

The Workforce Challenge: To Place is to Win

New York City has begun a major effort to bring employment and training to the city's would-be workers. But the city's new contracting system leaves service providers little margin for error—and particularly threatens the nonprofit organizations that have historically done the most to help people find jobs.

UNLIKE NEARLY EVERY OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE, JOB TRAINING HAS AT ITS CORE AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH IN THE magic of the market. In the age of welfare reform, job training has been held up as the mechanism by which people may lift themselves out of poverty and government dependence, and into the benevolent arms of the free market. The system's biggest champions burn with the conviction that only the market—not government—can solve unemployment, underemployment, and persistent poverty.

So why trust nonprofits with the task?

Major policy changes in workforce development, both locally and nationally, have made this more than a theoretical question. These shifts have tilted the playing field away from small, community-based, nonprofit job trainers and toward organizations with greater resources, a more professional approach and, often, a for-profit business structure with a real eye for the bottom line.

Until two years ago, job training in New York City was largely the province of small- to medium-sized nonprofits operating on contracts from the city's Department of Employment (DOE) and Human Resources Administration (HRA)—and delivering uneven performance ranging from excellent to dismal. Some standout programs not only helped thousands of New Yorkers find solid jobs and hundreds of New York companies recruit good employees, but also fostered hope and self-reliance among discouraged, frustrated people. With little accountability, however, this overlooked system was plagued with embarrassing problems, such as job trainers that prepared people for careers in failing industries. Nevertheless, almost without exception, poor providers and quality providers alike saw their contracts renewed from one year to the next.

In 1999, after absorbing DOE's contracts, HRA completely revamped its system for welfare-to-work job training and placement. The overhaul replaced dozens of small contracts with 17 mammoth "prime" contracts that totaled nearly half a billion dollars over a three-year period. Through these controversial contracts, smaller providers, including most of the nonprofits engaged in job training, have been relegated to subcontractor status—a change with dramatic consequences both for these organizations and for the clients that come to them for help finding jobs. Ever since the contracts were announced, many of New York's community-based job trainers have loudly and publicly feared for their own survival.

About the same time, changes flowing from the 1998 federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) were completely reorganizing job training for everyone not on welfare. Congress passed this law in response to persistent frustrations about provider accountability and the size and complexity of the system. Much like HRA's overhaul, WIA has the express purpose of consolidating a bewildering array of federal funding streams for job training; unlike HRA's revised system, WIA trumpets the much-cherished notion of "consumer choice" for people who need new job skills. This will be accomplished, eventually, through Individual Training Accounts—essentially, vouchers. Small job training organizations are concerned about this, too; everywhere they've been tried, vouchers have proven beneficial for bigger providers that can work on a large scale, but have taken clients away from smaller providers.

New York State as a whole, and New York City in particular, has been spectacularly slow in implementing WIA, so this model of customer choice and centralized client management has not yet reached the five boroughs. But these incipient changes, too, pose major threats to local community-based organizations (CBOs). HRA's reforms of the city's welfare-to-work contracts mean that these little nonprofits no longer have guaranteed cash flow and a predictable stream of customers. The additional changes mandated by WIA may just push them over the brink.

Here's the hundred thousand dollar question: So what?

If community-based job training providers disappear from the landscape of New York City workforce development, is anything lost? If these organizations are killed off, isn't that just because they failed to adjust to a changing market—just like when for-profit businesses fail?

Our answers: Yes...and yes. As a host of experts across the ideological spectrum have argued, local community-based organizations will have to prove their relevance and effectiveness in the changed world of workforce development. And they have to get leaner, if not meaner.

But after eight months of research and hundreds of conversations with trainers, administrators and critics at the city, state and national level, the Center for an Urban Future concludes that community-based job training providers offer assets that might not show up on a balance sheet. Foremost among these is an intimate familiarity with, and deep ties to, the communities from which job-seekers come.

CBOs have traditionally recruited trainees for their job programs directly from the neighborhoods they serve, often through other programs they offer such as counseling or child care. By reaching out within their communities, they often represent the first rung on the ladder to a better life. With referrals from their welfare to work subcontracts increasingly coming from all over the five boroughs, the ties between training providers and the communities in which they operate are already weakening. Still, their traditional emphasis on providing services—regardless of the bottom line—should ensure a continuing mission for CBOs.

Of all the providers offering employment services, CBOs face the toughest challenges. Community colleges can offer specialized and customized training to young people entering the workforce and newly unemployed workers looking to change

careers. For-profit firms offer re-training in specialized fields from commercial trucking (think late-night TV ads) to appliance repair. But anyone expecting either the higher education system or for-profit trainers to invest the time and money in working with the people who remain on welfare after years of uninterrupted local economic growth—the people often described, somewhat clinically, as the “hardest to serve”—should probably spend a few days in the trenches.

There, trainers and career counselors work with people who may or may not have a high school diploma, more likely than not have children, might have problems with drugs or alcohol, and almost certainly lack a solid work history and skills that employers demand. Most people looking for work pose challenges to employment specialists, but under the new system, CBOs disproportionately wind up with the toughest cases. Their clients need time, energy and commitment to succeed—but the new workforce contracts promote quick placements above all else.

If there's a single way to place hard-to-serve clients quickly, neither the city nor the organizations it has contracted with has found it yet. New York's training providers work with adults in their 40s and 50s who are barely able to read and have no work history to speak of; women who have been on and off welfare for years, lack marketable job skills and are angry at a system that they feel has mistreated them and their families; and immigrants with minimal English language skills and physical impairments that restrict the work they can do. Even more common are individuals without one overwhelming obstacle to regular employment, but rather a series of smaller barriers: a chronic back or knee condition, problems finding a babysitter, a criminal record, concerns about medical care or paying the rent. Any one of those things might not be enough to stop someone from working, but two or three of them at once, for a single parent or someone without an education or work history, can prove a lot to overcome.

HRA's system is designed to motivate job training providers to place participants in jobs. The agency pays its contractors for placements and retention, as individuals keep their jobs and win promotions and raises over time. But by definition, the hardest to serve aren't easy to place—and some fear that for-profit providers, responsible to the bottom line and their stockholders, might prove less willing to devote time and resources to the intensive case management these individuals need. On the other hand, nonprofit CBOs are charged, by their history and mission, to follow motivations other than profit. For community-based trainers,

the barriers faced by the hardest to serve represent a challenge to be overcome.

Finally, there is the fact that federal welfare time limits are about to kick in; for tens of thousands of city residents, the five-year lifetime cap on federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is less than a year away. Since New York's state constitution mandates that the state must provide some assistance to those in need, we face the prospect of continuing to provide services without any help from Washington. If CBOs represent our last, best chance to lift some of these people off the rolls, it stands to reason that we should give them more support, not less.

Instead, community-based job trainers find themselves pressured by outside circumstances to make major internal changes in order to survive. There are no guarantees anymore; in their new roles as subcontractors in HRA's system, CBOs must rise to the challenge of moving clients into work quickly to ensure that they earn money under the new regime of performance-based pay. Accordingly, CBOs have to re-examine their programs, broaden their funding bases, streamline their organizations, form partnerships and coalitions, and generally stretch their money further than they ever have before. A number almost certainly will fail to adapt, and will disappear.

That said, New York's reconfigured job training system has some strong elements to recommend it. Even among those providers who have struggled under HRA's new contracts, there is a general consensus that the performance-based compensation model now in use—which pays training providers for their services only after their job-seeking clients have found work—is here to stay, and is an improvement over the old system of paying providers regardless of whether or not trainees got jobs. And, though its long-term future as part of the system is probably less certain, the larger scale realized by HRA's prime contractor system has its benefits as well.

But the current system could be improved with an injection of what has traditionally fueled job training in New York City: A firm commitment to bringing work training to the worst-off as well as to the easiest to place in jobs. Our city can reaffirm that commitment by making more resources available up front for organizations working with the hardest to serve—or by raising the reimbursement rates for putting the most challenging clients in jobs, to reward the extra work those cases require. We believe that this fusion of market power and mission is the key to building a workforce system that truly serves job-seek-

▶ KEY FINDINGS

THE WELFARE TO WORK CONTRACTS DRAWN UP BY THE HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION (HRA) HAVE NOT YET moved large numbers of former welfare recipients into work, but after major administrative problems with referrals and payments to training providers, the system is starting to function more smoothly and to place more participants in jobs. Providers generally praise HRA for working with them and being responsive to their complaints and suggestions. As of March 11, 2001, city workforce contractors had placed more than 15,000 clients in jobs.

—*for more, see “Prime Time,” p. 4*

IN HRA’S EMPLOYMENT-ORIENTED MODEL, THOSE MOST READY TO WORK ARE PLACED IN JOBS EARLY IN THE PROCESS, while the toughest cases remain on the rolls longer. This ensures that the most job-ready find work quickly and start earning income, but the system is structured in such a way that they often never get a chance to improve their skills through the career-track training available. At the same time, those clients who need more intensive services are often poorly assessed early on, increasing the amount of work contractors must do to help prepare them for employment.

—*for more, see “Prime Time,” p. 4*

UNDER THE HRA CONTRACTS, TRAINING PROVIDERS ONLY GET REIMBURSED FOR WORK WITH PUBLIC-ASSISTANCE CLIENTS referred through HRA’s system, rather than just recruiting among welfare clients in the communities in which they operate. Providers complain that this limits their ability to work with those clients they are best positioned to help—the ones who live just a few blocks away.

—*for more, see “Assess Pool?,” p. 8*

SOME PRIME CONTRACTORS AND THE SUBCONTRACTORS THEY WORK WITH HAVE BEGUN TO SUGGEST THAT UNLESS THE benchmarks for payment on the contracts are adjusted, and more money is made available upfront, it will become almost impossible for them to help the people who have the hardest time finding steady work. They note that providing employment services to this group is more time-consuming and expensive than working with other clients in the system and offers less certain contract payoffs. Defection of these providers would imperil the ability of the system to serve those individuals most in need of help.

—*for more, see “Assess Pool?,” p. 8*

JUST AS TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS HELP JOB-SEEKERS FIND JOBS AND KEEP THEM, SOME INTERMEDIARY GROUPS ARE BEGINNING to help employers find employees. Good Help, a program run by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, has helped Brooklyn businesses fill job openings for three years now. BizLink, an initiative of the National Welfare to Work Partnership, is working with community-based organizations to provide human resource services for employers who have hired or are planning to hire individuals formerly on welfare.

