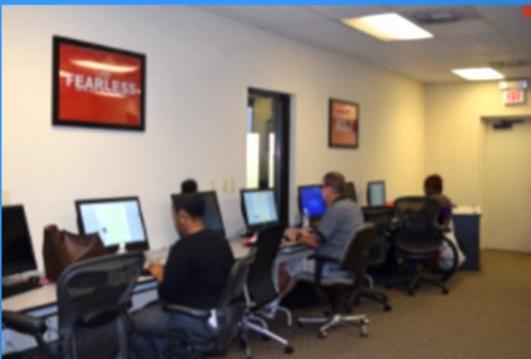


# INVESTING IN PEOPLE

## An Evaluation of Travis County Investments



# RMC

Ray Marshall Center for the  
Study of Human Resources

 **TEXASLBJ School**

The University of Texas at Austin  
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs

## Update 2017

# **EVALUATION OF TRAVIS COUNTY INVESTMENTS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**2017 UPDATE**

Cynthia Juniper  
Patty Rodriguez  
Heath Prince  
Greg Cumpton

**December, 2017**



3001 Lake Austin Blvd., Suite 3.200  
Austin, TX 78703 (512) 471-2188

This report was prepared with funds provided through a grant and cooperative agreement with Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department to the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin. These data were derived by the Ray Marshall Center from a record set supplied by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). TWC specifically disclaims responsibility for any analysis, interpretations, or conclusions. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the funding agencies or The University.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	3
List of Figures .....	3
Introduction.....	4
Evaluation Overview .....	6
Data Sources .....	7
Program Impacts .....	8
Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum-Travis County.....	10
Participant Profile .....	12
Participant Outcomes .....	13
Program Impacts .....	15
Descriptions of WERC-TC Funded Programs.....	17
Workforce Solutions Capital Area Career Centers.....	17
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas .....	20
Austin Area Urban League .....	23
American YouthWorks .....	25
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas.....	32
Workforce Development Programs and Services .....	32
<i>Support Services</i> .....	34
<i>Participant Profile</i> .....	34
<i>Participant Outcomes</i> .....	34
<i>Program Impacts</i> .....	37
Capital IDEA .....	39
Workforce Development Programs and Services .....	39
<i>Support Services</i> .....	41
<i>Participant Profile</i> .....	42
<i>Participant Outcomes</i> .....	43
<i>Program Impacts</i> .....	45
LifeWorks .....	47
Workforce Development Programs and Services .....	47
<i>Support Services</i> .....	48
<i>Participant Profile</i> .....	49
<i>Participant Outcomes and Program Impacts</i> .....	49
Skillpoint Alliance .....	50

Workforce Development Programs and Services .....	50
<i>Support Services</i> .....	52
<i>Participant Profile</i> .....	52
<i>Participant Outcomes</i> .....	52
<i>Program Impacts</i> .....	55
Results.....	57
Outcomes and Impacts.....	57
Bibliography .....	61
Appendix A: Demographics of Travis County Workforce Development Program FY 2016	
Exiters .....	62
Appendix B: Description of Impact Table Elements.....	65
Appendix C: FY 2016 Data Elements Requested.....	67

## List of Tables

Table 1. WERC-TC FY 2016 Exitters by Program .....	12
Table 2. WERC-TC FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes .....	13
Table 3. WERC-TC FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts .....	15
Table 4. American YouthWorks FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes .....	28
Table 5: American YouthWorks FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts.....	30
Table 6. Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes .....	35
Table 7. Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts .....	37
Table 8. Capital IDEA Participant Outcomes, FY 2016 Exitters .....	43
Table 9. Capital IDEA FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts .....	45
Table 10. Skillpoint FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes.....	53
Table 11. Skillpoint FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts.....	55
Table 12. Average Quarterly Employment for all FY 2016 Exitters.....	58
Table 13. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed FY 2016 Exitters .....	59
Table 14. Average Quarterly UI Earnings and Filed UI Claims FY 2016 Exitters .....	59

## List of Figures

Figure 1. WERC-TC Average Quarterly Employment of WERC-TC FY 2016 Exitters.....	14
Figure 2. WERC-TC Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed WERC-TC FY 2016 Exitters...	14
Figure 3: Unconditional Earnings Over Time, WERC-TC Participants.....	16
Figure 4. Average Quarterly Employment American YouthWorks FY 2016 Exitters.....	29
Figure 5. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed American YouthWorks.....	29
Figure 6. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, American YouthWorks Participants .....	31
Figure 7. Average Quarterly Employment of Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Exitters.....	36
Figure 8. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employment of Literacy Coalition .....	36
Figure 9. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Literacy Coalition Participants .....	38
Figure 10. Average Quarterly Employment of Capital IDEA FY 2106 Exitters.....	44
Figure 11. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employment Capital IDEA FY 2016 Exitters .....	44
Figure 12. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Capital IDEA Participants.....	46
Figure 13. Average Quarterly Employment of Skillpoint FY 2016 Exitters .....	54
Figure 14. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed Skillpoint FY 2016 Exitters .....	54
Figure 15. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Skillpoint Participants.....	56

## **Introduction**

In FY 2016, Travis County invested approximately \$2.5 million through contracts with workforce development programs for low-income residents who tend to face challenges to steady employment with sufficient earnings to support themselves and their families. Several of the programs provide short-term occupational training leading to certifications in a variety of fields, including general office skills, basic computer technologies, construction trades and “green building”, and other occupational areas with promising entry-level prospects. In addition, funds support the provision of or referral to education services ranging from adult basic education, English language classes, GED or high school diploma programs, to long-term skills training leading to certifications and associate degrees in areas such as nursing and allied health professions, information and electronic technologies, skilled trades, and other better-paying, *demand* occupations in growth industries with good prospects for career pathway advancement.

Among the FY 2016 Travis County Workforce development grantees listed below, four of the former contractors submitted a joint proposal for County-funded assistance as the Workforce Education and Readiness Continuum – Travis County (WERC-TC). WERC-TC providers are: Workforce Solutions Capital Area Career Centers, Goodwill of Central Texas, Austin Area Urban League, and American YouthWorks. Four additional organizations maintaining workforce development contracts with Travis County are also included in this report: Literacy Coalition of Central Texas, Capital IDEA, LifeWorks, and Skillpoint Alliance. In addition, as identified in the following program list, WERC-TC provider American YouthWorks also delivers services to participants through Travis County funding that is not WERC-TC.

## **FY 2016 Travis County Funded Workforce Development Programs**

1. Workforce Education and Readiness Continuum – Travis County (WERC-TC)
  - a. Workforce Solutions Capital Area Career Centers
  - b. Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
  - c. Austin Area Urban League
  - d. American YouthWorks: Metro Parks and Youth Build
2. Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: Workforce Infusion
3. Capital IDEA: Long-Term Training
4. LifeWorks: Workforce Development
5. Skillpoint Alliance: Gateway, Next, and Empower
6. Travis County Emergency Services District #4 – Fire and EMT Academy (ESD-4)<sup>1</sup>

This evaluation examines outcomes and impacts for participants in the Travis County-funded community-based workforce programs exiting services in FY 2016. To understand the impact of these services, the County has contracted with the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources (RMC) at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a longitudinal evaluation of its investments. This Workforce Development (WFD) evaluation process will prepare the first year analysis of outcomes and estimated net impacts of these investments in the programs funded in FY 2016, the first of a five year on-going evaluation (FY 2016- FY 2020).

The following section presents an overview of the evaluation questions and research methods, followed by separate sections for each of the providers examined. Each provider section includes a brief profile of the provider and its workforce development program(s), and details outcomes and impacts for participants who exited the program during FY 2016. Findings examine UI wage data for the quarter the client exited services, four quarters prior to entering the program, and four quarters post exit. Findings examine results in the post-service period through June 30, 2017, the latest quarter for which UI wage data is available. Additionally, each section reports annual funding levels. The final section summarizes evaluation findings from FY 2016.

---

<sup>1</sup> Travis County Emergency Services District #4 (EMS-4) trains a limited number of individuals, 12 to 15 a year. Due to this limited number of participants the program is excluded from this analysis.

## Evaluation Overview

The purpose of Travis County's investment in local workforce development services is to help low-income residents with weak labor force attachment build the skills needed for gainful employment. Accordingly, each program is evaluated based on its participants' outcomes. Output and outcome performance goals are established for each provider in its contract with the County. Among the various performance measures utilized, four are shared across the majority of providers:

- Number of unduplicated clients served,
- Percentage of clients who obtain or improve employment or enter postsecondary education, or training,
- Percentage of clients who retained their placement for six months, and
- Average wage at job entry.

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

- Number of clients who enter basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), or secondary (high school/GED) education,
- Number of clients who enter and complete occupational skills training,
- Number of clients who complete educational training programs, and
- Number of clients enrolled in internships.

Performance results of workforce and other social service investments are detailed annually in the Workforce Development Community Impact Report prepared by the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department (HHS&VS).<sup>2</sup> While that report assesses how a provider or program fared in relation to its contractually-established performance goals, its focus is primarily on immediate and near-term objectives (e.g., wage at entry, two calendar quarters of employment).

The Ray Marshall Center's evaluation extends the analysis of Travis County's workforce investments by examining participants' labor market experiences prior to entering the program

---

<sup>2</sup> The full report is available at: <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/health-human-services/research-planning/cir>

and then tracking their labor market outcomes following training. This evaluation draws on multiple data sources to answer the following questions:

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

The outcomes evaluation focuses on four key labor market measures:

- Average quarterly employment,
- Average quarterly earnings of those employed,
- The share meeting monetary eligibility requirements for UI benefits quarterly, and
- The share filing a claim for UI benefits quarterly.

It should be noted that the third measure is a proxy measure for employment stability. In Texas, monetary UI eligibility is based on the claimant earning sufficient wages in at least two consecutive quarters of the five quarters prior to filing a claim for benefits. For the FY 2016 exiting participant groups, labor market outcomes are examined in the four quarters prior to entering the program, the last quarter of participation in provider services (the “exit quarter”), and up to four post-service quarters. Findings in this report examine results in the post-service period through June 30, 2017, the latest quarter for which UI wage data is available.

## **Data Sources**

The evaluation of Travis County-funded workforce development programs draws from multiple data sources, including participant records maintained by individual programs, UI wage and benefits claim files, The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) records, Work in Texas records, interviews with program administrators and staff, program documents, provider websites, and published reports.<sup>3</sup>

Two caveats should be noted about UI wage data used for this evaluation. First, UI wage

---

<sup>3</sup> While UI benefit data are collected and reported weekly, the outcomes are examined on a quarterly basis to mirror UI wage records.

records have known coverage gaps. Workers in industries with high levels of self-employment or independent contracting, such as construction and truck driving, are less likely to be in a UI-covered position.<sup>4</sup> Researchers therefore acknowledge that the outcomes reported here for programs that train for construction and truck driving occupations likely undercount actual labor market outcomes. Second, UI wage records are subject to review and correction by workers and employers as part of the claims determination process for UI benefits. Therefore, numbers reported here are based on the most recently available records.<sup>5</sup>

A total of 1389 unduplicated participants were included in the dataset for this report (see Appendix A: Demographics of Travis County Workforce Development Program FY 2016 Exiters). A few participants were clients of more than one Travis County-funded workforce development service during the study time period. Outcomes for these participants are documented for each program in which they were enrolled.<sup>6</sup>

## **Program Impacts**

The quasi-experimental impact analysis seeks to gauge the “value-added” from workforce program participation by comparing labor market outcomes for participants with those of a matched comparison group. Comparison group members were drawn from The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) records and include Travis County residents who registered for employment with the state’s *WorkInTexas* program or who received job search services at local Workforce Solutions Career Centers or online. Quasi-experimental approaches tend to work well when participants for whom comparison groups are created have sufficient prior employment and earnings histories and when data are available on a sufficient number of variables with which to perform the match. Youth and ex-offenders are problematical in this regard precisely because their prior employment and earnings histories are either lacking or difficult to determine with any real confidence. Ex-offenders present an additional problem since

---

<sup>4</sup> The Austin-based Workers Defense Project has thoroughly documented the extensive practice of hourly worker misclassification as contract employees in the construction industry in Austin and elsewhere in Texas. See *Building Austin, Building Injustice* (Workers Defense Project) 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Any discrepancies are expected to be quite small.

<sup>6</sup> WERC-TC clients were reported once, although they may have received services from more than one WERC-TC service provider.

offender status is generally lacking for comparison group members.

The report presents quasi-experimental impacts only for groups/providers for which adequate matching could be performed. A detailed description of the measures included in the impact table can be found in Appendix B. Impact graphs compare the average wages of participants to the comparison group members at least four quarters prior to receiving services, at the quarter of service entry and for at least four quarters post-service entry. More information on the matching process and the quality of comparison groups is provided in the Technical Appendix document.

Because of the way data is tracked in the *WorkInTexas* system, members of the comparison group were known to have been located in Travis County at the time the data was obtained by RMC, however, individuals may or may not have been located in Travis County during the time periods studied.

## Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum-Travis County (WERC-TC)



WERC-TC functions as a part of a larger network of Austin and Travis County providers of workforce services: the Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum (WERC). WERC is a City of Austin and Travis County-funded network of community partners linked to help prepare Austin-area residents to enter or reenter today's competitive job market. With 27 locations, WERC provides client services ranging from case management; ABE and ESL; job readiness instruction and job search assistance; and assistance accessing a variety of employment training options, including college-level courses, occupational certifications and licenses, and on-the-job training. All external occupational training provided must be with entities on the Workforce Solutions Eligible Training Provider list and lead to a credential.<sup>7</sup> WERC-TC is a component of the larger WERC program.

WERC-TC offers both *In-house Occupational Training* and *External Occupational Training*. The following is included as a prerequisite for participants to enter *External Occupational Training*:

- 1) ***Basic Soft Skills*** - Demonstrated through a learning assessment such as O-Net or other pre-assessment,
- 2) ***Education Specific Foundational Skills*** - Provided by the training organization; these pre-requisites can be demonstrated through the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), client self-attestation, or a letter of foreign equivalency from a credentialed provider.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> External Approved Training Provider List which is updated weekly, and the most current list is available at: <https://apps.twc.state.tx.us>.

<sup>8</sup> In-house Occupational Training does not require TABE (with the exception of GED/HS Diploma).

WERC-TC funds four area workforce development service providers: Workforce Solutions Capital Area Career Centers, Goodwill of Central Texas, Austin Area Urban League, and American YouthWorks. Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board administers the program, operating as the fiscal agent for WERC-TC funds, providing program oversight, quality assurance monitoring of client eligibility and performance outcomes, and supporting the continuum of care through quarterly partner meetings. Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board contracts with Goodwill to manage the WERC-TC data management software system: CaseWorthy Empowered Case Management (ECM). WERC-TC funds two additional Goodwill staff to manage the data system. All four WERC-TC providers are required to directly enter into CaseWorthy client information, services and referrals provided, follow-up contacts, and outcomes. CaseWorthy allows for the sharing of client data across programs, standardized reporting, and a single point of entry for WERC-TC clients with common intake forms and eligibility requirements, allowing clients to be referred to different providers in the WERC continuum of care without repeating the intake process.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Information from a conversation with Amy Dutton, Special Projects Manager, and Kendra Campbell, Special Projects Coordinator, Workforce Solutions Capital Area. September 6, 2017.

