

Notes from the March 7, 2022 Inclusive Prosperity Workshop

Recommended Resources for Holistic and Collaborative Services

Three themes from member responses:

- Client driven services, client taking charge of figuring out which holistic services are needed
- Customized services: everyone's journey is different, need to have flexibility. Not a one size fits all approach
- Longer term relationships are needed

Limited English-speaking clients need more intensive empowerment to overcome their feeling of helplessness and low morale caused by linguistic and cultural barriers

Sally Meyer, Britepaths: Family Independence Initiative/UpTogether

- Up Together program is an out of the box program that is customized and client driven
- Positive that it is long term
- Still trying to figure out how it works. There is a program in Cincinnati:
 - 2-year program
 - Monthly mandatory meetings for first 6 months
 - Clients come together in collaborative group network/supportive manner
 - Develop community while trying to move forward economically and socially
 - After first 6 months clients have access to Up Together app and funding sources for \$2400/2 years to use as they see fit, paying off bills etc.
 - 23% saw increase in income
 - 60% decreased dependence on SNAP and other public benefits
- Program is simple but a radical way to support families; gives them ownership to move themselves forward
- Sally will send information on Cincinnati YouTube video that describes the program. (See link [here.](#))

Ji-Young Cho, KCSC: United Way Model

- This model focuses on individualized coaching services via ongoing relationships, cross training staff for financial coaching, workforce development services and other supports
- Very applicable and relevant to KCSC's program
- Limited English-speaking clients need "warm up" or "incubation" period because of language and cultural barriers. Need more time to make them feel empowered
- Coaching would be key during incubation period
- Still challenges with day care, transportation, etc. for clients to be able to take advantage of programs. Financial assistance is important as they are building their job skills, doing job training. People need to be stable while they are in this period

Additional thoughts from cohort discussion:

- Three themes are needed together. Can't do one without the other two.

- Case managers are called “coaches” in UC’s Family Achievement Program. They need a certain amount of financial assistance so they can get out of survival mode and focus instead on moving forward. Steve will send a link to UC’s Family Achievement Program
- If debt/finances are what clients are worried about, people can’t focus on training
- Need to look at two generational approaches.
- One thing that gets in the way: partners don’t always share that they are sending us clients. Much better if we know so that we can collaborate and work holistically on the client’s problems. “Hold the baton together” on client referrals for the first part of the hand-off
- Question: are nonprofits connected with the [Human Services Resources Guide](#)? We will add the guide to the Resource List

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

- Confidence and believing in yourself was critical
- Nearly all mentioned a person who supported their progress
- Indicators of better lives are not just better jobs/better pay but also other areas such as:
 - Changed self-image
 - Quality of life experiences
 - Different sense of possibilities

Peer reflections on Participant Interviews – what stood out?

Christina Schoendorf

- Clients talked about all the resources and opportunities they didn’t know about
 - People were connecting to resources that they previously didn’t think they would qualify for
 - The more information that we have and understand the different resources, the impact on our clients is significant
 - Information is constantly changing, can be overwhelming for clients. Especially challenging for non-native speakers. Important for staff to be able to help and serve as navigators
- Need to staff to serve as cheerleaders to help build confidence

Chris Garris

- The interview with Janice from Training Futures demonstrated how powerful it can be to learn in a simulated work environment
- Importance of soft skills like problem solving to help people succeed once they get on the job
- Importance to help people be successful in interviews and on site
- “A stronger workforce makes a stronger community”

How is a work environment simulated at Training Futures – Janice Halowich

- Participants come with the goal of getting a job in an office setting
- Training is in an office setting, participants rotate through actual work experience such as handling phones and visitors with Training Futures reception duty, and do actual work projects like helping to plan an actual presentation

- Participants report to trainers as if they are reporting to a supervisor and have performance reviews
- Lots of opportunities to reflect on what they are doing and how skills are applied in an office
- Somewhat different with COVID, but now act as though they are working virtually. Still require professional dress online, checking in with supervisors as bosses, etc. Participants work on real life projects.

CHAT ACTIVITY: One insight learned from interviews with successful participants

- Participants need us to collaborate for their benefit
- All journeys are unique. People are amazingly resilient
- Need to build people's confidence
- Some participants join many programs at once. Hard to capture the scope of their journeys.
- Our programs in their own ways are impactful
- One individual or mentor can make a difference in the trajectory of people's lives

PARTNERING WITH PROGRAM GRADUATES

Top two options selected as top interests by members at the last workshop were (1) Graduate Panels and (2) Grad Volunteers as Program Champions

What works with these options, how does it add value? – Member discussion:

- Benefits the current cohort because they can see future images of themselves as successful like the graduate
- Lived experience is important
- Graduates inspire others with their journeys, see a future vision for themselves
- We use graduates on panels with a variety of experiences: some who got hired quickly, some who started a job that didn't work out, etc. Show that there are lots of different ways to reach success.
- This is an opportunity for current participants to network with graduates.
- We have always shared participant success stories and have also filmed their testimonies for our websites or various other outreach events. It really helps to show potential participants what they could achieve or the services/resources they can receive by participating in our programs.
- Partner event: people can discuss their experiences in the program and can provide realistic expectations, how they've handled disappointments
- Funders love to see how participants contribute to the organization
- Computer CORE students often come back and volunteer in roles such as student onboarding. Also, we actively hire paid interns and leverage resources from Fairfax County employment services to help fund their wages. This allows for practice of those hands-on office skills!
- Virginia Career Works & their WIOA and SCSEP (senior employment) programs are sources of work-based learning funds. Contact Tatiana Nuth if you are interested in learning more about how these resources might work to hire graduates or place them into internships for work experience with your programs

- On the job training: Contractual agreement that WIOA has with an employer. WIOA pays a portion of their salary/hourly wage to offset training
- Work Experiences Opportunities: individuals are volunteers to employers and are paid a stipend, usually about 30 hours per week/minimum wage via WIOA

If you've wanted to do this but haven't, what gets in the way of working with successful graduates?

- Things can get discouraging for participants if things do not go according to plan, so motivation can decrease. Successful grads can help with this.
- Some funders have restrictions that may make hiring of graduates difficult and organizations will need to get clients approval to use their stories (some clients such as those in shelters for women who have been abused cannot share their stories due to safety concerns)
- Delicate balance between funders wanting to see success stories versus an individual's privacy
- Clients don't just come in, graduate and then they are successful. We have to continually take baby steps to progress along a longer journey
- It takes a long time for people to be successful. If just starting out with a program, may take a while to build up to having successful graduates

CHAT ACTIVITY: Are you interested in program-specific graduate engagement or collaborative engagement together with multiple programs?

- 5 said "collaborative" (Chris, Cristina, Ji-Young, Sally, Alexis), and 3 said "both" (Michael, Nagia, Janice)
- It's very challenging to hire within and would be more so collaboratively. However, I do think about some of our staff/students serving on other organizations' boards or vice versa

KEY TAKEAWAYS: (taken from chat and dialogue)

- We all into this together as a one family!
- When we talk about case managers who made a difference and who clients know by name, I am still convinced some clients have many caseworkers who do not know each other. All are super - but there is not just one.
- That it's the personal experience and mentoring such as peer to peer that makes a difference, and also programs featured are leading to jobs.
- Explore different program models and their impacts on clients and communities.
- Have partners share more in depth how they work with clients, partners etc.
- Great learning more about peer programs such as United Way and Training Futures. Reminds us of how much we can learn from one another.