

# **California Works for Better Health Initiative**

**A Final Report to the Funders**

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# California Works for Better Health

## Executive Summary

In 2000, The California Endowment and The Rockefeller Foundation launched the California Works for Better Health (CWBH) initiative to test the theory that improving the consistency and quality of employment among people with multiple disadvantages in the labor market could also improve their health. CWBH brought together grantee agencies in four California regions – Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego – to form collaboratives that were charged with raising the level and quality of employment in targeted communities. Community-based organizations (CBOs) were chosen in each region to carry out the activities that were expected to lead to more and better jobs for workers with multiple disadvantages in the targeted California communities.

The initial vision of the CWBH funders was an effort of eight to ten years and a scale and scope that included a significant commitment to learning through evaluation. The CWBH concept in the four California regions was approved by the two foundation sponsors at a budget eventually totaling about \$20 million including \$1.4 million for evaluation and an additional \$2.5 million for technical assistance and management services. Two phases were anticipated: a three-year first phase of planning and development and a 5- to 7-year implementation phase with outcome measurement.

CWBH unfolded as an extraordinarily complex effort to change community conditions that featured many levels of planning and decisionmaking, shifting goals over time, and an evaluation attempting both micro-level documentation and macro-level measurement while expectations and activities were under development and undergoing revision. The final design and implementation of the initiative and, consequently, the design and implementation of the initiative's evaluation research, were significantly different from the initial vision because: 1) CBOs serving multiple, non-contiguous neighborhoods or city-wide populations were selected to participate in the site collaboratives, which made it unrealistic to expect measurable neighborhood effects of CWBH; 2) the timeframe for Phase II of the CWBH initiative was scaled down from seven to five years, and then to three years, shifting sites' attention to job placements as the central objective (away from health improvements).

The CWBH initiative as implemented between 2000 and 2006 was not a true test of its starting hypotheses, given the major changes in scope and focus over its first four years and major difficulties experienced by the sites and the initiative partners in carrying out essential elements of the initial vision. As a result, most of the changes that the initiative was aiming to effect were visible only in limited areas and, overall, compared to the initial vision, outcomes were disappointing. Among the key outcome findings were:

- Job placement rates by CWBH collaborative agencies ranged from 17.5 to 39.3 percent, rates that were mostly below average for similar populations served by non-CWBH employment and training providers, although CWBH agencies did succeed in reaching

multiply-disadvantaged workers and sometimes filled niches in local workforce investment programs that were important to these groups.

- Wages for CWBH individuals placed in jobs were above minimum wage, but below local “living wage” targets, and the evaluation was not able to collect universal data on job benefits. Occupational data that was collected suggests that CWBH individuals placed in jobs were “moving up,” but definitive evidence is not available.
- The four CWBH sites had varying levels of success in working together. Two sites – Fresno and Sacramento – developed relatively effective regional collaboratives. In the two other sites, the structural barriers to collaboration, some introduced by CWBH, and the divergent capacities and agendas of the participating agencies, hindered the development of true region-wide efforts.
- Policy and system changes attributable to CWBH activity were very limited. There are a few stories of strengths in this area, but also evident is the lesson that limited-duration interventions should not expect local agencies to go up against their “bread and butter” funders by undertaking policy/system change advocacy against those entities.

Site-level findings reflected the diverse origins of the community agencies selected to participate in CWBH, their partnerships with their local Workforce Investment Agencies (WIAs), and the employment-related needs of their constituencies. For example, in the *Fresno* region, there was a pre-existing collaboration among workforce agencies, both public and non-profit, that gave the CWBH initiative a boost, even though employment conditions were very difficult. This site succeeded in connecting clients to vocational training and placed about one-quarter of participants in jobs, but fell short in its efforts to secure a municipal “first-source” hiring agreement, and did not succeed in harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of the local residents who were trained for leadership and advocacy.

The *Los Angeles* CWBH collaborative theory built on previous successful efforts to organize and advocate for better jobs and working conditions for disadvantaged workers, based in part on better access to job training, and it involved several of the CBOs that had led those efforts. This strategy produced mixed results, as the experienced CBO members of the collaborative pursued their own agendas and new collaborative members were recruited to provide employment services that they had no experience with. Overall, the Los Angeles CWBH site had a job placement rate of less than 20 percent, the lowest rate of the four CWBH sites.

*Sacramento*’s CWBH involved public agencies and CBOs with long histories of collaboration and cooperation, and a policy orientation toward serving disadvantaged workers within the constraints of a national WIA system that did not make that easy. While the site had limited success in cementing hiring agreements and increasing the number of “healthy jobs,” this site helped very disadvantaged clients make progress in terms of the placement rate (39 percent, the highest among the four CWBH sites), diversifying and improving occupations, improving placements with benefits, and job retention. The results of resident leadership efforts were disappointing, however.

*San Diego*’s CWBH site, focused on the job difficulties of people in two neighborhoods heavily impacted by the problems of Mexican immigrants, many of whom were undocumented, brought together CBOs connected to the targeted population with advocacy/policy development

organizations working on strategies for tying very active downtown development activity to improvements for workers in downtown businesses and low-income residents of downtown neighborhoods. One strand of this employment improvement strategy was through the existing system of public services for the unemployed and underemployed in the neighborhoods that were anticipated to be affected by downtown development. During the data collection period of the CWBH initiative, San Diego's job placement rate was under 25 percent.

CWBH faced many of the challenges that had been experienced in foundation-initiated community improvement projects since the mid-1980's – particularly the difficulty of stimulating community-driven processes of change that fit within the funder's overall agenda and timeframe for seeing results. Often, arriving at community consensus about how to proceed is more complicated and time-consuming than funders anticipate, as is expanding the local capacity to carry out agreed-upon plans. Money is not enough. It needs to be supplemented with expertise that is well-matched to local institutions and carefully coordinated with the overall vision of the change agenda and process. In the middle of foundation-initiated community change initiatives, the funders often experience a crisis of confidence, pressed between Board of Trustee questions about measurable outcomes and the realities of community-based planning and implementation. CWBH came to just such a juncture, at which the funders scaled back their expectations and support. As a result, while CWBH offers local implementation stories of interest, the overall theory of leveraging employment to improve public health was not truly tested.

## Chapter 1. Introduction to CWBH

In 2000, The California Endowment and The Rockefeller Foundation launched the California Works for Better Health (CWBH) initiative, which brought together grantee agencies in four California regions (“CWBH sites”) – Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego – to form collaboratives that were charged with raising the level and quality of employment in targeted communities. CWBH was built on a set of propositions that were encapsulated in the slogan, “better work, better health.” CWBH set out to test the theory that improving the consistency and quality of employment among people with multiple disadvantages in the labor market could also improve their health. Assumptions identified by the funders in early 2000 included:<sup>1</sup>

1. Working is better than not working for a person’s health (though there may be caveats for hazardous employment and families with very young children).
2. Once working, quality jobs with benefits and with healthy working conditions are better for health than work at any job.
3. Neighborhood conditions, the physical and social environments in which people live, such as housing conditions, access to resources and services, transportation systems, degree of poverty and crime, and experiences of discrimination, affect people’s health;
4. Labor market experiences and abilities to access work are influenced by these and other neighborhood characteristics, such as people’s connections to job information networks or the structural mix of jobs.
5. Economic, labor market and health inequities, which persist, despite overall economic and health improvements in California, must be reduced to improve community health.
6. Community institutions and networks, firms, regional labor markets, and public policy are key levers for improving health.
7. Community-based organizations can develop the capacities to work collaboratively, across racial and ethnic lines, to develop “upstream” program and policy agendas for transforming labor market and economic opportunities.
8. Community-based organizations are appropriately situated in neighborhood-building efforts to effectively promote community capacity and health through labor market interventions.

As summarized by MDRC, the CWBH hypothesis was:

[P]oor health is associated with – and frequently is at least in part *caused by* – unemployment or underemployment and attendant high levels of poverty. Therefore, at the level of public health concerns, the incidence of poor health can be *lowered* by helping unemployed people find work, or by improving the work circumstances of people who are already working but whose work itself contributes to poor health. CWBH attempts to improve public health in distressed

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<sup>1</sup> Samuels and Associates (2000), p. 2.

California communities by increasing the ability of community residents to access regional economic opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

There was an extensive research record behind the core CWBH proposition demonstrating that people with low skills, little education, and low-paying and/or inconsistent work were increasingly unlikely to be covered by health insurance and increasingly likely to have untreated and uncontrolled health problems.<sup>3</sup> However, these individual-level observations were extended by CWBH, in its initial vision, to regions. As noted in their call for an external evaluator, the funders said:<sup>4</sup>

CWBH is based on the notion that regions matter. Instead of focusing on neighborhood and community development in isolation, CWBH is dedicated to changing labor market dynamics on a regional level, and to providing neighborhoods with multiple outlets for addressing labor market inequities: Attending to the broader social context of the regional labor market, CWBH will focus its efforts on building the capacity to create structural changes that can improve the health of poor people – not merely in the CWBH-funded neighborhoods but region-wide.

In a political environment where comprehensive health care reform seemed a long way off, the CWBH funders decided to invest in an employment-driven approach to improving the health status of vulnerable working-age people and their families, bringing together the long workforce investment record of The Rockefeller Foundation and the California health focus of The California Endowment. The initiative encompassed a three-part strategy: 1) providing the direct employment-related services to people with multiple disadvantages in target communities that would enable them to get better-paying jobs with better benefits and improve their income; 2) advocating for systemic, region-wide improvements in the mainstream employment and training system to ensure that people with multiple disadvantages could receive effective assistance and advocating for improvements in the wider economic environment to increase opportunities for good jobs for people with multiple disadvantages; and 3) community organizing, mainly to support advocacy efforts (although, in practice, this also helped market direct employment services). However, the specifics of service, policy advocacy, and community organizing strategies were to be determined by the local collaboratives in a “bottom up” planning process, aided by foundation-funded experts.

The funders’ assumptions about how CWBH would achieve its goals – the funders’ “theory of change” – are represented in Figure 1.1. As discussed further below, by the time that CWBH was being developed, articulating a clear theory of change had become standard practice in funder-initiated community change initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> MDRC (February 18, 2000).

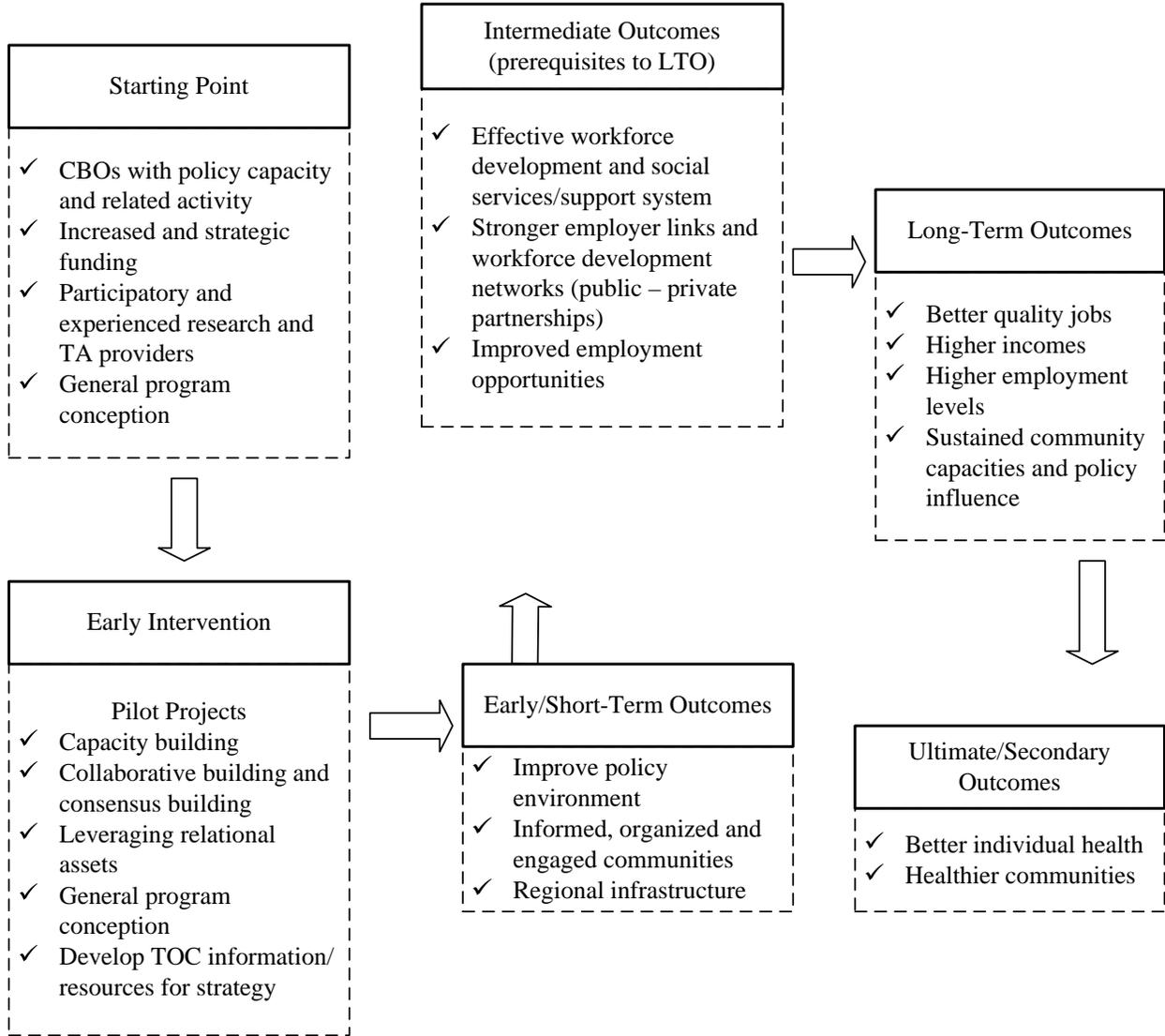
<sup>3</sup> Bartley, Ferrie and Montgomery (1999); Dooley, Fielding and Levi (1996); Adler and Ostrove (1999); Marmot (2002); Bosma, van de Mheen, Boorsboom and Mackenbach (2001); Kawachi (1999); Sturm and Gresenz (2002); Wilkinson (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Samuels and Associates (2000), p. 2. A key source for the proposition that connecting poor people to regional economies and regional growth was a study by Pastor et al. (1997).

# California Works for Better Health

Figure 1.1

## California Works for Better Health Theory of Change



SOURCE: CWBH Administration, 2001.

The CWBH funders' decision that community-based organizations (CBOs) were the appropriate and most effective vehicle to carry out the activities that were expected to lead to more and better jobs for workers with multiple disadvantages in the targeted California communities was consistent with a long history of publicly-funded programs to deliver employment and job training services to the most disadvantaged workers and drove many other decisions about how the CWBH initiative would be structured, implemented and evaluated. MDRC noted the potential effect of relying on CBOs early on:

CBOs are in touch with community needs as well as resources, and are already trusted by community residents. However, even in the case of the most accomplished CBOs in a given community, program management capacities and potential for leadership of major initiatives vary greatly. They also generally face tensions in managing diverse interests among multiple partners, while simultaneously maintaining their resident base and responsiveness. As a consequence most will need assistance to: strengthen internal organization and management to oversee the initiative; maintain and expand constituent input and consensus as new strategies are developed and new activities initiated; manage collaboration among a diverse array of institutional, community-based and resident association partners; and oversee new policy and program activities towards the initiative's overall goals.<sup>5</sup>

This assessment of CBOs, which was in accord with the funders' views, stimulated a major feature of the initiative – a Technical Assistance component, described below.

The initial vision of the CWBH funders was an effort of eight to ten years and a scale and scope that included a significant commitment to learning through evaluation. The CWBH concept in the four California cities was approved in 1999 by the two foundation sponsors at a budget of \$16 million, eventually totaling about \$20 million including \$1.4 million for evaluation and an additional \$2.5 million for technical assistance and management services.

## **The CWBH Experience**

From ambitious expectations at its start, California Works for Better Health unfolded as an extraordinarily complex effort to change community conditions that featured many levels of planning and decisionmaking, shifting goals over time, and an evaluation attempting both micro-level documentation and macro-level measurement while expectations and activities were under development and undergoing revision.<sup>6</sup> If ambition and complexity are two major themes of the CWBH experience, adjustments to realities on the ground and to funder needs for demonstrable progress is a third. In this section, the major features and events of the initiative and its evaluation are outlined, and the inherent challenges in effecting community change are discussed and illustrated by similarly ambitious foundation-funded initiatives.

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<sup>5</sup> MDRC (February 18, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The written record of the CWBH evaluation containing MDRC's communications with the funders and their representatives administering the initiative is one of the most extensive in MDRC's experience.

## **A. Structure of the CWBH Initiative: Dimensions of Attention and Organizations Involved**

The CWBH initiative was initially envisioned as having three dimensions: a geographic dimension, a time dimension, and an activities dimension.

- The *geographic* dimension of the CWBH initiative was defined by community-level efforts that would focus on identifiable neighborhoods in the regions of Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego, which were selected by the funders based on the co-incidence in each of high unemployment and high rates of poor health and on a goal of working with CBO's whose primary constituents represented the racial and ethnic diversity of their regions.
- The initial vision of the funders' *time* commitment was eight to ten years, beginning with a three-year Phase I capacity development effort targeted to CBOs, involving a significant amount of work by technical assistance experts with the initiative sites to help them develop their local theories of change and the activities that would align with these theories. A five-to seven-year Phase II implementation period would follow, focused on generating new economic opportunities through community organizing and policy advocacy and providing specific job training and placement services for the targeted groups. Phase II would include measuring the effects of the activities of the CWBH sites on both employment and health outcomes.
- A spectrum of *activities* was envisioned for CWBH collaborative participants. Policy advocacy to effect change in the mainstream employment and training system, and in the structure of job markets, was central to the initial vision of CWBH, the main objective being to redirect the resources of those systems so that people with multiple disadvantages in the labor market would benefit more. It was in the policy change objectives of CWBH that its regional scope came into view: While providing employment and training services was expected by the funders to drive health improvements for individuals at the neighborhood level, they recognized that policy affecting employment and training opportunities and incentives, as well as opportunities for quality jobs, was decided regionally -- at the level of counties or multi-county areas -- with state-level policy implicated as well. Community organizing was seen as an essential activity to gather support for policy change activities.

The organizational structures created and/or funded to enact the original vision of the CWBH initiative were an important part of the story about how the CWBH unfolded. Two organizations, together called the Technical Assistance Intermediary (TAI), were funded to provide technical assistance to the CWBH sites in Phase I. These were the National Economic Development and Law Center (NEDLC) and the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI), which each assigned regional "coaches" to work with the CWBH sites. MDRC, the overall CWBH evaluator, had its own evaluation team and was also responsible for directing and overseeing the work of consultant evaluators in each of the four sites, who had the difficult job of being both objective reporters about the progress of the initiative and site advisors in a participatory research model. The foundation funders created a CWBH initiative management

structure located within The California Endowment, referred to as “CWBH Administration,” that was staffed by both foundations and expected to represent both foundations’ interests as well as to ensure the success of the CWBH initiative.<sup>7</sup> This complicated structure for CWBH – with its attendant challenges of communication, consistency, and accountability – has much to do with the achievements of the initiative.<sup>8</sup>

## **B. Changes Over Time: Evolution of the Initiative and the Research Design**

As the CWBH initiative unfolded, changes related to geography, duration of the initiative timeframe, and relative emphasis on policy change – some driven by the circumstances in the CWBH sites, some by independent funder decisions, and some by the funders reacting to conditions on the ground – significantly shifted the design and implementation of the initiative and, consequently, the design and implementation of the initiative’s evaluation research. Among key changes were:

- The initial neighborhood focus of the CWBH initiative was complicated in all four sites when CBOs serving multiple, non-contiguous neighborhoods or city-wide populations were selected to participate in the site collaboratives. This development made it unrealistic to expect measurable *neighborhood* effects of CWBH.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the evaluation design was revised to focus on outcomes for *individuals* served by site collaborative agencies.
- The timeframe for Phase II of the CWBH initiative was scaled down from seven to five years, and then to three years, based on funders’ assessments of what could be accomplished. This foreshortened timeframe made it less realistic to expect measurable changes in health outcomes of CWBH activities and re-focused the initiative sites on employment outcomes -- and thus refocused data collection for the evaluation on employment outcomes as well. In the end, the numbers of targeted individuals served in the sites were not large enough to enable an estimate of initiative effects. While MDRC responded with a plan to re-focus the evaluation on the *direction* of effects, the site-by-site analyses of outcomes ultimately compared CWBH job placement rates to those measured for programs with similar goals serving similarly disadvantaged populations.
- When the CWBH Phase II implementation period was shortened, sites turned their attention to job placements as the central objective; regional policy change work lost momentum and several of the organizations that had been included in site collaboratives

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<sup>7</sup> In addition, during Phase I, there were local “Neighborhood Indicator Intermediaries” in each site, engaged to help develop indicators of neighborhood conditions to aid in “theory of change” work and to provide a baseline for assessing CWBH progress, as well as various technical assistance specialists focused in strategic planning, communications, and information technologies.

<sup>8</sup> As one observer of CWBH implementation said, “The Foundations created a dual governance and administrative structure that the intermediaries reproduced.” See Bermudez (August 2003).

<sup>9</sup> See MDRC (July 23, 2003).

because of their policy advocacy strength and focus dropped out or were not funded for work in Phase II.

As of September 2004 – about nine months into Phase II – MDRC noted that implementation was going slowly and characterized the CWBH intervention, for purposes of proposing Phase II evaluation research, as consisting of three elements:<sup>10</sup>

1. Employment Service Provision. CWBH regions seek to improve the employment and health of targeted residents by enhancing the range, accessibility, and effectiveness of employment-related services offered in each region to help residents secure and retain employment and advance into better paying jobs with benefits. Arrangements for providing employment services vary by CWBH region, ranging from community-based employment resource centers (ERC's) operated by collaborative members that offer services through a combination of on-site direct provision and off-site referrals, or solely through referrals to activities offered by other workforce development agencies.
2. Policy Advocacy. The collaboratives of CWBH grantees will engage in policy advocacy efforts directed at getting local employers, workforce development institutions, social service providers, and/or local government bodies to agree to administrative policy changes, resource reallocations, and other measures that will improve residents' access to employment opportunities and services.
3. Residents in Community Organizing and Outreach Activities. Most of the CWBH collaboratives plan to involve residents in publicizing employment opportunities and services in their communities, and in working with the collaboratives on policy campaigns for better jobs and services for their communities. This will require the collaboratives to provide additional training and supervision to these residents to ensure they can assume these responsibilities.

The changes in CWBH parameters and emphases from 2000 to 2004 led to major measurement challenges for the CWBH initiative evaluation. Initially, MDRC proposed a research approach that would build consensus during Phase I in the initiative sites around the desired scale and nature of outcomes and implementation strategies that would be pursued to reach them – working with the Technical Assistance Intermediary organizations on a “theory of change” (TOC) strategy – as well as an effort to provide “on-the-ground, frequent, real-time, objective feedback to the local partners” about the progress of implementation in a “participatory” evaluation approach.<sup>11</sup> With local goals and methods clarified during Phase I, MDRC would then be able to design an evaluation for Phase II that would measure achievements site by site. However, it was MDRC's assessment toward the end of Phase I that an evolution in the thinking of the funders and their intermediary experts about how to focus site activities to achieve initiative impacts was not necessarily accepted by the sites. Calling this issue “concept elasticity,” MDRC said:

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<sup>10</sup> MDRC (September 8, 2004.)

<sup>11</sup> MDRC (February 18, 2000), pp. 4-6.

[W]hile recognizing that CWBH had always posited employment and distal health outcomes as its goal, the TOC process among foundation staff and intermediaries refined our collective understanding of exactly what nature of work outcomes would have the best chance of resulting in changes in health status at the individual and community levels. As a result, foundation and intermediary articulation of the nature of outcomes has become increasingly specific, if not always consistent, evolving from the general statement of “better work equals better health,” to measurable increases in employment, which will in turn lead to measurable improvements in health, to the current, more specific expectation that each collaborative would work to produce large employment gains for target populations of working-age adults in relatively small geographic places in each region.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, MDRC reported that differences among the state-level actors – i.e., the CWBH administration and the intermediaries, led to “considerably varied interpretations by the collaboratives and even differing interpretations by individual grantees within a collaborative.”<sup>13</sup>

The result was a conception that remained a moving target for the regions for much of Phase I, as one-or-another interpretation gained sway in a particular period, and with each collaborative initiating its planning activities under the adverse conditions of a seemingly elastic conception of the exact initiative purposes.<sup>14</sup>

For Phase II evaluation of the impacts of the initiative, the funders initially called for a longitudinal time series methodology. In its original evaluation proposal, MDRC suggested that this approach might not provide the strongest evidence of the initiative’s effects on its intended outcomes. Going into Phase II, the initiative’s evaluation was open to discussion in many respects and open to developments in the Phase II implementation stage. Ultimately, MDRC fielded a data collection and analysis effort built on local Management Information Systems (MIS’s) in each site that gathered data on employment outcomes of participants in site employment service activities, which was backed by an extensive record of the discussions, deliberations, and decisions in each site about their conditions, objectives, theories of change, and actual service delivery, and extended by a two-wave panel survey of participants focused on health and employment issues.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> MDRC (August 2003), pp. 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> MDRC (August 2003), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> MDRC (August 2003), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> In the two-wave survey design, the first wave of interviews was fielded between mid-April and mid-July 2006. The second wave, fielded between late September 2007 and early March 2008, occurred after the end of Phase II. At that time, The California Endowment was funding a third phase of CWBH without the participation of The Rockefeller Foundation.

As the CWBH evaluation emerged and evolved in response to changing conditions, the result, reported here, is an in-depth look at what the initiative aspired to and undertook in each site, including what was accomplished in terms of program and policy changes. The quantitative research was intended to illuminate whether “the collaboratives have gotten on an upward trajectory in terms of program participation, employment placements and wage progression among constituents, rather than attempting to make judgments as to whether the collaboratives were successful in realizing their employment targets...”<sup>16</sup> The evaluation does not provide quantitative evidence of whether and how much those changes in programs and policy affected individuals or communities.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, the quantitative assessment of CWBH progress was based on job placement rates, particularly in comparison to such measured outcomes for similar programs. Qualitative CWBH evaluation focused on the details of the activities undertaken in the four CWBH sites and the site challenges and accomplishments. This report includes case studies dedicated to these site stories.

### **C. The Magnitude of the Challenge**

The CWBH initiative was conceived as a new test of the “bottom up” approach to community improvement -- specifically focused on the connection between work and health -- that joined the resources and overall goal orientation of funders with the established capabilities and specific objectives of community-based organizations in the four cities chosen by The California Endowment and The Rockefeller Foundation. As such, CWBH joined a long line of philanthropic efforts to push community change and neighborhood improvement. “Place-based community change” is one label for what the CWBH foundation partners were trying to achieve, and although the CWBH initiative was initially more specific about its goals and pathways to change than some philanthropic predecessors with similar ambitions, this initiative confronted many of the same challenges as earlier foundation-sponsored community improvement efforts – including several that, like CWBH, committed multi-millions of dollars over many years.

