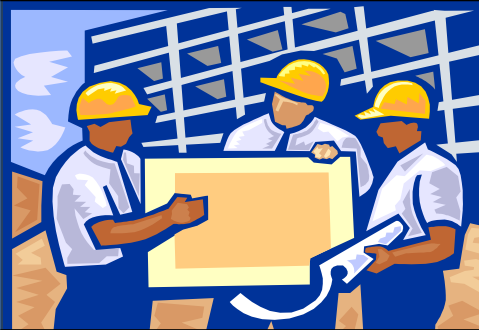


The Local Investments in Workforce Development Evaluation:

Travis County-funded 2009/2010 Participants Plus
Longer-Term Outcomes for Capital IDEA



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INTRODUCTION

Travis County, Texas, home to state capital Austin, has a long history of investing in workforce development services for poor and disadvantaged residents. For more than fifteen years, Travis County and the City of Austin have both contracted with job training, placement, and support programs to help adults and youth re-skill to meet the needs of the local economy. The level of investment and number of providers changes year-to-year. In 2009, the County invested a total of \$1.49 million in workforce development services through eight providers. In 2010, the County's workforce development investment through ten providers totaled \$1.96 million.¹ These programs include short-term training in: general office and computer skills; general construction and "green" skills in housing construction; computer repair and recycling; and park land conservation. Jobs in these fields, which often require a high school diploma or GED, typically pay at least a living wage (defined as \$9-10 per hour). The County also invests in long-term training for nursing and allied health professions, information and electronic technologies, skilled trades, and other higher-paying occupations (\$16+ per hour).

Since 2006, Travis County has funded an evaluation of its workforce program investments by the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at The University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Affairs.² The evaluation has tracked outcomes and impacts for community-based workforce programs as well as pilot demonstration projects operated by Workforce Solutions–Capital Area, the local workforce investment board. This report, the twelfth in the series, only examines outcomes. Impacts will be the focus of a subsequent report.

Following this introduction, the report presents a discussion of evaluation questions and research methods followed by separate sections for each of the seven providers examined. Six of the providers offer short-term training and basic skills development:

1. American YouthWorks
2. The Austin Academy

¹ The evaluation excludes 2009 and 2010 programs through Easter Seals Central Texas and Vaughn House, Inc., as well as a 2010 program through Austin Community College. (Community Impact Report, 2009 and 2010).

² www.raymarshallcenter.org

3. Austin Area Urban League
4. Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
5. Skillpoint Alliance
6. Workforce Solutions—Capital Area Workforce Board

The seventh provider, Capital IDEA, is the only one to offer long-term training for higher-skilled occupations.

Each section includes a profile of the provider and its workforce development program(s), and details outcomes for participants from calendar years 2009 and 2010.³ All findings examine results in the post-service period through March 2012. It is important to note that this time frame spans the Great Recession⁴ and the following period, which has been marked for its “jobless recovery” and lingering high unemployment. The employment outcomes, particularly for short-term training programs targeting general or less-skilled occupations, are likely to be lower than findings for previous cohorts.

Evaluation Questions and Research Methodology

The Local Workforce Services Evaluation draws on multiple data sources to answer the following questions:

- Are services being delivered as planned?
- Who is being served?
- What outcomes are achieved?
- What are the impacts of the investment?

The outcomes evaluation focuses on four key measures:

1. Average quarterly employment
2. Average quarterly earnings of those employed
3. The share meeting monetary eligibility requirements for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits quarterly
4. The share filing a claim for UI benefits quarterly

³ Findings for the Capital IDEA program are presented for participants from 2003-2010.

⁴ The Great Recession spanned from December 2007 through June 2009. Many parts of Texas, however, were unaffected through most of 2008. By 2009, the impact of the recession was widespread throughout the state and most major industries. The Austin-Round Rock metropolitan statistical area was less affected by the Great Recession than other regions and has had reasonable job growth during the recovery period.

The workforce programs funded by Travis County are evaluated based on their participants' outcomes. Output and outcome performance goals are established for each provider in its contract with the County. Performance measures include three that are shared across the majority of providers:

- Number of unduplicated clients served
- Percentage of clients who retained employment for 6 months
- Average wage at entry

Other performance measures are based on the type of service provided, for example:

- Number of clients who entered basic education skills training (GED, ESL)
- Number of clients who entered job training
- Number of clients who complete training program
- Percentage of clients receiving job placement services
- Percentage of clients who obtained employment

Performance results of workforce and other social service investments are detailed annually in the Community Impact Report prepared by the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans' Services Department. While that report assesses how a provider or program fared in relation to the contractually established performance goals, its focus is primarily on immediate- and near-term objectives (e.g., wage at entry, two calendar quarters of employment). The evaluation presented in this report broadens the time horizon for outcomes, measuring at annual intervals following the initial goal of two post-service quarters; outcomes at the 6th and 10th post-service quarters and across all post-service quarters through March 2012 are presented here for most participants.

Data Sources

The evaluation of Travis County-funded workforce development programs draws from multiple data sources, including participant records maintained by individual programs, UI wage records and benefits claim files⁵, The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) records,

⁵ While UI benefit data is collected and reported weekly, the outcomes are examined on a quarterly basis to mirror UI wage records.

interviews with program administrators and staff, program documents, provider websites, and published reports.

Two caveats should be noted about the data used for this evaluation. First, incomplete participant records resulted in a number of individuals served by County-funded workforce programs being dropped from the analysis. Second, UI wage records have known coverage gaps. Workers in industries with high-levels of self-employment or independent contracting, such as construction and truck driving, are less likely to be in a UI-covered position.

Researchers therefore acknowledge that the outcomes reported here for some programs that train for construction and truck driving occupations likely undercount their actual labor market outcomes.

A total of 4,150 participant records were in the dataset for this report. Across programs and years, 199 individuals were in the dataset more than once. Forty-one participants received services from the same program in different years. Outcomes for these participants are based on the initial program entry date. Some participants were clients of more than one Travis County-funded workforce development service during the same year: 136 were found in two programs, and three individuals participated in three programs. Outcomes for these participants are documented for each program enrolled.

The mission of American YouthWorks is to transform “the lives of at-risk youth through education, service and green jobs training.”*

The program operates a charter public high school and job training programs based on a service learning model which combines academic instruction with occupational training and community service projects.