—*for more, see “Taking Care of Business,” p. 12*

IN UPSTATE ROCHESTER, NONPROFITS HAVE QUICKLY COME TO REALIZE THAT THE NEW WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM mandated by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) largely chokes off their traditional supply of clients. The WIA one stop center that’s supposed to send them a steady flow of job-seekers has instead focused on assisting local businesses to train workers already on the job, and the tiny trickle of referrals the one stop has sent is nowhere near enough to keep their training programs going.

—*for more, see “Rubbed Wrong in Rochester,” p. 14*

POLICIES OF “WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT,” WHICH ARE ORIENTED TOWARD JOB-SEEKERS, ARE USUALLY DISCONNECTED from “economic development” initiatives, which are focused on employers. In New York City, mayor after mayor has failed to address the lack of coordination between the two. In Seattle, however, political leadership from the mayor’s office has supported the Seattle Jobs Initiative, a promising effort to coordinate workforce development with regional economic trends and growth fields.

—*for more, see “Sea Change in Seattle,” p. 15*

The city's Human Resources Administration has consolidated its workforce development system, replacing dozens of small contracts with 15 multi-million dollar agreements. But it isn't clear yet whether bigger is really better.

AFTER THE SOUND AND FURY OF NEW YORK'S 1999 welfare to work contracts, the jury remains out whether our new system for moving people from public assistance into jobs is as effective as its champions claimed—or as harmful as its detractors charged.

Last spring, two welfare-to-work contracts worth \$104 million became the subject of a bitter political feud between city comptroller Alan Hevesi, who insisted that the contracts were tainted, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who defended both the process and the vendor in question, Maximus, Inc. After a protracted court battle, the mayor won. His new system, in which welfare-to-work job assessment and placement was to be managed through 17 multimillion-dollar “prime” contracts held by 13 large organizations, was implemented over the first few months of 2000. As the controversy died down, the focus soon shifted to the real question: Does it work?

As usual, the answer depends on whom you ask. The system is organized so that welfare recipients either get served directly by one of the “prime” contractors, or get referred by a prime contractor to a subcontractor—usually a community-based organization (CBO)—for “job readiness” activities such as practice interviews and resume preparation. Participants learn work skills, from clerical tasks to training in computer applications. They also might brush up on their basic literacy and math skills—whatever is deemed helpful to getting them jobs. The prime contractors get paid a per capita rate for each person that they successfully help find a new job, a scheme called “performance-based” contracting. When their subcontractors place participants in jobs, they get paid through the prime contractor. Until clients find jobs, though, the subs don't earn a cent.

It might sound relatively simple, but to listen to some of the providers who have suffered under this new regime, the first year of prime contracts and performance-based compensation has been a virtual debacle, characterized by inept assessments, tardy reimbursements, overly strict regulations, unrealistic goals and Kafkaesque record-keeping nightmares.

“As a practical matter, this is an absolutely maddening contract,” complains one frustrated subcontractor. “It requires the worst of both worlds of performance-based contracting and reimbursement contracting.” In other words, contractors have to push all their resources toward getting results as quickly as possible

just to earn enough money to survive...and then, in the case of the subs, they may wait as long as six months to get paid.

But others praise the Human Resources Administration, and Commissioner Jason Turner, for pulling off a fundamental shift in how the city conducts workforce development. The new model, they argue, really does assist poor people by holding training providers accountable. While acknowledging startup problems, supporters contend that this system is more rational and more functional than the previous model, which generally paid providers whether or not their clients ever found jobs.

“Performance-based contracting and focus on placement is in keeping with welfare reform,” says Lee Bowes, CEO of the for-profit trainer America Works, one of the city's prime contractors. “The truth is that there has been much more success in getting into the job market and staying in the job market than there was in the previous approach.”

Nobody denies that, on a system-wide basis, the first year was rough sledding. Through December 2000, all the vendors had fulfilled just 26 percent of their contractually obligated placements to that point. For that month, however, they achieved 53 percent of their target numbers, a clear sign of improvement. Almost without exception, the individual vendors have done even better in the first months of this year. Wildcat Services Corporation, which has a prime contract as an Employment Services and Placement (ESP) provider (see chart, p. 6-7), reported making 740 placements in November 2000. By February of this year, Wildcat had more than doubled that number, to 1,592.

“At the beginning it was difficult, but now we see the results,” says Isora Tordesillas, assistant vice president at Goodwill Industries. Goodwill operates three centers under its

To listen to some providers, this last year has been a virtual debacle, characterized by inept assessments, tardy reimbursements, and Kafkaesque record-keeping nightmares.

prime contract for Skills Assessment and Job Placement (SAP); they have nearly doubled

their contractual obligation to place 10 percent of all those who walk through the door.

Aside from Maximus, which has yet to re-establish a real presence in the city after its long legal battle, all the contracts have been in place for at least a year. The prime and subcontracting agencies who spoke with the Center for an Urban Future generally found consensus around two points: The system has functioned more smoothly over time, and the lines of communication with HRA have generally remained open, with the agency largely responsive to providers' concerns and complaints. Even some of the providers with overall concerns about the system conceded that their regional HRA managers were willing to work with them to devise solutions to their problems.

Another common experience seems to be that those prime contractors that built their programs on existing infrastructures have had the easiest time adjusting to the new way of doing business. Naturally enough, this has tended to favor the larger and better-funded providers.

“We built this out of existing resources,” says Craig Walker of the Consortium for Worker Education, an association of New York City labor unions that offers education and training services. “We'd operated a similar program before, and we were prepared both for serving this population and for the mechanics of the roster system before we started.”

The new contracts also have served as a proving ground for an exciting new model of workforce service delivery. The network of community-based training providers affiliated with the Non-Profit Assistance Corporation (N-PAC), one of the prime ESP contractors, has won praise from clients, philanthropic funders, and HRA officials alike. Unlike the other ESPs, N-PAC provides no direct training or employment services, but instead assigns clients directly among its nine affiliated CBO providers. N-PAC serves as the liaison with HRA, handling billing and other administrative tasks. “With N-PAC as the direct contact with HRA,” says Ronald Lee of St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, one of N-PAC's affiliate providers, “we can concentrate on our programs.”

But for other prime and sub providers, those administrative functions have proved harrowing. HRA's stringent requirements for verifying that participants have been placed in jobs have only made matters worse. “The placement requirements, in terms of

paperwork, [are] very difficult,” one prime contract administrator explains. “They want the client’s first pay stub. That’s great, but after getting a job, the client isn’t running back to us with pay stub in hand. So you have to go to the employer—but the company doesn’t want you on the site, and a lot of the time they’re not very cooperative. So HRA asks for a letter—but the letter has to have the employer’s signature, our agency’s signature, and the participant’s signature. You have to convince them to take time off to come and see you and sign the thing. So it’s actually easier to get the pay stub.”

Even when the provider manages to jump through HRA’s verification hoops, it takes time to get reimbursed. The same administrator notes that his organization has received payment for less than a third of the people it has placed.

One reality that caught many of the providers unprepared was that the very nature of the population they were serving had changed. Under the old systems—before there was a requirement to work, or to try to work, as a condition for receiving public assistance—training providers generally worked with self-motivated individuals who were actively looking for work. Now, they are working almost

entirely with public aid recipients, who have varying degrees of motivation to work.

And while the vibrant economy of the last few years has created enough jobs in New York City to accommodate many former welfare recipients, as the most job-ready individuals have found work, the tougher cases have remained on the rolls—including many that fall into the category called “the hardest to serve.” Frequently lacking even a high school education, these individuals might have criminal records, histories of substance abuse, physical or mental illness, and no work history to speak of. With more than one “barrier to employment,” they are the most difficult to place in jobs.

Fernando Brinn, CEO of welfare to work subcontractor Brinn and Associates, has a dim view of the prospects for many of these people.

“There are some people I know who just aren’t going to get jobs,” he says. Brinn estimates that perhaps half of the entire remaining public assistance population “are going to [remain] in the system.” Some primes and subs have begun to suggest that unless the program goals are adjusted—and the purse strings are loosened—it will become almost impossible for them to work with a population composed increasingly

of the hardest to serve.

What that means is that these contractors will have to do a better job with people who will need more time-consuming and expensive help—for an even less certain payoff. If CBOs decide that they cannot earn enough money to stay in business as subcontractors in this system, their departure could open a hole in the bottom of the system, weakening its ability to serve the hardest cases.

With this basic dilemma, and some other procedural points of friction, it’s clear that the new system is not yet a finished product. What seems equally clear, though, is that some of its key components are here to stay—performance-based contracting most prominently. For nonprofit providers used to line-item contracts, the growing pains are inevitable, and have already begun. But there’s no turning back.

“The concept and the idea around performance-based contracting and how it helps to encourage change and drive the system forward are good things,” says former Wildcat Executive Vice-President Jeff Jablow, one of the city’s most respected workforce experts. “We should work to fix it, rather than abandon it and go back to what didn’t work in the past.”*

Program	Type of Program	Length of Program	Clients Served	Placements to Date*	PA Placements Rates			
					Total Program	Contract to Date	Second Quarter 2000	Third Quarter 2000
Skills Assessment and Placement	Assessment and Job Placement	4–6 Weeks	Public Assistance Applicants and Recipients	6,281	Total Program	23%	28%	25%
					Range of Vendor Placement Rates			
					Highest	30%	40%	30%
					Lowest	19%	20%	19%
Employment Services and Placement	Training and Job Placement	Long Term	Public Assistance Recipients and Non-Public Assistance Individuals	8,818	Total Program	26%	34%	31%
					Range of Vendor Placement Rates			
					Highest	38%	58%	52%
					Lowest	12%	15%	13%

* through March 11, 2001

Source: Human Resources Administration

A Nice Walk to Work?