The history of foundation-funded neighborhood improvement initiatives aimed at substantial poverty reduction, employment increases and/or health improvement can be dated at least to the 1960’s “Gray Areas” program of the Ford Foundation. Initiatives that also included a significant evaluation component to document strategies and measure outcomes are more recent, beginning with the Neighborhood and Family Initiative of the Ford Foundation launched in 1990,<sup>18</sup> followed closely by the New Futures Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation – predecessors to the undertakings that were called “comprehensive community initiatives” (CCIs). CCIs were characterized by a combination of foundation funding to achieve broad

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<sup>16</sup> MDRC (September 8, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> MDRC has also produced a paper describing best practices of the CWBH sites. See Linda Kato with Kay E. Sherwood (August 2008), “The California Works for Better Health Initiative: Creative Responses to Local Needs,” New York: MDRC.

<sup>18</sup> The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago was the evaluator of this initiative. For a description, see Chaskin (April 1992), Chaskin (2000), and Chaskin et al.. (1999).

community change goals and community planning processes to decide what specific changes were desired and how those changes would be achieved.<sup>19</sup>

The combination of foundation commitments to improving the quality of life in poor communities and community-driven processes for deciding how foundation resources should be allocated to achieve broad goals – often mediated by professionals in the work of urban planning, program planning, program evaluation, and political processes – has proven difficult, at best. Two extensively documented CCIs illustrate many of the difficulties. The Neighborhood Improvement Initiative (NII), an ambitious effort to help three neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation at over \$20 million between 1996 and 2006, is a recent example.<sup>20</sup> Much earlier, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s New Futures Initiative intended to reduce school dropping out, increase school performance, reduce teenage pregnancy, and increase the number of students who go on to jobs or college-level programs among poor children through a middle-school intervention that ran from 1987 through 1994 in five cities.<sup>21</sup>

The essential challenge in such community improvement initiatives is how to effectively combine the agendas of funders seeking to help poor communities and poor populations – funders that, at the same time, need to answer to their internal demands for using their resources effectively -- with the various agendas of people and existing organizations in poor communities, which usually include redistributing power and redistributing resources as well as helping disadvantaged residents, and usually encompass many and divergent theories of how change can happen. Foundation-funded community initiatives have struggled with how to structure new injections of money in ways that best serve the target communities and how to identify and support the community forces and leaders that best represent the interests of the community. Needless to say, this is not an easy puzzle to solve in any community.

A planning innovation of the 1990’s, based on “theories of change” (TOC), has been employed in CCIs to help sort out the potentially diverse agendas of funders and community-level actors to get everyone on the same page about goals and objectives, strategies and tactics, and thus to lay the groundwork for evaluation that can effectively gauge whether CCI’s achieve what they intended. (One of the earliest and most prominent advocates for the TOC approach to planning for change, James Connell, of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education, was engaged by MDRC to help set up this work in CWBH’s Phase I.)

The basic TOC idea is that all of the relevant community actors will come together to articulate, reality-check based on relevant data, and eventually agree on their assumptions about how change in their community can happen, and then to define the concrete steps that various organizations and individuals need to take toward the goal, based on the theory. The mantra of TOC work is that the theory must be “plausible, doable, and testable” and facilitators

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<sup>19</sup> The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change has established the vocabulary and led the conversation about these initiatives since 1992. See [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).

<sup>20</sup> The source of lessons about this initiative is Brown and Fiester (March 2007).

<sup>21</sup> See Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995) and Annie E. Casey Foundation (1998).

(prominently, Connell) are often employed to help CCI participants explore the implications of their ideas according to these criteria. Evaluators use theories of change to help them design research that is in accord with community views of what change is desired and how it is expected to occur.<sup>22</sup> Such TOC work was central to the activities of the four CWBH sites during Phase I, although as one CWBH observer noted, at the start of the initiative, the TOC ideas were familiar to the foundation actors and the evaluators, but not to the community participants.<sup>23</sup>

The experiences of other community initiatives suggest that even the most diligent TOC work to produce coherent plans for community change is often not enough. Politics at the level of elected officials and at the level of community leaders and community voices can stymie planning because the prospect of new injections of financing stimulates competition for scarce resources. In some cases, new money in poor communities generates competition that is based on historical divisions or ethnic and racial differences. It is not unusual to see such competitive behaviors settled by an agreement to “share the wealth” that does not necessarily serve the programmatic or evaluation objectives of a community change initiative.

In many cases, the process of coming to agreement about the objectives, activities, and resource allocation in community change initiatives takes so much time, energy and resources that the possibilities for seeing actual, measurable change within the original timeframe of the initiative are seriously reduced. And, if measurable outcomes are key to continuing funder support, an extended early phase of TOC work, organizing, and educating participants in a “bottom up” process can spell an early end to an initiative. Simply stated, time runs out. And, as time runs short from a funder’s perspective, what was intended to be a bottom-up process can become more top down, generating resentment and confusion.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of the four CWBH sites, there were clearly some issues of competition for resources and struggles for dominance present in Phase I of the initiative, along with philosophical differences among collaborative members about how best to improve the quality of life and health of their constituents. There were also differences among the technical assistance intermediaries and MDRC about their roles and responsibilities and about their interpretations of what the sites were or should have been expected to plan for and accomplish. And there was some resistance from the sites to an increasing top-down specification about how to proceed as Phase II implementation approached, as well as a perception of inconsistent attention from the CWBH administration.<sup>25</sup> While there is no simple way to characterize the CWBH planning and implementation struggles, one conclusion is that the CWBH intervention experienced many of

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<sup>22</sup> The foundations of theory-based evaluation of community change initiatives can be found in two volumes published by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Change Initiatives for Children and Families. See Connell et al. (1995) and Fulbright-Anderson et al. (1998).

<sup>23</sup> Diana Bermudez in telephone conversation with Kay E. Sherwood, September 25, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Similar experiences have been reported for foundation-initiated “systems change” initiatives. See Walker, Gary, Anne Kubisch et al. (December 2008).

<sup>25</sup> See Bermudez (August 2003).

the same difficulties as its predecessors and did not successfully work through them quickly enough to insure funder confidence that the initiative would succeed.

Shiree Teng, who was engaged as a consultant to CWBH, first providing technical assistance to the sites on TOC development through the National Community Development Institute and then as overall manager of the initiative's technical assistance efforts in Phase I, describes the disappointments of CWBH as a "perfect storm" of troubles with many sources. Contributing first, according to Teng, are the inherent tensions involved in a funder-initiated top-down model of place-based change dependent on bottom-up planning and cooperation. Success in carrying out such an initiative requires funders to be able to solicit and listen very carefully to what people in community-based organizations have to say about what is needed and how it can be supported. In the dynamic of funder-grantee (or -potential grantee) relationships, candid communication is difficult to achieve but essential to the success of place-based community change initiatives, according to Teng. Community partners will say "yes" to funders in order to gain needed resources for their organizations, even when they believe the funders' ideas or methods are off-base, and then they will do what they believe is needed for their constituents or communities, regardless of funder priorities and theories of change. To make these initiatives work, the momentum for change has to come from the bottom up, even if the resources come from the top down, Teng believes.<sup>26</sup>

Also contributing to the troubles of CWBH, according to Teng, was the complicated design – involving an extended process to identify CBO's in each site that could be brought together to implement the funders' test of ideas about a work-health connection – rather than, for example, a process to identify CBO's doing good work in employment that could be extended to aim higher for better jobs and benefits. Finally, leadership and execution were critical issues in CWBH implementation, according to Teng. Among the multiple actors who might have been problem solvers, none seemed to be able to "get above the fray."

Many of the lessons from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative published in 1995 are still relevant for place-based community change endeavors. As captured in the chapter headings of *The Path of Most Resistance: Lessons Learned from New Futures*, these are:

- Comprehensive reforms are very difficult
- It takes time
- It's not for every community
- Building local ownership is no simple matter
- Refine and modify plans
- Communicate
- Real change often depends on increases in economic opportunity and social capital

Even though the creators of the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative looked closely at the experiences of several previous foundation-funded predecessors

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<sup>26</sup> Teng was also a consultant to the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative and agrees with the observations of Brown and Fiester in their March 2007 report.

and structured its NII approach based on their interpretation of those experiences, there were nevertheless “hard lessons” learned from the Hewlett effort to stimulate change in three communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. As Paul Brest, President of the Foundation, put it:

For us,[NII] reinforced the critical importance of clarity about goals, strategies, and indicators of progress as well as the need for all the participants in a joint venture to agree on these matters at the outset. This does not foreclose significant course corrections along the way – but that term implies that there is a course to correct, and this was not always evident in the NII.

At any given time, the NII had a mix of substantive and capacity-building goals for improving residents’ lives and building indigenous capacity to continue doing so after the initiative ended. But the specific projects were constantly changing, and the strategies never quite kept up with them, nor did efforts to assess their progress. Indeed, it was not until some time into the venture that the NII articulated and pursued clear, tangible objectives for improving the communities and began to assess progress toward them.

Efforts to strengthen disadvantaged communities require perseverance, patience, and sustained focus on a limited number of strategies. The role of evaluation is seldom to determine whether one has ultimately succeeded, but rather to give the participants the feedback necessary to know whether they are on the path to success so they can make adjustments if they are not.

Like most of the other participants, we came to understand these principles better during the course of the NII...<sup>27</sup>

#### **D. Outcomes of Phase II Evaluation**

The CWBH initiative as implemented between 2000 and 2006 was not a true test of its starting hypotheses, given the major changes in scope and focus over its first four years and the major difficulties experienced by the sites and the initiative partners in carrying out essential elements of the initial vision. As a result, most of the changes that the initiative was aiming to effect were visible only in limited areas and, overall, compared to the initial vision, outcomes were disappointing. Among the key outcome findings were:

- Job placement rates by CWBH collaborative agencies ranged from 17.5 to 39.3 percent, rates that were mostly below average for similar populations served by non-CWBH employment and training providers, although CWBH agencies did succeed in reaching multiply-disadvantaged workers and sometimes filled niches in local workforce investment programs that were important to these groups. (The CWBH rates and comparable job placement records are discussed in more detail below.)
- Wages for CWBH individuals placed in jobs were above minimum wage, but below local “living wage” targets, and the evaluation was not able to collect universal data on job

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<sup>27</sup> From the cover letter for Brown and Feister (March 2007).

benefits. Occupational data that was collected suggests that CWBH individuals placed in jobs were “moving up,” but definitive evidence is not available.

- No health outcomes were included in measured outcomes for CWBH. However, the first wave of a panel survey of 215 CWBH participants added to program information about the health-related circumstances of the target group, indicating that while 79 percent of respondents reported their health as good, very good or excellent, 53 percent had no health insurance, and the proportion of respondents reporting various physical limitations and mental health issues – in a sample with an average age of 33 -- was over 25 percent.<sup>28</sup> In terms of program efforts, there were a few documented instances in which CWBH stimulated local service providers to change the way they did business after being exposed to the CWBH ideas about the work-health connection.
- The four CWBH sites had varying levels of success in working together. Two sites – Fresno and Sacramento – developed relatively effective regional collaboratives. In the two other sites, the structural barriers to collaboration, some introduced by CWBH, and the divergent capacities and agendas of the participating agencies, hindered the development of true region-wide efforts.
- Policy and system changes attributable to CWBH activity were very limited. There are a few stories of strengths in this area among the site case studies below, but also evident is the lesson that limited-duration interventions should not expect local agencies to go up against their “bread and butter” funders by undertaking policy/system change advocacy against those entities.

Table 1.1 summarizes CWBH outcomes across the four sites.

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<sup>28</sup> MDRC (November 1, 2006). The disability figure may include double-counting of individuals as more than one limitation could have been reported by the same individual.

**California Works for Better Health**

**Table 1.1**

**Selected Job Placement Features of CWBH Participants, by Region**

Characteristics	Fresno <sup>a</sup>		Sacramento		San Diego		Los Angeles <sup>b</sup>		Total	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Placement rate	25.3	404	39.3	307	22.9	151	17.5	53	28	915
Number of jobs <sup>c</sup>		469		356		200		62		1087
Medical insurance	22.2	104	33.7	120	29.5	59	62.9	39	29.6	322
Occupational category:										
Leisure/hospitality	15.1	71	5.9	21	23.5	47	3.2	2	13	141
Retail sales	6.6	31	19.9	71	19	38	4.8	3	13.2	143
Other services	22.2	104	20.5	73	10.5	21	16.1	10	19.1	208
Manufacturing	30.9	145	19.9	71	13	26	8.1	5	22.7	247
Office	4.3	20	9.6	34	11.5	23	41.9	26	9.5	103
Transportation	1.3	6	2.8	10	8	16	1.6	1	3	33
Construction	8.1	38	2.8	10	9.5	19	12.9	8	6.9	75
<b>Total sample size</b>	<b>1583</b>		<b>775</b>		<b>609</b>		<b>299</b>		<b>3267</b>	

SOURCE: CWBH MIS Data

NOTES: <sup>a</sup> Totals include 380 home buyer workshop participants.

<sup>b</sup> CWBH funded only.

<sup>c</sup> Some clients obtained more than one job.

## CWBH Outcomes in Context

The job placement outcomes for CWBH participants can be compared to similar results for disadvantaged participants in other programs designed to help them find jobs. Studies of welfare-to-work programs and preliminary data from other studies underscore the fact that certain barriers, many of which were common to CWBH participants, seriously impede employment and job retention. For instance, in a study that tracked CalWORKS<sup>29</sup> leavers in Los Angeles County, of those who did not secure employment in the first year after exiting CalWORKS, 80 percent had no prior work experience, 54 percent had less than a high school education, 30 percent had child care issues, and 68 percent had two or more barriers. Of those who managed to secure employment some time during the first year after exiting CalWORKS, less than a third of them (31 percent) were people with multiple barriers, and only 14 percent were people with physical or mental conditions that limited ability to work.<sup>30</sup>

Employment rates reported for the most disadvantaged subgroups that participated in various welfare-to-work experiments in the past decade, primarily women, add to this picture:

- An experimental study of Los Angeles County's Jobs-First GAIN evaluation found that among the most disadvantaged participants, the percentage of those who were ever employed some time during the year following random assignment was 39 percent for the treatment group versus 24 percent for the control group.<sup>31</sup>
- An experimental study of the JOBS program in Portland, Oregon, found that the percentage of those who had worked at any time one to two years after random assignment among the most disadvantaged participants, was 53 percent for the treatment group versus 39 percent for the control group.<sup>32</sup>
- An experimental study of Connecticut's Jobs First welfare-to-work program found that the percentage of those who had worked at any time one to two years after random assignment, among the most disadvantaged participants, was 34 percent of the treatment group versus 19 percent of the control group.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> CalWORKS is the name of California's welfare-to-work program, operated under the federal program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

<sup>30</sup> Verma and Hendra (2003).

<sup>31</sup> Freedman et al. (1999). The most disadvantaged were long-term welfare recipients without a high school diploma or GED, who had no paid employment during the year prior to random assignment.

<sup>32</sup> Scrivener et al. (1998): Table 5.5. The most disadvantaged had no high school diploma or GED and no employment in the year prior to random assignment, and were welfare recipients for more than two years prior to random assignment.

<sup>33</sup> Bloom et al. (2002), p. 118. The most disadvantaged were long-term welfare recipients who had not worked in the year prior to random assignment and did not have a high school diploma or GED.

**Employment programs for persons with barriers:** Experimental studies of employment programs that specifically target adults with serious barriers -- including those who were not welfare recipients recently -- are also underway and have as yet only reported preliminary findings:

- **Health barriers:** Preliminary data from an experimental study of the New York City PRIDE program (serving welfare recipients with work-limiting health conditions) indicates how challenging securing employment can be for this population, with 23 percent of PRIDE participants employed during the first year after random assignment versus 19 percent for the control group.<sup>34</sup>
- **Supported work programs:** These typically provide persons with barriers pre-employment counseling, followed by placement into paid employment, during which participants are closely supervised by program staff and receive a range of financial and other work supports. One review of a number of these programs – which were not evaluated with experimental designs – show placement rates from 50 percent to 75 percent. However, these intensive programs tend to be costly and difficult to expand, limiting the numbers who can be enrolled at a given period of time.<sup>35</sup>
- **Ex-offender programs:** The employment and earnings outcomes reported by the limited number of studies of such programs over the past three decades have not been encouraging, and offer mixed evidence about whether employment helps to prevent recidivism. Since then, employment opportunities for ex-offenders with serious offenses have also worsened.<sup>36</sup> Several major experimental studies of employment-focused programs for ex-offenders are currently underway and have yet to generate outcomes. Control group data from the evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities<sup>37</sup> program indicates that 56 percent worked in a job covered by Unemployment Insurance at some point during the first year following random assignment, but quarterly employment rates typically only ranged between 25 and 35 percent. An experimental design evaluation of the Health Link Program for former inmates of Rikers Island Jail in New York City found that the intervention had no impact on employment rates, criminal activity, and behaviors that spread HIV infection.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that the welfare-to-work programs cited above mandate employment as a condition for financial support. Additionally, the welfare-to-work and other programs discussed above typically offered participants a range of work support services, including child care and transportation assistance. Some also provided financial assistance while participants took ABE, GED, and ESL courses. Few, if any of these supports were available to CWBH participants. In

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<sup>34</sup> Bloom (2006).

<sup>35</sup> Pavetti and Strong (2001), pp. 28-29.

<sup>36</sup> Bloom (2006), p.10.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ceoworks.org/>

<sup>38</sup> See Burghardt, John and Karen Needels (2004).

addition, most of the CWBH collaboratives spent some part of the Phase II period getting their employment services on-line, which limited the time available to enroll and follow up with participants.

## Lessons of the CWBH Initiative

The creators of California Works for Better Health had done their homework when they recommended that their foundations go forward with this venture. They were not innocent of the history of similar foundation-funded community-change ventures and they had studied the research on the connection between low income and poor health. So, one of the first lessons from the CWBH experience might be that, no matter how much you have studied the past, this is still difficult work for which there are no simple solutions. At its core, merging top-down and bottom-up visions of community change, even when a theory of change process is successfully implemented – which it was not in CWBH<sup>39</sup> – requires extraordinary attention, persistence, patience, good will, and some measure of political skill. Open questions are whether the gap between the “top” and the “bottom” that are brought together in such community change initiatives is so great as to be inadequately bridged in funder-designed initiatives, and whether there are other models that are more likely to achieve the hoped-for results.<sup>40</sup>

Another open question, informed by accumulating evidence about the health-work connection since the CWBH funders began their investigations, is whether low income and lack of health care access or insurance link to poor health as directly as the CWBH model assumed, based on earlier research -- and if they do, whether improvements in these markers of poor health can reverse the underlying processes to produce the health outcome improvements that the CWBH model expected to result from improvements in wages and benefits for low-income workers. Some more recent research suggests that the multiple stresses of living on limited resources, often in dangerous and service-starved communities (including communities lacking adequate health services and healthy food supplies), combined with nutritional and health habits of poor populations, are the principal determinants of health in poor communities, which may not be much affected by modest changes in income or access to health care.<sup>41</sup> Even though CWBH did not succeed in measuring the health-employment link, it is possible that the starting assumptions about it were too simple. It is becoming increasingly clear that the diseases of the poor may have deeper, more complex, and or more long-lasting causes than CWBH planned to test.

Further, the timeframe for outcomes in cross-disciplinary initiatives such as CWBH may also present problems, as observed by staff of the California Wellness Foundation, which undertook a Work and Health grantmaking program in 1995:

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<sup>39</sup> For details, see Bermudez (August 2003).

<sup>40</sup> An alternative model is the bottom-up community change effort, in which local leaders determine the goals and methods and go in search of funder support for their ideas and activities. An example is detailed in Tough (2008).

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Braveman and Egerter (2008) and Adler and Stewart et al. (2007).

For health funders, perhaps the biggest challenge is that many interventions related to employment can be expected to demonstrate health effects only many years after the intervention. Youth training programs, for example, may open up jobs, high-quality employment and careers to youth, but the health effects of this upward mobility may only be visible many years into a service recipient's career. It is challenging to convince boards of health foundations that placement into jobs with upward mobility is an intervention that competes with the power of direct health services, such as providing immunizations.<sup>42</sup>

A second lesson is about design. The voluminous documentary record of CWBH points to complicated structures, complicated processes, and a host of issues that made it difficult for all of the CWBH actors to get on the same page about what needed to be done and how. Much of Phase I was marked by different agendas, disagreement, and confusion, some of which can be attributed to the involvement of many different actors, who brought many different perspectives to the task of launching the CWBH. The difficulty of merging the top down and bottom up views of community change in the CWBH initiative was magnified by the involvement of a host of technical assistance providers and evaluation actors who each brought their own experiences and organizational agendas to the initiative.

Open questions about the design of such initiatives include whether there is a more refined staging practice that might aid in getting all the players on the same page; whether technical assistance providers should be vetted for their views on community development at the beginning to assure that their advice to sites will accord with the initiative goals; and whether the "participatory evaluation" role needs to be defined to more clearly distinguish between the evaluative and advocacy view of reporting.

A third lesson is about execution. The complexity of the CWBH design, including multiple actors and complicated processes, was magnified by problems in coordination and communication, and changes in the top-down direction over time. While it is certainly the case that the funder representatives had to learn much on-the-job -- the experience of preceding CCI's suggests that adaptation to local conditions was an essential part of the work -- the CWBH initiative was characterized by a top-down direction that was judged by the sites as inconsistent, intermittent, and confusing in Phase I.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, existing evaluation models and thinking are not well adapted to "emergent" systems, especially complex systems in flux, which was the case of CWBH. While the fluidity and complexity of the CWBH initiative were recognized early, MDRC had difficulty in creating an evaluation plan that matched the continuously changing circumstances. By February 2006, virtually none of the original evaluation plans fit the realities of what was happening the CWBH sites and MDRC proposed to follow the multiple stories in the sites, where collaborative efforts had mostly been replaced by individual agency contracts for CWBH activities, some of which

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<sup>42</sup> Brousseau and Pena (2002).

<sup>43</sup> See Bernudez (August 2003).

pre-existed the CWBH initiative.<sup>44</sup> The result was a set of case studies of site activities, inputs, and outcomes (included in the following site case studies), but very limited measurement or data analysis that was useful to decisionmaking at the site or initiative level, in part because of the foreshortened timeframe for Phase II and, in part, a result of the lack of a true cross-site model of action.

## **Case Studies of CWBH Site Accomplishments**

The following four chapters constitute a set of case studies describing, in depth, the activities and accomplishments of the CWBH sites. These case studies are primarily the work of consultant researchers hired in each site to fulfill the dual role of documenting the implementation of the initiative and providing useful feedback to sites as they developed their collaborative theories of change and activities to meet their change objectives.<sup>45</sup>

Echoing the dual top-down and bottom-up nature of CWBH, these four case studies represent the bottom-up view of the initiative that, in some important ways, contrasts with the top-down view described in the previous pages. Not only do these case studies look closely at the mechanics of local collaboration and the local obstacles and opportunities to improving employment and health resources for the most disadvantaged workers, they recount plans, activities, and accomplishments that do not all fit neatly into the top-down theory of change for CWBH. Some of these divergences are unexpected benefits set in motion by the initiative<sup>46</sup> and some simply illustrate sites setting different priorities and taking different tracks than were initially envisioned by the funders. Most prominently, the site stories emphasize benefits and accomplishments that do not necessarily fit the overall CWBH theory of change about how improvements in employment can lead to improvements in health, either for individuals or communities.

While differences across the sites are prominent, each local CWBH collaborative was operating in the context of the publicly-funded Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system that provides employment services to the unemployed and each joined the CWBH initiative with one or more defined “Target Neighborhoods.” Descriptions of what these meant in each site are contained in the case study chapters.<sup>47</sup> Each local CWBH collaborative became known by its variant of the initiative’s title, so the following chapters begin with Fresno Works for Better Health and ends with San Diego Works for Better Health.

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<sup>44</sup> MDRC (February 2, 2006).

<sup>45</sup> The work of the site researchers was supervised and aided by MDRC’s research team, and initial drafts were edited for consistency and clarity by another MDRC consultant, Susan Blank.

<sup>46</sup> Pastor et al. (October 19, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> For a description of the WIA system as it operates in California, see Kato and Sherwood (October 2008).

## Chapter 2. Fresno Works for Better Health

In the City and County of Fresno, CWBH faced significant challenges. They included double-digit unemployment rates, a seriously disadvantaged target population, and a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system that had lost funding and that was most strongly oriented to serving well prepared or relatively well prepared jobseekers. The collaborative that was charged with implementing Fresno Works for Better Health (FWBH) in the midst of this demanding environment consisted of three fairly new community-based organizations (CBOs). Only one, Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA), serving the West Fresno area, had any employment-service experience. The second agency, Fresno West Coalition for Economic Development (FWCED), concentrated on immigrants and refugees, particularly Southeast Asians. At the time CWBH was being launched, FWCED had only recently made the transition from being a group of volunteers to securing its tax-exempt nonprofit status and hiring its first employees. The third group, One by One Leadership (OBO) was a medium-sized faith-based community development corporation that served one particular neighborhood. More generally, none of these three CBOs had ever worked together before becoming part of CWBH.

### **A. FWBH Targeted Neighborhoods and Their Regional Context**

FWBH Targeted Neighborhoods,<sup>48</sup> an amalgamation of communities served by the three partner agencies, were clustered in a number of densely populated census tracts in Southeast Fresno.<sup>49</sup> (See map below.) This area was ultimately determined to be much too large for FWBH to produce neighborhood-level employment and health outcomes during the CWBH Phase II time period.

Fresno County, where the Targeted Neighborhoods are located, has suffered from historically high levels of poverty. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that about one-fifth of the county's residents lived in poverty. These rates have not changed much in subsequent years, and as shown in Table 2.1, have remained substantially higher than the statewide average. A 2005 Brookings Institution publication observed that Fresno's prevalence of concentrated poverty is the nation's highest.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Information used for this analysis of the Targeted Neighborhoods includes data from a community survey developed by FWBH. In combination with an analysis of census data, results from the survey formed the basis of a 2003 report produced by Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems (ISIS) Center for FWBH. ISIS was one of the Neighborhood Indicator Intermediaries funded by CWBH .

<sup>49</sup> The Targeted Neighborhoods included the following Fresno census tracts: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13.01, 13.02, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.01, 25.02, 26.01, 26.02, 27.01, 27.02, 28, 29.01, and 29.02. Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems (ISIS) Center, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Berube and Katz (2005).