Travis County invested \$201,992 in workforce training through American YouthWorks in 2009 and 2010. The County also contracted with the E-Corps program to conduct improvements at Travis County parks in 2009 for an additional \$83,300.

*www.americanyouthworks.org/about-american-youthworks. Accessed: 10.20.2012



For more information visit:
www.americanyouthworks.org

AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS

Travis County funds multiple training programs through American YouthWorks, including Casa Verde Builders, Environmental Corps (E-Corps), Youth Media Corps, and the Clean Energy Service Corps. Each of these programs uses a Service Learning Academy model to combine occupational skills training and academic instruction with community service projects. Students often switch from one training program to another and may complete multiple programs over time. The two largest programs, Casa Verde Builders and E-Corps, served approximately 75% of American YouthWorks participants in 2009-2010.

Casa Verde Builders is part of the national YouthBuild initiative led by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing & Urban Development. Students learn “green” construction skills while constructing energy efficient, affordable homes primarily in East Austin. Participants in the Casa Verde program typically range in age from 17-24 years old. The Casa Verde training takes approximately nine months to complete and is generally reserved for high school seniors or those who will earn a high school credential within the year. Participants earn 18 credit hours at Austin Community College at the completion of the construction training. Participants also earn certifications through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Home Builders Association.

The E-Corps program trains youth to build, restore, and maintain the natural environment. Through work in parks, nature trails, and wildlife habitats, participants learn

environmental management and safety practices. A key area of focus is invasive species management. Contracts with Travis County, the City of Austin, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the National Parks Service, among others, give participants real work experience while creating benefits for the broader community.

Beyond the academic and occupational skills training, American YouthWorks participants also receive training in soft skills, job search, and résumé building. For participants who are interested in pursuing higher education, the program has recently added college access and persistence services.

Wrap-Around Support Services

In addition to the occupational skills training and high school academy, American YouthWorks provides a number of wrap-around support services to help individuals succeed. Participants in both Casa Verde Builders and E-Corps receive bi-weekly stipends to help cover their living expenses while in training. The program also provides uniforms and safety equipment, tools, clothing for interviews, bus passes, on-site childcare, and emergency assistance for food, diapers, and other necessities.

American YouthWorks has dedicated staff to help participants with job search and internships, as well as full-time counselors to help participants overcome other obstacles to success. The program partners with the local One-Stop Career Center to connect participants with other training opportunities and support services.

Participant Profile

Participants in most American YouthWorks training programs must fall between 17-24 years of age at program entry and have a family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline level. Many also have significant barriers to employment, such as homelessness, or prior incarceration or criminal justice system involvement.

The majority of participants are White or Hispanic males, with an average age of 20 years old. Most participants were living in South or East Austin at the time of enrollment.

Participant Outcomes

Table 1 presents outcomes for 2009-2010 American YouthWorks participants. There are 336 participants in the outcomes evaluation; 25 participants received services in both years. In the four quarters prior to entering the program, roughly one-quarter were employed. As expected, the share employed dropped during program participation. The share employed grew for both cohorts in the second post-service quarter. However, while the share of 2009 participants who were employed in the 6th quarter post-service continued to rise, there was a significant decline in employment by the 10th post-service quarter (2.5 years after training). It is important to note that these employment levels were likely affected by the Great Recession, which hit youth employment particularly hard. Across all post-service quarters through March 2012, more than one-third of 2009-2010 participants were employed.

Pre-program earnings averaged less than \$2,000 a quarter for those employed in the year prior to entry. For the 2009 participants, there was strong earnings growth in the post-service period, with average quarterly earnings in the 10th quarter post-service more than doubling their pre-service average.

Prior to entering American YouthWorks, approximately 16% of participants had sufficient employment and earnings histories to meet the monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits. In Texas, monetary eligibility is based on the claimant earning sufficient wages in at least two quarters of the five quarters prior to filing a claim for benefits. This measure is a proxy measure for examining employment stability. In the 10th post-service quarter, 33% of 2009 participants met UI monetary eligibility requirements. Across all post-service quarters, just 1% of American YouthWorks 2009 participants had filed a claim for UI benefits.

Table 1. American YouthWorks 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

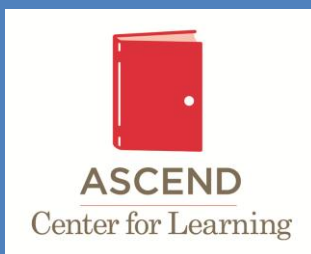
Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2009 Quarterly Employment	24.8%	17.4%	31.9%	43.4%	38.1%	39.3%
2010 Quarterly Employment	22.3%	21.4%	33.0%	24.1%	.	33.9%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$1,588	\$1,515	\$2,776	\$3,035	\$3,358	\$2,895
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$1,918	\$2,524	\$2,402	.	.	\$2,787
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	16.0%	.	.	23.5%	33.3%	25.8%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	16.3%	.	.	13.8%	.	11.4%
2009 Filed UI Claim	0.17%	0.00%	0.69%	0.74%	0.00%	1.01%
2010 Filed UI Claim	0.49%	0.00%	1.03%	0.00%	.	0.45%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

The Austin Academy became the Ascend Center for Learning in 2012. The mission of the organization has remained the same: to help people missed by the traditional school system catch up and succeed in education and the workplace.

The program offers Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, basic computer literacy classes, and job readiness training.

Travis County invested \$43,609 annually during the 2009-10 period in what was then The Austin Academy.



For more information visit:
www.ascendaustin.org

THE AUSTIN ACADEMY/ASCEND CENTER FOR LEARNING

In 2009-2010, The Austin Academy offered a broad-based Workplace Competency Training Program to build literacy and basic office skills, as well as a GED preparation program. The Workplace Competency program included training in workplace communications, job search, and résumé development. The computer literacy training helped individuals build skills in basic computer operations (e.g., keyboarding, Internet basics, file sharing, email) and Microsoft Office applications. All training was provided by program staff.

Individuals take the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) test at entrance to identify skill strengths and weaknesses. In the 2009 and 2010 Austin Academy program, applicants were required to perform at a minimum of 7th grade math and 9th grade reading for entry.

The Austin Academy program included both daytime and evening options. The day program ran from 8:30am-3:00pm five days a week. The evening program ran from 5:30-9:00pm Monday-Thursday for employed participants.

