

**Evaluation of City of San Antonio Workforce Development Programs Funded by the
Department of Community Initiatives**

By

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September 24, 2007

Executive Summary

Introduction

Five workforce development programs were evaluated by the Center for Policy Studies of the University of Texas at San Antonio during a two month period from mid-July through mid-September of 2007. These programs included:

- Project QUEST,
- Alamo Community College District – Seguir Adelante,
- Goodwill Industries of San Antonio – “Learn While You Earn”,
- Antioch Community Transformation Network, Inc. – “Each One, Teach One”, and
- Young Women’s Christian Association – “Self-Employment for Economic Development”.

The body of the report consists of five individual program evaluations. Each is a complete report that may be extracted separately for information, review, and discussion as a stand alone document. However, it is recommended that a copy of the executive summary be provided to each Delegate Agency along with their respective sections of the report.

An assessment of the San Antonio Youth Centers – “Alamo City Youth Build” program had originally been planned but was removed because it had been in operation with City of San Antonio funding for only a few months. The first full cycle using City funding started a month or two prior to the start of the assessment. Consequently, there are only a few months of data to review and none of the available data provides a meaningful basis for assessment at this time.

Methodology

With minor exceptions the same methodology was employed for each delegate agency. The research team collected quantitative data reported by the Delegate Agencies on monthly Contract Monitoring Reports and program files. These data were analyzed to assess whether baseline Balance Scorecard measures used by the Department of Community Initiatives were met each year. A table is provided with each section identifying the performance measures, the years they were used and whether the measures were met. Longitudinal graphs or tables are used to document the trends in performance data by each agency on most of these performance measures. Narrative interpretations accompany each graph or table.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with a small *random* sample of “graduates” who had completed the program 18-24 months earlier. Data from these interviews provided a qualitative framework for assessing whether the fundamental goals for these programs were met. The interviews are summarized within each section. Appendix 1 for this summary provides the informed consent script used for the interviews.

Literature Review

There are a number of different approaches to workforce development. The approaches generally fall into one of five major categories – work-first/job search, education first, employment focused mixed-activity, education focused mixed activity, and earnings supplements (Michalopoulos, 2004, pp. 55-57).

Work-First/Job Search

Work-first/job search programs strive to get clients employed very quickly. This helps to stabilize their lives, reset normative values and reestablish a work ethic after chronic or lengthy periods of unemployment. These types of programs are often most suitable for clients with serious barriers to employment because of the hands on activity (Holzer, 1996, pp. 47-70). These types of programs demonstrate greater short-term impacts on participants’ ability to find and maintain employment (i.e., 24 months) compared to basic education programs (Ochel, 2005; Stoll, 2006, p. 106). Increased earnings are attained by added work hours rather than wage rates.

Although, work-first strategies may be most effective with hard to place clients many are unable to sustain or build upon these gains because they do not possess enhanced skills. As a result, many hybrid programs have emerged to provide a more balanced approach, pairing work with training services to develop higher skills and knowledge. These mixed approaches have

longer lasting impacts because clients develop increased competencies that provide access to high skill, high wage jobs (Lemke, Witt & Witte, 2007; Stoll, 2006, p. 108-109). The “Learn While You Earn” program by Goodwill Industries has a work first/job search phase (Level I) and a mixed approach (Level II) for development of higher level skills.

Education-First

Education-first programs develop human capital by increasing knowledge and skills through completion of a General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency, admission to college or university, or admission to a trade certification program. This approach is based on the general association between increased education and greater employability, higher wages, better benefits and employment stability (Brown, 2001; Edelman, Holzer & Offner, 2006; Holzer, Stoll & Wissoker, 2004; Rademacher, 2002; Voorhees & Harvey, 2005). Although, work-first programs produce immediate effects, the investment in people through education and training appears to have longer lasting effects in moving people out of poverty and off public assistance because they provide access to good paying jobs with benefits (Houston & Ong, 2006; Lafer, 2002; Stoll, 2006; Lemke, Witt & Witte, 2007; Zandniapour & Conway, 2001, 2002).

