INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH
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PROGRAMS to Support Job Training Success

Innovations to Address Unmet Needs

JOB TRAINING SUCCESS

About This Report

This report provides profiles of programs that meet key unmet supportive service needs among job training participants. IWPR selected and studied eight programs employing innovative approaches to meeting child care, transportation, financial, and mental health needs, as well for addressing domestic violence. This report describes the programs' strategies and methods for connecting trainees with supports to provide suggestions and inspiration to other programs seeking to expand their ability to meet clients' supportive service needs. The report was informed by expert interviews, a research review on the need for supportive services in the workforce development system and promising models for providing these services, and the results of a survey of job training program administrators reflecting key unmet needs. This is the third report from an Institute for Women's Policy Research project to study the prevalence and need for supportive services among job training participants, and strategies to meet their needs. The project was supported by the Walmart Foundation.

About the Institute for Women's Policy Research

The Institute for Women's Policy Research conducts and communicates research to inspire public dialogue, shape policy, and improve the lives and opportunities of women of diverse backgrounds, circumstances, and experiences. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a diverse network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that also works in affiliation with the women's studies and public policy and public administration programs at The George Washington University.

Institute for Women's Policy Research
1200 18th Street NW, Suite 301 Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202/785.5100 Fax: 202/833.4362
www.iwpr.org

Board of Directors

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Programs to Support Job Training Success:

Innovations to Address Unmet Needs

Julie Anderson, M.A., and Cynthia Hess, Ph.D.

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Wider Opportunities for Women

Van Ton Quinlivan
Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development
California Community Colleges

Rachel Unruh
Chief of Staff
National Skills Coalition

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Executive Summary

Job training program participants often need supportive services to enroll and achieve success in their programs. Recent research suggests that while some supportive services, such as case management, are relatively common, others—such as the need for child care, emergency cash assistance, mental health services, and domestic violence services— are more difficult to come by.

This report features strategies and examples from eight programs that serve job training participants in addressing key unmet needs, across a range of settings and that serve differing populations. Most provide occupational skills training to their program participants; a few function as workforce intermediaries, which because of their close connections to many actors in the workforce development systems in their communities are often well-positioned to facilitate access to supports. In selecting these programs, IWPR chose eight examples of innovative supportive service provision that meet some of the greatest unmet support needs and may offer useful models for other organizations with similar challenges and goals. They include:

- **Brighton Center** in Newport, KY, which offers a wide range of programs and services to job training participants (including emergency cash assistance, financial education, substance abuse counseling, and assistance obtaining public benefits, child care, housing, clothing, and transportation) through holistic case management;

- **Building Futures** in Providence, RI, a pre-apprenticeship program focused primarily on the construction sector that provides hands-on training in the skilled trades and supportive services such as bus passes and gas cards, food cards, emergency cash assistance, help accessing public benefits, and small, no-interest loans;

- **Climb Wyoming,** which provides training for single mothers in health care, truck driving, office careers, pipefitting, and HVAC repair, among other occupations, and is designed to address the holistic needs of participants by having them work with a licensed mental health clinician individually and as a group and by providing additional services and referrals;

- **JVS Boston,** which provides a continuum of learning that includes occupational training for certified nursing assistants and pharmacy technicians, as well as services such as financial coaching, child care, and transportation assistance to those with disabilities, veterans, refugees and asylees, and ex-offenders;

- **Raise the Floor** at Gateway Community and Technical College in Florence, KY, which recruits, trains, supports, and places women enrolled in manufacturing programs who are pursuing short-term certificates or associate's degrees, connects them with partner organizations to meet their comprehensive supportive service needs, and offers emergency cash assistance to meet uncovered costs during their training;

- **Seattle Jobs Initiative,** a workforce development intermediary that uses a career pathways model in partnering with three community-based organizations to connect participants with supportive services and occupational skills training at local colleges in four sectors (automotive, trade, and logistics; health care; office occupations; and manufacturing);

- **Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA)**, located in Mercedes, TX, which supports economically disadvantaged individuals who are enrolled full-time at area colleges and training in high-demand occupations by assigning each a career counselor who helps identify any academic, financial, or supportive service needs and then connects students with financial assistance, child care, and referrals for other services; and

- **YWCA of Greater Cincinnati,** which offers occupational skills training in hospitality and tourism and directly provides individuals with child care assistance, an onsite child care center, financial education, services for survivors of domestic violence, and transportation assistance, as well as referrals for additional services.

Strategies for Maximizing the Reach and Impact of Supportive Services

During site visits and interviews with program staff, the administrators identified several key strategies for meeting job training participants' supportive service needs: building strong partnerships, implementing integrated case management, and providing services in group as well individual settings. They emphasized that:

- Partnering with an area expert can be an effective strategy to identify and address participants' greatest unmet needs. While building and maintaining partnerships can pose challenges, strong organizational collaborations can reduce duplication of services by aligning the numerous and diverse actors—including businesses, colleges, service agencies, and community-based organizations—comprising the workforce development system. One alliance in Northern Kentucky, for example, brings together over 130 community organizations, public agencies, educational institutions, and funders to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of safety net services, while striving to avoid duplication of services. Such coordination helps to ensure that staff at local organizations can refer participants to services they need and avoid a replication of services in the community.

- Integrated case management, which allows job training participants to work with a single case manager to access supportive services, can be the most important element of job training success. Effective case managers assess participants' needs as early as possible—sometimes prior to the start of the program—and help them to navigate systems to access a range of services. In some cases, case managers have a dual role, also providing career counseling; this additional focus on the future can help participants preemptively address obstacles that might disrupt employment once they complete training and encourages them to discern a career path that entails continuing skills development. Programs interviewed emphasized that case management can also have the added effect of creating a sense of accountability to the program that may improve completion rates; some of their participants have noted that the case manager's commitment to them makes them want to show up and succeed, in part because they do not want to let their case manager down.

- Integrating group sessions into the service delivery model can save costs while also providing a structured opportunity for members of a cohort to share resources or troubleshoot challenges among themselves. At one program, participants have shared rides, helped each other with car repairs, and helped each other with temporary housing. At another, they have shared advice on how to pass a commercial driver's license test and lessons learned about how to get by as a woman in a male-dominated field. Administrators

report that group sessions also generate a sense of accountability to one another among participants, who may support each other during the program and even after completion.

Providing Supportive Services to Job Training Participants: Addressing the Greatest Unmet Needs

The programs profiled in this study implement these strategies in different ways through practices designed to address some of the greatest needs job training participants face.

- **Child care.** Because it can be difficult to find a child care provider who meets one's needs, one of the programs IWPR visited offers an intensive and specialized level of support from a dedicated staff person familiar with areas providers and processes to receive subsidies. Several also help participants apply for public child care assistance and, in some cases, cover remaining expenses. In addition, child care is provided directly by one of the programs in the study, although this option may not be feasible for many organizations.

- **Financial assistance.** At one program IWPR visited, emergency cash assistance is used to meet participants' comprehensive support needs. Several other programs provide tangible goods, such as books, uniforms, and tools, that participants need while in training. Some of the programs in the study also provide financial education and counseling through workshops or on an individualized, ad hoc basis.

- **Transportation.** To provide job training participants with affordable and reliable transportation, the programs profiled offer gas cards, mileage reimbursement, or work with area transportation authorities to give trainees free or reduced-cost passes. One program has developed relationships with a bike repair shop and an auto body shop that makes free or reduced-cost repairs for their job training participants. To help participants purchase or repair a car, another program offers small, no-interest loans. Still another provides emergency cash assistance for this type of one-time expense.

- **Mental health counseling.** Unmet mental health needs can make it difficult for people to complete job training. Programs interviewed underscore the importance of identifying mental health services needed at intake or as early as possible and having staff who are knowledgeable about local mental health providers and can match a participant with a provider. One program IWPR visited directly provides group and individual counseling with a licensed mental health professional to all trainees, with the group sessions designed to foster bonds among participants and develop their communication and conflict-resolution skills, and the individual sessions designed to improve their self-esteem and help them address personal challenges that may prevent them from maintaining employment.

- **Domestic violence services.** Two of the programs IWPR visited are members of a five-organization partnership formed to measure the prevalence of domestic violence among training participants in their area and increase access to needed services. All partners received training from a regional expert on how to screen for experiences of domestic violence and refer to appropriate local resources; several partnered with organizations that have specialized supports domestic violence survivors may need, such as legal advice and mental health counseling. One job training program housed within a multiservice, community-based organization directly provides their job training participants with supports to address domestic violence.

Strategies to Enhance Funding for Supportive Services

Supportive services can be costly to provide and funding is often scarce; programs reported that the best strategy to reduce costs is to eliminate duplication of services and identify other resources or organizations in their community that offer supports their participants may use. When no other source is available, several strategies can help make the most of limited funding, including:

- Collaborating with partners to secure grants;
- Working with participants to identify every possible source of funding that can help cover their supportive service costs and potentially combining ("braiding") multiple funding sources to pay for these expenses;
- Making use of underutilized funding opportunities that could help cover the costs of supportive services for job training participants. For example, interviewees pointed to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program, which provides several kinds of grants. One is referred to as "50-50 funds," or 50 percent reimbursement grants that are uncapped federal funds that reimburse states for up to half of certain SNAP E&T program costs that are not federally funded, including supportive services.

Through strategic provision of supports and investment in the services that make the greatest difference for their participants, the programs featured in this report are addressing the typical constraints and working to ensure that the women and men in their programs have the resources they need to complete training and advance in the workforce. Even programs that prioritize supportive service provision, however, may still struggle to fully meet participants' needs, due to challenges such as restrictions on how funding can be used, the limited nature of funding overall, and, in some cases, the lack of an area partner to provide a particular service. These challenges suggest that expanding access to supportive services for job training participants requires not only commitment and innovation on the part of training and social service providers, but also broader changes that increase investments in supportive services for individuals in training and education.

The efforts of the programs described in this report, while they do not represent the full spectrum of possibilities, provide examples of how support needs can be met that may serve as models for others in the field. Increasing investments in supportive services would allow the replication of such models and the development of new approaches to promote job training success.

I. Introduction

Study Rationale

Supportive services help many individuals enroll in and complete job training programs, yet research indicates that these services are often in short supply (Hess et al. 2016a; Hess et al. 2016b). A recent Institute for Women's Policy Research survey of 168 administrators of workforce development programs indicates that these program leaders believe their participants have a number of key unmet supportive service needs, including child care assistance, emergency cash assistance, transportation assistance, mental health counseling, and domestic violence services. The administrators surveyed say these services are critical to facilitating completion of job training programs, yet they struggle to provide all the supports their participants need, due largely to the limited nature of funding, staff, and other resources (Hess et al. 2016b).

To help programs meet challenges associated with supportive service provision, IWPR studied examples of programs that provide supportive services to address key unmet needs among job training participants. This report profiles eight programs that use an array of strategies for serving participants in job training programs and employ innovative methods for addressing unmet needs. The report discusses how programs maximize the reach of supportive service provision, then examines how their strategies inform the provision of specific supports. It next examines approaches to funding supports in cost-effective ways, and concludes with reflections on ways to address the larger challenges organizations face in providing supportive services and profiles of the organizations included in the study. The report is the third in a series produced as a part of the Job Training Success Project at the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), which investigates gaps in the provision of supportive services across the workforce development system and how these gaps can be addressed.

