

NAWRS/NASTA 2012 Annual Workshop

Strategies for Engaging Employers and Social Enterprise Initiatives

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National Transitional Jobs Network

The National Transitional Jobs Network (NTJN) exists to ensure that policies account for the hard-to-employ, that programs are able to effectively serve as many individuals as possible, and that best practices and technical assistance are widely shared and implemented throughout the network. **The NTJN offers**

- Technical assistance
- State and federal advocacy
- Monthly newsletters – sign up at www.transitionaljobs.net
- National conference

Employing Hard to Employ Participants: Challenges to Engaging Employers

- **Especially now employers be picky**
 - ❑ Roughly 4 to 5 job seekers per every 1 job opening
- **Bureaucratic Barriers**
 - ❑ HR hiring policies against hiring people with criminal backgrounds
 - ❑ Lack of clarity regarding who has the authority to agree to take on participants of public programs
- **Perceptions about hiring hard to employ individuals**
 - ❑ Concerns about reduced workplace productivity.
 - ❑ Assumptions about legally risky hires.
 - ❑ Fears about low skills and undependability.



Learning from the TANF Emergency Fund Experience

How did states get all those employers to participate in subsidized employment programs?

Strategies Used to Recruit Employers

- Media and Marketing
 - Led by Governors and Mayors
 - Dedicated websites
 - Catchy names
 - Self-marketing by participants
 - Word of mouth
- Use of Intermediaries
 - Staffing firms
 - One stops
 - Non-profits

Employer Recruitment Strategies, cont.

- **Business Outreach**
 - Departments of Commerce
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Partnerships with WIBS
- **Job Development**
 - Cold calling
 - Want ad responses
 - Meetings with prospective employers

Employer Recruitment Strategies, cont.

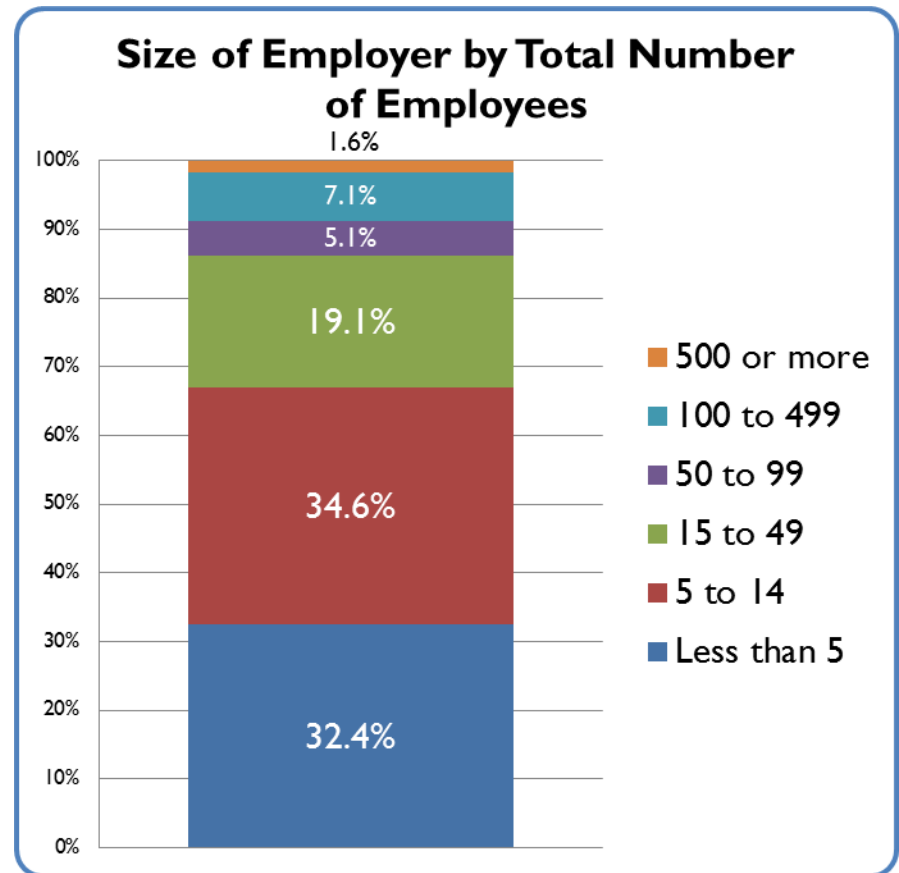
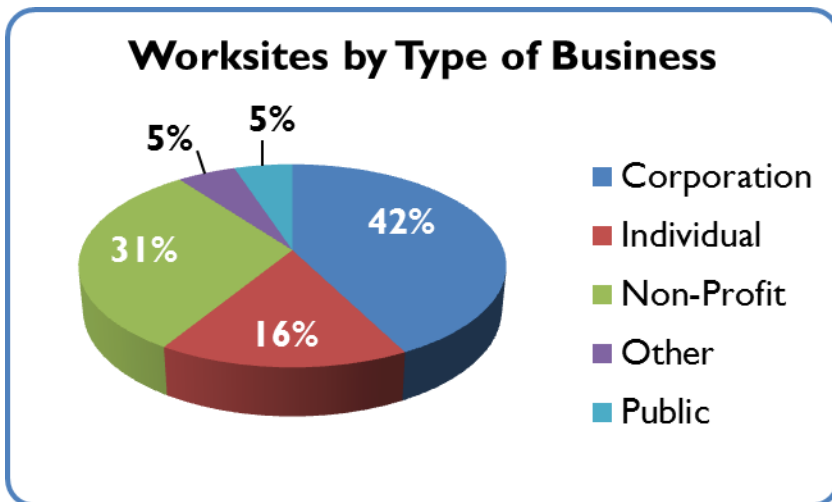
- Strategic Targeting
 - Smaller employers
 - Track record of hiring people with criminal records
 - Non-profits for more barrierred job seekers

