Increasing Earning Capacities of TANF and Workforce Clients

OFA Policy Academy Project
Maryland

December 2016

Michelle Derr • Jonathan McCay
Talia Kahn-Kravis • Elizabeth Brown
Meeting Objectives

• Create collaborative, productive, and mutually beneficial relationships for implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

• Identify specific and measurable goals for increasing the earning capacities of low-income job seekers in Maryland

• Introduce the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) process, an analytic, replicable process for program change
Exploring the motivation for systems change
Creating a vision—People before performance
Putting People Before Performance

Current approach

• Compliance-oriented

• Driven by federal performance measures (e.g., WPR, WIOA performance measures)

• Strong emphasis on Work First

• Practice focuses on adherence to federal and state policies

Putting People Before Performance

• Comprehensive assessment of jobseeker needs, circumstances and aspirations guides path to self-sufficiency

• State and local partnership and resources optimally utilized to benefit individuals/families and maximize WPR/WIOA performance measures

• County practice and state policies influenced by science, research evidence, and practice wisdom
Characteristics of a Compliance-Oriented System

- Rules drive decision making and most day-to-day actions
- Success is defined by how well rules are followed
- System outcomes and goals may not correspond to the reality of individuals’ and families’ lives, and may not be achievable
- Goals defined by the system, not the individual
- Goals often focus on process and not on outcomes (in the case of TANF)
Characteristics of a People-Centered System

• Precisely-defined benchmarks and goals local service areas can realistically achieve, guided by a vision of what’s best for individuals and families

• Systems and actions within local service areas are designed to reflect achievable goals for the program, its staff, and its clients

• Day-to-day interactions between staff and clients focused on mutually agreed upon goals and steps to achieve them

• Structure provides a mechanism for obtaining ongoing feedback to guide program improvement efforts

• Program goals help to define road to greater success, including how to increase engagement and employment and improve the WPR/WIOA performance measures as well as intermediate program outcomes
Focal Areas

• Employment
• Occupational skills and credentialing
• Life management skills
• Personal and work supports
• Partnerships and collaboration
What would the “ideal” look like in a system that focuses on improving earning capacities of clients AND puts people before performance?
Program Self-Assessment Tool

Implementing the WIOA local plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>In place</th>
<th>Partially in Place</th>
<th>Not in Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Almost fully in place</td>
<td>Partly in place</td>
<td>A few steps taken</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I. Program Approach

1. Evidence-informed, goal-focused program framework

   - System design and actions are aligned and framed around explicit achievable goals
   - Well-defined service pathways are aligned with the characteristics, needs and aspirations of the caseload
   - Draws upon the behavioral science and research evidence (e.g., self-regulation, executive functioning, behavioral insights, and trauma informed care, etc.)
Identifying opportunities, expectations, and resources
Discussion Questions

• What would you like to accomplish?

• What would change look like for your organization? Program? Staff? Clients?

• What might get in your way?

• What resources do you need to accomplish your goal(s)?
The Process—Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²)

- **Learn**
  - Identify opportunities for improvement
  - Assess readiness for change

- **Innovate**
  - Explore possibilities
  - Define the “Roadmap for Change”

- **Improve**
  - Road test and refine the approach, tools, process, etc.
  - Ensure a solid, integrated implementation
  - Develop guidance for replication and scaling across counties
Exploring the roadmap for change
Targets—

Relationships, behaviors, skills, attitudes, beliefs
Assessing the program environment
Headwinds and Tailwinds

• Political will and leadership
• Resources (e.g., funding, staffing, institutional knowledge)
• Staff skills/abilities
• Interagency partnerships/collaboration
• Other??
Wrap up for the day...
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Recap of Day 1
Exploring Relationships

- Not all relationships are equal
- Figure out what you can and can’t have with the different partners
- Trust takes time
Revisiting LI²

• What problems are we trying to fix? What do we know about them? (Learn)

• What strategies can we use to solve them? What difference would that strategy make (i.e., So what?)? (Innovate)

• Let’s try it out! (Improve)

Example: Larimer County, Colorado
Intermediate Outcomes

• Improving access to individualized services
• Communication and coordination across agencies
• Improving efficiency—reducing duplication of services
# Individualized Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of the Prototype</th>
<th>Job seeker prototype #1</th>
<th>Job seeker prototype #2</th>
<th>Job seeker prototype #3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and credentialing</td>
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<td>Life skills management</td>
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<td>Supportive services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals relevant to the jobseeker prototype</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of the Prototype</td>
<td>Work-ready, job-seeking</td>
<td>Hard-to-employ, not in crisis</td>
<td>Underemployed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment services</td>
<td>Job placement</td>
<td>Job readiness</td>
<td>Job retention and advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education &amp; credentialing</td>
<td>Basic job skills training</td>
<td></td>
<td>Voc. education; post-secondary education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life skills management</td>
<td>Guidance for managing work and family</td>
<td>Developing healthy work habits; guidance for managing work and family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive services</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals relevant to the jobseeker prototype</td>
<td>WPR and WIOA common measures</td>
<td>Making progress toward required hours and activities</td>
<td>Credential attainment, wage increase, job retention/advance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving Communication and Coordination

• Common vision, goals, and messaging
• Regular partnership meetings
• Co-location
• Cross-training staff
• Warm hand-offs
• Data sharing
Improving Efficiency

• Common intake
• Reducing duplication of services
• Data sharing
• Braiding funding
Measuring progress and success
Creating an Implementation Timeline

• Key tasks
• Allocation of roles and responsibilities
• Timing of activities
• Process for reviewing progress
• Making midcourse corrections – fail fast!
• Celebrating successes
For More Information

• Michelle Derr
  – MDerr@mathematica-mpr.com