Program Selection

IWPR identified a set of program selection criteria based on findings from its administrator survey, *Supportive Services in Workforce Development Programs: Administrator Perspectives on Availability and Unmet Needs,* as well as a review of existing literature and program evaluations, expert interviews (see Appendix A), and a scan of job training programs and intermediary organizations that provide supportive services. In seeking programs to profile, IWPR considered the following criteria: type and length of training provided, extent of supportive services offered, program size, evidence of positive program and employment outcomes, use of service delivery models or strategies identified as promising in the literature, evidence of program sustainability and replicability, diversity in geographic regions and populations served, diversity in program settings and industry focus, and a focus on meeting one or more key unmet service needs (see Appendix B for more on the criteria). In addition, IWPR focused on programs that have not been extensively profiled in the workforce development literature but that provide examples of supportive service provision that may offer useful models for other programs with similar challenges and goals. IWPR sought to compile an array of programs that met a subset of the selection criteria and together provided examples reflecting key unmet needs.

Among the more than 200 programs identified through the research as providing supportive services to job training participants, 12 programs that met a large subset of the selection criteria were selected for 30 minute phone interviews. Based on information gathered from these interviews, eight programs were chosen for site visits (see Table 1 for information on the sites and

Appendix C for profiles of the programs). Most of the programs profiled provide occupational skills training to their program participants; several function as workforce intermediaries, which because of their close connections to many actors in the workforce development systems in their areas are often well-positioned to facilitate access to needed supports.

Two IWPR researchers conducted each site visit and interviewed program administrators, case managers, data managers, and in some cases, job training participants and program graduates (see Appendix D for a sample interview protocol). Programs were asked about their provision of supportive services, including the funding and administration of these services, costs and operating strategies, the perceived role of supportive services in influencing job training participants' success, and what the programs view as the keys to their success and challenges they face in helping participants access supportive services. Most visits lasted between one day and a day and a half; one visit was completed in two hours, and another during an hour-long interview by Skype.

Program Characteristics

The programs selected for this report are diverse in terms of the populations they serve, the goals of their programming, and the sociopolitical, geographic, and economic contexts in which they operate. Table 1 gives a brief snapshot of these characteristics.

Table 1. Quick Facts about Programs in this Study

Name	Location	Program Goal	Brief Description
Brighton Center	Newport, KY	Help families achieve self-sufficiency	• Trains for careers in medical assisting and business and computer technologies • Offers a wide array of services including assistance obtaining public benefits, child care, housing, clothing, and transportation; emergency cash assistance; financial education; and substance abuse counseling • Refers participants to other organizations for legal services, mental health counseling, and domestic violence services, among other services • Offers each participant holistic case management and bundles services • Conducts a community assessment to identify service providers and gaps in services
Building Futures	Providence, RI	Prepare low-income adults for apprenticeships	• Is a construction pre-apprenticeship program that enrolls primarily men • Directly offers small, no-interest loans, transportation assistance, help accessing public benefits, financial education, and emergency cash assistance • Provides referrals for housing assistance, legal services, and mental health or substance abuse counseling • Maintains a strong alumni network and offers graduates the opportunity to get loans and receive referrals or information about supportive services for life

Climb Wyoming	WY (six locations)	Help single mothers achieve and maintain self-sufficiency	• Trains women to enter a variety of occupations: construction and energy, health care, truck driving, office careers, and more, with training changing frequently to meet local employer demand • Serves single mothers exclusively • Requires participation in group and individual therapy and parenting classes • Provides referrals for child care assistance, emergency cash, health care, and substance abuse counseling, among other services • Uses a group, therapeutic model with a licensed mental health clinician • Continues connection with program graduates through monthly lunches
JVS Boston	Boston, MA	Help individuals from diverse communities find employment	• Provides occupational training for certified nursing assistants and pharmacy technicians • Provides financial coaching/asset building, help obtaining public benefits, and transportation assistance • Makes referrals for additional supports such as child care, housing, legal services, counseling, and domestic violence services • Serves a large volume of clients with a range of services, including job search skills, resume writing, and occupational skills training • Offers a continuum of learning, from basic language and employability through college preparation, to move people into quality jobs • Has expertise in integrating language and skills training, serving immigrants, refugees, and asylees
Raise the Floor at Gateway Community and Technical College	Florence, KY	Train women for manufacturing positions	• Trains women for manufacturing jobs • Through the case manager, helps participants apply for benefits and ensures that all supportive service needs are met by one of the program's partners • Pays for uncovered costs through emergency cash assistance, if supportive service costs are not fully covered • Has an all-women governing committee that is a resource for supportive services and jobs • Provides an academic counselor for participants, in addition to the case manager
Seattle Jobs Initiative	Seattle, WA	Help low-income individuals access training and build living-wage careers	• Partners with three community-based organizations (CBOs), each of which enrolls and supports participants training in a specific sector (automotive, trade, logistics; health care; office occupations; and manufacturing), and with community colleges, who provide the training • Provides transportation assistance and assistance obtaining tools, equipment, and uniforms • Refers participants for many other supports, including child care, financial education, help securing public benefits, housing assistance, legal services, and counseling

			• Assigns each participant a career navigator, housed within the CBO, to assist in navigating the college system, and to secure supports and job placement • Follows a career pathways model, allowing participants to step in and out of training and employment • Is an innovator in maximizing use of SNAP E&T 50-50 funds
Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA)	Mercedes, TX	Help economically disadvantaged adults achieve training in high-skilled, high-wage occupations	• Supports full-time community college students who are earning a certificate, associate's degree, or (select) bachelor's degree in an "in demand" occupation; in 2015 served students completing training in business, education, health care, manufacturing, technology, and specialized trades • Primarily serves low-income Hispanic adults • Provides financial assistance based on an individual assessment of need, which can include curriculum-based required expenses; child care and transportation assistance; intensive case management; and career counseling • Makes referrals for housing, counseling, and domestic violence services, among other services through a network of community partners • Directly connected to economic development initiatives and funded largely by the cities and counties it serves, as well as by foundations and state and federal funding; helped in large part by its local partnerships
YWCA of Greater Cincinnati	Cincinnati, OH	Help low income individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency	• Provides training in hospitality and tourism • Primarily serves women with children and no high school diploma • Provides supportive services including child care assistance and onsite child care center, financial education, services for survivors of domestic violence, and transportation assistance • Makes referrals for housing assistance, mental health counseling, and substance abuse counseling • Trains all staff to continuously check in with participants about emerging support needs • Is the primary resource for domestic violence support services in the region; trains other job training program to screen for domestic violence and refer to appropriate resources

II. Strategies for Maximizing the Reach and Impact of Supportive Services

Meeting the diverse needs of job training participants can prove challenging for many workforce development programs that have limited budgets and staff resources. Most organizations in this

study seek to maximize what they can offer by using multiple approaches to supportive service provision, including making referrals to other organizations and close partners, providing services directly, and having a case manager who can help facilitate access to the services that are available through various sources. According to experts interviewed for this project, having a single point of contact and a well-developed network of community partnerships is essential to helping job training participants navigate across systems to access the full range of services they need.

This section examines strategies for maximizing the reach and impact of supportive services: developing strong organizational partnerships, implementing integrated case management, and integrating group sessions into the service delivery model. While these strategies can take different forms in different contexts, program leaders interviewed for this study agree that they are integral to strengthening the provision of supportive services that promote job training success.

Partnerships: Expanding Access to Supportive Services

Strong organizational partnerships between job training programs and diverse local actors are critical to cost-effective and comprehensive supportive service delivery. Because most job training providers do not have the capacity, expertise, facilities, or funding to provide all the supportive services their participants need, partnerships can help them expand access to supports. In the IWPR Job Training Administrator Survey, 80 percent of respondents reported that their organizations provide supportive services to job training participants through partnerships of some form, which can include referrals to close partners as well as to other organizations (Hess et al. 2016b). Often, referrals are made and partnerships established to help meet the need for services that require specialized expertise or special facilities, such as domestic violence services, housing assistance, or substance abuse counseling. A program leader at one program IWPR visited described how partnerships benefit her organization by bringing resources and expertise their staff do not have: "We know what the gaps are for the [people] we serve and so [it helps to] collaborate with those partners, work with them to help identify gaps so that we're really efficient and are not trying to recreate the wheel…We can let the experts do their best work so that I don't have to try to be an expert in something that I'm not qualified to do."

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Programs leaders at the organizations profiled in this report identified several keys to establishing strong partnerships.

- **Make building relationships with other organizations a strategic priority.** One program leader interviewed described her organization as "relationship-driven," which is reflected in the organization's commitment to hiring individuals who are adept at making connections and its decision to encourage staff to spend time developing and maintaining strong partnerships. She said, "I'm backed up by my organization . . . [cultivating partners] is seen as a value and not as a time-waster." Through active engagement in the community, program staff both stay informed about supports that might be helpful to their job training participants and identify opportunities to serve as a resource for local service providers.

One administrator said, "We're constantly in the communities. You don't run a good program if you don't know what's out there." At **Raise the Floor**, a relatively new job training program, administrators did more than 100 presentations to various audiences in the program's first year of operations to raise awareness of its existence among potential partners and help staff establish new relationships. If done well, partnerships can benefit all parties by helping them maximize their resources and effectively serve populations they may not otherwise reach.

> "The key is to have those collaborations and networks. And not just an 'Oh yeah, we know them,' but to have actual working relationships with others. Because you have got to be able to turn to someone when you can't [provide a service], and they've got to be able to do the same thing."

- **Clarify partners' roles and goals.** Partnerships are most successful when the responsibilities of the partners and their goals are clearly defined. In some cases, establishing a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) helps to clarify organizational roles and responsibilities, solidify common goals, and hold parties accountable to one another; in other instances, an informal agreement may suffice. Regardless of the level of formality, programs agreed that successful partnerships require a clear understanding of the resources available from each partner, buy-in at all levels of their organization, and regular communication. **Brighton Center**, for example, writes periodic check-ins into MOUs with their partners, which Brighton Center staff say help to keep both sides of the partnership up-to-date with one other's circumstances and focused on their collective goals.

- **Partner with an area expert to address unmet needs.** Many of the programs interviewed for this study have intentionally established partnerships that address their participants' greatest unmet needs. For example, five community-based organizations in the Greater Cincinnati area (**Brighton Center**, Cincinnati Works, Greater Cincinnati Urban league, Santa Maria Community Services, and **YWCA Greater Cincinnati**) formed a partnership in response to anecdotal evidence about the prevalence of domestic violence experiences among job training participants in the area. The partnership sought to better understand the problem and find ways to help participants access domestic violence services (Partners for a Competitive Workforce 2016). With the financial support of Partners for a Competitive Workforce and the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the organizations involved launched the Intimidation and Intimate Partner Violence Screening Project, which took place between January and June 2016. In its early stages, the five partners included in the initiative received a half-day training session from the YWCA, the regional expert on domestic violence, on how to conduct trauma-informed screenings. Screeners are trained to recognize the effects of intimate partner violence, understand how abusive relationships can impede participation in job training programs, create a supportive environment for survivors, positively respond to disclosures of violence, and identify available resources for survivors. Members of the partnership say that due to the

> Organizational partnerships can improve supportive service delivery by increasing alignment between the local workforce development system, businesses, service agencies, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

relatively high incidence rate revealed in initial screenings, most participating organizations will likely continue to screen participants for domestic violence.

- **Develop partnerships that increase alignment and reduce duplication across systems and different types of organizations.** Organizational partnerships can improve supportive service delivery by increasing alignment between the local workforce development system, businesses, service agencies, community colleges, and community-based organizations. IWPR's Job Training Administrator Survey found that community colleges generally provide fewer services than other community-based training organizations, but for a few services (e.g., child care and mental health counseling) they provide more, suggesting that better integration across systems could help participants in both types of settings. One administrator argued that all entities involved in workforce development should be involved in making supportive services work for communities: "We have to understand how we are aligning our strategies with supports and how we are building a system of supports so that people can go to work."

