



Theory of Change: Low-income jobseekers who are prepared for jobs in growth industries and provided long-term support get jobs with good pay and advancement potential.

Program Goal: To help people gain the skills they need to meet employer demand and get, keep and advance in economically self-sustaining jobs and contribute to the economic vitality of their communities and the Chicago region.

All proposals submitted to the Foundation should adhere to one of the following strategies:

STRATEGY A

Pre- Employment Training and Placement

Target Population: Jobseekers with low literacy and numeracy skills and limited or no work experience

Components

- Provides Adult Basic Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation
- Provides career awareness and exploration and a simulated work environment
- Offers resume preparation, interviewing techniques and soft-skills training
- Provides financial literacy training, budget and credit counseling
- Includes case management and resource referrals
- Provides placement and retention services
- Supports work and bridge programs

Evaluation Criteria

- Program recruitment, enrollment and completion rates
- Grade level gains and/or GED attainment
- Entrance into an educational or vocational training program
- Transitional or subsidized employment leading to permanent unsubsidized jobs
- Retention, wage rates, net income, and benefits
- Advancement opportunities
- Improved credit scores

STRATEGY B

Occupational Skills Training and Placement

Target Population: Job seekers with literacy and numeracy skills above the 9th-grade level

Components

- Includes employer input into curriculum development and instructors with industry experience
- Provides soft-skills training
- Offers industry-recognized certifications
- Provides financial literacy training, budget and credit counseling
- Maintains ongoing relationships with employers
- Provides placement and retention services

Evaluation Criteria

- Program recruitment, enrollment and completion rates
- Certification attainment
- Permanent, unsubsidized, full-time job placement
- Retention, wage rates, net income and benefits
- Advancement opportunities
- Improved credit scores

STRATEGY C

Systems Improvement and Innovation

Target Population: Systems through which job seekers and employers pursue workforce development services

Components

- Provides a clear action plan, developed with participant input, that includes benchmarks for progress, defined organization and sector goals and anticipated outcomes and timing
- Provides individualized technical assistance and/or advanced training for staff at participating organizations
- Offers opportunities for cumulative learning to promote effective systems integration and improvement
- Advocates for increased resources and improved policies, improved inter-agency as well as public-private coordination that reduces barriers to access for jobseekers and employers, and capacity building that enhances program planning and delivery

Evaluation Criteria

- Increased resources for the system and service providers
- Streamlined and enhanced service delivery
- Better labor market information
- Improved job quality
- Increased program participation by employers and job seekers
- Better alignment between workforce development and economic development systems that results in the reduction of skills mismatch by equipping people with the skills needed to meet employer demand
- Improved and streamlined data management systems that allow policymakers and service providers to identify needs, set program priorities and improve performance