## Participant Profile

Table 1 identifies the program exiters by service provider.<sup>10</sup> These counts include three participants who enrolled in more than one program.

**Table 1. WERC-TC FY 2016 Exiters by Program**

WERC-TC Program	FY 2016 Exiters
Workforce Solutions	259
Goodwill	225
Austin Area Urban League	311
American YouthWorks	81
Total	876

Note: 876 includes three clients who enrolled in more than one program and one participant missing a social security number.

The following analysis reports on the 871 unduplicated WERC-TC participants who exited the program in FY 2016.<sup>11</sup> Although the average age of WERC-TC participant exiters is 39, the program served youth as young as 16 and over five percent of the exiters were in their sixties. The majority of exiters identified as either White (43.5%) or Black (47.9%). Most exiters were male (61%), with .3 percent identifying as transgender. The majority, 60.2 percent reported having a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education or a GED and 22.2 percent reported attending or graduating from college. Twenty-one percent reported judicial involvement and few, 5.8 percent, identified as veterans. Less than half reported receiving any public benefits (46%). The majority of the exiters report residing in the following areas: North Austin (20.9%), East Austin (29.6%), eastern suburbs of Austin (21.8%) and South Austin (15.4%).

---

<sup>10</sup> American YouthWorks receives additional Travis County funding that is not WERC-TC.

<sup>11</sup> Workforce Solutions had one participant with quarterly earnings in excess of \$25,000 for several quarters. This participant was removed from the reported outcomes.

## Participant Outcomes

Table 2 presents WERC-TC participants who exited services (completed or dropped out) in FY 2016. Overall, in the four quarters prior to entering the program, quarterly employment in a UI-covered job in Texas for individuals serviced by WERC-TC was just over 45 percent. Quarterly employment grew to 73 percent during the exit quarter and fell by nearly three percentage points in the second and dropped again by another two percentage points four quarters post-service. However, wages grew from an average of \$4,518 in the quarter before services and increased to an average of \$6,410 the fourth quarter post-service (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

**Table 2. WERC-TC FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes**

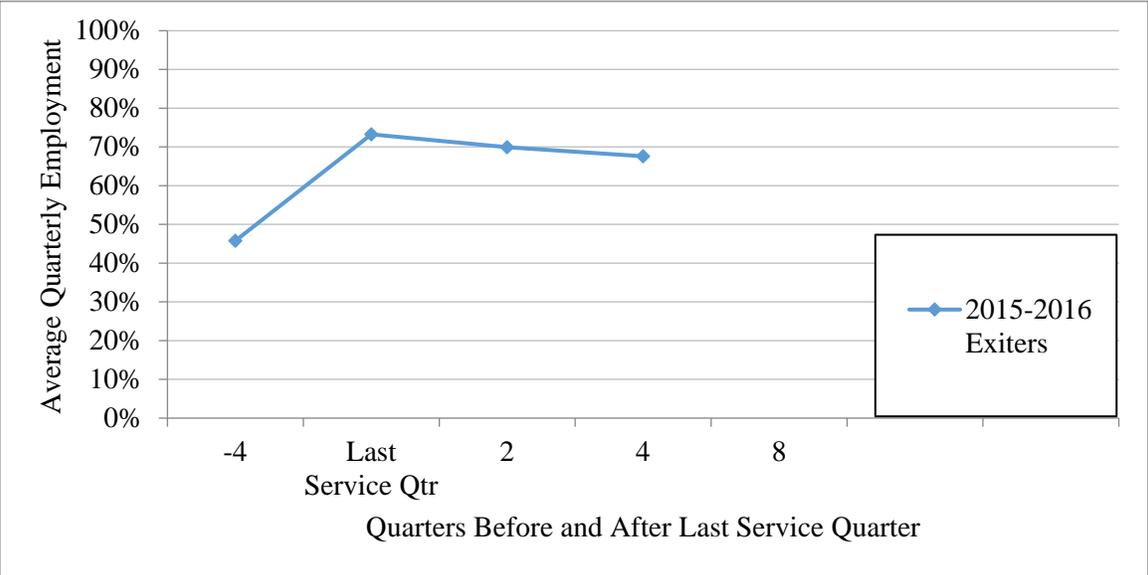
Cohort Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	8th Qtr Post-Service	12th Qtr Post-Service	16th Qtr Post-Service	All Post-Service Qtrs
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	871	871	871	358				
<b>Quarterly Employment:</b> 2015-2016	45.8%	73.3%	69.9%	67.6%	.	.	.	68.8%
<b>Average Qrtly Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	\$4,518	\$4,545	\$5,712	\$6,410	.	.	.	\$5,932
<b>Qualified for UI Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	37.9%	39.0%	47.2%	65.4%	.	.	.	54.7%
<b>Filed UI Claim:</b> 2015-2016	2.7%	1.2%	2.9%	0.8%	.	.	.	1.4%

Source: WERC-TC participant records and Texas Workforce Commission UI wage and claim records.

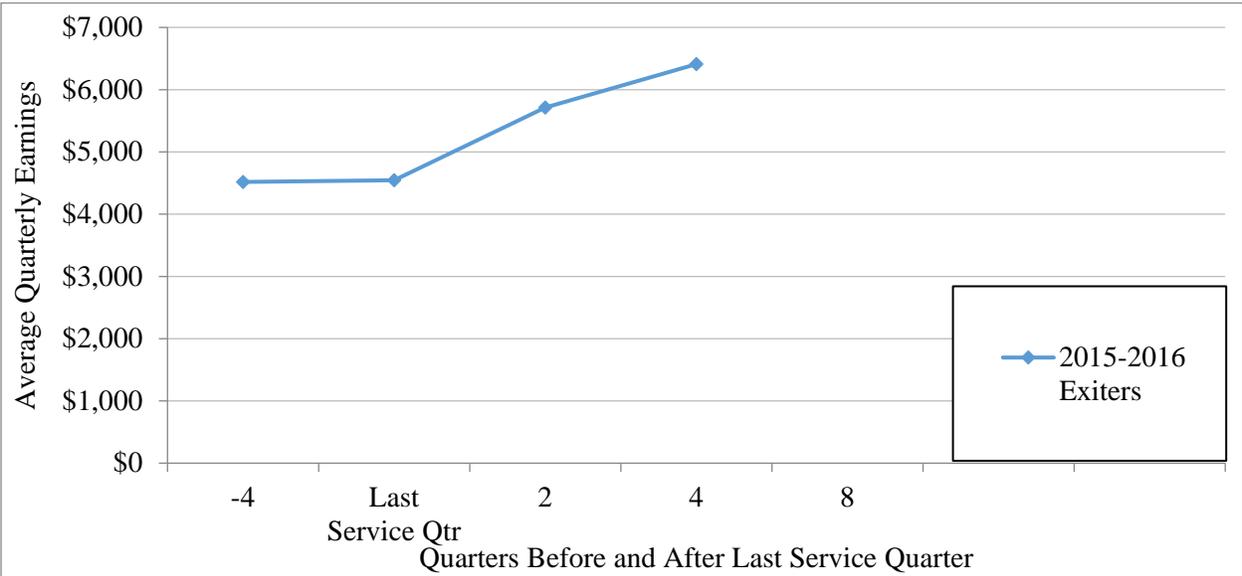
Note: Workforce Solutions had one participant with quarterly earnings in excess of \$25,000 for several quarters. This participant was removed from the above reported outcomes.

Note: A dot represents too few participants, no data to report, or insufficient time passing to report for that timeframe. Participants were counted as employed if they were found in Texas UI wage records. Those who were not found may be unemployed, employed outside of Texas, or employed in Texas in a position that is not UI-covered and reported to TWC.

**Figure 1. WERC-TC Average Quarterly Employment of WERC-TC FY 2016 Exiters**



**Figure 2. WERC-TC Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed WERC-TC FY 2016 Exiters**



## Program Impacts

Table 3 presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing the outcomes of WERC-TC FY 2016 exiters to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. Participation was positively associated with three of the four outcomes measures of interest: a 8.4 percentage point advantage in employment, a \$1301 advantage in average quarterly earnings, and a 1.5 percentage point decrease in the share that filed for UI benefits.

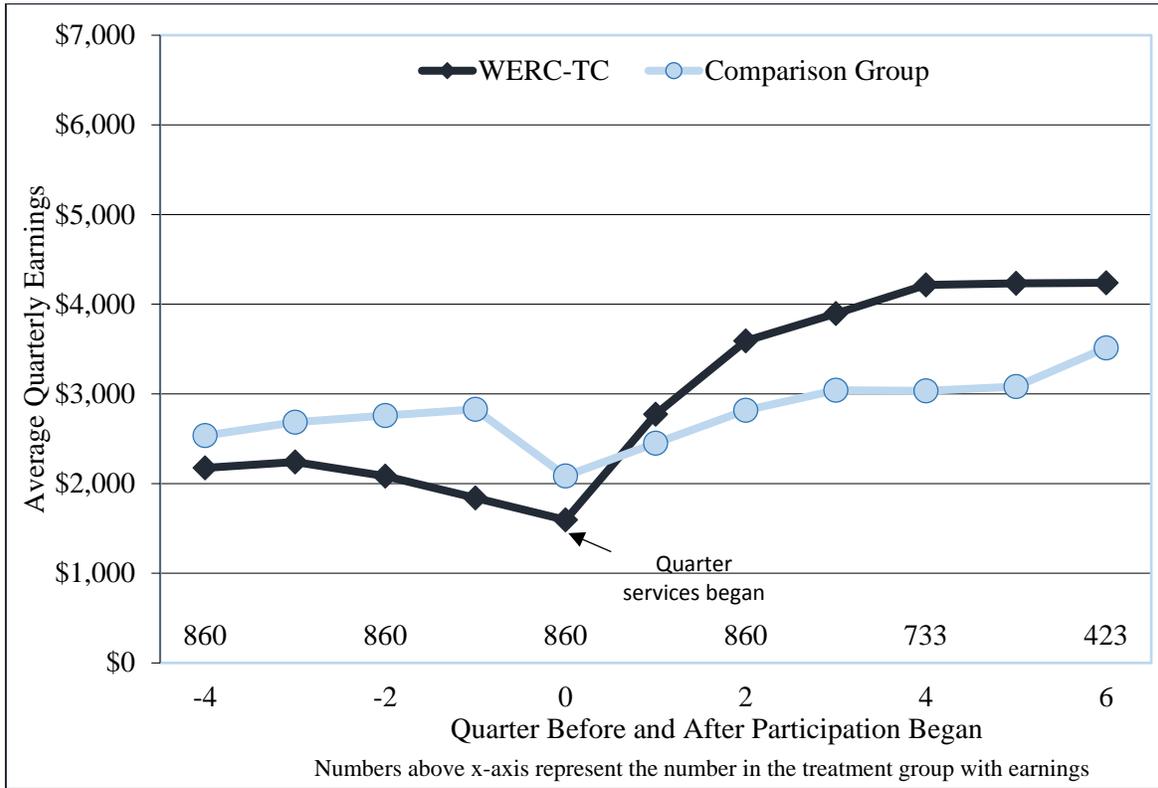
**Table 3. WERC-TC FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts**

Impact measure	All Qtrs Post-Service: Comparison Group	All Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	56.6%	68.8%	12.5%	8.4%
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$5,296	\$5,961	\$665	\$1301
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	43.8%	46.3%	2.6%	0.0%
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	1.51%	1.40%	-0.11%	-1.52%

Note: None of the reported effects in this table are statistically significant.

In Figure 3, the impact of participation in WERC-TC is examined by looking at participants' earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group's unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that WERC-TC participants quickly outpaced the control group members during the first quarter of participation in the program and continued to gain income over time.

**Figure 3: Unconditional Earnings Over Time, WERC-TC Participants vs. Comparison Group**



Workforce Solutions – Capital Area is the local Workforce Investment Board for Travis County. It is one of 28 local boards in Texas. The board oversees federal, state, and local employment and training programs.

Travis County funded the Rapid Employment Model (REM) project as a regular workforce services program in 2010-2012 for \$244,275 annually; annual funding for 2013 and 2014 settled at \$400,157, and rose to \$493,580 in FY 2015.

In FY 2016, Workforce Solutions became the administrative agent for the WERC-TC, responsible for managing the distribution of \$630,315.



For more information visit:  
[www.wfscapitalarea.com](http://www.wfscapitalarea.com)

## Descriptions of WERC-TC Funded Programs

### Workforce Solutions Capital Area Career Centers

#### Workforce Development Programs and Services

Workforce Solutions–Capital Area Workforce Board operated the Travis County-funded Rapid Employment Model (REM) program through FY 2015. REM launched in 2006 as a pilot demonstration project, then transitioned to regular workforce program operations at the Workforce Solutions career centers and through its community partnerships. The program was funded exclusively by Travis County. In FY 2016, the program and its funding were folded into the WERC-TC effort.

The purpose of the Workforce Solutions WERC-TC program model is to accelerate the time it takes for individuals to become employed or reemployed with new skills and a marketable credential. Services are specifically targeted at disadvantaged County residents, in particular judicially involved individuals, TANF-Choices and SNAP recipients, low-income individuals, and those seeking financial assistance from the County.<sup>12</sup> In-depth assessment, individual employment planning (IEP), intensive case management, and flexible service tracks leading to rapid

<sup>12</sup>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Choices assists participants receiving cash assistance to transition from welfare to work through participation in work-related activities, including job search and job readiness classes, basic skills training, education, vocational training, and support services. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides a monthly supplement for purchasing nutritious food.

employment with an average wage goal of \$12, are keynote features.

All participants receive case management from one, or more, specialists assigned to the program. The program specialist discusses training options and opportunities with each participant. The focus is on employment rather than training with those for whom this is an appropriate service track. Job-ready participants may steer directly into limited pre-employment services and job search or a work experience program for rapid placement. Others receive more intensive pre-employment, job search and placement services, including internship opportunities, and short-term occupational training lasting less than six months. The TABE is given to those seeking short-term training services to assess their readiness level for the desired skills training.

Participants select from a number of occupations for which short-term training is available, including general construction, electric and plumbing; clerical, office work, computer training; line cook; certified nurse aide; and truck driving, as well as ESL, ABE and GED classes. The notable change in the WERC-TC transition is the availability of paid internships with County funds. The average wage for completers in FY 2016 was \$12.69 per hour.