  An example of such alignment across systems is the Safety Net Alliance of Northern Kentucky (which **Brighton Center** helped found and participates in), which brings together over 130 community organizations, public agencies, educational institutions, and funders to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of safety net services, while striving to avoid duplication of services (Safety Net Alliance 2016). The Safety Net Alliance holds monthly meetings where different service providers discuss the needs of the community, strategize about any emerging needs, discuss each organization's work and needs, and identify ways they can help other organizations fill service gaps. The Alliance also maintains an email listserv for member organizations, which allows groups to communicate between these monthly meetings. As a member of the Executive Committee of the Safety Net Alliance, Brighton Center both assists with the organization and operation of the Alliance and shares information and resources with partners. This free flow of information ensures that staff at Brighton Center can effectively refer participants to services they need and helps avoid a replication of services in the local community.

> … competition among organizations for funding and recognition can impede building fruitful alliances. One interviewee went on to note, however, that this challenge can be addressed through open and thoughtful communication: "You need to remember that you are a guest in someone else's house. Be humble, know your place, focus on the greater good, and have patience because change is slow."

While partnerships offer many benefits, establishing and maintaining them poses challenges as well. For example, interviewees noted that community networking and building collaborative relationships takes considerable time; for some organizations, it can be difficult to prioritize cultivating partnerships that may provide a longer-term payoff over meeting the direct and immediate needs of current program participants. Another challenge that several program leaders observed is that competition among organizations for funding and recognition can impede building fruitful alliances. One interviewee went on to note, however, that this challenge can be addressed through open and thoughtful communication: "You need to remember that you are a guest in someone else's house. Be humble, know your place, focus on the greater good, and have patience because change is slow."

Integrated Case Management: Helping Training Participants Navigate Across Systems

At most programs visited for this report, staff emphasized case management or career navigation as an essential support for ensuring that job training participants obtain the resources they need. Several program staff indicated that case management is most effective when an integrated approach is used, which allows individuals to work with a single case manager who helps them access all the services they need rather than multiple case managers who each connect them with different resources. One interviewee described case management as the "silver bullet" of support service delivery; while the structure of case management varies across programs, the practice of working one-on-one with individuals to help them "troubleshoot their lives" is, according to those interviewed, perhaps the most important ingredient to job training success. Many job training providers strive to provide this support: in IWPR's online survey of program administrators, 60 percent report providing case management directly and 38 percent refer participants to a close partner for this service (Hess et al. 2016b).[1] The average caseload varied widely across these organizations, from 9 participants per case manager to more than 200.

Case managers can help participants access services in their communities and ensure that they have the support and resources needed to address personal challenges that may hinder program completion. When IWPR researchers asked trainees at one program what they do or who helps them out when they run into a problem that might interfere with their training, all pointed to their case manager and shared stories about her providing them with snacks, tools, gas cards, transit passes, or a bicycle. In one instance, the case manager reached out to a trainee who had to take a long absence for a personal issue, and together they figured out how he could return to the program and pick up where he had left off. The case manager said that touching base goes both ways—trainees "check in" with her just as she reaches out to them if they miss class or seem "off" in some way. A graduate of another program described the program staff helping her "figure out" the challenges she faced in her life, including deciding which child care provider was best for her and her child. She said that while she might have still finished the training if the program had not provided case management, without this service and the support of her classmates, she would not have found her voice or learned how to ensure that her needs were met.

> "For us, it means that individual relationship with the student. It's understanding what their individual barriers are—not just at the beginning at the intake, but throughout their program of study as they weave in and out."

Case management can have the added effect of creating a sense of accountability to the program that may increase persistence and completion among trainees. Having a primary point person who participants can go to for advice, support, and to access program resources may lead them to feel a greater sense of responsibility or commitment to their program. Program staff reported that the relationships that case managers establish with participants create bonds of accountability that enhance participants' chances of success within their programs, while participants stated that the case manager's commitment to them makes them want to show up and succeed, in part, because they do not want to let the case manager down.

[1] Administrators could select more than one option for how case management was provided: directly by their organization, by referral to a close partner, or by referral to another organization that is not a close partner.

During program visits, interviewees identified several strategies for providing effective case management or career navigation.

- **Assess needs and connect job training participants with a case manager or primary point of contact as soon as possible.** Each program strives to connect participants with a case manager or main contact person through a needs assessment or intake process as early as possible—often prior to the individual's enrollment in training. This enables the program to identify individuals who have obstacles they are unable to address themselves and connect them with appropriate services from other sources prior to starting the program. It also helps the case manager and trainee to begin forming a trusting relationship—which is essential to successful case management—early on. As a case manager explained, the greatest obstacle to completion for many students is often a random, unplanned setback such as losing access to a car or child care; the case manager's task is to help the student access whatever services they need to complete the training. When a trusting relationship with a case manager has been established, participants are more likely to disclose their needs, making it easier for programs to meet them.

- **Provide trainees with tools to navigate systems on their own.** Several program leaders interviewed for this report emphasized that a key role of an effective case manager is to help job training participants learn to navigate systems on their own, since they will need to do so once the training has ended. One administrator said that "part of being self-sufficient is learning how to navigate those systems and figuring out if someone says 'no' to you, how do you still get your need met and how do you not give up." Case managers with knowledge of local systems and processes can lessen the burden of navigating these systems on participants by providing clear information to help make sense of them. Without access to this information, it could be difficult for participants to navigate local support systems.

- **Incorporate career planning into case management.** In addition to helping participants with supportive services while they are in training, case managers often help participants with job placement and longer-term career planning. At some organizations, the title for those who provide case management reveals an orientation toward employment; for example, **Seattle Jobs Initiative** provides case management through "Career Navigators" and **JVS Boston** through "Career Coaches." At **JVS Boston**, no matter what the level of skills or experience a student has, or what current level of training they are receiving, case managers encourage them to envision their next step in terms of employment, until they have reached a living-wage job. As an administrator described it, the goal is to "get in [to a job] and then ladder up." After students are placed in a job, their career coach maintains regular contact—if the student loses their job, needs a second job, or is ready to gain skills for a better job, they are encouraged to come back to JVS for more training. At **Seattle Jobs Initiative,** which focuses on career pathways that lead to better-paying jobs, career navigators serve primarily as a coach and a "connector"; they work with job training participants to navigate the college system, develop a career planning document, identify the obstacles to fulfilling those career plans, and then access the supports to overcome these obstacles.

Integrating Group Sessions into the Service Delivery Model

Some of the organizations in this study have developed a model for supportive service delivery that combines services delivered in both individual and group settings. Two of the programs IWPR visited, **Building Futures** and **Climb Wyoming**, invite legal experts to advise the group on issues

such as record expungement or child custody. At **VIDA**, students have a private individual session with their case manager once a month to discuss their progress in the program and to share any challenges they are facing; three times a month VIDA participants meet as a group to learn life skills, develop employability skills such as building their resumes, participate in mock interviews, and receive financial literacy education. Similarly, at **Climb Wyoming**, at least one day a week for the 12 weeks of training is set aside as a "Climb Day" that includes a mix of individual and group activities. During this day, participants come together to discuss challenges and successes in their training programs and participate in parenting classes; they also hold one-on-one meetings with a mental health professional who helps them identify themes or patterns of behavior that may prevent success in training or on the job (e.g., lack of sleep or eating) and, if necessary, make referrals to long-term therapy. This structure ensures that participants both receive assistance targeted to their specific needs and benefit from interaction with others in their program.

The programs described several strategies for increasing access to supports by integrating group work into the service delivery model.

- **Provide structured opportunities for resource-sharing among a cohort.** Integrating group sessions into the service delivery model provides an opportunity for job training participants to share knowledge and resources. A **Seattle Jobs Initiative** trainee, for example, said that he preferred SJI to a college program he had been enrolled in because the students stay the same and they can help each other out; for example, if one student is struggling to master a particular skill, another will stay around after class to help him practice it. Similarly, at a "**Climb** Day" observed by IWPR researchers, women who were completing training to receive a commercial driver's license offered each other advice on how to maneuver difficult turns and shared information about resources available in their community, and a graduate stopped by over lunch to share tips for getting by in a male-dominated job and handling long-haul driving. Over the course of the one-year pre-apprenticeship, **Building Futures** students may share rides, help each other with car repairs, or provide temporary housing to one another.

> "The group just has this connection with one another. Part of the reason they're successful in the training is because they have their peers kind of pushing them."

- **Encourage a sense of connectedness and accountability**. Program leaders also noted that the group sessions create a bond among participants that can make it difficult for one participant to stop attending the program or drop out without being noticed. At **Climb Wyoming**, an administrator described a lengthy process of working with a training provider, who typically provided one-on-one training, to develop a strategy so that the Climb women could receive training as a group and could set aside one day each week to receive services at the Climb office. As the administrator described it, "There is a lot of support that they provide each other in a group. If they were just doing it individually, I think a lot of them would have given up, or felt like 'I can't do this, I'm not having success.'" From the start of their training, Climb staff encourage the women to reach out to each other if one of them misses class or seems to be struggling

> "There is a lot of support that [the participants] provide each other in a group. If they were just doing it individually, I think a lot of them would have given up, or felt like 'I can't do this, I'm not having success.'"

to check in and ask why. On the day IWPR visited, three of the women were absent; unprompted, the other women indicated that they would get in touch with their missing classmates. Similarly, several of the women had not passed the driving test on their first try; although they were discouraged, feeling that they had failed and wanting to walk away, the other moms, some of whom had also failed, assured them that they were all going to succeed in the end, and they would get through it together.

A graduate of one of the programs interviewed for this report said that in the training, she and her classmates "created relationships where we could support each other, where if somebody's car broke down, there were eight other [participants] who said, 'I'll pick you up.' We had [participants who] were struggling with this or that, and being able to help each other find those support services too was really a big thing…[it] was just awesome." More than two years after graduating, the trainees in this cohort continue to actively keep in touch with and support each other.

III. Addressing Key Unmet Needs in Supportive Services for Job Training Participants

The programs in this study employ the strategies described above to expand access to services that can address participants' unmet needs. In general, experts in the workforce development field maintain that though supportive services are essential to job training success, they are typically in short supply (Gault, Reichlin, and Román 2014; Hess et al. 2016a, Maxwell et al. 2012). Many job training participants do not receive the full range of services they need, although the specific nature of their unmet needs may vary across population groups, geographic location, and type of program (Hess et al. 2016b). For example, people training for construction or manufacturing jobs may need a reliable way to get to job sites that are not accessible by public transportation, parents may need help to find and pay for child care that they are comfortable with and can easily get to, low-income participants may need food and clothing, and those who have experienced trauma or extreme stress may need mental health services to help them achieve the stability needed to complete training.

While there are many supportive services that help job training participants complete their programs, this section focuses on five that are identified as often unmet needs in IWPR's research and that the programs visited for this study provide: child care assistance, financial assistance, transportation assistance, mental health counseling, and domestic violence services. Programs can and do provide many other supportive services—such as housing assistance and substance abuse counseling—that may be equally valuable for some participants.[2] The services described below do not represent the full spectrum of possibilities, but rather provide some examples of ways that organizations are striving to help meet some of the most pressing needs. In many instances, the strategies described above—building strong partnerships, implementing integrated case management, and integrating group work into service delivery—inform the provision of these services and enable organizations to expand their reach and impact.

[2] One of the programs IWPR visited, Brighton Center, provides affordable housing but since this would be difficult for others to replicate is not included in this report.

Child Care

Child care is a critical service to allow parents to maintain enrollment and succeed in job training, especially for women, who provide a large share of dependent care in most families (Pew Research Center 2015). In IWPR's Survey of Job Training Administrators, child care assistance was reported as the greatest unmet need for women participating in job training programs—66 percent of administrators identified it as among the five greatest needs for women (and about 21 percent identified it as one of the greatest needs for men; Hess et al. 2016b). Over half of program administrators surveyed (55 percent) indicated that they would like to provide more child care assistance than they do. During site visits, however, administrators noted that child care assistance is one of the most difficult supports to provide, due in part to the high cost of offering this service.