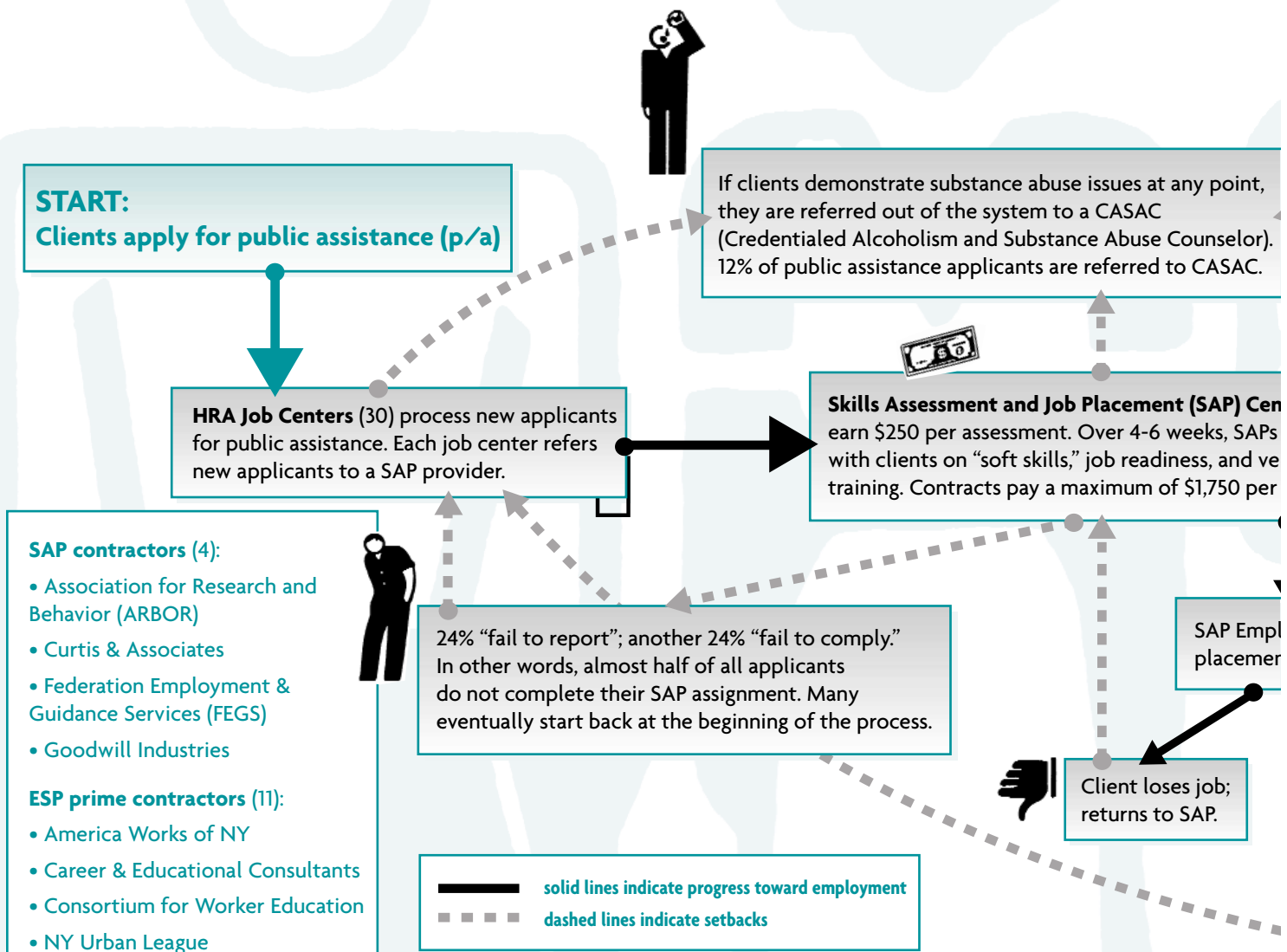


chart designed by Julia Reich

HRA's Performance Driven Welfare-to-Work System: An Overview

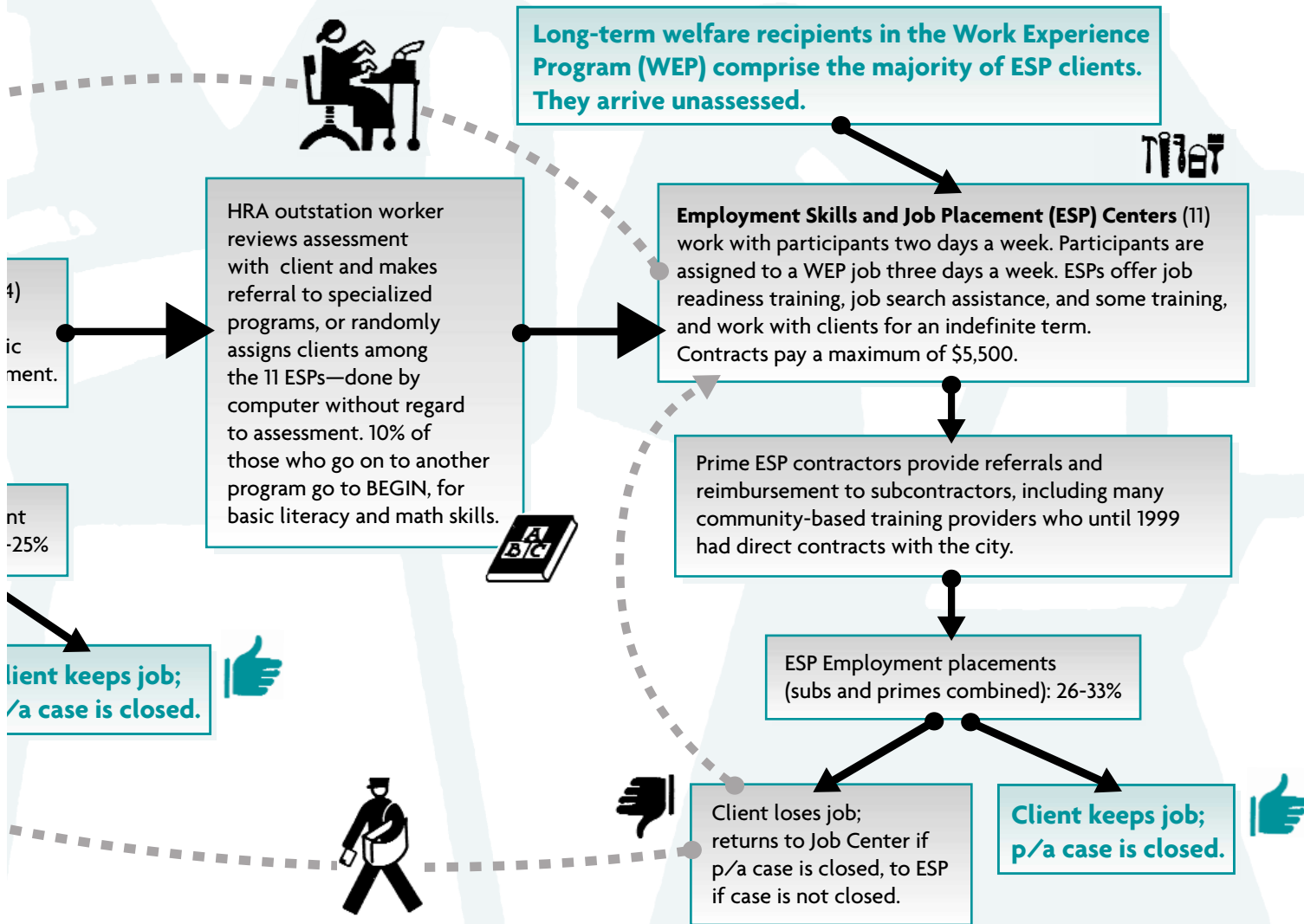
By Amy Peterson
Project Director ESP and SAP Program
Human Resources Administration

The current workforce initiative under Mayor Giuliani is intended to overcome some of the well assistance programs which paid providers on a "line-item" basis, or reimbursement for expenses rather For welfare recipients, private employment vendors are contracted to provide either short-t services or longer-term more intensive services. Both kinds of providers are paid only upon a succes

The short-term program is the Skills Assessment and Placement program (SAP). HRA refers vendors as a first step. The SAP vendors are responsible for providing an assessment an employment, through job search, resume help, and interviewing skills. The SAP vendors are exper of individuals, with the average length of assistance for each individual no more than four to six v

Source: Human Resources Administration

The effort to place welfare recipients into jobs starts as soon as they apply for assistance. Depending on each individual's skills and background—and the quality and suitability of the help they get—the trek toward employment can be painlessly quick, or agonizingly slow.



only paid between \$750 and \$1,500 for successful job placements and \$250 for retention. Many individuals, especially those with prior work histories, can be placed easily this way at a relatively low cost, leaving more resources and funding available to provide more intensive services to the harder-to-place individuals.

When a SAP vendor is unable to place an individual within the allotted four to six week period, he or she is referred from the SAP to an Employment Services and Placement vendor (ESP) or other specialized program whose responsibility it is to work more intensively with the participant over a longer period. ESPs are paid more for each placement and retention, up to approximately \$5,500, because the population served is less work-ready. The ESP vendors have the time and ability to use resources outside the contract such as support services and intensive training to better serve these individuals. The ESP contract includes payment milestones for initial placement, three and six months' retention, and high wages. This provides a financial incentive for vendors to continue working with the harder-to-place individuals after they are placed in a job, to help them stay at work, earn more money, and reach higher levels of self-sufficiency.

The combination of the two services, operated in tandem, is designed to result in employment success as vendors maximize their income opportunities. The city's current welfare-to-work initiatives focus on the bottom line results of getting participants into jobs and onto self-sufficiency.

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ASSESS POOL?

The city's job placement programs are moving the best candidates into work quickly. But those charged with providing longer-term services say the system fails many of those who need more help.

UNDER THE CITY'S WELFARE-TO-WORK contracts, the task of putting welfare recipients to work is split into two separate jobs—an arrangement that some contractors criticize as uneven and unfair.

When new welfare recipients enter the public benefits system, they first spend four to six weeks with a "Skills Assessment and Job Placement Center," or SAP. Four prime contractors serve as SAPs, and are paid \$250 per person to diagnose potential work barriers, like child care problems or substance abuse, and to identify particular skills or interests. Explicitly designed to "skim" the most employable participants and quickly place them into jobs, the SAPs offer a range of services to help move people quickly into work, show participants how to prepare a resume, practice job interview skills, and provide small databases of employers looking to hire.

In addition to their assessment and evaluation duties, these first-line contractors have a powerful incentive to put people in jobs—a check from the city for every successful placement, for between \$750 and \$1,750 per person. And it doesn't always take much time and effort on the part of the contractor to find some of these clients a job; one SAP provider estimates that as much as 30 percent of its job placements came as a result of "independent job search" efforts on the part of participants.

There have been times I've walked into one of our classrooms and almost fallen over from the stink of liquor, says one skills trainer.