### Support Services

Workforce Solutions clients are often co-enrolled in other programs providing support services. Workforce Solutions regularly conducts “in-reach” (the recruitment of participants) for WERC-TC prospects at the Austin Transitional Center. Other referral sources include Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA), TANF Choices, and SNAP. WERC-TC partners recruit at criminal justice transition sites and other community centers, which subsequently results in referrals to Workforce Solutions as well. Through co-enrollment, these programs provide the wrap-around support services participants need to be successful.

Job search participants can receive up to 12 weeks of transportation assistance while looking for employment, and training participants can receive up to 24 weeks transportation assistance while attending classes. Emergency assistance (utility payments, auto repairs, etc.) and work related expenses up to \$200, are also available on a case-by-case basis. Under WERC-TC there is no incentive for weekly attendance in education and training programs, however,

participants can receive \$25 incentive upon employment and four additional \$25 incentives at each retention milestones.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Information from a conversation with Amy Dutton, Special Projects Manager, and Kendra Campbell, Special Projects Coordinator, Workforce Solutions Capital Area at Capital Area September 6, 2017.

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas provides services to justice involved individuals, the homeless, individuals with disabilities, individuals who lack a high school diploma or GED, opportunity youth, and others who face barriers in the labor market. Its mission is to help individuals generate lifelong connections to work.

From 2011 to 2015, Travis County invested \$137,439 annually in Goodwill's Ready to Work program. In FY 2016 they received level funding through the WERC-TC collaborative.



<https://www.goodwillcentraltexas.org/education-job-training>

## **Goodwill Industries of Central Texas**

### *Workforce Development Programs and Services*

Goodwill's Ready-to-Work (R2W) was accessible at several locations throughout Travis County, including the Goodwill Career and Technical Academy (GCTA), the Excel Center, Workforce Advancement sites distributed about the City of Austin and Travis County.

In 2013, Goodwill renamed the program Ready-to-Work Plus, a change in nomenclature signifying the intensified collaboration with WERC-CoA partners along a continuum of education, training, and employment services, as well as an enhanced focus on the acquisition of credentials valued by industry in occupations with career pathway potential.

For FY 2016, Goodwill received WERC-TC funds administered by Workforce Solutions. Both WERC-TC and R2W share the focus on helping individuals develop occupational skills necessary to enter a field with real prospects for reaching a self-sufficiency wage through the development of talent, soft skills, financial literacy, and workplace internships. Soft skills training includes job search, resume preparation, computer basics, and interview techniques.

This occupationally focused training now includes not only very short-term credentials like Travis County Food Handler permit for entry into the hospitality sector, but also expanded access to more substantive training

paths, such as Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) with ancillary credentials for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and phlebotomy, Texas Commercial Driver's License (CDL), QuickBooks,

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, office administration, and dental assistant. The target placement wage for the County program in 2016 was \$12 per hour for WERC-TC.

The County funding permits Goodwill to provide paid internships for WERC-TC participants, an option that boosts the prospects for client success in the labor market. Additionally, all training provided with County funds must be with entities on the Workforce Solutions Eligible Training Provider list and lead to a credential. Goodwill goes a step further by requiring the credential to be industry recognized. Truck driver/CDL training has proven an effective training path for the employment of the justice involved.

Service target groups include not only justice involved individuals, but also those with low-levels of education, individuals with disabilities, and the homeless. Goodwill works with a number of organizations to accept referrals of potential participants including: Travis Correctional Complex, the Austin Transitional Center, Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), Foundation Communities, Salvation Army, Integral Care, SAFE Alliance, and other providers serving the homeless.

Goodwill focuses on making participants marketable. With the participants coming from prison, there is a struggle to balance their immediate need for employment with intensive case management and longer-term occupational training. Case Managers work with justice involved individuals to develop strategies for responding to employers' questions about their judicial involvement. The program with Travis County Correctional Center offers classes pre- and post-release for Del Valle inmates with a focus on peer support and mentoring. Job readiness training for the justice involved includes information on the federal bonding program, understanding career options and limitations, and developing letters of explanation for their crimes. Goodwill also conducts outreach to employers through its Business Solutions staff to understand what participants need to be able to demonstrate to gain employment. Many companies are reluctant to hire justice involved individuals, and participants who try for employment but are unsuccessful may feel defeated or overwhelmed. Goodwill works to provide some hope to these individuals

and develop a plan for moving forward. Goodwill helps participants recognize that there are legal work opportunities; it just takes time to pursue them.<sup>14</sup>

### Support Services

As part of County-funded program, individuals can earn \$25 from Goodwill for every 30 days of employment retention, up until 180 days of job retention. This helps to keep individuals connected to the program and involved in case management. Case managers may also provide Goodwill/Simon gift cards per the program support service and incentive policy. With case managers' help, individuals develop housing stability plans and may qualify for financial assistance for supports. Other services offered to participants, based on their individual needs, include transportation, help in obtaining identification cards, child care referrals, connections to food pantries, and resources for work/interview clothes.

As a result of its partnership with United Way, Goodwill has incorporated more financial education into its programs. Participants are offered classes and one-on-one sessions with a financial literacy trainer, focusing on topics such as budgeting, credit repair, and the dangers of payday loans. Through its itinerant connection with multiple partner programs around Austin, including Caritas, Any Baby Can, SAFE Alliance, Integral Care Assistance Centers, and others, Goodwill is able to help its staff build knowledge and connections that enhance referrals and supports for participants.

---

<sup>14</sup> Goodwill's operative approach is called Transtheoretical Cognitive Transformation.

“The mission of the Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) is to provide tools to African-Americans and under-served populations to build a foundation for social and economic equality.” \* AAUL strives to achieve this mission by focusing on educational improvement, employment readiness, health and wellness, and the preservation of affordable housing.

IN FY 2016, AAUL joined the collaborative WERC – TC to help individuals attain certifications and credentials valued by employers.

IN FY 2016, AAUL received \$45,744 WERC-TC funding.



\*<http://www.aaul.org/>

## **Austin Area Urban League**

### *Workforce Development Programs and Services*

In FY 2016, AAUL became part of WERC-TC and the organization’s County support is channeled through its subcontract under Workforce Solutions. Through 2016, the Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) offered three main programs: Essential Office Skills (EOS) classes; life skills workshops; and job placement assistance. The approach of the AAUL program is to “meet the participant where they are” and help them to build the skills they need for employment.

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

Life skills workshops focus on soft skills to “assist youth and adults in altering those negative patterns of behaviors that create barriers to their success;” elements of cognitive behavior therapy have been introduced into the Life Skills and other AAUL services.<sup>15</sup>

The Job Resource Center provides resume writing, interviewing, and job search best practices training, as well as job leads and referrals. AAUL has established relationships with hiring managers in healthcare, insurance, customer service, construction, information technologies, and education among

---

<sup>15</sup>Information from a conversation with Darnise Bowens-Jones, Workforce Program Manager, September 19, 2016.

other fields. Under WERC-TC, AAUL has begun to expand its training referrals to include truck driving/CDL training and Certified Nurse Assistant training through Austin Community College. The target wage for employment entries in FY 2016 was \$12 per hour minimum. Given the weak work histories and barriers to employment of most participants—many of whom are judicially involved, while others may be elderly or disabled looking for part-time work or community volunteer opportunities—meeting the \$12 per hour standard has been a challenge.

### Support Services

AAUL works to connect participants with resources in the community, including Dress for Success for female participants and various faith-based agencies for interview and work clothes for male participants. Born Again Ministries is a key resource for transitional housing for men who have been released from incarceration. Bus passes are also provided if funding is available and the provision of gas cards has been increasing with the enrollments in CDL training. AAUL also operates its own vans to transport groups of individuals to and from classes. Incentives (\$20) are provided at 30-day intervals to support attainment of the 6-month retention target. AAUL also helps with work-related expenses, refers to Workforce Solutions for child care, and can provide emergency assistance.

## American YouthWorks

### Workforce Development Programs and Services

Travis County funds three training programs through American YouthWorks (AYW); YouthBuild Austin that includes two programs Casa Verde Builders, and the Youth Media Corps (a revised configuration of the former Computer Corps introduced in late 2013); and the Texas Conservation Corps. YouthBuild programs use a Service Learning Academy model that combines occupational skills training and academic instruction with community service projects. Students often switch from one training program to another and may complete multiple programs over time.

YouthBuild Austin is part of the national initiative led by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing & Urban Development. Students learn “green” construction skills while constructing energy efficient, affordable homes, primarily in East Austin. Participants in the Casa Verde program typically range in age from 16-24 years old. The Casa Verde training takes approximately nine months to complete and is generally reserved for high school juniors and seniors or those who are working to earn a high school credential. Participants earn 18 credit hours at Austin Community College at the completion of the construction training. Participants also earn certifications through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Home Builders Association.

The Texas Conservation Corps program trains youth to build, restore, and maintain the natural environment. Through work in parks, nature trails, wildlife habitats, and disaster relief services, participants learn environmental management and safety practices. A key area of focus is invasive species management.

The mission of American YouthWorks is “...to provide young people with opportunities to build careers, strengthen communities, and improve the environment through education, on-the-job training, and service to others.”\*

The program offers college, high school, and GED classes, as well as job training programs based on a service learning model that combines academic instruction with occupational skills development and community service projects.

In FY 2016 Travis County invested \$145,000 workforce development funds combined with Metro Parks Project funding of \$100,000. YouthBuild also received \$46,065 in funding from WERC-TC.



For more information visit:  
[www.americanyouthworks.org](http://www.americanyouthworks.org)

\*[www.americanyouthworks.org/about](http://www.americanyouthworks.org/about). Accessed: 08.10.2017.

Contracts with Travis County, the City of Austin, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the National Parks Service, among others, give participants real work experience while creating benefits for the broader community.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond the academic and occupational skills training, YouthBuild participants also receive training in soft skills, job search, and resume building. The target wage for those who enter employment was \$10 per hour minimum in 2016. For participants who are interested in pursuing higher education, the program has recently added college access, credit articulation, and persistence services.

In FY 2016 YouthBuild entered into a partnership with the juvenile justice system to provide services to justice involved youth. This program enrolls students as young as 16 into the program. YouthBuild developed a re-entry specialist case manager position to work with justice involved youth, and the program is evaluating potential adjustments to continue to present options for younger students. Sixteen year old students who enroll in HS/GED and pursuing YouthBuild certifications may need an extended time with the program to complete their high school diploma/GED goals. Further, during FY 2016 YouthBuild began preparing to offer the Health Corps program again and intended to begin enrolling students in September 2017.<sup>17</sup>

### Support Services

In addition to job training and on-site access to Premier High School/GED studies, American YouthBuild provides a number of wrap-around support services to help individuals succeed. Participants in both Casa Verde Builders and Texas Conservation Corps receive bi-weekly stipends to help cover their living expenses while in training. The program also provides uniforms and safety equipment, tools, clothing for interviews, bus passes, on-site child care, and emergency assistance for food, diapers, and other necessities.

---

<sup>16</sup> AYW Texas Conservation Corp. has moved towards a fee for services approach to cover expenses and provide opportunities for youth.

<sup>17</sup> Information from a conversation with Britni Trustman, Assistant Director–Grants Management and David Clauss, YouthBuild Austin Program Director, August 2017.

American YouthWorks has dedicated staff to help participants with the job search process and internships, as well as full-time counselors to help participants overcome other obstacles to success. The program partners with Workforce Solutions in both WERC-CoA and WERC-TC to connect participants with other training opportunities and support services.

#### *Non-WERC-TC Participant Profile*

AYW workforce development County funding is channeled through three contracts: WERC-TC, Workforce Development (direct to AYW), and the Travis County Metro Parks Project.<sup>18</sup> The services and participants reported on in this section of the report are only funded through Travis County Workforce Development and Travis County Metro Parks funding and are identified as non-WERC-TC funded participants. YouthBuild participants receiving services through WERC-TC are reported in the subsequent WERC-TC section of this paper.

This non-WERC-TC participant analysis reports on 87 American YouthWorks participants who exited the program in FY 2016.<sup>19</sup> American YouthWorks provides services to youth as young as 16 with 26.4 percent of participants ranging in age from 14 to 19, and 70 percent of participants ranging in age from 20 to 29 years. The average age of American YouthWorks participant exiters is 22. The majority of exiters identified as White (62.1%) with 10.3 percent identified as Black and 14.9 percent Hispanic. Most exiters were male (63.2%). Sixteen percent of respondents reported having less than a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education.<sup>20</sup> The majority of the exiters report residing in two areas: East Austin (23%) and South Austin (29.9%). Ten percent reported judicial involvement.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Non-WERC-TC Funded Participant Outcomes*

Table 4 provides an overview of 87 American YouthWorks program exiter outcomes that receive Travis County funding separate from WERC-TC. As may be expected with a young service population, in the four quarters prior to entering the AYW program, quarterly

---

<sup>18</sup> The Metro Parks Project can be understood as a transfer of HHS funds to Travis County passed through to AYW for a subsidized work experience program.

<sup>19</sup> These exiters represent the American YouthWorks participants who were not enrolled in WERC-TC.

<sup>20</sup> Education level was missing from 78 percent of the participant data.