Digging Deeper

Feedback from employers in Illinois who participated in the TANF EF programs

Picture of Employers Participating in TANF ECF Illinois Subsidized Employment Program (PITW)

- Majority for-profit or nonprofit
- Majority small
- 62% never participated in subsidized jobs program



Reasons Why Employers Participated: Illinois Subsidized Employment Program (PITW)

Help struggling community and neighbors with jobs	60%
Create an opportunity for somebody who wants to upgrade skills/get trained	58%
Opportunity to "test" new workers without risk but with potential to hire later	53%
Opportunity to have subsidized labor for a few months	45%
Help struggling business	25%
Test partnership with a social service agency for another program	14%

- Top two reasons: altruistic?
- Significant portion testing employees for potential permanent hire

Employer Feedback: As a result of PITW...

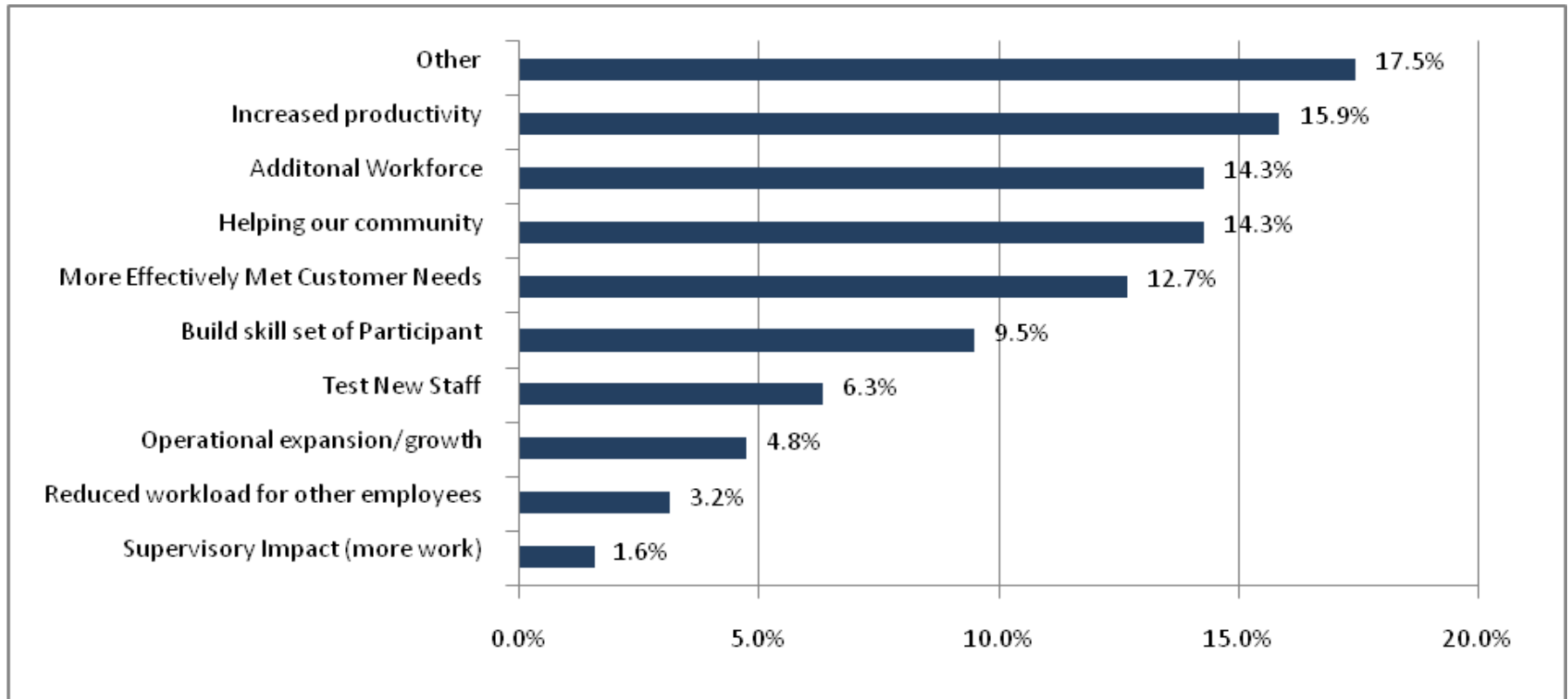
- **74%:** productivity increased
- **69%:** current workforce's satisfaction with workload improved
- **67%:** able to serve more customers
- **61%:** quality of work improved
- **58%:** saw customer satisfaction improve
- **58%:** financial health was better or somewhat better
 - **47%** attributed at least half of that improvement directly to participation in PITW

