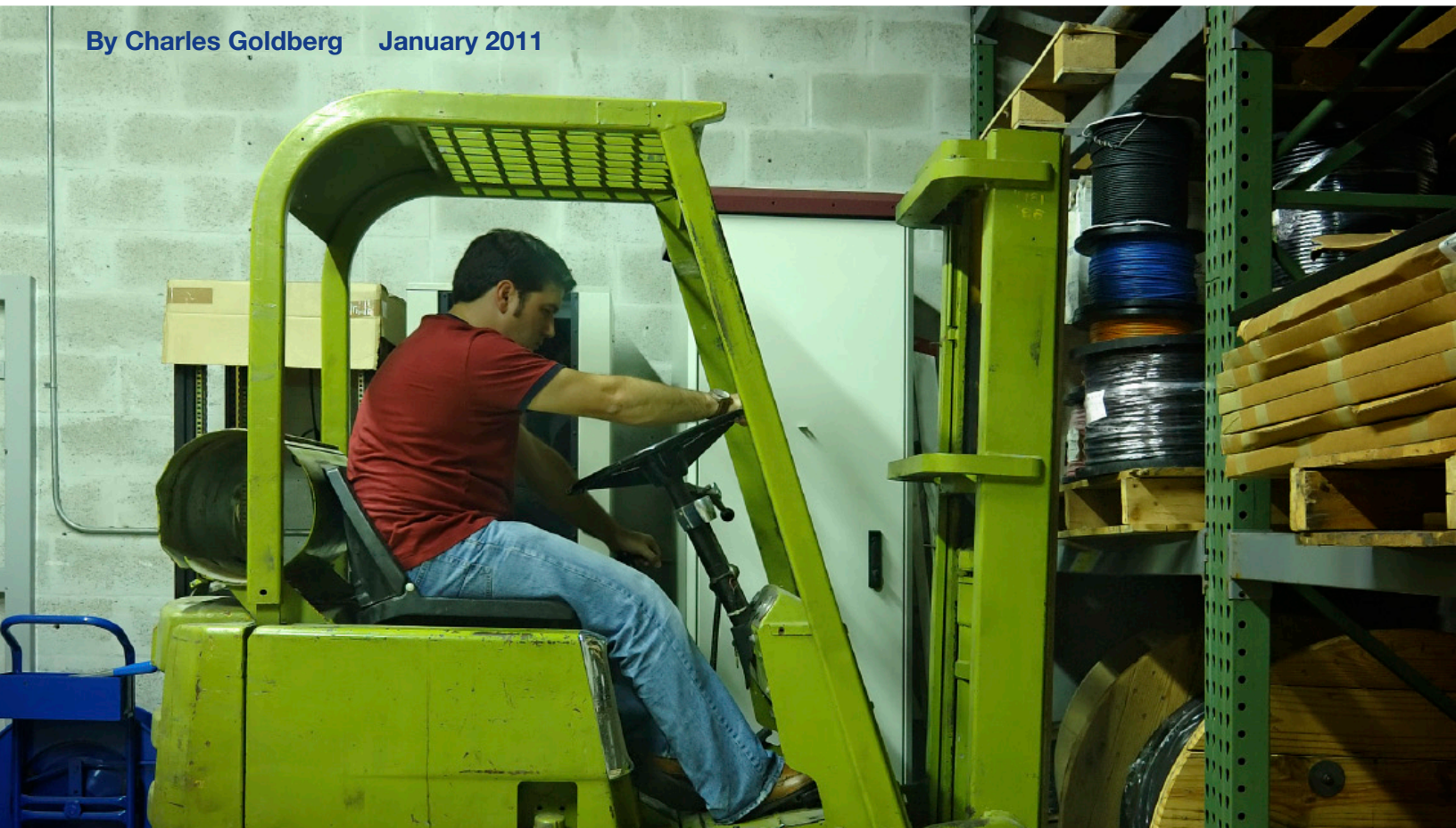




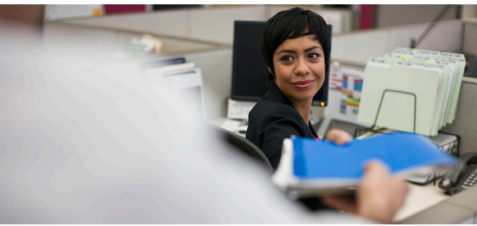
# THE ORIGINS OF REGIONAL FUNDING COLLABORATIVES IN THE NATIONAL FUND FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDIES

By Charles Goldberg January 2011







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## The National Fund for Workforce Solutions

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The *National Fund for Workforce Solutions* is an unprecedented national partnership testing new ways to address a critical problem: the large gap between the skills many workers have and the skills many employers need to compete. In 24 sites across the country, the National Fund works closely with employers and leaders from the public and nonprofit sectors to find solutions, testing how lessons learned from groundbreaking pilot projects in workforce development can be applied on a national scale. About 300 funders and 900 employers are part of this effort.

The fund's national investors provide seed money—\$23 million in commitments to date—to regions building local approaches to job training and career development. The investors also support a comprehensive evaluation of initiative activities taking place across the country, technical assistance for local partnerships, and a dynamic “national learning community” that helps those partnerships share best practices and solve problems together. The national investors are: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, The Hitachi Foundation, JPMorgan Chase and Co., the U.S. Department of Labor, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Microsoft Corporation, The Prudential Foundation, and The Walmart Foundation.

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## Jobs for the Future

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JFF develops, implements, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. JFF develops and leads the National Fund's peer-learning strategies, coordinates technical assistance to the regional collaboratives and local partnerships, oversees the national evaluation, and provides fiscal and grants management.

## About the Author

Charles Goldberg is a trained cultural anthropologist with over 25 years of experience in evaluation and policy research in education, workforce development, and social services. An independent consultant, he previously was a senior research analyst at Commonwealth Corporation where he participated in numerous evaluations of workforce development programs. He was lead researcher on four projects relating to the sustainable employment initiative of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. He is the author of *Does “What Works” Really Work?* to be published under the auspices of The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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# PREFACE

Just after Labor Day 2007, leaders from foundations, businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations gathered in Washington, DC, to announce the launch of the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions*. This ambitious project is designed to bolster and expand promising workforce development partnerships in communities across the country.

Pressed on all sides by a troubled economy, stagnating wages, and a competitive global marketplace, America's workers are finding it hard to acquire the skills they need to fully contribute to our nation's economy and provide for their families. These challenging times, however, present a real opportunity for strengthening how we support the American worker.

As the economic recovery fitfully emerges and new business models and technology become clear, workforce development programs need to be built on a deep understanding of both employer needs and the challenges facing workers. A 21<sup>st</sup>-century approach to helping workers and jobseekers build sustainable careers requires a comprehensive analysis of multiple industries.

Innovative and flexible strategies also must be in place to address the ever-changing challenges facing employers. These new approaches must be able to help adults who have been laid off or otherwise disadvantaged to acquire the skills and credentials that are truly valued by the industries in their market. And they must be locally owned. Employers, policymakers, practitioners, and funders who work and reside in a community are in the best position to develop worker training and career development programs that meet the needs of workers and employers in that community.

This is the philosophy that guides the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions* and the approaches being developed and implemented by our 24 regional workforce collaboratives. In each, local funders come together to support workforce

development projects—to decide, in partnership with employers and practitioners, how and where these investments should be made.

The National Fund did not emerge overnight. In this report, Charles Goldberg traces the history of seven regional workforce collaboratives in the initiative, from before the launch of the National Fund through early 2010. For each collaborative, the case studies address several key issues:

- **Setting the stage:** What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?
- **Beginnings:** How did the collaborative get started?
- **Moving forward:** How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?
- **Challenges:** What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?
- **Lessons learned:** What important lessons can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives?

As the case studies illustrate, the strategies promoted by the National Fund—and how they are implemented on the ground—are not simple. Getting Americans on successful career paths to long-term employment with family-supporting wages is a complex challenge. But the crux of our message is this: philanthropy, both national and local, can and should partner with employers and workers to develop talent development programs that create a direct link between what we are training workers to do and the skills businesses need to compete.

— Fred Dedrick, Executive Director  
*National Fund for Workforce Solutions*

# BOSTON

## Setting the Stage:

### What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?

The last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of far-reaching economic and social change in Boston. Blue-collar manufacturing industries, which had employed much of the area's labor force for over a century, were in precipitous decline, leaving few living-wage jobs for those who lacked educational credentials or technical skills. Dominating the new economic landscape were the surging "knowledge industries"—high technology, health care, financial services—which competed to attract well-educated and skilled workers and the retail and service industries, which required fewer skills and credentials but often paid their workers too little to support a family.

Paralleling that change, in the 1980s and '90s, public support waned for government programs serving those who were marginally attached to the labor force. The strongest expression of this trend at the federal level was the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which set time limits on welfare benefits and required recipients to find jobs. Another was the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which reduced the funds available for adult education and training even while embracing a broad mission to address the labor market needs of both employers and jobseekers. Thus, in a time of high demand for well-educated and skilled workers and a growing need among new and displaced workers to upgrade their skills and credentials, sharply diminished resources constrained the largest public program with a mandate to meet those needs.

Around 2000, funders, policymakers, and workforce development organizations in Massachusetts launched several initiatives in response to these trends. To meet the needs of employers and low-income adults for higher-level skills, the state initiated and funded Building Essential Skills through Training (BEST) and the Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (ECCLI). BEST encompassed a variety of industries and occupations;



ECCLI aimed specifically at low-paid workers in nursing homes and other extended-care settings. Other state-funded programs grew out of these efforts, and foundations added to the mix by supporting community-based organizations that provided adult basic education and occupational training.