## Fresno Works for Better Health

**Table 2.1**

### **Poverty and Median Household Income in California and Fresno County, 2004**

	Number of persons in poverty	Percent in poverty	Median household income (dollars)
California	4,681,645	13.2	49,894
Fresno County	170,457	19.8	36,930

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (<http://www.census.gov>)

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, about a third of Fresno County's population age 25 or older had not graduated from high school.<sup>51</sup> (See Table 2.2) Moreover, as a result of the region's recruitment of prisons as a source of employment and income, 19 federal or state correctional facilities now lie within a 150-mile radius of Fresno, and the city has become a convenient re-entry point for many ex-offenders, who come to the local labor market burdened with criminal records. For example, an estimated 2,795 nonviolent offenders were expected to return to Fresno City upon release from prison in 2005.<sup>52</sup>

Although the City of Fresno's population nearly doubled between 1980 and 2000 (when Fresno went from being the 65<sup>th</sup> to the 37<sup>th</sup> largest city in the U.S),<sup>53</sup> the suburban sprawl that accompanied this growth saw more affluent residents moving northward, leaving older neighborhoods, particularly in southwest Fresno, in decline. Residents refer to the contrast in the demographic and physical characteristics of North and South Fresno as the "tale of two cities." For this and other reasons, the Targeted Neighborhoods were among the hardest-pressed in the county.

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<sup>51</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Fresno County Quick Facts.

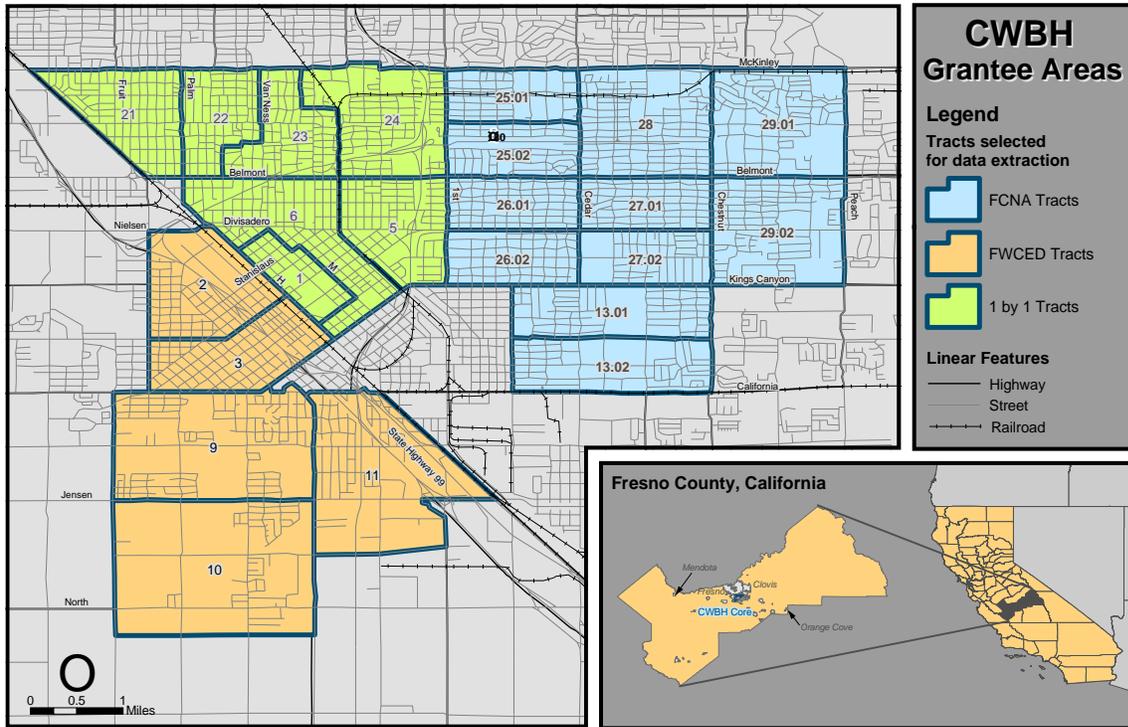
<sup>52</sup> Schultz (2005).

<sup>53</sup> According to the 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census, the Fresno City population increased by nearly 96 percent from 218,202 in 1980 to 427,652 in 2000.

# Fresno Works for Better Health

## Figure 2.1

### Fresno Works for Better Health Target Area, by Collaborative Agency Coverage



SOURCE: Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems (ISIS) Center, 2003, p 3.

**Fresno Works for Better Health**

**Table 2.2**

**Characteristics of the Fresno Works for Better Health (FWBH)  
Target Area Population**

Characteristics	FWBH Target Area	Fresno, CA Urbanized Area
Race/Ethnicity (%)		
White	13.9	43.0
Black or African American	10.6	6.7
Asian	15.0	9.9
Hispanic or Latino	57.1	36.6
Other	3.4	3.8
Household living below the poverty level (%)	36.6	18.1
Median household income (\$)	21,004	34,896
Educational attainment (%)		
No high school diploma or GED	55.6	27.8
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	19.4	20.7
Some college	15.0	24.0
Associate degree	4.3	7.0
Bachelors degree or higher	5.7	20.5

SOURCE: Census 2000 Summary File 1 and 3.

**A possibly misleading statistic on unemployment:** Between 2001 and 2005, Fresno County’s civilian workforce increased by 5.2 percent, or 20,100 workers. During this same period, unemployment rates reportedly declined -- in 2005, to a single-digit level, down from continuous double-digit levels in past years. (See Table 2.3.)

**Fresno Works for Better Health**

**Table 2.3**

**Civilian Unemployment Rate, Fresno County and California (Percent)**

Year	Fresno County	California
2003	11.8	6.8
2004	10.5	6.2
2005	9.0	5.4

SOURCE: *Fresno County Snapshot*, California Employment Development Department

However, several Fresno workforce development officials interviewed for this report attributed what looks like a decline to 9 percent in 2005 to changes that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) made in its methods for calculating and tracking unemployment rates. According to

officials, the new methods exclude or undercount categories of work-eligible unemployed people, who are heavily represented in Fresno County. As one official observed:

The last [Bureau of Labor Statistics] survey said we were at 7.9 [percent].<sup>54</sup> But you have to remember...it does not count farm workers, and it does not count temporary employees. And if you're dislocated from agriculture, or you're dislocated from mining, dislocated from forestry, dislocated from government services, they don't count you. Well, the largest IRS Service Center on the West Coast is in Fresno. They hire seasonal...So those folks aren't counted. Two of the largest national parks in the nation are here. We have Kings Canyon and Sequoia, plus Yosemite is right here. So when those folks get off of firefighting from October, they're not going to count them as unemployed. So by the time they get done skewing the numbers, we have a 7.9 unemployment rate. Yet we're still seeing [at local One-Stop WIA job centers] about a thousand people a month.

Furthermore, however much the decline in unemployment rates represents genuinely positive change, and not changes in calculations, the rates in Fresno County remain at levels substantially higher than the statewide average.<sup>55</sup>

As shown in Table 2.4, Fresno County, like the entire state of California, has a high proportion of immigrant residents and residents whose primary language is not English. The county has the largest Hmong community in California.<sup>56</sup>

### Fresno Works for Better Health

**Table 2.4**

**Foreign-born and Non-English Primary Language Speakers (Percent) – 2000**

	Fresno City	Fresno County	California
Foreign-born persons	20.3	21.1	26.2
Language other than English spoken at home, 5 yrs + older	39.5	40.8	39.5

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Fresno County Quick Facts

A Neighborhood Indicators Report<sup>57</sup> that was commissioned by the collaborative in 2003 underscored the disadvantage of Targeted Neighborhood residents, who had higher-than-city and higher-than-county levels of: low educational attainment, poor health status, poverty,

<sup>54</sup> This official was interviewed in 2006 and thus cites an unemployment rate that had changed from the 9 percent rate reported in Table 2.3.

<sup>55</sup> California Employment Development Department, *Fresno County Snapshot, 2004*.

<sup>56</sup> <http://hmongstudies.com/2000HmongCensusPublication.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems Center (ISIS) (2003), FWBH Neighborhood Indicators Report.

unemployment, and public assistance receipt. In 1999, at the start of the CWBH initiative, Fresno County's median family income was almost double that of the Targeted Neighborhoods, with West Fresno having some of the lowest income tracts in the county. In several of the Targeted Neighborhoods census tracts, poverty rates were above 50 percent. Compared to the 20 percent of households receiving public assistance citywide, 40 percent of the households in the Targeted Neighborhoods were in this situation. The FWBH constituent survey, which surveyed over 1,000 adults in the target area, found that the unemployment rate was more than 56 percent and as high as 61.5 percent among the Southeast Asian population.<sup>58</sup>

For any WIA service delivery area, assisting jobseekers with significant barriers to employment tends to be considerably more expensive than working with better prepared customers.<sup>59</sup> And like its counterparts around the country, the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the agency that manages the WIA One-Stop system,<sup>60</sup> has had to contend with diminishing federal and state WIA funding allocations. Moreover, the sudden drop, in 2005, of the official unemployment rate as a result of the BLS changes prompted a drastic cut in Fresno's WIA allocation. And with Fresno County's higher-than-state average unemployment rates, the county's One-Stops, which served 19,802 customers in the program year 2004-05,<sup>61</sup> found that their resources had to accommodate heavy service use.

Besides expense, another reason that WIBs like the one in Fresno may not choose to focus on hard-to-employ jobseekers is the need to meet demanding federal and state job placement rates that affect WIA funding. Similarly, another crosscutting pressure on serving people with significant barriers to employment is that one goal of the WIA system is to supply businesses with qualified workers. In keeping with this outlook, the Fresno County One-Stops offer an array of tools for matching employers with qualified jobseekers, for alerting jobseekers to demand occupations, and for providing viable training candidates with high-quality assessments. Graduates of WIA intensive services and training with acceptable-to-superior numerical rankings are placed in "the talent bank," a database that matches them with job openings. According to one official:

[I]f we put a customer in there [the talent bank], that means we're telling an employer that this person is ready to start work tomorrow. And he's certified now. We've given them a stamp of approval that this person is...good for a job.

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<sup>58</sup> Interdisciplinary Spatial Information Systems (ISIS) Center (2003), p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> The WIA system typically refers to its clients as "customers," and this report sometimes uses that term for users of the WIA system.

<sup>60</sup> One-Stop Centers are the principal organizational structure of the federally funded employment services system. Created by the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, these service centers were designed to bring together in one location multiple programs for a wide variety of unemployed and underemployed people and to organize access to services according to the degree of need for services, while allowing for state and local priority-setting within a framework of federal program goals.

<sup>61</sup> Fresno Workforce Investment Board. 2004 - 2005 Annual Report. Available at <http://www.workforce-connection.com/index.cfm>

The general consensus among WIB members and workforce development personnel is that the county's WIA workforce development system lacks the financial resources and staffing to properly assist harder-to-employ customers. Workforce development interviewees insisted that the WIA funding stream is designed to handle only certain aspects of workforce development, with a focus on the job-ready, or the motivated near-job-ready. That does not mean that these officials necessarily thought the needs of the hard-to-employ should or would be ignored. As one official put it:

WIA is one small piece of a very large employment and training process. There are 19 other federal programs that receive employment and training funds from the federal government.

Typically, then, the customer flow at the One-Stops, even for so-called core services – the system's initial, most basic assistance -- is designed to refer hard-to-employ customers elsewhere for help in such areas as housing assistance, GED preparation, and domestic abuse and substance abuse counseling. The thinking is that these customers can return to the One-Stop for employment assistance once other problems have been addressed.

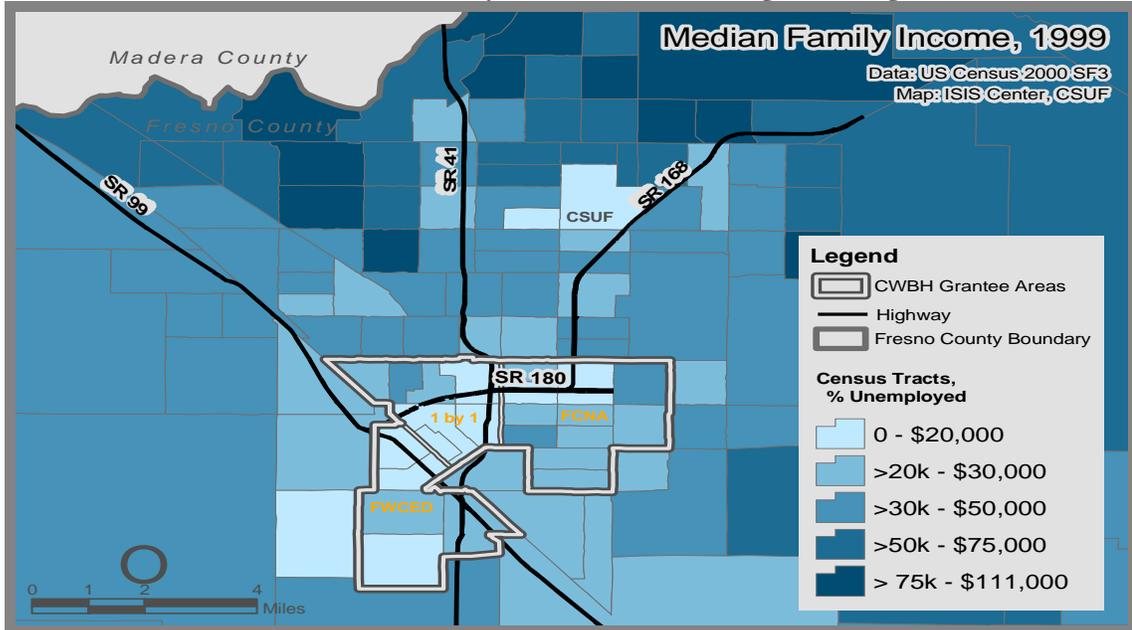
In sum, the contextual factors affecting how collaborative members of FWBH devised a theory of change and set of activities to make change happen included:

- A population with serious employment barriers;
- Growing physical separation of more affluent residents from those with fewer resources;
- Changes in official calculations of the actual level of unemployment in the county, resulting in reduced federal funding for employment services and misperceptions of actual needs;
- A heavy concentration of immigrants;
- Targeted Neighborhoods with very high rates of disadvantaged workers, including some neighborhoods with poverty rates above 50 percent; and
- Competing demands on the resources provided under the Workforce Investment Act.

Fresno Works for Better Health

Figure 2.2

Income Levels in Fresno County and in FWBH Targeted Neighborhoods

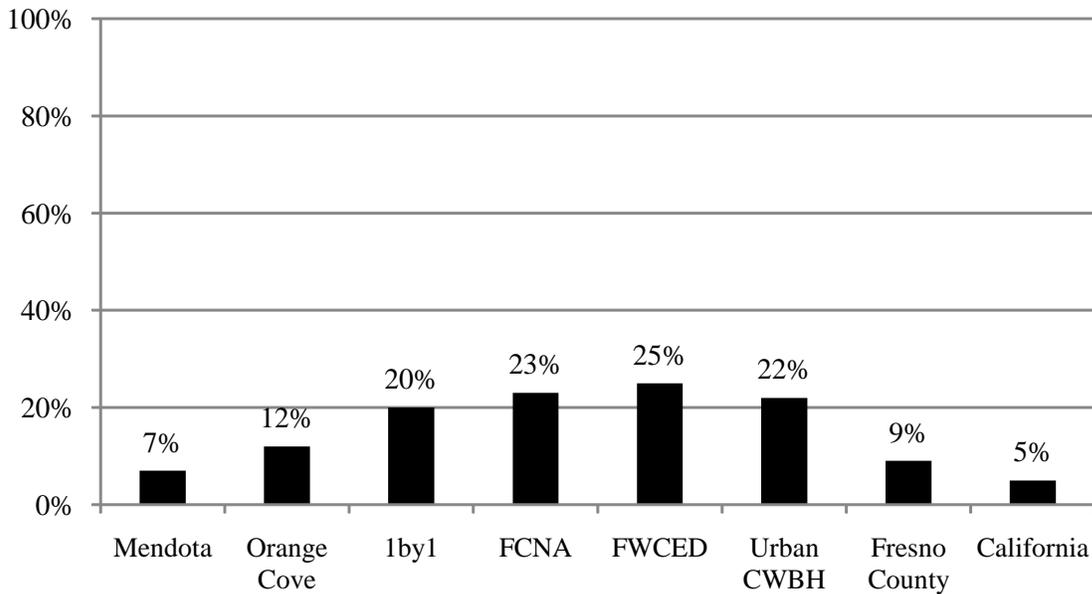


SOURCE: ISIS, 2003. FWBH Neighborhood Indicators Report.

Fresno Works for Better Health

Figure 2.3

Percent of Households with Public Assistance



SOURCE: ISIS, 2003. FWBH Neighborhood Indicators Report.

## **B. The FWBH Collaborative**

Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA) was founded initially to help the county's large numbers of Hmong and Lao refugees to "become self-sufficient, self-fulfilled, and productive members of the community, while fostering cultural preservation and promoting cross-cultural understanding."<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, FCNA's work has expanded to include refugees and immigrants in general, as well as their U.S.-born or U.S.-raised children. However, FCNA, which is recognized for its culturally competent services, continues to work closely with the Southeast Asian community. Unlike the other FWBH partners, FCNA came to FWBH with considerable experience in providing employment assistance and social services, primarily through contracting with the local health and human services agency to serve refugee clients of CalWORKS, the state's welfare-to-work program.

Fresno West Coalition for Economic Development (FWCED) is a small community development organization that seeks to improve the physical and socioeconomic conditions of southwest Fresno and its residents. FWCED grew out a number of successful grassroots campaigns to bring businesses into the economically depressed West Fresno area, which had previously been passed over for redevelopment funds. One such success was the Kearney Palms Shopping Center, which brought a major chain grocery store and a Rite Aid pharmacy to the neighborhood.

The Jefferson-Lowell neighborhood that is the focus of work for One by One Leadership (OBO) is located near downtown Fresno. OBO, a faith-based community development organization, works with congregations and CBOs to build their leadership and organizational capacities, so that they can participate in designing and undertaking their own community development efforts.

Despite the differences between the three agencies, they worked with a high degree of cooperation on the CWBH project. Throughout the initiative, members jointly developed goals, implemented steps to reach them, and assessed their common progress. During a site visit, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation commented on the collegial relationships of collaborative members, adding that in observing their interactions, he could not tell which staff members worked for which agencies. While the collaborative experienced its share of member differences and adjustments, especially when there was turnover of key staff in each partner agency, members remain committed to working together even after the end of Phase II of CWBH -- and not necessarily only on the original CWBH issues. One manager of an FWBH partner agency emphasized how much the initiative had done to create an enduring bond between the partners, one that would have been unlikely without this initiative: "a shotgun marriage, but a marriage nevertheless."

What factors contributed to this success? According to some interviewees, collaboration was aided by the long-term funding that allowed the partners to set aside the rivalry that typically exists between CBOs that compete for limited resources. Also, the leaders and many staff members of each partner agency demonstrated a high degree of commitment to collaboration.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.fresnocenter.com/>

Finally, the FWBH Theory of Change and the systematic process that produced it helped to bring the partners together.

**Box 2.1**

**The Fresno Works for Better Health Collaborative**

**Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA)**

**Founded:** 1991  
**Budget:** \$1.7 million  
**Staff size:** 42  
**Target area:** Fresno County – with a focus on Southeast Asians and other immigrants and refugees

**Fresno West Coalition for Economic Development (FWCED)**

**Founded:** 1995 Became a tax-exempt nonprofit organization in 2000.  
**Budget:** \$1.05 million  
**Staff size:** 6 full time, 2 contractors  
**Target area:** West Fresno

**One by One Leadership (OBO or 1 by 1)**

**Founded:** 1994  
**Budget:** \$2.1 million  
**Staff size:** 19  
**Target Area:** Jefferson-Lowell neighborhoods near downtown Fresno

**C. The FWBH Theory of Change (TOC)**

Early in Phase I, the Fresno collaborative outlined a skeletal TOC, which was developed by following the planning framework and processes outlined by the Aspen Roundtable. Subsequent work on the TOC, undertaken in early 2003, involved a number of planning sessions and retreats with the CWBH Administration and technical assistance providers, and the use of information from the FWBH constituency survey, which was conducted during that same year.

The TOC that emerged from these planning processes had three strands: Access to a) Employment; b) Job Opportunities; and c) Community Engagement. As shown in Table 2.5, each of the collaborative partners opted to take the lead on translating one of these strands into operations. The table also shows the goal that each strand was intended to realize and it indicates the rationale for assigning a particular strand to a particular FWBH partner.

## Fresno Works for Better Health

**Table 2.5**

### Division of Responsibilities in FWBH Based on the Theory of Change

TOC Strand	Goal	Lead agency and factors contributing to choice of the agency
Access to Employment	To establish Employment Resource Centers: increase access to employment by ensuring constituents are job- ready.	OBO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff with extensive experience in employment services and community organizing.</li> <li>• Assisted in the development of Neighborhood Resource centers located in elementary schools throughout the city and county.</li> </ul>
Job Opportunities	To create new jobs in growth sectors for the communities served by the collaborative.	FWCED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was one of the CBOs involved in securing the Empowerment Zone designation.</li> <li>• Worked on two major development projects (Elm Street Corridor and Roeding Business Park) in the early stages of development.</li> <li>• Staff participated in a number of community committees and boards. (for example,. EZ Board, RJI committees, and West Fresno Health Coalition).</li> </ul>
Community Engagement	To empower grassroots leaders to advocate and influence public policy.	FCNA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established good working relationships with leaders in the Southeast Asian community and with a number of other CBOs.</li> <li>• Bilingual and bicultural staff providing services in multiple languages.</li> </ul>

Each of the FWBH partners could have used the division of labor laid out in the TOC to go its own way, working on the strand of activities on which it was supposed to take the lead. Instead, FWBH held both regularly scheduled meetings and multiple retreats that focused on cooperative planning of the TOC.

#### **D. Helping Individual Participants Find Jobs**

The CWBH initiative asked collaboratives to try to substantially improve the employment and incomes of Targeted Neighborhood residents by getting them into living-wage jobs, preferably with health insurance. Following this lead, FWBH’s TOC sought to prepare residents for good quality employment opportunities. The collaborative would secure some of these positions by establishing hiring agreements with employers; other positions would be identified by local WIA One-Stops.

The TOC called for collaborative members to establish Neighborhood Employment Resource Centers (ERCs) in each of the three Targeted Neighborhoods. The ERCs would recruit residents to take advantage of the good quality job opportunities and would refer some ERC users to support services before they began focusing on employability issues. The ERCs would

also help local residents use workforce development services more effectively -- whenever necessary, filling in gaps by directly providing services that were not readily available from the One-Stops and other providers. As leader of the TOC's Access to Employment strand, OBO opened the first ERC in June 2004. Six months later -- FCNA's and FWCED's ERCs began operations.<sup>63</sup>

### **Box 2.2**

#### **The FWBH Neighborhood Employment Resource Centers (ERCs)**

##### **FCNA ERC**

4879 E. Kings Canyon Road

##### *Physical Setting*

Adjacent to FCNA's main office, the facility where the ERC is located houses multiple programs. The resource center itself is the largest of all three CWBH ERCs, with 10-12 computers. Along with the main office, the ERC is located in a shopping center with ample parking and a bus stop a few yards away.

##### *Surrounding Community*

This area of Fresno historically has had the greatest concentration of Southeast Asians (although the most recent wave of Hmong refugees has found more affordable housing in West Fresno). The area bustles with commercial activity -- for instance, many Southeast Asian businesses and restaurants, situated alongside residential neighborhoods, are located in strip malls on Kings Canyon Road.

##### **FWCED ERC**

302 Fresno Street, Suite 212

##### *Physical Setting*

The ERC is located in a large two-story building that also houses a mental health facility and a charter high school. It is less than 10 blocks from the Kearney Palms Shopping Center, and is situated directly in front of an express bus stop. There is a small parking lot behind the building and some street parking nearby. FWCED's space is divided into administrative offices and the resource room in one area, and the frontline staff offices in the other. The fairly small resource room contains six PCs.

##### *Surrounding Community*

The primarily residential area surrounding the ERC is just west of Highway 99 and directly adjacent to downtown Fresno. While historically an African-American neighborhood, West Fresno's demography has changed substantially in the last 15 years. From 1990 to 2000, the neighborhood's Hispanic population grew 12 percent while the African-American population decreased by 14 percent. The area is also home to a sizeable population of Asian immigrants.

(continued)

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<sup>63</sup> FWCED's ERC was actually called "the NEERC" (Neighborhood *Economic* Employment Resource Center), but it is referred to as "the ERC" in this report.

## Box 2.2 (continued)

### **OBO ERC**

1754 L Street

#### *Physical Setting*

OBO's ERC consists of a reception area, staff office, a small resource room with two computers, and a medium-sized conference room shared by the ERC and the building's other tenant, the Nonprofit Advancement Council. Although it is the smallest of the three Fresno ERCs, this facility offers the most privacy for meetings with customers.

#### *Surrounding Community*

OBO is located in an older, tree-lined historic district of Fresno with broad, quiet streets and some beautiful Victorian-style homes that organizations have restored or are attempting to renovate. OBO's main office and ERC occupy two of the restored homes. The neighborhood's homes, which generally are sizeable and have relatively cheap rents, are attractive to large, low-income families. The area around the ERC includes a number of shelters and halfway houses.

## **Who Enrolled in the FWBH ERCs?**

The research reported in this chapter defined anyone who completed a FWBH intake and assessment form and who signed an informed consent form to participate in the MDRC research study as an FWBH participant.<sup>64</sup> As will be discussed in more detail below, characteristics of the clientele of the different ERCs differed based on the extent to which people who sought them out for employment-related help. For example, FCNA generally focused on people who were looking for jobs, though its ERC did offer clients other services such as citizenship and ESL classes and driver's education. Strictly speaking, these are not employability services, but it is likely that many of the clients who used them did so to improve their chances to find jobs – or better jobs. In contrast, the FWCED ERC enrolled a large number of people who attended its first-time homebuyers workshops, and it is very likely that many of these participants had little or no interest in employment services or in looking for work.<sup>65</sup>

According to the data collected by the three ERCs<sup>66</sup>, from July 2004 through September 2006, 1,583 people participated in FWBH – approximately 55 percent enrolled under FWCED

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<sup>64</sup> With ERCs that routinely referred clients to one another, the FWBH did not review its MIS data by breaking out clients of the different partner agencies. This chapter, however, does sometimes distinguish between the participants of the three agencies in order to point out differences in their characteristics and service use patterns.

<sup>65</sup> The FWBH intake forms asked if enrollees were unemployed and seeking employment or working, but the forms did not ask working enrollees whether they had come to the program for help in finding a different and/or better job. Thus, it is possible that some participants in the homeownership workshops were seeking such help. However, it is unlikely that large numbers of people who attended the workshops were also planning to ask FWCED for assistance on employment matters.

<sup>66</sup> Unless otherwise noted, information on client characteristics comes from the FWBH MIS system.

auspices, 30 percent enrolled through FWBH, and 14 percent through OBO. The following discussion of participant characteristics draws on CWBH MIS data.

**ERCs successful in engaging a very disadvantaged population:** At intake, almost 63 percent of ERC participants were unemployed and seeking jobs. While a fair number of clients who were unemployed at enrollment had never worked before (14 percent of all participants), many people who were not working at that point had been out of a job for six months or less (43 percent of all participants), suggesting that most unemployed ERC clients were active, if unsuccessful, labor market participants.