The programs visited for this study help participants with their child care needs in a variety of ways.

- **Specialized assistance to find appropriate child care. Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI)** has a staff member who is responsible for providing participants with information and referrals for child care. Especially in large urban areas, where there can be many child care providers, having one individual who has thorough and up-to-date knowledge of providers in the area and the processes and eligibility for subsidies can be critical. SJI partners with a child resource program to provide a child care coordinator for their participants. As the Seattle child care coordinator described it, securing child care can be overwhelming to participants and their families, and lack of affordable child care can be a significant obstacle; she provides support, advocacy, and often makes introductions and accompanies parents on visits to potential child care providers: "I help participants who have kids find and stabilize child care and then that helps them focus on school, and go to work, and do job search and all of that." Whenever participants encounter a child care challenge, they can go directly to the staff person in charge of child care for access to information and resources.

  > "I help participants who have kids find and stabilize child care and then that helps them focus on school, and go to work, and do job search and all of that."

  In Wyoming, **Climb** staff help the mothers decide what is important to them in terms of child care and find a child care arrangement that meets their needs. This may involve helping the mothers determine whether they prefer care in a home or a child care center, and whether it would be better if the care were located near their home or near their job—as well as deciding what questions they should ask when evaluating a child care provider, like whether the provider is licensed.

- **Assistance paying for child care.** Programs may help participants pay for child care by assisting them with the application for public child care assistance, providing them with subsidies directly, or filling in the gaps between public assistance received and participants' unmet needs or costs. **VIDA**, for example, connects participants to the local workforce board that provides child care subsidies. However, if the co-payments on these subsidies are too expensive for participants, or if the workforce board is not able to provide participants with enough assistance, VIDA provides participants with direct financial assistance. Administrators also noted that many of their students prefer to have family members provide child care, which the workforce development board cannot subsidize. In those cases, VIDA pays the family member a subsidy to provide child care.

- **Providing child care directly.** Providing onsite child care is another way programs can help meet participants' needs. The **YWCA of Greater Cincinnati**, for example, has an onsite child care facility that can be used by YWCA job training participants as well as program staff and the general public. While onsite child care can provide a convenient and safe child care solution for participants that works with training schedules, the costs of providing this care may be out of reach for many programs. In addition, programs offering this care may encounter other issues, such as the challenge of ensuring that the center remains well-used even when it is not located close to many participants' homes or when affordable transportation for the children to and from the center is not available.

Financial Assistance

Financial issues are a significant obstacle for many job training participants. IWPR's survey of job training administrators found that financial education and counseling is the most frequently offered supportive service provided directly to participants by the job training programs surveyed, yet respondents ranked financial considerations as the most common reason for noncompletion (Hess et al. 2016b). Programs can support job training participants financially in multiple ways, including by providing participants with emergency cash, needed material goods, and financial education and counseling.

> "One [participant] may need more books. They get a book allowance with their Pell but it doesn't cover as much as anyone may think. For another it may be child care because the single mom, she has these other bases covered, but they need child care. And then there's the one . . . who has to go to the other end of the valley to go to school so that one might need a stipend for transportation. So it's the combination and it's based on the individual assessment of need."

- **Offering emergency cash assistance**. Emergency cash assistance provides a vital support for some job training participants, yet in the IWPR Job Training Administrator Survey respondents identified it as the second most common unmet service need for both women and men. Only about one in four programs (28 percent) provide this support, and 55 percent say they would like to expand emergency cash assistance to help their participants maintain stability in their lives when unexpected situations occur, such as a need to pay for car or bike repairs or contend with a health emergency or unanticipated child care need (Hess et al 2016b).

  One of the programs IWPR visited, **Raise the Floor**, connects participants with partners to provide comprehensive supports, helps participants apply for public assistance, and then covers unmet costs of supports through emergency cash assistance. As a small organization, Raise the Floor does not have the capacity to provide many services directly, but the financial assistance the program offers, combined with case management and referrals, enables participants to access services that meet many of their needs. In an emergency situation, all participants can go to the case manager who, for anything $50 or less, can give gas cards, food vouchers, or cash assistance to meet a need as it arises. Any need that exceeds $50 requires that the participant and case manager submit a confidential letter of intent, detailing the participant's need and academic status, to a committee at Gateway Community and Technical College for approval. Once approved, the funds usually come with

a time limit, giving the participant time to outline a long-term plan with the case manager to address the need for support.

For some services, Raise the Floor has established requirements on participants' use of assistance; for example, emergency assistance for child care can only be used at child care centers and family child care homes that are designated as a quality care provider by Community Coordinated Child Care.

- **Assistance obtaining material goods.** According to IWPR's survey of job training administrators, nearly half of job training programs (46 percent) assist participants with obtaining clothing or shoes (Hess et al. 2016b). Several of the programs IWPR visited were committed to ensuring that their participants incurred no costs related to their training, so the program provides tangible goods. At **Seattle Jobs Initiative**, for example, trainees are provided with tools, uniforms, and specialized safety gear; a Career Navigator mentioned that for those in manufacturing and auto trades training, the required tools can be numerous and expensive, but are critical so trainees can practice their new skills. **VIDA**, which provides case management and financial assistance to college students, has flexibility to help students with a variety of expenses, such as curriculum-based, program-required expenses like tools, uniforms, and books. **Building Futures** provides all graduates with a gift of $250 upon graduation, which they can use to purchase the tools, clothes, and books they need for an apprenticeship or to pay for entrance fees.

- **Providing financial education and incentives**. In the IWPR Survey of Job Training Administrators, financial education was one of the services most commonly offered. Among the organizations IWPR visited, **Brighton Center** provides financial coaching, free tax preparation, and asset building tools such as Individual Development Accounts providing a 4:1 match for a total of $500 that can help trainees start saving money and address barriers that can affect retention. At **JVS Boston**, students can enroll in frequent financial education workshops on topics such as saving for retirement, growing savings, credit reports, money habits and spending plans, and taxes. A **JVS** program administrator pointed out that over the course of training, there may also be several "organic" moments—such as applying for financial aid, receiving a first paycheck, or filing taxes, when participants can receive one-on-one financial education. The **YWCA of Greater Cincinnati** has formalized a partnership with Cincinnati Works, a financial opportunity center, to provide YWCA clients with financial coaching. At **Building Futures,** students who take a small, no-interest loan have the opportunity to learn about and improve their credit score as they pay it back over a year.

Transportation Assistance

Job training participants need reliable and affordable transportation to attend and succeed in training, yet transportation costs can be prohibitive (U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration 2014) and, especially in rural areas, public transit may not be accessible. Transportation is "one of the critical pieces in ensuring that low and moderate income workers can connect to good quality jobs" (Aspen Institute 2014); many low-income workers, however, must choose between lengthy commutes using public transportation or the high costs of owning a car and driving to work. In the IWPR Job Training Administrator Survey, transportation assistance was the fourth most common unmet need for female and male participants of job training programs, although transportation needs vary by location, the population served, and other factors. The

programs highlighted in this report implement several strategies for ensuring that their participants are able to get to and from their training sessions.

- **Developing community partnerships to offer affordable means of transportation.** In Laramie, **Climb Wyoming** staff have developed relationships with a bike shop near their office that helps with bike rentals, offers free or inexpensive bikes, or does repairs or maintenance, and with an auto body repair shop that will do free or reduced-cost repairs so that their participants' cars will not fail an inspection or get ticketed. Other programs IWPR visited have partnered with the area transit authority to provide participants with free public transportation.

- **Helping participants afford the cost of transportation**. At **Building Futures**, many of the participants who enter the program have had their driver's licenses suspended in the past for various reasons. To help improve their access to transportation, Building Futures offers small, no-interest loans for the fees needed to get or renew a driver's license, or for a car repair or purchase. Students repay the loan, which is funded by Building Futures, within one year and are able to build up their credit score. Administrators reported that, though only a small percentage of participants request a loan, for some it can be a critical way of maintaining stable attendance and staying in the program.

- **Providing emergency cash assistance**. As noted, emergency cash assistance can be used to meet a range of support needs. **Seattle Jobs Initiative** provides participants with bus cards or gas cards when necessary, but also gives emergency cash assistance to those who need help with one-time expenses such as paying for car repairs or purchasing a bike. Career navigators at SJI reported that being able to provide participants with this form of flexible, emergency cash assistance has allowed multiple clients to continue attending classes when they otherwise would not have been able to do so.

Mental Health Services

Many adults experience mental health challenges that can make it difficult to complete training. In the United States, women report having an average of 4.3 days of poor mental health per month and men report having an average of 3.3 days (Hess et al. 2015). Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression can threaten students' academic success (American College Health Association 2015), suggesting that counseling and other mental health services can play an important in role in helping individuals succeed in training and education.

Respondents to the IWPR Job Training Administrator Survey identify mental health counseling as the fifth most common unmet need for women enrolled in job training and the third for men; 46 percent said they would like to provide more mental health counseling to their job training participants (Hess et al. 2016b). Several of the organizations visited for this study help their participants access mental health services from other sources, and one of the programs directly provides mental health services to job training participants.

- **Gather information about mental health needs during intake or early in the program.** Because unaddressed mental health issues may present a serious challenge for those enrolled in job training, several programs mentioned that they attempt to identify mental health needs as soon as possible. In some cases, programs provide a referral to a mental health provider and defer enrollment in training until the participant is receiving counseling. More than one administrator mentioned that participants are often reluctant to

disclose mental health issues until they have become more familiar with and trusting of program staff, at which point they are referred to a provider.

- **Identify an appropriate mental health provider and make an introduction**. Ideally, staff at the job training program are familiar with mental health providers in their area and know which ones are well-suited to work with their clients, which may entail, among other considerations, determining which providers accept individuals without health insurance (as one program noted, providing referrals for long-term therapy can be difficult for clients without insurance). Because trainees may be hesitant to disclose mental health issues, administrators at one program described the value of a "warm hand-off," where they match the individual with a provider and make introductions to facilitate the referral.

- **Provide mental health services onsite.** For one of the programs IWPR visited, **Climb Wyoming**, mental health services are a core element of programming that is provided to all job training participants. Climb provides group counseling weekly and individual counseling every other week. Administrators report that group sessions foster bonds among participants and develop their conflict-resolution skills, and individual counseling improves their self-esteem and helps them address personal challenges they may be experiencing. Staff emphasized that the counseling provided by the Climb mental health professional during training focused on addressing issues and improving skills that will help the women to maintain employment; if a participant has experienced trauma or requires longer-term counseling, they are matched with an outside provider. Climb staff believe that mental health services are extremely important to participants not only in helping them to finish job training, but also to sustain employment after graduation.

Domestic Violence Services

Over one quarter of women (27.3 percent) and 11.5 percent of men in the United States experience sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime (Breiding et al. 2014). Survivors of violence often experience short- and long-term negative effects on their overall well-being, including their health and economic security. In particular, research indicates that intimate partner violence (IPV) can impede job training participants' ability to enroll in and complete programs, due to partners who are either not supportive of educational pursuits or who actively impede participation in education or training (Brush 2000; Curcio 1997).

IWPR's Survey of Job Training Administrators found that 32 percent of those surveyed identified domestic violence services as one of the five greatest unmet needs for women in their job training programs (Hess et al. 2016b). A range of services for domestic violence survivors—including legal assistance, counseling, and ongoing safety planning—can help them to remain safe (McKean 2004) and may help prevent interruptions in training. Throughout expert interviews and site visits, however, interviewees noted that few job training programs have the capacity or expertise to provide survivors with supportive services, though some work with partner organizations to address this need. Several practices emerged that can increase disclosure of violence and access to appropriate resources.