It was in this atmosphere of change and challenge that Boston's SkillWorks funding collaborative began taking shape.

## **Beginnings:**

### **How did the collaborative get started?**

The Boston funding collaborative emerged from a series of informal bimonthly meetings among staff members from six local funding organizations: The Boston Foundation, The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation, Fleet Charitable Trusts, The Hyams Foundation, State Street Foundation, and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. They were later joined by two national foundations: The Rockefeller Foundation and The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Beginning in 2000, this "Funders Group," convened by The Boston Foundation's director of grantmaking, Angel Bermudez, discussed critical questions about workforce development: How well was the system serving Boston employers? How great was the need for training and adult education services? What was the capacity of local institutions and organizations to meet this need? And how well-organized was the system as a whole to address these issues?

With a grant from the Casey Foundation, the Funders Group commissioned research on those questions and, in 2001, it sponsored a conference to announce what had been learned and to showcase promising ways to improve the effectiveness of workforce development programs. To sustain the momentum the conference had created, the Funders Group then convened a series of focus groups composed of workforce development stakeholders, seeking to probe deeper into the issues highlighted in the research.

As the members of the Funders Group continued to meet bimonthly into 2002, they came to realize that their organizations' collective investment in workforce development in Boston was substantially larger than that provided under the federal Workforce Investment Act. Nevertheless, WIA dominated the design and focus of workforce development in the city. Instead of working separately as individual funding organizations, they reasoned, they could have greater impact by pooling their resources in a common effort to improve the system as a whole. To help them devise a plan for achieving that objective, they engaged Jobs for the Future, a Boston-based research, consulting, and advocacy organization with broad

national reach and extensive experience dealing with workforce development issues.

Over the months that followed, the Funders Group worked with JFF to develop a multiyear initiative encompassing five major goals:

- Help low-income Bostonians attain family-supporting jobs with adequate benefits and opportunities to build assets;
- Provide career advancement pathways accessible to low-income jobseekers and low-wage workers;
- Increase the resources available for education and training services;
- Help employers become more productive and competitive by meeting their human resource needs; and
- Support the achievement of the other goals through long-term changes in Greater Boston's workforce development system.

To accomplish these goals, the initiative would incorporate "best practices" from recent workforce development initiatives in Massachusetts and elsewhere. It would have a "dual customer" focus, addressing the needs of both employers and workers. Using a sector approach, it would seek to engage multiple employers in an industry sector. Also, the initiative would emphasize well-functioning partnerships among employers, education and training providers, social service organizations, and other stakeholders, as well as the development of career pathways and career ladders for workers to advance beyond entry-level jobs. Finally, career coaching and support services would be included to help workers plan careers and overcome the obstacles standing in their way.

The Funders Group decided to pursue a three-pronged approach to improving Boston's workforce development system:

- Support workforce partnerships among service providers and employers to build workforce skills in growing industry sectors;
- Improve and expand services through capacity-building grants to service providers; and
- Support public policy advocacy to improve the overall workforce development system.

With these conceptual building blocks in place, the members of the Funders Group secured multiyear pledges of financial support from their respective organizations. In addition, they agreed upon a "mutual fund" investment model: the members of the group would decide collectively about the allocation of the pooled funds.



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## Moving Forward:

### How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?

Two important steps remained: gaining the participation of the public workforce development system; and launching the first set of new projects.

The members of the Funders Group recognized from the beginning that it would not be possible to make lasting improvements to workforce development in Boston without the active participation of the state and local agencies that administered the public system. Once they agreed upon basic principles that would guide them forward, they met with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and his staff, the state's workforce development director, and other state officials to inform them about the initiative and gain their endorsement and participation. As a result, both the city and state pledged financial support; representatives from the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services and the state Department of Workforce Development also joined the Funders Group.

By 2003, the Funders Group had established itself as the governing body of the Boston Workforce Development Initiative, later renamed *SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce*. The initiative, launched as a five-year project, began with pledges of support totaling \$10.1 million and a five-year fundraising goal of \$14.3 million. The Funders Group continued to meet bimonthly, and it created subcommittees to oversee the initiative's three main components: workforce partnerships, capacity building, and advocacy. To manage the components, the Funders Group contracted with the Boston Private Industry Council for workforce partnerships, Management Consulting Services for capacity building, and JFF for policy advocacy and to manage all the consultants. In addition to their overall coordinating functions, the three organizations were responsible for managing the proposal process and providing technical assistance to grantees.

The initiative quickly made its first grants: six local organizations received funding to help them build their capacity to deliver services. At the same time, SkillWorks sought proposals to: establish workforce partnerships in industry sectors; initiate and coordinate public policy advocacy in support of system change; and evaluate the initiative as a whole.

In fall 2003, SkillWorks announced five workforce partnership grants: two multiyear implementation grants in the health care industry and one in the hospitality industry, as well as two one-year planning grants. It also awarded a public policy advocacy grant to the Workforce Solutions Group, a coalition led by Crittenton Women's Union, the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board Association, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO,

and the Massachusetts Communities Action Network. The initiative also contracted with Abt Associates and Mt. Auburn Associates, both of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to conduct a comprehensive multiyear evaluation.

In the years that followed, SkillWorks reached a number of important milestones:

- It awarded three more multiyear implementation grants to support the creation and development of workforce partnerships.
- The advocacy efforts of the Workforce Solutions Group were instrumental in the enactment of the Massachusetts Economic Stimulus Bill of 2004 and the Workforce Solutions Act of 2005, resulting in over \$40 million dollars in new state funding for occupational training and adult basic education.
- In 2005, it hired a full-time director, responsible for the overall administration of SkillWorks.
- The first five-year phase ended in 2008, with more than \$15 million raised from local and national foundations and state and local funds; SkillWorks then began its second five-year phase.

As SkillWorks established itself as a vital force for reshaping workforce development in Boston, foundation leaders and others interested in workforce development across the nation followed its progress closely. It became one of the principal models for the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions*, which formally accepted SkillWorks as a regional funding collaborative in 2007 and one of its first partners and grantees.

## Challenges:

### What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?

SkillWorks' three-year evolution from a networking group of local funders to a fully operational citywide initiative demanded enormous time and effort on the part of the principal convener: Angel Bermudez of The Boston Foundation acted as de facto project director and staff. His regular full-time duties with the foundation often made it difficult for him to devote the time needed to move the initiative forward, and less progress was made than if dedicated staff had been available. This lack of dedicated staff also resulted in inefficiencies and occasional confusion after the project's launch: the tasks of managing SkillWorks' different components were divided among three organizations, and no single individual was overseeing the day-to-day operations of the project as a whole.

A solution to this problem was achieved when Loh-Sze Leung was hired to be the full-time director of SkillWorks. She quickly became the public face of SkillWorks, functioning as the single point of contact for the initiative and responsible for its management.

## **Lessons Learned**

The development of SkillWorks suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

***Take the time needed to ensure that all partners are on board and committed to playing an active role.***

Building a well-functioning collaborative takes time. It must be an inclusive process in which each partner organization has a clear and visible role that is compatible with its mission and can win the support of its board and other major stakeholders.

***Have a strong champion, a strategically placed individual with the commitment and ability to bring partners together, nurture collaborative relationships, and lead the effort to develop a clear mission and identity for the initiative.***

The leadership of The Boston Foundation's Angel Bermudez was instrumental in establishing SkillWorks as a fully functioning enterprise. His position in the hierarchy of his own organization and his credibility among his peers in other organizations were critical to getting SkillWorks off the ground. Just as important was his willingness to devote the time and energy needed to keep everyone on track and build momentum for the initiative. His essential role could not have been filled by a lower-ranking staff person.

***Engage dedicated staff as soon as possible to assist those who are developing the collaborative and eventually to manage day-to-day operations.***

The initial absence of designated staff may have prolonged the development phase of SkillWorks, and it was problematic for the efficient management of the initiative. In retrospect, these problems might have been alleviated if one or more well-qualified individuals had staffed the project earlier.

***Build on local assets to establish a strong foundation for the collaborative.***

Boston's history of successful collaborations among funders, the presence of a strong philanthropic community, and good connections with the political establishment were all important factors in creating and developing SkillWorks. The local partners used these assets to secure the participation and

support of two national foundations and leverage the support of the local and state agencies that manage the public workforce development system.

***Gather and broadcast research findings that help demonstrate the need for collaboration, establish credibility among potential stakeholders, and build a foundation for planning and developing common principles.***

Much of the first year of the Boston initiative was spent gathering evidence of local needs and gaining an understanding of best practices in workforce development around the country. This culminated in a conference that attracted local and statewide stakeholders, generating the momentum that helped launch SkillWorks.



# CENTRAL WISCONSIN

## Setting the Stage:

### What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?

Long a center for the paper industry, the southern part of Central Wisconsin's Wood County was convulsed by a succession of economic shocks during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2000, a foreign firm bought the largest local employer—a *Fortune 500* paper company—and other large paper mills downsized during the ensuing years. In total, the area lost 39 percent of its jobs between 2000 and 2008, leaving over 5,000 people out of work—a devastating setback in a region with a total population of 40,000.

The newly unemployed workers were especially vulnerable because they tended to be low-skilled and older—Wood County has the state's oldest population. Most had little experience using computers. Many were lacking in basic math, reading, and communication skills, as well as “soft” skills like teamwork, taking initiative, and decision making. Without additional education and training, few could take advantage of job openings in the growing sectors of the region's economy such as advanced manufacturing, health care, and information technology.