<sup>21</sup> Veteran status and receipt of public benefits were not reported for the exiting participants. American YouthWorks is designed to support primarily youth, thus *veteran status* may not be an applicable data element.

employment was relatively low at 19 percent. Employment increased during the last quarter of services to 31 percent, rising to 49.4 percent by the second quarter post-service and falling to 45.8 percent in the fourth quarter post-service. Wages varied across the time continuum, with average post-service income of \$2,090, increasing to \$4,159 by the second quarter post-services, and rising again by an average of \$1,000 by the fourth quarter post-service, with an average income of \$5,237 (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

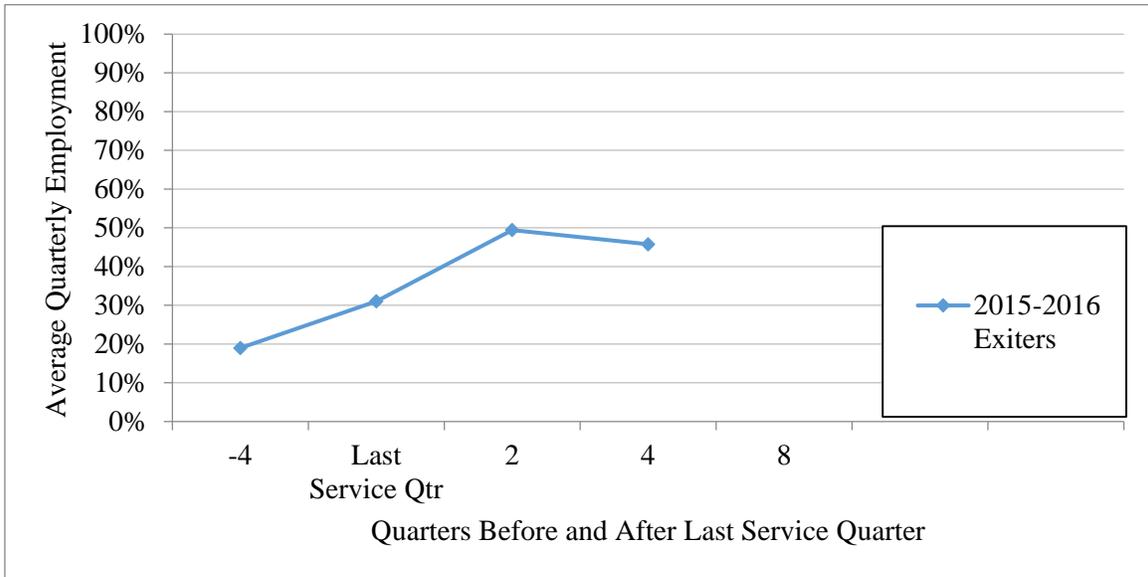
**Table 4. American YouthWorks FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes**

Cohort Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	8th Qtr Post-Service	12th Qtr Post-Service	16th Qtr Post-Service	All Post-Service Qtrs
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	87	87	87	59				
<b>Quarterly Employment:</b> 2015-2016	19.0%	31.0%	49.4%	45.8%	.	.	.	46.5%
<b>Average Qrtly Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	\$2,090	\$2,203	\$4,159	\$5,237	.	.	.	\$4,511
<b>Qualified for UI Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	16.7%	11.5%	11.5%	32.2%	.	.	.	20.8%
<b>Filed UI Claim:</b> 2015-2016	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	.	.	.	0.5%

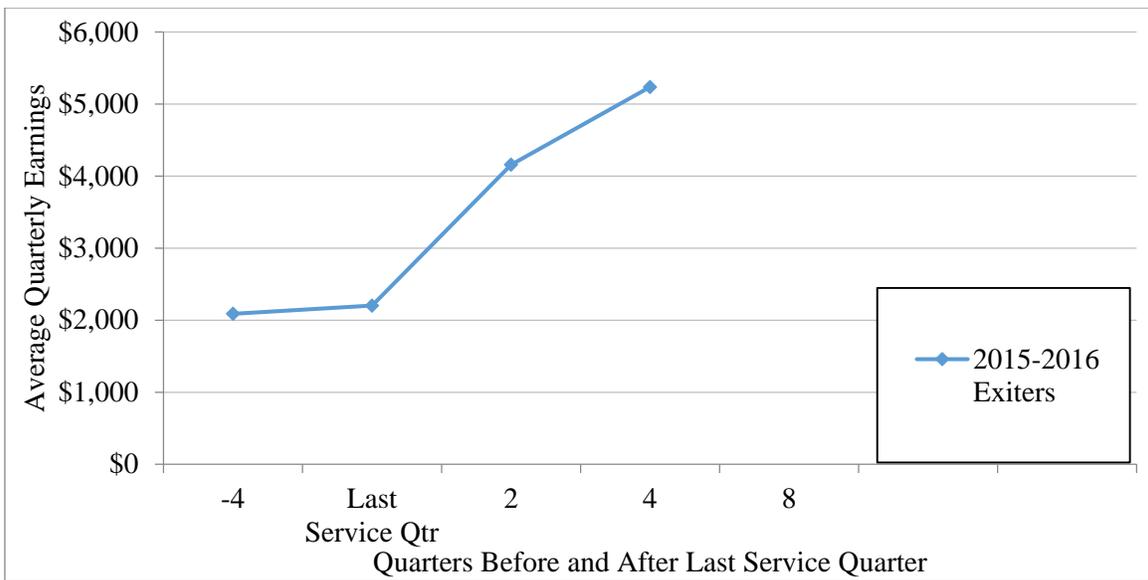
Source: AYW participant records and Texas Workforce Commission UI wage and claim records.

Note: A dot represents too few participants, no data to report, or insufficient time passing to report for that timeframe. Participants were counted as employed if they were found in Texas UI wage records. Those who were not found may be unemployed, employed outside of Texas, or employed in Texas in a position that is not UI-covered and reported to TWC.

**Figure 4. Average Quarterly Employment American YouthWorks FY 2016 Exiters**



**Figure 5. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed American YouthWorks FY 2016 Exiters**



Non-WERC-TC Funded Program Impacts

Table 5 presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing the outcomes of the AYW FY 2016 exiters to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. Participation was positively associated with one of the four outcomes measures of interest: a 25.6 percentage point advantage in employment.

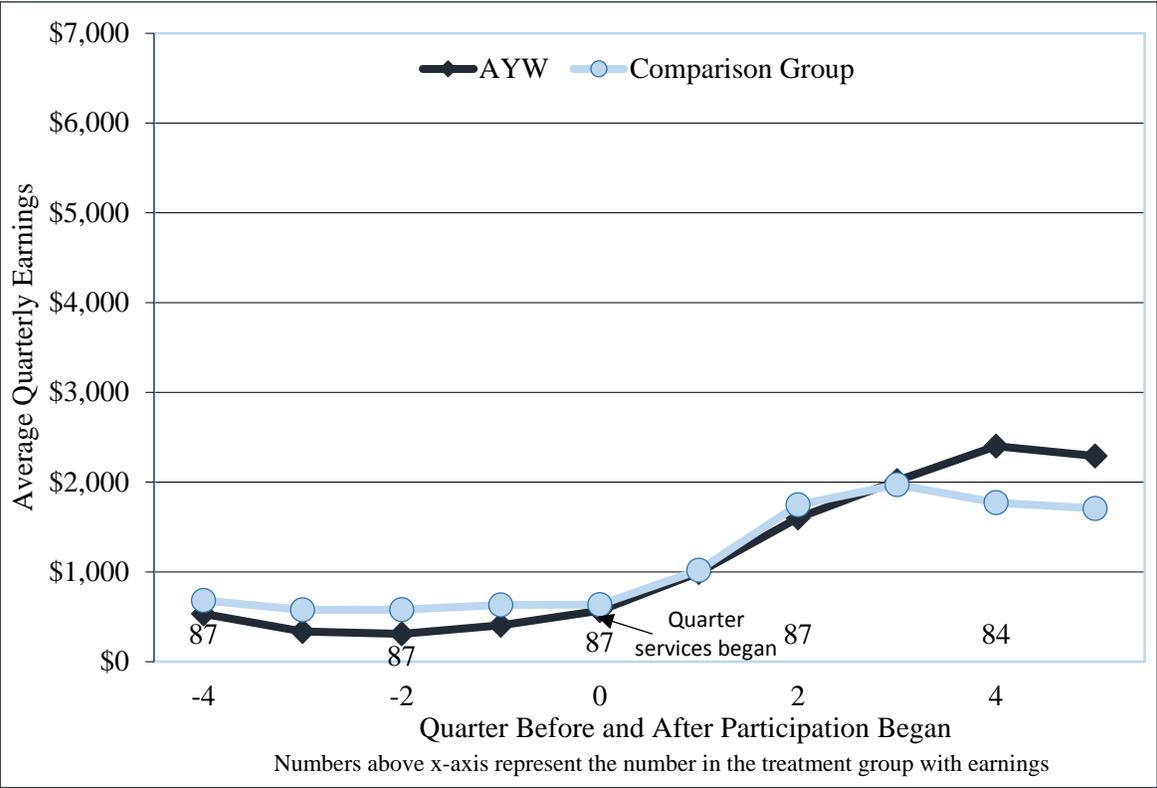
**Table 5: American YouthWorks FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts**

Impact measure	All Qtrs Post-Service: Comparison Group	All Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	35.2%	46.5%	11.4%	25.6%
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$4,547	\$4,511	-\$36	.
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	11.6%	9.8%	-1.9%	0.0%
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	0.20%	0.50%	0.30%	-0.39%

Note: None of the reported effects in this table are statistically significant.

In Figure 6 the impact of participation in AYW is examined by looking at participants' earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group's unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that the two groups were matched in earnings increase until the fourth quarter where the comparison group continued to show gains while the program participants report a drop in earnings.

**Figure 6. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, American YouthWorks Participants vs. Comparison Group**



The Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: "... improves the quality and increases the availability of literacy services for Central Texans." \* The core strategy of the organization is to embed its programming in the business, healthcare and nonprofit sectors.

In FY 2016 Travis County invested \$273,054 in two Literacy Coalition programs: Workforce Infusion (\$241,196) and Literacy Illuminates (\$31,858).



\*Mission statement from:  
<http://willread.org/>

## Literacy Coalition of Central Texas

### Workforce Development Programs and Services

Travis County workforce investments have followed a series of institutional and program realignments over the past few years. Since 2014 the Literacy Coalition merged with two Coalition Partners (the Ascend Center for Learning and *English @ Work*), started a bilingual parenting program, and added a workforce development component to their collaborative capacity-building programs across nine partner sites.<sup>22</sup> The program activities have matured and expanded with each successive institutional change.

As the Ascend Center merged with the Literacy Coalition, the program began to migrate from Workplace Competency to Job Readiness to the present (FY 2016) Workforce Infusion Program. The Workforce Infusion program builds on the Literacy Coalition's network of community-based service providers to implement workforce curricula that integrates literacy with occupation-specific workforce preparation and training across regional adult education programs. Services are targeted for very low-skilled, working age adults who are currently enrolled in adult literacy programming (ABE, GED, and ESL), and have goals to improve their employment status. The program works to utilize the capacity of community literacy services to:

- Build career awareness,
- Increase job readiness skills, and
- Increase employment and career advancement.

<sup>22</sup> The Literacy Coalition coordinates services at a total of 12 sites: 11 are community partners (two are currently not offering Workforce Infusion) and one site operated directly by the Literacy Coalition (The Learning Center formerly the ASCEND Center for Learning).

The Literacy Coalition recruits interested persons through their network of adult literacy partner organizations. Each partner site works with two Literacy Coalition AmeriCorps Members (an instructor and a job coach) who are trained to implement the Workforce Infusion program in the context of each site's existing literacy services.<sup>23</sup> Students currently enrolled in literacy programs meet with AmeriCorps Members to complete an intake process to establish goals and a plan to obtain their educational and employment goals. Participants take the TABE at the beginning of the program to identify skill strengths and weaknesses. Participants are then tested after every 40 hours of instruction. Students interested in advanced workforce preparation can enroll in work-readiness skill-building services to work with a job coach to complete an Individual Learning Plan to further outline their educational and career goals. The job coach will connect students to additional resources to meet those objectives. The target wage for those that enter employment was \$9.25 per hour in FY 2016.

The Workforce Infusion project employs an incentive program to track client employment and job retention rates. Clients who return documentation proving improved employment will receive \$100 in gift cards, and those proving retention of their new position for at least six months receive \$50.

Literacy Illuminates is the Literacy Coalition's community-wide outreach and education effort. Its goals are to raise general awareness about the literacy services in the area, distribute educational and informational materials to low literate parents of young children (to promote high literacy rates among their children), and to better connect social service professionals to the literacy resources available for their clients. The campaign provides trainings on literacy resources to case management professionals in area non-profits, City of Austin, Travis County, and AISD programs that provide direct services to vulnerable families. Literacy Illuminates employs an evolving strategy as the project pursues different options to determine how best to reach the project's intended population.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> During the first year of transition to the Workforce Infusion (FY 2106) model, AmeriCorps members who were teaching ESL/ABE were trained to add workforce prep and career development services into their teaching and their work with students. In FY 2017, the program moved toward having dedicated job coaches.

<sup>24</sup> Information from a conversation with Meg Poag, Chief Executive Director, Yaira Robinson, Director of Collaborative Programs, and Sadia Tirmizi of the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas. September 12, 2017.

### Support Services

Literacy Coalition partner sites each deliver varying support services to participants. Students enrolled at the Literacy Coalition Learning Center site are eligible to access a web of support services. The Learning Center employs a full-time case manager/participant support specialist and a social services coordinator who work to improve program persistence and completion by offering a number of support services. The Learning Center offers transportation assistance, primarily in the form of bus passes, but has moved towards gas cards, and even helps with auto repairs. The organization also provides emergency rent or utility assistance on a case-by-case basis. The social services coordinator makes referrals to organizations throughout Travis County based on the participant's needs. For example, parenting participants may be referred to Workforce Solutions–Capital Area to access child care development funds. The organization finds that a lack of child care is a significant barrier to participation.

### Participant Profile

This analysis reports on 77 Literacy Coalition participants who exited the program in FY 2016. The average age of Literacy Coalition participant exiters is 33, a plurality of program participants were between the ages of 20 and 29 (35.1%). Most exiters identified as Hispanic (41.6%), with 22.1 percent identifying as White and 27.3 percent identifying as Black. Most exiters were female (70.1%). The majority, 80.5 percent, reported less than a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education. Exiters report residing primarily in the following areas: East Austin (50.6%), and South Austin (28.6%).<sup>25</sup>

### Participant Outcomes

Table 6 provides an overview of participant outcomes across the four quarters prior to services, during the exit quarter, and the second and fourth quarter post-services. Overall, in the four quarters prior to entering the Literacy Coalition program, quarterly employment in a UI-covered job in Texas was 50.7 percent, rising to 59.7 percent by the second quarter post-service, but falling to 51.6 percent in the fourth quarter-post service. Wages remained relatively static prior to service and through the second quarter post service yet increasing by over \$1000 in the

---

<sup>25</sup>Information on exiter judicial involvement, veteran status and receipt of public benefits were missing from the reported data.

fourth quarter. (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

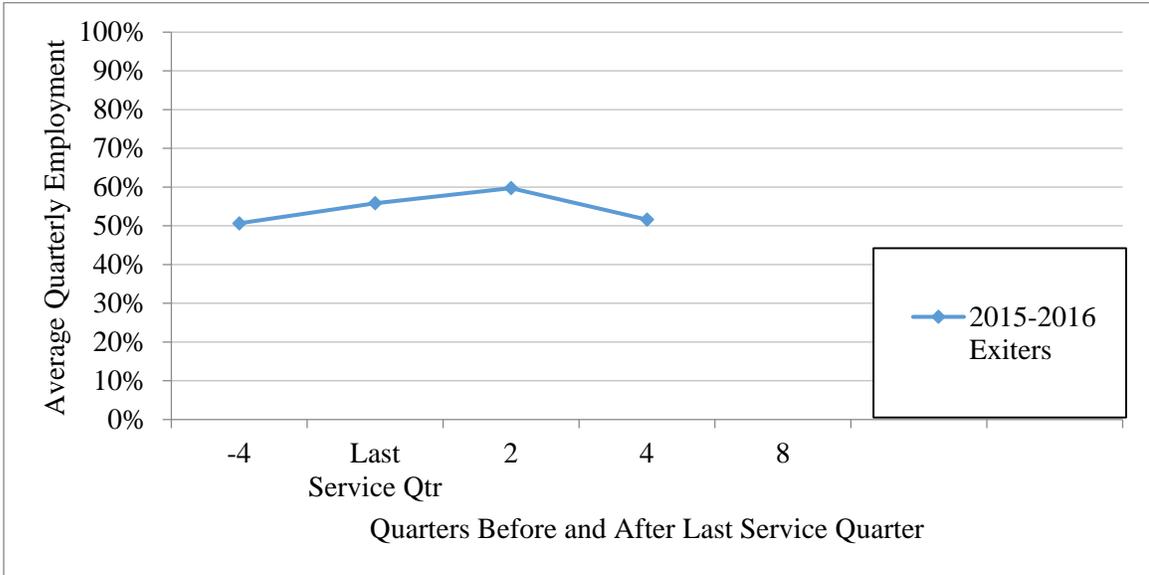
**Table 6. Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes**