The Austin Academy operated an open enrollment program which had no set semesters. Because the training was individualized for each participant, the amount of time an individual was in training varied but averaged approximately four to six months. The structure and program offerings encouraged participants to return for additional training or job search services when they were ready.

Wrap-Around Support Services

The Austin Academy employed a full-time case manager who made referrals to organizations throughout Travis County based on the participant's needs. For example, parenting participants may have been referred to Workforce Solutions–Capital Area to access childcare development funds. The organization found that a lack of childcare was a significant barrier to participation.

The Austin Academy also provided transportation assistance, addressing another significant participation barrier, primarily in the form of bus passes. The organization also provided emergency rent or utility assistance on a case-by-case basis.

The Austin Academy partnered with a number of community organizations to provide additional classes to participants on a variety of topics. These include financial literacy classes through Frameworks, healthy relationships training through Safe Place, parenting skills through Any Baby Can, smoking cessation classes through YWCA, and safe sex practices through AIDS Services Austin.

Participant Profile

The Austin Academy participants met eligibility criteria including family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. The program intentionally sought participants who may face barriers to employment including disabled veterans, public housing residents, high school dropouts, and victims of violent crimes. The majority of The Austin Academy participants were White or Hispanic women, 20-29 years old, residing in East or South Austin.

Participant Outcomes

A total of 231 participants from The Austin Academy's 2009-2010 cohorts are included in the outcomes evaluation. In the four quarters prior to entering the program, roughly 40% were employed. Following a drop during the in-training period, employment rebounded slowly, reaching roughly 48% by the sixth post-service quarter. In all post-service quarters through March 2010, employment averaged approximately 42%.

Average quarterly earnings of employed The Austin Academy participants ranged from \$3,227 to \$3,930 in the four quarters prior to entering training. For 2009 participants who were employed in the 10th quarter post-service (2.5 years after leaving training), average quarterly earnings rose to \$4,794. Across all post-service quarters through March 2012, quarterly earnings for employed participants averaged roughly \$3,670.

Slightly more than one-third of The Austin Academy's 2009-2010 participants met the monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits based on their earnings and employment history in the four quarters prior to entry. A similar share of 2009 participants met the monetary eligibility requirements across all post-service quarters. The participants in the 2010 cohort, however, have experienced a decline in employment stability based on the UI monetary eligibility measure.

In the year prior to entering the program, roughly 3% of The Austin Academy participants filed a claim for UI benefits. Almost 8% of 2010 participants filed a UI claim in the last quarter of training. Across all post-service quarters, however, only 1.5% of participants in either cohort had filed a UI benefit claim.

Table 2. The Austin Academy 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2009 Quarterly Employment	40.8%	31.5%	38.6%	48.8%	39.8%	42.9%
2010 Quarterly Employment	40.1%	26.9%	34.6%	47.7%	.	42.0%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$3,227	\$2,487	\$3,164	\$3,460	\$4,794	\$3,663
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$3,930	\$3,209	\$3,706	\$3,879	.	\$3,676
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	34.7%	.	.	33.1%	37.5%	35.0%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	35.1%	.	.	26.7%	.	27.1%
2009 Filed UI Claim	2.95%	3.15%	0.79%	0.79%	1.14%	1.52%
2010 Filed UI Claim	3.37%	7.69%	1.92%	3.49%	.	1.51%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

The mission of the Austin Area Urban League is to assist African-Americans and other under-served residents in the achievement of societal and economic equality by focusing on educational improvement, employment readiness, health and wellness, and the preservation of affordable housing.

AAUL is currently re-envisioning its job readiness and workforce programs, with a new emphasis on helping individuals attain certifications and credentials valued by employers.

Travis County invested \$45,744 annually in AAUL during the 2009-10 period.



For more information visit:
<http://www.aaul.org/>

AUSTIN AREA URBAN LEAGUE

The Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) offers four main programs through its contract with Travis County: Essential Office Skills (EOS) classes; GED exam preparation classes; life skills workshops; and job placement assistance. The approach of the AAUL program is to “meet the participant where they are” and help them to build the skills they need for employment.

Essential Office Skills classes focus on developing computer skills, with a particular focus on the Microsoft Office software suite and Internet/email basics. The curriculum includes Workplace Literacy training, such as business math and business communications (both verbal and written). The training also exposes participants to office technology, such as multi-line phone systems and fax/copy machines.

Life skills workshops focus on soft skills to “assist youth and adults in altering those negative patterns of behaviors that create barriers to their success.”⁶ The Job Resource Center provides résumé writing, interviewing, and job search best practices training, as well as job leads and referrals. While AAUL does not target any particular industry or occupation, the organization has established relationships with hiring managers in healthcare, insurance, customer service, construction, and education among other fields.

Participants are typically engaged for several weeks in an AAUL program. The computer classes are offered in 6-week sessions – five hours daily for the daytime classes; three

⁶ Austin Area Urban League. <http://www.aaul.org/programs/workforce-development.htm>. Accessed: 09.04.2012

hours daily for the evening classes. Life skills workshops are offered every Wednesday during the daytime computer class for one to two hours each session. The GED program is a three-day per week, 3.5 hours each day program.

Wrap-Around Support Services

AAUL works to connect participants with resources in the community, including Dress for Success for female participants, and with various faith-based agencies for interview and work clothes for male participants. Born Again Ministries is a key resource for transitional housing for men who have been released from incarceration. Bus passes are also provided if funding is available.

Participant Profile

AAUL participants must be residents of Travis County and have a family income at or below 200% of the Federal Income Poverty Guideline Level. A little more than half (53%) of the 1,472 participants in the evaluation for the 2009-2010 period were male. Approximately 69% of participants were Black or African-American. The average age of participants was 36. Participants served were primarily from East and North Austin.

Participant Outcomes

Roughly half of AAUL participants were employed in the four quarters prior to program entry in 2009 or 2010. For 2009 participants, the share employed was greatest in the 10th post service quarter (65%). For 2010 participants, quarterly employment was greatest in the 2nd quarter post-service (56%).

Average quarterly earnings of employed AAUL participants were up slightly in all post-service quarters in comparison to the pre-service period. Employed 2009 participants earned an average \$6,221 in the 10 quarter post-service.