**Generally marginal jobs for people employed at intake:** The 33 percent of FWBH participants who were employed at intake mostly held low-wage, unstable jobs: only 12 percent of all FWBH participants had permanent, full-time jobs. Average monthly earnings were only \$453 (and still lower, at \$260, for FCNA clients and \$168 for OBO clients). Just 14 percent of participants were receiving health insurance from their jobs, 26 percent were being offered paid vacations, and 17 percent had retirement or pension plans.

**Three somewhat different groups of clients:** The largest racial and ethnic groups among FWBH participants were African-American (44 percent), followed by Hmong (23 percent), and Hispanic (17 percent). But the profile of clients' ethnic backgrounds -- and the profile of their service needs -- varied considerably among the three ERCs:

- **FCNA** overwhelmingly served Asians (95 percent), particularly Hmong residents (72 percent), most of whom were married and had several children to support. Of the three ERCs, FCNA client households were on average receiving the most income from non-employment sources such as public assistance -- probably in most cases, because the households were headed by recent refugees. Almost three-fourths of FCNA clients were unemployed jobseekers. Clients reported the major barriers to employment as: insufficient/poor work history (57 percent); lack of education (52 percent); and limited English proficiency (43 percent could neither speak nor write English).
- **FWCED** engaged a clientele that was predominantly African-American (75 percent) and custodial parents (64 percent). Six percent of participants were ex-offenders and 20 percent lacked a GED or high school diploma. A little more than half of participants were unemployed and looking for work; 71 percent of these jobseekers reported no barriers to employment, and working FWCED participants earned on average much more than their FCNA and OBO counterparts. But this picture of relative advantage should be viewed against the backdrop of FWCED's enrollment of people who took part in homebuyers workshops. Very likely, if this group of service users had not been defined as FWBH participants, the remaining group of participants would have had employment-related characteristics that looked more like those of FCNA and OBO enrollees.
- **OBO** had the most ethnically mixed population (23 percent white, 17 percent African-American, and 8 percent Asian), and had the most success in engaging Hispanics (49 percent). About half of participants (52 percent) did not have custodial care of children, thereby disqualifying them from public assistance, including health insurance, for low-

income families. Income needs were pressing, with 83 percent of participants unemployed and looking for work, and living on household incomes that were on average substantially lower than those of clients of the other two ERCs. Of the three ERCs, OBO's clients reported the highest percentages of criminal records (16 percent) and substance abuse (9 percent).

**Under-enrollment of Hispanics:** Although the Targeted Neighborhoods are home to a high concentration of Hispanics (59 percent of the population, in contrast to 40 percent in Fresno City as a whole), Hispanics, as noted, comprised only 17 percent of FWBH participants. Viewed by the percentage of Hispanics in its overall clientele, OBO had the most success in engaging this ethnic group, but of the three grantees, the agency enrolled the smallest number of participants overall.

As noted, FWCED's clientele was very heavily African-American – this despite the fact that West Fresno, with a growing percentage of Hispanics, has ceased to be a predominantly African-American neighborhood. FWCED staff members acknowledged that their ERC needed to expand its outreach to Hispanics -- notably, by hiring bilingual Spanish-speaking staff.

### **What Types of Services Did the ERCs Provide?**

**Expectations and realities:** Initially the ERCs focused on *preparing* clients for work, rather than on placing them in jobs. For instance, early on, FCNA worked on referring clients to such activities as basic computer skills and ESL instruction, driver's education, and support services, all intended to improve qualifications for better paying jobs. But collaborative members soon found that large numbers of unemployed people came to the ERCs with pressing needs to find jobs as soon as possible. These clients made it clear that they could not afford to spend the time it took to engage in education and vocational training; instead, they wanted immediate job search assistance. Also, while the TOC had conceived of the ERCs primarily as referral agencies, with direct service provision only as a secondary role, for two reasons that turned out not to be the case. First, as noted, the ERCs did provide some services on site.

Second, as discussed, the local One-Stops were often not well equipped to serve clients with the kind of barriers to employment presented by the ERC participants. The One-Stop's "universal" (meaning universal access) resource rooms with computerized job listings and other aids for jobseekers, who are expected to use the resources at least somewhat independently, were certainly open to FWBH participants, as were the One-Stop job search workshops. But these clients typically needed more intensive help -- often one-on-one guidance -- to learn how to conduct computerized job searches and prepare resumes and application letters.

Moreover, the One-Stops did not always offer sufficient bilingual assistance, and particularly Hmong-English, assistance -- although FWCED, as noted, was without Spanish-speaking staff, which led one staff member to observe that Hispanic jobseekers preferred to go, among other places, to the One-Stops, where they could find some bilingual help. In contrast, some One-Stop staff members who were interviewed acknowledged that their facilities were underused by Hmong refugees.

The frontline experience of the ERCs was at odds with the One-Stop conception of program flow that was described earlier: ERC staff discovered that participants often needed help with a range of non-employment needs like housing or health care *concurrently* with job search assistance, not sequentially.

**Cultivating resource partnerships with public workforce development systems:** As time went on, the ERCs assumed more and more responsibility for providing on-site employment services to their clients. But FWBH did not insist on proceeding in isolation or reinventing the wheel. Instead, the ERCs successfully negotiated helpful agreements with the state Employment Development Department and with the county WIB. These agreements allowed the ERC center staff to handle intake of neighborhood residents for the One-Stops at the center, and to input clients into the WIB's database and provide them with "passport" cards for use at any of the One-Stops – essentially making the ERCs satellites to the One Stop system and making ERC clients co-enrollees of the One-Stops.

The WIB provided the ERCs with WIB intake forms and a telecommunications line to access its communications network. It also supplied the ERCs with software that allowed the One-Stops and ERCs to share information about their co-enrollees, and it gave the ERCs training on how to use the system. The WIB also offered the ERCs special One-Stop assessment and job development tools that focused on industries and occupations with the best potential for expansion and advancement -- and again, trained ERC staff in the use of these tools. This was the *first time* that the WIB provided support of this kind and magnitude to an organization that was not one of its contractors.

**Job search assistance:** As part of its role as CWBH evaluator, MDRC offered some technical assistance to CWBH and in that capacity, was charged with assessing the efforts of the three collaboratives to realize their TOC goals. An MDRC assessment of FWBH conducted in July 2005 underscored two related insights that the ERCs themselves were already coming to recognize – first, the ERC participants' needs for entry-level, low-wage jobs to pay the bills and to get a foothold in the labor market, and second, the importance of the centers' focusing on these needs over and above any other services. The ERCs generally heeded this advice (although, as will be discussed later in this section, during this period, a fair number of ERC participants did enroll in vocational training programs and find jobs in the higher-paying building trades).

Increasingly, ERC staff oriented themselves to giving customers on-site help with job search, resume writing, interview skills, and job applications. As noted, FCNA already had experience in providing these kinds of services, but it had mainly been with the help of small grants devoted to special populations. Now that resources for employment services had expanded via CWBH, the FCNA ERC devoted more attention to defining staff roles and tracking progress for these kinds of services. In general, staff at FCNA and OBO found that they were essentially functioning as job coaches, providing individualized guidance and encouragement to jobseekers, and following up on their progress.<sup>67</sup> OBO blended its individualized help with group sessions: Its ERC hosted monthly roundtable discussions focused on a variety of employment-related

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<sup>67</sup> These observations about case management strategy and intensity were derived from a randomly selected sample of case files, participant interviews, and interviews with frontline staff.

topics,<sup>68</sup> but the OBO employment counselor described pulling individual participants out of these sessions for 10 to 15 minutes at a time to check in with them. At FCNA, frontline staff used similar group sessions but were more emphatic about preferring individualized assistance whenever possible.

Both FCNA and OBO staff went to great lengths to help customers secure and retain jobs. For instance, staff sometimes drove client to interviews, and, in one case, even drove a client to work for the first two weeks of a job. One ERC staff member said:

We're going out of our bounds to do more than what we should for our clients. We're actually taking them to interviews, taking them to the office, giving them a ride back...Even talking to them to prepare a resume, to prepare for an interview because of the lack of resources that they have. Whatever they need – we try to give them what they need.

Compared to FCNA and OBO, FWCED staff provided less intensive support to clients. Perhaps because FWCED is a community development organization, staff focused more of their efforts on cultivating employers and identifying job leads and training opportunities. There were some signs that FWCED was growing into its employability coaching role over the course of Phase II. Still, by the end of the reporting period, the agency's help to clients to secure support services that would help them become more employable remained generally cut and dried, and focused mainly on giving clients lists of providers whom they could seek out.

**Community-based job development:** MDRC's assessment encouraged the ERCs to identify entry-level job opportunities for which participants were already qualified. To facilitate that work, each of the ERCs hired job developers. The job developers found that often for reasons involving child care, care of other family members, and transportation, many participants were looking for jobs based in their own neighborhoods. To respond to this interest, job developers canvassed their neighborhoods for small businesses that might have entry-level job openings. Typically, this involved extensive footwork, with job developers searching for mom-and-pop stores or for tiny workshops, often tucked into back streets, that were involved in occupations like printing T-shirts and signs, or packaging clothing. An FWBH job developer said:

I am actually going out networking and cold-calling in every industrial area pocket that I can find available here. That is the nature of the business that I am in. I have to go out and knock on the doors. I can't rely on the paper. I can't rely on word of mouth.

While urban-poverty experts such as William Julius Wilson<sup>69</sup> emphasize the inadequate supply of employment opportunities in low-income neighborhoods, suggesting the need for job

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<sup>68</sup> Roundtable topics included computer literacy, interviewing skills, and budgeting for work clothing. Representatives of the cosmetic industry (for example, from Avon or Mary Kay) met with Roundtable participants to inform them of how to become salespeople for their products.

<sup>69</sup> William Julius Wilson (1996).

development that concentrates on less disadvantaged locales, the ERC staffs pointed out that they were not looking for thousands of job openings. Furthermore, the ERCs could capitalize on their familiarity with their neighborhoods to expeditiously supply local employers with suitable job candidates. One ERC staff member said:

We can meet that employer on Monday and have somebody ready [for] them on Monday, you know, and that person could go interview on Monday...in most cases. So we can make a very direct, swift transaction rather than, “Okay, I will meet you this week. We will send you somebody...next week” ...We already know who has the skill set, who is already going to match [the opening], or we can just go call up our data base.

**Job development for immigrants:** In a job development activity that overlapped with seeking out neighborhood employers, FCNA also looked for jobs that would be particularly suitable for participants with limited English-speaking proficiencies. (FWCED and OBO did serve some immigrant clients, but did not make the same kind of immigrant-oriented job development efforts as FCNA.) Again, the focus was on entry-level positions, often involving small manufacturing. One FCNA staff member described a negotiating strategy used with prospective employers:

When the employer says “I’m looking for five people,”...we will say we have one who speaks very good English, but...the other three or four [do not speak English]. [For them] this person can be [the team] leader...then we make sure the employer will hire [the] others who are in the program that have less language ability.

**Work in the building trades:** FWBH – and FWCED in particular – was successful in seeking out jobs for participants in the construction trades, one of the industries targeted by the Fresno Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI), a five-year initiative to upgrade the area’s employment opportunities.<sup>70</sup> With FWCED taking the lead, the collaborative began by establishing agreements with two local vocational schools. The agreements specified that FWBH would refer participants to the schools’ construction pre-apprenticeship trainings, and that in return, the schools would give FWBH weekly progress reports, test scores, and attendance information so that FWBH could keep track of its participants.

The agreements helped to satisfy the needs of these schools to enroll students from underrepresented populations and neighborhoods. But these arrangements did not mean that FWBH enrollees would be guaranteed training slots or supports like stipends and funds for buying equipment when they graduated. Moreover, the collaborative subsequently discovered that the pre-apprenticeship programs did not offer job placement assistance, and instead looked to FWBH to assume this role for the graduates. Members of minority groups have long had difficulties breaking into the building trades, and today minority group members who want to pursue work in this area continue to face significant hurdles to securing apprenticeship training

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<sup>70</sup> RJI is discussed in more detail in the “Policy and Advocacy” section of this chapter.

and better-paying employment opportunities.<sup>71</sup> Against this backdrop, the pre-apprenticeship training program's lack of job placement and job development help was a serious problem for FWBH participants. FWCED took the lead in filling the ERCs' important need for job development for graduates. FWCED looked for subcontractors working in the area who would contact the ERCs when they needed workers.

Like the effort to find local mom-and-pop businesses, identifying small contractors was labor-intensive, requiring a job developer to canvass construction sites by driving around the area. (If there had been no paid staff to take on this work, ERC clients who had graduated from training programs likely would have had to travel from site to site on their own – and probably would have had considerably more difficulty than the job developers in gaining an entrée to employers.) Staff at one of the two schools with which CWBH had initially signed agreements stressed the importance of the collaborative's job development efforts. One staff member said:

If [only] we could have someone spending some time networking with the [subcontractors]...I'm not excluding the unions...But especially with non-union shops in town. I think they would be very appreciative to know, 'I've got some students. They've proven themselves.'

### **What Types of Services Did FWBH Participants Use?**

**Help with job searches:** Somewhat less than half (44 percent) of the 1,583 FWBH participants used ERC employment services. These services covered activities ranging from help with resume preparation, providing jobseekers with job leads, general job search assistance, interview training, and career counseling. Corresponding to the priority the ERCs placed on job search assistance and job development, the most common kinds of help given to the 695 people who availed themselves of employment services were:

- job search assistance – 21 percent
- provision of job leads – 22 percent
- help with resume preparation – 13 percent

**Case management:** The ERCs defined “case management” services as activities that were distinct from specific employability assistance activities such as helping someone prepare a resume or giving someone a job lead. Instead, case management services were viewed as more generalized interactions with clients – for example, checking in with someone to see about that person's progress in following an individualized service plan that had been developed at the

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<sup>71</sup> For instance, Bloch (2003) found significantly lower wages among minorities and laborers in his examination of minority employment in the construction trades across 162 large U.S. metropolitan areas. Andersson et al. (2000) looked at data on non-fatal injuries among construction workers treated at emergency departments from 1990 to 1998. The majority of the injured Hispanic workers were employed in the less-skilled trades. Compared with other injured workers, Hispanics, who also had a higher proportion of serious injuries, were disadvantaged in terms of training and union status. The authors cited the need for interventions to address the limited employment and union membership options that are available to minority workers in the construction industry.

ERC. The MIS records show that the ERCs provided case management to 413 participants (26 percent of all participants).<sup>72</sup>

**Significant use of vocational training but not education services:** FWBH differed from the three other CWBH initiative sites in the substantial number of participants involved in vocational training (265 participants, 17 percent of the total). Even though, as noted, the ERCs sought to address participants' immediate employment needs, overall FWBH did make a place for vocational training in its repertoire of services. In contrast, although many FWBH participants lacked a high school diploma or GED and/or English language proficiency, the numbers involved in adult basic education, GED preparation, and ESL classes were small.

**Substantial participation in homebuyers' workshops complicates interpretation of CWBH MIS data:** The FWCED homebuyers' workshops engaged a total of 380 people – 24 percent of all FWBH participants and 43 percent of FWCED's clientele. This enrollment phenomenon clouds the picture of who sought out FWBH -- and particularly the picture of who came to FWCED -- for employment help.

### **How Well Did FWBH Meet Its Employment Goals?**

Of the 1,583 FWBH participants followed from program start-up in July 2004 through September 2006, 404 entered employment -- a collaborative placement rate of 25 percent. Because, as just discussed, FWCED enrolled a large number of people who apparently were non-jobseekers, it is useful to examine FCNA and OBO placement rates separately.

**A significant proportion of OBO and FCNA clients secured jobs with some positive features:** The job placement rates of the FCNA and OBO ERCs were, respectively, 43 percent and 45 percent – rates well within the upper range of the ones achieved by the most disadvantaged subgroups of the welfare-to-work demonstrations.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, participants entering employment from FCNA earned an average of \$7.60 per hour and worked 36 hours per week, while OBO results were almost the same (\$7.61 per hour and 32 hours a week). This suggests that many clients of these two ERCs found full-time jobs at more than the minimum wage, which was \$6.75 in California during this period.

**High starting wages for FWCED participants:** The FWCED placement rate was 11 percent (although for reasons already discussed, this rate may not reflect FWCED's true rate of success in placing clients who in fact were interested in finding jobs). The average starting wage (\$10.08 per hour) was high, perhaps reflecting the numbers of participants whom FWCED successfully steered toward construction-trades training and employment, as seen in Table 2.6.

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<sup>72</sup> This figure very likely understates the actual number of clients that received what the ERCs defined as case management. This is because initial assessments of clients' needs, which were very common at the ERCs, are a form of staff interactions with clients that are not focused on one specific employability activity, and thus can be fairly characterized as case management activities.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 1 discussion of such rates, pp. 17-18.

**Fresno Works for Better Health**

**Table 2.6**

**Employment Outcomes for FWBH Participants, July 2004 – September 2006**

Outcomes	FCNA	FWCED	OBO
Clients entering employment (#)	207	94	101
Clients entering employment (%)	42.6	10.6	44.7
Jobs Obtained by clients	220	109	138
Average starting hourly wage	\$7.66	\$10.08	\$7.61
Average starting weekly work hours	37	36	32
Jobs with benefits			
Medical insurance coverage	27.3	29.4	8.7
Paid vacation	23.6	22.9	3.6
Retirement or pension plan	20.9	16.5	1.4
Occupational category			
Management/professional	2.8	11.0	10.2
Leisure/hospitality	18.3	12.8	12.4
Retail/sales	5.0	6.4	9.5
Other service	15.1	22.0	34.3
Office	2.3	10.1	2.2
Farming, fishing, forestry	0.0	0.0	3.6
Construction	0.0	22.9	9.5
Manufacturing	53.2	11.0	12.4
Transportation	0.9	0.9	2.2
Unknown	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	2.3	2.8	3.6
Sample size	480	879	224

SOURCE: FWBH MIS Data<sup>74</sup>

**Most jobs did not offer benefits:** While participants mostly found full-time jobs, these positions generally did not come with benefits. Across the three FWBH collaborative agencies, approximately 22 percent of participants secured a job that included medical insurance coverage, 18 percent of the jobs included paid vacation, and 14 percent included retirement or pension plans. Even though the average starting wage for FCNA clients was substantially lower than the FWCED average, FCNA clients' jobs were only slightly less likely to provide medical benefits than the positions held by FWCED participants.

**Different strategies, different sectors and occupations:** The jobs that FWBH participants secured were concentrated in three occupational categories: manufacturing (31 percent across all three collaborative agencies), other services (22 percent), and

<sup>74</sup> There are slight differences in participant and job placement totals between CWBH MIS data and locally generated figures. As a result, the CWBH data show a total of 404 job placements for FWBH, while the local data shown here add to 402 job placements.

leisure/hospitality (15 percent). However, there were notable differences among the clients of different ERCs:

- More than half (53 percent) of FCNA clients were placed in manufacturing jobs, with leisure/hospitality (18 percent) and other service jobs (15 percent) as a distant second and third. These outcomes testify to the FCNA's success in cultivating small manufacturing firms willing to hire clients with limited English proficiency.
- Similarly, with 23 percent of FWCED's clients securing employment in the construction industry, this agency lead role in efforts to partner with an adult school construction trades pre-apprenticeship program and to cultivate local subcontractors for construction jobs seems to have borne fruit.
- Of the three ERCs, the OBO ERC enrolled the largest category of clients in "other service" jobs and had the highest proportion of clients in jobs without benefits.

**Incomplete follow-up data:** For participants still active in the program, ERC staff were asked to conduct follow-up (via either telephone or a face-to-face meeting) at approximately 6, 9, 12, and 18 months after intake. Staff were also expected to complete exit forms for people who either explicitly declined more services or who after some time could not be contacted. Notwithstanding these expectations, FWBH, like most of the CWBH initiative sites, lost contact with most clients at the follow-up points. FWBH MIS data show records for only 19 percent of enrolled clients at the 6-month follow-up point and for only 8 percent at 12 months.<sup>75</sup> The amount of missing data on post-placement outcomes does not permit conclusions about job retention or continued employment for FWBH.

## **E. Policy and Advocacy Work**

The FWBH TOC called on collaborative members to do more than providing services and finding job openings for individual clients: The partners committed to making policy-related efforts to create new jobs. For instance, one idea was that the ERCs would make hiring agreements for their clients with employers in health care, construction, and tourism -- three of the six industries identified by the Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI) as having high potential for expansion. Through its Community Engagement strand, the TOC also called on the collaborative to select and train 30 residents per year to work with collaborative members in advocating for job opportunities for Targeted Neighborhood residents.

FWCED had expertise in working to change public policies to benefit its community, but the other two partner agencies lacked this kind of experience, and none of the three partners could be characterized as an advocacy organization. Moreover, FWBH faced the prospect of trying to change policies and practices in a political landscape dominated by pro-business and

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<sup>75</sup> Randomized case file reviews conducted at the three ERCs indicate that it is highly likely that FWCED, which enrolled more than half of all FWBH participants, was the primary contributor to these low follow-up rates. The individual FCNA and OBO follow-up rates were probably considerably higher than the collective rates for CWBH.

pro-development priorities. The view that social problems are best left to market solutions, individual effort, and private charity is a popular one in Fresno County.

Compounding challenges posed by the local political environment, the collaborative was expending a great deal of energy operating employment programs for very disadvantaged clients, with two of the three partner agencies undertaking this work for the first time. It is thus not surprising that the collaborative did not achieve its policy-related goals during Phase II. Nevertheless, the collaborative's activities for this TOC strand highlight the members' energy and creativity, and the value of CBOs working together.

### **Working with Other Policy-Oriented Organizations**

**FWBH makes a place for itself in the policy world:** To pursue its policy goals, FWBH had to establish relationships with key workforce development and economic development groups in the policy arena. According to FWBH partners, CBOs in the Fresno area have not historically been included on citywide and countywide boards and task forces focused on economic development and workforce development policies. Typically nonprofit representation of these kinds of groups was limited to larger CBOs and other nonprofit organizations.

But in a breakthrough for local CBOs, FWBH partners came to be represented on a number of influential and high-profile local and regional boards and task forces -- notably, on the RJI's Workforce Development Taskforce, the Empowerment Zone's Executive Board of Directors (described in Box 2.3), as well as the county WIB, and Fresno Unified School District's Choosing Our Future Taskforce.

## Fresno Works for Better Health

### Box 2.3

#### Fresno Area Business-Government Economic Development Initiatives

Fresno County and municipal government entities have been working with the business community to explore ways to diversify the economy and cultivate growth industries. For instance, the county WIB joined with the area's businesses and academics to identify high-wage, high-growth industries, such as health care or information technology, to which local workforce development services and resources could be directed.

Two business-government initiatives that have been especially important to FWBH are:

- **Fresno Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI)** (<http://www.fresnorji.org>): RJI members include mayors, county supervisors, and representatives of business, education, nonprofits, and labor. RJI has set itself a goal of creating 25,000 to 30,000 net new non-farm jobs with average salaries of \$29,500 within a five-year period. It is hoped and estimated that these jobs will have an annual economic impact of over \$885 million on the region, and will diversify the economy while retaining its core agricultural base. Starting with the idea that regional economies are made up of a series of related and mutually beneficial industries, or clusters, the RJI has identified nine emerging clusters in which the region has a competitive advantage. Several RJI task forces, including the Workforce Development Taskforce on which FWBH sits, are trying to find ways to expand those clusters.
- **Fresno Empowerment Zone:** In January 2002, Fresno City received an Empowerment Zone designation designed to stimulate economic development. Businesses in Empowerment Zones, which are operated under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are eligible for significant federal tax incentives for investing and expanding in the area, and for hiring area residents.

FWBH partners found that being involved in these groups gave them access to new information and networks, which they could cultivate on behalf of their clients. At the same time, the more veteran members of the boards and task forces had reason to welcome their relationship with the collaborative. Often they saw the CWBH partners as CBOs that had credibility among neighborhood constituents. Because the organizations with longer histories on the boards and task forces sometimes lacked strong connections to individual communities, many of them viewed CWBH as a group that could help them publicize programs, recruit candidates for positions, or fill gaps in services that they were unable to provide directly.

**Working with a city agency on Empowerment Zone activities:** Portions of FWCED's and OBO's catchment areas are located in a federally sponsored Empowerment Zone. (sometimes called an EZ). The Fresno municipal Economic Development Department, which has jurisdiction for the city's EZ, turned to FWBH for help in contacting employers in the Targeted Neighborhoods – businesses that were more likely to be known to FWBH than to the Department -- to encourage them to take advantage of EZ incentives to expand and hire area residents. In

response, FWCED staff met with several businesses in the area to educate them about these incentives.

Together, FWBH and the Economic Development Department created a brochure, written in both English and Spanish, advertising EZ benefits. When the team that was originally designated to handle marketing efforts experienced budget cuts, FWBH partners stepped in to help with the dissemination of the brochures, distributing 10,000 of them to businesses, with many brochures being hand delivered. (The collaborative also gave brochures to ERC jobseekers, suggesting that they show them to EZ employers so that these businesses would see that the EZ gave them an added incentive to hire someone living in the zone.) A municipal official interviewed for this report emphasized the importance of the collaborative's credibility to the city's dissemination effort: "[FWBH] hand delivered this stuff... Otherwise, when residents get something from City Hall, they won't read these."

**Hard to follow up on results of EZ work:** Unfortunately, neither FWBH nor the EZ itself had a ready-made way of determining whether outreach efforts were paying off. Employers who hired EZ residents reported that information to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to receive tax credits, but the IRS did not forward that information to local EZ managers. Also the managers had limited resources for tracking how many EZ residents were taking advantage of EZ benefits. (This lack of information was a problem for FWBH in trying to demonstrate to funders that its efforts helped FWBH participants get better jobs in the Zone.)

The collaborative worked with Economic Development Department staff to create a tracking mechanism, but the system was rudimentary: The brochures that had been jointly produced by CWBH and the Department included a tear-off section that employers were asked to fill out when they hired an EZ area resident. They were to mail it back to the Department, which then was to track how many residents from the EZ area had been hired as a result of CWBH outreach. However, employers were not required to send back the tear-off section, and Economic Development Department staff lost many of the forms that were returned.

**Using best practices for holding job fairs:** The Employment Development Department also looked to FWBH to co-sponsor job fairs in FWBH neighborhoods, and to conduct outreach to employers and residents to make these events a success. One government official observed that as organizations with community roots, the FWBH partners "come in with a different sense of energy, with a different way of looking at things," and with the ability to draw local businesses and residents. "I show up in a group," said the official, "and I'm a bureaucrat. [One of the FWBH leaders] shows up and they're a neighborhood person. A totally different credibility."

Officials cited FCNA in particular for its thoroughness and energy in sponsoring job fairs. Before a job fair, FCNA met with Employment Development Department staff to give them input on which employers to invite to the event. And on the weekend preceding a job fair, FCNA held pre-event workshops to help residents prepare resumes and practice interviewing. The official who was just quoted praised FCNA: "There was preparedness. It wasn't just having them show up. We use it as a model now."