This problem was exacerbated by the fact that this is a rural area with a population widely dispersed over 823 square miles. Moreover, the North Central Workforce Development Board (the local Workforce Investment Board) is responsible for nine counties covering 8,561 square miles and a population of 411,000. The WIB was not organized to focus on the needs of only one or two counties.

In 2004, the Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County responded, joining with Heart of Wisconsin Business Alliance (the local chamber of commerce) to launch the Community Progress Initiative, a multiyear effort to reinvigorate the local culture and economy through citizen education and action. Supported by the Ford Foundation, CPI fostered the



creation of industry cluster networks for emerging industry sectors, provided training in entrepreneurship, introduced successful approaches to economic revitalization from other parts of the country, and nurtured the development of new social change agents through advanced leadership training.

By 2008, encouraged by CPI's successes and national recognition, a group of community leaders felt confident enough to take advantage of new opportunities to address their region's community and economic development challenges.

## **Beginnings:**

### **How did the collaborative get started?**

The Central Wisconsin funding collaborative, known as “Partners for Workforce Innovation,” was built upon the CPI's foundation of collaboration and community development. The idea of forming the collaborative was a response to a request for proposals from the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions*. The work of preparing the proposal was organized by the Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County, joined by three other organizations: the North Central Workforce Development Board, the Heart of Wisconsin Business Alliance, and Mid-State Technical College. In spring 2008, the partner organizations held focus groups with local businesses, funders, education and training organizations, and other nonprofits to identify key issues and concerns and to map out a strategy for collaboration. The eventual proposal for Workforce Central—originally named “Partners for Workforce Innovation”—was one of two rural funding collaboratives that received grants from the National Fund in October 2008.

The collaborative covers the same primary region as CPI: Greater South Wood and North Adams counties. A “secondary service area” coincides with the larger region served by Mid-State Technical College to ensure that major employers and key community partners are included. The Community Foundation acts as the lead organization and fiscal agent. Its executive director, Kelly Lucas, chairs the collaborative, which employs a full-time project director, Jennifer Riggenschach, who assumed her position in February 2009.

Workforce Central has four goals:

- Create a sustainable funders' collaborative that operates with a long-term orientation and invests in transforming workforce development in the region.
- With employers in the region, develop and implement articulated career pathways for four high-impact sectors: health care, manufacturing, technology, and skilled trades.

- Advance adults from low-skill, low-wage jobs to “middle-skill” jobs that provide for career advancement and offer family-sustaining wages.
- Advocate for changes in workforce and postsecondary systems, structures, and policies to reduce the barriers faced by low-skilled, low-wage adults seeking to enter and advance into careers with family-sustaining wages.

To progress toward these goals, Workforce Central organized two committees. The Funders Council makes all funding decisions, sets the overall strategy, and decides how it will be implemented. The Community Solutions Advisory Group discusses key issues related to workforce development in the region and makes recommendations to the Funders Council on funding proposals, strategies, and project implementation. Both groups are committed to following a systems approach to workforce development: linking employers, funders, government agencies, educators, trainers, and social service providers in a coordinated effort to build a skilled regional workforce.

Each of the ten original members of the Funders Council—six charitable foundations and four corporations—donated to a common pooled fund. These ten have been joined by the North Central Workforce Development Board, which has pledged to align some of the public funds under its control with projects and programs supported by the collaborative. The group meets monthly; each member organization has one vote. The Advisory Group, which also meets monthly, is comprised of 22 stakeholder organizations with expertise across a broad range of areas such as community and economic development, human resources, adult education and training, and social support services.

## **Moving Forward:**

### **How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?**

The Workforce Central proposal to the National Fund called for the rapid collection of information to determine specific workforce and service gaps, followed in spring 2009 by the issuance of requests for proposals to fill those gaps. However, it became apparent early in the implementation process that considerably more groundwork would be needed before Workforce Central could issue the RFPs.

First, the organizations participating in the Funders Council and the Advisory Group were for the most part unfamiliar with the workforce development field and the various approaches that could be taken to address workforce needs. Moreover, since the field of workforce development has concentrated largely on

cities, it was important to learn about successful rural models and how they might be adapted to the circumstances of the Workforce Central region.

As a result, Workforce Central devoted much of its first year to building capacity in the two committees to understand and come to grips with the issues under their purview. Committee meetings included presentations by speakers knowledgeable about the issues, discussions about alternative approaches, and efforts to familiarize the members with the scope and perspectives of the different organizations that made up the two committees. In addition, Workforce Central and the Community Foundation hired a consultant to study opportunities for workforce development stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and sponsored a June 2009 conference at which it presented its findings to more than 100 attendees.

A second reason for delaying the issuance of RFPs was the realization that it would first be necessary to better understand employers' workforce needs and to engage their full participation in the collaborative.

Further, it would not be possible to move forward immediately in all four industry sectors listed in the proposal to the National Fund. The Funders Council decided to focus on advanced manufacturing as the most promising sector, and it invited six advanced manufacturing employers to participate in a series of discussions about how to proceed. The CEOs of four of those companies joined Workforce Central staff and Funding Council representatives in a July 2009 visit to the West Central Minnesota Workforce 2020 Initiative, a workforce partnership with a history of helping local manufacturers upgrade the skills of their workers.

Impressed by what they had learned, the Central Wisconsin executives were enthusiastic about developing a similar program. They made it clear that no organization in the area was knowledgeable enough about their workforce needs to play the role of workforce intermediary. As a result, Workforce Central itself would assume that role and hire a respected retired executive to staff the newly established Advanced Manufacturing CEO Peer Council on a part-time basis. As 2009 drew to a close, plans were underway to launch an Incumbent Worker Training Fund for advanced manufacturing the following spring.

Also scheduled for issuance in 2010 was an RFP for a workforce partnership focusing on the training, placement, and retention of new manufacturing workers and on providing support services (i.e., child care and transportation services) to reduce the barriers to their employment. The RFP would be partly based on the findings of the Advisory Group, a number

of whose members had volunteered to survey service providers in the area.

Workforce Central has concentrated its attention on two areas of policy and system change: increasing access to employment and training services for food stamp recipients through the Food Stamp Employment and Training program; and advocating for the region's participation in a new transitional jobs pilot program for non-custodial parents. In addition, Workforce Central chairperson Kelly Lucas has joined with her counterpart at the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance—another National Fund grantee in Wisconsin—to inform state cabinet secretaries about the work of the funding collaboratives and discuss policy issues related to improving the workforce development system statewide.

### **Challenges:**

#### **What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?**

Perhaps the greatest challenge confronted by Workforce Central has been to develop a workable strategy for a rural area with a relatively small and dispersed population. The region lacks the infrastructure, diversity, and large number of businesses, funders, and nonprofit organizations that can be found in many cities. Faced with these limitations, it has been difficult to move forward quickly with an approach that presupposed the presence of organizations well-suited to the role of workforce intermediary, as well as businesses prepared to lead in shaping a collaborative workforce development strategy.

What was needed was a more gradual process of educating and engaging key partners. Important groundwork had been laid by the Community Progress Initiative, which had involved large segments of local government and the business and nonprofit communities. This eased the upfront tasks of relationship building and developing options suitable for a rural environment. It also led to a more realistic plan for achieving the collaborative's goals than the one initially proposed to the National Fund.

A second and related challenge has been that of engaging the North Central Workforce Development Board, which serves a much larger geographical area and population and is not accustomed to the highly collaborative and targeted approach advocated by Workforce Central. It remains to be seen what role the WIB will play as the initiative moves toward program implementation, but it is encouraging that the WIB is represented at the monthly meetings of both the Funders Council and the Advisory Group and has participated actively in discussions on the future of the initiative.



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## Lessons Learned

The story of Workforce Central suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

***Special care must be taken to ensure that collaborative members understand the issues, the options, and the roles they are being asked to play.***

While it is necessary to improve the capacity of service providers to perform their functions more effectively, it is also essential to build the capacity of the collaborative's members themselves to understand and address the issues they face. As Workforce Central was getting off the ground, it was important to take a step back and engage the partners in this capacity-building effort.

***Because employer involvement is critical to the development of well-functioning workforce partnerships, it is important to engage employers in planning and implementation as early as possible.***

Although the original Workforce Central plan called for issuing RFPs to create workforce partnerships within a few months after the collaborative's launch, the partners realized early in the implementation process that they would have to shift gears and devote time and energy to securing employer support before moving forward. This was a critical step toward reflecting the realities of employers' workforce needs, capabilities, and interests.

***Patience and persistence are key. It takes time to develop the levels of understanding, trust, and thoughtful engagement necessary for successful collaboration.***

A hurried determination to proceed with the work plan as originally conceived would likely have resulted in a less than satisfactory outcome. Taking more time helped ensure that collaborative members understood the issues, participated fully in the planning process, and were on board with the strategies that were developed.

***Don't reinvent the wheel unless absolutely necessary. Learn from the examples of others who have worked on solving similar problems.***

Workforce Central partners and staff were diligent in seeking out the help of organizations familiar with the problems they faced, especially in rural settings. This interest in discovering other models led them to West Central Minnesota and provided direction for developing a workforce partnership in advanced manufacturing.

# CHICAGO

## **Setting the Stage: What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?**

In the mid-1990s, Chicago's high-rise housing projects had a national reputation as breeding grounds for chronic poverty and crime. In 1995, after decades of attempts to deal with the problem, the board of the Chicago Housing Authority resigned en masse, setting the stage for the largest-ever federal takeover of a public housing program.

Four years later, in 1999, a reconstituted Chicago Housing Authority announced its Plan for Transformation, widely recognized as the largest and most ambitious urban renewal project in U.S. history. The 15-year, \$1.6 billion plan calls for 25,000 new or rebuilt housing units, including 7,800 mixed-income units for low- and moderate-income families.