Also up slightly in the post-service period was the share meeting monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits. In the 10th post service quarter 54% of 2009 participants met the requirement, while half of 2010 participants met the requirement in the 6th post-service quarter.

Prior to entering the AAUL training program, almost 5.5% of participants in both years had filed a claim for UI benefits in the previous four quarters. Across all post-service quarters, less than 4% of participants filed a UI claim.

Table 3. Austin Area Urban League 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2009 Quarterly Employment	52.2%	51.6%	52.6%	53.8%	65.4%	53.1%
2010 Quarterly Employment	46.5%	53.7%	55.9%	53.2%	.	55.0%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$4,183	\$3,841	\$4,444	\$4,591	\$6,221	\$4,614
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$4,320	\$4,087	\$4,072	\$5,161	.	\$4,675
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	47.3%	.	.	47.5%	53.9%	47.9%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	45.9%	.	.	50.0%	.	47.2%
2009 Filed UI Claim	5.44%	3.28%	2.83%	4.14%	3.85%	3.56%
2010 Filed UI Claim	5.48%	3.40%	3.53%	5.52%	.	3.80%

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas has defined a key role for services to ex-offenders, the homeless, individuals with disabilities, and others who face barriers in labor market. Its mission is to help individuals generate lifelong connections to work.

Workforce programs at Goodwill include Ready to Work, Job Source, Community Rehabilitation, and WIA Youth.

In 2009 and 2010, Travis County invested \$137,439 annually in Goodwill's Ready to Work program.



For more information visit:
www.austingoodwill.org/wds/services.html

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Goodwill's Ready-to-Work program is available throughout Travis County. Adults can access this program through many service points, including the County's Community Centers. While both Travis County and the City of Austin support the program, Travis County funding is primarily targeted to support ex-offenders while city funding is used to support homeless individuals.

The Ready-to-Work program is focused on helping individuals develop occupational skills necessary to earn growing wages. The training includes both soft and hard skills training. Soft skills training includes job search, résumé writing, basic computer training, and interview techniques. Hard skills training is more occupationally focused, with individuals earning certifications such as a Travis County Food Handler permit, or a Texas Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Other training prepares individuals for work in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, office administration, and basic life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certifications.

Since 2004, Goodwill's workforce development emphasis has grown exponentially. From a staff of 7 in 2004, the team now has 70 full-time employees. During the 2009-2010 period, Goodwill was shifting away from one-on-one services towards a more cohort-based approach. In a cohort model, a group of individuals start and complete training together, allowing for the

development of peer support. The work process was also re-organized by population of focus to help staff build a stronger knowledge base. Goodwill also created taskforce teams that focus on specific types of offenses (for example, a sex offenders team that focuses on identifying job opportunities that meet probation/parole requirements). All Goodwill staff members are certified in Offender Employment Services.

Goodwill has a new focus on making participants marketable. With many participants coming from prison, there is a struggle to balance their immediate need for employment with intensive case management and longer-term occupational training. Placement specialists help participants to understand that work is a way out of poverty and to get their buy-in for starting the pathway to earning money and building skills. Goodwill also works with ex-offenders to develop strategies for responding to employers' questions about their criminal background. The program conducts a background check on all participants and shares the results with the participants to help them understand the information that is available to a potential employer.

The Ready-to-Work program offers classes pre- and post-release focused on peer support and mentoring. This is part of the effort towards simplifying reentry into the community. Job readiness training for ex-offenders includes information on the federal bonding program, a description of career options and limitations, and assistance with drafting letters of explanation for their crimes. Goodwill also conducts outreach to employers in order to understand what types of skills and characteristics participants need to gain employment. Companies often have vague policies around hiring ex-offenders, and participants who try for employment but are unsuccessful may feel defeated or overwhelmed. Goodwill works to provide some hope to these individuals and develop a plan for moving forward. Goodwill helps participants recognize that there are legal work opportunities; it just takes time to pursue them.

Wrap-Around Support Services

As part of the program, individuals can earn \$25 from Goodwill for each 30 days of employment retention. This helps to keep individuals connected to the program and involved in case management. Case managers may also provide Goodwill/Simon gift cards at their discretion. Case managers help individuals develop housing stability plans, and individuals may

receive up to \$2,000 annually in housing supports. Other services offered to Ready-to-Work participants, based on their individual needs, include transportation, help in obtaining identification cards, child care referrals, connections to food pantries, and resources for work/interview clothes.

Goodwill is incorporating more financial education and awareness into its programs as a result of its partnership with United Way. Ready-to-Work participants are offered classes and one-on-one sessions with the financial literacy trainer, focusing on topics such as budgeting, credit repair, and the dangers of payday loans. Through its co-location with multiple partner programs around Austin, including Caritas, Any Baby Can, Safe Place, Austin-Travis County Assistance Centers, and others, Goodwill is able to help its staff build knowledge and connections that enhance referrals and supports for participants.

Participant Profile

A Goodwill participant must have a documented barrier to employment, be a County resident with income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline Level, and be ready to work. The challenge is that many participants have multiple, overlapping barriers to employment, including multiple required appointments for probation, unstable housing, lack of technology skills, and lack of identification (as noted by staff, a state prison ID card is not a good employment tool).

Of the 367 participants in the outcomes evaluation, approximately 60% are male. There were roughly equal shares of White (35%) and Black (34%) participants. More than half were between 30-50 years old.

Participant Outcomes

Goodwill's 2009 participants had higher pre-program employment levels than the 2010 cohort. Both cohorts had large employment gains in the last quarter of service (roughly a 20% point increase in quarterly employment). While the 2009 cohort had only a slight increase in the 2nd quarter post-service, the 2010 cohort's share employed rose to 71% that quarter. Across all post-service quarters, approximately 58% of the 2009 cohort and 64% of the 2010 cohort were employed.

The 2009 participants who were employed in the four quarters prior to entry earned an average \$1,000 more per quarter than the 2010 participants in the pre-service period. The 2009 cohort also maintained their earnings level during the last in-service quarter while the employed participants in the 2010 cohort saw their average drop by \$855 that quarter. In the post-service period, earnings were greatest for the 2009 cohort in the 6th quarter after training at \$5,359.

Roughly 40% of Goodwill participants qualified for UI benefits based on their employment and earnings histories in the pre-service period. Across all post-service quarters, the share monetarily eligible for UI benefits grew by ten percentage points or more.