- **Train staff to screen for domestic violence.** As noted above, to better understand the prevalence of intimate partner violence among job training participants in their region, five community-based organizations in the greater Cincinnati area partnered. Staff at the participating organizations received training from the **YWCA of Greater Cincinnati**, one of the primary providers of domestic violence services in their area, on how to provide sensitive and trauma-informed screening and the appropriate responses and resources when abuse is disclosed (Partners for a Competitive Workforce 2016). Screeners are trained to acknowledge survivors strengths, validate their experiences, affirm potential hardships, offer viable resources and options, and provide affirming messages without promising that everything will be okay. The YWCA offers specific screening questions that both directly and indirectly assess abuse, such as "Are you or have you been emotionally or physically abused by your partner or someone important to you?" (direct) and "Do you have anyone in your life who is unhappy or upset about your return to school /work?" (indirect). Participants who disclosed abuse are offered resources and referrals to the local domestic violence program. The training also seeks to raise awareness of other factors that may contribute to a positive screening environment, such as the importance of matching the gender of the screener and client and conducting interviews in a context where the participant feels comfortable and safe (Partners for a Competitive Workforce 2016).

  > "There's a little bit of resistance [but the training has improved] the comfort level of staff . . . Let's not fear the discussion, let's identify the issue and make sure our folks have connections."

  Participants in the initiative say that the greatest challenge was getting staff comfortable with opening up the conversation. One person interviewed said, "There's a little bit of resistance [but the training has improved] the comfort level of staff, recognizing that they're not positioned as clinicians around it, what their role is, when is the appropriate time to make the hand-off, but let's not fear the discussion, let's identify the issue and make sure our folks have connections." The organizations have also been attuned to when in the training process the likelihood of violence increases (during enrollment, completion, job placement) so they can be prepared to proactively help survivors.

- **Build partnerships with local organizations that have extensive experience working with domestic violence survivors.** Because domestic violence survivors may need mental health counseling, help establishing safety plans, legal advice, and other specialized supports, many job training programs partner with local domestic violence service organizations and refer participants to those organizations. At one program IWPR visited, if a participant is experiencing abuse, staff may accompany the individual to a local domestic violence service provider.

- **Provide in-house domestic violence services**. As the main provider of services for survivors of domestic violence in the county, the **YWCA of Greater Cincinnati** is in a relatively unusual position in that they screen their clients enrolled in job training program for domestic violence experiences at intake, and can then directly provide domestic violence services. The organization offers crisis line assistance and shelter services, transitional housing assistance, court advocacy, batterers' intervention services, a sexual assault hotline, and other services.

IV. Strategies to Enhance Funding for Supportive Services

While the strategies and practices outlined above help meet the supportive service needs of job training participants, programs cannot implement these approaches without adequate funding. Given that funding is often scarce and supportive services can be expensive to provide, IWPR asked each program interviewed to share their strategies for leveraging existing resources and securing new funding streams to maximize supportive service provision. Many reported that their most effective cost-saving strategy is to avoid duplication in services and make use of the resources that are already available in their communities. As one program administrator put it, "My philosophy is, 'Can we find someone else to pay for it?'" When organizations do need to provide services directly, there are multiple strategies for increasing their reach, including working with partners to secure grants and access services, "braiding" or combining funding from several sources, and taking full advantage of underutilized sources of funding, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) funds.

> The most cost effective strategy is to avoid duplicating services by using resources already available in the community.

Partnerships to Increase Funding

- **Partnering to secure grants.** Partnerships can not only improve the delivery of supportive services, but may also be a useful and often necessary strategy to increase and leverage funding. One interviewee noted that many workforce development funders increasingly require applicants to include plans for partnerships and collaborations in grant proposals, and programs have a better chance at receiving funds if they show evidence of past successful partnerships and highlight how partnerships will continue to function in the future. One workforce development council interviewed as a part of IWPR's study reported that one of the ways they seek to help job training programs is to identify and convene potential partners for grant opportunities, which they hope will help bring more funds into the system and reduce the sense of competition for funding among stakeholders.

Coordinating Funding across Sources

- **Covering support costs by combining funding sources**. Another strategy to leverage existing funds is to identify and combine (or "braid") funding from multiple sources, which a program administrator described as a "constant, logistical dance." Job training programs can coordinate state, federal, and private funding streams to offer individuals supportive services that they would not otherwise be able to provide (Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). One program administrator explained that braiding funding in their state has allowed for a much more comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness because the state is able to combine resources from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), SNAP, and other sources. The administrator said, "Behind the scenes it's a managing logistical nightmare, but to the families it's a game changer…"

  Most programs in this study report working with participants one-on-one to strategize how programs can fill the gaps in the supports participants may already be receiving, such as Pell Grants, to ensure that they have enough support to succeed in training. One program

administrator said, "We don't pay 100 percent of anything. It's braiding the funding that they [the participants] have and that we have. It's figuring out what all is available." Another described their organization as the "funder of last resort," meaning they attempt to identify another source to cover any support service costs, and only cover what others cannot.

VIDA, for example**,** described the ways in which it supplements child care subsidies from the local workforce board. The workforce board covers child care costs for students, but there is a co-pay that is too costly for some VIDA students, and the workforce board sometimes runs out of funds for child care; in those cases, VIDA will cover the cost of the co-pay (which can sometimes be up to $40 to $100 per month) or, when workforce board funds run out, will cover the entire cost. The cost of child care provided by family members, which many VIDA students prefer, is not an allowable expense for the workforce board, but VIDA gives the family member a subsidy for the care work they provide while the student is in class.

> "It's bringing together those financial resources, braiding resources available in the community. The philosophy is to provide the wraparound services to get them to the finish line, and to do so in a cost-effective, timely manner."

Due to variations in administrative requirements, eligible populations, timeframes, and accountability expectations, as well as limitations on how different funding streams may be used, strategic coordination is necessary to successfully employ this funding strategy (Center for Law and Social Policy 2015). For these reasons, outside assistance can sometimes be helpful. One workforce development council explained that a key service they offer job training programs is assistance and guidance to help them pool together funding streams and use them most efficiently.

Making Use of Underutilized Funding Sources, Such As SNAP E&T

- **Taking full advantage of available resources for supports.** Interviewees noted that there are potentially untapped or underutilized funding sources that could help cover the costs of supportive services for job training participants. One such resource is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program. SNAP E&T provides several kinds of grants including 50 percent reimbursement grants, which are uncapped federal funds that reimburse states for up to half of certain SNAP E&T program costs that are not federally funded, including supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2016). States can leverage 50-50 funds to help SNAP participants get employment and training services and to provide a range of supportive services through partnerships with community colleges and community-based organizations. Experts interviewed for IWPR's project said that the underutilization of SNAP E&T funds may due to lack of awareness or understanding of 50-50 funds and/or an inability to afford the 50 percent of program costs required to pay for the services that individuals need to participate in SNAP E&T programs. Partnerships with third parties such as employers, community-based organizations, and philanthropic organizations can allow programs to overcome financial limitations and maximize 50-50 funds to provide supportive services (Lower-Basch 2014; National Skills Coalition 2015).

  Seattle Jobs Initiative played a leading role in helping Washington State to develop a SNAP E&T program, which program leaders noted has allowed job training programs and

community colleges to substantially expand their training and support services. Between the program's beginning in 2005 through 2015, SNAP E&T funding in the state increased from 1.4 million to 36 million dollars. The state's Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program is a third-party match SNAP E&T program, in which all of Washington's 34 community and technical colleges as well as over 30 community organizations provide services and receive reimbursement funds. Washington's federal 50 percent reimbursement funds are used by community colleges to support tuition, student fees, books, program administration, and supportive services (National Skills Coalition 2015). They are used by community-based organizations to support English as a Second Language (ESL) training, job readiness training, case management, and more.

V. Increasing Access to Supports in Workforce Development Programs: Strengthening Investments in Essential Services

Workforce development experts and practitioners agree that supportive services are critical to job training success. Especially for low-income adults, financial and logistical challenges can make it difficult to complete training. Many job training programs in the United States, however, do not have sufficient funding, expertise, staffing, or facilities to directly provide all the supportive services their participants may need. This reality requires that programs strategically invest in delivery mechanisms and supports that make the greatest difference to the individuals they serve.

The eight job training programs profiled in this report provide examples of how programs work within the typical constraints to help participants access supportive services that address key unmet needs. Their strategies include partnering with local organizations, implementing integrated case management, encouraging information-sharing and community-building among cohorts, and finding creative approaches to fund supportive services, such as partnering with other organizations on grant applications, combining funds from multiple sources, and seeking out underutilized sources of funding.

Even programs that prioritize supportive service provision and implement these strategies, however, may still struggle to fully meet participants' needs. Challenges such as restrictions on how funding can be used, the limited nature of funding overall, and, in some cases, the lack of an area partner to provide a service may leave organizations with few options for addressing some of their clients' most pressing needs. These challenges suggest that expanding access to supportive services for job training participants requires not only commitment and innovation on the part of training and social service providers, but also broader changes that increase investments in supportive services for individuals in training and education, particularly for those with high needs.

Changes to investments in supports could take several different forms. First, policy changes that align and potentially target federal and state resources for low-income populations in job training could improve access to supportive services and enable more women and men to enroll in and complete training (for a discussion of some opportunities to improve alignment, see Hess et al. 2016a). In addition, changes that increase flexibility in how funding is used can enable programs to "do more with less" and tailor their provision of supportive services to address the specific needs of each individual they serve. Given the limited nature of many sources of public funding, however, it is also vital for philanthropy to increase investments in supportive services for participants in job

training and education. By recognizing the importance of these services to facilitating job training success and supporting organizations that provide supports to participants in training and education, philanthropists can help ensure that more American workers acquire the skills needed to obtain higher-quality jobs and advance in the workforce.

These public and private investments must support a range of approaches to service delivery; as several programs profiled in this report noted, the needs of individuals in job training differ according to the specific circumstances of their lives and the contexts in which their training takes place. To date, however, few studies have explored which services make the greatest difference for particular population groups, and programs themselves often do not collect data to assess the impact of specific supports on program outcomes, due in part to challenges they face in data collection that limit the usefulness of data for organizations' internal monitoring and goal setting (Hess et al. 2016b). One organization in this study that received a grant to focus on data collection has made a concerted effort to develop a more robust data tracking system that allows them to use data to track and evaluate supportive service provision; investments in similar efforts could allow workforce development programs to assess the impact of their supports on program outcomes and further refine their service delivery models to increase job training success.

The strategies and practices outlined in this report provide examples of some approaches that have already proven useful for addressing key unmet needs and that may provide models for other programs with similar challenges and goals. Increasing investments in supportive services would allow the replication of such models and the development of new approaches that are integral to job training success.