In addition to developing thousands of desirable homes, the plan aims to foster economic self-sufficiency among residents. It does so in part by requiring that heads of households show proof that they are either employed or in training for at least 30 hours per week.

It is this latter feature of the Plan for Transformation that triggered the sequence of events leading to the creation of Opportunity Chicago, a regional funding collaborative that seeks to expand employment options for public housing residents.

## **Beginnings: How did the collaborative get started?**

As the Chicago Housing Authority and other public agencies began implementing the Plan for Transformation, several philanthropic and business leaders recognized an unprecedented opportunity to have a significant impact on some of the city's most depressed neighborhoods. Executives at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community



Trust, and the Chicago Board of Trade took the lead in developing a major effort to advance toward this goal. In 2003 they formed the Partnership for New Communities, a funder collaborative promoting large-scale improvements to neighborhoods affected by Chicago's effort to transform public housing. For PNC's advisory committee, the partnership recruited CEOs from the city's major foundations, corporations, and other public and private institutions.

Housed at the Chicago Community Trust, PNC began with \$5 million in seed money from its two founding member foundations. It also initiated a long-term campaign to raise \$15 million for special initiatives focused on economic development and job creation, workforce development, and community building.

During PNC's first three years, it made most of its grants in the areas of research and planning, economic development, and providing support services to public housing residents. Helping residents get jobs remained a key priority as well, but it was expected that enhanced job placement services provided by the public sector would meet the need. However, it became evident that job placement was not enough: there was a great unmet need for adult education and training services to prepare public housing residents for family-sustaining jobs.

To address this problem, PNC joined with the housing authority, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, and the State of Illinois to initiate another collaboration in January 2006. They created Opportunity Chicago, with a focus on workforce development to, in the words of its brochure, "improve access to self-sufficiency through employment, strengthen the capacity of the public workforce development system, and increase the quality of resident employment outcomes." Its strategic priorities would be:

- Promoting the development and expansion of intensive employment skills and training programs;
- Supporting the continued development of employment opportunities;
- Advocating for public policy changes to improve the capacity of the workforce development system to help low-skilled, low-income adults;
- Supporting technical assistance for frontline service providers;
- Expanding and improving the existing service delivery system; and
- Evaluating and documenting the effectiveness of the initiative.

## **Growing the Collaborative:**

### **How did more partners become involved?**

The task of recruiting additional partners to Opportunity Chicago was facilitated by the fact that PNC and its public partners represented a cross-section of the city's institutional and business leadership, a leadership that was strongly committed to neighborhood revitalization. By the end of 2006, the collaborative's governing body, the Strategic Advisers Group, consisted of high-ranking representatives from key city and state agencies, private foundations, and other important stakeholders. In addition to the founding organizations, its membership included representatives from three other city departments (Human Services, Children and Youth Services, and Planning and Development), two state departments (Human Services, and Commerce and Economic Opportunity), two private foundations (The Joyce Foundation and The Annie E. Casey Foundation), the Chicago Workforce Board, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. A subcommittee called the Public Agency Partners was convened to coordinate systems and resources among the participating public agencies.

Among the first acts of the Strategic Advisers Group was finding a local organization to manage projects funded by the new collaborative. They selected the Chicago Jobs Council, a citywide coalition of community-based training organizations, advocacy groups, businesses, and individuals working to ensure that people living in poverty had access to employment and career advancement opportunities. It was further decided that PNC and the Chicago Jobs Council would jointly oversee activities related to the projects supported directly by the partnership's funds.

By June 2007, when Opportunity Chicago requested support from the National Fund, \$3.4 million in private funds had been committed to the initiative, including \$1 million from PNC, \$750,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and \$500,000 from the Chicago Community Trust. This private contribution had leveraged \$17.6 million in public funds, including \$6.3 million from the Chicago Housing Authority, \$5 million from the Illinois Housing Development Authority, and \$4.9 million from the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development.

## **Challenges:**

### **What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?**

The Partnership for New Communities began with an ambitious agenda for revitalizing Chicago's depressed neighborhoods through economic development, job creation, workforce



development, and community building, all in support of reinventing Chicago's public housing. Participating businesses such as Peoples Gas, one of the city's largest employers, were committed to hiring qualified residents. Additional and better targeted job placement services were expected to help most public housing residents meet a new employment requirement set by the Chicago Housing Authority.

As the initiative got under way, it became clear that many residents lacked the basic requirements for the jobs that were available: 43 percent of adults had neither a high school diploma nor a GED; 43 percent had no recent work experience; and 30 percent had been employed only sporadically during the previous two years. Addressing these challenges would require a more comprehensive workforce development model, one that not only included job placement services but also expanded literacy and adult basic education services, occupational training, career development services, work-readiness training, and transitional jobs for those with little or no employment history. Furthermore, although PNC could make a significant contribution to implementing such a model, it had too many other priorities on its agenda to play the principal role in making it happen. An initiative devoted exclusively to workforce development was needed.

The Opportunity Chicago collaborative was the result of this growing understanding of the workforce development challenge—and the need to address it with a comprehensive strategy.

## **Lessons Learned**

The development of the Partnership for New Communities and the subsequent development of Opportunity Chicago suggest several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to build regional funding collaboratives:

***Recruit influential civic and business leaders early in the process of forming a collaborative.***

Those buying into the initiative should include well-known and respected local leaders who are committed to the effort and willing to dedicate their time and energy to championing its cause. The presence of such leaders in both PNC and Opportunity Chicago was critical in launching those initiatives and in sustaining momentum.

***Align new initiatives with efforts that already enjoy widespread public visibility and support.***

The ambitious new plan to reform Chicago's public housing program had mobilized support from all parts of the city.

Both PNC and Opportunity Chicago benefited from their close connection to this popular new effort.

***Be vigilant in questioning assumptions, examining what is working and what is not, and making improvements along the way.***

PNC's original assumption about how to address the housing authority's employment requirement—through expanded job placement services—proved to be ill-founded. Opportunity Chicago would not have come into being had it not been for the partners' commitment to questioning their assumptions, studying implementation problems, and moving forward deliberately to adopt more promising solutions.

# CINCINNATI

## **Setting the Stage:**

### **What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?**

For over a century, Ohio was a manufacturing powerhouse. Well into the 1960s, it was among the centers of the nation's prosperity, boasting the sixth highest per capita income among all states. But its economic fortunes began a steady downward slide with the decline of manufacturing across the United States. By 1999, Ohio's per capita income was below the national average.

Ohio's economic doldrums have continued into the new century. The greater Cincinnati area, including parts of Kentucky and Indiana, lost another 20 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 2001 and 2006 (a total of 18,000 well-paying jobs), and the poverty rate in that region ranked among the nation's highest.

There were signs of hope as well. Labor market analysts observed a rising demand for skilled workers in key industries throughout the region. Nearly one-half of the 50,000 new jobs projected by 2014 were in the booming health care sector, with significant job growth also predicted in the life sciences, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and educational services.

In the midst of these trends, jurisdictional boundaries made it difficult to mount a coordinated, sector-based workforce development strategy across the three-state region. Yet a number of strategic planning efforts undertaken at both the state and local levels demanded that exact approach. The time was ripe for a new way of organizing workforce development at the regional level.

## **Beginnings:**

### **How did the collaborative get started?**

The new approach, known as the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, grew out of an emerging consensus on the need for a new strategy. By 2008, each of the three states had



developed strategic workforce development plans emphasizing a sector-based, dual customer approach to addressing the workforce needs of growing industries. At the local level, Cincinnati's mayor launched an initiative called GO (Growth & Opportunity) Cincinnati to attract and retain businesses and develop the city's workforce to stimulate growth in key industries. The United Way of Greater Cincinnati developed a new Agenda for Community Impact, identifying financial stability as one of its main areas of focus. And the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber announced a strategic plan that included workforce development as a key area of emphasis. It is therefore not surprising that interest in the Cincinnati area was high when the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions* issued a request for proposals for partnership funding.

Kathryn Merchant led the development of the National Fund application. Merchant, the president and CEO of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and chair of GO Cincinnati's committee on workforce development, convened key public and private stakeholders and worked with them to craft a proposal for the new entity—the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network—to coordinate and integrate workforce development across the region. The Workforce Network spans eight counties and encompasses urban, suburban, and rural areas in southwest Ohio, southeast Indiana, and northern Kentucky. Its goals are to align workforce resources and strategies across systems and states, and to close skill gaps in three priority industries through workforce partnerships, capacity building, and an improved regional workforce system.

The Workforce Network seeks to meet the workforce needs of key industries while mapping out paths toward family-sustaining employment for three target populations: low-wage incumbent workers; low-skilled unemployed and underemployed workers seeking entry-level jobs in growing industries; and recent graduates from vocational and technical programs. Its principal strategy is to facilitate the development of career pathways—systems of training programs and linked support services leading from entry-level to higher-skilled jobs in each of its priority sectors.

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation acts as the initiative's lead organization, convener, and fiscal agent—and as the employer of Ross Meyer, the Workforce Network's executive director. Principal decision-making powers are vested in three bodies: the Workforce Network; the Leadership Council; and the Funder Collaborative. The Workforce Network, comprising the full membership of the initiative, is made up of over 150 stakeholders from a wide variety of public- and private-sector organizations, including businesses, public agencies, education and training institutions, and community-based organizations. At its quarterly meetings, usually attended by representatives

from 70 or more organizations, members are updated on recent developments and provide guidance on course corrections and future directions.