Two of the programs evaluated are education-first programs – Seguir Adelante focuses on providing poor residents access to higher education; and, ACTN – “Each One, Teach One” focuses on helping the illiterate and functionally illiterate improve their basic skills (i.e., reading, writing, speaking and mathematics). Employment may be a more distant objective for clients of “Each One, Teach One” than for other programs.

Employment-Focused Mixed-Activity

Employment-focused mixed activity programs require clients to find employment and augment work with a variety of training and educational programs that provide job skills as well as the soft-skills needed for employability and job retention (Zinser, 2003). This model is represented by Level I of the “Learn While You Earn” program conducted by Goodwill Industries of San Antonio. The first phase of this program focuses on three goals – preparation for employment, placement and retention of a transitional job. The preparation segment consists of a short training program covering soft-skills for employment. The role of the transitional job is to socialize the client for work, provide feedback on behaviors and performance, redirect behavior or performance for improvement, and provide job search assistance.¹

Education-Focused Mixed-Activity

The education-focused mixed activity programs provide educational content, job-search and job placement assistance and usually try to place clients in positions that pay a living wage with benefits (Rademacher, 2002; Rademacher, Bear & Conway 2001). These programs either provide training and education directly or they make such programs accessible. The range of education and training programs encompassed by this model include such programs as Adult Basic Education, preparation for GED testing, English as a Second Language, job readiness training, soft-skills for employability and retention, trade training, or college level course work aimed at fulfilling positions in demand occupations (Michalopoulos, 2004; Zandniapour & Conway, 2001, 2002). Project QUEST is a sectoral education and training program focused on developing higher level skills needed in demand occupations. Clients are prepared for admission to institutions of higher education or job training programs. The program makes development of high level skills accessible to those who could not qualify or afford to upgrade their skills on their own.

Earning Supplements

The term “earning supplements” refers to two different types of programs. The first are changes in policies and practices that allow people on public assistance to earn additional income which is discounted so that they don’t lose their benefits and may gradually work themselves off public assistance. Strict income requirements enforced by threatening loss of benefits create a trap – any effort to become economically self-sufficient threatens eligibility for public assistance. This is a “rule conflict” that could lead to a loss of housing, food stamps, child care assistance, health insurance coverage for children, and other critical supports. Enforcement, without exceptions, of these rules creates strong disincentives against “...pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps” (Herring, 1994; Schreiner, 1999; Solomon, 1992; Turner, Danziger & Seefeldt, 2006).

The second type of program encompassed by this category involves education and training for small business ownership (Benus, 1994; Osborne, 2000). These programs provide training and education to low income people who are thinking about opening a business so that they understand what is required to be successful. In theory, a small business could produce a second source of income and provide a stronger financial base for families. Ideally this would

lead to decreased dependency on public assistance as families move out of poverty. The YWCA – Self-Employment for Economic Development (SEED) program is an example of this type of program. It provides six weeks of training for small business ownership, assists clients in preparing a business plan and provides referrals to local banks that provide small business loans.

Findings

Workforce Development Programs

The available evidence leads to the conclusion that two programs – Project QUEST and Seguir Adelante – are highly effective workforce development programs. Continued funding for these programs is warranted. Expansion of the Seguir Adelante program should be considered given its effectiveness, impacts and limited funding. These two programs literally break intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Two other programs are also rated as effective – “Learn While Your Earn” and “Each One, Teach One”. They deal with the most difficult clients who commonly have multiple serious problems (educational or cognitive deficits, mental health issues, histories of substance abuse, and chronic unemployment) as well as motivational problems. Both programs are important and necessary. They assist people with multiple barriers to self-sufficiency to have a higher quality of life. These programs reduce social costs for law enforcement, confinement, and other social services.² They are the right response – ethically and morally – to circumstances that confront people with multiple complex barriers to employment. Continued funding for these two programs is warranted. Both programs could serve larger numbers if provided additional resources. The unmet need is readily apparent on the streets of San Antonio.

The assessment of the YWCA – “Self-Employment for Economic Development” (SEED) program revealed a program with little evidence of effectiveness as a workforce development program. Although, this program is well intended and consistent with the literature for education and training of low income populations for self-employment it has not performed well. The assessment finds that very few clients actually start businesses. Schreiner (1999, p. 501) captured this issue succinctly when he wrote that microenterprise and self-employment training programs may “...help a few people a little, [but] they are unlikely to help many people a lot.” The program is rated very low in terms of effectiveness. Continued funding for the “SEED” program seems unwarranted.

