Serving Disconnected Young Adults: Lessons Learned from @LIKE Program

Presented By:

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Presented on behalf of the Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial County Workforce Development Boards

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What Is @LIKE?

- A Workforce Innovation Fund initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Labor
- Program is in operation across three unique counties in Southern California: Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino
- The Linking Innovation, Knowledge, and Employment (@LIKE) Program serves young adults ages 18 to 24 who are disconnected from work and school and are less likely to succeed later in life which increases the likelihood of being permanently disenfranchised, poor, and dependent on social service subsidies
- @LIKE is designed to:
  - Test strategies to reconnect young adults to educational opportunities, employment, and community
  - Focus on socio-psychological elements of resiliency and self efficacy through life coaching along with more traditional employment and education services at a more intensive level than in traditional WIA programs
Timeline

- U.S. DOL awarded contract for $6m; contract began July 2012
- Three counties, over 20 organizational partners, and 9 delivery sites
- First young adults enrolled in January 2013
- As of October 2014 – 664 young adults enrolled with over 50% in the 22-24 older youth age category
  - Target was 675 with 60% 22-24
Innovations

- Working with this population in and of itself is noteworthy
- Focuses on:
  - LIFE COACHING versus only case management
  - Helping young adults learn to be resilient and to find confidence (self efficacy)
  - Connection to post secondary and industry-based certifications
- Increasing the intensity of service as opposed to traditional programs (WIA)
  - Through number of professions delivering a ‘wrap around’ service
  - Through length of time in program
  - Through service options available.
Key Performance Indicators by Program End

**Enrollment**
- Target 675; Achieved 664

**Serving Older Disconnected Young Adults, Ages 22 to 24**
- 60%

**Complete Career Awareness Component**
- 90%

**Complete GED or High School Diploma within two years**
- 60% of those enrolled without credential

**Enter Paid Internship**
- 80%

**Enter Unsubsidized Employment**
- 65%

**Enter Vocational Training or College**
- 50%

**National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Attainment**
- 100%

**Participant Retention**
- 85%

**Improve Basic Skills by Two Education Levels within One Year**
- 75%

**Employers Report Satisfaction/Expectations Exceeded**
- 100%

**Young Adults Report Satisfaction/Expectations Exceeded**
- 100%
Progress and Successes To Date

- Streamlined the enrollment process so that young adults enter the program immediately
- Created a common approach to marketing the program
- Created an Advisory Council made up of young adults
- Engaged young adults on the Steering Committee
- Professionalized the field with trained Life Coaches
- Created an integrated data management and analysis system
- Continue to receive high levels of young adult customer satisfaction
- Created an electronic communication system using SharePoint
- Ensuring common systems and processes across the counties and in 9 delivery sites
- Created a planned approach to sustainability.
- First of the 26 WIF Grantees to be monitored by U.S. DOL, with no findings or corrective action required.
Key Challenges

- Leaving behind a WIA mentality in terms of procedures and practices
- Recruiting 22 to 24 year olds
- Maintaining an active Advisory Council in each county
- Engaging employers
- Developing deep understanding of how to use the results of the resiliency and self efficacy assessments
- Developing an appreciation among all sites of the value of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)
- Creating robust partnerships with community colleges in all sites
- Creating true career pathways from @LIKE to post secondary education and training
- Maintaining consistency across all 3 regions and service delivery sites
- Frequent staff turnover resulting in lost program and process knowledge gained thru experience
- Staying focused on two prongs:
  1. Operational - running the program in an innovative fashion
  2. Big Picture - conducting an evaluation and contributing to the field of knowledge and professional practice
4 Areas of Lessons Learned (of many!)

- Recruitment and Engagement
- Life Coaching and Assessment
- National Career Readiness Certification (CRC)
- Streamlining the ‘front end’
Recruitment: What Works Best

- Boots on the ground
- Word of mouth
- Referrals from certain partners
Recruitment: Boots on the Ground

- Go to places where young adults hang out and recruit one-on-one
  - Skate parks
  - Convenience stores
  - Tattoo parlors
  - GameStop stores
- Go door to door in neighborhoods to reach couch surfers
Recruitment: Word of Mouth

- Use young adults who have enrolled in the program to refer relatives or friends
  - Offer a referral stipend (Subway gift card or $25 stipend)
Recruitment: Referrals from Partners

- Parole/Probation Officers
- Community Resource Officers
- Local Pastors
- Housing Authorities
Recruitment: Other Successes

- Press releases (or newspaper articles featuring success stories)
  - Parents and grandparents respond
- Mass emails to partner agencies asking if employees have family members who can benefit from the program
- Advertising in weekly classified ad papers (Pennysaver) - target by zip code
Keeping Older Youth Engaged