The Leadership Council, which acts as the executive committee of the Workforce Network, is much smaller: its 20 to 25 members represent the region's four Workforce Investment Boards, area businesses, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, employment service providers, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations. Chaired by Kathryn Merchant, the council meets monthly to address pressing issues, review progress, and oversee the executive director.

The Workforce Network Funders Collaborative is an extension of Better Together Cincinnati, a partnership of six foundations and nine corporate funders created in 2003 to address the underlying causes of racial unrest that had occurred in Cincinnati two years earlier. Better Together Cincinnati is committed to providing "significant financial resources over a multi-year period to produce lasting community change." Seeing the Workforce Network as an expression of that mission, the collaborative members pledged a first-year total of \$960,000 to a pooled fund, with decisions about the allocation of those funds to be made collectively by the funders' group. Membership in the Funders Collaborative has been expanded to include the region's four Workforce Investment Boards (two in Ohio and one each in Kentucky and Indiana), which have agreed to align some of the public funds under their control with projects supported by the Workforce Network.

### **Moving Forward: How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?**

With its organizational structure in place, the Workforce Network moved toward implementation in late 2008 and early 2009. Its proposal to the National Fund identified health care as the first of the three industry sectors it would focus on, and charged the Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati to direct the development of a workforce partnership.

The Health Careers Collaborative began in 2004 as a partnership among the region's two largest health care systems (Cincinnati Children's Hospital and the Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati) and two educational institutions (Cincinnati State Technical Community College and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology & Career Development). Its mission is to provide education, training, and support to promote the career advancement of low-wage incumbent workers and facilitate the entry-level employment of unemployed and underemployed adults in health care. It provides prepaid tuition, adult basic education, occupational training, and job



coaching within the context of multiple scheduling options, a choice of classroom locations, and flexible work hours.

Since becoming a National Fund grantee, the Workforce Network has supported the expansion of the Health Careers Collaborative to include additional health care providers and educational institutions, increase the number of students enrolled in its education and training programs, and introduce new options to enrollees for health care career pathways. The network has pledged support for HCC operations over a three-year period, including the salary of a full-time manager. That manager was hired early in 2009 along with a “career pathway leader” to facilitate the development of career pathways in health care. New career pathways were added in spring 2009 after TriHealth, the area’s third-largest health care system, joined the partnership. However, despite efforts to attract a Kentucky-based health care provider, HCC remained limited to the Cincinnati area in southwest Ohio at the end of 2009.

In its proposal, the Workforce Network had stated that it would implement two other workforce partnerships in the second and third years of its National Fund grant. However, it decided to “fast track” the selection and implementation of those partnerships, creating an infrastructure for both partnerships early on, which would increase the likelihood that they would be sustained. Based on a review of labor market data and the advice of the participating Workforce Investment Boards, the network selected advanced manufacturing and construction as priority sectors and began recruiting employers, educational institutions, and community-based organizations into partnerships. Early in 2010, plans were under way to develop career pathways for both sectors and to begin training programs in those pathways by mid-year.

Early in the implementation process, Workforce Network partners and staff realized that no independent organization in the Greater Cincinnati region could credibly fill the role of a neutral intermediary in developing the new workforce partnerships. As a result, they rejected their original plan of issuing requests for proposals for that purpose and decided instead that the network itself would assume the intermediary role. It hired two “career pathway leaders,” one each for advanced manufacturing and construction, and entrusted them with recruiting employers and education and training organizations. These leaders (both employees of the Workforce Network) also worked with those new partners to identify goals, design career pathways, and develop plans for recruiting and training participants.

The Workforce Network also hired a part-time “career planning coach” to assist the career pathway leaders in each of the three partnerships with strategic planning and implementation, and to

coordinate professional development and peer learning for the members of the partnerships.

The Workforce Network has also supported the Hard-2-Hire Network, a coalition of more than 50 organizations that provide employment services to people with criminal records. To improve the effectiveness of that coalition, the Workforce Network funds a part-time facilitator who leads network members in a strategic planning process known as “Strive Six Sigma.” The process is continuing through a sequence of biweekly meetings, with the ultimate goal of aligning and coordinating the services provided by the member organizations.

Another important development has been the formation of a policy committee; its 15 members represent employer partners, Workforce Investment Boards, employment and training providers, community-based organizations, labor, advocacy organizations, and funders. In a series of monthly meetings, the committee developed a policy agenda, which the network adopted in fall 2009. The agenda includes three policy goals:

- Make postsecondary education and training more affordable and accessible for adult students.
- Reduce barriers to employment for people with criminal records.
- Ensure that the public workforce system meets employer needs.

Finally, the Workforce Network has moved forward with developing a common data collection system. Based on the G\*STARS system used by the Southwest Ohio Workforce Investment Board for Hamilton County, the system was piloted by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati with eight of its employment service grantee agencies. Based on the results of this pilot, the United Way has instituted the system for all 18 employment service providers it funds. The system is now being used as well by the Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio (for Butler, Clermont, and Warren counties). The network intends for all participating Workforce Investment Boards and major training providers to enter client data into this common system by the end of the three-year National Fund grant.

### **Challenges:**

#### **What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?**

By far the greatest challenge confronted by the Workforce Network has been putting its broad regional vision into operation. As the project’s local evaluators pointed out in their

initial report to the network, the member organizations are separated by a myriad of conflicting objectives and perspectives, including different vocabularies, curricula, standards, data systems, and performance management systems. Those divisions are especially acute across state boundaries, making it all the more difficult to develop a regional system that encompasses three state jurisdictions. Hence, the difficulty of finding trusted intermediary organizations with the ability to build workforce partnerships for the whole region or to persuade health care organizations in Kentucky to join an existing workforce partnership in their own industry sector. While the Workforce Network continues to espouse its regional vision, much of its day-to-day work is “Cincinnati-centric.”

The ideas of a regional partnership and a region-wide workforce development system continue to garner broad support, even as the members struggle to find vehicles for making that support concrete. However, opportunities for regional cooperation are expected to emerge as the parties continue coming to the table and the environment to which they must adapt changes. Regular committee and subcommittee meetings are well attended by stakeholders from all three states, and the leaders of the Workforce Network have come to recognize the importance of forging strong relationships and trust among coalition members.

Some change may come with the economic upswing that began early in 2010. The economic recession has restrained the Workforce Network’s ability to secure the revenues pledged for its pooled fund, necessitating a heavier reliance on aligned funds from Workforce Investment Boards. Moreover, the development of new workforce partnerships in advanced manufacturing and construction has hinged on the expectation of a renewed demand for skilled workers in those sectors.

## **Lessons Learned**

The Workforce Network’s story suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

***Building a successful collaborative requires a level of trust among the partners that is unusual among disparate and often-competing organizations. It takes time and patience to build collaborative relationships to the point where such trust can be achieved.***

Reflecting on the history of the Workforce Network, Executive Director Ross Meyer concluded that too little time was taken at the beginning to concentrate on building relationships among the member organizations. While members have continued to support the network’s regional goals and been steadfast in

their participation, it is a continuing challenge to bridge the differences between them and forge a strong partnership.

***Invest significant time and effort to forge links with the public workforce system and develop a collaborative partnership with it.***

It is not surprising that Workforce Investment Boards are somewhat suspicious of outside efforts to bring them under the umbrella of a larger system. Issues of power, turf, and lines of authority are likely to bedevil such attempts. It is important to work closely with WIBs and spell out a clear and complementary role for the collaborative that does not threaten their domain or jurisdiction.

In the case of the Workforce Network, taking time to reach an understanding has significantly improved the collaborative’s relationship with partnering WIBs. It is clear to all concerned that the Workforce Network focuses on specific industry sectors and target populations, that the WIBs and One-Stop Career Centers are an essential part of the total picture, and that the collaborative does not compete with or seek to displace them.

***It is important to have a neutral organization to convene other organizations that often compete with one another.***

The Workforce Network, along with the Greater Cincinnati Foundation in which it is housed, provides a venue for disparate interests to be represented on an equal footing. Without such a venue, it would have been difficult to sustain the collaboration and keep the conversation alive. The network has also been able to play an important role in facilitating a region-wide response to common problems as well as fashioning collaborative solutions and grant proposals. For example, it took the lead in developing a regional proposal for funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. While unsuccessful, that application paved the way for future efforts to develop regional solutions to workforce issues.

***The nurturing of workforce partnerships may require a multistage process that does not immediately involve the participation of an independent intermediary.***

The Greater Cincinnati case suggests that other options must be considered when no organization has the neutrality and credibility to play the workforce intermediary role. The Workforce Network itself became the intermediary, with the aim of creating a partnership that would be trusted by its constituents and stable enough to be established in the future as an independent entity.

# MILWAUKEE

## Setting the Stage:

### What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?

In 2007, Milwaukee's workforce development system was in transition. The newly created Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board placed under the city's jurisdiction served functions that had been managed by the county government. The city's mayor was reaching out to businesses, funders, and nonprofit organizations to engage them in a discussion about ways to improve and broaden the scope of the workforce system. In the eyes of many, it was essential that the system be expanded and that it adopt a dual customer focus: addressing the needs of employers for a skilled workforce while at the same time offering opportunities to low-income, low-skilled residents for family-sustaining jobs.

Milwaukee's economy was changing. No longer centered on manufacturing, the city had become the hub for a vibrant health care sector, and demand was growing for skilled craftspeople to rebuild the region's obsolescent infrastructure. However, employers were hard-pressed to find qualified applicants to fill skilled and well-paying jobs. The mismatch between job openings and the skills of jobseekers was acute, and more than half of the region's African-American men were unemployed.