Approximately 5% of 2009 participants and 3% of 2010 participants filed a claim for UI benefits in the four quarters prior to entering Goodwill training. Almost 4% of participants in both years filed a benefit claim across all post-service quarters.

Table 4. Goodwill 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2009 Quarterly Employment	43.4%	61.3%	62.2%	52.9%	57.6%	57.5%
2010 Quarterly Employment	39.1%	62.0%	70.6%	61.0%	.	64.0%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$3,739	\$3,681	\$4,481	\$5,359	\$4,637	\$4,609
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$2,713	\$1,858	\$3,366	\$4,134	.	\$3,771
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	41.9%	.	.	54.6%	59.3%	52.4%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	39.6%	.	.	58.9%	.	56.0%
2009 Filed UI Claim	4.90%	4.41%	2.99%	2.30%	5.08%	3.94%
2010 Filed UI Claim	3.07%	3.68%	4.29%	3.55%	.	3.91%

Note: a dot indicates too few participants or no observations to report.

Skillpoint Alliance is a regional workforce intermediary based in Austin, Texas. Skillpoint connects individuals, training providers, employers, and other community organizations together to meet identified workforce skills gaps.

Skillpoint offers short-term occupational skills training through its Gateway program.

In 2009 and 2010, Skillpoint Alliance received \$244,965 from Travis County for two programs: Youth College & Career and Gateway. The evaluation only examines the Gateway workforce training program.



For more information visit:
www.skillpointalliance.org

SKILLPOINT ALLIANCE

The mission of Skillpoint Alliance's Gateway program is to get people employed in high demand occupations at a livable wage. Gateway programs are defined by fairly rapid training. Depending on the occupation targeted, full-time training may range from three to ten weeks. The curricula emphasize hands-on learning opportunities, with the program shifting more class time away from lectures towards active skill development in recent years.

In 2010, Skillpoint renewed its focus on employer engagement. Gateway program administrators recognized a need to engage employers better in a dialogue in order to understand their workforce needs, as well as to provide them and industry groups a bigger role in shaping the Gateway training programs. The new focus is to match training to the demands of employers so that individuals have the skills they need to gain employment.

The Gateway program expanded from training in one field (construction) in 2009 to three fields in 2010 (adding electrical and allied health). As the program has grown, Skillpoint Alliance has worked with its training providers to develop a core curriculum that serves as the first step in the training sequence for a number of career paths. For example, a 4-week construction core class is now the entry point for additional training in electrical work.

Professional development became a more formal activity in the Gateway program in 2010. While participants have always developed résumés early in the training sequence, most employment services were offered after the occupational

skills training ended. In the new structure, 12 hours of professional development and soft skills training is integrated with the occupational training coursework. Topics include targeted job search, interviewing, and conversation skills. Individual sessions with a workforce development specialist are still offered following training to target participants' specific employment needs.

Many of the Gateway training programs lead to industry-recognized credentials. For example, the construction training program leads to NCCER certifications and apprentice "Level1" licenses. In 2009, all training was provided through Austin Community College. In 2010, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Central Texas joined as a training provider for the Gateway Electrical training program.

Wrap-Around Support Services

In addition to covering the full cost of the training and professional development activities noted above, Skillpoint also provides wrap-around support services to help participants manage the travel, equipment, and clothing requirements of the program. Services include bus passes, parking passes for the community college, tools, work clothes and shoes, and books. Child care assistance may be included on a case-by-case basis.

Skillpoint also connects Gateway participants with other resources in the community. For example, participants are referred to Workforce Solutions Career Centers for workshops on job search skills and other topics. Participants receiving SNAP or TANF are also encouraged to take advantage of the resources available through those programs.

Participant Profile

Participants funded by Travis County are required to be Travis County residents. Other requirements include:

- Eligibility to work in the U.S.;
- 14 years of age or older;⁷ and
- Earnings limited to 200% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines Level.

Different occupations also have set minimum skill levels established by Skillpoint. For

⁷ Staff noted that in reality few younger youth are served, as most employers in the construction and health care fields prefer employees to be at least 18 years of age.

example, in construction, participants must have at least a 7th grade skill level in reading and math. For the electric program, participants must have at least a 9th grade English skills level and a 10th grade math skill level. For allied health, participants must have 10th grade skills in both subjects.

Gateway administrators noted that the intake process has become more rigorous in recent years, with eligibility interviews focused on identifying candidates who are actually interested in working in the selected field rather than simply participating in training. Interviews are intended to help staff understand the applicant's motivation for training, the individual's attitude and "coach-ability". Staff noted that as the intake process has improved, so, too, have the employment numbers following training. Approximately 19% of applicants are accepted into a Gateway training program; the number trained each year is driven by space limitations of the training partner, funding limitations, and eligibility.

Gateway served 204 participants in the 2009-2010 period. Approximately 67% were between 20-39 years old, with an average participant age of 34. Half of Gateway participants had less than a high school education.

Participant Outcomes

In the 2009-2010 period, Skillpoint Alliance served 176 participants in the Gateway Construction program and fourteen participants each in the Gateway Electrical and Gateway Allied Health programs. At the outset, it is important to note that the construction industry has significant shares of self-employed and independent contractors - individuals who would not appear in UI wage records. Therefore, the outcomes presented here likely under-estimate actual outcomes for Gateway participants.

In the four quarters prior to entry, 15% of 2009 participants and 32% of 2010 participants were employed. Employment for 2009 participants reached 38% in the 6th quarter post-service (1.5 years after leaving training). Employment for 2010 participants reached 53% in the 2nd quarter after service. In all post-service quarters, slightly more than half of 2010 participants (51%) were employed.

2010 participants had significantly higher earnings in the four quarters prior to entering Gateway than the 2009 participants. After the expected dip in earnings during the training

period, 2010 participants were earning slightly more than their pre-service level in the 6th quarter after service. For 2009 participants, earnings in the 6th quarter post-service reached \$4,577, approximately 43% higher than their pre-service earnings.

Twelve percent of 2009 participants met the monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits in the four quarters prior to entering Gateway. That share rose to 32% across all post-service quarters. For 2010 participants, 32% met UI monetary eligibility in the pre-service period, with that share rising to 41% across all post-service quarters. Few Gateway participants filed a claim for UI benefits before or after service.