Table 1 (below) provides a summary of key indicators for each of the five programs.

Table 1: Synopsis of City of San Antonio Funded Workforce Development Programs
Center of Policy Studies, University of Texas at San Antonio

Category	Project QUEST	ACCD – “Seguir Adelante”	Goodwill Industries – “Learn While You Earn”	ACTN – “Each One, Teach One”	YWCA – “Self Employment for Economic Development”
Fiscal Years Receiving COSA Funding	FY1993-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2004-05, FY2007
Assessment Period	FY2001-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2005-2007	FY2004-05, FY2007
Total Expenditures (assessment period)	\$12,797,540	\$467,870	\$310,220	\$199,700	\$101,250
Average Annual Expenditure (assess. period)	\$1,828,220	\$155,957	\$103,407	\$66,566.67	\$33,750
Average Number of Unduplicated Clients/Yr.	553.0	250.3	65.0	78.0	46.7
Average Annual Cost/Unduplicated Client*	\$3,306 *	\$623	\$1,591	\$853	\$723
Average Annual Number of Client Contacts	28,150 **	10,465 •	5,460†	5,400	1,483Δ
Average Annual Cost Per Client Contact	\$64.95	\$14.90	\$18.94	\$16.70	\$22.76
Average Annual Number of “Graduates”	170.3	104.0 **	58.0	Not Relevant††	47.4 ΔΔ
Average Annual Cost Per “Graduate”	\$10,754	\$1,500	\$1,783	Not Relevant	\$712
Average Annual Job Placements	111.9	38.0	58.0	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Average Hourly Wage Upon Placement	\$14.05	No Data	\$6.77	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Average Annual Placements > Living Wage	90.3	35.5 ***	25.0	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Average Annual Placements < Living Wage	21.7	No Data	33.0	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Average Annual Percent Still Empl. <12mos.	89.7%	53.5	39%	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Average Annual Percent Still Empl. >18mos.	87.4%	No Data	No Data	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Pct. Scorecard Measures Met or Exceeded (m/N)	81.3% (52/64)	75% (21/28)	65.2% (15/23)	56.5% (13/23)	100% (20/20)
Pct. Scorecard Measures Not Met (n/N)	12.5% (8/64)	25% (7/28)	30.4% (7/23)	34.8% (8/23)	0% (0/20)
Impacts Revealed by Qualitative Interviews	Major Positive Gains	Positive Gains	Small Positive Gains	V. Small Pos. Gains	V. Few Pos. Gains
Overall Assessment Rating - Effectiveness	Exceptional	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low

* Note: For Project Quest the cost/unduplicated client includes tuition, fees, books and support costs associated with higher education of clients as well as overhead costs to operate the program.
 ** Note: For Project Quest it is unclear how many client contacts occur annually. The estimate is computed by multiplying all clients served/mo. by 6 meetings/mo. produces an average of 28,150 contacts/year.
 † Note: For Goodwill Industries the number of client contacts is estimated based on daily contacts for the first three months of the program plus two contacts per month during the final three months of the program. The analysis presented in the Goodwill section estimates the overall average number of contacts/year as 5,460 (or 16,380/3).
 • Note: For ACCD the average annual number of client contacts is estimated at 10,836 in FY2005, 10,044 in FY2006 and FY2007 (after 7 months) 6,156. The total estimated contacts is 27,036 across 2.58 years. The annual average contacts is computed as 10,465/year [(27,036)/(2.58)].
 ** Note: For ACCD a “graduate” is defined as a person who either entered a higher education program or obtained transitional employment.
 *** Note: For ACCD Annual placements above a living wage is based on FY 2005 and FY 2006 data. Data on this variable were not collected for FY 2007.
 †† Note: For ACTN – “Each One Teach One” is an intensive reading and mathematics program for functionally illiterate and innumerate clients. It requires one-on-one teaching. Clients are referred from the City of San Antonio and other workforce development programs when significant learning deficits are identified. The average cost per contact hour is \$16.70. This represents an average of 57 hours of instruction/year [(3 hrs.) X (19 sessions)] per unduplicated client. Trained volunteer instructors provide most direct services to clients which reduces overall program costs. The average annual number of client contacts is estimated by the average of the total number of clients served per month during FY 2006 and FY 2007. Most clients do not “graduate” but some do improve sufficiently to enroll in a Pre-GED Prep program. There is no available data on employment.
 Δ Note: The method for estimating the average annual contacts of the YWCA – SEED program is presented in the report and estimated to be 1,483/year (or 4,200/2.833 months).
 ΔΔ Note: Number of students who produced a business plan is used as a surrogate variable for number of graduates. The number is based on data from FY2005 and FY2007 (79/1,667 yrs.).