The need for a coordinated, effective workforce development system had become a central issue for Milwaukee's business community, political leaders, local foundations, educators, and social service providers.

## Beginnings:

### How did the collaborative get started?

Known as the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance, this funding collaborative resulted from a series of efforts to improve and expand the local workforce development system. In 2007, the city commissioned Urban Strategies, a local consulting





firm specializing in community and workforce development, to gauge the interest of public and private organizations in working together on workforce issues. Around the same time, Eric Parker, executive director of the Milwaukee-based Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, took the lead on encouraging the city to apply for a grant from the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions*.

The city's proposal, although not selected, underscored a need to broaden the mix of public and private funders. Officers from the Helen Bader Foundation and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation joined with Urban Strategies staff to meet with other local funders, learn about their concerns, and engage their support for a workforce funding collaborative. In 2008, these activities culminated in the submission of a second—and successful—proposal to the National Fund.

Established as an affinity group of the Donors Forum of Wisconsin (a statewide association of grantmakers), the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance has four goals:

- Strengthen and expand the workforce system by leveraging local investments.
- Build the capacity of the workforce system.
- Help employers get the skilled workers they need.
- Advocate for policies that sustain effective workforce partnerships.

Ten founding members launched the alliance's Leadership Council: six private foundations (the Helen Bader Foundation, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, the Jane Bradley Petit Foundation, the Manpower Foundation, and the Milwaukee 7 Regional Workforce Alliance); and four public agencies (the Milwaukee Area WIB, the Milwaukee Community Development Grants Administration, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Municipal Court). The Donors Forum served as fiscal agent for the initiative and Urban Strategies was contracted to staff and manage it. Kathryn Dunn, community investment officer at the Helen Bader Foundation, became the organization's chairperson.

Early in the planning for the Workforce Funding Alliance, it became clear that few of the private funders were receptive to the idea of contributing to a common pool of funds. In their view, recent attempts to pool public and private funds had resulted in situations where they had little say in how their contributions were used. Instead, the funders agreed they would work together to align their individual contributions with the common goals and objectives of the alliance.

## **Moving Forward:**

### **How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?**

The members of the Workforce Funding Alliance had decided that in the first year, the collaborative would focus its energy and support on developing workforce partnerships in two key sectors: construction and health care. In developing their proposal to the National Fund, they had identified the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, a nationally known workforce intermediary organization since 1992, as the lead organization to shape a partnership in construction. They had also decided that they would support W RTP in its new role by strengthening its organizational capacity to perform a broad range of functions. Accordingly, after receiving the National Fund grant, the alliance hired a consultant to perform an organizational assessment of W RTP. Based upon the results, presented to the Leadership Council in spring 2009, the alliance provided funds to help W RTP build its capacity in such areas as financial management, information systems, and fundraising.

The Workforce Funding Alliance used a different approach in health care. Anticipating the second proposal to the National Fund, the Helen Bader Foundation issued a request for proposals in summer 2008 to identify an organization that could take the lead on building a health care workforce partnership. However, not one organization submitting an application had the capacity to fill this role, so the foundation awarded planning grants to two organizations—the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center—to collaborate in developing a new partnership. This planning phase continued through fall 2009 with the expectation that the partnership would be fully operational in 2010.

Also in 2009, in conjunction with the development of the health care partnership, five Milwaukee area hospitals became members of the Workforce Funding Alliance. By October, as the alliance began its second year as a National Fund grantee, fifteen new members had joined the original ten: five health care organizations, six corporations or corporate foundations, three private foundations, and one public agency.

In tandem with its activities to identify, develop, and build capacity for workforce partnerships, the alliance has pursued a policy and systems change agenda to improve and expand the workforce development system at the local and state levels. An important part of this agenda has been educating and learning from policymakers about workforce development issues. Alliance chairwoman Kathryn Dunn has joined with Kelly Lucas, her counterpart at Workforce Central (the Central Wisconsin National Fund grantee) to engage state cabinet

secretaries in discussing issues of common interest. As a result, Dunn has been appointed to the Governor's Council for Workforce Investment.

Also in the policy realm, the alliance has worked with public officials, legislators, and other stakeholder organizations to alleviate specific barriers hindering the entry of disadvantaged groups into the workforce. These efforts have included advocacy for driver education programs, restoring revoked driver's licenses, and workforce reentry programs for ex-offenders.

### **Challenges:**

#### **What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?**

Bringing together diverse public and private organizations to collaborate in pursuit of common goals has required considerable time and persistence on the part of the staff and leadership of Workforce Funding Alliance. For example, WIB officers and staff were unaccustomed to working with private funders and needed reassurance that the collaborative was not a threat to their authority or prerogatives. It was critical to ensure consistent participation by all members of the collaborative in regular meetings—to educate one another about the concerns of each organization and gradually build cooperative and trustful relationships.

This has proven to be a time-consuming responsibility for the alliance chair who estimates that she gives about 70 percent of her time to this function. As the person in charge of economic development at the Helen Bader Foundation, Dunn can deal with these issues as part of her normal portfolio of activities, but this means that sometimes she gives less time than she would like to other aspects of her job.

Another challenge has been in the area of capacity building. As the alliance began its operations, it was apparent that increasing organizational capacity would be a key issue, and the members agreed on the strategy of performing organizational assessments in order to identify the principal areas to which capacity-building funds should be directed. WRTP was a test case in this regard. As an established and highly regarded organization, it was reluctant to submit to such an assessment, but the result was a clear agenda for organizational improvement and over \$100,000 in cash and in-kind support.

Similarly, it has been challenging to develop the capacity of the Milwaukee YWCA and the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center to collaborate effectively on developing a health care workforce partnership. They had no experience in working together, but patience and persistence by the staff of those two

organizations and the alliance leadership has been a critical factor in making progress.

### **Lessons Learned**

The story of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Alliance suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

***An aligned model can provide the context for members of the collaborative to develop a better understanding of the organizations they fund and how their contributions can be part of a larger picture.***

The aligned funding strategy adopted by the members of the Workforce Alliance has led to an integrated funding approach. Each funder's contribution complements the contributions of the others, resulting in a coherent package of grant support that no single funder could assemble on its own. It demonstrates the power of collaboration among a well-organized group of funders. It also enables program officers to clearly explain to their boards how their contributions, no matter how small, fit into a larger picture and leverage other funds to produce a large impact.

JPMorgan Chase Foundation is a perfect example. The foundation was seeking to make a significant impact on workforce development but had limited funds to do so. Its program officer was participating in the Workforce Alliance and recommended that her national board award relatively small grants of \$45,000 to each of three organizations. She made a convincing case that those contributions would fill important gaps in the larger picture.

This ability to leverage other funds can be especially powerful under difficult economic conditions, such as those experienced during the recession that began in late 2007. Faced with decreased assets and the need to cut back on their grantmaking, alliance members leveraged their individual grants to have a larger impact.

***An organizational assessment process can be a useful tool for both donors and recipients in identifying specific areas for channeling capacity-building funds effectively.***

Organizational assessments have given Workforce Alliance funders a clear picture of the strengths and deficiencies of the organizations they are considering for support—showing how individual grants can help significantly to build organizational capacity and reinforce the effectiveness of the alignment model. Because this was so useful in the case of WRTP, alliance member organizations now require such assessments of all organizations being considered for capacity-building grants.

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***Formal agreements are not enough to produce effective collaboratives. Trusting and respectful interpersonal relationships are vital to making collaboratives work.***

Issues of turf, power, and authority enter into all relationships among organizations, leading to skepticism and mistrust—and impeding collaboration. There is no substitute for engaging in the gradual, time-consuming process of getting to know one another, reaching a deeper understanding of the different members’ perspectives, and learning how to work together. For this to happen, members must meet regularly in a neutral venue, and one or more trusted individuals must lead the effort. In the case of the Workforce Alliance, Chair Kathryn Dunn and Urban Strategies Executive Director Karen Gotzler share the role of convener and leader.

***Time, patience, and persistence are essential to making collaboratives work.***

Breaking down the barriers between organizations and building trusting relationships take time. It is essential to have skillful leaders who can commit the time necessary to nurture those relationships and keep the partners engaged and focused on the goals they have pledged to achieve.

# RHODE ISLAND

## Setting the Stage:

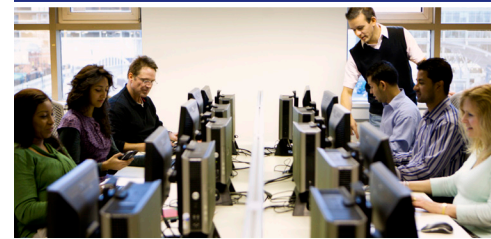
### What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?

In 2003, United Way of Rhode Island completed a far-reaching reexamination of its charitable giving. Determined to increase its impact, United Way decided to concentrate on three “community impact areas”: solutions for children; helping people in crisis; and building adult and neighborhood independence.

The next year, United Way began a series of “summit meetings,” bringing together community leaders, government officials, and service providers across the state to set clear goals for each impact area and discuss strategies for achieving those goals. In the area of “building adult and neighborhood independence”—known by the acronym BANI—summit panelists agreed upon the goal of “increasing the employability of low-income or unemployed populations so they can better support themselves and their families.” They also decided on a “dual customer” approach that would serve employers who needed more skilled workers in key industries *and* potential employees who needed education, training, and support services to acquire the skills that employers sought.

Informing the deliberations of the BANI panelists was the realization that a large proportion of the state’s workforce lacked the credentials and skills to secure well-paying jobs. Eighteen percent of all Rhode Island adults and 21 percent of Providence’s adult residents lacked a high school diploma, making the state and its capital city the least educated among New England states and metropolitan areas. Exacerbating the problem was the large number of low-skilled and hard-to-employ adults with limited English proficiency moving to the area.