- Help them find a job first (likely they have family responsibilities)
- Develop a sustained connection to a trained life coach
  - Life coach on the basketball court; Starbucks
  - As trust is established, they are more willing to engage in educational activities
- Stipends - earn points and dollars for achievements (GED, industry-recognized certificate, college enrollment etc.)
Engagement: Expect Cycling In and Out

- They disappear for periods of time
- Text, email, post on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, make home visits and let them know they are welcome back
- Invite relatives to social gatherings and ask them to encourage the youth to return
- Have a toolkit for re-engagement
  - Referrals to partners for mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, assistance with housing
National Career Readiness Certificate – Professional Development Training

- Essential to offer background training to program staff to explain:
  - What the NCRC is – nationally recognized job skills assessment
  - How to market the NCRC to employers (job candidate has attained specific workforce competency levels)
  - How to explain the benefit of this credential to the young adults
@LIKE Evaluation

- Background
- Design
- Results to date - Implementation and Process Studies; impact analysis
- Looking ahead - Cost Benefit Analysis
Evaluator: IMPAQ International

- Premier Social Science Research and Evaluation Firm
- Offices in Maryland, DC, and California among others
- Third-party Evaluator for 15 DOL TAACCCT and WIF Grantees in 18 States
- Grant Evaluations Focus Areas Include:
  - Biosciences
  - Disadvantaged Young Adults
  - Information Technology
  - Mining
  - Communications
  - Energy
  - Logistics
  - Retail Management
  - Cyber Security
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Manufacturing
  - Transportation
What Does an Evaluation Do?

Knowledge for the Field

Audit?

Assessment?

Value!!!

Continuous Improvement
Evaluation Background

• Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) requirement

• Rigorous Evaluations:
  ◦ Identify evidence-based improvements
  ◦ Contribute to knowledge base
  ◦ Inform future investments

• IMPAQ International: Independent evaluator
@ LIKE Evaluation Overview

- Implementation Study
- Process Study
- Impact Study w/ CBA

Findings
Evaluation: Data Collected

- Administrative data
- Site visits
- In-person interviews with key stakeholders
- Participant focus groups
- Documents review
Qualitative Evaluation Results: Successes

- Successfully Implemented Program
- Identified KPIs
- Established Data Tools
  - Collects and Uses Program Data Early and Often
- Used Purposeful Leadership and Strategic Planning
  - Includes Young Adults in Strategic Planning
Qualitative Evaluation Results: Successes

- **Program Recruitment**
  - Followed Multi-faceted Approach to Recruitment
  - Streamlined Program Enrollment and Engagement

- **Workforce Focus**
  - Life Coaches/Case Managers
  - Hired and Trained Life Coaches
  - Professionalized Life Coaches through Coach U training.
“It is not just what my Life Coach connected me to. It was having someone believe in me. It was the whole package. The people, the experience. They learn your name. Ask you about your day. They genuinely mean it.”

–@LIKE Participant
Qualitative Evaluation Results: Successes

• Participant Engagement
  ◦ Cohort Approach
  ◦ Employ Social/Psychological Assessments
  ◦ Emphasize Professional Development
  ◦ Flexibility to Re-engage
Key Challenges

• Recruiting 22 to 24 year olds
• Maintaining an active Advisory Council in each county
• Developing deep understanding of how to use the results of the resiliency and self efficacy assessments
• Developing an appreciation among all sites of the value of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)
• Frequent staff turnover resulting in lost program and process knowledge gained thru experience
Key Challenges

• Engaging employers
• Creating robust partnerships with community colleges in all sites
• Creating true career pathways from @LIKE to post secondary education and training
• Maintaining consistency across all 3 regions and service delivery sites
Quantitative Evaluation

- Descriptive and Outcomes Analysis
- Impact Analysis
- Cost Benefit Analysis
Quantitative Evaluation: Impact Analysis

- Quasi-experimental design
- Propensity score matching
  - @LIKE participants
  - Young adults (18-24) - WIOA or adult services
Quantitative Evaluation: Main Results
Impact Analysis

- Did the program improve the educational and employment outcomes of individuals?