Stripped of the jargon, this means the participant found his or her position with the aid of two time-tested job search tools: The classified ads and a pair of comfortable shoes. According to the most recent Mayor's Management Report, SAP contractors served 10,385 individuals during the most recent reporting period, and placed 2,219 people in jobs—21.4 percent of the total served. (This total includes the 24 percent of SAP clients who "fail to comply"—and do not complete the four to six weeks they are required to work with the SAP. Accordingly, the placement rate of those who finish is higher.)

Those participants who aren't placed

while with SAPs are assigned at random to one of 11 "Employment Services and Job Placement Centers," known as ESPs. While keeping up the constant efforts to get people hired, ESPs also offer more specialized training for positions ranging from office worker to cook. For two days a week, clients work directly with either the ESP primes, or their subcontractors—which include many community-based training providers that used to contract directly with the city for training services. On the other three days, clients go to assignments in the city's Work Experience Program. According to the MMR, ESP providers placed 2,593 individuals in jobs out of 11,516 served during the last reporting period, or 22.5 percent.

In theory, and sometimes in practice, the setup makes a lot of sense; people who need more help get more help. HRA officials point out that of all the clients placed by ESP vendors, 46 percent find jobs after spending three months or more working with an ESP. For some clients, at least, the extra time is clearly beneficial. On the other hand, the drive to place individuals in jobs as quickly as possible inevitably leaves the least employable people—those with minimal education, no English ability or health problems—slated for the most demanding regimens of education and training. The most employable people, who presumably could benefit from career-track training, usually wind up getting a job right away, and might never get a chance to advance and improve their skills. (HRA has pledged to step up its efforts to provide additional training opportunities to these new workers through job-upgrade vouchers.)

Either way, the employment services contractors wind up working with the most difficult clients: In a model that encourages skimming off the top, the ESP contractors are left with the hardest cases at the bottom. Anita Moses, executive director of the Educational Planning Institute and one of the harshest critics of the new system, argues that by the time clients get to the CBOs, they've already been through two layers of skimming—first at the SAP, then by the prime ESP contractor.

ESP providers also contend that the system is arranged so that the SAP contractors have an incentive to spend minimal time and effort on the difficult work of evaluating clients, and instead spend those four to six weeks helping the most employable people find jobs. As a result, those important assessments—which determine whether an individual can only work in a certain neighborhood, whether she

has an interest in pursuing a particular field, such as culinary arts or sales—are inaccurate, insufficient, or don't get done at all. To some extent, poor communication between the vendors might be part of the problem: HRA officials claim that assessments for 95 percent of clients who come through the SAPs are available on an online data system, NYC WAY, that all the ESPs can access.

But with only four SAP providers and 11 ESPs (plus their subcontractors), only a fairly small percentage of the total ESP client population comes through SAPs at all. The rest arrive at the ESPs straight from what HRA refers to as the city's "undercare" population—those who went on welfare before the current system was implemented just over a year ago. Frequently, these people have been in the city's much-maligned Work Employment Program (WEP) for a year or more. While some might have benefited from their WEP assignments to the point where they are ready to move into private jobs, many others show up with the same array of problems that drove them to public assistance in the first place—and, without benefit of assessment, those problems likely will bewilder and surprise the ESPs that seek to serve them.

"There have been times I've walked into one of our classrooms and almost fallen over from the stink of liquor," says one skills trainer whose organization works extensively with "undercare" clients. "Those people shouldn't be here. They need help, and we don't offer those kinds of services."

But ESPs have only two options: Take on these clients, or risk having no clients—and therefore no cash flow—at all. "The assessment centers are in direct competition with us," agrees one ESP contractor whose agency has specialized in career training for many years. "They keep on working with the good clients to get them placed, and get backlogged. So we have to take unassessed individuals. If we don't take them and work with them, we don't get paid."

"We were told that we wouldn't get people with less than a fourth-grade reading level," an administrator at one subcontractor recounts. "But this morning I was training people who couldn't read 'to, the, an.' We've been serving homeless clients for years, and we've never served a group with such low skills as we see now."

To make matters worse, now that everyone receiving public assistance in the city is supposed to receive job-related services through the system, CBOs accustomed to recruiting in their own neighborhoods often

UNEVEN FLOW

Between the switch to performance-based contracting and frequent delays in getting reimbursed by city agencies, community-based organizations that offer job training are facing major cash-flow concerns.

The inherently unpredictable nature of performance-based contracting has hit many longtime nonprofit job trainers like a bucket of ice water. Chinatown Manpower Project (CMP) has provided job training and employment services to New York City's Chinese immigrant community since 1972, training thousands of job-seekers for positions ranging from chef to nurse and computer specialist. But in the summer of 2000, CMP was pushed to the brink, when city contracts they were counting on for revenue were seriously delayed.

The culture change has been drastic for community-based nonprofits like CMP, which had held city-funded job training contracts for decades. But against the backdrop of federal welfare reform in the mid-1990s, a new mindset began to take hold. In the offices of the city's Human Resources Administration, the perception was that these providers had enjoyed a long, accountability-free ride on the public gravy train. Their message now: Everybody off. Word got out in the spring of 1999 that New York City would be moving to a performance-based contracting system, and community-based providers saw the lives of their organizations flash before their eyes.

The flow of public dollars to CBOs hasn't dried up entirely. Many of the large contractors in the new welfare to work system subcontract some portion of their workload to community-based organizations. HRA officials also plan to announce awards for another round of contracts to serve "special populations" in the near future, many of which are expected to go directly to community-based training providers.

But the changeover to performance-based contracting has left these CBOs on a tightrope without a net. With little to no cash reserves and paper-thin budgets, these nonprofits must adapt to a new way of doing business: Invest time and money up front to train and place clients, and get compensated much later. And organizations that go into it with their eyes closed run the risk of being put to sleep for good.

Chinatown Manpower Project felt the crunch in 2000, but lived to tell the tale. CMP serves more than 1,600 people each year, and enjoys an outstanding reputation with city agencies involved in job training for always meeting or exceeding its contractual obligations. CMP had begun its training cycle in July without a contract in place, a business decision that is surprisingly common among the city's job training nonprofits.

After months of scrambling, the organization finally reached an agreement with a for-profit trainer, which could apply CMP's clients against its own city contract—and took 28 percent of the reimbursement for doing so. "We were pretty much at their mercy," concedes CMP Executive Director Sue Lee.

CMP had been placing clients in jobs for months without any payment, and had been looking forward to a windfall. But with the new performance benchmarks for payment, they found out that they would have to endure another long wait—until all the newly hired job-seekers had held their positions for months—before getting the full balance from the city.

"We carried [our programs] for four whole months without funding from the city," Lee says. "We poured out half a million dollars. Our board was about to cut us off, and we had to lay off some staff. It was a tough summer, and we lost some good people."

Chinatown Manpower Project made it through the summer by drawing upon a "nest egg" of a few hundred thousand dollars that Lee and CMP's Board of Directors had been building up for more than a decade. That reserve proved to be a crucial insurance policy last summer, but over the long haul, Lee is faced with the reality that the organization either must quickly find new sources of cash, or else must offer fewer services to the community it has served for 29 years.

The biggest challenge for CMP, and for all the city's community-based job trainers, will be to develop new and broader sources of income. CMP already hosts an annual fundraiser dinner, usually featuring political luminaries: Manhattan borough president Virginia Fields spoke last year. The organization also has raised money through corporate contributions and tuition fees, and seeks to conserve resources by collaborating with other training and service providers when possible.

Nevertheless, says Lee, the future looks grim for many community-based trainers, no matter how successful they have been in the past. "Cash flow and staffing are going to be real issues, unless we're able to find another source of funds and not be so reliant on government contracts," she says. "It could be very difficult in the next round [of city contracting] for small nonprofits to survive."

find that the potential clients they talk to have been assigned to other providers by HRA. "We've got eligibility restrictions," explains one subcontractor. "We used to recruit by advertising, and people chose to be in our program. Now, we really can't do that, because of the way in which the system is structured; we have to rely on HRA. But the flow of referrals has not been sufficient, nor has it been appropriate in terms of the population they've been sending." (HRA officials say they encourage the providers to recruit individuals within their communities who are not on public assistance; some organizations have been aggressive and successful in pursuing this population, while others have not.)

In a nutshell, the problem these training providers face is pretty simple. They have little idea of how many referrals they will receive from the stop before them in the system—the SAP for prime contractors, and the prime for subcontractors. Then, they have no real way of knowing just how ready for work the referred

clients will be when they arrive. Finally, when they do manage to train and place clients in jobs, they must wait for payment to flow first from HRA, and then, in the case of subcontractors, through the prime. And while the pace of reimbursement has picked up in recent months, delays are still all too common. "It took six months to repay us," one prime contractor says. "The payment, for primes and subs, came back as a lump sum, and it's been unbelievably difficult to figure out what payment has been associated with what subcontractor and what [retention] milestone."

Coordination and management can help alleviate some of the problems the trainers face. Indeed, some CBOs—notably those working within the innovative "EarnFair Alliance" created by the Non-Profit Assistance Corporation (N-PAC)—seem to be thriving within the system. The division of labor N-PAC has devised allows the providers themselves to concentrate on serving clients, while N-PAC handles administrative

functions, provides technical assistance, and ensures quality control. HRA encourages other prime contractors to provide similar assistance to their subcontractors, and the agency's highly regarded regional managers even work directly with the subs when feasible.

Nonetheless, many community-based trainers and mission-driven nonprofits are struggling—and many are even wondering if they can keep working within this system. "We are losing money on our subcontract," one veteran CBO provider notes. "That's unheard of for this agency. We're considering whether we can go forward with this arrangement any longer—the city effectively just isn't allowing us to meet our requirements."

That sentiment is common among the providers at the end of the system's chain of services. "In order to earn a small amount of money, we have to spend so much more," another frustrated subcontractor complains. "We'll just have to see if it's going to work." ❄️

An Interview with **Human Resources Administration Commissioner** **Jason A. Turner**

How much emphasis has HRA placed on addressing the issues raised by the provider community?

What's in the best interest of the potential employee? That's our first concern. In that sense, this system really represents a sea change for the job training economy in New York City. This is our view: We're trying to get the most benefit to the participant. We're not running a jobs program for vendors. That's a phenomenon that the mayor talks about with respect to the school system—it's there to educate kids, not to employ teachers.

We want to focus attention on those who the system is supposed to help. The vendor community will accommodate this—and what organizations “win” and what organizations “lose” will sort itself out, as in any market system.