As the BANI discussions proceeded, United Way was nearing the end of *Making It Work*, a 10-year collaboration with businesses, foundations, and the state Human Resources Investment Council to help Rhode Islanders with significant barriers to employment





receive the services they needed to enter the workforce (e.g., basic education, occupational training, job placement, support services). Using state and private funds (\$500,000 per year from the state and \$250,000 per year from private sources), *Making It Work* eventually trained and found jobs for 1,505 hard-to-employ individuals.

*Making It Work* was an important step in moving low-income and low-skilled Rhode Islanders into the workforce. However, it had focused on the supply side of the labor market: those needing jobs. Now, United Way staff and the BANI panelists agreed that a more comprehensive strategy was needed, one that addressed both the supply and demand sides of that market. Skill Up Rhode Island was designed to meet that need.

### **Beginnings:**

#### **How did the collaborative get started?**

Skill Up Rhode Island took shape in 2004 and 2005, as the BANI panel continued meeting and *Making It Work* completed its final year. The panel members followed developments in Boston with interest; funders there had joined forces with city and state workforce agencies in 2003 to create SkillWorks, a sector-based initiative with a dual customer focus. Under the leadership of United Way Senior Vice President Jane Nugent who coordinated the BANI initiative, panel members consulted with SkillWorks principals and other leading practitioners and proponents of sector-based programs around the country. By mid-2005, they had agreed upon the basic elements of Skill Up Rhode Island and received the approval of the United Way board of directors to implement the new program.

Modeled on SkillWorks, Skill Up Rhode Island was designed to meet the workforce needs of both workers and employers in growing industries and to provide a platform for coordinating diverse workforce development programs and policies around the state. Workforce intermediary organizations would receive funds to work with employers to identify high-demand occupations that paid family-sustaining wages and with service providers to recruit trainees and provide them with basic education, occupational skills, and support services.

United Way co-developed and oversaw the initiative with a volunteer steering committee made up of representatives from funding organizations, businesses, state agencies, and community-based organizations. The principal organizations were three private funders (United Way, the Rhode Island Foundation, and The Annie E. Casey Foundation) and two state agencies (the Governor's Workforce Board and the Office of Adult Education, a division of the Rhode Island Department of Education). The agencies, in particular, were undergoing major changes that were leading them in the direction of a coordinated

sector-based, dual customer strategy. The Governor's Workforce Board, which had replaced the Human Resources Investment Council, was focused on developing eight statewide industry partnerships. Johan Uvin, director of the newly created Office of Adult Education, was seeking to align the objectives of his agency with an overarching workforce development agenda.

With key partners and a conceptual framework in place, Skill Up Rhode Island was formally launched in fall 2005. It solicited letters of interest from organizations wishing to form workforce partnerships, followed by proposals and the announcement of four pilot workforce partnership grants early in 2006. Skill Up Rhode Island funded partnerships in four industry sectors: health care; the marine trades; construction; and distribution and logistics. Grants were distributed among the Providence metropolitan area, northern Rhode Island, and the city of Newport.

### **Moving Forward:**

#### **How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?**

Unlike SkillWorks, the principal members of the Skill Up Rhode Island collaborative did not pool their resources into a common fund. Instead, the multi-organizational steering committee screened proposed projects, the United Way board made final funding decisions, and United Way was the sole granting agency. However, all applicants for funds had to match their proposed grants with resources from participating employers and other funders, some of whom were also members of the Skill Up steering committee. This provided the basis for ongoing discussions among the committee members on how best to align the funding decisions of the various organizations to meet common workforce development objectives. To facilitate these discussions, United Way played the key convening role.

Jobs for the Future and Abt Associates, as consultants to Skill Up, helped guide the initiative's development and implementation as the key partners moved closer to adopting a common agenda for a more integrated and better coordinated workforce development system. To that end, they came to agree more and more on an aligned strategy: the members of the group would link their funding decisions to the larger objectives espoused by the group as a whole and to whether applicants were also receiving support from other members of the group. For example, in 2007 the Office of Adult Education gave explicit priority in its request for proposals to projects funded through Skill Up. The Rhode Island Foundation announced that its future workforce development grants would be limited to projects that Skill Up also funded.

After the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions* selected Skill Up as a grantee in 2008, funding group members began collaborating more closely to advance a common agenda of workforce development and systems change. Since then, the group has met every three to four months to discuss common issues and formulate strategies operating under an informal structure and with no by-laws. Members who fund common projects have met separately to inform one another about the progress of those projects, examine outcomes, and discuss strategies for dealing with problems.

Building on relationships that have developed through these discussions, the participating organizations have collaborated on other key initiatives, with one member or another taking the lead. For example, the Office of Adult Education initiated two projects: the Professional Development Center at Rhode Island College and the Welcome Back Recredentialing Center for foreign-born, foreign-trained health care professionals. The collaborative has also awarded a grant to the Rhode Island Workforce Alliance to advocate for legislation to support policy and system changes at the state level.

Worsening economic conditions in 2008 and 2009 led to significant changes in two of the four funded workforce partnerships: a suspension of activity in the case of the marine trades project and a decision to change the sectoral focus in the northern Rhode Island project from distribution and logistics to long-term care. In spring 2009, United Way consolidated the three impact areas that had been organized six years earlier. As a result, it dismantled BANI and laid off several high-ranking staff members, including Jane Nugent, who had led both the BANI initiative and Skill Up Rhode Island since they started.

Nevertheless, the members of the collaborative have continued to meet and have renewed their pledge to work together toward a more integrated and coordinated workforce development system.

### **Challenges:**

#### **What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?**

During the planning and early implementation stages of Skill Up Rhode Island, it was difficult to secure the commitment of the agencies that administered the public workforce development system to participate actively in the initiative. The Governor's Workforce Board was new, replacing the former Human Resources Investment Council. It was apparent that the timing was not right for a pooled-funding approach to collaboration.

Gradually, the public sector began to play a more collaborative role. The establishment of the Office of Adult Education, led by a director committed to the integration of adult education and workforce development, was an important step in that direction. Another was the development and refinement of the alignment model of collaboration, especially in the context of the Skill Up proposal to the National Fund. Skill Up's grant gave it further impetus to fuller participation and collaboration by the public sector.

A related challenge has been deciding the form for alignment. The first step was in the area of funding: the collaborating organizations chose to give priority to projects that could demonstrate support from other members of the collaborative. During the implementation of those projects, the funders began comparing outcomes data and other information to enrich one another's understanding of the projects' progress toward their objectives. This proved to be especially helpful when problems arose: it provided a broader perspective and a basis for collaborative decision making on how to address those problems. Recently, group members have discussed other ways to align their efforts, such as developing common tools and procedures, and incorporating common language into their respective grant guidelines and requests for proposals.

Finally, the collaborative has faced the challenges posed by the recent economic recession. Burdened by one of the nation's highest unemployment rates, Rhode Island has suffered massive layoffs, and hiring has slowed to a standstill among many of the state's employers. Under such conditions, it has been difficult for the funded initiatives to sustain momentum. As noted, Skill Up instituted a radical course change for two of the four workforce partnerships.

These developments, coupled with United Way's organizational changes, have posed new challenges to the collaborative, but most of the funded projects have continued. Moreover, the members of the collaborative have reaffirmed their commitment to working together to achieve their goals.

### **Lessons Learned**

The story of Skill Up Rhode Island suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

***It is critical to have a convening organization to champion the cause of the collaborative and bring other members together in a neutral venue.***

In Rhode Island, this role was performed by United Way under the leadership of its vice president, Jane Nugent. As a private funding organization, United Way was a place where public

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agencies and other private funders could discuss the issues before them without being constrained by the protocols that a more public venue would have required.

***It is helpful to have a person who has the authority, time, and resources needed to move the initiative forward.***

The coordination of BANI and the development and implementation of Skill Up Rhode Island were central to Jane Nugent's job description, not "add-ons" to an already full portfolio. As a result, she could focus on those tasks.

***By eliminating the requirement to contribute to a pooled fund, the alignment model of collaboration can make it easier for funders to participate.***

When it became clear that key funding organizations would not cede enough autonomy to create a pooled fund to support the initiative, the aligned funding model enabled them to work together more closely around common interests. This provided a platform for the further development of a system-wide strategy and collaborative efforts to promote systems and policy change across the state.

***It is important to take time to nurture the interpersonal relationships that are vital to a collaborative's success.***

Despite having a full-time person (Jane Nugent) and a neutral venue (United Way) for convening partner organizations, it still took about two years for the collaborative to evolve into a well-functioning enterprise. As they came together regularly to discuss substantive issues, the members of the group gained a deeper understanding of one another's perspectives and learned how to work together effectively and in an atmosphere of mutual trust. These important elements of collaboration take time to evolve.

***A stimulus from the outside can help partners think through important problems and the collaborative to function at a higher level.***

The National Fund's application process stimulated the members of the group to define more clearly their common goals and how they would collaborate to accomplish them. Further, the selection of Skill Up as a National Fund grantee made it possible for the initiative to move more effectively into the realms of systems and policy change. The National Fund also helped build capacity within the member organizations by providing opportunities for professional development and networking with other practitioners around the country.

***It is essential to be flexible and adaptable in the face of inevitable change.***

Economic, political, and organizational change are constant features of the landscape in which Skill Up Rhode Island has taken root and developed. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the initiative to survive without the ability to adapt.