Appendix A. Experts Interviewed

Lucy Crane
Director, Community Impact
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Meghan Cummings
Executive Director
The Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation

Linda Dworak
Consultant
Workforce Development Affinity Group
Association of Baltimore Grantmakers

Dot Fallihee
Chief Program Officer
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

Gerri Fiala
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor

Allison Gerber
Senior Associate
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Bob Giloth, Ph.D.
Vice President
Center for Community and Economic Opportunity
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Rachel Gragg, Ph.D.
SNAP Office of Employment and Training
Food and Nutrition Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Eileen Hopkins
Director, Education and Training
YWCA of Greater Cincinnati

Christina Hubbard
Associate Director, Adult Career Pathways Program
Northern Virginia Community College

James Jacobs, Ph.D.
President
Macomb Community College

Kevin Jordan
Vice President for National Programs
Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)

Marty Miles
Workforce Development Consultant
Workforce Benchmarking Initiative

Darlene Miller
Executive Director
National Council for Workforce Education

Jack Mills
Chief Workforce Strategy Officer and Director
National Network of Sector Partners
Insight Center for Community Economic Development

Frieda Molina
Deputy Director of Low-Wage Workers and Communities Policy
MDRC

Robert Sainz
Assistant General Manager of Operations
Economic and Workforce Development Department
City of Los Angeles

Paula Sammons
Program Officer
Family Economic Security
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Carissa Schutzman
Vice President of Corporate College
Gateway Community and Technical College

Whitney Smith
Senior Program Director
The Joyce Foundation

Cindy Taylor
Vice President of Social and Economic Policy
Abt Associates

Jim Torrens
Associate Director
Workforce Innovation and the National Network of Sector Partners

Janice Urbanik
Executive Director
Partners for a Competitive Workforce

Che Watkins
President & CEO
The Center for Working Families, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)

Wonda Winkler
Executive Vice President
Brighton Center

Eileen Poe-Yamagata
Managing Director, Principal Associate Labor and Human Services
IMPAQ International

Appendix B. Criteria for Program Selection

The programs highlighted in this report—which provide or support participants in different types of training across diverse regions of the country—were identified by experts in the field, through IWPR's Survey of Program Administrators conducted between March and May 2016, or through an online program scan. Twelve programs identified through this work as providing a range of supportive services to job training participants were interviewed by phone; eight were selected for site visits that were conducted in person, except for one done by Skype. During these visits, IWPR researchers interviewed program leaders and staff, and in some cases observed a program in action or spoke with current program participants or graduates. In general, IWPR chose programs that:

1. Provide occupational skills training for quality jobs, focusing on training that lasts less than two years, or function as an intermediary that helps to ensure individuals are trained for quality jobs meeting local employment demands

2. Offer a range of support services, including services that address one or more key unmet needs

3. Serve an average of at least 30 individuals per program year or 10 individuals per program

4. Show evidence of positive program and employment outcomes for program participants (such as having published an evaluation study, having collected data showing positive outcomes, or having been recommended by experts in the field)

5. Use at least one of the following service delivery models or strategies: bundled service delivery, organizational partnerships, direct service provision, or case management

6. Show evidence of program sustainability (such as by having been in existence for many years, having promising sustainability data in its annual report, or having diverse sources of funding)

7. Show evidence of cost-effectiveness and replicability in providing support services (such as by training other programs on its model, or using available sources of funding effectively)

8. Has not been profiled extensively in workforce development research

In addition, IWPR sought to ensure diversity in the programs selected by considering geographic location, racial/ethnic and gender diversity in populations served, diversity in size and scale of programs (number of participants, training programs, and/or sites), and diversity in program settings (including at least one community college). Consideration was also given to ensuring that a variety of service delivery models and supportive services were offered and that there was variety in industry focus, with the goal of having at least one program that trained women for nontraditional occupations. While there are other programs that provide more services than many programs featured here, IWPR chose to focus on programs that offer examples of service provision that may be attainable for average organizations.

Appendix C. Program Profiles

Brighton Center (Kentucky)

Founded in 1966, Brighton Center's mission is "To create opportunities for individuals and families to reach self-sufficiency through family support services, education, employment, and leadership." To fulfill this mission, Brighton Center provides a wide range of programs and services to individuals and families, including adult and early childhood education, workforce development, substance abuse recovery for women, affordable housing, financial education and counseling, youth services, and neighborhood-based programs including affordable housing development. During the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year, Brighton Center served 49,850 individuals through 41 programs in the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati area (Brighton Center 2016a).

Brighton Center has three primary workforce development programs: Center for Employment Training, Step Up, and Career Connections. Together, these programs served 6,932 individuals during 2015-2016 (Brighton Center 2016b). The Center for Employment Training (CET) provides training for careers in medical assisting and business and computer technologies, combining technical skills instruction with success skills, adult education, and career coaching. The program is accredited through the Council on Occupation Education and is highly individualized and self-paced so that participants move through the curriculum as they are ready. Within this setup, students who have been in the program longer are encouraged to act as mentors to trainees just entering, empowering them to take on leadership roles while they learn. Brighton Center's CET has also served as a site for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) pilot, funded by the Social Innovation Funds, since 2011. As a part of this FOC, Brighton Center bundles three core services (employment, financial services, and work supports) for participating families. All training is free to program participants. In 2015-2016, 204 participants enrolled in CET. Step Up helps out-of-school youth aged 18-21 acquire their GED, develop workplace skills, and ultimately get a job or complete post-secondary education. Career Connections assists individuals who are unemployed or underemployed by providing job search workshops, individual career guidance, and assistance to obtain Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding for a high demand sector. Brighton Center reports that in 2015-2016, 6,609 individuals were served by this program.

Individuals enter Brighton Center's workforce development programs in a variety of ways. Some hear about the programs through word of mouth from friends and family who have gone through the program; some learn about the programs through flyers and other informational materials that are distributed throughout the community; some are referred to Brighton Center from other organizations; and some are already using Brighton Center for one (or more) of the many other services they provide. Brighton Center's service provision programs allow it to provide a range of supportive services directly to participants in their workforce development programs, including assistance obtaining public benefits, child care, housing, clothing, and transportation; emergency cash assistance; financial education; and substance abuse counseling. The flexibility of funding provided by United Way of Greater Cincinnati is core to this work and provides leverage or match funding often needed to secure other resources to address these barriers. Brighton Center also refers participants to other organizations for legal services, mental health counseling, and domestic violence services, among others.

One program administrator said that the key to Brighton's success is taking a "systems approach" to everything it does. Brighton does not provide its services in a vacuum, but rather works on creating

systemic change through collaboration with other local entities. To assist this work, Brighton Center regularly performs a comprehensive community assessment as a part its strategic planning process to help identify community needs and opportunities. The community assessment is an in-depth project that surveys families in the communities Brighton Center serves, Brighton Center staff and volunteers, and additional stakeholders and partner organizations; this information is then combined with publicly accessible demographic and other data to create a comprehensive picture of the communities participating in Brighton Center's programs. The assessment allows Brighton Center to check in with the broader community and see how its supports are helping, which programs may no longer be needed, and what issues need more attention for the whole community to thrive. Brighton Center uses the information from the assessment to modify and improve its existing programs as well as add new programs to address unmet needs.

According to staff, the "systems approach" that Brighton Center applies to all of its programs is also applied internally, as staff from across the different programs strive to provide integrated services for their customers in a seamless way. The different departments meet weekly to discuss trainees, their progress, and the challenges they might be facing and coordinate efforts to ensure that trainees are progressing and getting the support they need. Brighton Center administrators note that the organization remains committed to creating a work environment that reflects the core values of collaboration and commitment that guide Brighton's work. To help create this environment, staff time is set aside for employees to discuss the organization's mission, guiding philosophy, outcomes and results, and overarching values, which program administrators say helps to creates an empowering environment for employees and leadership that is then passed along to those who they serve.

Building Futures (Rhode Island)

Building Futures is a pre-apprenticeship program that began in 2007 with the mission to meet employer and industry need for skilled workers through the Registered Apprenticeship system, while creating family-sustaining career opportunities for low-income diverse residents of Rhode Island. Since 2007, Building Futures has primarily focused on the construction sector and has placed over 200 individuals in building trades' apprenticeships, 90 percent of whom are men. The program has a comprehensive assessment phase to evaluate a trainee's readiness and interest in a construction career as well as 200 hours of hands-on training in the skilled trades. In addition to basic construction skills, training includes "soft" skills such as workplace culture and expectations, financial education, contextualized math classes, and career exploration. Currently, about 40 individuals each year complete the training in two cycles; previous years had more cycles but a decline in the demand for construction led the organization to reduce the number of participants to ensure that the number of people being trained did not exceed the number who could be placed.

Administrators at the program report that it focuses equally on supply and demand for workers in the local construction industry. On the demand side of their work, Building Futures has an Apprentice Utilization Program through which they make the case to development project owners that it is in their interest to hire apprentices and boost the vitality of the future labor supply. Building Futures encourages projects to have targeted hire requirements that include 15 percent of labor force hours provided by apprentices, and provides a system to achieve these goals through bid documents, onsite progress meetings, monitoring, and reporting.

The organization's social mission is to support disadvantaged people through apprenticeship, which offers individuals an opportunity to learn while they earn, advance, and eventually achieve family-sustaining wages. All of Building Future's participants are low-income and, because

construction can be more open to those who have criminal records than some other industries, the organization is able to accept those who have been incarcerated. Building Futures' first-year employment retention for their graduates has been consistently around 94-95 percent, compared with drop-out rates that Building Futures estimates are about 50 percent for entry-level people who walk in off the street to become an apprentice in some of the trades.

Most people learn about the program through word of mouth from family, friends, and graduates. Staff also let community-based organizations, courts, and parole officers know when the training cycle is beginning. During the application process, prospective participants have an interview with program staff where they begin to discuss potential barriers or support needs. The case manager/services coordinator then meets one-on-one to do a barriers assessment, a survey that facilitates the conversation about the obstacles that might prevent program completion and how Building Futures might be able to help address them.

Building Futures helps participants access public benefits, transportation assistance in the form of bus passes and gas cards, food cards, financial education, emergency cash assistance, and small, no-interest loans. Program administrators say that the loans, which are available to current students and graduates, are especially important because construction work demands that people have a driver's license and a car; an added benefit is that the borrower's credit score improves as they pay back the loan. Staff also help participants, on an as-needed basis, to address workplace issues ranging from understanding the deductions from their paycheck to how to cope with an abrasive boss. For those placed in a trade apprenticeship, assistance with tools, work gear, and entrance fees is also provided.

Administrators from Building Futures shared that they intentionally work to build a sense of community with and among participants; staff share their cell phone numbers and call participants frequently. According to staff interviewed, the strong peer support among current participants as well as between current and past participants is one of the supports that participants find most valuable. To cultivate the alumni network, Building Futures holds an annual alumni gathering where they recognize those who have completed their apprenticeship and invite their union representatives; in addition, alumni often return to help with orientation or mentoring. Program graduates find each other on job sites and support each other; some graduates help each other to complete home repairs or projects. As an administrator described it, "Building Futures becomes the first family, first union." Building Futures also offers to be a resource to graduates for life, by providing a loan, helping a graduate connect with another type of supportive service, assisting with work related questions or concerns, or celebrating a life milestone.

Program leaders interviewed say that relationships between staff and other actors in the workforce development and social service systems in the area also enhance the quality of programming at Building Futures. Due to Rhode Island's small size, program staff are able to form personal relationships with stakeholders in the construction industry and social service community. These close-knit relationships and networks allow Building Futures to maintain positive relationships with service providers, employers, and other key stakeholders in the workforce development system. They also enable program staff to make referrals for services such as housing assistance, legal services, and mental health or substance abuse counseling. Because of their personal ties with staff at other community-based organizations, Building Futures staff say they do not feel the need to formally document partnerships or sign MOUs except when it is necessary to satisfy grant requirements: "It's not that it's not genuine [the partnership], it's just that we didn't need the piece of paper to prove it to each other."

Climb Wyoming

Climb Wyoming provides low-income single mothers with occupational skills training, including in nontraditional occupations such as truck driving, pipefitting, and HVAC. As of 2016, Climb Wyoming had six program locations and served about 145 single mothers each year in 12-week training programs. Climb Wyoming reports that over 90 percent of enrollees typically complete their programs.