**Agreements with training schools and employers were not very powerful.** At the outset of working on the Job Opportunities strand of its TOC, the FWBH collaborative envisioned trying to secure hiring agreements with institutions that would give ERC participants entrée to jobs, especially good jobs. The collaborative did pursue this goal, but the agreements turned out to be generally unimportant. The shortcomings of the formal agreements with two schools sponsoring pre-apprenticeship classes have already been discussed. Also, early in the program period, mostly before the ERCs had brought in job developers, FWBH signed a number of formal agreements with area employers. Typically, FWBH agreed to recruit and screen ERC enrollees who met the employers' hiring criteria, while the employers agreed to inform FWBH about job openings and to report to FWBH when they hired one of its participants. But unlike some agreements with employers, such as those secured by leading Los Angeles advocacy groups in the years before CWBH was initiated, these kinds of agreements did not give FWBH job applicants preferential consideration for openings. Because of this lack of substance, efforts to secure the agreements waned after the ERCs hired job developers, who generally cultivated employers and looked for job openings without relying on agreements.

### **More Direct Efforts to Influence Policy**

While the collaborative's work to reach out to EZ employers and hold job fairs were conducted in partnership with policy-oriented groups, these activities, which were primarily aimed at finding jobs for individual ERC participants, were in fact mainly extensions of the collaborative's other direct-service efforts. But during Phase II, FWBH did engage in three activities that were more purely designed to change broader public policies – a policy campaign to establish a first-source municipal hiring agreement, co-sponsorship of a conference on concentrated poverty, and advocacy training.

#### **Trying to Secure a Municipal First-Source Hiring Agreement**

FWBH wanted to pursue a first-source agreement that would specify that as a prerequisite for the city entering into a municipal contract, the city would require new or expanding businesses and new construction or remodeling projects to give priority to hiring Fresno residents. The proposed agreement also included apprenticeship programs to provide skills training for better-paying construction jobs. And while the agreement was envisioned as covering the entire city, its proponents also wanted to consider specifying zip codes in closest proximity to development projects or containing heavy concentrations of disadvantaged jobseekers that would be given still more priority for hiring.

**A key ally:** In a success for FWBH, the collaborative enlisted the RJI to join the first-source campaign. The RJI had already been working on a first-source hiring policy intended to encompass four counties, including Fresno, and had learned something from the experience that gave the group one reason to join CWBH in promoting a policy that focused on the city: The RJI's efforts to persuade the Clovis City Council to adopt a *regional* policy had recently failed, suggesting that rather than entering into regional agreements, with benefits dispersed over a broad labor market, municipal elected officials might be more receptive to a *local* policy, which would offer more concentrated benefits to their constituents.

**A non-confrontational approach:** FWBH and the RJI asked the city council to establish a task force to examine the feasibility of the policy. To be chaired by a West Fresno district councilmember, the task force would include representatives of FWBH staff, city council districts, and the RJI.

In deciding how best to advocate for the new policy, FWBH could have taken a more confrontational approach to the city government – for example, calling for the first-source hiring without proposing that government play a key role in the feasibility task force. But for several reasons, FWBH decided to reach out to city government from the outset. The decision was likely based partly on some organizational self-interest: Two of the FWBH agencies, which relied on public funding, did not wish to jeopardize their standing with government agencies by waging campaigns against them. Also, there was the hope that if city government was part of the task force, it would have a stronger interest in underwriting the costs of the feasibility study. In addition, FWBH seems to have decided -- as many more seasoned advocacy groups do -- that one effective way to bring about policy change is by forming close alliances with governmental and other groups that have the power to make change.

**Not enough preparatory work:** Despite any promise of the campaign's beginning, the collaborative failed to lay enough groundwork to successfully advance its proposal to convene a task force. The proposal was presented without an effort to first educate council members about the first-source concept. This was a misstep in a political environment where a policy that regulated an employer's discretion to hire might be regarded with suspicion -- and sometimes even hostility -- and where publicly subsidized efforts to provide employment-related assistance to disadvantaged constituents are often characterized as wasteful and ineffective.

In the days and hours before the proposal to form a task force was to be presented to the city, the lead councilmember's office and collaborative officials began to receive questions and even disparaging remarks about the idea from some of the other council members. FWBH and the sponsoring councilmember consequently decided to table the proposal indefinitely; they then met three more times and ultimately reaffirmed this decision.

Interviewees inside and outside FWBH who reflected on the first-source experience agreed that it highlighted collaborative partners' inexperience as advocates: The partners did not cultivate city council members to the point that a majority of them would have at least been receptive to exploring the first-source concept, let alone to the point where some members would have been willing to introduce the idea as their own. The partners also did not mobilize FBWH local constituents to come out to demonstrate their support of first-source hiring. A FWBH administrator noted:

What I've learned about policy is that it takes a combination. You have to have a certain amount of community organizing. You have to have a certain amount of backroom politics. You have to have a certain amount of relationships.

## **Co-Sponsorship of a Policy Summit**

In fall 2006, FWBH and the RJI held a day-long conference titled *Worlds Apart Futures Together: Strategies for Creating Prosperity and Sharing Opportunity in Fresno*. Inspired in part by the previously cited Brookings Institution publication's designation of Fresno as the U.S. city with the highest prevalence of concentrated poverty,<sup>76</sup> the summit sought to expose the Fresno community to the problem, examine innovative policies from other parts of the country to address it, and secure commitments to try to solve it.

**A successful event:** The summit drew a diverse group of over 300 participants, many of whom met one another for the first time. Attendees included elected officials (two city councilmembers, a state assemblyman, and the mayor), business leaders, CBO representatives, and heads of various public agencies. Besides featuring speakers including one of the co-authors of the Brookings Institution publication and The California Endowment's president, the summit gave attendees opportunities to discuss issues with one another. In effect, the conference served as a starting point for critical conversations about Fresno's concentrated poverty problem that could engage a much broader spectrum of discussants than had so far come together to discuss this issue. The event also provided a fitting end to Phase II in positioning FWBH formally and publicly as a key player in future policy discussions of this nature.

## **Preparing Community Advocates**

To pursue its goal of training grassroots advocacy leaders, the collaborative decided to set up six-month training modules for 15 trainees – five to be selected by each partner agency. The training would inform participants about local, state, and national issues that affect the employment and well-being of their communities, and would give them guidance on both how to network with other community groups with employment-related interests and to lobby employers and public officials. Each cohort of trainees would become members of CWBH's Community Leadership Development Forum (CLDF). The goal was to train 60 leaders during Phase II.<sup>77</sup>

**Finding training participants:** The leadership trainings, which began in August 2004, were scheduled for weekly meetings at convenient times for participants. The collaborative prepared an application that asked why applicants wanted to participate in the training, what they expected to gain from it, and what community activities they had already taken part in. But FWBH had difficulty finding suitable candidates, especially because of the length of the six-month training commitment. While some of the trainees who were eventually recruited seemed well suited to the experience, others appeared to be less than ideal. For instance, one was a youth who was having difficulty in school and another was a veteran of community organizations and activities, who found the CLDF instruction too elementary.

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<sup>76</sup> Berube, and Katz (2005).

<sup>77</sup> In order to improve the collaborative's chance of reaching this goal, the number of participants selected by an agency for each cohort was later raised from five to seven.

**Need for English-language proficiency was a problem:** The collaborative originally hoped to make CLDF training available in a number of languages besides English. But especially given the large number of languages spoken in the Targeted Neighborhoods, FWBH concluded this was not feasible and thus held trainings in English only.<sup>78</sup> This was a problem, particularly for FCNA, since training limited to English prevented the agency from recruiting first-generation Hmong immigrants, including Hmong clan leaders. “In our community, the clan leader is most influential in mobilizing the people,” said an FCNA staff member. “But these are the people who don’t speak English.” However, FCNA did subsequently secure foundation funding to hold a Hmong-language leadership training session for clan leaders and other Hmong speakers.

**Planning and refining the training:** Although FCNA took the lead on advocacy training, the partner agencies worked together to draft its curriculum. The first training series primarily consisted of presentations by outside speakers on a range of topics – local employment, cultural diversity, affordable housing, transportation, education, health, social services, immigration, advocacy practices, and conflict resolution.

The completion rate for the first set of sessions was lower than collaborative members had hoped. When the series ended, FWBH established an advisory council made up of its graduates and asked the group to help revise the curriculum. Based on the council’s feedback, the training was reduced from six months to three.<sup>79</sup> The first cohort of trainees also found the sessions too didactic. To make them more participatory and to better help trainees build leadership skills, rather than only digesting policy information, FWBH engaged a consultant to refine the curriculum and serve as trainer.

The four subsequent CLDF training series developed by the consultant each consisted of two parts. The first set of sessions continued to feature outside speakers, but the second half focused on leadership skills development, covering: goal-setting, conflict management, ethics, stress and time management, leadership and communication styles, managing change, and self-presentation.

In other changes designed to improve participation rates, each prospective trainee signed a contract agreeing to attend 9 of 12 sessions in order to graduate, and attendees of 10 of 12 sessions were promised a stipend.<sup>80</sup> Participants also agreed to take part in a class project that was to be completed within six months, with that deadline to be extended if needed.

**Difficulties finding enduring purpose and roles:** By the end of Phase II, the collaborative had offered five CLDF trainings, which yielded 62 graduates. But with a few exceptions, the graduates did not find ways to collectively turn their training into contributions to

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<sup>78</sup> To reflect the linguistic diversity of the Targeted Neighborhoods, training for FCNA clients alone would have had to be provided in three languages other than English -- Hmong, Cambodian, and Vietnamese.

<sup>79</sup> Also, even though Saturday sessions had originally been thought to be more convenient for some participants, they were eliminated because it had been too difficult to find outside speakers who wanted to commit to a Saturday event.

<sup>80</sup> Stipend amounts were not specified in the contract though subsequent field research indicated the amount to be \$200. However, it was unclear if all FWBH partners followed through on this commitment.

their communities. One major obstacle to their doing so was that FWBH did not have an ongoing policy campaign through which graduates could make this contribution.

The first, second, and third cohorts were encouraged to brainstorm about neighborhood issues they could address. One issue that emerged was the lack of resident awareness of community resources. To help meet this need, the advocates organized a block party where service providers were invited to disseminate information to FWBH constituents. One staff member praised the efficiency of using a single event to cover the many problems that affect disadvantaged communities:

I think that maybe you can't choose just one, for example [participants] say, health access is an issue, employment [access] is an issue, so that's why we are having this informational day where they invite a number of service providers to come out there [because by doing so] they address a number of issues.

In the same vein, the advocates also sponsored and invited local residents to an orientation and open house for a local WIA One-Stop center.

These efforts, which were led by two chairpersons per CLDF cohort who were selected by cohort members, were orchestrated by the advocates themselves, without FWBH staff direction. In fact, FWBH had neither a staff member assigned nor a system in place to follow up with the graduates. "They can pretty much tackle the project independently," said one FWBH staff member, "with only financial support from us, from the collaborative."

The fourth and fifth cohorts asked for training to show them how to lobby at the state capital. They subsequently were part of a FCNA-sponsored trip to the capital where they discussed issues affecting their neighborhoods with elected officials – an experience, according to FWBH staff, that the participants very much enjoyed.

One expectation for the graduates was that they would propose themselves for election to boards of nonprofits, school committees, and other local organizations. But perhaps because of the growing tendency of nonprofits, – even CBOs in low-income neighborhoods -- to recruit board members with legal and financial expertise, securing board membership proved to be a challenge for the advocates. Central California Legal Services, with which FWCED has had a close relationship, did appoint an FWCED advocate to represent West Fresno residents on its board. Otherwise, the advocates had no success with this goal.

A few other scattered activities grew out of the training. FWCED periodically turned to the advocates for help with planning and marketing its events. Some graduates helped the Central California Forum on Refugee Affairs, which reaches out to employers to persuade them to hire Southeast Asian refugees.

**Mixed reactions to the experience:** A small number of advocates who were interviewed about their CLDF experience offered differing views of how meaningful and useful it had been. Some had only hazy recollections of the training. Others, especially those who had come to the project with a history of community volunteering, valued the training sessions, citing both newly

acquired communication skills and the information they had received about local resources to which they could refer neighbors or classmates.

Some interviewees said that even long after the training had ended they continued to apply its lessons to their own efforts to be helpful citizens. For example, one person, a librarian, noted that the information about community resources enabled her to better assist library users. Another interviewee was able to help a student who was a daughter of Mexican farm workers and who had become pregnant but wanted to finish high school. The parents, who worked, felt they could not afford to let their daughter do so since they could not provide child care while she was in school. The family did not realize that the daughter qualified for public assistance, which would pay for child care while she finished high school. The advocate was able to direct the young woman to the CalWORKS office. “I would have never thought in a million years that I could have helped like that,” said this advocate. Besides the way in which the training promoted helping skills, some interviewees noted that by exposing them to fellow trainees of other ethnicities, ages, and neighborhoods, the sessions taught them a great deal about other cultural practices and perspectives.

FWBH expended a considerable amount of time and funding on selecting and preparing advocate trainees. But the collaborative did not follow up on this investment. Without staff and a system in place for follow-up, FWBH ultimately did not use the advocates in any organized way to help the ERCs reach out to local residents, nor did the collaborative enlist the advocates in a campaign to influence public policy – a problem exacerbated by FWBH’s own lack of such a campaign. However, FWBH did plan to make a more concerted effort in Phase III of the initiative to place CLDF graduates in community task forces and other groups where they could put their community organizing knowledge to use.

## **F. Conclusions**

Challenged both by inexperience in providing workforce development services and a tough environment for promoting the interests of hard-to-employ workers, FWBH collaborative members did not make as much progress as their TOC called for. Nevertheless, over the period covered by this report, the collaborative came a long way in building the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to promote the concerns of its constituents. Following are key conclusions on the FWBH experience:

**An authentic collaborative:** Several factors seem to have contributed to this cohesiveness of the FWBH collaborative. They include agency leaders and many staff members committed to collaboration, the luxury given to the three CBOs of not having to compete with one another for funds for workforce development projects over a relatively long time period, and a well crafted TOC planning process.

**Employment gains:** FWBH successfully engaged residents with serious barriers to employment, including the kinds of jobseekers who have not always been the focus of Fresno’s workforce development system. Job developers worked hard to find job openings in participants’ own neighborhoods and openings suitable for immigrants. By the end of this report period, the ERCs had helped sizeable numbers of hard-to-employ clients – even though by no means a

majority of ERC users -- find jobs, including positions in the relatively well-paid construction field. In addition, outcomes suggest that the ERCs helped to improve the earnings and occupations of a substantial minority of clients. And FWBH was more successful than other CWBH sites in connecting participants to vocational training opportunities.

**Valuable relationships with mainstream government workforce development system:** The ERCs established formal agreements with the WIB and EDD that in effect made the ERCs community-based satellites of the One-Stops and that gave them unprecedented access to One-Stop technology and other resources for their constituents. For its part, through job fairs and work on the Empowerment Zone, the collaborative stepped up to the challenge of conducting outreach to residents and employers on behalf of government agencies.

**Advocacy activities fell short of original vision:** Fresno was one of only two CWBH sites to train community residents. While creating and implementing a leadership training curriculum was an achievement that was valued by many of the individual trainees, once FWBH's own advocacy efforts had stalled, the collaborative was not able to develop an alternative structure to harness the skills and enthusiasm of these residents. Also on the advocacy front, FWBH's failure to lay enough groundwork for its first-source hiring proposal derailed this effort.

**FWBH's policy and advocacy agenda cultivated critical relationships:** While FWBH was unsuccessful in securing hiring agreements or municipal first-source hiring policies, by the end of Phase II, the collaborative had succeeded in establishing working partnerships with a number of key local and regional elected officials, government administrators, and business leaders and in finding a place for itself on high-profile policymaking boards and task forces that seldom had sought representation from CBOs. Through these accomplishments, the collaborative had positioned itself for inclusion in future discussions on public policies of significance to its constituents.

## CHAPTER 3: Los Angeles Works for Better Health

The original expectations for the entire CWBH initiative were in part inspired and shaped by the successes of groundbreaking advocacy campaigns waged by coalitions of Los Angeles community-based-organizations (CBOs). The campaigns, which have been emulated by advocacy groups across the country, secured funds from developers, industry leaders, and the Workforce Investment Board (the agency that operates a locality's federally funded Workforce Investment Act system). This approach, known as Targeted Industries Trainings, aims to prepare residents for employment in industries with living-wage jobs and career advancement opportunities, and encompasses hiring agreements with local employers. These Los Angeles advocacy campaigns helped to create a regional political climate in which developers and politicians alike regard local hiring agreements as standard business practice.

Three of the CBOs involved in these pre-CWBH campaigns -- the Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition-Community Partners (ACJC-CP), the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CoCo), and Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education (SCOPE) -- were chosen as Los Angeles Works for Better Health (LAWBH) grantees because they had been instrumental in developing these seminal campaigns and their advocacy models. (See Box 3.1 for capsule descriptions of these agencies.)

### Box 3.1

#### Los Angeles Works for Better Health Collaborative Members

**1. Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition- Community Partners (ACJC-CP--Formerly ACJC)**

**Founded:** 1999  
**Budget:** approximately \$330,000 per annum (the CWBH grant)  
**Staff size:** 4  
**Constituency:** primarily African-American  
**Target Area:** communities surrounding the 20-mile long Alameda Corridor (from Long Beach to the downtown railyards).  
**Mission:** To uphold and develop strategies that promote and sustain job opportunities, employment, job training and benefits for residents from low income communities on public works projects.  
**Approach:** job training.

**2. Chinatown Service Center (CSC)**

**Founded:** 1975  
**Budget:** \$5.7 million<sup>a</sup>  
**Staff size:** 90  
**Constituency:** Asian population of Los Angeles County  
**Target Area:** Chinatown, the San Gabriel Valley and North Hills  
**Mission:** To offer education, health and human services to Asian and other immigrant and refugee communities, to enhance their ability to contribute to the cultural fabric of the United States.  
**Approach:** direct services (medical, human services and workforce development)

(continued)

### Box 3.1 (continued)

#### 3. Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CoCo)

**Founded:** 1990  
**Budget:** \$2.8 million<sup>b</sup>  
**Staff size:** 29 (2003)  
**Constituency:** African-American and Hispanic  
**Target Area:** South Los Angeles  
**Mission:** To transform the social and economic conditions that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty by building a permanent community institution involving thousands of people in creating, influencing and changing public policy.  
**Approach:** community organizing.

#### 4. East LA Community Corporation (ELACC)

**Founded:** 1995  
**Budget:** \$1 million (2004)  
**Staff size:** 23  
**Constituency:** Hispanic  
**Target Area:** Boyle Heights and unincorporated East Los Angeles  
**Mission:** To advocate for economic and social justice in Boyle Heights and unincorporated East Los Angeles by building grassroots leadership, self-sufficiency and access to economic development opportunities for low and moderate income families, and to use its development expertise to strengthen existing community infrastructure in communities of color by developing and preserving neighborhood assets.  
**Approach:** housing and economic development and community organizing.

#### 5. Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)

**Founded:** 1993 (as AGENDA)  
**Budget:** [Information not available from SCOPE.]  
**Staff size:** 19  
**Constituency:** African-American and Hispanic  
**Target Area:** South Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, Silver Lake/Echo Park  
**Mission:** To develop multi-dimensional approaches that reduce and eliminate structural barriers to social and economic opportunities for poor and economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color.  
**Approach:** community organizing

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>See [www.cscla.org](http://www.cscla.org)

<sup>b</sup>2003 annual report

It was originally expected that the LAWBH collaborative, which consisted of the three groups involved in pre-CWBH campaigns along with the Chinatown Service Center (CSC), and the East LA Community Corporation (ELACC), would continue the policy advocacy work and community organizing that had marked the previous campaigns. However, LAWBH unfolded as

a fragmented effort, for several reasons. A decision of CWBH funders to allow CoCo and SCOPE to continue with their pre-existing work rather than to pursue new campaigns, discussed further below, ultimately resulted in LAWBH falling short of realizing its potential in undertaking the advocacy component of LAWBH. A decision to include participants of trainings that predated CWBH, based on the trainees living in the LAWBH Targeted Neighborhoods, made it difficult to sort through which employment outcomes could be ascribed to LAWBH. These trainings were – and are still -- supported by numerous other funding sources, and at a level of funding far greater than the level of resources provided by CWBH. Further, the assumption that the newer members of the coalition would be able to learn from the pre-CWBH activities of the established advocacy groups did not prove true, mainly because the advocacy groups pre-existing CWBH stuck to their own organizational agendas and activities.

The implementation of Phase II in the Los Angeles site looked very different from that of the other CWBH collaboratives, which generally had little or no recent experience with advocacy, and which mainly concentrated on offering job search assistance, not training, to CWBH participants at neighborhood centers. To understand the distinctive LAWBH experience, it is helpful to view it against the backdrop of the previous Los Angeles advocacy campaigns and their legacy of Targeted Industries Training programs. The next section describes the campaigns that are most relevant to the story of LAWBH.

## **A. The Los Angeles Advocacy Campaigns: A Foundation for CWBH**

### **The Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition**

ACJP (later known as ACJP-CP) was formed in the late 1990s in response to the development of the Alameda Corridor – a \$2.4 billion road-rail project, which paralleled Alameda Street along its 20-mile route between the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to the nexus of rail yards south of downtown Los Angeles. At the time, the Alameda Corridor Project was the largest public infrastructure project underway in the U.S. Local organizations wanted to acquire some benefit from this project by demanding that a portion of the new jobs generated by the construction go to residents of the low-income communities that it was going to affect.

In March 1998, after a long and extensive grassroots campaign, the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) adopted a plan submitted by ACJC requiring that 30 percent of all work hours on the project be performed by residents of the affected low-income communities along the corridor. The agreement included a commitment for 1,000 training slots that would go to low-income corridor residents over the three-year life of the project.

When ACTA invited bids for the construction training program, ACJC applied for and won the contract. Under the auspices of ACJC-TEC (Job Training and Development Program), ACJC recruited CBOs all along the Alameda Corridor to become intake sites for the training. The coalition staff was responsible for producing outreach materials, training the intake site staff, providing monthly orientations to residents, and maintaining a database of applicants. By the project's end in 2001, 1,281 Corridor residents had graduated from the training program, and 710 had been placed in construction industry jobs.

At the beginning of the CWBH initiative, ACJC had almost completed its Alameda Corridor training contract. Once the construction project ended and no further funding from the project was available, the coalition's member organizations dropped away. ACJC went from being a 40-partner coalition to an organization with a staff of four, almost exclusively funded by CWBH.

### **The Healthcare Career Ladder Training Program (HCCLTP)**

HCCLTP was formed through the efforts of SCOPE and its efforts exemplify the role that CBOs can play in the workforce development system, not just as service providers, but as advocates. In 2001, SCOPE called on the City of Los Angeles WIB to target the region's health care sector for a *sector-based workforce development initiative*. The focus of such initiatives is on growth sectors that offer employees well-paid jobs and opportunities to advance their careers. To secure new positions, the local WIA system cultivates employers in the targeted sector and connects them to qualified workers through its WIA business services and through its One-Stops. In addition, WIA dollars are often invested in training and intensive services to increase the pool of qualified job candidates.<sup>81</sup>

Typically, however, sector-based workforce initiatives are promoted by business and/or local governments, and the priority is to supply sector employers with the most qualified candidates. SCOPE proposed something more unusual – using the Targeted Industries Training approach to give low-income and less qualified jobseekers access to vocational training for living-wage, entry-level jobs with benefits and career advancement opportunities in growth industries. SCOPE mobilized an extensive coalition of labor unions and grassroots African-American and Hispanic organizations to advocate for the sector initiative.<sup>82</sup> With implications for LAWBH planning that are discussed below, the period of developing and mobilizing support for HCCLTP coincided with the CWBH Phase I planning period.

In July 2002, in a major victory for SCOPE, HCCLTP was launched with \$1 million in funding from the Los Angeles City WIB and matching funds from key regional healthcare employers. HCCLTP is coordinated by a One-Stop, and partners with a number of major healthcare employers to guarantee jobs for graduates of the training program.<sup>83</sup> These employers contributed both funding for the training and in-kind resources, such as the use of their laboratories for the trainings. The trainings were conducted by local community colleges, training organizations, and health care unions. The HCCLTP Executive Committee, which includes SCOPE, was responsible for monitoring the program.

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<sup>81</sup> WIBs across the nation – including WIBs in Fresno, Sacramento, and San Diego -- have promoted sector-based workforce development initiatives, particularly for the health care sector, which offers living-wage jobs, career advancement opportunities, and unfilled vacancies.

<sup>82</sup> See SCOPE website <http://www.scopela.org>.

<sup>83</sup> Cambrian Homecare, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Country Villa Health Services, Fountain Gardens, Hollywood Presbyterian, Kaiser Permanente, Martin Luther King, Jr.-Harbor Hospital, LAC+USC Medical Center, West Palm Care Center, Pacifica Hospital of the Valley, and Personal Assistance Services Council. (MLK Hospital has since downsized considerably.)

As part of its work in the HCCLTP campaign, SCOPE challenged the funding priorities of the Los Angeles City WIB, which allocated most of its WIA funding to an unusually large number of One-Stops.<sup>84</sup> According to SCOPE and other critics, these One-Stops functioned primarily as labor exchanges that cycled jobseekers in and out of low-wage jobs. Furthermore, critics contended, low-income jobseekers with barriers to employment were routinely bypassed for the few available WIA-funded training opportunities in favor of better prepared candidates -- thus helping to ensure that One-Stops could meet their WIA performance requirements for post-training job placements and wages. SCOPE called on the WIB to allocate a larger share of its WIA funding to trainings that would prepare low-income jobseekers and low-wage workers for better-paying jobs with career prospects. In a sign of SCOPE's success in enacting this agenda, the Targeted Industries Training concept was incorporated into Los Angeles City WIB policy (although HCCTLP, as well as the rest of the WIA system, suffered from reduction in federal funding).<sup>85</sup>

### **Workplace Hollywood**

The history of the Workplace Hollywood project starts with the DreamWorks Studio, which between 1997 and 1998 stood to receive \$90 million of public subsidies to build a studio in Playa Vista. SCOPE and City Councilmember Ruth Galanter led an effort to make sure that some of this public money ended up benefiting the city's low-income communities. (CoCo, which views itself as a sister agency to SCOPE, supported this effort.) Eventually, it was agreed that DreamWorks would provide \$5 million to train residents of low-income communities for jobs in the entertainment industry. DreamWorks ultimately did not build the studio -- and thus did not take the public subsidies -- but because it remained committed to the agreement, in 2001 it created Workplace Hollywood. DreamWorks capitalized an endowment to maintain this organization, and both SCOPE and CoCo have a place on its board of directors.

The goal of Workplace Hollywood was to assist the "historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged to get jobs in the entertainment industry." Supporters of the project pointed out that the industry, which is known for its nepotism and is surrounded by mystique, makes its employment opportunities difficult for outsiders to understand and penetrate.