Cohort Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	8th Qtr Post-Service	12th Qtr Post-Service	16th Qtr Post-Service	All Post-Service Qtrs
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>62</b>				
<b>Quarterly Employment:</b> 2015-2016	50.7%	55.8%	59.7%	51.6%	.	.	.	58.7%
<b>Average Qrtly Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	\$3,837	\$3,654	\$3,992	\$4,909	.	.	.	\$3,873
<b>Qualified for UI Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	37.0%	39.0%	41.6%	51.6%	.	.	.	46.1%
<b>Filed UI Claim:</b> 2015-2016	2.0%	2.6%	0.0%	1.6%	.	.	.	0.8%

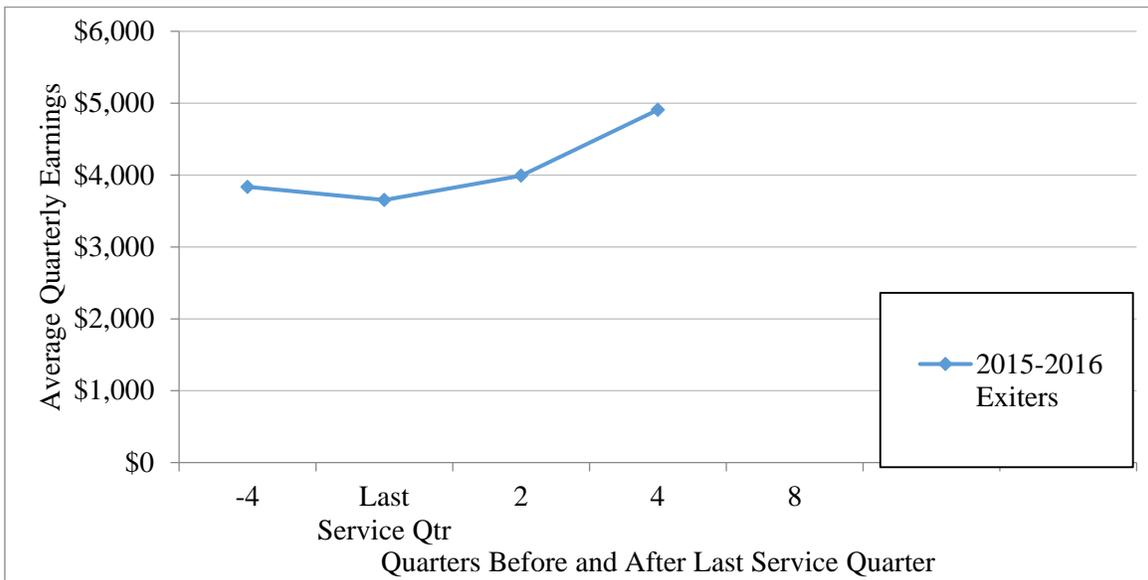
Source: Literacy Coalition participant records and Texas Workforce Commission UI wage and claim records.

Note: A dot represents too few participants, no data to report, or insufficient time passing to report for that timeframe. Participants were counted as employed if they were found in Texas UI wage records. Those who were not found may be unemployed, employed outside of Texas, or employed in Texas in a position that is not UI-covered and reported to TWC.

**Figure 7. Average Quarterly Employment of Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Exiters**



**Figure 8. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employment of Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Exiters**



Program Impacts

Table 7 presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing the outcomes of the Literacy Coalition FY 2016 exiters to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. Based upon the data, participation was not positively associated with any outcomes measures of interest.

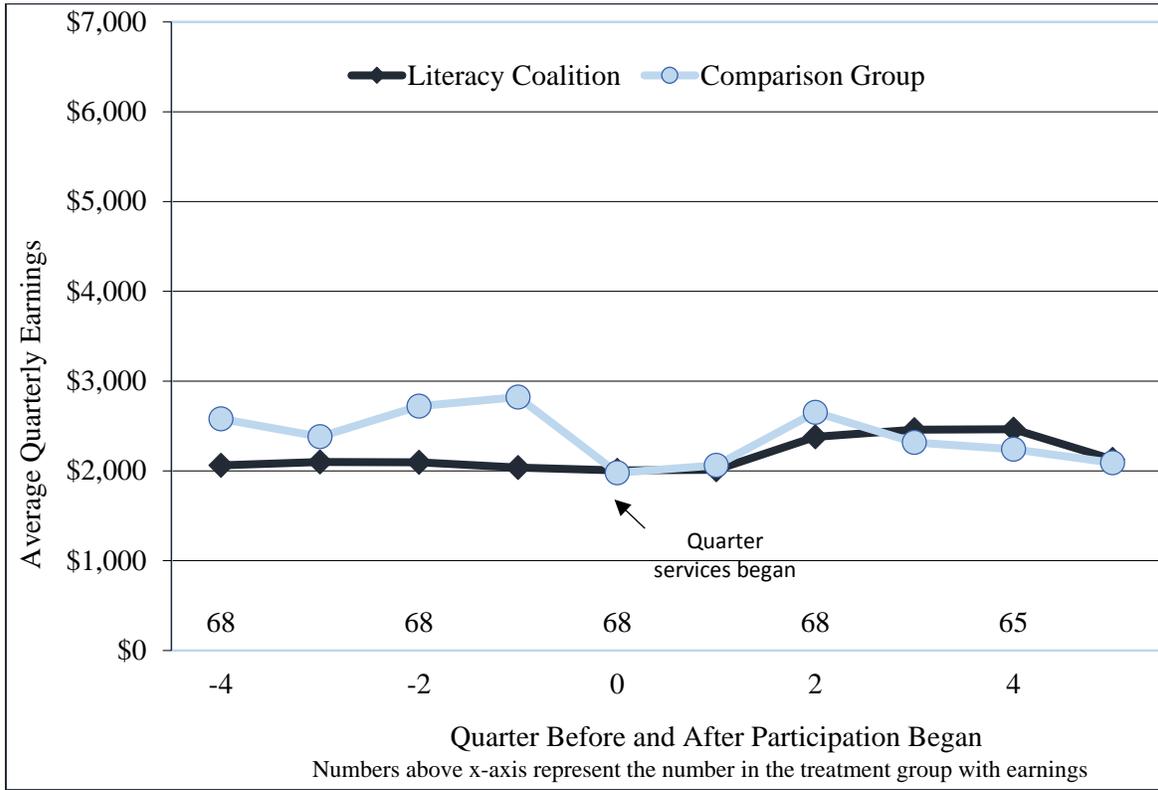
**Table 7. Literacy Coalition FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts**

Impact measure	All Qtrs Post-Service: Comparison Group	All Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	48.1%	59.6%	11.5%	-9.2%
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$5,432	\$3,971	-\$1,461	-\$344
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	44.5%	59.1%	14.6%	0.0%
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	0.66%	0.93%	0.27%	0.00%

Note: None of the reported effects in this table are statistically significant.

In Figure 9 the impact of participation in Literacy Coalition services is examined by looking at participants' earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group's unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that Literacy Coalition participant's average quarterly wages were similar to the comparison group in all quarters post-service entry.

**Figure 9. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Literacy Coalition Participants vs. Comparison Group**



## Capital IDEA

### Workforce Development Programs and Services

Capital IDEA is a sectoral workforce development program, offering training in health care, high-tech, and professional trades industries. Healthcare occupations (both patient care and allied health) historically have accounted for approximately 75 percent of the training in which participants are enrolled. Each program supported at Capital IDEA is one identified by area employers as an occupation in high-demand paying \$15.90 or more per hour.

Capital IDEA carefully screens applicants for suitability and commitment through an assessment process including: the TABE and the System for Assessment and Group Evaluation (SAGE). Applicants participate in a career counseling session to review assessment results and prepare an individual Services Strategy to outline the training and support services needed to meet their educational and career goals. Finally, applicants are interviewed by a Capital IDEA director who will make the decision on acceptance.

Programming includes the College Prep Academy (described below), ongoing group sessions with a Career Navigator and other participants, and occupational skills training. Each student is assigned a Career Navigator to help guide them through the higher education system.<sup>26</sup>

Eligibility for the program includes at least a 5<sup>th</sup> grade skill level in reading and math and a high school diploma or GED. Participants scoring as low as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level on the

“Capital IDEA’s mission is to lift working adults out of poverty and into living wage careers through education and career advancement.”\*

The program provides non-traditional, low-income adults with the opportunity to pursue long-term training in high-wage, high-demand occupations.

Capital IDEA collaborates with employers and training providers to help prepare participants for good jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits.

In FY’s 2014 and 2015, annual funding from Travis County was \$875,000. FY 2016, Travis Co. removed child care funding from the grant and the amount decreased to \$760,800.



\*[www.capitalIDEA.org](http://www.capitalIDEA.org)

<sup>26</sup> The majority of Capital IDEA’s participants are non-traditional, first-generation college students.

TABE and are judged to be unlikely to pass the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA), which is required for college admission, are enrolled in the College Prep Academy. The College Prep Academy is an intensive 6.5 hour per day, five-day a week, 12 week program designed to build math, reading, writing, and study skills. Less than 10 percent of participants require more than one semester of the academy; those who do repeat typically need additional support in math. Almost all students enroll in certificate or Associate's degree-level training at a community college. Ninety-five percent of Capital IDEA students enroll at Austin Community College, with most of the remaining students enrolling at Temple College. Overall, the average length of enrollment for participants is 3.5 to 4 years in training, plus two years of job placement assistance and follow-up and guidance as needed.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, in response to increasing employer demand for experienced workers, Capital IDEA and ACC introduced the IT Career Expressway (ACC calls the program Career ACCelerator) in Fall 2015, which provides paid internships to students, providing the work experience that employers seek.<sup>28</sup> The Health Care Career ACCelerator was introduced in FY 2016.<sup>29</sup> Presently, about 75 percent of the Career Expressway participants are in a health care education track.

In FY 2016, Capital IDEA began recruiting low-income, high-need applicants straight out of high school, right after graduation. It is uncertain at this time what effects serving the younger clientele may have on persistence, completion, and duration of services. Capital IDEA has noted that the historic average age of participants has been dropping significantly. Also,

---

<sup>27</sup> Those who withdraw or suspend participation usually do so at about 2.5 years, typically for financial, personal health or family issues, according to Capital IDEA Director, Steve Jackobs, during a conversation on 8/28/2015.

<sup>28</sup> Entry-level IT jobs may pay less than the target wage, but the career path is expected to quickly lead to occupations that surpass that rate. As the IT Career Expressway ramps up in the next year, it will rebalance the occupational prevalence of healthcare occupations. Jackobs attributes the model to the Workforce Potential Project, conducted by the Ray Marshall Center in 2012 on behalf of the Austin Area Research Association (AARO). <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/business/acc-programs-aim-build-a-fast-track-to-higher-pay/npbsx/>

<sup>29</sup> There is some concern that IT interns may be placed in good paying jobs directly from the internships, prior to finishing the Capital IDEA training sequence. Employers can custom train those whose talent and prospects they recognize. This would affect completion rates. The risk is eliminated in the health care sector because students must finish their studies and licensure prior to employment in the industry. Conversation with Steve Jackobs, Executive Director, Eva Rios-Lleverino, Director of Operations, and Amy Price, Director of Development, on August 26, 2016.

Administrators note that 40 percent of these recent graduates fail to pass the Texas Success Initiative Assessment and need developmental education.<sup>30</sup>

One of the primary activities in Capital IDEA are the regular one-hour peer support group sessions led by a Career Navigator. Topics for these sessions are driven by student needs and their ability to navigate the college experience. Navigators also meet individually with participants at the start of each semester to make sure they get off on the right track. Participants are encouraged to manage their own self-sufficiency by working part-time during training. Financial literacy is a core skill participants develop through Capital IDEA. Financial aid and budgeting are important topics that help participants stay focused on their training plan.

### Support Services

Capital IDEA covers all tuition, fees and books. The program also covers the cost of uniforms, shoes, tools, training software, and anything required on a class syllabus. ACC students have a “green pass”, which entitles them to free bus, rail, and Express Bus services in the region for the entire semester.

Participants receive assistance with purchasing school supplies including backpacks, printer ink, and paper. The program also covers the cost of other services important to learning, such as eye examinations and eyeglasses, if needed. Emergency utility vouchers, and mortgage and rent assistance are also available on a case-by-case basis.

Workforce Solutions provides child care services for Capital IDEA participants living in Travis County and who needed such assistance. Through 2015, Capital IDEA offered supplemental child care support for qualifying parents who did not receive support through Workforce Solutions. In FY 2016, child care expenditures were disallowed and child care has

---

<sup>30</sup> Information from a conversation with Steve Jackobs, Executive Director, Eva Rios-Lleverino, Director of Operations, and Amy Price, Director of Development, on August 26, 2016

become an ongoing challenge for parents of young children. In response, Capital IDEA hired a part-time program specialist to assist students navigating the child care process.<sup>31</sup>

Capital IDEA has a robust network of informal and formal relationships with social service providers. Participants in need of mental health counseling may be referred to the Samaritan Center or LifeWorks. Other partners include Dress for Success and other sources for interview clothes, Blue/Brown Santa, food banks, the Housing Authority, Foundation Communities, SafePlace, and many others. Proximity to the ACC Eastview Campus Workforce Center has improved connections between the Workforce Solutions' WIOA program and Capital IDEA and helps to build partnerships and resource connections. In Fall 2014, ACC opened the ACCelerator, a high-tech learning lab at Highland Mall campus. Capital IDEA also has staff and offices on-site at Highland. Students can utilize multiple pods of (600+) computer stations for individualized and self-paced learning, as well as the tutoring, academic advising, adult and continuing education, and college readiness services available in the state-of-the art facility.