Climb seeks to address the holistic needs of participants through a training and supportive service delivery model developed in 1986 at the request of the state government by two psychologists under the name of the Fleming Young Parent Program. This model takes a therapeutic, relationship-driven approach. At its core is the belief that learning to build healthy relationships (including effectively dealing with interpersonal conflict) and executive functioning skills are the keys to ensuring success in training and employment. These relationships and skills, Climb's program leaders believe, are most effectively developed through group work; as one administrator said, "When the resources can be brought to a group and the group works together to learn to use them, [trainees] can learn to function independently." To this end, Climb has a licensed mental health clinician on staff who is trained to work with groups, and much of the program's supportive service delivery, as well as its skills training, happens in a group setting.

This "group work" takes place during Climb Wyoming's one day per week designated as a "Climb Day" as well as the four days per week of training. As noted above, a typical Climb day starts with a meeting among all participants and program leaders where participants discuss the schedule for training, the progress and challenges participants are experiencing in training, and any supportive service needs that are surfacing. At this meeting, conflicts among participants sometimes arise, providing an opportunity for them to work with program staff to develop strong communication and conflict resolution skills. Climb days also include participating in group parenting classes and eating lunch together; in addition to these group activities, where the women share knowledge about available resources in the community and tips on how to succeed in training and on the job, participants meet individually with a mental health professional who helps them identify themes or patterns of behavior that may prevent success in training or on the job (e.g., lack of sleep or eating) and, if necessary, makes referrals to long-term therapy.

Climb's supportive service delivery model assumes that a reliable and predictable structure is critical to the success of their program participants. One program leader said that predictability is important for participants who are used to "a traumatic chaotic life…At a Climb Day, participants know exactly what is going to happen during the day. This predictability is helpful." She went on to say that one feature of its programming that Climb strives to ensure remains consistent and predictable is transparency and honest communication among its staff, and between staff and program participants: "The [women participating in the training] know that staff are not going to talk about them outside of staff meeting. When we make a call to help women [access services], we do it with them in the room. We do not talk about the program participants behind their back."

This emphasis on transparency and open communication is intended to encourage self-sufficiency and independence among program participants. One administrator explained, "We listen to what they have to say about themselves and their children and their needs… they decide what they need." If participants need financial assistance to pay for child care, transportation assistance, or have other needs, Climb staff will guide them through the process of applying for benefits or seeking help from appropriate sources. Climb Wyoming also provides several supportive services directly, including financial education, parenting classes, and peer support, and participants receive

referrals for child care assistance, emergency cash, health care, and substance abuse counseling, among other services. Climb staff begin getting input from participants about their supportive services needs very early in the process: prior to enrolling in the program, prospective participants attend an informational meeting to learn about the training opportunity and complete a detailed application. If there is interest in the program, interviews with program staff are scheduled at the informational meeting. As a part of the interview process, the participants' supportive service needs are discussed.

As a program operating in rural areas, Climb staff noted that they face particular opportunities and challenges in supportive service delivery due to their geographic location. One interviewee commented that on the one hand, in an area with a relatively small population, "everyone is connected," which makes it easier to know what resources are available in the community. At the same time, she continued, "All they have is all they have... [and sometimes] when you hit walls, there are some that you just can't crawl over." For example, in her area there is no homeless shelter, and medical and dental resources are limited. The lack of availability of certain resources in the community represents a challenge that can be difficult to overcome.

Climb staff emphasize that the key to its supportive service delivery model is the trusting relationships between participants and staff through which support needs are met. In the words of one administrator, "Change happens when there's a trusting relationship and we spend more time than I believe most programs do in really making sure that the relationship the women have with our staff is really, really therapeutic and nonjudgmental and a trusting relationship from the beginning…It allows them [the participants] to not only trust the environment but learn some of those skills that really make a difference with success on the job."

JVS Boston

Since the founding of the organization in 1938, JVS Boston has provided education, training, and employment to a population with a large share of immigrants and refugees. The organization's mission is to "Empower individuals from diverse communities to find employment and build careers." JVS Boston serves about 20,000 individuals in some capacity each year, about half of whom are foreign-born. Among the immigrants and refugees that JVS Boston serves, there is considerable variety in individuals' occupational and language skills and the challenges they face in the workforce.

Programming at JVS Boston offers a continuum of learning that includes English as a second language, an adult high school diploma program, a college preparation program, services for job seekers or career changers, and training to become a certified nursing assistant or pharmacy technician. It also includes career services for those with disabilities, veterans, refugees and asylees, and ex-offenders. Many individuals who receive services from JVS Boston wish to secure employment as soon as possible and accept low-quality jobs. The staff at JVS Boston encourage these clients to come back to JVS Boston when they are ready and able to get more skills training, advance in the workplace, and earn more money. For example, individuals may come to JVS Boston initially to receive language training, then return later to attain academic credentials.

Most refugees and immigrants who have been referred to JVS by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) are working with an ORR case manager who provides direct services to meet their needs. They are referred to JVS for employment programs, and most enroll in vocational English as a Second Language classes. A group intake at JVS is done every Friday, and a one-on-one appointment with a Career Coach scheduled for the following week. In some cases, the Career Coach will

determine that an individual is not yet employable because there is a major barrier, such as a mental health issue, that was not previously identified by the ORR case manager, a fact JVS attributes to ORR's massive caseloads and limited funding. In these instances, JVS does not enroll the person but lets them know that they can return to JVS at a later time. For those who are accepted into the program, the Career Coach works with various agencies to make sure they are getting all the supports they need and are entitled to, like cash assistance or child care vouchers. He or she also works with employers to maximize the number of program participants who are placed in jobs. Administrators report that lack of language proficiency and child care are generally the greatest obstacles its participants face to securing jobs, and these challenges influence the supportive services that JVS Boston provides. JVS Boston also directly provides participants with financial coaching/asset building, help obtaining public benefits, and transportation and child care assistance. For additional supports, such as housing, legal services, counseling, and domestic violence services, participants are referred to other organizations.

The staff at JVS also noted the importance of peer support to their participants. When IWPR visited JVS, the organization had recently moved into new office space that, unlike their old space, allowed students enrolled in various programs to intermingle or spend time together in a break room or study space, rather than simply coming for class and leaving immediately afterwards. Several staff brought up the impact of the move, which they felt was inspiring students who could see someone "just like them" who was seeking higher-leveling training or preparing to go to college. Staff members interviewed also recounted stories of students sharing advice about child care and other resources with each other.

Raise the Floor (Kentucky)

Launched in 2014, Raise the Floor recruits, trains, places, and supports women in manufacturing programs at Gateway Community and Technical College in Kentucky. The program initially included a Certified Production Technician course that leads to certification as a Manufacturing Skill Standards Council CPT—a national, industry-driven credential. Subsequently, Raise the Floor has expanded to support all women in manufacturing programs whether the women are pursuing short-term certificates or Associate's degrees.

Raise the Floor was first envisioned in 2012 at a time when manufacturing jobs were projected to grow significantly in Northern Kentucky. Leaders of the program saw the growth in the industry as an opportunity to improve the quality of women's employment by providing them with skills to succeed in the sector. According to Raise the Floor, out of the 77 students who have completed the program, 33 are now employed in manufacturing, 18 are working in in non-sector jobs, nine are pursuing full-time education, and 17 have disengaged or lost contact with the program.

Since many women do not consider manufacturing as a career option, the Raise the Floor program has worked to confront the misperception that women are not a good fit for manufacturing jobs. Raise the Floor is open to all women who will consider a career in manufacturing, but requires anyone interested in the program to attend an informational workshop before applying. The informational workshop is designed to ensure that potential participants have a full understanding of what a manufacturing job looks like and what it means to be a woman in manufacturing. Each workshop includes a full tour of a manufacturing company as well as an opportunity to sit down one-on-one with a woman who is a current participant in the Raise the Floor program.

Upon enrollment in Raise the Floor, participants do an in-depth intake with the Raise the Floor case manager, walking through what their everyday life is like for each and identifying any academic and

supportive service needs they may have. The case manager describes these sessions not unlike an initial therapy session, where each participant gets the time and space to talk about their lives and their needs. The length of the intake process to identify and address support needs depends on the circumstances of each participant. Once the initial process has been completed, the case manager continues to work closely with the participants to address any and all needs.

The Raise the Floor case manager helps participants connect with partner organizations to meet their comprehensive supportive service needs, including locating transportation, accessing child care, and applying for any applicable public assistance. If the costs are not fully covered, Raise the Floor fills any gaps using emergency cash assistance. Administrators at Raise the Floor emphasized that case management has been absolutely essential for ensuring that participants can succeed in training. The relationship between participants and the Raise the Floor case manager continues even after program completion. The Raise the Floor alumni participate in alumni events organized by the Raise the Floor staff and often keep in touch with the case manager, continuing to update her about their careers and lives. In addition, many of the women who have finished the program continue to interact with Raise the Floor in other ways, such as by speaking on panels for employers and community partners.

When they begin the program, Raise the Floor participants are given a program blueprint, a workbook where they can map their academic and life goals, planning the steps they think they will need to take to achieve these goals. This blueprint is used to assist them in staying on track academically and to help them monitor and address any obstacles that pop up along the way. The Raise the Floor participants meet three times a semester in a peer support group to discuss their lives and how they have changed, including the obstacles that have arisen and the successes they have achieved. The group acts as both a sounding board and support system as the women progress through the program.

Program administrators at Raise the Floor say that as a small, relatively new program in the local workforce development system recruiting women to train in a nontraditional occupation, one of their key ingredients to success has been the commitment of their governing committee to the program's success. The all-female governing committee includes local business leaders, philanthropic leaders, and key players in the workforce development system. Having the buy-in of these women has not only allowed Raise the Floor to access connections, funding, and job opportunities for the program participants, but also allowed them to continue to offer the much needed supportive service of child care to any participants who need it. The Women's Fund of Cincinnati, part of the governing committee and a Raise the Floor partner, reimburses any child care costs that Raise the Floor incurs, without which Raise the Floor would not be able to provide funds for their most needed supportive service.

Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) provides career and technical training to adults with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, with a mission to create opportunities for people to support themselves and their families through living-wage careers. SJI was launched in 1997 as a program of the city of Seattle's Office on Economic Development. In 2003, it became an independent nonprofit organization; today, SJI continues to function as a workforce development intermediary, working with community-based organizations, community colleges, employers, and local and federal government agencies. In 2015, SJI reported serving about 600 individuals.

Seattle Jobs Initiative partners with three primary community-based organizations (CBOs) that connect participants with occupational skills training in four sectors. Participants receive training through Seattle College District and other local colleges. Using a career pathways model, students are able to step in and out of training as they need, providing the flexibility to take breaks in training when they need to work full-time or take care of other responsibilities.

The CBO partners are responsible for recruiting students to the college system and staffing Career Navigators, "the face of SJI," who help job training participants build capacity to navigate the college system and create an individualized career planning document to identify and address the obstacles they face to achieving that plan. Career Navigators describe a process of triaging participants, wherein they identify the participant's career goals, timeline (for example, do they need immediate job placement or can they devote some time to training), any obstacles such as a criminal conviction that might be an impediment to employment in certain sectors, and supportive service needs, as well as develop soft skills to meet workplace expectations. In addition to the community college training staff and community-based service providers, Career Navigators also have robust relationships with local employers to ensure that job training participants are gaining the skills to meet their needs. Career Navigators regularly meet with employers, industry partners, and city government stakeholders to discuss workforce needs and skills gaps. Program administrators at Seattle Jobs Initiative emphasized that "smart partnerships" and relationships across the workforce development system and the local support service ecosystem are a key to the program's support service delivery model.