The ideas behind Workplace Hollywood were not new. People in the industry, such as producer Kathleen Kennedy, had long been advocating for increased diversity in its workforce, and the industry was already funding small organizations to train people for entry-level industry jobs. However, as Workplace Hollywood's executive director said, there was "no way to know if these trainings were impacting the industry."

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<sup>84</sup> In challenging the WIB's funding priorities, SCOPE also took on other CBOs that had WIB contracts to operate One-Stops in low-income neighborhoods. They faced the prospect of cuts in their One-Stop funding -- even a possible reduction in the overall numbers of One-Stops -- should the WIB be persuaded to shift more funding towards training.

<sup>85</sup> For background on the WIA system of job placement and training, the incentives and pressures WIA publicly funded agencies face, see Linda Kato with Kay E. Sherwood (August 2008), *California Works for Better Health: Creative Responses to Local Needs*.

Workplace Hollywood was to serve as an umbrella organization to coordinate the efforts of the training organizations, to track graduates, and to monitor the trainings to ensure that they met industry standards (and if not, to direct resources to organizations in charge of the trainings to get them up to standard). Most Workplace Hollywood funds were given in grants to CBOs that were already doing training in order to increase the number of their training slots. Funding was also extended to more grassroots organizations that Workplace Hollywood had identified in underserved parts of the city.

The existing trainings coordinated by Workplace Hollywood targeted entry-level jobs, such as production assistant and entry-level unionized positions. The industry's unions had been willing to assist in establishing the program, helping to create the trainings and providing teachers, but it had already proven to be a challenge to get graduates into union jobs. Workplace Hollywood discovered that this continued to be the case, especially after a contraction in the industry, with many productions moving to Canada because of cheaper production costs.

### **B. Selection of CWBH Grantees: Implications for the Collaborative**

Impressed by the work of ACJC-CP, CoCo, and SCOPE in Los Angeles advocacy campaigns, the CWBH funders sought these organizations out, hoping they would bring their experience to the CWBH initiative. During the early planning stages of CWBH, SCOPE and CoCo (along with the Center on Policy Initiatives from San Diego) were invited to hold advisory talks with the funders.<sup>86</sup> What the prospective grantees took away from these discussions was the impression that CWBH funding was to be a capacity-building grant, providing them with resources to both continue and enhance their existing programs and projects, rather than undertake substantially new and different work – an impression that would shape the Los Angeles site's implementation of CWBH for years to come. By the time the Phase II TOC was being developed, these grantees understood that CWBH goals had changed substantially from their original impression of them, but the desire to bring their existing individual activities to scale remained.

The two other organizations invited to join the collaborative, Chinatown Service Center (CSC) and East LA Community Corporation (ELACC), had limited experience in advocacy work. CSC, among other activities, operated a WIA One-Stop, and ELACC was primarily known for the development of affordable housing. However, these agencies were included in the collaborative mainly in the hope that they could strengthen their capacity for advocacy by working alongside partners that had more community-organizing experience.

Phase II advocacy work did not materialize to the extent anticipated. This was mainly because LAWBH activities focused on targeted industries trainings and job placements that were available through organizations such as HCCLTP that had been created through past advocacy campaigns or other initiatives. The two advocacy-oriented groups that were part of LAWBH, CoCo and SCOPE, did not try to use their resources to launch new advocacy efforts. (ACJC-CP, which had its roots in advocacy work, had by this point shifted its focus to training.) Thus, CSC and ELACC were not able to benefit from the mentoring relationship centered on advocacy that

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<sup>86</sup> In fact, SCOPE was approached to become a Technical Assistance Provider for CWBH, although it declined in favor of becoming a grantee.

was originally envisioned -- a situation that, in turn, made it less likely that the collaborative would coalesce.

Adding to the fragmentation of the collaborative's work was another aspect of the grantee selection process -- choosing organizations that served three different ethnicities (Asian, Hispanic, and African-American) in three different neighborhoods that cover a large geographic area. For instance, there are almost 30 miles between the offices of CoCo and ELACC. (The next section provides more detail on the LAWBH target area.) Thus, it is not surprising that the grantees resisted any suggestions made by the CWBH Administration that the collaborative concentrate its efforts on one neighborhood. Instead, Phase II activities were developed to serve specific ethnicities or particular neighborhoods, changing the concept of "collaboration" to the coordination of separate and different programs.

### C. The LAWBH Targeted Neighborhoods<sup>87</sup>

#### Los Angeles Works for Better Health

Figure 3.1

Los Angeles Works for Better Health Target Neighborhoods



<sup>87</sup> This section includes information from: Economic Roundtable, "Neighborhood Indicators Report, Los Angeles Collaborative, California Works for Better Health," May 19, 2003. The Roundtable was engaged by the collaborative to report on key demographic features and economic conditions to use in the Phase II Theory of Change (TOC) planning process.

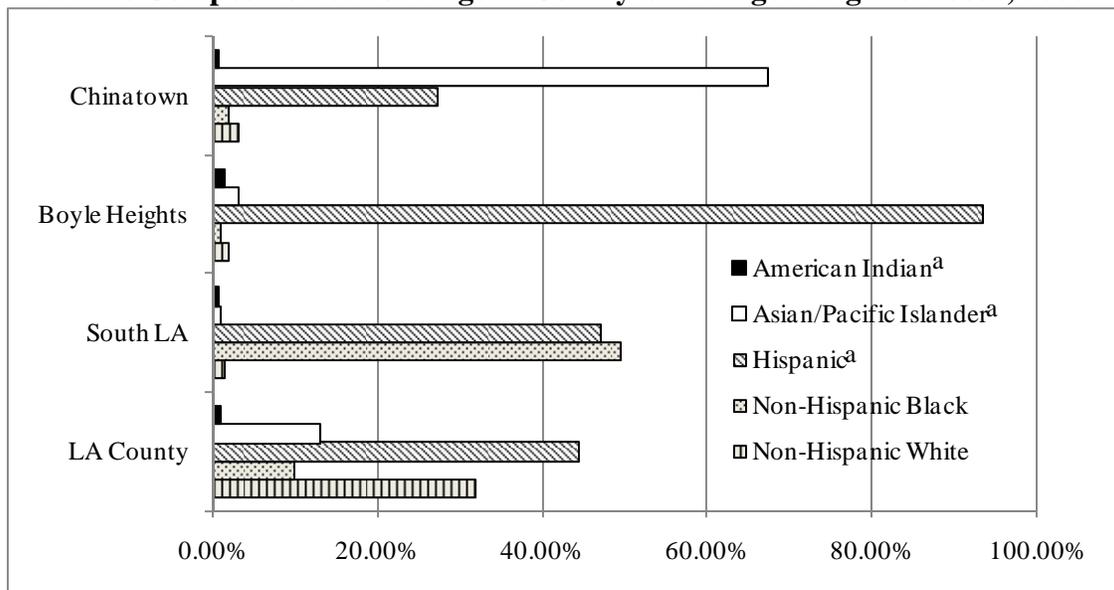
LAWBH was originally directed at three Targeted Neighborhoods comprising zip codes in Chinatown, East Los Angeles, and South Los Angeles, which were described in the Phase II proposal as “poor or working-class communities.” At the beginning of Phase II, the collaborative secured and acted on the verbal approval of the outgoing CWBH Administrator to incorporate new zip codes in South and East Los Angeles and adjacent to Chinatown into the Targeted Neighborhoods.<sup>88</sup> Although contiguous, the Phase II Targeted Neighborhoods – Chinatown, a portion of East Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and South Los Angeles -- represent a vast swath of the city, and vary greatly in ethnic composition. Following are some highlights of the characteristics of these Targeted Neighborhoods.

**Mixed, predominantly, Hispanic ethnicity:** According to 2000 U.S. Census data, Hispanics form the largest single ethnic group in Los Angeles County, comprising 45 percent of the population. That Hispanic population is concentrated in East Los Angeles (94 percent of Boyle Heights is Hispanic) and increasingly, South Los Angeles (47 percent). The population of South Los Angeles is 50 percent African-American, but it is projected that if recent trends continue, Hispanics will soon become the majority group in the area. Chinatown remains primarily Asian (67 percent), even though when Asian immigrant families become established, they tend to move out of Chinatown to areas such as the San Gabriel Valley.

### Los Angeles Works for Better Health

Figure 3.2

Ethnic Composition of Los Angeles County and Target Neighborhoods, 2000



SOURCE: 2000 Census US Census

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>Categories are not mutually exclusive.

<sup>88</sup> The resulting target area corresponded to the following zip codes: 90002, 90003, 90007, 90012, 90013, 90018, 90023, 90026, 90031, 90033, 90037, 90044, 90047, 90059, 90062, 90063, 90731, and 90732 (although subsequently the collaborative became confused about which zip codes had been approved and decided to drop 90026.) Most of the Targeted Neighborhoods zip codes fall within the City of Los Angeles, but some of the zip codes in South Los Angeles overlap with the unincorporated communities of Westmont and West Athens.

**Prevalence of limited English proficiency:** One of the challenges that faced the collaborative was attempting to assist constituents with limited English proficiency. Chinatown and Boyle Heights have a particularly large proportion of foreign-born residents – 70 and 52 percent respectively. Boyle Heights also has a large proportion of recent immigrants (defined as people who have migrated to the U.S. within the last five years): Recent immigrants make up 19 percent of the Boyle Heights population. In Chinatown, 57 percent of households are “linguistically isolated” (meaning no one over age 14 speaks English well) and in Boyle Heights that proportion is 41 percent.

**Low levels of educational attainment:** In a county where 2000 Census data show that 30 percent of the population 25 years and over has less than a high school diploma or GED (General Educational Development credential), the Targeted Neighborhoods stand out for their above-average rates of residents without even this basic level of education: In Chinatown, the proportion is 70 percent, in Boyle Heights, 60 percent, and in South Los Angeles, 48 percent.

**Transportation a challenge:** In Los Angeles County, where public transportation is often limited, only 7 percent of workers use it to commute to work. In the Targeted Neighborhoods, that proportion was 22 percent for East Los Angeles, 19 percent for Chinatown, and 15 percent in South Los Angeles.

**High rates of unemployment and underemployment:** According to 2000 U.S. Census data, Los Angeles County had an 8 percent unemployment rate while the Targeted Neighborhoods had rates of 15 percent (South Los Angeles), and 14 percent (Boyle Heights and Chinatown). These neighborhoods also suffered from under-employment: While the rate for part-time/seasonal employment in Los Angeles County was 40 percent of the workforce, in Chinatown it was 52 percent, in East Los Angeles, 48 percent, and in South Los Angeles, 45 percent.

**Over-representation of workers in low-wage occupations:** U.S. census data for 2000 show that 58 percent of Chinatown’s workers were employed as service workers or in production,<sup>89</sup> compared to 31 percent of the County workforce. The situation was similar in East and South Los Angeles, with a total of 53 and 45 percent of the workforce employed in these occupations.

**Higher-than-average poverty rates:** According to the 2000 Census, the Los Angeles County poverty rate was 19 percent in 1999. Rates in the Targeted Neighborhoods were 37 percent in East Los Angeles and 33 percent in both Chinatown and South Los Angeles.

#### **D. The LAWBH Theory of Change (TOC)**

During the Phase I planning sessions for LAWBH, the four other collaborative members deferred to SCOPE’s leadership. This is not surprising since SCOPE had extensive experience in planning advocacy campaigns that focused on workforce development. As noted, it was during Phase I that SCOPE was seeking funding for the Health Care Career Training Ladder Program

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<sup>89</sup> This category is listed as “production, transportation and material moving occupations” in the U.S. Census.

(HCCTLP), in particular by approaching the Los Angeles WIB. The Theory of Change (TOC) that SCOPE took the lead in developing was identical to HCCTLP's -- and it was enthusiastically embraced by both the LAWBH partners and the CWBH Administration. But when SCOPE subsequently won funding for HCCTLP from the WIB, the program no longer needed CWBH funding and the LAWBH TOC became obsolete.

At the same time, the CWBH Administration was shifting the emphasis of the project to the need to generate high job placement rates. CoCo and SCOPE (which, as noted, are closely linked to one another) were opposed to this approach, likening it to the pressures exerted by the local WIA system on its contractors, which encouraged them to pass over jobseekers with multiple barriers to employment. Rather than compromise, CoCo and SCOPE decided to leave the collaborative. Since the CWBH Administration believed the initiative needed these grantees, they were eventually persuaded to stay, but only after they were promised that they could use CWBH funds to support their existing efforts. (The details of how they did that are discussed shortly.)

In the interim between CoCo and SCOPE leaving and then rejoining LAWBH, the remaining grantees (ACJC-CP, CSC, and ELACC) scrambled to plan a replacement TOC. Ultimately, when SCOPE and CoCo again became collaborative members, the activities of each of the five grantees were soldered together into the final Phase II TOC. It focused on two strands of activities: 1) advocacy work to provide hiring agreements and other supports for the benefit of the Targeted Industries Training participants; and 2) workforce development activities in the form of Targeted Industries Trainings, with intensive case management for the hard-to-employ.

### **Targeted Industries Trainings**

To collaborative partners, these trainings offered potential opportunities for the low-income constituents of LAWBH, particularly those with serious barriers to employment, to train for better-paying jobs. As an ACJC-CP staff member observed:

Traditional WorkSource Centers [One-Stops] have numbers they have to pass...They aren't willing to take the time for these people...We understand that and know that it might take more than one go-around to get through. The difference is that we will be there for you. We have your back... We need that foundation. If we were satisfied and saw the benefits of the organizations that are already there, like the Work Source Centers, we wouldn't have to do this!

The TOC called for new Targeted Industries Trainings to be operated by ACJC-CP and CSC (targeting international trade and banking, respectively). Because SCOPE is not a traditional service agency and lacks the infrastructure to serve clients directly, the organization decided to make provisions to enable LAWBH partners to refer clients to two existing training programs, HCCTLP and Workplace Hollywood. In order to reward the cooperation of these programs and compensate them for the added workload involved in training LAWBH participants, SCOPE re-granted about one-fifth of its CWBH funds (\$180,000) to these two programs. (Some of the funds re-granted to Workplace Hollywood were used to start a new training.)

However, the clients referred by LAWBH service organizations were mostly ineligible for these pre-existing programs, owing to a lack of educational attainment, poor language skills and, in the case of Workplace Hollywood, age (the program targets young adults). In order to generate the job placement numbers established in the grant deliverables, SCOPE requested Workplace Hollywood and HCCTLP to co-enroll participants into LAWBH if they lived in LAWBH Targeted Neighborhood zip codes. Likewise, during Phase II, ACJC-CP created a Memorandum of Understanding to co-enroll participants with Century Community Training Program, which had had provided construction industries training for the Alameda Corridor program and had worked closely with ACJC-CP for many years. (ACJC-CP did not re-grant funds to Century.)

The collaborative asserted that multiple training programs for multiple industries in multiple locations were necessary to serve a disparate population of clients dispersed around the city. However, because each LAWBH partner managed its own training or co-enrolled clients of pre-existing training programs, the result was a loosely affiliated network of trainings, which for the most part were available only to the constituents of the individual organizations providing the training. In Phase I, this produced not the envisioned increase in training opportunities, but a continuation of the pre-CWBH approach for Targeted Industry Trainings.

**The case management component of the Targeted Industries Training strand:** When the Phase II TOC was being developed, the CWBH Technical Assistance Intermediaries insisted that something was needed to unify the workforce development efforts being independently pursued by each LAWBH partner. The partners decided to make the intensive case management model (originally proposed by CSC) a feature of all their trainings. In addition to unifying their work, collaborative members noted that prospective enrollees in the Targeted Industries Trainings who had serious barriers to employment would probably need the support services offered through case management to complete the trainings, and then to find and keep jobs.

The collaborative proposed offering one-year intensive case management (which the collaborative called ICM) to these clients. The partners hoped that by being able to demonstrate positive outcomes of ICM, it could become a model that they could present to the WIB and advocate for including in WIB-funded programs. However, at the point in the planning process when ICM was proposed, the CWBH Administration, which was increasingly concerned about how CWBH would reach its employment-related outcomes during the recently abbreviated Phase II funding period, refused to fund the high per-participant cost of ICM and instead required the collaborative to direct more of its funding to generating employment outcomes through the Targeted Industries Trainings. As a result, LAWBH ultimately operated a scaled-down version of ICM.

## **Advocacy**

In planning the original TOC, SCOPE had suggested meeting the requirement for an advocacy component by calling on the collaborative to pursue advocacy centered on removing barriers to employment. But SCOPE's vision of what this advocacy would consist of had been small-scale, focusing on winning possible enhancements to HCCTLP, such as transportation

assistance for participants. In the new version of the Phase II TOC, this idea was resurrected and again expressed in language that allowed for small-scale policy initiatives directed at enhancing the existing Targeted Industries Trainings, rather than at major new advocacy campaigns.

Another component of the Phase II advocacy plan was that CoCo and SCOPE would provide training in community organizing to partners that lacked advocacy experience. However, because LAWBH did not launch a new advocacy campaign, this training was restricted to a few training sessions, rather than the hands-on experience that would accompany the launching and waging an actual advocacy campaign. One important reason why the plan did not call for such a campaign was that by the beginning of Phase II, both SCOPE and CoCo were developing new campaigns that were not aligned with CWBH priorities – for SCOPE, a green-industries campaign, and for CoCo, a campaign to include college preparatory classes in local high schools. Both organizations felt they needed the freedom and resources to pursue these new directions.

With the community organizing component of the Phase II TOC scaled down considerably, the much-prized advocacy capacity of the organizations that had been sought by the funders was redirected away from CWBH. In the last year of Phase II, CoCo did launch the Youth Workforce Development Initiative, which grew out of its college-prep-classes campaign and which the collaborative adopted as its advocacy activity. This campaign, unlike its progenitor college-prep campaign, was aligned with CWBH priorities, but had not been anticipated when the Phase II TOC was planned.

### **Implications of the TOC Planning Process for the Intent of the Collaborative**

The planning experiences that brought LAWBH into Phase II predicted that the collaborative would have difficulty moving ahead as a cohesive, well articulated initiative. First was the lack of integration between the disparate parts of the revised TOC. Second was the tightening of performance measures, which discouraged CWBH grantees from helping the hard-to-employ. An executive director of one partner agency voiced the collaborative's concern that CWBH, could "miss all the same people WIB, CalWORKs and all the others miss." There was also disappointment about the funders' decision to scale back resources requested for Intensive Case Management.

### **Post TOC-Planning – The Structure of LAWBH Phase II Activities**

All of the forces that have just been discussed led to the development of a complex set of roles for collaborative members. Table 3.1 provides an overview of those roles. Consistent with the overall story of LAWBH, they are a mix of direct LAWBH activities, re-granting and other uses of LAWBH funds, and relationships with training programs that served LAWBH participants.

## Los Angeles Works for Better Health

### Table 3.1

#### Major Activities and Roles of Partner Agencies during Phase II

Partner Agency	Activities and Roles
The Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition – Community Partners (ACJC-CP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed and operated LAWBH International Trades Training.</li> <li>• Referred a few clients to other trainings.</li> <li>• Gave clients basic employment assistance using a Jobs Advocate.</li> <li>• Referred clients to case management.</li> </ul>
Chinatown Service Center (CSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed and operated LAWBH Banking Training.</li> <li>• Operated a case management component – initially for its own clients and those referred by AJCJ-CP and ELAAC, later only for its own clients.</li> <li>• Hired a Case Manager Supervisor who trained staff at ELACC and CoCo in clinical case management. (She left after one year and was not replaced.)</li> <li>• Hired a community organizer toward the end of Phase II.</li> <li>• Used some CWBH funds for a home health care training program.</li> </ul>
Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CoCo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used LAWBH funds to operate its homework assistance program by designating program participants as its caseload for LAWBH case management services.</li> <li>• Used LAWBH funds for its ex-offender service provider taskforce.</li> <li>• In the last year of Phase II, launched the Youth Workforce Development Initiative (YWDI) – a campaign focused on establishing career academies in high schools.</li> </ul>
East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided workforce development services through Job Advocates.</li> <li>• Referred clients to trainings.</li> <li>• Was a member of CoCo’s YWDI campaign.</li> </ul>
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regranted a portion of the funds to HCCTLP and Workplace Hollywood to cover the extra administration work inherent in co-enrolling clients.</li> <li>• Contributed funds to a HCCTLP medical billing training in order to restrict the training to those living in LAWBH target zip codes</li> <li>• Identified Workplace Hollywood trainings that seemed most appropriate for LAWBH participants.</li> </ul>

### **E. LAWBH Workforce Development Activities**

Only one of the LAWBH partners came to the CWBH initiative with a history of providing employment services or case management to clients. Two groups (CoCo and SCOPE) were advocacy organizations, one (ACJC-CP) had started as an advocacy group but had become almost exclusively a training entity, and another (ELAAC) was best known for developing affordable housing. None of these four had infrastructure for recruiting, assessing, assisting, and case managing workforce development clients, especially those with serious barriers to employment. (For instance, both SCOPE and CoCo’s offices are located in blank-faced buildings, heavily secured by fences and electronically operated doors – settings that do not encourage drop-in clients.) CSC, the only partner with a workforce development background, had no experience in securing hiring agreements for graduates of its job trainings, and like other

Los Angeles City One-Stop managers, primarily focused on offering jobseekers so-called WIA “core services” – focused on job search -- rather than on referring them to vocational training. Adding to these challenges, LAWBH, like the other CWBH sites, was trying to help people with multiple barriers to employment. It is therefore understandable that the collaborative struggled to implement new trainings, and to provide referrals and follow-ups for existing ones.

Before examining LAWBH training programs, this section first looks at the people who enrolled in them.

### **Who Participated in LAWBH Training Programs?**

Because grantees were allowed to co-enroll participants in pre-existing programs if they happened to live in LAWBH target zip codes, there are some questions about exactly who constituted a LAWBH participant and there are some uncertainties embedded in evaluation data about participants in LAWBH training programs. Some trainees who were asked to complete LAWBH MIS forms had not been referred to the training by an LAWBH partner, nor were they subsequently served by one (for instance, with job placement assistance or case management). Indeed, they might have never encountered an LAWBH staff person during the course of the CWBH initiative. When a random sample of Century and Workplace Hollywood training program graduates who had been co-enrolled in LAWBH were interviewed for this report, only a very few of them recognized the term “Los Angeles Works for Better Health” from the MIS forms, and none of them recognized the names of any of the LAWBH partner agencies. Because the co-enrollment policy obscured the data on characteristics of participants referred by or served by LAWBH grantees, the evaluators have attempted to distinguish between co-enrollees and other participants. Overall, 456 LAWBH participants completed intake and assessment forms for the CWBH MIS. Of these 456, 157 (34 percent) were co-enrolled clients who did not receive services from LAWBH partners.

The remaining 299 participants were all enrolled under the auspices of ACJC-CJ, CSC, or ELAAC. According to the CWBH MIS data, 41 percent of participants served by these three LAWBH partners were Hispanic, 34 percent African-American, and 21 percent Asian. There were more female (64 percent) than male participants. Despite an average age of 34, most of the group (64 percent) did not have children living in their households. Most participants (87 percent) were proficient in English and 29 percent had a high school diploma or GED. Slightly over half (53 percent) were unemployed when they enrolled in CWBH, but only 13 percent had full-time permanent jobs. Participants cited insufficient/poor work history (19 percent), limited English (16 percent), lack of education (16 percent) and lack of transportation (15 percent) as barriers to employment.<sup>90</sup> Most (55 percent) lacked health insurance.

Characteristics of the subgroups of participants enrolled by the three different agencies differed in some respects from those of the overall group. For example, ELAAC participants were almost all (97 percent) Hispanic, while CSC participants were more likely than the overall group to be female (75 percent). Box 3.2 describes the circumstances of one LAWBH

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<sup>90</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100 percent as participants were allowed to cite more than one barrier.

participant. Following the box, specific characteristics of participants in ACJC-CP, ELAAC, and CSC training programs are described.

### **Box 3.2**

#### **No Time to Learn English**

**Alma Rodriguez,**<sup>a</sup> a data entry clerk for a retail company, works only the hours the company needs her, which often include weekends, and she is not paid overtime unless she works over 40 hours weekly. Because she is classified as a part-time worker, she does not receive health insurance benefits. As glad as she is to have a job, her irregular hours make it hard to plan the rest of her life.

Ms. Rodriguez, who moved to the U.S. from Mexico City 24 years ago, knows that she needs to improve her English to advance to a better job, but says there's no time to learn. In fact, she passed the entrance exam to get into the local adult school, but she would have to attend at night, with classes not finishing until 9:15 PM. This presents transportation problems as some buses don't run after 8 PM. Even if she could find a bus that did run after 9:00 PM, she would need to take two buses for a trip home that is only 10 minutes by car.

With no health insurance, Alma, who has a bad leg from polio she suffered as a baby, has limited options for health care. The last time she had a health problem she had to pay the full cost of the doctor's visit. She was, however, able to have a mammogram and a pap smear because the doctor who had previously treated her when she was covered by health insurance is a family friend and did not charge for the procedures.

NOTES: <sup>a</sup> Names used in individual profiles that are included in this chapter have been changed.

### **The Targeted Industries Trainings Experience**

**ACJC-CP's International Trade Training Participants:** ACJC-CP initially referred some clients to Century for construction apprenticeship training, but most of their clients were steered towards their International Trade training. Some participants were referrals from Catholic Charities, with which ACJC-CP had a training contract, and ELACC and CSC also referred clients. ACJC-CP staff described the training participants as including people who had barriers to employment, such as ex-offender status, lack of a high school diploma, and homelessness. However, MIS data reveal that participants were on the whole well-educated: only 7 percent lacked a high school diploma or GED; a third (34 percent) had attended college; and 17 percent had graduated with a 2- or 4-year college degree. Ex-offender status was only cited by 9 percent of participants as a barrier to employment, although lack of work experience was cited with an 11 percent frequency. Participants apparently ranged greatly in age; one of the participants said his cohort included a high school student and a woman in her early 50s. The average age of the participants was 37 (slightly older than ELACC or CSC participants) and yet the ACJC participants were the least likely (58 percent) to have ever married, and only 47 percent had children living in their household.

There was a good balance of women and men among the participants, with marginally more women (56 percent). The racial make-up was mostly African American (71 percent), with a fairly large number of Hispanics (21 percent), and the remainder White or Asian. Holding the training on a Saturday seems to have encouraged the attendance of incumbent workers; less than half (47 percent) of the participants were unemployed at the time of training, although only 11 percent were in full-time, permanent jobs. The skill sets varied greatly among participants, from accountants and IT specialists to those with minimal skills and experience. The majority (52 percent) lacked health insurance.

Although there were very few participants (2 percent) with limited English proficiency, limited English was not a barrier to the training. “One of the jokes I make is that the international language of business is bad English. I spend the entire day with all kinds of broken English. So it’s not really a barrier,” said the instructor. “Very low-level criminal backgrounds,” did present more of a barrier, but “it was something that impeded [the participants] in their head... Most of them were minor things that would be embarrassing for someone with a conscience that held them back a lot, but which I can’t see employers carrying much about.” Even if the offenses were only misdemeanors, if candidates did not disclose this information in job applications, it could lead to problems when the companies conduct background checks. “It’s heartbreaking because how many jobs did this person not get because as a teenager they were caught for shoplifting?”