Many of the prime contractors in the welfare to work contracts have faced operational difficulties in the first year. Granting that some administrative problems were likely inevitable, do you feel that the primes overextended themselves?

In order for the system to be successful, the individual vendors have to make a profit. Not all of them, necessarily, but the system must create a profit potential. When I use the word “profit” I mean income in excess of all costs, and in this sense of the word I am including nonprofit organizations as well as for-profit.

We started our new performance contracts with a transition period where the vendors were paid on a line-item basis as they were before under their prior contracts with the city. This was done so that they could operate for a period with a measure of stability.

After several months' transition, we moved to a performance payment system, and at first some said, ‘Whoa, this is scary.’ Some vendors responded by re-evaluating how big they were relative to what HRA could provide in numbers of referrals, which is a major factor in a vendor's ability to earn income.

Moving to a performance-based system is a big change for HRA and for the vendors. Some vendors have told us they have never worked this hard. We at HRA have never worked so hard either. For us, assuring that vendors get paid in a timely manner is a new challenge when the authorization for payment is contingent upon proof of employment.

What are the inherent difficulties in this system, from the standpoint of service delivery?

As a provider, a vendor needs far more referrals than they may have expected in order to meet their employment targets so as to fulfill their contracts. Compare that to the earlier JTPA program [the Job Training Partnership Act, federal legislation that preceded WIA]. One reason that system went on merrily for so long is that vendors were always working with volunteers. These were people who actually came through the door and wanted to use the services offered to increase skills and find jobs. It appeared as if the program was working because lots of people served went on to find jobs, just as the program intended. However, there was always a far larger number who didn't avail themselves of services provided through JTPA, and just advanced on their own.

A large scientific evaluation of the JTPA program, funded by the federal Department of Labor, was published in the early 1990s to try to determine the net impact of JTPA. The study used the difference in employment outcomes between “treatments,” those who received JTPA services, and “controls,” who did not but were identical in every other respect, to determine what the net impact of the program was. To the dismay of the Department of Labor, which ran JTPA, they discovered the program had no impacts for adult men, barely perceptible positive impacts for women on welfare, and negative impacts for young men. Some of the impetus for the reforms made under the Workforce Investment Act, intended to improve effectiveness, resulted from this study.

Getting back to the question, relating to the difficulties in service delivery, when the system switches from a voluntary to a non-voluntary service population, which is the case under welfare-to-work, if you are a vendor you have to realize you are no longer in the same business as [you were under] JTPA. On the one hand, research shows that there is a greater chance for having a positive net impact, as compared to working with volunteers, but there are also tremendous operational difficulties

that you didn't have before. Suddenly you have to deal with attendance problems, attitude problems, high dropout rates, high turnover rates once you get them into jobs, and multiple problems from home—everything from drug addiction to spouse abuse and child abuse and criminal records. Before, those kinds of individuals either wouldn't have shown up for training, or they would have dropped out right away.

Some vendors are translating the unanticipated aspects of the new business they are in as problems with the delivery system per se. Actually, although they are right that there have been start-up difficulties with the new performance system, the more fundamental change is that many of the vendors are in a new business—trying to help those who may prefer to be left alone.

Are the providers starting to understand this?

The longer they're in it, the more they understand the new aspects of the business they are in. But we at HRA are also working to improve the other problems as well, relating to reimbursement and referrals.

So how do you serve populations with multiple barriers to employment, or with the most severe barriers to employment?

It is sometimes argued that employment-related performance payment systems do not work as well where individuals are faced with multiple barriers to employment. But I don't want to pay for a training certificate that doesn't result in a job, or other unrelated costs. Doing so is an easy way out that removes the focus from where it belongs—achieving employment success even for the hard to serve.

A better approach to accommodating those who cannot move to early employment under a performance-based payment system is to have certain intensive services, such as additional training and education, for instance, be paid for separately outside the performance-based system, e.g. through CUNY or through Individual Training Accounts paid for through WIA. Another adjustment that can be made for the hard to serve is to adjust the reimbursement rate for successful milestones. But employment should be retained as the goal.

How was it that, in the contracting process, HRA went from discouraging potential bidders from making bids on both the SAP (assessment) and ESP (employment services) contracts, to ultimately awarding both kinds of contracts to four vendors?

What we didn't want was vendors who did assessment under SAP contracts to have the option of steering the easiest participants to their own ESP. That represents an inherent conflict of interest. When we reviewed the bids and discovered that many of the ESP providers were also the strongest assessment vendors, we allowed for both by having HRA randomly assign participants to the ESP contractors. Doing so prevented any chance of a conflict.

Is this designed to prevent creaming?

The SAP contracts are set up to do quick assessments and placements—all within four or six weeks of referral. But payments for successful placement are worth only about a third of the maximum placement awards under the ESP contracts. We intend to cream the easy to place through the SAP contracts for less money, leaving the higher payments for the participants needing longer-term help.

Assessment vendors are extremely focused on placing people immediately. We thought we'd have a 10 percent placement rate among the SAPs; actually, it's over 20 percent.

Philosophically, what role do you see for community-based nonprofit providers in this new system?

Smaller community-based nonprofits have the same opportunities that their larger cousins do—and many are specialized and can do certain things better. On the other hand, under a performance-based payment system, they must produce results, something that hasn't always been the case. Many of the smaller community based organizations with sub-contracts with prime vendors are benefiting from technical assistance from these larger organizations.

One RFP we recently put out was for employment for special populations. We got back a significant number of vendors who were mostly neither primes nor subs in the current contracts. They focus on special populations: Orthodox Jews, Chinese immigrants, Russian immigrants, just to name a few. We asked vendors to describe for us the specific population they focus on serving. Some included groups like very low-functioning individuals, which I wasn't sure was a distinct group—but we accepted all their definitions of special populations, and ranked them. These [contract awards] will be announced pretty soon.

But these contracts will also be performance-based, and vendors will be subject to performance-based payment systems just like the others in place at the moment. I am not sure all the respondents to this recent RFP understand that. ❀

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

With a renewed emphasis on the needs of employers in the workforce development system, new intermediary organizations are helping businesses find workers and keep them on the job.

ESPECIALLY SINCE MANDATED WORK ACTIVITIES have become part of the world of welfare, training providers have been bulking up—and talking up—their capacity to connect with employers, locate the best job openings, and quickly get their trainees to work. Almost any workforce development group you ask will rhapsodize about their in-house job developers, the strong bonds they forge with clients, and how in tune they are with what employers want and need.

The employers, even those who have warmed to the idea of hiring former welfare recipients, don't necessarily concur. Talk to them, and you might hear repeated complaints about new hires off the welfare rolls—people who aren't sufficiently work-ready, who frustrate their managers with personal issues that get in the way of their jobs.

"Many of those employees aren't too well up on work ethics," says Charles King of Primary Security, a Queens company that has hired many former public aid recipients. "They don't understand the importance of coming in on time, and showing people what you can do in an organization." The job trainers, too, often frustrate employers, barraging them with dozens of resumes from candidates who are thoroughly unqualified for the position in question.

Despite these objections, the near-record labor shortage that lasted until late last year led many firms to take chances they wouldn't ordinarily, hiring marginally qualified job-seekers rather than letting positions sit unfilled. But the work of going through dozens, even hundreds of applications and resumes to ferret out promising candidates is costly and time-intensive. So just as job developers act as placement agents for job-seekers, some intermediary groups are beginning to perform a similar function on behalf of employers.

For the past three years, the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce has offered a program called Good Help to serve as a screening agent for small- to medium-sized Brooklyn firms looking to fill job vacancies. Since 1998, 322 Brooklyn firms have used Good Help's services, and between 15 and 20 new requests come in each month, according to director Mike Rosenthal.

"The process starts when a company calls us or we reach out and they tell us what they want—whether it's a truck driver, secretary, or any other kind of worker," says Rosenthal. Good Help then assists the employer in putting together a job description, and circulates the

opening to a wide range of training providers, schools, and other organizations that might be in touch with suitable candidates.

Then the resumes come in. "The agencies are supposed to figure out who matches to the job description among their folks and fax us a resume of an appropriate person," Rosenthal explains. But, he says, Good Help rejects about half right off the bat—"the resume is horrible, or they're not qualified, for whatever reason." Applicants can be ruled out at this stage because of geographical location, lack of appropriate job skills, or an employment history that suggests they won't stay in the position for very long.

Rosenthal and his staff contact the agencies whose candidates are still under consideration and have them come in for interviews. Punctuality and dress are important, as is demeanor. "They have to show an interest," he notes. "If they're slumped in the chair and don't seem interested, we're not interested in them. A business can't accept people who will 'try out' the job. They have to want the job."

After picking a handful of the best candidates, Good Help sends their resumes along to the company, which will then schedule interviews. If a Good Help candidate gets hired, Rosenthal and his staff follow up by phone with the new employee and the employer after 30, 60, 90 and 180 days, and again after one year.

This focus on retention might seem a bit much, but a great many job trainers in New York City and elsewhere have found that it's a lot easier to get someone hired than to keep them employed. Whether it's because former welfare recipients have trouble adjusting to the culture of the workplace, bad chemistry with managers or other employees, or (most often) concerns outside of work such as making sure children are picked up from school, obstacles appear all too often that might threaten continued employment. If Good Help or the training organization the individual worked with can help devise a solution to the problem that allows the individual to keep his or her job, everybody benefits.

Brooklyn employers that have worked with Good Help found the company especially valuable during the recent labor crunch, when traditional recruitment techniques such as newspaper advertising failed to draw enough qualified applicants. "They brought suitable people at a time when I couldn't find anyone," says David Censi, owner of Mystic Display, an

industrial display company in Brooklyn. Censi has hired repeatedly from Good Help during the last two years. "They were an excellent source of qualified candidates."

Cathy Stimphill, Human Resources director at Armrest Security, has also hired extensively from the candidates Good Help presented to her—and has found the former public-aid recipients and others with less-than-stellar employment histories to be unusually motivated workers. "What distinguishes them is the fact that they're enlisting the assistance of a program," she says. "It shows that they're really motivated and looking for something steady."

Another intermediary that boasts tremendous potential resources is the BizLink network of the National Welfare to Work Partnership. Funded by a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to "assist welfare to work activities," this program operates in five cities, assisting businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses, with hiring and retention. Jim Beale, an executive on loan from Chase Manhattan Bank, has been overseeing the project since October 1999. He points out that even the biggest corporations, such as Chase, have relatively small human resources departments; smaller firms might have just one full-time HR staff member, if that. More and more firms are looking to outside entities to help them identify potential new workers and provide services for their current employees.