Based on the evidence funds used for the SEED program might be better used if they were redistributed to more productive programs. Of the three marginally funded programs – Seguir Adelante offers the best opportunity for significant workforce development gains. The “Learn While You Earn” by Goodwill Industries is a close second. “Each One, Teach One” is also a very good program that works with the most challenging clients served by any of the workforce development programs. Gains by their clients appear small compared to other programs. Yet, these small gains represent huge leaps for many of their clients. Some of the “Each One, Teach One” clients have gone on to earn General Educational Development equivalencies, enroll with Project QUEST, and attend local community colleges. These successes are not measured or reported. Given the level of performance and clientele served, increased funding for any of these three programs may be warranted.

Although the cost per contact hour for Project QUEST is substantially higher (\$64.95/hr. compared to \$15-\$23/hr.) than other programs Project QUEST also serves 2-10 times as many clients per year and graduates more clients than other workforce development programs. Its graduates have high retention rates with nearly 90% employed after 18 months. A small random sample of “graduates” revealed that Project QUEST produced major life changes in their lives and that these changes were sustained after 18-24 months. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data Project QUEST is rated as an exceptionally effective program. The next most effective program is Seguir Adelante (ACCD), followed by “Learn While You Earn” (Goodwill Industries of San Antonio, Inc.), “Each One, Teach One” (ACTN) and “Self-Employment for Economic Development” (YWCA). The YWCA stands out as the least effective program.

Performance Assessment and Data Collection Problems

The Balance Scorecard measures used by the Department of Community Initiatives are relatively superficial indicators of performance. This is true of all programs assessed. The measures focus on flow through activity (*output*) or short term gains by clients that might be associated with the program (*outcome*). Rarely are *impact measures* used to assess whether the fundamental purposes of the programs have been attained and sustained 18-24 months after last contact with the programs. It is important to recognize that programs may meet all the standards for activity and client gains without attaining the long-term purposes of the program (i.e., impacts).

The performance measures used for most of the programs appear to be ad hoc measures of questionable validity (i.e., measures that actually measure program performance) and

reliability (i.e., the consistency of the results) concerns. Additionally, many of the measures have been changed from year to year depending on the focus of the contract monitors or program managers. As a result of measurement problems, there is little utility to the data collected. For example:

- There is limited ability to analyze performance measures through time;
- There is no ability to compare outputs, outcome and impacts of the various programs or elements within programs;
- There is no ability to assess the effects of changes in applicant recruitment or screening processes, program design changes, or the influence of other factors (i.e., individual, social, programmatic, etc) on client performance or the long-term impacts on their lives.

The Department of Community Initiatives should identify a set of *valid and reliable* performance indicators for each program to assess *output, outcome and impact*. This will require some expansion of the measures collected for each organization. Also contract monitors and program managers must resist the temptation to change measures each year. Measures should be used for at least three years. After that, only measures found to be of questionable validity or reliability should be removed or changed. Consistency in the collection of valid and reliable data over time will be very useful for program evaluation.

Another goal for the Department of Community Initiatives (DCI) should be to regularly assess program impacts over time. This would require that DCI include an annual requirement for follow-up assessment using a random sample (i.e., about 20% if the number is large) of those who completed the program and those who dropped out 18-24 months ago as part of the contract. This could be accomplished through follow-up telephone surveys; or, by an outside provider contracted to conduct the impact assessment. Regardless of which approach is used, program staff will need to systematically collect and enter data on a separate electronic data base designed for impact analysis. Impact assessment is responsible public management and DCI should build in funding for these assessments as part of the contract monitoring and program evaluation process.