Seattle Jobs Initiative provides transportation assistance and assistance obtaining tools, equipment, and uniforms. Because securing child care can be a significant obstacle for parents, SJI also partners with a child care resource program to provide a dedicated child care coordinator who offers support, advocacy, and often makes introductions and accompanies parents on visits to potential child care providers. In addition to these direct supports, the Career Navigators provide participants with referrals for many other services, including financial education, help securing public benefits, housing assistance, legal services, and counseling. When IWPR researchers asked trainees who helps them out when something might interfere with their training, all of them pointed to their Career Navigator, who described her job as a combination of "checking in" with trainees, providing emotional support, and "helping people troubleshoot their lives." Clients can continue receiving help with supports for three months after their job placement.

Seattle Jobs Initiative is also committed to producing policy research and developing best practices to improve low-income adults' access to training and education. For example, SJI was part of a group of leaders from government, community colleges, and community-based organizations in Seattle that came together in 2004 to strategize about how to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) to more effectively prepare low-income and low-skill residents for better jobs (Kaz and Krauss 2014). The pilot program that the group developed, Washington's Basic Food Employment & Training program, has expanded from Seattle to the entire state, includes all of the state's community colleges, and has increased funding for occupational skills training and supportive services in the state substantially. Seattle Jobs Initiative was one of the original agencies involved in the pilot, subcontracting with agencies to provide wrap around supportive services to students and collecting data demonstrating that SNAP E &T was not duplicating other workforce development efforts and was more effectively serving those who were low-skilled and in need of more intensive services. Seattle Jobs Initiative has developed a toolkit for states to design and implement SNAP E&T programs and was selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services to develop SNAP to Skills, a technical assistance project to

help ten states to improve and expand their skills-based SNAP E&T programs (Seattle Jobs Initiative 2014; U.S. Department of Agriculture 2016).

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) (Texas)

VIDA provides a combination of financial assistance, intensive case management, and career counseling to help economically disadvantaged individuals complete education and training in high-demand occupations. Founded in 1995, VIDA's mission is "To formulate new institutional relationships in the Rio Grande Valley that simultaneously address employers' needs for skilled workers and link the area's unemployed and underemployed with high-skill, high-wage jobs identified in the region. The program provides job-training services to economically disadvantaged, unemployed, and underemployed adults with family responsibilities." To ensure that students are training for jobs that are in-demand in their region, VIDA regularly refines the occupational training it supports based on input from the economic development board and local employers (Copson, Gardiner, and Rolston 2014).

VIDA serves the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, an area with relatively high poverty levels and low levels of educational attainment (Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement 2014). According to program administrators, about 90 percent of VIDA participants are Hispanic and 60 percent of participants are women. In 2015, VIDA served over 700 adult full-time students attending area community colleges for training in business, education, health care, manufacturing, technology, and specialized trades. The majority of students are associate's degree candidates; others are in one-year certificate programs or completing a bachelor's degree. VIDA also operates a free 16-week College Preparatory Academy for their participants who test between tenth- and twelfth-grade level (Copson, Gardiner, and Rolston 2014). Staffed by developmental education instructors at two area colleges, the College Prep Academy helps participants pass state college entrance exams and gain placement directly into college credit courses, saving them from spending time and financial aid on remedial coursework.

The intake process includes an assessment of academic readiness, financial need, and, using one-on-one interviews, identifies barriers that may prevent full-time enrollment, which is a program requirement. VIDA provides each student with a career counselor/case manager for intensive case management and career counseling. Career counselors hold monthly one-on-one meetings on campus with students to discuss any academic, financial, or supportive service needs. Counselors also lead group sessions three times a month to provide soft skills training, time management lessons, and financial education, which administrators credit with developing a supportive social network among a cohort. From initial enrollment through program completion, VIDA offers financial assistance for tuition, books or other required materials, transportation costs, child care, licensing fees, and emergency assistance. Students receive referrals for many other supports including housing, counseling, and domestic violence services, among others. Administrators believe that their effectiveness can be attributed to coupling financial assistance with case managers dedicated to forming close relationships with participants, so that they can connect them with services that are tailored to their needs as they arise.

YWCA of Greater Cincinnati

The YWCA of Greater Cincinnati is a community-based organization that was founded in 1868 as the fifth association of the YWCA in the United States. Nationally, the YWCA has programs at more than 1,300 sites. The mission of the YWCA is to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. In 2013, 187 adults participated in job readiness

programs and 428 adults received workforce and literacy services at the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati Workforce Development (WD) program (YWCA of Greater Cincinnati 2015), with occupational skills training provided in hospitality and tourism. The YWCA WD serves high-needs individuals; many participants come to the program with minimal skills and need assistance with GED preparation and literacy. Participants, therefore, are often focused on getting a paying job as soon as possible, while at the same time mapping out a career pathway plan that will lead to better job advancement and increased economic security.

The YWCA of Greater Cincinnati WD directly provides supportive services, including child care assistance and onsite child care center, financial education, services for survivors of domestic violence, and transportation assistance. Participants are also referred to other organizations for additional services, including housing assistance, mental health counseling, and substance abuse counseling. Participants also have access to financial coaching and legal assistance through a formalized partnership between YWCA WD and Cincinnati Works.

Administrators at the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati WD say that fostering a respectful, relationship-driven culture and environment represents a key to the organization's success. This relationship begins as soon as a participant walks through the door during the orientation process, where the case manager helps identify obstacles and needs and discusses the participant's short- and long-term goals in an initial intake setting. Participants complete more in-depth career and life planning with the workforce development staff as they map out a multi-year plan for meeting their goals.

The relationship building continues with the case manager as well as other workforce staff throughout the program. Identification of needs is a regular and ongoing process, since some needs may not be identified during the intake process and new needs may arise during training. Administrators shared that participants often cite YWCA WD staff members' regular communication and follow-up as the reason they persisted in education and training. Robust relationships between staff and participants, which include continuous interaction and communication before, during, and after training, allow for bonds of accountability that increase participants' chances of success. One administrator said, "The relationships that our programs build with our clients, our participants, our members, are the key to helping them to be successful. They [the participants] feel like you care about them, that you're supporting them, that they have value. Because some individuals, because they're coming from a lens of poverty, and haven't necessarily felt valued, or that they have power, or they can be empowered—they'll disconnect. So you really have to be available to meet people where they are and build that relationship that makes people feel like, 'Hey, they really do care about me.'"

Relationship building between YWCA Cincinnati WD staff and participants has also been key in the implementation of the pilot program discussed above for screening for experiences of domestic violence. YWCA Greater has been the leader in training and implementing DV screening as a part of a broader domestic violence initiative in Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati. The YWCA WD and other community programs have recently begun to screen for instances of domestic violence as part of their intake process. While the case manager leads this screening, all YWCA workforce development staff have been trained to conduct this type of conversation since disclosure can happen at any point during training. A YWCA administrator reported that "all staff have found that having these types of conversations with participants early on enhances [their] relationships…and opens new avenues for conversations about other issues." This has also led to increased services for those who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence, since the staff will then refer them to the domestic services of the YWCA (if they desire).

Program administrators report that one of the major strengths of the YWCA WD is that all participants are viewed as lifetime members. All participants are welcome to come back to the YWCA WD at any time for any issues they may have, knowing that the staff will be there to help with their work or life needs. Because YWCA Cincinnati WD serves high-need individuals, their career path and engagement with the YWCA WD may last longer than a traditional job training or workforce development program. As such, participants often continue to access supportive services over the years as they advance along their career pathway. At the same time, program administrators' interviews emphasize that the many branches of the YWCA WD means that, even after their engagement with the workforce development program has ended, participants are considered part of the greater YWCA WD family and are welcome to the various services they offer.

Appendix D. Site Visit Protocol

Program's Past and Future

1. Tell us about the history of the program. How and when did it begin? In what ways has it changed or evolved over time? Where do you see it headed in the future?

2. What do you see as the key ingredients to the program's success? What's your greatest strength (particularly regarding its provision of comprehensive supports to participants, but also in general)?

3. If there were no constraints, what changes would you make to how your program serves the needs of its participants?

Population Served

1. Tell us more about the populations you serve. What are their goals? What are their greatest challenges in reaching these goals? How are their challenges different from other populations? Do these challenges vary in rural versus urban locations?

2. Are you currently serving the number of participants that you'd like to? If not, what would it take to reach that goal?

Assessing Support Needs and Provision of Supports

1. How did your organization decide which support services to prioritize? Have there been changes in the supportive services you offer since the program started (if so, what and why)?

2. Could you please describe the intensity of each of the services that you provide directly? For example, how often do participants meet with case managers?

3. Could you please walk us through the process participants go through to receive services—how do you determine who is eligible for different supports? Do you use an intake form? If so, would you be willing to share that form with us?

4. What are the support services that are most commonly needed? How well would you say the support service needs of your participants are met, either by the services your program offers or through other organizations in the community? Are there any services that are particularly hard or easy to meet? Why?

5. [If applicable] Your program is unusual in that it provides _____ to all/most participants. How did this come about? How important is _____ compared with other services that you offer?

6. [If applicable] You mentioned that about _____ percent of your participants receive domestic violence support services. Could you please describe what services participants receive? Have you found any to be more or less helpful for survivors of violence?

7. You mentioned that you refer your participants to partners to receive some supportive services. How did this practice come about? What is your relationship with that organization(s)?

8. When you refer participants out for supportive services, are you able to track whether or not they receive those services? If you collect these data, would you be willing to share it with us?

Partnerships

1. Which organizations do you refer people to for access to supportive services most often? What is the nature or level of formality of your relationship with those organizations?

2. Are there particular challenges you faced when building and maintaining close partnerships with other organizations? What tips or guidance would you give other programs interested in setting up formal partnerships with supportive service providers in their community?

3. It seems that successful programs are all part of a larger network. Describe your relationships with 1) community colleges 2) community-based organizations 3) local-area employers and business leaders and 4) the area Workforce Investment Board.

4. [If applicable] You mentioned that you work closely with business leaders and economic development leaders to tailor training to meet local employer needs. How did this come about? What are the benefits and challenges to working with these individuals?

5. What benefits do you feel that your organization gets out of partnerships and relationships with other organizations with respect to supportive service provision? What limitations do you experience within these partnerships?

6. Are there areas where you would like to build or strengthen partnerships with other organizations?

7. Is there a local One Stop or American Job Center that you have a relationship with? If there is one nearby, but that you don't work with, can you tell us why?

Program Completion

1. You mentioned that _____, _____, and _____are the most common reasons participants don't complete the program – can you tell us some more about that? Do you feel like access to supportive services affects completion rates among your participants? If so, which supports most affect the likelihood of completion?

Funding

1. [If applicable] You mentioned that declines in state funding have limited your ability to refer participants to supportive services in recent years. Have there been particular supportive services that have been more difficult than others connect your participants with?

2. Do you track how much you spend on supportive services? Which are the most/least expensive services you provide?

3. How cost-effective do you believe your supportive services are? Have you developed any useful cost-saving mechanisms?

4. How would you rate the degree of your program's financial stability?

5. Do you anticipate any changes in the way supportive services will be offered or funded as a result of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)?

Data

1. We are interested in the data you collect. Do you have completion data? Do you collect data on who receives which supports? How long after training is completed do you continue to track info about employment and earnings? Are these data broken down by factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, and age? Can you share the data with us?

2. What data have you found most useful to assess success among participants?

Local Context

1. How would you say local policies make workforce development in your state or region easier or harder? Are there policies you would change or enact that would allow you to more effectively help people complete job training? Any changes specifically around providing supportive services?

2. Are there any champions in the community or at your program that have played a significant role in facilitating the success of your program, and specifically its ability to comprehensively meet participants' needs? If so, can you tell us more about this?

3. Are there any other contextual factors (such as local politics, economy, urban or rural area) that you think influence the way your organization offers supportive services to job training participants?

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