**ELACC’s LAWBH participants:** ELACC enrolled constituents who were seeking help with employment, and not just exclusively those who were interested in the Targeted Industries Trainings. The participants were most likely to be Hispanic (97 percent), female (65 percent) and with an average age of 32. ELACC also enrolled some young adults, but not many since they “don’t want to participate.” The ELACC clients were the most likely of all LAWBH participants to have children in their households (71 percent), although only 11 percent cited lack of childcare as a barrier to employment. Two of the staff noted that the characteristics of the clients probably reflected the locations chosen for outreach: the library, a book fair, and churches.

The majority (53 percent) of ELACC’s clients were unemployed when they enrolled in CWBH, although 19 percent were already in full-time, permanent jobs. Most participants (56 percent) lacked health insurance. ELACC’s many immigrant constituents were very interested in training to improve their employment prospects, but were hindered by limited English proficiency (32 percent), lack of a high school diploma or GED (25 percent), and lack of transportation (26 percent). In addition, some of ELACC’s clients were undocumented. One of the ELACC staff noted: “The immigrant community is very, very motivated... Our difficulty with it is that sometimes they can’t afford to go to a 40-hour [a week] training.” Only a few ELACC clients entered training of some kind, and even fewer graduated or were placed as a result of the Targeted Industries Trainings (specifically, International Trade).

**CSC’s LAWBH Participants:** CSC operates a WIA-funded WorkSource Center (One-Stop). The CWBH administration encouraged CSC to include all clients seeking employment services and living in the Target Neighborhoods in the CWBH enrollment and placement totals, not just those interested in Targeted Industries Trainings. It is not clear what proportion of CSC clients

fell into this category; the high rate of unemployment (64 percent) among participants who enrolled in CWBH and the low rate of those with full-time, permanent jobs (9 percent) may just be a consequence of the type of clientele attracted to a One-Stop. The LAWBH participants enrolled by CSC differed slightly from other training participants in that a sizable majority (75 percent) were female, were the most likely to have ever married (56 percent), but were the least likely to have children living in their households (only 43 percent). The average age was 32. Three quarters (74 percent) of the clients were Asian, with 10 percent African American and 10 percent Hispanic. Most participants had few educational barriers (25 percent had a GED or high school diploma; 34 percent received some college education; and 33 percent had graduated with either a 2 or 4 year degree). Although only 21 percent admitted to limited English proficiency, 35 percent of the participants saw their limited English as a major barrier to employment. Other barriers cited were poor work history (27 percent) and lack of transportation (19 percent.) A large proportion (60 percent) of participants lacked health insurance.

LAWBH implemented Targeted Industries Trainings in three different ways:

- Referring constituents to pre-existing Targeted Industries Trainings
- Creating new Targeted Industries Trainings
- Offering intensive case management to Targeted Industries Training participants

### **Referring Constituents to Pre-Existing Targeted Industries Trainings**

One of the ways in which the collaborative planned to provide training to constituents was to leverage partners' relationships with established training programs to ensure places for LAWBH clients that were referred to them. In the cases of Workplace Hollywood and HCCTLP, the leverage was strong. To start, these organizations owed their very existence to SCOPE advocacy campaigns. Moreover, as noted, SCOPE re-granted a portion of its CWBH funds to these two programs.

However, the experience of LAWBH with these programs highlights the challenges that training programs for better-paying occupations face in trying to assist low-income jobseekers with substantial barriers to employment. The programs were willing to accept LAWBH constituents, but all but a few of the LAWBH-referred clients were screened out, either because they could not pass the entrance exam or did not fit the program's eligibility criteria.

Following are synopses of LAWBH's experience with HCCLTP and Workplace Hollywood and with Century Community Training Program, which as noted, had been a longstanding ally of ACJC-CP.

#### ***Health Care Career Ladders Training Program (HCCLTP)***

**Disappointment for most LAWBH applicants to the training:** HCCLTP offers training for health care positions, such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), and medical billing, which that are much in demand among LAWBH constituents. One CSC staff member described CSC applicants for the training as highly motivated and hoping to move beyond the CNA level to become LVNs or registered nurses.

However, almost all LAWBH participants whom CSC and ELACC referred to HCCLTP were turned away after they failed to pass the entrance tests to determine whether they had the minimal reading, mathematics, oral comprehension, and other skills that were needed to complete the training. Many applicants referred by the Chinatown-based CSC lacked the English skills required for the training.

**Their disappointment not unique:** At the point when CSC and ELACC clients were being rejected for the training, the problem of low skills among HCCLTP applicants in general had already been brought to the attention of the HCCLTP Executive Committee, of which SCOPE is a member. The problem came to light after a review of HCCLTP applicant records showed a big discrepancy between the numbers of applicants who took the entrance test and were accepted for the training.<sup>91</sup> (A large percentage of screened-out applicants came from the LAWBH Targeted Neighborhoods of East and South Los Angeles.)

**HCCLTP tries a new approach:** To help applicants pass the entrance test, the HCCLTP Executive Committee decided to try adding a “bridge program” component to HCCLTP. The program was piloted at several One-Stop centers from March through June, 2006. Instruction is computer-based and geared to allowing individual participants to complete their study as soon as they reach the skill level needed to pass the entrance test. A coach was available to give participants personal attention as they progressed through the coursework. Special efforts were made to contact and recruit HCCLTP applicants who had previously failed the assessment test -- although ultimately of the 43 participants in the pilot only four people fit this category. Forty of the 43 participants completed the program and comparisons of their pre- and post-test scores showed marked improvement.

While this pilot was not undertaken under the LAWBH auspices, the experience of LAWBH constituents in having been screened out of HCCLTP highlights the need to address the kind of problems that eventually prompted the development of the bridge program. In its annual plan for 2006-2007, the Los Angeles City WIB called for bridge programs to be made available to prepare applicants with barriers to employment for all WIA-funded trainings.

### ***Workplace Hollywood***

LAWBH concentrated on the Workplace Hollywood programs that were in locations accessible to Targeted Neighborhood residents and that on the basis of site visits conducted by the SCOPE CWBH coordinator, seemed to be best suited to the needs of these residents. These programs included Streetlights, a six-week, full-time production assistant training program serving young people ages 18-24 years, and Hollywood Cinema Production Resources, which provides an eight-week, part-time training mostly for entry-level art and camera department jobs and which, like Streetlights, is targeted to trainees below age 25.

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<sup>91</sup> In 2005, 63 to 66 percent of applicants for CNA training, 68 to 82 percent of LVN applicants, and 80 percent of medical billing applicants failed the assessment. An HCCLTP official pointed out that failing applicants were not just the foreign-born applicants with limited English, but also U.S.-born applicants with high school diplomas or GED certificates; this official saw this as evidence of the poor quality of education in the public schools of low-income Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Following are some highlights of LAWBH's experience with Workplace Hollywood:

**Hesitations about referring people to the trainings:** LAWBH partner staff were not familiar with the entertainment industry and its jobs, so they were sometimes reluctant to recommend jobseekers to a program that they and their clients were concerned would not lead to a stable income. Although it is true that many jobs in the entertainment industry are project-based, with periods of unemployment between projects, the level of reimbursement for entry-level jobs is much higher than in many other industries and occupations. By managing their money wisely, workers can readily get by during periods of unemployment or underemployment, and earn a comfortable annual income.<sup>92</sup> And as one graduate of a Workplace Hollywood training program explained, the training program "teaches you budgeting for down time."

**Multiple challenges facing prospective trainees:** Notwithstanding the attractiveness of entertainment industry production jobs, LAWBH constituents -- encountering obstacles just as they did for the health care training -- found it hard to take advantage of the Workplace Hollywood trainings and to use them to make their way in the entertainment industry. Workplace Hollywood staff and training graduates highlighted the following problems: the industry's preference for young workers; the needs for English proficiency, for auto transportation to get to distant locations, and for very strong interpersonal skills to withstand the pressures on the set; and finally, intense competition for jobs in a setting where film-school graduates from all over the world are willing to pay their dues in entry-level positions.

**Adding administrative assistant training to the mix:**<sup>93</sup> Because LAWBH constituents were mostly ineligible for the production job trainings, SCOPE and Workplace Hollywood decided to use CWBH funds to add another training to prepare people to become administrative assistants in the entertainment industry. An administrative assistant could work in a major studio or, less commonly, in production companies, and would have the advantage of regular work hours and a fixed place of work.

The training was offered through Job Corps. However, once again, most people recruited from the LAWBH Targeted Neighborhoods could not meet the educational attainment levels required to enroll in the training -- with most averaging fourth or fifth grade reading and mathematics levels. Applicants also often lacked the social skills needed by an administrative assistant in a very demanding workplace environment. Toward the end of Phase II, Workplace Hollywood encouraged Job Corps to be more selective in its recruiting for the training. Also the course was renamed "administration," reflecting its expansion to include all entry-level administrative jobs, including those in cable companies and call centers. In another change, a workshop focusing on the life skills necessary to secure and retain a job in a professional environment was added to the course.

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<sup>92</sup> A production assistant will typically receive \$200 a day for commercials, \$150 for a photo still shoot and \$110 for a TV pilot (although there is no overtime pay).

<sup>93</sup> Although, strictly speaking, the administrative assistant training does not fall into the category of "Pre-Existing Trainings" that is the focus of this section, it is discussed here because it was an outgrowth of the other Workplace Hollywood trainings that existed before Phase II began.

### *Century Community Training Program (Century)*

Century offers an eight-week pre-apprenticeship training for the construction trades that includes job placement assistance.

**For LAWBH participants, familiar pattern of barriers to accessing training:** Century required training applicants to provide a valid California driver's license and proof of eligibility to work in the U.S., and to have access to auto transportation, as workers must travel from construction site to construction site. While a GED or high school diploma was not required to participate in the training, these credentials would subsequently be required of graduates if they wanted to apply for apprenticeships.

**Cultural barriers at CSC:** CSC could not interest its clients in construction training, with staff observing that there is a Chinese cultural bias against what is considered a "dirty" or inferior occupation.

**Few referrals from ACJC-CP:** This agency referred some people who attended its early outreach events and a few walk-in clients, but mostly focused on recruiting clients for its own International Trades training program.

### **Creating New Targeted Industries Trainings**

Besides lack of experience in operating training programs, one challenge that CSC and ACJC-CP faced in their new trainings was that, unlike HCCTLP, they did not screen out participants with low educational attainment and limited English proficiency. However, the biggest problem the agencies encountered was difficulty in securing agreements with targeted industry employers to hire training graduates – a key component of the Targeted Industries Training model used in the Los Angeles advocacy campaigns discussed earlier. Furthermore, the other members of the LAWBH collaborative did not assist CSC or ACJC-CP by using their collective power or connections to secure these agreements.

### *CSC's Banking Training*

CSC conducted two cycles of this training in 2006.<sup>94</sup> Focusing on entry-level jobs, the training was developed in part to accommodate constituents for whom trainings offered by Century, HCCLTP, and Workplace Hollywood were not appropriate. Not only would a CSC constituent living in Chinatown have a 30-mile trip to attend trainings in South Los Angeles, often without access to private transportation, but many also lacked the English proficiency needed to qualify for these trainings.

**Training intended to lead to placements for trainees with limited English:** To accommodate Chinese immigrants with limited English proficiency, CSC intended the new

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<sup>94</sup> CSC also incorporated a pre-existing home health care aide training into its LAWBH activities. So far, trainees have enrolled primarily to learn to care for family members, rather than for paid home health care employment.

program to target positions in banks in Chinatown and elsewhere that primarily served a Chinese-speaking clientele, and therefore needed employees proficient in Chinese dialects.

**Discouraging news from banks asked for advice:** In designing the training, CSC sought input from, and hiring agreements, with Chinese banks, but discovered that these banks required tellers to be proficient in English as well as Chinese dialects, and that most of them already had in-house training programs. In response, CSC changed the focus of its proposed training to customer service, as there are many job openings in this area. Also, since English proficiency was a requirement of the Chinese banks as well as other banks, CSC expanded the range of potential employers to include all banks.

**Content of the trainings:** The banking training that CSC ultimately offered was designed to prepare participants to do computer keyboarding and try to make sales of banking services during customer service interactions. The training also covered banking basics – for example, what happens to a check -- and the meaning of industry terms. Immigrants in the training course would also learn socially and culturally appropriate conduct expected of customer service employees in the U.S. These skills were intended to be applicable to other industries, such as hospitality, which have advancement opportunities.

**Placements very hard to make:** CSC endeavored to cultivate relationships with banks in order to place graduates, but had difficulty getting hiring commitments. Consequently, nobody in the first cohort of training graduates was able to secure banking-related employment. To improve prospects for the second round of training graduates, CSC targeted non-banking employers, emphasizing the crossover skills in the customer service training.

### *ACJC-CP's International Trade Training*

**Trying to capitalize on the city's strengths as a shipping port:** ACJC-CP launched an international trades training course, hoping that it would expand employment options available to LAWBH residents. The training was intended to prepare people for jobs in shipping and warehousing firms, to work, for instance, in product documentation or freight forwarding. Staff observed that Los Angeles is unique among the CWBH regions – and among many U.S. cities – in the prominent role that it plays in receiving, processing, and then distributing goods from overseas and elsewhere, and in doing the same for U.S. goods destined to go overseas. The Alameda Corridor plays a key role in this distribution chain, and ACJC-CP viewed the training as an extension of its involvement in the Alameda Corridor construction. Furthermore, as some staff members pointed out, the international trade sector includes well-paying jobs with career advancement opportunities for men and women, and the jobs do not require college degrees.

ACJC-CP developed the curriculum for the training under a Charles Stewart Mott Foundation grant that predated CWBH. The grant and the person who developed the curriculum subsequently transferred to another CBO, where the training program has flourished. ACJC-CP decided to sponsor its own training as part of the CWBH focus on low-income and hard-to-employ constituents in South Central Los Angeles<sup>95</sup> -- “for those ex-offenders, our low-income

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<sup>95</sup> The program was also originally directed to residents of South Los Angeles.

folks, our homeless people,” as one staff member described the target population. The staff member noted that, “[w]e, as a community, don’t have too many industries.”

**Applicants and enrollees relatively well educated:** The MIS data on all ACJC-CP participants (including the few clients who were steered to Century training) depicts a group that was on the whole well educated. Only 7 percent lacked a high school diploma, a third (34 percent) had attended college, and 17 percent had graduated from a two- or four-year college. Ex-offender status was cited by only 9 percent of participants as a barrier to employment.

**Content of the training:** The training, which took place over 11 weeks and was held every Saturday at the ACJC-CP offices, enrolled participants referred from CSC and ELACC as well as ACJC-CP. It introduced trainees to the world of international trade, including aspects of financing, shipping, and distribution. A major portion of the training focused on documentation, particularly identifying and filling out forms properly.

Trainees also learned about pricing and how it varies as products move across different national and domestic jurisdictions, each with different tax codes and currency exchange rates. A great deal of time was spent on basic math, to calculate, for example, product dimensions to determine whether a product would fit into a container, a plane, or warehouse. After it was clear from the experience of the first cohort of trainees that some participants needed instruction on the basics of job search, job preparation sessions were added to the training.

**Other potential uses of the training:** The instructor of the training course noted that graduates could also look for work elsewhere, including in the garment industry, a computer company, and a retailer. “Almost every manufacturer in this country has a purchasing department that does some form of importing, a trafficking department that does exporting, a sales department that handles overseas sales.”

**Lack of self-confidence sometimes a problem for trainees:** Some trainees and graduates had to overcome doubts about themselves that impeded their job searches. For example, one graduate did not follow up on a call back from an employer, so the instructor offered to stay with him while he made the call. “He was shivering,” said the instructor. “Grown man, looks tough, but he was scared. ‘What do I say? How do I approach this?’” According to the instructor, participants tended to undervalue themselves, their skills, their experience, and their right to seek something better for themselves. The instructor recalled:

I had one student... He was very good at math. He embraced any exercise that we did that was number-related. He loved it. And I kept thinking that this was someone who should get an accounting background. But at the end of the class when I interviewed him, he said, “I’m hoping to get a dock job.” I said, “Why? Nothing that you’ve told me says you want to lift heavy things all day.” But that’s where he thought he should be.”

**Job placement challenges:** The training program had difficulties placing graduates into training-related jobs. Certainly, ACJC-CP worked hard to find job openings by searching websites and other sources, and helping graduates circulate their resumes on the Internet.

However, the agency was unable to secure agreements from employers to hire or give preferential consideration to the graduates. (The person who originally developed the training curriculum emphasized that negotiating hiring agreements has been critical to the success of his program.)

**ACJC-CP still saw reasons to pursue the training:** Despite the challenges and disappointing placement outcomes, ACJC-CP emphasized that the training was able to offer residents of low-income neighborhoods an additional avenue of employment in an area where there was a dearth of job opportunities: “As with anything,” said a staff member, “people become impatient. But look at what else we have around here [for employment opportunities]. That’s why we’re so adamant about it. This is a real chance for our community.” Indeed, for trainees who did get call backs for interviews, the positions were desirable -- purchasing and warehousing jobs in freight companies, such as UPS, and in importing companies, with starting wages of \$12 to \$15 an hour and opportunities for career advancement.

**ACJC-CP works alone to secure hiring agreements:** As was the case with CSC, ACJC-CP might have had more success if the collaborative had brought its collective strength to bear on securing hiring agreements from employers. Instead, each partner focused on its own training program and chosen industry.<sup>96</sup>

## Case Management

**Reduced scope of case management:** Once ELACC and ACJC-CP recognized that they would not receive the amount of funding for Phase II Intensive Case Management (ICM) that had been anticipated, they changed the nature of the services they would offer with this support. Instead of case managers, these agencies employed Job Advocates to give clients basic employment assistance.

Initially, SCOPE wanted the funding that it had re-granted to HCCLTP to be used to help pay the salaries of two case managers who would provide supportive services to training program participants. Ultimately the funds supported only one staff member designated as the CWBH case manager, and she received a supplement to her salary only large enough to cover the extra work created by completing CWBH MIS forms for co-enrolled clients. She had neither the time nor the capacity to make referrals to support services, or to meet with clients beyond the initial intake interview.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> At one point during Phase II, the CWBH Program Administrator was given permission to use some California Endowment discretionary grant funds to give LAWBH construction trainees a chance to participate in the construction of The California Endowment’s new offices in Downtown Los Angeles. The funds were used to purchase 15 Century training slots, and the developer of the construction project was asked to ensure a minimum of 15 local hires on construction crews, a request that was intended to get Century training graduates hired on the project. However, Century subsequently reported that only a couple of its graduates were hired for this work. Moreover, the developer met his local hiring quota by counting already-hired construction workers who were Targeted Neighborhood residents.

<sup>97</sup> Besides augmenting the case manager’s salary, the re-granted funds were used to partially support a medical billing course. The CWBH funding allowed HCCLTP to restrict the class to residents of the LAWBH target zip codes, a practice that would not have been allowed if WIA funds had been used for the training.

CSC and CoCo offered to provide case management during Phase II to LAWBH participants with multiple barriers to employment, including clients referred from ACJC-CP and ELACC. Initially, it was imagined that CSC would serve LAWBH clients from Chinatown and East Los Angeles and that CoCo would serve clients from South Los Angeles. However, the case manager whom CoCo selected for this role was already running a homework assistance program for college-bound youth that predated CWBH. Once Phase II was under way, he designated these students as his LAWBH case management clients, filling his Phase II caseload quota. At the same time, his college-bound young clients were unlikely to generate referrals to LAWBH's Targeted Industries Trainings or be placed in jobs during the Phase II grant period. Thus, CSC was left to provide case management to all LAWBH participants.

**CSC case management takes shape slowly:** CSC delayed the start of its case management for a year as the agency searched for a case manager supervisor. In the second year of Phase II, CSC finally filled this position. CSC also hired two part-time case managers, who, as discussed below, also provided case management services to parents of children at a local elementary school.

**Systemic accomplishments for CSC case management:** Once hired, the supervisor proceeded to create an impressive case management training curriculum, intended to be part of a replicable Intensive Case Management model. Training based on this curriculum was offered not only to the CSC case managers but also to the case manager at CoCo and to the ELACC and ACJC-CP Job Advocates.

The training took place during the monthly case management workgroup meetings, which was also the occasion for the case manager supervisor to preside over case conferences for the more challenging LAWBH participants. (CoCo's case manager stopped attending these meetings because he did not try to serve LAWBH constituents.) A LAWBH case management referral form was developed, which the partner staff were supposed to complete and send to the CSC case managers when referring participants to them. It included a checklist of barriers to employment, taken from the LAWBH MIS intake form.<sup>98</sup>

**CSC case managers also serve parents in a school-based program:** Rather than hiring a case manager to be based in its offices, CSC decided to supplement the salaries of two case managers, who were assigned part-time to LAWBH, and part-time to a program based in Chinatown's Castelar Elementary School that aimed to help the families of school children in crisis. The case managers worked out of an office in the elementary school.

It was expected that LAWBH clients referred to these case managers could include hard-to-employ people either enrolled in Targeted Industries Training or others who had not qualified to become trainees. The case managers were also open to serving LAWBH jobseekers or workers who needed supports such as transportation assistance or subsidized child care to help them find and keep jobs. Besides helping clients access services, it was hoped that the case managers would refer parents whom they assisted in the elementary school program to LAWBH's Targeted Industries Trainings once their families were out of crisis.

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<sup>98</sup> MDRC (February 28, 2006), Overview of ICM Program, p. 3.

**Few LAWBH participants used the services:** Logistical problems mainly account for the low usage rates: People referred to the case managers by agencies other than CSC typically would have to travel great distances to Castellar Elementary School. Even if they made the trip, they would most likely be referred elsewhere for support services, because the case managers did not have many services they could offer directly. In addition, the school was open only during regular school hours, making it difficult to schedule appointments for employed LAWBH participants. Even CSC’s own LAWBH participants questioned why they had to travel to the school for something as simple as picking up bus tokens supplied to WIA-enrolled jobseekers. Why, some of these clients asked, could they not get everything done at the CSC offices with the LAWBH staff person, especially since this person -- not the case managers – had the authority to co-enroll them into WIA to receive the tokens?

**Tensions with disappointed jobseekers:** A number of LAWBH participants who were referred to the case managers had completed ACJC-CP’s international trade training or CSC’s banking training but had then been unable to find jobs. They had been advised to consult a case manager with the thought that this person could, in turn, refer them to programs for overcoming barriers to employment. However, according to staff interviewed for this study, these participants were already unhappy because their training had not resulted in jobs, and interpreted the referral to case management as a sign that LAWBH had “dumped them” or “given up” on helping them find jobs. Those who did follow up on the referrals often expected that the case managers would step in to help them find work. As a result, the case managers bore the brunt of disappointed anger or urgent pleas for jobs. In part in response to these problems, CSC eventually decided that its case managers would no longer serve clients who were referred from the other LAWBH partners, and instead focused solely on LAWBH participants referred to them by CSC.<sup>99</sup>

## **F. How Well Did LAWBH Do In Helping Participants Secure Employment?**

The LAWBH collaborative members made valiant efforts to collect and maintain their data, but the number of training partners (and in the case of HCCTLP and Workplace Hollywood, the number of training partners *of* the training partners) complicated the attempt to keep accurate records. This helps explain a substantial difference between the numbers reported by the LAWBH grantees and the CWBH MIS. Because the exact reasons for the divergence cannot be determined, both sets of outcome data will be reported here.

Leaving aside the disparity between CWBH and grantee data, the co-enrollment practice, discussed earlier, also makes it difficult to draw conclusions about training participants’ outcomes. To help address these difficulties, the following charts break out co-enrollments from the full group of LAWBH participants.

Table 3.2, which is based on the in-house MIS data of LAWBH partners, shows that LAWBH zip code area residents who were co-enrolled into pre-existing trainings – and who might never have been assisted by an LAWBH partner -- account for the majority (61 percent) of the LAWBH placement outcomes. Moreover, co-enrolled participants in the pre-existing trainings were placed at a higher rate than LAWBH participants of newly created trainings. This

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<sup>99</sup> MDRC (February 28, 2006), Overview of ICM Program.

likely reflects the difficulties that the new trainings had in securing employer commitments to hire training graduates, and the fact that trainings implemented by LAWBH did not screen out participants with low educational attainment and limited English proficiency.

### Los Angeles Works for Better Health

**Table 3.2**

#### Los Angeles Works for Better Health Outcomes (Grantee MIS Data)

	Enrollment	Placement	Placement Rate
Co-enrolls: Workplace Hollywood	103	35	34%
Health Care Career Ladders Training Program (HCCLTP)	124	62	50%
Century Community Training Program (Century)	151	57	38%
Co-enrolls total	378	154	41%
Percent of total Los Angeles Works for Better Health (LAWBH)	45%	61%	
The Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition (ACJP-CP) – International Trade	298	42	14%
Chinatown Service Center (CSC) – Banking	60	25	42%
Chinatown Service Center (CSC) - Home health care	79	15	19%
East LA Community Corporation (ELACC)	16	16	100%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>22%</b>
Percent of total LAWBH	55%	39%	
<b>LAWBH Total</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>30%</b>

SOURCE: LAWBH Grantee MIS

The next table (Table 3.3), which is based on data from the CWBH MIS, also supports the conclusion that the majority (55 percent) of placements were from co-enrolled clients in pre-existing trainings. Unlike the previous one, Table 3.3 contains information on average hourly wages and the proportion of trainees who received health benefits. (Grantees’ in-house data do not include this information.) These data suggest that one group of participants who were not co-enrolled, those in the International Trades training, were placed at a much higher starting wage than co-enrolled participants (\$12.69 per hour compared to \$9.93 per hour) and that overall, the LAWBH partners and their training programs were much more successful in securing jobs with health benefits (63 percent compared to 29 percent for pre-existing trainings).<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Of ELACC participants who were placed in jobs, none became employed through participation in the Targeted Industries Training programs.