Table 5. Skillpoint Alliance 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2009 Quarterly Employment	14.6%	34.0%	36.2%	38.3%	32.9%	36.5%
2010 Quarterly Employment	31.8%	30.9%	53.2%	47.8%	.	50.8%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$3,195	\$1,250	\$2,567	\$4,577	\$4,405	\$3,983
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$7,593	\$4,405	\$6,032	\$7,760	.	\$6,262
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	12.0%	.	.	28.7%	28.6%	31.8%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	31.6%	.	.	40.2%	.	40.5%
2009 Filed UI Claim	1.33%	2.13%	1.06%	2.13%	2.86%	1.87%
2010 Filed UI Claim	3.86%	2.73%	0.92%	0.00%	.	2.19%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

Workforce Solutions – Capital Area is the local Workforce Investment Board for Travis County. It is one of 28 local boards in Texas. The board oversees federal and state employment and training programs. The Capital Area Board also raises funds through active grant and contract development efforts for targeted workforce development services.

Travis County funded the Rapid Employment Model (REM) project as a regular workforce services program in 2010 for \$244,275.

In 2009-10, the Board and Travis County collaborated on the pilot Gainful Employment Model (GEM) project. Travis County invested a total of \$175,000 in GEM.



For more information visit:
www.wfscapitalarea.com

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS—CAPITAL AREA WORKFORCE BOARD

Workforce Solutions—Capital Area Workforce Board contracted with Travis County for two workforce projects in recent years. Both projects started out as pilot demonstration efforts. The Rapid Employment Model (REM), which launched in 2006, transitioned to regular workforce program operations in 2010. The Gainful Employment Model (GEM) pilot project ran from 2009-2010 only.

Rapid Employment Model

The purpose of the REM program is to accelerate the time individuals became reemployed with new skills and a marketable credential. Services are specifically targeted at disadvantaged County residents, in particular ex-offenders, welfare recipients (TANF-Choices), and those receiving food stamp (SNAP) benefits.

Workforce Solutions contracts with a number of training providers to serve REM participants, including Austin Academy, Skillpoint Alliance, Austin Community College, Express Training Services, Ventana Del Sol, and New Horizons. Participants select from a number of occupations requiring from two to eight weeks of training. The 2009-10 occupations and number of training participants are detailed below.

Table 6. Training Selection of REM Participants

Occupation	Number of Participants
Construction/Electrical	87
Clerical/Computer Training	68
Cook	12
Certified Nurse Aide	11
Other	10

In 2010, Workforce Solutions developed a Job Preview Exercise to help participants think through the training program and next steps for obtaining a job. The Exercise focuses on barriers to employment, participant's needs and goals for employment, working conditions, and other factors related to target occupations. The Exercise also asks participants to develop a job search plan which includes identifying three potential job leads. The program specialist then uses the exercise as a framework for discussing training options and opportunities with each participant. The program specialists report that the Exercise has been helpful in keeping the focus on employment rather than training.

Wrap-Around Support Services

REM participants during the 2009-2010 period received a \$100 per week incentive for weeks in which they were enrolled in classroom training and met other guidelines, such as full day attendance at each scheduled training session, and completion of assigned job search activities, vocational assessments, and other related activities. Half of the incentive is paid weekly, while the other \$50 is held in reserve until the participant reports verified employment to the program specialist. Eligible jobs are regular employment (not temporary or on-call), at least half-time, related to the training, and obtained within 12 weeks of training completion. Participants may also earn an additional \$50 bonus if they retain employment for six months.

REM participants primarily are referred to the program through another workforce training service at the board, such as Project RIO which serves ex-offenders, TANF Choices which serves those on public assistance, and SNAP Employment & Training which serves those receiving food assistance. The majority of REM participants (77%) were Project RIO participants, followed by Choices (13%) and SNAP (9%). These programs primarily provide the wrap-around support services participants need to be successful in REM.

Participant Profile

The majority of REM participants (59%) were male. Approximately 36% were Black, 27% Hispanic, and 23% White. During the 2009-2010 period, 113 of 188 REM participants were also identified as clients of another workforce program or provider studied in this evaluation.

REM Participant Outcomes

Given the large number of participants who were in construction training, it is likely that the outcomes reported here undercount the actual employment levels reached by REM participants due to the UI coverage issue noted earlier. In the four quarters prior to program entry, 14% of 2009 REM participants were employed while 28% of 2010 participants were employed. In the 2nd quarter after service, employment appeared to peak for both cohorts, reaching 37% for the 2009 participants and 52% for 2010 participants. Across all post-service quarters 34% of 2009 participants and 28% of 2010 participants were employed.

Average quarterly earnings for 2010 participants employed in the four quarters prior to entering REM were significantly larger than 2009 participant earnings in the same period. The 2009 participants earned on average \$1,653 in the pre-service period, rising to an average of \$2,943 across all post-service quarters. Participants in 2010 earned an average of \$8,155 in the pre-service period. While those participants earned an average of \$7,773 in the 6th quarter post-service, earnings across all post-service quarters averaged \$5,573.

The share of participants who met monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits in the pre-service period also differed greatly. Twelve percent of 2009 participants met that standard in the four quarters prior to entry; across all post-service quarters that share rose to 27%. For 2010 participants, 29% met the UI monetary eligibility standards in the pre-service period; that share rose to 39% in all post-service quarters. Few participants filed a claim for UI benefits before or after their REM training.

Table 7. REM 2009-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service Ends
2009 Quarterly Employment	13.7%	29.9%	37.1%	35.1%	17.3%	33.6%
2010 Quarterly Employment	28.3%	38.5%	51.7%	44.6%	.	47.9%
2009 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$1,653	\$1,241	\$2,793	\$2,702	.	\$2,943
2010 Average Quarterly Earnings	\$8,155	\$3,665	\$5,660	\$7,773	.	\$5,573
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	12.1%	.	.	30.9%	21.2%	27.4%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	29.4%	.	.	40.0%	.	38.5%
2009 Filed UI Claim	0.52%	1.03%	0.00%	3.09%	1.92%	1.66%
2010 Filed UI Claim	3.85%	3.30%	1.10%	3.08%	.	2.29%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

Gainful Employment Model

The Gainful Employment Model (GEM) pilot project built on the REM program. Rather than focusing on short-term training for quick connections to employment, the GEM project offered participants the opportunity to engage in medium-term training (up to 9 months in length) for occupations paying higher wages in the Travis County labor market. These occupations included administrative assistant, bookkeeping and accounting clerk, pharmacy technician, and automotive technician. The majority of GEM participants entered into either the administrative assistant (39%) or bookkeeping (40%) training programs. Participants also completed pre-employment and Healthy Choices life skills training.