### Participant Profile

This analysis reports on 175 Capital IDEA participants who exited the program in FY 2016. Although the average age of Capital IDEA participant exiters is 32, a plurality of program participants were between the ages of 20 and 29 (42.3%). Most exiters identified as White (44%), with 22.9 percent identifying as Black. The remaining ethnic categories: Hispanic, Asian combined to represent 16.6 percent, with 16.6 percent identifying as "other". Most exiters were female (65.1%). Fifty-two percent reported a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education or GED, with 46.9 percent having attended or graduated from college. The majority of the exiters report residing in three areas: North Austin (30.3%) East Austin (25.7%), and South Austin (24.6%). Ten percent reported judicial involvement.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> FY 2016, Travis County disallowed child care support expenditures, causing Capital IDEA to rely on Workforce Solutions or other funding sources to provide child care support. In July 2016, TWC placed a freeze on child care support for Priority 3 workforce participants, reserving funds for Priority 1 and 2 (TANF and Child Protective Services). Although existing workforce clients were grandfathered in, the freeze presented challenges to the 80 new participants that Capital IDEA has enrolled for the fall, 2016 semester. Information from a conversation Eva Rios-Lleverino, Director of Operations, Capital IDEA on 9/13/2017.

<sup>32</sup> Information on exiter veteran status and receipt of public benefits were missing from the reported data.

Participant Outcomes

Table 8 provides an overview of labor market outcomes for Capital IDEA FY 2016 exiters. Participant employment at four quarters prior to enrolling in Capital IDEA was relatively high at 68 percent. In the last quarter of participation, employment rose to 72 percent. Participants continued to exhibit strong employment levels during the second and fourth quarter post-services (80 and 79.8 percent respectively). Exiters' income doubled across the report period: prior to service, average income was \$4,469, increasing to \$9,274 during the fourth quarter post-services. (Figure 10 and Figure 11)

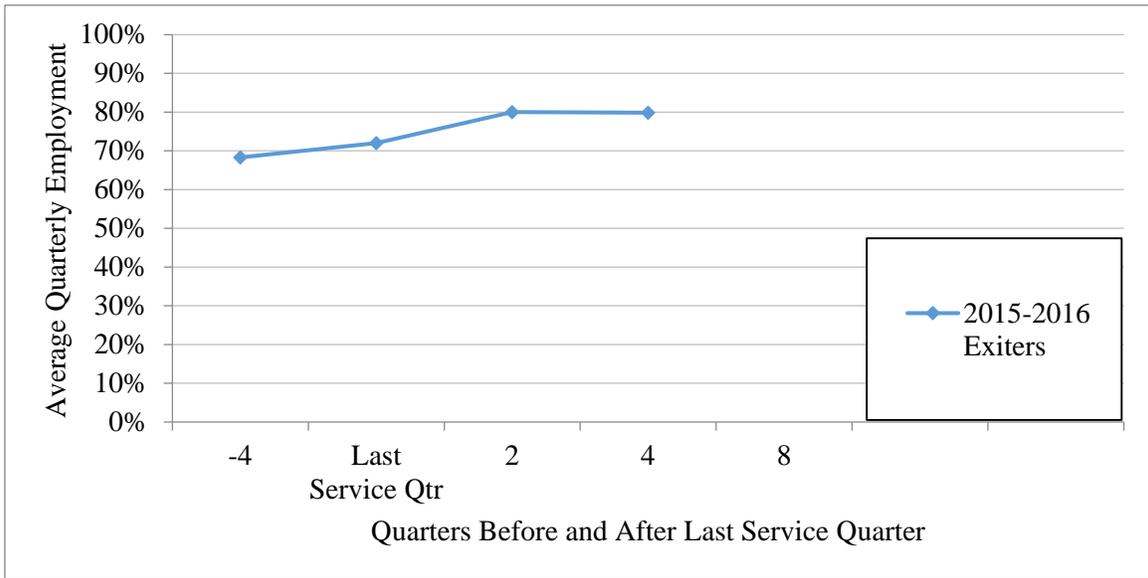
**Table 8. Capital IDEA Participant Outcomes, FY 2016 Exiters**

Cohort Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	8th Qtr Post-Service	12th Qtr Post-Service	16th Qtr Post-Service	All Post-Service Qtrs
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>119</b>				
<b>Quarterly Employment:</b> 2015-2016	68.3%	72.0%	80.0%	79.8%	.	.	.	79.8%
<b>Average Qrtly Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	\$4,469	\$6,350	\$8,225	\$9,274	.	.	.	\$8,418
<b>Qualified for UI Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	55.6%	65.1%	64.0%	69.8%	.	.	.	69.4%
<b>Filed UI Claim:</b> 2015-2016	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	.08%	.	.	.	1.1%

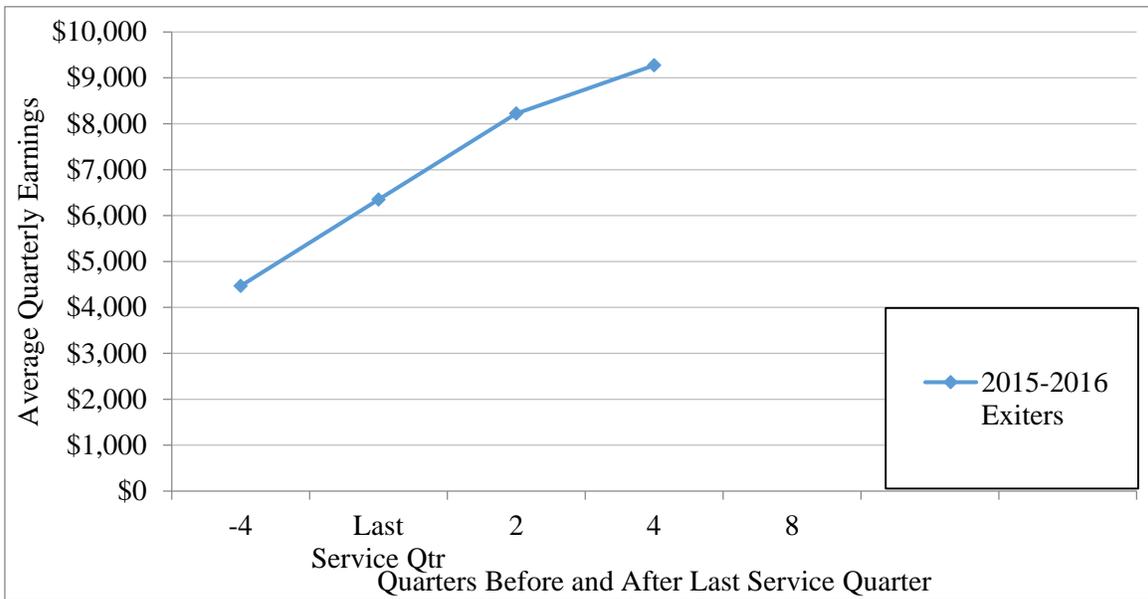
Source: Capital IDEA participant records and Texas Workforce Commission UI wage and claim records.

Note: A dot represents too few participants, no data to report, or insufficient time passing to report for that timeframe. Participants were counted as employed if they were found in Texas UI wage records. Those who were not found may be unemployed, employed outside of Texas, or employed in Texas in a position that is not UI-covered and reported to TWC.

**Figure 10. Average Quarterly Employment of Capital IDEA FY 2106 Exitters**



**Figure 11. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employment Capital IDEA FY 2016 Exitters**



Program Impacts

Table 9 presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing the outcomes of the Capital IDEA FY 2016 exiters to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. Participation in Capital IDEA was positively associated with three of the four outcomes measures of interest, notably a \$973 advantage in wages and a 4.1 percentage point advantage in quarterly employment.

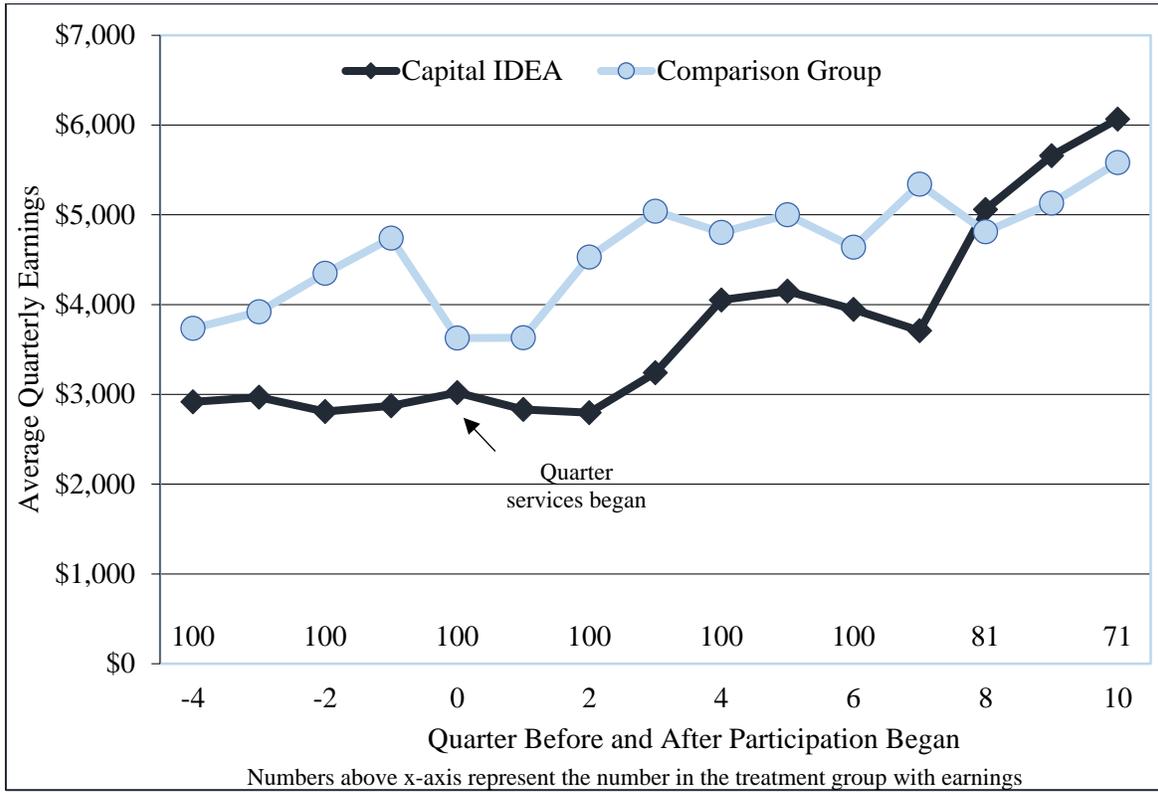
**Table 9. Capital IDEA FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts**

Impact measure	All Qtrs Post-Service: Comparison Group	All Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	74.0%	75.5%	1.5%	4.1%
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$6,625	\$7,574	\$950	\$973
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	58.1%	64.0%	5.9%	0.0%
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	3.79%	0.71%	-3.08%	-2.70%

Note: None of the reported effects in this table are statistically significant.

In Figure 12 the impact of participation in Capital IDEA services is examined by looking at participants' earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group's unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that Capital IDEA participant's average quarterly wages make gains during the eighth quarter post service entry.

**Figure 12. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Capital IDEA Participants vs. Comparison Group.**



## LifeWorks

### Workforce Development Programs and Services

The LifeWorks mission is to advocate for youth and families seeking their path to self-sufficiency through comprehensive service delivery including housing, counseling, education, and workforce development.

LifeWorks services youth and young adults (ages 16 to 26) facing major obstacles to achieving their goals including: homelessness, trauma, abuse and judicial involvement.

FY 2016 Travis County invested \$241,196 in the LifeWorks education and workforce development program.



[www.lifeworksaustin.org](http://www.lifeworksaustin.org)

The current LifeWorks program was created in 1998 through the merger of Pathways Community Counseling, Child & Family Service, Teenage Parent Council of Austin, and Youth Options. The goal of the merger was to establish a continuum of support for youth and families experiencing crises.

LifeWorks has more than 50 years' experience working with homeless youth, youth aging out of foster care, young adults, and young parents. Today, LifeWorks provides programs designed to bolster self-sufficiency under the categories of Housing, Counseling, and Education/Workforce. Education and Workforce programs provide literacy and GED classes, workforce placement and critical skill-building support. Youth and families may access one or multiple LifeWorks programs with continuity.

In FY 2016 Travis County funded LifeWorks to implement the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, an evidence based supported employment model developed by Dartmouth College. The model, originally designed to provide employment services, training opportunities, and job placement assistance for individuals with mental health challenges, has been adapted to serve LifeWorks youth and young adults. The model has been adapted to offer strategies for service providers

working in collaboration with communities, youth, and young adults to overcome and work-around previous obstacles to workplace success. The core premise of IPS is the belief that work promotes mental wellness. FY 2016, the first implementation year, staff worked to ensure the fidelity of the model implementation.

Youth and young adults participating in the IPS program are referred by a LifeWorks staff member, have a valid ID and Social Security Card, and have identified employment as a goal. Individuals entering the workforce program have an established relationship with a LifeWorks Case Manager who works in collaboration with the IPS Employment Specialist. Employment Specialists focus on employment assessment, the development of relationships with employers, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports. Employment support services include, at a minimum, weekly visits for the first month of employment followed by monthly contact. Supports are individualized and can range from wake-up phone calls and transportation assistance, to assistance learning specific job tasks and support with on-the-job interpersonal relationships.

LifeWorks GED and literacy program targets youth and young adults who have dropped out of school or are parenting and face significant barriers to achieving their educational goals such as: homelessness, pregnancy, parenthood, or involvement in the juvenile justice system. Education services are provided at two LifeWorks locations Monday through Thursday at a variety of times. Education services are offered in collaboration with Austin Community College through the Adult Education and Literacy Consortium, as well as the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas. The Literacy Coalition coordinates AmeriCorps volunteers to support the direct education services. All students are assessed using the TABE test, and an individualized service plan is developed to identify service needs and the monitoring of educational progress. While studying in the program, each student's educational progress is assessed monthly.

### Support Services

At intake, each client works with their case manager to complete an initial assessment using a Self-Sufficiency Matrix (SSM). The SSM identifies client strengths, needs, and goals in order to guide case managers to make referrals and provide supports. LifeWorks directly assists clients with housing, counseling, and transportation services, while referring to a variety of service providers within Travis County to provide services such as child care and other supports. The SSM, reviewed and updated quarterly, is used to track clients' movement across programs

and measure the impact of services.<sup>33</sup>

### *Participant Profile*

The Workforce Development FY 2016 Community Impact Report prepared by Travis County provided information for this report regarding all LifeWorks participants for FY 2016. This description includes all participants and is not limited to FY 2016 program exiters. Participants were primarily female (55%) and male (42%), while two percent identified as Transgender. Most participants identify as Hispanic or Latino (58%) and under the age of 24. Ages range from 15 to 39, and all participants report an income level of less than 200% of FPL.<sup>34</sup>

### *Participant Outcomes and Program Impacts*

Due to challenges with data collection, LifeWorks was unable to provide RMC with the necessary data to report on client outcomes. Steps have been taken by LifeWorks staff to ensure data will be available for FY 2017 program exiters.