This is the role BizLink hopes to fill. Where Good Help works to find employees for businesses looking to hire, Beale foresees a big role for BizLink in helping new hires stay and grow in their new jobs. "New workers, including former public-assistance recipients, need support so that they don't quit," he says. "We can serve as problem solvers for businesses—figuring out solutions to childcare, transportation issues, and other concerns that could jeopardize employment."

Both Good Help and BizLink work closely with the very types of community-based organizations that otherwise have found themselves left out of some of the innovations in workforce development. Good Help has drawn candidates from CBOs such as Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, a highly regarded training organization in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood. BizLink's "consortium of local service providers" includes the South Forty Corporation (now known as Osborne), an

agency that has worked with former prison inmates for more than three decades.

John Rakis, executive director of South Forty Corporation, sees a relationship with BizLink as a way to provide a different kind of help to his clients. “BizLink offers a wider spectrum of resources,” he says. “If somebody calls us with a complaint about domestic violence, say, we’ll work with them to identify

the right resources to get them help in a way that not only helps them stay safe and secure, but helps them keep the job they have while they’re getting help.” By itself, South Forty doesn’t have these resources; with BizLink, it has a partner with deeper pockets and a wider range of connections to help take care of its client. BizLink’s client, of course, is the business that employs the person needing help.

“You have to link up,” Rakis adds. “You can’t do everything by yourself. We can’t expect our clients to negotiate this maze of programs that are out there without stumbling or getting lost.” As New York’s workforce system continues to develop and change, intermediaries such as Good Help and BizLink are counting on employers, providers and job-seekers all continuing to need guidance through that maze. ✨

EMPLOYER SNAPSHOTS

Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn

According to Jill Wachtel, if every job trainer in the city were as good as Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, New York’s employers and job-seekers alike would find their problems solved.

“They’re fabulous!” exclaims Wachtel, the employment manager at Lutheran Medical Center. “Out of 15, 18, 20 [of their clients] that we’ve hired, there hasn’t been one we’ve terminated.” The Sunset Park-based training organization offers basic skill training with a special emphasis on job preparation activities, all under the supervision of Executive Director Sister Mary Franciscus. “It’s the whole training program over there,” Wachtel offers. “It’s intense. Sister Mary makes them behave like they’re in a regular work environment, so when they are, they’re not shell-shocked.

“A lot of those kids have never worked in an office; if she didn’t conduct the program as she does, these kids would never make it. They’re prepared, and they’re successful.”

Anixter, Brooklyn

At the Morgan Avenue location in Brooklyn for Anixter, the world’s leading communications products and wire and cable distribution company, former welfare recipients have come to play an increasingly important role in the workforce over the last half-decade.

“All of them have done very well with us,” says Joe Giordano, the warehouse manager at the outlet. The Anixter outlet has hired between seven and ten graduates of the training program at Williamsburg Works since the mid-1990s; six are still there. Williamsburg Works graduates comprise fully one-third of the establishment’s eighteen employees.

Giordano praises the attitudes and preparation of the former aid recipients—and notes that these traits have helped them advance quickly. “We have two people that came in for office positions. One is now an administrative supervisor. Another came in as a receptionist, and now does billing and order entry.”

He also gives credit to the training provider that referred these workers. “We have a very good relationship with Williamsburg Works,” he says. “They’re always calling up to see if we’re hiring.”

Chase Manhattan Bank

At Chase Manhattan, former welfare recipients have managed perhaps the greatest accomplishment of all: They’re no different from any other workers in the banking giant’s many locations in New York City and Long Island.

“We’ve stayed away from ‘success stories,’” says Chase Vice-President Lela Wingard-Hughes. “We haven’t made it a big deal that they used to be on public assistance.” In other words, once they’re hired, they’re just employees—no different from anyone else.

Internal research at Chase strongly suggests that the retention rate for former public assistance clients “pretty much mirrors that of employees we find through other sources for the same jobs,” says Wingard-Hughes. Small sample size hasn’t been a problem; since starting to hire former public aid recipients in 1998, Chase has retained over 200, through its partnerships with nonprofit trainers Wildcat, Goodwill and FECS.

RUBBED WRONG IN ROCHESTER

As New York City takes its first steps toward implementing the federal Workforce Investment Act, community-based training organizations in Rochester worry that WIA has put them on the road to ruin.

COMMUNITY-BASED JOB TRAINERS MAY FEEL overwhelmed by the city's new welfare-to-work regime, but the changes have only just begun. While New York City still struggles with the question of how to implement the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), other local governments have been forging ahead. If the experience of Rochester is any indication, our local nonprofits had better stock up on antacids—or maybe antidepressants.

In that city of 222,000, after the first year of WIA, several nonprofit providers find themselves on the verge of having to close down programs that have successfully served community residents for decades. While other players in the workforce field have prospered, Rochester's nonprofits already have come to realize that the new system largely chokes off their traditional supply of clients.

Like New York City's welfare to work contracts, Rochester's public job training contracts are performance-based, meaning that the vendors get paid only after their clients find jobs. Theoretically, that's not a problem—except that the WIA one-stop center that's supposed to send them a steady flow of job-seekers has hardly referred anyone. The tiny trickle of referrals is nowhere near enough to keep their training programs going.

WIA was put into practice in Rochester very quickly. The Rochester Resource Alliance, a nonprofit organization created by government and business leaders to manage the system, contracted with a local community college to run the city's new one-stop center, the job training and placement clearinghouse mandated by WIA. The one-stop then set up partnerships with a number of community-based job training providers, including Action for a Better Community (ABC).

For 27 years, ABC has trained certified nursing aides, relying on funding from the since-discontinued federal laws that preceded WIA. The program trains low-income Rochester residents in a relatively well-paying field with both immediate openings and prospects for raises and career advancement. The ABC Training Institute, the branch of the organization that runs this program, among others, averages a 90 percent placement rate and has won several awards for the quality of its programs.

With a total annual budget of between \$17 million and \$20 million and responsibilities that include managing Rochester's Head Start program, operating a business incubator, and running a day care center, ABC is diversified,

well-established, and respected. But none of that helped the agency in its new circumstances. The nonprofit's agreement with the one-stop included an estimate, based upon historical performance, that ABC would get 155 referrals for all its programs in the first year. Instead, ABC has received fewer than 30—and has suffered a severe revenue shortfall as a result.

"I was so blindsided," recalls Jane Kriegler, ABC's deputy director for training. She says that the problem lies in the very

...very few people ever become eligible for actual skills training.

nature of the new system. Only after moving first through "core" and then "intensive" services, which are designed to place the job-seeker in a job as quickly as possible, does training become an option for the unemployed. As a result, very few people ever make it to ABC for actual skills training. "Core services, the first level of services they offer, is a big wide cup; some might go to intensive services, which is the next level," Kriegler says. "Then it gets really narrow—like drops from a faucet."

ABC Executive Director James Norman has seen his organization's prized training program begin to crumble. "With WIA, we had to depend upon individual referrals to generate enough funding to pay for the lights and rent and conduct the training," Norman says. WIA started in July 2000; through September, ABC had received only two referrals for its nursing aide training program. Prior to WIA, three-quarters of the funding for the program had come through the federal Job Training Partnership Act, which WIA replaced.

The organization requested a special exemption from Rochester's Workforce Investment Board so that it could receive government money to keep running its training program. But the request was tabled, and ABC's last hope is now to get funding through Individual Vocational Education and Skills Training (InVEST), a separate state program that funds more advanced training for low-income individuals. InVEST is also performance-based, but unlike WIA will compensate ABC for training individuals the organization recruits from the community—as ABC has always done.

ABC is not the only organization that's struggled under the new regime in Rochester. Carol Sims, Director of LifeSpan, which helps older adults and former stay-at-home mothers and wives find work, echoes many of Kriegler's complaints about the one-stop. "I have a staff person gone [to the one-stop] three days a week," she complains. "I'm not seeing a return [on that time], and we're not seeing referrals of clients coming in."

ABC's Norman blames the philosophy of the new workforce order. He argues that Rochester's system is no longer designed to serve the population that ABC and other community-based organizations traditionally have worked with. "In my opinion, they'd be content to put all of the dollars into customized training and matching funds for employer training," he says.

From the perspective of the businesspeople that run Rochester's WIB, it's an understandable position: The city's unemployment rate hovers under 4 percent, and many of those who might have been unemployed a few years ago now rank among Rochester's working poor—a group the business community sees as "deserving," according to Norman. Finally, by investing WIA dollars in upgrading their skills—the customized training for employers Norman refers to—the system can create new openings at the bottom of the job ladder, as the current working poor move up to higher rungs.

But Norman believes that, to a large extent, the business-dominated Rochester WIB simply isn't interested in the problems of people moving from welfare to work. "[The WIB has] a committee dealing with welfare to work, and it's made some proposals that have been rejected," he says. "They seem to be of the opinion that the [state] Department of Social Services is really dealing with this population through the various contracts it's made." ABC and five other agencies had been running a collaborative organization, CATAPULT, designed to help people leave welfare and find work, but the WIB wasn't interested in maintaining their funding. "They felt it wasn't their baby—it was for DSS, or the Department of Labor, or welfare-to-work, to fund it," he says. "There was no response from the WIB, except to create a committee." CATAPULT dissolved soon after, as the federal welfare to work appropriations that had supported the effort dried up.

Rochester is only about one thirty-fifth the size of New York City, but the hard lessons CBOs

SEA CHANGE IN SEATTLE

In contrast to the official silence and lack of coordination that characterizes workforce development in New York, Seattle has enjoyed sustained political leadership and fused private and public resources to create a comprehensive job training system that could emerge as a national model.

BY AND LARGE, CONSERVATIVE WORKFORCE experts trust in the private sector to cure our welfare and employment ills. In their argument, excessive planning by government meddlers only gums up the works with a million different lines of funding and authority. Guaranteeing jobs drains motivation from jobseekers and training providers alike, since both are off the hook no matter how poor their performance. Contracts that are structured to reward for training alone, rather than employment, lead to full classrooms—and equally full welfare rolls.