Participant Profile

There were 85 GEM participants during the demonstration project. While GEM, like REM, targeted disadvantaged County residents—particularly those receiving public assistance (TANF)—the participant mix was markedly different in terms of gender and prior incarceration or involvement with the criminal justice system. The majority of participants (76%) in the GEM

project were female, and far fewer were involved in Project RIO. Almost one-third of GEM participants were Black (31%), and there were roughly equal shares of White (23%) and Hispanic (21%) participants. Seventy percent of GEM participants were between 20-39 years of age, with an average age of 36.

Participant Outcomes

More than half of GEM participants (54%) were employed in the four quarters prior to entering training. The share employed rose to 58% in the second quarter after training, though across all post-service quarters approximately half of participants were employed. In the year prior to entering GEM, employed participants earned an average of \$3,408. In the 6th post-service quarter, average earnings for those employed rose to \$4,602.

The share of GEM participants meeting the monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits was roughly equal in the pre- and post-service periods. In the four quarters prior to entering training approximately 8% of participants had filed a claim for UI benefits. That share dropped to approximately 3% in all post-service quarters.

Table 8. GEM Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service Ends
Overall Quarterly Employment	54.1%	43.8%	57.5%	48.8%	49.5%
Overall Average Quarterly Earnings	\$3,408	\$2,917	\$3,601	\$4,602	\$4,332
Overall Qualified for UI Benefits	48.1%	.	.	48.8%	45.0%
Overall Filed UI Claim	8.44%	3.75%	7.50%	5.00%	3.43%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

Capital IDEA provides long-term training in high-wage, high-demand occupations. The mission of the organization is to “lift working adults out of poverty and into living-wage careers through education.”

As a sectoral workforce development program, Capital IDEA collaborates with employers and training providers to help prepare participants for good jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits.

In 2009 and 2010, Travis County invested \$700,213 annually in Capital IDEA.



For more information visit:
www.capitalidea.org

CAPITAL IDEA

Capital IDEA is a sectoral workforce development program, offering training in nursing, allied health, skilled trades, utilities, information and electronic technologies, and other fields. Approximately 75% of the training is in healthcare. Each program supported at Capital IDEA is one identified by employers as an occupation in high-demand, paying \$16 or more per hour.

Capital IDEA carefully screens applicants for suitability with its intensive program design. Programming includes the College Prep Academy (described below), weekly group sessions with a Career Navigator and other participants, and occupational skills training. Eligibility for the program includes at least a 5th grade skill level in reading and math, and a high school diploma or GED. The College Prep Academy is an intensive 6.5 hour per day, five-day a week program to build math, reading, writing, and study skills. Less than 10% of participants require more than one semester of the academy; those who do repeat typically need additional support in math. Twice a week, time is dedicated to tutoring, advising, or other activities.

One of the primary activities in Capital IDEA is the weekly one-hour peer support group session led by a Career Counselor. Topics for these sessions are driven by student needs and their ability to navigate the college experience. Counselors meet individually with participants at the start of each semester to make sure they get off on the right track.

Capital IDEA covers all tuition, fees and books, and

provides financial assistance towards the costs of childcare. The program also covers the cost of uniforms, shoes, tools, training software, and anything required on a class syllabus. Participants are encouraged to manage their own self-sufficiency by working part-time during training. Financial literacy is a core skill development for Capital IDEA participants. Financial aid and budgeting are important topics that help participants stay focused on the training plan.

Wrap-Around Support Services

The majority of Capital IDEA training is delivered by Austin Community College (ACC). ACC students have a “green pass” which entitles them to free bus, rail, and Express Bus services in the region for the entire semester. College Prep Academy participants, who are not ACC students, are provided bus passes or emergency gas cards if they have a particularly lengthy commute. Participants receive gift cards to purchase school supplies including backpacks, printer ink, and paper. Emergency utility vouchers, mortgage and rent assistance are available on a case-by-case basis.

Capital IDEA refers participants to Workforce Solutions for child care supports. For parents who do not receive support through Workforce Solutions, Capital IDEA offers the following support based on income level: If the participant’s family income is under 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, then Capital IDEA covers 100% of childcare cost; if the participant’s family income is over 100% of FPL, then parents must pay 20% of the childcare cost. Many of the participating parents have school-aged children, so the required care is typically before/after school rather than full-day.

Capital IDEA also refers participants in need of grief, PTSD, or other counseling to the Samaritan Center. Other partners include Dress for Success and other sources for interview clothes, Blue/Brown Santa, food bank, Housing Authority and Foundation Communities, Safe Place, and LifeWorks. Co-location at the ACC Eastview Campus Workforce Center has improved connections between the local WIA program and Capital IDEA and helps to build partnerships and resource connections.

Participant Profile

More than half of Capital IDEA participants (58%) are between 20-29 years of age.

Participant Outcomes

In the four quarters prior to enrolling in Capital IDEA, roughly 67% of participants from 2003 to 2010 were employed. In the last quarter of participation, that share rose to 74%. Participants from 2003 to 2006 continued to exhibit strong employment levels at 18 quarters (4.5 years) post-service and across all post-service quarters through March 2010, ranging from 73-79%. Employment for the 2007-2010 cohorts in the post-service period averaged from 62-67% across all quarters.

Earnings in the pre-service period averaged \$4,489 for employed participants. In the 18th quarter post-service (4.5 years after leaving training), employed participants earned an average of \$7,942. Approximately 61% of Capital IDEA participants met the monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits in the four quarters prior to entry. Across all post-service quarters, that share rose to 70%. Few participants filed a claim for UI benefits in either the pre-service or post-service period.