YES!!
Impact Analysis: Main Results

- **Increased** the likelihood of obtaining **unsubsidized employment** by **26.4%**
- **Increased** the likelihood of obtaining **vocational training** by **14.8%**
- **Increased** the likelihood of obtaining a **high school or GED degree** by **4.6%**
- **Increased** the likelihood of **program completion** by **39.7%**
Descriptive Analysis

- What are the demographic characteristics of @LIKE participants?
- Does @LIKE serve individuals with barriers?
- How do demographic characteristics vary by age?
Summary of Results

- Participants equally split between 18-21 and 22-24 olds
- More than half participants are males
- Majority of participants are Hispanic
- Program served individuals with a variety of barriers
- Slightly higher male predominance in the 18-21 age group
- Participants aged 18-21 had higher completion rates for secondary education without receiving a diploma compared to their 22-24 year olds
Characteristics of Enrolled Participants

- Foster Care Youth: 6% (All Participants), 2% (Riverside County), 3% (Imperial County), 2% (San Bernardino County)
- Gang Affiliated: 8% (All Participants), 3% (Riverside County), 3% (Imperial County), 1% (San Bernardino County)
- Ex-Offender: 17% (All Participants), 6% (Riverside County), 11% (Imperial County), 16% (San Bernardino County)
- With Family Responsibility: 24% (All Participants), 20% (Riverside County), 18% (Imperial County), 16% (San Bernardino County)
- Homeless: 28% (All Participants), 6% (Riverside County), 2% (Imperial County), 8% (San Bernardino County)
@LIKE Participants Education Distribution by Gender

% 18-21 22-24

Female
- 42.7% 45.6%

Male
- 57.3% 54.4%

- Gender: Female
- 18-21: 42.7%, 22-24: 45.6%
- Gender: Male
- 18-21: 57.3%, 22-24: 54.4%

@LIKE NAWDP Presentation  May 2016
@LIKE Participants Education Distribution by Age

- Under 10th Grade: 5.4%, 10-12 Grade Completed but no diploma: 35.0%, High School Diploma: 45.3%, High School Equivalency Diploma: 10.0%
- 18-21: Red, 22-24: Green
- Some College or Vocational School: 2.1%, Vocational School Certificate: 1.5%, Bachelor's Degree: 0.6%
Descriptive Analysis

- What was the intensity of services provided?
- How did participants perform on socio-psychological assessments?
Summary of Results

- Nearly all participants (98.0 percent) received at least one service
- Career Exploration Services were the most popular
- 45.5 percent of all participants completed over 500 hours of any service
- For the social/psychological assessments tests, the post-test results were generally more positive than the pre-test results
Proportion of Population Receiving Each Type of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Services</td>
<td>98.0% (651)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Coaching Services</td>
<td>84.0% (558)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Exploration Services</td>
<td>90.8% (603)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>52.9% (351)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services</td>
<td>88.0% (584)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Readiness Preparation Services</td>
<td>76.2% (506)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>664</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Hours of Services Received by the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Completed</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0% (664)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Hours</td>
<td>2.0% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-250 Hours</td>
<td>37.7% (250)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251-500 Hours</td>
<td>14.9% (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1000 Hours</td>
<td>21.1% (140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001-2000 Hours</td>
<td>14.9% (99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001+ Hours</td>
<td>9.5% (63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceived Barriers Test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2.4 (No Barriers)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5-4.8 (Few Barriers)</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9-7.2 (Moderate Barriers)</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3-9.6 (Many Barriers)</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7-12 (Substantial Barriers)</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes Analysis

- How did the program do in terms of meeting performance goals?
Summary of Results

- Program did well in meeting its performance goals
- Program-related variables such as number of services and program tenure mattered more than demographic and socioeconomic variables, and were positively related to outcome achievement.
### Program Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Basic Math Skills (2 grade levels+)</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Basic Reading Skills (2 grade levels+)</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Basic Math Skills (1 grade level+)</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Basic Reading Skills (1 grade level+)</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Component</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered vocational training program</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Career Readiness Certificate</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received GED/High School Diploma</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attained unsubsidized employment</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attained paid internship</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
@LIKE Non-Completers: Reasons Cited for Program Exit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Cited for Non-Completion</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC non-completion</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-exempt reason</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA-exempt reason</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason Cited for Non-Completion
Discussion Questions

- What was the level of effort that was required to get staff to change their 'mental map' from WIA rules to taking a more innovative approach?

- What are the two or three key lessons you have learned from these initiatives that helps inform how to work with older disconnected young adults?

- What are the main elements of the @LIKE evaluation? How do each of these pieces contribute to learning about the program and its impact?

- How can evaluations and research be useful to states and to local areas? Specifically, why evaluate programs similar to @LIKE?

- What type of resources and technical assistance is needed to conduct evaluations?
To Learn More

- See our Issue Briefs on
  - Recruitment
  - Assessment
  - Life Coaching – forthcoming

- See our videos
  - https://www.facebook.com/atlike4u
    • Theories of Change and New Approaches
    • AtLike Program
Contact

- For more information, please contact:

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