Given the wildly inconsistent results of past federal workforce initiatives, this critique has considerable merit—and under Mayor Rudy Giuliani, it has largely guided the city's policy. But the woes of New York City's sprawling workforce system could just as easily be chalked up to the absence of oversight and accountability as to government micromanaging. Bureaucratic inertia, overlapping jurisdictions, and a failure to distinguish between successful and floundering providers have all hampered efforts to forge an effective job training system in the city—and with very few exceptions, New York City has taken an extremely hands-off role. Policies of “workforce development,” which are oriented toward jobseekers, are usually disconnected from “economic development” initiatives, which are focused on employers, while mayor after mayor has maintained a determined silence on the issue.

The next mayor might do well to look to Seattle, where city government has been taking an unprecedented role in fusing public and private resources to create a rational job training and employment system. Seattle's Office of Economic Development (OED) runs a program called the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI), which works with employers, job training providers, and other human service agencies to do two things: Find job placements for those looking for them, and train and place workers in economic sectors that SJI anticipates will grow in the years ahead. In its holistic approach to job training, specifically its understanding that people need not just job skills but help with issues from child care to anger management, SJI represents a dramatic advance from most standard job training approaches. Its deference to private sector employers, labor market economists, and the hundreds of other experts it consulted before and while setting its priorities and designing its program is also all but unique.

In 1995, under Mayor Norm Rice, the city wooed the Annie E. Casey Foundation to name Seattle as one of six “Jobs Initiatives” sites

the foundation was sponsoring nationwide. Rice's background as a former job developer with the Urban League was a strength, as was his commitment to working with Seattle's poorest and least employable citizens. But despite what seemed like a shared philosophy, the foundation was still wary of giving grant money to a government agency. “When they picked us, they were very clear that they were nervous about it,” says OED director Mary Jean Ryan. “They'd never worked with a city government before, and they were constantly asking us to document ‘How will you not be bureaucratic?’”

Taking advantage of a mandatory two-year planning period, SJI's directors conducted hundreds of interviews and site visits with trainers and community-based organizations, undertook extensive labor market analysis, and brought businesses, colleges, labor unions, foundations, and nonprofit human service agencies into the planning process. As a result, SJI was able to focus its efforts on those sectors of the economy that showed the strongest potential for growth.

The program “got a big boost,” in Ryan's words, from the national welfare reform law of 1996. “After welfare reform was signed by President Clinton, Mayor Rice proposed to the City Council that they invest city dollars in the Jobs Initiative,” Ryan remembers. “Welfare reform was going to come, and if we didn't have a more thoughtful response in Seattle, he feared that we'd have a lot of people who would end up suffering.”

Unlike other reform efforts, the Seattle Jobs Initiative wasn't just a crusade to slash the welfare rolls—it aimed to lift people out of poverty and into decent jobs. The program focused on jobs that paid at least \$8 per hour, offered opportunities for workers to win raises and promotions over time, and did not require much formal education. Given the local economy, that meant that SJI emphasized the fields of health care, automotive services, manufacturing, and business and secretarial and clerical work. The program has made flexibility a watchword; in the wake of substantial layoffs at Boeing in 1998-99, SJI abandoned its aerospace training program.

The results have been striking. While Washington's statewide work-first program has produced average starting wages of \$7.20 an hour, SJI participants start work earning an average of \$9.51 an hour. And retention rates one year after placement for all workers placed through SJI are an impressive 58 percent. “The

additional supports we offer account for that difference,” says executive director Dianne Hanna. Those supports come through SJI's work with a group of Seattle CBOs, which recruit participants for the program and provide some of the case management that even skeptics praise as a program strength. After placing people in jobs, case managers help new employees with problems ranging from getting health insurance to issues in the workplace.

SJI's directors haven't been afraid to reorganize the program on the fly. They have found that the sector-based approach, touted as the program's most innovative and promising idea, has been less successful in making job placements than the conventional method of “direct placements” through community-based providers, in which the job developers with those providers help individuals apply for and get placed in jobs.

Sector-based approaches take longer, and in SJI's case, they haven't yet generated enough momentum to translate to either large numbers of placements, or high wages for those individuals who do get placed. Participants in SJI's sector programs go through intensive skills training in a specific field such as electronics assembly or automotive repair. The classroom work is usually done at area community colleges that partner with SJI, and can last for anywhere from 12 to 24 weeks—not much time compared to a two- or four-year degree program, but an eternity for, say, a single mother trying to pay the rent. Many SJI participants literally can't afford to wait, and try to land direct placements to get money in their pockets as quickly as possible.

When participants finish their courses, SJI tries to place them in jobs in whatever field they've trained for. But a series of problems, from higher-than-anticipated dropouts from the courses to difficulties in placing graduates in fields where few women and people of color have worked before, have limited the success of most of SJI's sectoral projects. SJI's most ambitious undertaking has also proven to be its most difficult.

“I think right now we're struggling with the sectors,” Hanna says. “It's hard to get sector initiatives up to scale when we're targeting people who can't afford to go to training because they can't take the time off.” Hanna hopes that a new program to train entry-level HTML programmers, scheduled to begin in April, will function more along the lines of SJI's sector project concentrating on office and business jobs. This has been the most

ers, employers and the city as a whole.

Here's how it might look. As in most other types of businesses, large providers— for-profit groups such as America Works and Curtis and Associates, educational institutions such as CUNY and citywide nonprofits like Wildcat Services and Goodwill Industries—could provide a broad array of basic services, acting like job-training supermarkets. CBOs, on the other hand, could offer “boutique” services tailored to specific neighborhoods, occupations, or even employers. They could augment this work with direct contracts from the government to handle “special populations,” such as distinct ethnic communities, new immigrants, or former prison inmates. A centralized coordinating entity—perhaps HRA itself, or eventually the city's Workforce Investment Board—could implement “finder's fees” or other incentives for CBOs to step up their recruiting efforts in the neighborhoods; even if the CBOs can't offer direct services to every client they recruit, they can refer clients to appropriate service providers through HRA or the WIB.

A range of intermediary and ombudsman services should be available to help job-seekers and employers alike navigate and use the system. The city's Workforce Investment Board has plans to make such services a key component of the new centralized “one-stop” centers mandated by WIA, and several private intermediaries have emerged to work on behalf of employers as well as job-seekers. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce has been running a program called Good Help, matching clients in area training programs with local job openings for three years now, and the national Welfare-to-Work Partnership, now setting up shop in New York City, also has great potential as a “bridge” organization.

There are lessons to be learned from other places as well. Community-based organizations in Rochester, New York, where WIA implementation is much further along, are facing issues with too few referrals from that city's one-stop system that New York's CBOs would do well to note—and take measures to guard against. In Seattle, by contrast, CBOs and others in the field are benefiting from political leadership from city officials determined to coordinate economic development and workforce development through the Seattle Jobs Initiative.

If they plan to emerge from this shakeup more efficient and more effective, nonprofits must learn to share. Smaller organizations should explore ways to share trainers, placement officers, administrative functions, even training facilities. They'll also need to find other sources of income; as access to public dollars through local and federal contracts for job training becomes less certain, CBOs will need to start raising cash through private philanthropy, corporate contributions, or for-profit ventures.

In the still-fluid landscape of job training in

CLIENT SNAPSHOTS

Marcellus

51, has been in New York's public assistance/workforce development system for three years. He currently receives training at Williamsburg Works, an ESP subcontractor, and participates in the Work Experience Program (WEP) as a subway car cleaner. A Vietnam veteran, he has held clerical positions both in the military and in civilian life. “I'm trained to be a personnel clerk, yet I can't get specialized training to allow me to get a certificate, and then find a job with that certificate,” he says. Instead, he has been in computer training, and has previously participated in a general work-readiness program like the one he currently is in.

Marcellus complains that the WEP program actually makes it harder for participants to find jobs, as it is unattractive to employers. “There's a stigma when an employer finds out you're in WEP,” he says. But the problems go deeper, he argues: “This system is a maze. Each person is treated differently; it's not uniform. Some people are given leeway and others are not. You are categorized as far as who you are and your expectations of productivity.”

Patricia

now 54, was, to all appearances, a welfare lifer. The mother of three had been on welfare for 20 years, since her husband left her, and by her own admission had never worked a “real” job.

When she saw a flier for a community-based job training organization in March of 1999, she decided to check it out. “I was sick of babysitting and told myself, I'm going to take the step,” she says. Patricia quickly learned how to dress for jobs, practiced interviewing, and prepared a resume—despite her lack of work experience. “I'd done volunteer work with the blind, which turned out to be very valuable. And I'd been a Sunday school teacher at church.”

A short stint as a home health aide ended when Patricia realized that the \$67 a week she was taking home wasn't worth the pain in her chronically sore back. She reconnected with Williamsburg Works, where a job developer had arranged an interview with Cornell Cooperative Extension, a community health project of Cornell University operating in New York City. Patricia was skeptical of her chances, and even canceled her interview. “I thought: This is a university—what do they want me for?” she recalls. But the developer “told me I needed to be confident in myself. She encouraged me, which I needed very badly.” A second interview was scheduled, and Patricia was hired as a temporary worker making \$8.50 an hour. Her initial three-month term was extended to six months, and soon after she was hired full time as a community educator, making close to \$12 an hour lecturing to community organizations on health and nutrition issues.

“I love this job,” she says today. “But I wouldn't be there if I didn't come to training.”

Yvonne

55, has found that it's a lot easier to get into the job training system than it is to get out. After working for 15 years at a citywide nonprofit, she lost her job in February of 1999. Ten months later, about to lose her apartment, she was approved for public assistance. But that was just the beginning of her trek through the system.

"I've gone to three different job search sites, where you're supposed to get help finding jobs," she says. "But I was never interviewed, and they never helped me with my resume. Someone said 'let me look at it,' but by the time they did, I was at another site. At this one, we made Xerox copies of the classifieds. We'd make calls or use the fax machine to follow up on whatever jobs we had seen in the papers. We had no access to the computers."

Meanwhile, she remains in WEP, and her financial situation remains precarious. "I'm in debt over my head. Whatever job they send you out on, you have to go; I don't have a problem with that. My problem is, why send me on a job earning \$5 an hour when I'm more than \$75,000 in debt? Wherever I go, I'd like to know that there's a job in the future. If I'm putting my energy into this [WEP assignment], then let's find a way to pay me, as opposed to just having me work off my assistance they're giving me."

Charlene

29, has two children. She worked for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for four years before getting laid off last October. "I was collecting unemployment, but it wasn't enough," she says. She's been looking for city jobs, including another job with the transit agency, but finally decided to apply for public assistance in February. "I'm not lazy," she says. "If I have to work for a [WEP] check or anything, I'm not gonna deal with that." Her view that WEP isn't worth her time is not uncommon among those in the system.