Table 9. Capital IDEA 2003-2010 Participant Outcomes

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr After Service	6th Qtr After Service	10th Qtr After Service	14th Qtr After Service	18th Qtr After Service	All Qtrs After Service
2003 Qtrly Employment	67.8%	79.3%	78.3%	75.0%	77.0%	76.5%	75.4%	74.7%
2004 Qtrly Employment	67.2%	79.6%	75.7%	80.6%	75.5%	73.5%	75.6%	75.3%
2005 Qtrly Employment	70.8%	85.0%	86.9%	79.1%	76.0%	82.0%	75.6%	79.0%
2006 Qtrly Employment	71.4%	78.3%	79.4%	75.0%	71.3%	66.1%	63.4%	72.7%
2007 Qtrly Employment	61.9%	64.2%	64.2%	63.9%	65.3%	53.3%	.	62.1%
2008 Qtrly Employment	60.5%	67.9%	60.7%	61.3%	56.0%	.	.	61.9%
2009 Qtrly Employment	67.9%	64.9%	66.9%	69.4%	63.7%	.	.	67.2%
2010 Qtrly Employment	66.9%	67.6%	64.0%	66.0%	.	.	.	65.0%
Overall Qtrly Employment	67.4%	73.6%	73.0%	71.9%	70.9%	72.8%	72.2%	72.1%
2003 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,376	\$5,353	\$6,527	\$7,274	\$7,370	\$7,846	\$8,244	\$7,860
2004 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,190	\$5,064	\$6,487	\$7,025	\$7,730	\$7,419	\$7,858	\$7,455
2005 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,622	\$6,337	\$7,159	\$7,697	\$8,214	\$6,755	\$7,967	\$7,752
2006 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,295	\$6,159	\$6,464	\$7,039	\$6,828	\$6,769	\$6,730	\$6,810
2007 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,156	\$6,078	\$6,404	\$7,160	\$5,381	\$6,339	.	\$6,350
2008 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,280	\$4,367	\$4,952	\$5,360	\$5,636	.	.	\$5,232
2009 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,815	\$4,264	\$4,328	\$4,973	\$5,359	.	.	\$4,843
2010 Average Qtrly Earnings	\$4,920	\$4,477	\$3,957	\$5,088	.	.	.	\$4,701
Overall Avg Qtrly Earnings	\$4,489	\$5,312	\$5,878	\$6,513	\$6,850	\$7,235	\$7,942	\$6,939
2003 Qualified for UI Benefits	66.5%	.	.	76.4%	72.5%	75.0%	73.3%	72.5%
2004 Qualified for UI Benefits	62.1%	.	.	75.7%	77.7%	72.3%	70.7%	73.5%
2005 Qualified for UI Benefits	62.9%	.	.	84.3%	76.9%	71.0%	76.8%	77.5%
2006 Qualified for UI Benefits	62.8%	.	.	77.7%	71.3%	61.7%	60.6%	68.2%
2007 Qualified for UI Benefits	50.9%	.	.	62.0%	58.3%	53.3%	.	55.0%
2008 Qualified for UI Benefits	54.0%	.	.	60.4%	56.0%	.	.	56.8%
2009 Qualified for UI Benefits	61.0%	.	.	62.0%	68.4%	.	.	65.9%
2010 Qualified for UI Benefits	64.0%	.	.	57.5%	.	.	.	58.5%
Overall Qualified UI Benefits	61.3%	.	.	70.4%	70.5%	69.0%	70.4%	70.2%
2003 Filed UI Claim	5.66%	0.94%	1.42%	3.77%	2.00%	1.53%	2.09%	2.17%
2004 Filed UI Claim	2.67%	2.91%	0.97%	0.97%	1.06%	2.41%	4.88%	2.35%
2005 Filed UI Claim	3.43%	3.27%	3.92%	1.96%	1.65%	2.00%	2.44%	2.97%
2006 Filed UI Claim	2.25%	0.53%	2.12%	1.60%	3.33%	2.61%	7.04%	2.73%
2007 Filed UI Claim	2.52%	0.92%	2.75%	0.93%	1.39%	2.22%	.	2.45%
2008 Filed UI Claim	2.90%	2.68%	2.68%	1.80%	4.00%	.	.	2.48%
2009 Filed UI Claim	4.96%	2.07%	1.65%	1.65%	4.09%	.	.	2.28%
2010 Filed UI Claim	4.95%	3.60%	2.70%	1.06%	.	.	.	1.16%
Overall Filed UI Claim	3.88%	1.95%	2.19%	1.90%	2.56%	2.03%	3.64%	2.40%

Note: A dot represents too few participants or no data to report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Travis County's investments in workforce development are part of a continuum of services and investments the County makes to improve opportunity for disadvantaged residents. The investment in a mix of workforce development providers and services covers a range of needs from adult basic education to short-term job skills training to longer-term occupational training for high-wage careers. Each provider has identified a target population, with many using County funds to serve individuals facing considerable obstacles to employment, including homelessness and criminal backgrounds.

The variety of services and target populations makes cross-provider comparisons inappropriate. The providers can be grouped, however, by service length—whether short- or long-term. Of the seven providers examined for this report, six are primarily short-term service providers. Participation in short-term skill building appears to have a greater effect on immediate and near-term outcomes, with employment and earnings peaking between the 2nd and 6th quarters after service. Participation in short-term skills building also appears to have some effect on increasing employment stability, as evidenced by higher shares of participants in many programs meeting the monetary eligibility requirements for Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Participants of Capital IDEA, the long-term training provider in the evaluation, appear to have stronger post-service outcomes than participants of shorter-term programs. In examining cohorts of participants who either completed or dropped out of Capital IDEA from 2003 to 2010, outcomes for earlier cohorts appear to be stronger than those of later cohorts. Employment, earnings, and the stability of employment for those earlier cohorts are larger and more consistent over time. It is possible that more recent cohorts have a higher share of participants still in training so that the outcomes presented here are largely driven by individuals who did not complete the program, and it may also reflect labor market softening during the time period examined. Future analysis based on additional quarters of post-service employment and earnings may shed light on these issues.

While this report has focused on participant *outcomes*, the next report in the evaluation series will look at the *impact* of participation in these various workforce development

programs. That analysis will compare the outcomes of participants to those of a matched comparison group of Travis County residents who received basic job search services at a Workforce Solutions Career Center or who registered for work with the state's WorkinTexas.com system. That analysis will provide important context for understanding the benefits of participation in a Travis County-funded workforce development program during the Great Recession and the recovery period.

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