

# Regional Reemployment Strategies for High-Growth Industries

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# Topics Covered

- Background on the High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI)
- Evaluation design for HGJTI
- Highlights of and findings on regional reemployment strategies
- Implications

# HGJTI or “High Growth” Grants

## ➤ Purposes:

- Building capacity for training programs in a high-growth industry
- Training new workers or upgrading the skills of current workers
- Creating strong partnerships between business, community organizations, and the workforce investment system

## ➤ Scale: Over 160 grants awarded from 2001-2008

- Broad range of grantees
- Nationwide, regional, and local reach of projects

## ➤ Sectoral Focus:

- Range of industries (e.g., construction, health care, and energy)
- Changed over 7 years of grant program based on industry needs

# Design Elements of HGJTI Projects

- Workforce challenges addressed by grantees were insufficiently skilled workers, poor employment opportunities for targeted groups, and a lack of training programs for occupation
- Some projects had job training or capacity building only, but most had both components
- Some projects focused on short-term safety training or skills upgrades for large numbers of trainees while others focused on longer-term training with degree/credential attainment

# Design Elements of HGJTI Projects (continued)

- Grantees often implemented more than one job training program
- A range of capacity-building efforts were undertaken – from building awareness for occupations among youth to increasing the number of permanent training “slots”
- Most employer and industry partners were required to provide cash or in-kind donations as a match to the grant
- As HGJTI funding ended, grantees sought new funding from industry and government partners to sustain training programs.

# HGJTI Evaluation

- Documents and examines the various models and projects that were developed
- Identifies innovative features and potentially promising strategies
- Assesses the implementation of capacity-building and job training projects and programs
- Analyzes employment and earnings outcomes/impacts from select job training projects

# Examples of HGJTI Regional Reemployment Strategies

- Columbia Gorge Community College
- Community Learning Center
- Carpenters Joint Apprentice Program

# Columbia Gorge Community College

- Industry: Health Care
- Region: Columbia Gorge on the Oregon/Washington border
- Training Program: CNA→LPN→ADN
- Partners: Hospitals and long-term care facilities
- Target population: Workers dislocated from main regional manufacturer and other unemployed residents

# Community Learning Center

- Industry: Aerospace
- Region: Dallas/Ft. Worth
- Training Program: Aircraft assembly
- Partners: Regional aerospace manufacturers and union
- Target population: Dislocated and incumbent workers from regional aerospace industry

# Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Program

- Industry: Construction and Advanced Manufacturing
- Region: St. Louis and Cape Girardeau
- Training Program: basic and advanced curriculum for entry-level jobs in construction and manufacturing
- Partners: Regional Industry Training Group of employer partners
- Target population: Dislocated workers and other unemployed individuals



# HGJTI Implementation Lessons

- Employers are important partners in implementing all aspects of an industry-driven project.
- New training technologies should be explored and used to provide better training delivery mechanisms.
- Having hands-on training components is as important as classroom training.
- Instructors from industry are needed, but they can be difficult to retain.
- Projects need to be flexible to respond to changes in the external environment.
- Resource and cash contributions, especially from employers, are difficult to secure.



# HGJTI Evaluation Lessons – Implementation Analysis

- Rich, contextual information on regional differences is important to understanding program implementation and outcomes.
- Interviewing workforce system professionals is vital to understanding regional contexts, even if they were not key partners in the effort.
- Careful, detailed site visit preparation by trained staff is important to ensure that the most knowledgeable people are interviewed and the need for follow-up is reduced.
- Well-developed protocols focus data collection efforts so extraneous data does not convolute the analysis.

# HGJTI Evaluation Lessons – Nonexperimental Impact Analysis

- Finding a comparison group or groups after-the-fact is difficult, but even more so when dealing with diverse regions.
- Working with program staff on data collection early on in the process is necessary to obtain reliable and valid program data, especially in multi-site programs.
- A smaller scale training program may be effective in serving employers and participants but it does not allow for impact analysis.
- Evaluators must consider if and how training programs changed during their period of performance during the analysis.

# Potential Implications

- Do any of these regional reemployment strategies work?
- Many of these projects served a few hundred people or fewer. Could these projects effectively be brought to a larger scale during a recession?
- How can workforce intermediaries better sustain employer and partner involvement in these projects during an economic downturn?
- Should regional reemployment projects include adult basic education if recruitment of qualified individuals is challenging?

# HGJTI Reports Available at [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

- **Implementation and Sustainability: Emerging Lessons from the Early High Growth Job Training Initiative Grants (Trutko et al. 2007)**
- **Implementation Analysis of the High Growth Job Training Initiative Programs (Nightingale et al. 2008)**

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