Need for Better Use of Existing Data

Each Delegate Agency collects data on their clients. These data are used internally to monitor client progress but could be more effectively used for contract monitoring and impact

assessment purposes. However, very few of these measures actually use a pre-test/post-test method to objectively measure learning or performance gains for outcome measures. In the future, a select number of measures should be recorded before clients start training and again upon completion of training (i.e., a pre-test/post-test design).

To facilitate impact assessment 18 to 24 months after “graduation” or termination from a program DCI should require that clients identify two backup contacts at intake. The additional contacts become critical when a client’s last known contact information is no longer accurate. Informed consent processes can be structured into the interview methodology and obtained verbally at the time of contact.

Each agency section of this assessment report contains a list of potential assessment measures for consideration. These measures focus on important performance characteristics and are likely to be both valid and reliable. However, for impact assessment new measures will be required at the individual, rather than aggregate level. These measures include individual demographic measures as control factors and substantive measures for comparison to post-test measures recorded during the follow-up interview 18-24 months after last contact with the program. This structure provides a basis for assessing the impact of programs on the lives of clients and their families. This will allow the Department of Community Initiatives to answer the fundamental questions about each program. “Has this program produced the effects on the lives of clients envisioned when it was designed?”

Observations about the Design of Workforce Development in San Antonio

In the process of conducting this assessment it became apparent that there was no model guiding the design, development, implementation, and funding of workforce development programs. Most of the program managers at each Delegate Agency met for the first time at an initial meeting in July 2007. It became apparent during that meeting that there was no overarching model for workforce development guiding the array of workforce development programs and services funded by the Department of Community Initiatives. The current array seems to be more a function of opportunity and luck than planning or design.

Some policy relevant questions to consider are:

- Where does workforce development begin?
- Does it begin with people who are out of work and need reentry assistance?

- Does it begin with providing an introduction to various careers and occupational opportunities to school age children?
- Does it extend through high school into college?
- What is needed to ensure these groups are exposed to various careers and occupations during their elementary, secondary and higher education?
- What client groups are likely to require workforce development services?
- What array of program and services are needed to meet their needs?
- What are the demand occupational sectors that pay a living wage with benefits?
- How should the City organize its resources to maximize workforce development within its resource limitations?
- How should the City organize the business, educational, and social service communities to monitor, analyze, and adjust for changing labor needs?

Systematic workforce development processes within the City of San Antonio and Bexar County need an overarching model to guide its development and adjustments to changing labor needs. Assessment Report - Appendix 2 provides a sample model adapted from a county in Virginia.

Programmatic Recommendations

1. Reallocate funding from the YWCA – SEED program to one or more of the following programs: ACCD – Seguir Adelante, Goodwill – “Learn While You Earn” or ACTN – “Each One, Teach One.” YWCA – SEED is rated as the least effective of five workforce development programs evaluated.
2. Continue to fund “Learn While You Earn” and “Each One, Teach One” as both programs serve hard to serve clients and provide important and necessary services that improve lives and reduce social service costs. These programs also represent ethically and morally appropriate policies for dealing with people who face serious and complex barriers to employment.
3. Consider expansion of both “Learn While You Earn” and “Each One, Teach One” to more closely align availability of these services with the level of need.
4. Continue to fund Project QUEST and Seguir Adelante. These programs are viewed as the most effective workforce development programs funded by the Department of Community Initiatives.

5. Consider increased funding for Seguir Adelante as this program is highly effective and could serve more eligible clients.
6. Consider three year contracts so that impact assessments may be structured within contract cycles.
7. Develop a systematic model to guide workforce development programs and services for the future and empower an advisory board to serve as a steering committee.