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

## Setting the Stage:

### What conditions gave rise to the collaborative?

In recent decades, it has become more and more difficult for low-wage workers and those who are dislocated from manufacturing jobs to make ends meet. Family-sustaining jobs are hard to find for workers without specialized education and skills. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century began, this problem was particularly acute in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the cost of living was among the nation's highest and steadily rising.

At the same time, the Bay Area's leading growth industries, especially health care and the life sciences, were hard-pressed to find the skilled workers they needed to fill an increasing number of job vacancies. The economy was experiencing a skills gap: a multitude of workers needed good jobs but lacked the skills to meet the demands of the changing labor market. Analyses of that market revealed a growing need for allied health workers, including registered nurses, pharmacists, and a wide variety of technicians. Most of that demand was for workers to fill new positions rather than to replace retirees. Concerns were being voiced, too, about California's low ranking—near the bottom among the 50 states—in the numbers of home health aides and nursing aides per capita and the ratios of registered nurses to patients.

Beset by fragmented and reduced funding, the public workforce development system did not mount a coordinated response to these challenges. Such a response could have targeted specific sectors that were generating most of the labor demand, such as health care and the life sciences.

Dissatisfied by the performance of the public system, several Bay Area foundations discontinued their support of workforce development programs, even as they recognized the need for more effective ways to meet the region's workforce challenge. The time was ripe for a new approach.





## **Beginnings:**

### **How did the collaborative get started?**

The Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative is rooted in a common interest among local foundations: to systematically address the needs of the region's working poor. Its initial impetus came from a March 2003 briefing on the working poor organized by Carol Lamont, a program officer at the San Francisco Foundation, and Cindy Marano, director of the National Network of Sector Partners, which is headquartered at the National Employment Development and Law Center. Attended by hundreds of representatives from public and private organizations around the Bay Area, the briefing highlighted the problems of the working poor. It also examined promising solutions to those problems, emphasizing the need for a coordinated, sector-based strategy for workforce development.

The briefing led to continuing discussions among the event's organizers and staff from other foundations and public agencies on how to coordinate their approaches to workforce development for the working poor. In the months that followed, meetings with staff from the California Employment Development Department sought to build relationships and develop a mutual understanding of the priorities and constraints of each type of funding. The outcome was an agreement to develop a strategy for aligning public and private workforce development funds. That strategy led to the establishment of the Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative in 2004. Through this public-private partnership, up to \$2 million in discretionary funds allocated to the state under the federal Workforce Investment Act would be matched by private foundation funds to support targeted workforce development projects.

Once the state agreed to this arrangement, The San Francisco Foundation and the Walter & Elise Haas Fund made pledges of support. These were followed by commitments from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and the California Endowment. Representatives from these foundations and from the Employment Development Department began meeting to develop principles and procedures for the newly formed funding collaborative. This group enunciated two goals:

- Increase economic security and career advancement for low-income individuals and low-wage workers, while meeting the workforce needs of key regional industry sectors.
- Stimulate greater planning and cooperation across the region among employers, Workforce Investment Boards, nonprofit employment and training providers, community colleges, labor, and other stakeholders.

To accomplish these goals, the collaborative would fund the creation or expansion of workforce partnerships to provide specialized training and support services for low-income participants. In addition, it would provide ongoing opportunities for those partnerships to learn from one another and improve their effectiveness. The funders group identified health care and the life sciences as the two sectors in which projects would be supported. It also defined the geographical compass of the collaborative's work to include 10 counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma.

## **Moving Forward:**

### **How did the collaborative develop into a fully functioning enterprise?**

Having agreed upon general guidelines, the members of the collaborative moved forward on two fronts:

- To better leverage the public funds offered by the state, they continued to seek support from other foundations; and
- To provide workforce development services in the targeted sectors, they began developing a request for proposals from coalitions of organizations.

By spring 2004, 13 private funding organizations had joined the Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative: the San Francisco Foundation, the Walter & Elise Haas Fund, the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, the Levi Strauss Foundation, the Koret Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and the California Endowment. Collectively, they pledged \$2.1 million to support a first round of grants, whether through contributions to BAWFC's general pool of funds—known as the “mutual fund”—or through separate, “aligned” grants to organizations receiving support from the collaborative.

Also that spring, the collaborative invited organizations to submit concept papers for workforce projects. In July, it asked those submitting promising concept papers to propose two-year projects in health care and the life sciences; it also solicited proposals for smaller, one-year projects. The collaborative received 55 proposals and awarded 12 grants. Seven of them were two-year grants ranging from \$200,000 to \$800,000 to support the development of workforce partnerships. The five smaller grants, ranging from \$25,000 to \$75,000, focused on such topics as curriculum development (two grants), establishing a learning network among workforce development

providers, developing subsidized internships, and mounting a communications campaign to attract diverse populations into health care.

To oversee the collaborative, its members established a steering committee in 2004, made up of representatives from five core funding organizations. In addition, they charged a funding panel, with representation from all member funders, with deciding which projects to support. Carol Lamont, who had played the leading role in the collaborative's creation, managed its work through 2005 and administered the mutual fund from her post at the San Francisco Foundation—with assistance from the National Employment Development and Law Center. At the end of 2005, the foundation's board voted to establish a Workforce Initiative, with a dedicated staff for the collaborative. The foundation hired Jessica Pitt as full-time coordinator and also established the position of half-time program assistant.

The Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative funded a second round of projects in 2006. It awarded five additional two-year grants for workforce partnerships, four smaller “innovation” grants in the areas of development and design, and two “policy” grants to support projects aimed at wide-ranging system change. In contrast to the workforce partnership grants, only philanthropic dollars funded the innovation and policy grants. There was no matching support from the state: its funds were restricted to programs providing direct participant services. In an even larger change, the California Employment Development Department notified its fellow collaborative members in 2008 that the state had shifted its priorities: WIA discretionary funds would now target the prevention of youth violence.

In the absence of state funding, and amid increasing concern about the long-term sustainability of the workforce partnerships it had funded, the collaborative refocused its energies on building the capacity of community colleges to prepare and support economically and educationally disadvantaged adults for career ladder jobs. Community colleges were seen as a primary vehicle for delivering career and technical education to the low-income populations that BAWFC was committed to serving.

The collaborative adopted three priorities for its community college funding:

- Developmental education that contextualizes basic skills instruction to specific career pathways;
- Support services tailored to the distinct needs of career and technical education students; and

- Job placement and retention services to help students find and retain employment in industries for which they were trained.

### Challenges:

#### What problems did the collaborative face and how did it address them?

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative has been the state's decision to withdraw its financial support as a result of the policy priorities of a new gubernatorial administration. As a result, the collaborative felt it could no longer support large-scale, multiyear workforce partnership projects as it had done during its first four years.

At the same time, some members of the collaborative had begun questioning the viability of a strategy premised on ongoing funding for workforce partnerships that depended on soft money. The state's decision added impetus to discussions of this issue, leading to a rethinking of the collaborative's approach and, eventually, to the new focus on community colleges. This direction, it was decided, had greater likelihood of sustainability because community colleges have access to a broad range of funding sources.

In a second challenge, the collaborative in its early years depended on the time and energy of Carol Lamont, whose position as a program officer included many other responsibilities as well. This problem was resolved when the San Francisco Foundation dedicated one full-time and one half-time position to the collaborative.

Finally, during BAWFC's early years, with the Employment Development Department on board as a full partner, the collaborative had to coordinate with the state's fiscal and client accounting systems to develop a picture of the results produced by the funded projects. This task proved difficult, but the problem was resolved through the painstaking efforts of the project's evaluation team, working closely with state officials and staff from the member foundations.

### Lessons Learned

BAWFC's development suggests several important lessons that can be applied to future efforts to create regional funding collaboratives:

#### *It is important to have a well-placed individual leading the effort at the beginning.*

It seems unlikely that the collaborative would have taken shape without the vision and commitment of Carol Lamont and the guidance she received from Cindy Marano. Lamont's position at the San Francisco Foundation gave her the credibility needed

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to engage state officials as well as others in the local foundation world. Marano's many years of experience at both the state and national levels provided the new venture with essential practical and strategic grounding.

***Get to know the key workforce development stakeholders in the area, and learn how the world looks from their perspectives.***

Foundation staff seeking to forge alliances across a variety of domains are at a disadvantage if they are unfamiliar with the perspectives of private industry, public agencies, Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, and research centers, as well as the community-based organizations with which they are usually well acquainted. Those who lead the effort to shape an emerging collaborative must learn about the objectives of its different stakeholder organizations and the conditions under which they operate in order to create a true partnership that meets their varying needs. Before the San Francisco funding collaborative obtained financial pledges from either philanthropy or the state, the core leaders held many meetings with prospective partners to build an understanding of their missions and constraints. The collaborative's mission grew out of hard work to find common interests and identify opportunities to leverage one another's resources and accomplish something greater than any one of them could accomplish on its own.

***Consider offering different funding options to engage funding organizations as collaborative members.***

Offering potential members the option of making separate, "aligned" grants to BAWFC-approved projects was an effective way to attract members who might not have been willing initially to commit to the pooled fund. For example, the California Employment Development Department would only invest in training programs for WIA-eligible individuals. This provided an opportunity for members to test whether being part of the collaborative matched their priorities, and it eventually led some to contribute to the pooled fund after an initial period as aligned funders.

***Employ staff to perform the day-to-day operations of the collaborative.***

It would have been difficult to develop and maintain the collaborative at the necessary scale without dedicated staff to ensure its timely and efficient operation. The commitment of the San Francisco Foundation to staff BAWFC was a crucial step in the establishment of the collaborative as a viable, fully functioning enterprise.



## **JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

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