Lessons from the Workforce Benchmarking Network

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Evaluation?
“We work in a world of true complexity, strong social influences, and tight dependence on local context—a world less of proof than of navigation, less of final conclusions than of continual learning.” Don Berwick, Institute of Healthcare Improvement.
Workforce Benchmarking Network
A Resource for Evaluation, Learning & Improvement

- Guidelines on Effective Program Practices
- Tools for Using Data to Improve Results (Lrng Cmties)
- Advocacy for Shared Measures and Reporting Tools
- Benchmarks for “Good” Performance
- “Apples to Apples” Comparisons

Website: benchmarking.skilledwork.org
More than 500 programs at 200 CBOs have participated since 2008.

In 62 cities

Across 26 states and provinces

Benchmarking Data Survey

Data plus Peer Learning activities
AGGREGATE program data on a previous one-year cohort of enrollees:

- Org type, workforce budget and staffing
- # Enrollments / Participant demographics
- Types & length of services
- # Completers
- Credential attainment
- # Placements: Definition + Wage/FT-PT/Benefits
- # Retentions: Definition + Wages (3 – 6 – 12 mos.)
- Data Verification Practices
National Reports: Benchmarks of “Good” Performance

Apples to Apples Reports

- **2013 Initial Report**

- **2016 Data Update**: more current data from over 250 programs

- [www.benchmarking.skilledwork.org](http://www.benchmarking.skilledwork.org)
## 2016 Dataset
### Overall National Outcome Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>75(^{th}) %ile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Completing Program</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Placement out of enrollees</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Placed out of program completers</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Placed in Full-time Employment</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Placed in Jobs Offering Health Benefits</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Hourly Wage at Placement</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>$11.25</td>
<td>$10.15</td>
<td>$11.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Retained at 3 months (out of placed)</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Retained at 6 months (out of placed)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Retained at 12 months (out of placed)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Better Job Placement

- Higher job placement (76% vs. 69%)
- More full-time (76% vs. 58%)
- More health benefits (48% vs. 23%)

Better Job Retention

- 3-month (78% vs. 69%)
- 6-month (68% vs. 56%)
- 12-month (46% vs. 39%)

Programs Offering Financial Literacy as a Core Service: Higher Results!
Benchmarking Data: Program Characteristics Correlated with Higher/Lower Outcomes

**Programmatic**
- Cohort size
- Ability to select clients
- Client to full-time staff ratio

**% of Participants**
- Age 18-24
- Criminal background
- Disability
- Homeless at intake
- No diploma or GED

**Core Services**
- Adult basic education
- Financial literacy / coaching
- Mentoring
- Occupational skills training
- Skills training leading to certification
- Work experience: internships & transitional jobs
- Post-employment follow-up services
- Weeks in pre-employment activities
- Hours/weeks in pre-employment activities
Benchmarking Reports: How Do My Program’s Results Compare?

The Workforce Benchmarking Network: Interpreting the Chart

- **A.** Your Program’s Outcome (from your survey)
- **B.** Benchmarking Characteristic featured in this chart
- **C.** Comparison Category for your program
- **D.** Number of programs in your comparison category
- **E.** Median outcome for your comparison category
- **F.** Your percentile ranking within your comparison category
- **G.** The range of outcomes in your comparison category

**Cohort Size**
- Medium (101-500)
- # of Programs: 133
- Your Percentile: 61st-70th

**Placement Rate**
- Median: 51%
- Your Rate: 61%
- Range - Min: 4%
- Range - Max: 80%

The Benchmarking Report – Spring 2014
Benchmarking Data Survey: Future Directions

2017-2018

- Seeking stakeholder input into national data survey
  - What results data matter now?
  - Do deeper dives: specific populations, services?
  - More interactive, user-friendly reports?
- Funding and business model to sustain data and capacity building work? Would orgs pay for this?
- New national survey – Fall 2018?
Benchmarking “Continuous Improvement” Learning Communities

2012-Present: Chicago, New York City, Twin Cities, Dallas-Ft. Worth

- Workshops on Using Data to Improve Performance
- Focused Improvement Goals
- Peer Learning Events
- Individual Technical Assistance

Reports on Results and Lessons

- Nurturing Inquiry and Innovation
- Learning to Thrive
The “Improvement Process”
Example: *Jane Addams Resource Corporation*

“Jump to Questions, not Conclusions”
Process Review: Where’s the “LEAK” or GAP? Where is Missed Opportunity?

- “Work Ready”
- Job Match
- 3-6 Mo. Job Ret.
- 1-Month Job Ret.
- 8-12 Month Job Retention

Diagram showing water flowing through pipes with leaks at different points, indicating areas of missed opportunity.
What “Milestone” Result Needs Focus?

What short-term “stepping stone results” - if accomplished – are most related to success on your long-term outcome measure??

Example: Jane Addams Resource Corporation - Chicago

- Increased JARC PLACEMENTS
- Lower Interview to Hire Ratio
- Increased “Dual Engagement” Of Employers
- Increased Test Pass Rates
What’s Our Hunch?
How Could We “Test” That?

Data Sources?

Potential Influencing Factor
Staff Communic.

Potential Influencing Factor
Mktg. Materials

Potential Influencing Factor
Inconsistent Messaging

Data Sources?

Site Visit Frequency

Missing Data

Unclear Procedures

JARC FOCUS MEASURE
Increase number of employers with dual engagement

Staff Input

Employer Input
“Change Ideas”: What Can We Try by Next Tuesday?

JARC GOAL: Increase employer “dual engagement”

Change Idea #1: Increase # of company visits

Change Idea #2: Clearer package of presentation and marketing materials

Change Idea #3: Standardized site visit follow-up procedures – Client Services Agreement

Change Idea #4: More frequent business staff mtgs with shared data
1. Leadership must "champion" using data for learning and improvement (not just accountability)

2. Involve staff and clients/customers from multiple levels and perspectives

3. Make sure data is visible, accessible and useful for all staff – not just managers

4. Disaggregate data to focus learning and improvement

5. Embed regular reflection and brainstorming on the "factors behind the data" into meetings – it’s not an "add on"!
6. Create “safe space” when discussing data

7. Culture change takes TIME: be patient, manage expectations and celebrate often!

8. Don’t let technology or staffing issues get in the way – get creative!!

9. Ensure that someone is “driving” the learning and improvement process – it doesn’t just “happen”

10. FUNDERS: Be “learning partners” by supporting organizations’ improvement focus and helping to build capacity.
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