Program Performance Measurement Recommendations

1. Develop a set of valid measurements for outputs, outcomes, and impacts from those presented in the second appendix within the assessment section for each delegate agency.
2. Retain these measures for three years without deletion or change then reevaluate each measure for validity or reliability.
3. Design an impact assessment data base for recording individual information at intake and upon program termination.
4. Conduct impact assessments *annually* by collecting follow-up data on former clients whose last contact with the program was 18-24 months ago (a census for small number of former clients or a random sample of former clients for a large number of former clients).
5. Build in funding for impact assessments within contracts.
6. Report output and outcome measures each month on Contract Monitoring Reports.
7. Report the number of unduplicated clients, number active clients, and number of client contacts each month as a basic set of performance oriented output measures.
8. Report outcome measures based on average change scores on monthly CMR documents.

$$\frac{\text{sum } [((\text{post-test score}) - (\text{pre-test scores}))/\text{number of cases}] \times 100}{}$$

9. Train all contract monitors, key DCI supervisory personnel, and all Delegate Agency program managers in program evaluation and measurement.

Assessment Report - Appendix 1

Script for Verbal Informed Consent by Telephone

Hello! My name is Michael J. Gilbert. I am a professor at UTSA and the City of San Antonio has contracted with us to evaluate several workforce development programs funded by the city. We have obtained your name and phone number from _____ (insert name of program). They may have contacted you to let you know you might receive a call from us. As part of the evaluation we wanted to talk to people who had completed the program 12-18 months ago to get a sense of how the program affected their career and quality of life. We also need to know what strengths and weaknesses you see in the program. Your comments will help us make recommendations about the program to City officials.

Are you 18 years of age or older? This conversation should take about 15-20 minutes. I assure you that your answers will be held in strict confidence. You will not be identified by name or in any other way that would allow you to be identified. You may refuse to answer any question and you may stop the conversation at any time. Would you like to help us by talking with us now?

Assessment Report – Appendix 2

City/County Workforce Preparedness Organization

1. Workforce Investment Advisory Board
 - a. Key business, educational, health, social and political leaders
 - b. Provide an oversight steering committee
2. Workforce Development Board
 - a. 51% business
 - b. Focus on development of career centers and job readiness training
 - c. Target groups (out of school youth and displaced workers)
 - d. Public Financing
3. Workforce Investment Council
 - a. Senior business and community leaders
 - b. Technical Preparatory Programs
 - c. Apprenticeship Instructor Training
 - d. Private Financing
4. Chambers of Commerce
 - a. Private sector members and educational leaders
 - b. Business partnerships with education
 - c. Private Financing
5. Community Assistance Council
 - a. Public assistance agency and program representatives
 - b. Resolve rule conflicts and rule driven barriers for those on public assistance.
 - c. Public Funding
6. Local Job Readiness Partnerships
 - a. 51% business plus representatives from other sectors
 - b. Provide grant funds for student enrollments in workforce development programs
 - c. Public and Private Financing
7. Industry/Education Councils (employment sectors)
 - a. 51% business plus representatives from education and other sectors
 - b. Team (automotive, banking/finance, manufacturing, culinary, heavy equipment, electrical trades, HVAC, etc.)
 - c. Organizations (Trade schools, colleges, industry leaders, etc.)
 - d. Public and Private Financing

Workforce Development Programs

- Work with schools to provide curriculum materials for K-5, 6-8
- Provide College Tech Prep and College Prep 9-12
- Adult Basic Education Programs (remediation for less than 6th grade academic skills)
- Job Readiness Training for the Unemployed or Displace Workers
- Work-First Programs (trade based apprenticeship programs)
- Work-First with Education and Training Programs
- Education-First Programs (general higher education programs with colleges)
- Education-First with Work Programs (sectoral education and training for demand occupations)

Adapted from:

Pumphrey, G. (1998). Workforce preparedness: A community partnership for economic development. Economic Development Review, 15(4), 30-34.

Endnotes

¹ Another example of an employment-focused mixed activity program is the Alamo City Youth Build program that provides paid employment in construction trades along with coursework to help their clients increase their ability to find and retain jobs in that field.

² See a discussion by Gault and Lovell (2006) about understanding the costs and benefits of various social policies designed to align work and personal life – paid family and medical leave, subsidized child care, paid sick leave, and subsidized pre-kindergarten. The central argument is that investments in improving the life and capacity of the poor often have benefits that far outweigh their direct costs and that promoting a better understanding of the benefits as well as the cost may be a basis for developing the political will to find common ground on important social issues.

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