PITW Employer Satisfaction Feedback

- 88% indicate **they would participate in PITW or a similar program** if it were offered again
- If the wage subsidy were cut in half, **40%** of employers report they would participate, and **43%** might participate
- **67% would give an employment reference** for more than half or all of their transitional workers
- **52% of employers would permanently hire** half to all of their Transitional workers if they were financially able to do so
- Half of all employers stated that they are **more willing now to hire low-income parents and young adults** than before PITW.

Employer Survey Feedback: Chicago TANF ECF Transitional Jobs Program (JobStart)

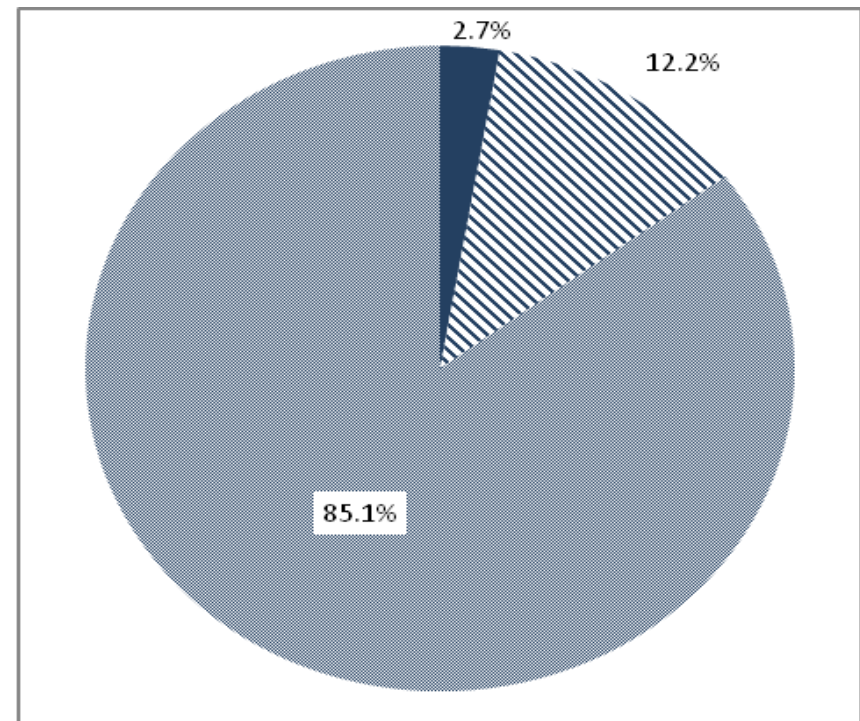
What was the most important impact of JobStart on your business?



Employer Survey Feedback: Chicago TANF ECF Transitional Jobs Program (JobStart)

Considering your experience with JobStart, would you participate in it or a similar program if it were offered again in the future?

85% of employers who participated in the Chicago Neighborhood JobStart program said they would participate in this program or a similar program again.



Lessons for Employer Engagement

- Subsidy – bottom line impact, “rebate”, internship like
- Employer friendly program – simple paperwork, time reimbursements
- Program staff offer key supports
- Ensure good matches – needs, skills, interests
- Opportunity to try out employees
- Appeal to economic return as well as to altruism

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