---

<sup>33</sup> Information from a conversation with Jackie Platt, Division Director, Education and Workforce Division, Nicholas Winowsky, Program Director, Workforce Development and GED Programs, and Peg Gavin, Director of Grants and Contracts, LifeWorks. September 13, 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Workforce Development FY 2016 Community Impact Report. Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Services Research & Planning Division. January 2017. Available at: <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/health-human-services/research-planning/cir>

## Skillpoint Alliance

### Workforce Development Programs and Services

The Skillpoint Alliance Gateway program objective is to employ individuals in high-demand occupations, at a livable wage, through short-term training. Depending on the occupation targeted, the 40 hours a week training may range from four to eight weeks. Each curriculum emphasizes project-based learning opportunities with a combination of class time and active hands-on skill development.

In 2010, Skillpoint began coordinating quarterly industry Advisory Committees in order to engage employers in conversation concerning their workforce needs, and to give employers and industry groups a bigger role in shaping the Gateway training programs. The focus of the Advisory Committees is to match Gateway training to the needs of employers and the community, so that individuals have the skills necessary to gain employment in demand occupations with promising career pathways.

Since 2010 the Gateway program has offered a number of different certification programs, including culinary arts, office administration, construction (electrical and HVAC), plumbing, and machine operator. In 2016, the program offered training and certification in certified nurse aide (CNA); electrical; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). Also in 2016, in response to local workforce needs identified by an industry Advisory Committee, Skillpoint began development of a pipefitting course (an expansion of the previously offered plumbing curriculum) to pilot in 2017.

Skillpoint Alliance is a regional workforce intermediary providing short-term occupational skills training through its Gateway program.

Skillpoint's mission is "...to provide a gateway for individuals to transform their lives through rigorous skills-based training and education."\*

Skillpoint connects individuals, training providers, employers, and other community organizations together to meet identified workforce skills gaps.

FY 2016 Travis County invested \$270,800 in the Gateway program.



\*[www.skillpointalliance.org](http://www.skillpointalliance.org)

Skillpoint Alliance works with its training providers to develop a core curriculum that serves as the first step in the training sequence for career pathways. For example, the HVAC and electrical courses are each eight week specialty courses that prepare participants for work as an apprentice. Students spend the first three weeks of the training completing the “Construction Core” curriculum, which awards a certification needed for entry-level positions in any construction trade. The participants then spend the last five weeks learning their specialty trade (electrical or HVAC), which upon completion earns them additional certifications based on their training topic. Currently all training is provided at the Austin Electrical Training Alliance (formerly known as JATC). The CNA training program is provided in partnership with Health Training Services. The four week program prepares participants to work in hospitals, home health care, or assisted living facilities. Skillpoint additionally provides participants with follow-up services for six months following their program completion, and, even though Skillpoint is not a job placement program, staff members provide program graduates with information on relevant job postings.

In 2016, the program experienced staff turn-over in key positions and struggled with participant recruitment. As staff stabilized, Skillpoint also developed a new coordinator position to formalize in-house Employability Workshops which provide professional development and job readiness training. Participants receive 12 hours of training in the application process (how to complete a job application) and develop a resume, interview preparation and practice sessions, introductions to employers and potential job site visits, and how to discuss potential challenges to employment (such as previous judicial involvement).

Another program component, academic entrance requirements, have been reviewed and evolved to decrease barriers for competent individuals to enroll in the program. Previously, the skills test, General Assessment of Instructional Need (GAIN), taken by potential participants required the demonstration of a 7<sup>th</sup> grade academic competency. The program will now exempt from testing potential participants who have earned a high school diploma or GED, or any higher education transcript. Staff report they continue to evaluate and refine this process to increase the

opportunities for individuals who may be a good match for the program yet experience challenges in testing or other internal barriers.<sup>35</sup>

### Support Services

In addition to covering the full cost of the training and professional development activities noted above, Skillpoint also provides substantial support services to help participants cope with the travel, equipment, and clothing requirements of the programs. Services include bus passes, tools, work clothes, shoes, and books. Skillpoint also connects Gateway participants with other resources in the community. For example, participants are referred to Workforce Solutions Career Centers for job search assistance, and participants receiving SNAP or TANF benefits are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available through those programs including job search and job readiness classes. Skillpoint regularly receives referrals for entry-level training from other local agencies to serve judicially involved and high-risk individuals.

### Participant Profile

This analysis reports on 178 Skillpoint participants who exited the program in FY 2016. The average age of Skillpoint participant exiter is 26. The plurality of exiters identified as Black (33.1%), with 13.6 percent identifying as White.<sup>36</sup> Most exiters were female (57.9%). Sixty percent reported attending or having graduated from college. The majority of the exiters report residing in three areas: North Austin (14%) East Austin (28.1%), South Austin (15.2%) and northern suburbs (11.2%). Ten percent reported judicial involvement, and 3.9 percent reported veteran status.

### Participant Outcomes

Table 10 provides an overview of Skillpoint participant outcomes. Overall, in the four quarters prior to entering the Skillpoint program, quarterly employment was 66.4 percent, rising to 82.6 percent by the second quarter post-service, and falling to 79.4 percent in the fourth quarter post-service. Wages varied across the time continuum reporting average post-service

---

<sup>35</sup>Information from a conversation with Sarah Gebhardt, Data and Media Specialist and Aaron Hill, Program Manager, September 8, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Race/Ethnicity was missing for 34.8 percent of the sample.

income of \$4,041, dropping to \$2,934 during the exit quarter and increasing to \$5,059 by the second quarter post-services, and falling by an average \$100 for the fourth quarter post-service (Figure 13 and Figure 14).

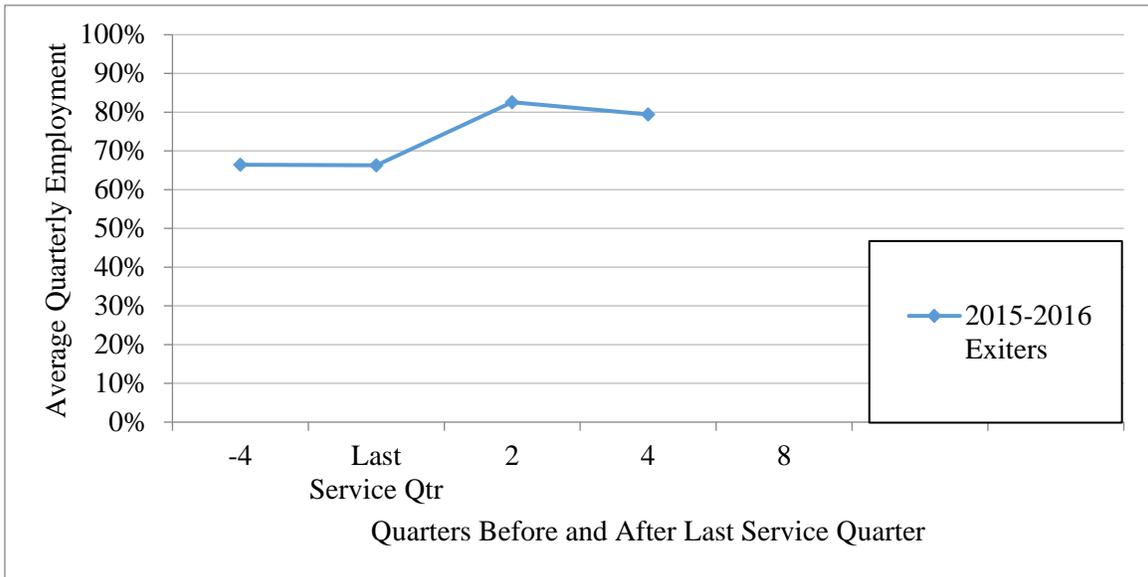
**Table 10. Skillpoint FY 2016 Exiter Outcomes**

Cohort Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Service	Last Qtr of Service	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	8th Qtr Post-Service	12th Qtr Post-Service	16th Qtr Post-Service	All Post-Service Qtrs
<b>Number of Participants:</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>141</b>				
<b>Quarterly Employment:</b> 2015-2016	66.4%	66.3%	82.6%	79.4%	.	.	.	79.2%
<b>Average Qrtly Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	\$4,041	\$2,934	\$5,059	\$4,942	.	.	.	\$4,899
<b>Qualified for UI Earnings:</b> 2015-2016	55.1%	57.9%	60.7%	68.8%	.	.	.	65.8%
<b>Filed UI Claim:</b> 2015-2016	2.0%	2.8%	1.7%	0.7%	.	.	.	1.1%

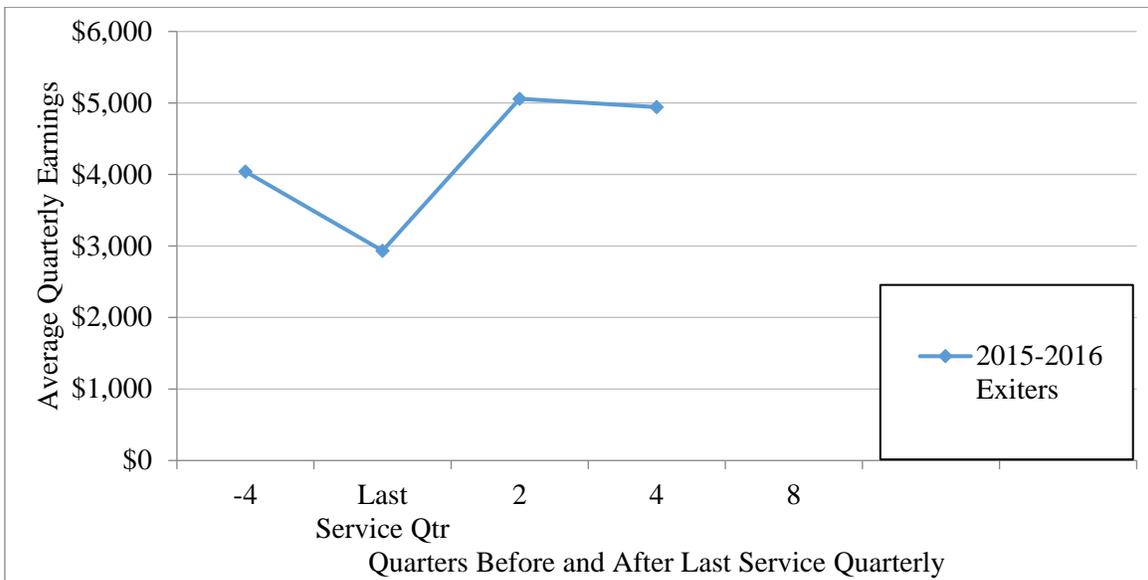
Source: Skillpoint participant records and Texas Workforce Commission UI wage and claim records.

Note: A dot represents too few participants, no data to report, or insufficient time passing to report for that timeframe. Participants were counted as employed if they were found in Texas UI wage records. Those who were not found may be unemployed, employed outside of Texas, or employed in Texas in a position that is not UI-covered and reported to TWC.

**Figure 13. Average Quarterly Employment of Skillpoint FY 2016 Exiters**



**Figure 14. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed Skillpoint FY 2016 Exiters**



Program Impacts

Table 11 presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing the outcomes of the Skillpoint FY 2016 exiters to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. Participation was positively associated with two of the four outcomes measures of interest: a \$1026 advantage in earnings, and 3.39 percentage point decrease in the share that filed for UI benefits.

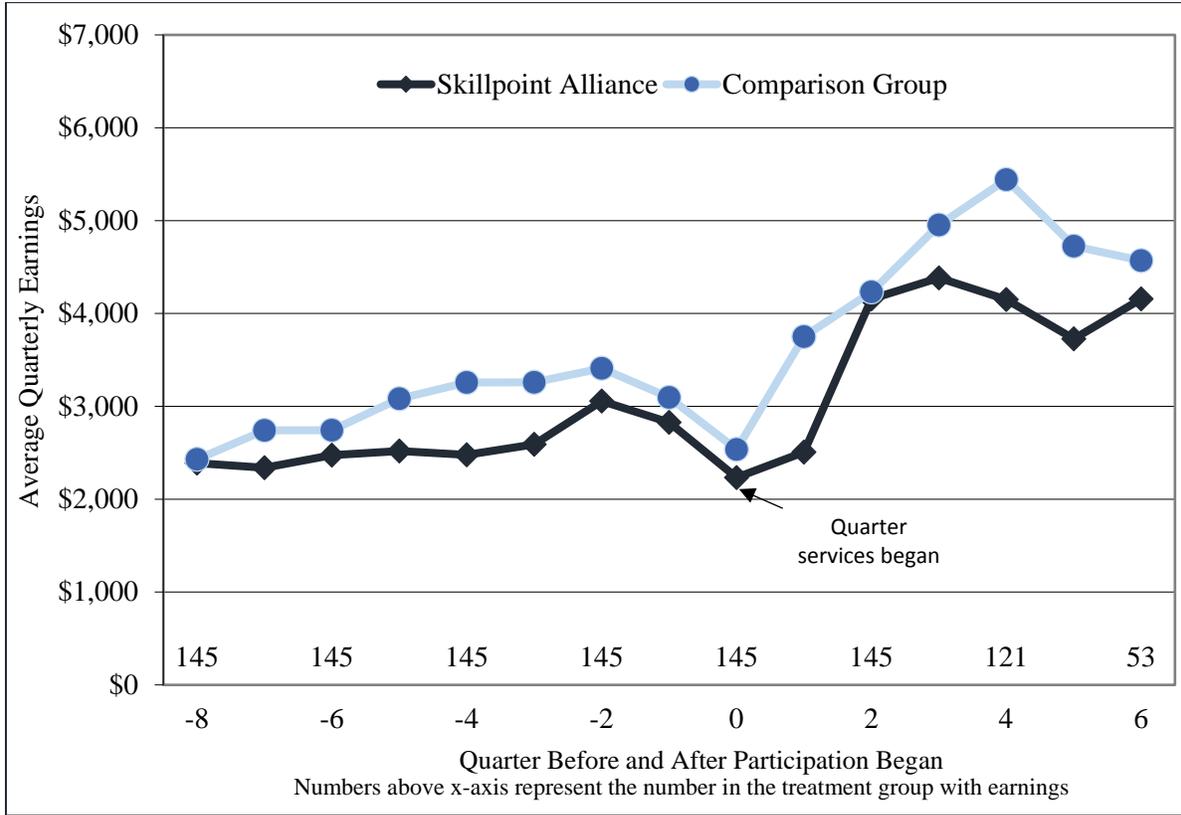
**Table 11. Skillpoint FY 2016 Quarterly Impacts**

Impact measure	All Qtrs Post-Service: Comparison Group	All Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	72.8%	79.2%	6.4%	-3.2%
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$6,944	\$4,990	-\$1,954	\$1026
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	53.7%	50.9%	-2.7%	0.0%
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	1.20%	0.89%	-0.31%	-3.39%

Note: None of the reported effects in this table are statistically significant.

