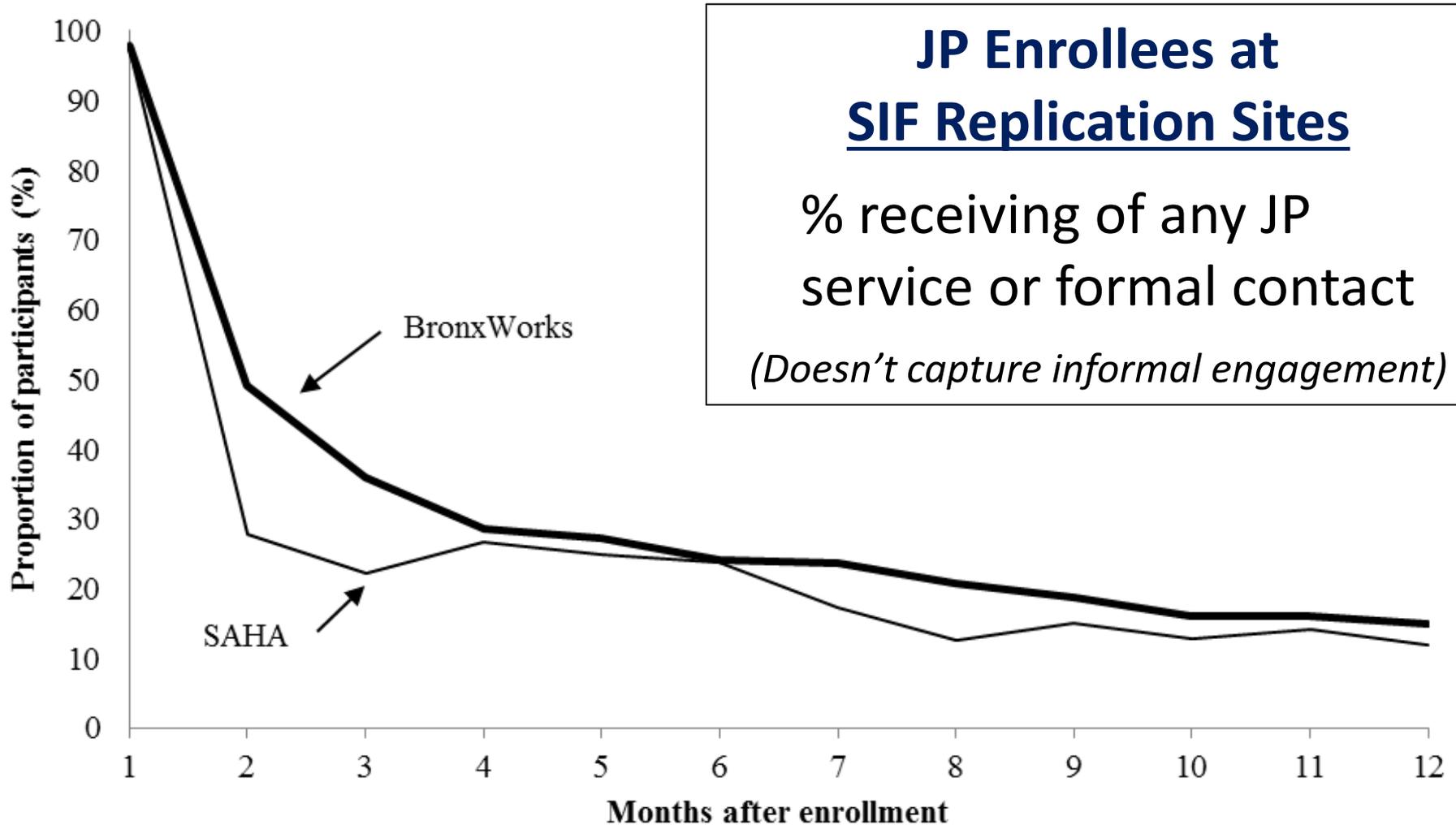
Seattle and St. Paul: Many Southeast Asian and East African immigrant populations

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



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