Samantha

34, has three children and is applying for her second stint on public assistance—only a month after leaving the welfare rolls for a position with a law firm. But the babysitting expenses that had been covered while she went to her WEP assignment were no longer reimbursed when she went off public assistance, and her social worker didn't know how to arrange for the money to be restored. Despite the promises of the Job Center to adjust her budget, Samantha couldn't pay her babysitter. Without anyone else to look after her children, she lost her job.

"The law firm told me they need someone reliable," she says. "I don't want to do this again. I want to work."

Rochester, *continued from page 16*

are learning in this little city should teach New York's CBOs that in the new world of WIA, a great track record and impeccable reputation are no guarantee of success. Hopefully, New York's WIB will draw a lesson from Rochester's experience as well, as it continues to design the city's one-stop system. As Wildcat CEO Amalia Betanzos grimly noted at the New York WIB's last meeting in January, her organization and other large city providers can assume the risk of cash flow interruptions and ride out periods of minimal referrals seemingly endemic to WIA—but the hardships of the system, if not addressed, threatened to "eliminate the competition" offered by community-based providers. In that eventuality, New York's job-seekers would be the real losers. ✨

Seattle, *continued from page 17*

successful sector initiative, placing nearly 200 people through February 2001 with impressive average starting wages of \$991 an hour. Perhaps even more encouraging, 73 percent of those placed in office positions are still on the job after one year.

Potentially, SJI is most interesting as a model for how to connect the different players in the workforce field. Rather than offering job training itself, SJI serves more as a coordinator of training and related services, conducting outreach and retention efforts in partnership with community-based organizations, leveraging its size to work with area community colleges to offer training courses, and checking in with its business partners to stay up to date on employers' hiring needs. Current Mayor Paul Schell has continued Rice's strong support for the program, ensuring the backing of city government.

New York's decision-makers on workforce issues have begun to place more emphasis on the needs of the employer, in addition to those of the jobseeker—an overdue recognition that those needs are not opposed, but complimentary. Quality training and placements, with the appropriate support services available, should both improve the worker's quality of life and enhance the employer's productivity. SJI's work offers the hopeful message that government can help bring them together to help smooth the way to successful and sustained employment. ✨

The Workforce Challenge, *continued from page 16*

the city, community-based providers have an opportunity to reaffirm their central mission, to connect people with new jobs and better lives. But the effort will require courage, brains and a willingness to step away from old ways of working and set out in new directions. Welfare reform at its best has the admirable mission of helping people help themselves. If New York City's community-based job trainers are willing to change, they can still deliver that help. ✨

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the extremely fluid nature of New York City's workforce development system, one could argue that the exercise of making suggestions to improve it is a bit like trying to repaint a speeding car. But it's also true that the best time to propose changes is during just such a dynamic period, before the bureaucratic arteries harden. With a new mayoral administration taking power in 2002, the Human Resources Administration's prime welfare to work contracts scheduled to expire at the end of that year, the Workforce Investment Board moving forward in its efforts to implement the federal Workforce Investment Act, and the looming debate in Congress over reauthorizing the federal welfare reform legislation passed in 1996, reformers and critics should have plenty of opportunities to be heard.

With this in mind, the Center for an Urban Future proposes several steps that we believe should be taken to help the city's workforce development system better serve employers and job-seekers. Several of the measures we suggest are focused on the welfare to work contracts, while others pertain to WIA implementation and the emerging workforce development system it will help create.

1 The city should revisit the welfare to work contracts, convening a panel of providers, employers and clients to determine what is and isn't working for all involved parties. Our two biggest concerns are whether the four prime contractors running Skills Assessment and Job Placement (SAP) centers are doing sufficient assessment work for the nearly 80 percent of their clients they are not able to place into jobs, and how the city might consider amending the contracts to allow ESPs and their subcontractors to expend more time and resources to prepare the "hardest to serve" clients for work.

From all indications, HRA is already making efforts to address these and other concerns, through regular meetings with its prime contractors and other less formal conversations between providers and HRA regional managers. But some system-wide effort to address the most frequent complaints would be in everyone's best interest. Many Employment Services and Job Placement (ESP) vendors have complained that their clients often show up without the "road

map" to being served that each assessment is supposed to provide. In the case of the long-term public assistance clients referred directly to the ESPs, the city should consider how best to conduct basic assessment for those clients, as it does for new applicants.

Currently, ESPs and their subcontractors are struggling with an inconsistent flow of referrals and the severe skill deficits of most of their clients. It's expensive and time-consuming to get these clients ready to work, and training providers have little money coming in from their contracts, since the city doesn't pay until clients are placed in jobs.

Another reform we believe could improve performance is regular conferences between SAP case managers and ESP case managers. Improving communication between the two kinds of providers would smooth clients' transition from assessment to employment services providers and reduce duplicative evaluations—as well as the frustration of participants.

2 Government officials and individual training providers should do everything they can to ensure that clients are getting skills, training and placement that leads not just to short-term work, but to career-track positions paying a living wage.

The biggest concern about the explicit skimming model in which Skills Assessment Centers immediately place the most job-ready participants is that it seems likely that these are the clients who might most benefit from longer training programs leading to better-paying work. Both HRA and some of the prime contractors have pledged that workers who show aptitude in their jobs can come back into the system for additional training toward a better position. But while HRA promises improvements in this area, there is scant evidence so far to indicate that many workers are receiving more training—or even that they know they have the option to do so. Commitment not just to work, but to quality jobs and careers, should be a hallmark of the system.

3 To assist providers concerned about cash flow while adapting to performance-based contracts and voucher-driven referrals, HRA

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

Most of the research for this report was conducted in the form of interviews with providers, practitioners, government officials, and critics. The Center for an Urban Future wishes to thank all the trainers, administrators, clients and employers who spoke with us during the eight months of preparation for this report. Special thanks go to the New York City Human Resources Administration, the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals, and the New York City Employment and Training Coalition, all of which were especially generous with their time and cooperation, and to the staff and clients at all the providers we visited in the course of researching this report.

and the Workforce Investment Board should consider creating and funding a nonprofit organization, perhaps along the lines of the Non-Profit Assistance Corporation's subcontractor loan assistance program, designed to make interest-free or low-interest bridge loans directly to CBOs with subcontracts.

Some of New York's welfare to work subcontractors, concerned about their ability to survive financially and frustrated by the city's perceived indifference to their plight, are considering dropping their contracts—a decision with potentially catastrophic results for the hardest to serve. While HRA itself has extended rolling cash loans to help its prime contractors through the difficulties of adjusting to the new system, most primes have not had the resources to extend similar assistance to their subcontractors. Creating an entity to help the subs through times of cash flow crisis is a logical solution to the problem, giving providers the financial flexibility they need to do their work.

If the experiences of CBO providers in Rochester and elsewhere are any indication, a loan-granting body will also come in handy when WIA implementation begins in earnest, and small organizations experience the pains of adjusting to the new system. As WIB member and Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce President Kenneth Adams said recently, in the past, providers could take their line-item contracts to a bank and secure credit. It's unlikely that they'll be able to do that under a voucher system. Creating an entity to fill this financing void might be the single most important step government can take to ensure that cash flow concerns and the difficulties of adjusting to the new system won't drive community-based providers from the field.

When drawing up contracts to fill in gaps in the workforce development system, HRA and, eventually, the WIA one-stop administrators should offer incentives for CBOs to work together by sharing resources and offering training programs that complement rather than duplicate work going on at other providers.

Sharing resources to create greater administrative and operational efficiency is likely to ease the budgetary pressures CBOs face. While we believe that CBOs will find that tighter budgets will motivate them

to join forces anyway, a little private sector-style encouragement couldn't hurt.

CBOs should look for ways to become leaner and more efficient, and invest whatever savings they accrue from those efforts in pursuing new revenue sources.

The last thing we want to imply is that government should consider itself off the hook for supporting community-based job training providers. As long as these groups continue to offer effective training and success at placing welfare clients into jobs, they deserve more, not less, public sector support. But political and budgetary realities are such that CBOs owe it to their clients, as well as themselves, to prepare for the worst, even as they hope for the best.

Then there's the Workforce Investment Act, which eventually will give individual vouchers a role of unprecedented importance in New York's workforce system. Evidence from Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and other cities where vouchers have largely supplanted contracts strongly suggests that small nonprofits lose clients when the nature of the system changes.

Some public money will remain available through contracts; the city WIB has already pledged to award contracts for special populations on a performance basis. The system's new focus on employers also could spur a new round of corporate philanthropy in the field, and public/private partnerships to provide customized training should flourish as well. Whether through these arrangements, or through other means entirely, community-based providers will need to pursue entrepreneurial avenues to avoid stagnation and eventual closure.

Just as compassion and commitment to their communities characterized the best community-based efforts of the last century, the best providers will add innovation and strategic growth to those values in the new one. It's a daunting challenge, but the proud history of New York's community-based providers suggests they're more than up to meeting it.

Several important studies of recent vintage also informed this work:

Public/Private Ventures:

- Sheila Maguire, *Surviving, and Maybe Thriving, on Vouchers*: Spring, 2000.
- Maria L. Buck, *Building a Firm Foundation: Recommendations for New York City's Job Training System*: December, 1999.

Jobs for the Future:

- Peter Plastrik with Judith Combes Taylor, *Responding to a Changing Labor Market: the Challenges for Community-Based Organizations*. January, 2001.

The following websites are also valuable resources for practitioners and students of workforce issues:

- City Project: <http://www.cityproject.org>
- Community Voices Heard: <http://www.cvhaction.org>
- The Jobs Initiative (Annie E. Casey Foundation): <http://www.aecf.org/jobsinitiative/index.htm>.
- John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University: <http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/>
- Jobs for the Future: <http://www.jff.org/>
- National Network of Sector Practitioners: <http://www.nedlc.org/nnspp/index.html>
- Public/Private Ventures: <http://www.ppv.org>.
- Welfare to Work Partnership: <http://www.welfaretowork.org>

For convenient links to these and other workforce development research sites, visit our website at www.nycfuture.org

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Kim Nauer, Executive Director

Neil Scott Kleiman, Director

Jonathan Bowles, Research Director

David Jason Fischer, Project Director

This report was written by David Jason Fischer and edited by Kathleen McGowan. Report designed by Julia Reich.

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