In Figure 15 the impact of participation in Skillpoint services is examined by looking at participants' earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group's unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that Skillpoint participants matched comparison group wages by the second quarter, yet decrease in the remaining quarters for which data was available. Of note is the number of participants with data available begins to also drop during the fourth quarter post-service entry.

**Figure 15. Unconditional Earnings Over Time, Skillpoint Participants vs. Comparison Group**



## **Results**

Travis County, Texas, invests local tax dollars in a continuum of services to improve opportunities for disadvantaged residents to increase their success in the labor market. Through contracts with a mix of workforce development providers and programs, the County supports education and workforce opportunities that match skills development and certifications to the needs of local employers. The service continuum includes ABE and ESL instruction infused with workforce preparation training, GED and high school diploma obtainment, job placement and job readiness training, training to obtain certifications in a variety of fields, including short-term training to obtain certifications as a food handler or nurses aide, to associate degrees in the health and technology fields that provide a step along a high-wage career pathway.

Each provider has established one or more target populations for services, and Travis County funds serve individuals facing considerable obstacles to employment, such as low academic attainment, homelessness, and judicial involvement, among others. All providers serve persons earning less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. In addition to the differences in key focus, intensity and duration of the service regime, the program participants for each program vary by race, ethnicity, gender, education, and age. For example, American YouthWorks participants are all 29 years of age or younger with 25 percent of their participants being 19 or younger, while 23 percent of the WERC-TC participants are over the age of 50; the Literacy Coalition services the largest group of Hispanics 41 percent, while WERC-TC serves primarily Black participants (48%); a third of the clients serviced by American YouthWorks are male, and 70 percent of the Literacy Coalition participants are female.

### **Outcomes and Impacts**

This report evaluates the outcomes for program participants for FY 2016, the first in a five year on-going evaluation of the new service provider continuum including the initial funding of WERC-TC. Although the variety of features, services and populations served renders cross-provider comparisons inappropriate, all of the providers have attained some degree of positive achievement in the employment-related outcomes.

Second quarter post-service employment gains were reported across all programs with American YouthWorks at 49.4 percent, a 30 percentage point increase from the four quarters

prior to service, and WERC-TC exiters experienced 24.1 percentage point increase in employment from 45.8 percent to 69.9 percent. Capital IDEA, which targets the working poor, had the highest pre-service employment rate of 68.3 percent and experienced 11.7 percentage point increase in employment by the second quarter post-service (80%). All groups of exiters report a decrease in employment during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter post-service ranging from a 0.2 percentage point decrease among Capital IDEA participants to an 8.1 percentage point decrease reported among Literacy Coalition participants (Table. 11).

**Table 12. Average Quarterly Employment for all FY 2016 Exiters**

	4 Qtrs Prior	Last Service Qtr	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	% increase
<b>WERC-TC</b>	45.8%	73.3%	69.9%	67.6%	21.8%
<b>American Youthworks</b>	19.0%	31.0%	49.4%	45.8%	26.8%
<b>Literacy Coalition</b>	50.7%	55.8%	59.7%	51.6%	1.0%
<b>Capital Idea</b>	68.3%	72.0%	80.0%	79.8%	11.5%
<b>Skillpoint</b>	66.4%	66.3%	82.6%	79.4%	13.0%

The earnings outcomes associated with the increased employment also varied across providers yet despite the dip in the percentage of exiters employed by the fourth quarter post-services, income levels for those who gained or retained employment in the fourth quarter post-services experienced an increase in income. Capital IDEA exiters income increased from an average of \$4,469 for the four quarters prior to service to \$9,274 in the fourth quarter post-service; a \$4,805 increase. American YouthWorks participants also experienced significant income gains, though pre-service income was \$2,090, with fourth quarter post-service income of averaging \$5,237 (Table 12).

**Table 13. Average Quarterly Earnings of Employed FY 2016 Exiters**

	4 Qtrs Prior	Last Service Qtr	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	amount of increase
<b>WERC-TC</b>	\$4,518	\$4,545	\$5,712	\$6,410	\$1,892
<b>American Youthworks</b>	\$2,090	\$2,203	\$4,159	\$5,237	\$3,147
<b>Literacy Coalition</b>	\$3,837	\$3,654	\$3,992	\$4,909	\$1,072
<b>Capital Idea</b>	\$4,469	\$6,350	\$8,225	\$9,274	\$4,805
<b>Skillpoint</b>	\$4,041	\$2,934	\$5,059	\$4,942	\$901

Table 13 presents the average quarterly UI earnings and claims filed. Across the reported quarters, pre-service to post-service, all programs experienced at least a 14 percentage point increase in the number of participants meeting the monetary requirement for UI benefits with WERC-TC exiters experiencing the highest increase of 27.4 percentage points. Few participants from any program submitted a claim for UI benefits in the quarters examined (generally fewer than 2 percent).

**Table 14. Average Quarterly UI Earnings and Filed UI Claims FY 2016 Exiters**

	4 Qtrs Prior	Last Service Qtr	2nd Qtr Post-Service	4th Qtr Post-Service	Average Post-Service Qtrs
<b>WERC-TC:</b>					
a. Qualified for UI Earnings	37.9%	39.0%	47.2%	65.4%	54.7%
b. Filed UI Claim	2.7%	1.2%	2.9%	0.8%	1.4%
<b>American Youthworks:</b>					
a. Qualified for UI Earnings	16.7%	11.5%	11.5%	32.2%	20.8%
b. Filed UI Claim	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.5%
<b>Literacy Coalition:</b>					
a. Qualified for UI Earnings	37.0%	39.0%	41.6%	51.6%	46.1%
b. Filed UI Claim	2.0%	2.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%
<b>Capital Idea:</b>					
a. Qualified for UI Earnings	55.6%	65.1%	64.0%	69.8%	69.4%
b. Filed UI Claim	0.3%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	1.1%
<b>Skillpoint:</b>					
a. Qualified for UI Earnings	55.1%	57.9%	60.7%	68.8%	65.8%
b. Filed UI Claim	2.0%	2.8%	1.7%	0.7%	1.1%

The quasi-experimental analysis compares the program impacts of participants to those of a matched comparison group. Although none of the impacts were identified as statically significant, they do provide insight into employment status and wage earnings of program participants. For the majority of the programs, participants fared as well as or better than the comparison group in income increases overtime. WERC-TC participants experiencing the largest quarterly increase in wages of \$1301, Skillpoint participants experienced a \$1026 increase, followed by increases experienced by Capital IDEA participants: \$973. The majority of the program participants also experienced in advantage in employment relative to the comparison group with American YouthWorks participants experienced a 25.6% advantage in employment, and WERC-TC participants experiencing an 8.4% advantage.

## **Bibliography**

- Miranda, Lori Axler (2016). “Workforce Development.” 2015 Community Impact Report. Austin, TX: Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department. March.
- Miranda, Lori Axler (2017). “Workforce Development.” 2016 Community Impact Report. Austin, TX: Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department. January 2017.
- O’Shea, Dan, Kristin Christensen, Greg Cumpton. (2016). An Evaluation of Local Investments in Workforce Development: 2015 Update. Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas. June.
- Dan O’Shea, Heath Prince, Cynthia Juniper and Patty Rodriguez. (2017). Evaluation of Travis County Investments in Workforce Development” 2016 Update. Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas. April.
- Smith, Tara, Kristin Christensen, Greg Cumpton. (2015). An Evaluation of Local Investments in Workforce Development: 2014 Update. Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas. June.
- Stevens, David W. (2007). Employment That Is Not Covered by State Unemployment Insurance Laws. Technical Paper No. TP-2007-04. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Program, May.

**Appendix A: Demographics of Travis County Workforce  
Development Program FY 2016 Exiters**

	WERC-TC	Literacy Coalition of Central Texas	Capital IDEA	Skillpoint	American Youth Works
<b>Number of Participants with SSNs</b>	875	77	175	179	87
Number of records removed due to duplicate SSNs	3	0	0	1	0
<b>Number of unduplicated participants included in analysis</b>	872	77	175	178	87
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	38.6%	70.1%	65.1%	57.9%	36.8%
Male	61.0%	29.9%	34.9%	42.1%	63.2%
Transgender	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Missing/Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
White	43.5%	22.1%	44.0%	16.3%	62.1%
Black	47.9%	27.3%	22.9%	33.1%	10.3%
Hispanic	4.2%	41.6%	9.7%	0.0%	14.9%
Asian	1.6%	2.6%	6.3%	1.1%	1.1%
Two Or More Races	1.4%	0.0%	0.6%	7.3%	5.7%
Other	1.0%	3.9%	16.6%	7.3%	3.4%
Missing/Unknown	0.3%	2.6%	0.0%	34.8%	2.3%
<b>Age</b>					
14 - 19 years	2.9%	3.9%	3.4%	10.1%	26.4%
20 - 29 years	26.3%	35.1%	42.3%	43.3%	70.1%
30 - 39 years	25.1%	20.8%	37.1%	25.8%	0.0%
40 - 49 years	22.7%	20.8%	11.4%	11.8%	0.0%
50 - 59 years	17.1%	11.7%	5.1%	5.6%	0.0%
60 years and older	5.6%	2.6%	0.6%	2.8%	0.0%
Missing/Unknown	0.3%	5.2%	0.0%	0.6%	3.4%
Average Age	39	33	32	26	22
<b>Education Level</b>					
Less than 12th grade	17.5%	80.5%	1.1%	10.1%	16.1%
12th grade or GED	60.2%	11.7%	52.0%	15.2%	3.4%
Attended or Graduated College	22.2%	3.9%	46.9%	60.1%	2.3%
Missing/Unknown	0.0%	3.9%	0.0%	14.6%	78.2%

	WERC-TC	Literacy Coalition of Central Texas	Capital IDEA	Skillpoint	American Youth Works
<b>Area of Residence</b>					
Central Austin	4.6%	5.2%	2.3%	0.6%	4.6%
North Austin	20.9%	9.1%	30.3%	14.0%	0.0%
Northern Suburbs	5.3%	2.6%	6.9%	11.2%	3.4%
East Austin	29.6%	50.6%	25.7%	28.1%	23.0%
Eastern Suburbs	21.8%	2.6%	6.3%	7.9%	4.6%
South Austin	15.4%	28.6%	24.6%	15.2%	29.9%
Southern Suburbs	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	4.6%
West Austin	2.3%	0.0%	3.4%	1.7%	1.1%
Western Suburbs	0.1%	1.3%	0.6%	1.1%	4.6%
Other/Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	24.1%
<b>Offender</b>					
Yes	21.0%	0.0%	15.4%	10.1%	10.3%
No	79.0%	0.0%	84.6%	89.9%	11.5%
Missing/Unknown	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	78.2%
<b>Receives Public Benefits</b>					
Yes	46.0%	0.0%	32.6%	0.0%	0.0%
No	54.0%	0.0%	67.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Missing/Unknown	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Veteran</b>					
Yes	5.8%	0.0%	2.3%	3.9%	0.0%
No	94.2%	0.0%	96.0%	96.1%	0.0%
Missing/Unknown	0.0%	100.0%	1.7%	0.0%	100.0%

## **Appendix B: Description of Impact Table Elements**

Impact measure	At least four Qtrs Post-Service: Treatment Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	Treatment group mean employment rate across at least four quarters post-service	Percentage point difference between mean employment rates for treatment and control groups.	Percentage point difference between mean employment rates for treatment and control group adjusted for any differences in their matching characteristics (Match characteristics include a number of variables that may influence the strength of the match relationship between the two groups, including demographics, prior employment status and earnings, etc.).
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	Treatment group average earnings across at least four quarters post-service.	Difference between the average earnings for treatment and control groups.	Difference between the average earnings for treatment and control group adjusted for any differences in their matching characteristics (Match characteristics include a number of variables that may influence the strength of the match relationship between the two groups, including demographics, prior employment status and earnings, etc.).
<b>Qualified for UI Benefits</b>	Percentage of treatment group members who qualified for UI benefits during at least four quarters post-service.	Percentage point difference between treatment and control group members who qualified for UI benefits.	Percentage point difference between treatment and control group members who qualified for UI benefits adjusted for any differences in their matching characteristics (Match characteristics include a number of variables that may influence the strength of the match relationship between the two groups, including demographics, prior employment status and earnings, etc.).
<b>Filed UI Claim</b>	Percentage of treatment group members who filed a UI claim during at least four quarters post-service.	Percentage point difference between treatment and control group members who filed a UI claim.	Percentage point difference between treatment and control group members who filed a UI claim adjusted for any differences in their matching characteristics (Match characteristics include a number of variables that may influence the strength of the match relationship between the two groups, including demographics, prior employment status and earnings, etc.).

## **Appendix C: FY 2016 Data Elements Requested**

<b>Data Element Requested</b>	<b>American Youth Works</b>	<b>Capital Idea</b>	<b>Lifeworks</b>	<b>Literacy Coalition</b>	<b>Skillpoint</b>	<b>WERC-TC</b>
Name	√	√	√	√	√	√
D.O.B.	√	√	√	√	√	X (provided age)
SSN	√	√	√	√	√	√
Zip Code	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gender	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ethnicity	√	√	√	√	√	√
Race	√	√	√	√	√	√
Family Size	√	√	√	X	√	√
Partner/Spouse	X	√	√	X	"Not collected"	X
Ages of each minor child in the family	X	X	"Not collected"	X	"Not collected"	X
Housing stability	X	X	√	X	√	X
Highest education level completed	√	√	√	√	√	√
Employed at time of program entry	√	√	√	√	√	X
Public benefits received	X	√	√	X	"Not collected"	SNAP only
Veteran	X	√	√	X	√	√
Judicially Involved	√	√	√	X	√	√
Disabled	X	X	√	X	"Not collected"	X
Date Eligibility Determined	X	√	"Not collected"	X	√	√
Program start date	√	√	√	√	√	√
Program exit date	√	√	√	√	√	√
Program components enrolled in	√	√	√	X	√	√
Completed program	X	√	√	Provided month or year	√	Exit Date Only
Certificate received in house	X	X	√	X	√	X

<b>Data Element Requested (cont.)</b>	<b>American Youth Works</b>	<b>Capital Idea</b>	<b>Lifeworks</b>	<b>Literacy Coalition</b>	<b>Skillpoint</b>	<b>WERC-TC</b>
Credential or Degree earned	X	X	√	X	√	√
Employment start date	√	√	√	X	√	√
Employment starting wage	√	√	√	X	√	√
Employed in a training related occupation	X	X	All "N/A"	X	√	√
Incentives for attendance	X	X	All "No"	X	All "No"	√
Incentives for program completion	X	X	All "No"	X	All "No"	√
Incentives for employment entry	X	X	All "No"	X	All "No"	√
Incentives for employment retention	X	X	All "No"	X	All "No"	√

Note: X identifies data not reported.