**Table 3.3****Los Angeles Works for Better Health Outcomes****(California Works for Better Health MIS Data)**

	Enrollment	Placement	Placement Rate	Average Hourly Wage	Proportion of Jobs with Health Benefits
Co-enrolls total	137	48	35%	\$9.93	29%
Percent of total Los Angeles Works for Better Health (LAWBH)	30%	55%			
The Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition (ACJP-CP) – International Trade	132	13	10%	\$12.69	52%
Chinatown Service Center (CSC) – Banking/HC	77	20	26%	\$9.79	79%
East LA Community Corporation (ELACC)	90	5	6%	\$9.39	40%
Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CoCo)/Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)	20	1	5%		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>\$11.09</b>	<b>63%</b>
Percent of total LAWBH	70%	45%			
<b>LAWBH Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>\$10.59</b>	<b>48%</b>

SOURCE: CWBH MIS

As tables 3.2 and 3.3 show, placement totals for CWBH data and grantee data vary greatly. Nevertheless, the number of placements is disappointing. For example, even if the grantees’ total of 252 job placements is taken as an accurate count, and even ignoring the fact that most of these placements were for co-enrolled clients, at most LAWBH achieved a placement rate in Phase II of 30 percent. The lower level achievement, based on CWBH MIS data, was a placement rate of 19 percent.<sup>101</sup>

Because the Targeted Industries Trainings varied so markedly from one another, the field researchers tried to collect information on the graduation and employment outcomes for each program. Following are insights on how individual programs contributed to the overall enrollment and placement figures:

**Century Community Training Program:** Follow-up information on outcomes for the 100 ACJC-CP participants who were reportedly referred to Century is scarce. ACJC-CP gave researchers a list of 50 participants who, according to the agency, had graduated from Century training, but few could be contacted. Of those interviewed, most did not recognize the name “ACJC-CP” or “Los Angeles Works for Better Health” and had not received services from ACJC-CP or any other LAWBH grantee organization. Most of the graduates were employed, but none had been able to develop careers in construction. This seems to have been a common

<sup>101</sup> This placement rate differs slightly from the one shown for LAWBH in Table 1.1, with cross-site comparisons, because of differences in how 15 enrollees in the CSC home care training program were categorized.

outcome. According to one interviewee, “lots of people doing the training ended up getting a different job.” Problems cited included the long distances that workers were routinely required to travel to get to construction sites, sometimes as far away as San Diego County.

**Workplace Hollywood:** According to LAWBH staff, not one LAWBH participant referred to Workplace Hollywood graduated from the trainings. The grantee data reflects co-enrollments of participants who happened to live in LAWBH target zip codes.

**Health Care Career Ladder Training Program (HCCTLP):** According to LAWBH partner staff members, only three LAWBH referrals graduated from this program, and one participant was still in training at the end of Phase II. Only one of the graduates had been placed in a job. Co-enrolled participants who happened to reside in the target zip codes represent the remainder of the participation and placement figures.

**ACJC-CP’s International Trade Training Program:** As noted, the program had difficulties in securing employer hiring agreements and placing graduates into training-related employment. None of the graduates interviewed had found employment in international trades. Although there was some improvement in placements after the first year, graduates continued to have difficulty finding training-related employment. However, as the CWBH MIS data confirm, the training instructor reported that wages and work conditions were good when someone did secure employment.

**CSC’s Banking Training:** The first cohort of graduates of CSC’s banking training found that they needed more customer service experience and English language proficiency, and were considered too old by prospective employers to qualify for entry-level banking job openings.<sup>102</sup> The second round of training had better outcomes, with some graduates finding banking jobs.

### Box 3.3

#### International Trade Graduate

**Lydia Rodriguez** is a graduate of the international trade training, but events have conspired to prevent her from looking for a job. First, she needed to sort out some problems her son was having at school, then her sister needed a babysitter for her daughter.

Before Ms. Rodriguez took the international trade training, she had been the office manager of a small immigrant-owned food supply company, where over the course of 13 years, she missed only two days of work. She was paid \$8 per hour and her employer objected when she wanted to take a vacation, even on public holidays.

A friend persuaded Lydia to take the international trade class. Lydia was impressed with the instructor and says ACJC-CP was “very helpful with bus transportation.” She also appreciated the mock interviews held during the training.

Currently, Ms. Rodriguez’s husband has family health insurance, but when she worked at the food supply company, she was uninsured. “I took aspirin and went to the pharmacy.”

<sup>102</sup> MDRC (February 28, 2006), Overview of ICM Program.

### Box 3.4

#### TCE Construction Worker

“I’m a single mom trying to keep my dreams alive, fighting to stay above water.” **Sandra Smith** does not fit the stereotype of a construction worker. She is a vibrant 49-year-old mother, who lives with her two teenagers and two adult children in South Los Angeles. She graduated from the Century construction pre-apprenticeship program in 2002 (before the implementation phase of CWBH). It was through Century that Ms. Smith learned about ACJC-CP, where she had been referred for transportation help and met the Executive Director, who, says Sandra, “has been my source of strength.”

After Ms. Smith graduated from the training program, Century placed her as a laborer plumber at \$10 per hour with no benefits. (According to Sandra, these conditions are standard for a non-union job.) She continued to get short-term jobs and then was unemployed for a four to five month period before she was placed on The California Endowment office construction site, where she worked for a year. One of the benefits of that job was that Sandra was able to join a union apprenticeship program. (All jobs on the site were unionized.) Century and ACJC-CP “came together” to pay half of the tuition for the laborers’ apprenticeship school, Ms. Smith reports. The school, she explains, is structured as an 18-month work-release program (meaning that the employer grants time off to attend classes), and for first-stage apprentice laborers, the pay starts at \$11 per hour with health benefits.

Currently, Sandra is not working because she decided to take time out to be with her children. She is able to do this because she worked a great deal of overtime during her year on The California Endowment project.

## **G. Advocating for Workforce Development Resources and Jobs**

The collaborative’s Phase II advocacy activities, which were modest compared to the original vision of CWBH advocacy, focused on efforts to secure hiring agreements from local construction projects, and at the end of the period, on a new campaign, the Youth Workforce Development Initiative (YWDI).<sup>103</sup> This section presents synopses of each of these activities.

### **Trying to Secure Hiring Agreements From Local Construction Projects**

Although the efforts described in this section were almost entirely unsuccessful, they do represent one area in which the collaborative members attempted to work together. The vehicle for this cooperation was LAWBH’s Community Engagement workgroup, which had been given the responsibility of working on the advocacy component of the TOC. Initially, the workgroup considered trying to secure a hiring agreement from the Metropolitan Transit Authority, since the

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<sup>103</sup> The United Job Creation Initiative (UJCI), a coalition of faith-based organizations in South Los Angeles to secure construction jobs, or to enforce existing local construction hiring agreements to benefit local residents, is another advocacy campaign that operated during this period and that attracted some attention from two LAWBH partners: ACJC-CP was invited to join the UJCI and a representative from CoCo has attended some of its meetings. However, because the collaborative did not embrace this initiative, as it did YWDI, is not included in this account of LAWBH advocacy activities.

construction of the Authority's Gold Line was underway in two of the Targeted Neighborhoods. However, the project was too far advanced for the collaborative to pursue this idea.

The workgroup then sought to negotiate an agreement with We Build, the Los Angeles School District (LAUSD) construction training and local-hire program. The impetus for establishing We Build had come in 2004, when LAUSD embarked on a \$19.2 billion school construction and renovation program, and negotiated a Project Stabilization Agreement (PSA), including hiring and training requirements, with the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trade Council. We Build was established to administer the training and local hire-component of the PSA.

One of the goals of the PSA is 50 percent local-worker participation in the construction project. However, under the PSA's terms, "local" can include living within the boundaries of the school district, which includes affluent suburbs in the San Fernando Valley. The PSA has no specific requirements for hiring residents of low-income neighborhoods.

The collaborative discovered that despite the broad interpretation of "local," We Build was still not meeting the 50 percent participation goal. LAWBH considered monitoring and enforcing compliance and even obtaining a commitment from We Build to give preference to residents from the Targeted Neighborhoods and other low-income areas for training and placement into public-school construction jobs. Also, the LAWBH workgroup contemplated trying to build support services into the We Build program, to help trainees complete the training and subsequently retain their jobs. The strategy for doing this would have been a campaign to secure municipal funding for support services for We Build trainees, with the requirement that the training providers recruit trainees from low-income zip codes.

However, the workgroup decided that We Build, which had only one staff person, lacked the wherewithal to implement any agreement that LAWBH would manage to negotiate, and was itself urgently in need of capacity-building. An LAWBH staff member observed:

Is this something we really want to do? Is this the type of program that we want to get the City to support, to put ourselves behind, given the problems we know already exist?

Yet another problem with focusing on We Build is that while the We Build construction training graduates were referred to the construction trades unions for placement into school construction jobs, it was unclear how much influence We Build had with the unions to enforce the local hiring requirements. Notwithstanding all the drawbacks of working with We Build, in the last few months of Phase II, LAWBH did finally secure a Memorandum of Understanding under which We Build agreed to co-enroll trainees living in LAWBH zip codes into CWBH.

### **Youth Workforce Development Initiative (YWDI)**

**A call for career academies:** YWDI grew out of CoCo's campaign to provide college preparatory classes to high school youth (a campaign that ELAAC also participated in). By the end of Phase II, the earlier campaign had evolved into a campaign for the creation of "career

academies” -- small learning communities organized around a particular industry. Career academies team with industry partners to train students in the skills necessary for these industries. The employer benefits from the assembly of a well trained, skilled workforce, and students benefit from the industry partner’s contributions to the costs of equipment and field trips.<sup>104</sup>

The curricula of career academies are vocation-specific, so that, for example, if a student studies animation, the academy’s math curriculum will include skills used in that profession. Staff at career academies say that with studies made more relevant to students’ lives, they are more motivated to stay in school and succeed. The academies are not intended for advanced or gifted students; enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis.

With a high dropout rate, LAUSD was eager to partner with YWDI to help address local educational shortcomings that had become the focus of a great deal of press attention. Potential career academy sponsors were selected from the Targeted Industries Training partners of advocacy campaigns previously undertaken by SCOPE and CoCo (such as Workplace Hollywood and the health care unions) and from other industries in the region, such as public utilities and construction industry companies that offered jobs with career ladders, living wages, and benefits.

**YWDI and LAWBH:** YWDI was officially embraced by the LAWBH collaborative in the last year of Phase II as its advocacy action, but by the end of Phase II, collaborative involvement had gone no further than LAWBH lending support to the YWDI kick-off event.

YWDI did allow ELACC to use CWBH funds for organizing activities – namely, organizing parents at Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles to meet and discuss with the principal the possibility of establishing a career academy at that school.<sup>105</sup> However, because the campaign was an outgrowth of ELACC’s earlier involvement in the college-prep classes campaign, it is likely that ELACC would have participated in YWDI with or without CWBH funding.

Toward the end of Phase II, CSC used CWBH funds to hire a community organizer, who observed YWDI campaign planning meetings. At that point CSC’s organizing efforts were still too much in their infancy to lend substantive support to the campaign, but it is possible that CSC will eventually grow its community organizing capacity. One staff member observed:

This is an agency that is exactly what it is named. It is a service center. We do not organize people. We have never been into that. We were talking at a managers’ meeting about sending some youth to protest a supermarket opening a non-union

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<sup>104</sup> A 15-year random assignment study of Career Academies in nine urban high schools around the country recently confirmed the effectiveness of this approach to increasing high school graduation rates and long-term pay-off in the labor market. See Kemple (June 2008).

<sup>105</sup> However, the school is one of the three targeted by the Mayor’s office for reform, and his office has already begun negotiations with the director of SEIU 660’s healthcare union training program to establish a health care career academy at the school. Consequently, at the end of Phase II, ELACC was uncertain about whether it would be included in the discussions about establishing a career academy at Roosevelt.

shop in the area...This would not be something we would have even looked at before CWBH. But now it's something that we're actually looking at doing.

**A delay in the mobilization effort:** YWDI had only just been launched when the Los Angeles mayor moved to wrest powers of the school district from the LAUSD School Board, and YWDI was temporarily suspended while the partners waited to see how the mayor proceeded. At the end of Phase II, YWDI's goals seemed to be in line with the mayor's efforts to transform the school district, but it was too early to tell whether he would work with CoCo or choose to work with certain career academy sponsors directly.

**YWDI-LAWBH future relationships uncertain:** YWDI's career academies might eventually partner with HCCTLP and Workforce Hollywood to provide these programs with a flow of high school graduates prepared to enter their trainings or the occupations they serve. However, as the evolution of YWDI has thus far been largely independent of any LAWBH collaborative involvement, it remains to be seen to what degree LAWBH will contribute to achieving these goals in Phase III.

## **H. Conclusions**

The story of LAWBH during Phase II suggests the following insights about the nature of the initiative and its experience:

- **Disparity between partners' organizational capacities and Phase II agenda:** The LAWBH collaborative brought great capacity to CWBH, especially in the area of workforce development strategies that used a community organizing/advocacy approach. What the collaborative mostly lacked was capacity in the provision of employment services – an area that came to predominate over the initial advocacy-focused vision of the initiative. During Phase II, two partners (ACJC-CP and CSC) struggled to implement trainings and one (ELAAC) to deliver employment services without the benefit of experience in these areas.
- **Lack of cohesion:** LAWBH did not support the fragmented efforts of its individual members in ways that allowed the collaborative to become greater than the sum of parts. Two collaborative members with powerful appeal to the funders (CoCo and SCOPE ) were given permission to invest CWBH dollars in pre-existing efforts that contributed very little to collaborative outcomes, other than boosting placement numbers through “co-enrollment.” Permission was also granted to invest funding in activities that clearly would not add to employment outcomes within the life of the initiative (for example, CoCo's homework assistance classes). In addition, the distinct ethnicities of LAWBH Targeted Neighborhoods and the vast size of the entire LAWBH target area contributed to the fragmentation of the initiative.
- **Good-faith efforts to implement new training programs:** ACJC-CP and CSC worked hard to develop and operate new training programs that focused on industries that seemed to provide employment and career advancement opportunities for their hard-to-employ constituents.

- **Failure to secure hiring agreements:** It is not known whether LAWBH would have been able to develop new hiring agreements during Phase II by uniting as a collaborative to approach industry employers and persuade them to give priority to hiring, or at least interviewing, LAWBH participants. However, the failure to use the collaborative's collective strength and experience to pursue this goal was a missed opportunity.
- **Low job placement rates:** In general, it is unrealistic to expect that workforce development assistance provided to hard-to-employ people will yield rapid and impressive job placement outcomes. Even taking this into account, the outcomes are disappointing given the level of investment, and the placement rates (19 percent, according to CWBH MIS data) are the lowest in all the CWBH regions. The collaborative's lack of hiring agreements for the new trainings and the failure to capitalize on collective collaborative strength to secure hiring agreements seem to have contributed to these disappointing outcomes.
- **Bridge programs a helpful intervention:** Experience with several LAWBH trainings suggests that it is not enough to ensure that people with barriers to employment have access to training focused on better paying jobs with opportunities for career advancement; they must also have help in meeting the entrance criteria for the trainings. The bridge program that was developed as part of the HCCTLP health care trainings is a good example of this kind of transitional effort.
- **Original vision for case management not given a full test:** The level of resources that grantees hoped to devote to case management was scaled back and this change, combined with decisions to use some Phase II case management funds for other purposes, diluted the original concept of how and to what degree clients would be served. The practical difficulties that faced many LAWBH clients who had to seek out case management services in a distant location underscores the problems of dispersing services for hard-to-employ low-income clients across a large geographical area, especially one with limited public transportation.
- **Mismatch between the advocacy interests of CWBH and the evolving interests some grantees:** LAWBH's attempt to use grassroots advocacy as a component of a multi-pronged community initiative can fairly be described as a disappointment in view of the exceptional past successes and capacities that several partners brought to the initiative. One important reason for this is that by the time Phase II was about to start, the advocacy organizations had moved on to new campaigns.

This experience offers a caution to designers and funders of new initiatives who seek to harness the power of advocacy groups to advance the objectives of their projects: These groups are unlikely to change course and accommodate the requirements of an initiative if it means ignoring their overall missions or issues that are of immediate and pressing importance to their constituents or if it means restricting their ability to participate in other collaboratives. Naturally, the longer the funding period, the more likely there will be changes in the priorities of the constituent community – or in the initiative itself, as was the

case for CWBH -- leading the grantees to part ways with the course that has been charted for the initiative.

- **At the end, an emerging advocacy interest but one not fully embraced:** The Youth Workforce Development Initiative campaign, officially adopted by the collaborative in the final year of Phase II, was a serendipitous evolution of the existing campaign of one partner, CoCo. It may be that in Phase III, the collaborative members will pull together to become truly invested in the campaign, but at the end of Phase II, the YWDI seemed mainly a convenient way to satisfy funder requirements without any genuine involvement from some partners.

## CHAPTER 4: Sacramento Works for Better Health

In the Sacramento region, the institutional conditions for implementing CWBH were particularly auspicious. The two Phase II partner agencies of the Sacramento Works for Better Health (SWBH) initiative -- Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI) and Mutual Assistance Network (MAN) – had extensive experience in providing workforce development services and social services to disadvantaged groups. Making good use of CWBH flexible funding, these agencies devoted the time and resources needed for building a very cohesive collaborative. They also saw the funding as an opportunity to try approaches to providing workforce development services that were new to them. In part because ARI manages a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop Center, the collaborative was closely linked to the local WIA system, which is itself strongly committed to partnering with CBOs and serving disadvantaged jobseekers. In the course of examining the implementation and outcomes of the SWBH Phase II project, this chapter provides a window onto what an initiative like CWBH can hope to achieve under the kind of favorable institutional conditions – and the willingness to capitalize on them -- that marked the SWBH collaborative.

### **A. Local and Regional Context for SWBH**

**City growth:** The city of Sacramento has grown considerably in recent years: The U.S. Census estimated that in 2003 its population was 445,335 – an approximately 9 percent increase from 2000 levels. The growth has been fueled by an influx of Bay Area residents looking for more affordable housing and by an economic expansion that has generated employment opportunities.

**Mixed economic picture for the county:** Between 2001 and 2005, the number of jobs in the county grew by 27,300, reaching a total of 597,500 positions. The expansion was mostly attributable to growth in construction, educational and health services, retail establishments, and leisure and hospitality services.<sup>106</sup> Unfortunately, most of these sectors are typified by low-wage jobs.

The county's average poverty rate is slightly higher than the rate statewide and its median household income has continued to trail statewide levels. One likely drag on the household income rate is that according to the 2000 U.S. Census, almost one-third (31 percent) of the county's families are headed by single mothers, and the median income for these families is \$23,259 – substantially lower than the median income for a family headed by a married couple (\$59,686), or by a single father (\$31,793).

The Sacramento area has been the nation's most active housing market, and its construction industry has prospered. But according to one study, an “unfortunate backlash” of this situation is that:

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<sup>106</sup> California Employment Development Department, *Sacramento County Snapshot*, 2004.

... working families in the Region increasingly are being priced out of the local housing market... (M)ore and more jobs in the Region's fastest-growing communities are performed by people who can't afford to live in those communities.<sup>107</sup>

**Supportive county WIA system but under familiar pressure to produce job placements:** The county's WIA system operates under the auspices of both the Sacramento Works Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Governing Board of the Sacramento Employment Training Agency (SETA). Neither agency ascribes to the view that a One-Stop's top or only goal should be to link employers with the most qualified jobseekers. Instead, both the WIB and SETA see serving low-income hard-to-place jobseekers as appropriate for their One-Stops – the network of local multi-service centers for jobseekers that is the mainspring of the WIA system. (As one SETA official put it, “Around here, who else is going to do this for these people?”) The WIB and SETA favor the management of One-Stops by CBOs like ARI and MAN (a past recipient of SETA service contracts) because of these agencies' credibility with, and intimate knowledge of, low-income and ethnic minority communities.

Nevertheless, in Sacramento as in other WIA service delivery areas, federal WIA performance requirements that influence the county's WIA funding allocations have presented One-Stops with formidable hurdles to enrolling very hard-to-employ jobseekers into intensive case management and training. As the next section describes, SWBH offered the One-Stops a welcome opportunity to refer customers<sup>108</sup> with serious barriers to employment who lived in the SWBH targeted neighborhoods to a program that offered them individualized job search, case management, and training.

## **B. In the Targeted Neighborhoods**

SWBH Phase II activities were focused on two Targeted Neighborhoods -- Del Paso Heights, in north Sacramento, and Fruitridge, located south of downtown. Both neighborhoods had the ethnic and racial diversity sought by the CWBH administration. (See Table 4.1.) Both were also either designated for -- or located near areas that were designated for – different kinds of specially funded redevelopment efforts.<sup>109</sup> The collaborative initially hoped to tap into these efforts to secure hiring agreements for well-paid jobs.

The two neighborhoods, which are both sizeable, are separated from one another by a substantial distance. This made it impossible for the collaborative to concentrate on a relatively small area, and thereby show neighborhood-level effects in the three-year Phase II time period.

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<sup>107</sup> Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (2004), p. 20.

<sup>108</sup> One-Stops typically refer to their clients as “customers.”

<sup>109</sup> Areas targeted for these redevelopment efforts include state-designated Enterprise Zones and Local Agency Military Base Recovery Area (LAMBRA) Act areas. Businesses locating in these zones and areas are eligible for state tax credits and deductions and employment incentives. See <http://www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/edip/lambralang.htm> and [http://www.cityofsacramento.org/econdev/msc/82\\_other\\_incentives.html#zones](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/econdev/msc/82_other_incentives.html#zones) <http://www.caez.org/index.htm>.

## Sacramento Works for Better Health

**Table 4.1**

### Sacramento Works for Better Health Targeted Neighborhoods

	Fruitridge		Del Paso Heights	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	30,682		35,008	
Hispanic	10,327	33.6%	6,685	19.1%
Asian & Pacific Islander	8,549	27.9%	6,564	17.7%
Black	2,966	9.7%	7,780	22.2%
Below Poverty	9,304	30.3%	9,539	27.3%
Households Receiving Public Assistance	1,759	19.9%	1,799	17.6%
Births with Inadequate Prenatal Care	148	21.7%	114	17.1%

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census data, cited in Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (June 2003).

**Fruitridge: an immigrant haven:** A wave of Southeast Asians who came to Fruitridge during the Vietnam War years has subsequently been followed by Hispanic newcomers to the U.S. According to a 2003 study, 18 percent of Fruitridge area residents did not speak English well or at all.<sup>110</sup> Despite the low incomes of many residents, the area bustles with business activity, including ethnic shops and restaurants. Elk Grove, a city directly to the south of Fruitridge, has grown over the years, and companies that have settled there have created growing consumer demand for the goods and services of Fruitridge businesses.

**Del Paso Heights: buffeted by change:** Del Paso Heights experienced an economic downturn starting with the opening of the North Sacramento Freeway in the late 1960s and followed much later by the closing of the nearby McClellan Air Force Base, a major area employer. In 1992, North Sacramento, which includes Fruitridge, was designated as a redevelopment area. At that point, MAN began operations in the neighborhood. Today Del Paso Heights is largely residential, with some small businesses. Although Del Paso Boulevard has attracted some new businesses such as art galleries and expensive restaurants, they do not offer residents a sizeable number of employment opportunities.

**Poverty and crime:** Both neighborhoods have a higher- than-citywide and higher-than-countywide average of residents living in poverty. A 2003 SWBH neighborhood indicators report<sup>111</sup> showed that compared to the 14 percent of residents living in poverty countywide, 30 percent of Fruitridge residents and 27 percent of people living in Del Paso Heights were in this situation. Responses by SWBH participants to a small 2006 survey of residents of the two neighborhoods<sup>112</sup> show that sizeable proportions of respondents thought that people selling or

<sup>110</sup> Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (June 2003), p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (June 2003), p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> This survey (called the Wave I survey) was conducted with 51 SWBH participants enrolled during the month before they took the survey.

using drugs in public, gangs, and guns and gunfire were “big” to “very big” neighborhood problems.

### **C. A More In-Depth Picture of the Collaborative**

During Phase I, SWBH consisted of three, not two, collaborative partners -- the third being the Sacramento Valley Organizing Community (SVOC), a faith-based network of clergy and congregations founded by the Industrial Areas Foundation. While ARI and MAN had been invited to join the collaborative because of their strong ties to low-income neighborhoods and ethnic constituencies and because of their workforce development experience, SVOC was chosen for its experience in organizing and advocacy.

During Phase I, collaborative members planned to include advocacy and grassroots organizing in their Phase II activities. These strategies would be deployed to help secure hiring agreements from Targeted Neighborhood employers and/or from local redevelopment initiatives such as the conversion project for the former McClellan Air Force Base. One of SVOC’s TOC responsibilities would be to develop and conduct leadership trainings for residents who would then take charge of SWBH advocacy campaigns. However, SVOC withdrew from Phase II of CWBH. This decision was made because of internal organizational issues that required attention and CWBH’s Phase II shift to an emphasis on employment and job placement outcomes.

The remaining collaborative partners were well positioned to play the workforce development role that had increasingly become the focus of CWBH. They were already operating employment and support services programs, and thought that they could expand and strengthen these activities with the help of CWBH funding. Even though ARI and MAN service literature listed individualized employment assistance as one of their available services, in reality, funding pressures had limited the time that either agency could spend on helping jobseekers, especially those with serious barriers to employment.

#### **ARI and MAN At a Glance**

ARI and MAN occupy prominent places in Sacramento’s overall service community and in their respective neighborhoods. Both agencies offer wide-ranging services that address their clients’ economic, social and health-related needs, either on site or through referrals. And both pride themselves on being responsive to the communities they serve.

Established in 1980 to assist Southeast Asian immigrants with employment, ARI is still identified with its Southeast Asian constituents but has subsequently expanded its mission to Sacramento’s many low-income and limited-English communities. Programs include employment services and social service referrals for adults and youth; enrichment programs for youth; and English-language enhancement classes along with a wide range of other services for recent immigrants. ARI operates out of offices in the north, south and midtown areas in Sacramento, serving about 10,000 clients annually. Half of ARI’s 24 staff members are former clients of the agency. Agency expenditures for 2006 totaled \$2 million.

ARI was founded in 1992 and, at the time of this research, had a staff size of about 60. It is one of only two CWBH grantees<sup>113</sup> to manage a full-service One-Stop -- the Broadway Career Center – and the agency has done so since the inception of WIA in Sacramento. Besides operating the Broadway Center, ARI is a co-located partner of another One-Stop, the Citrus Heights Career Center, which serves a sizeable number of Slavic and Central Asian refugees. ARI has the organizational capacity to operate a One-Stop – particularly, the scope of funds needed to cover WIA reimbursement lags and needs unmet by WIA funding, and the recordkeeping and reporting expertise that WIA contracts demand.

MAN aims to “expand commercial, financial, and employment opportunities” for residents of Del Paso Heights, and “to improve physical, public safety, and social conditions” in the neighborhood.<sup>114</sup> Activities include employment assistance for youth and adults, support services for new mothers, community gardens and farmers markets, programs for first-time homebuyers, and credit-counseling and business-development programs.

MAN’s efforts to revitalize Del Paso Heights include a commitment to hiring residents, who hold 65 percent of MAN staff positions, making the agency one of the largest private employers in Del Paso Heights. In addition, 70 percent of MAN board members are local residents. Although relatively new, the agency has a sophisticated administrative structure and has successfully secured and managed large county, state, and major foundation grants. Besides the CWBH foundations, funders have included the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the state’s criminal justice system, several public school districts, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In 2006, MAN expenditures totaled \$2.4 million.

### *The Collaborative Partnership*

In their joint Phase II management of SWBH, ARI and MAN showed no signs of competition or jockeying for influence, but instead viewed the collaborative as a way of combining their strengths. The two agencies designed and implemented SWBH employment services to be identical, with shared procedures and forms. Their aim in doing so was to create one collaboratively-operated SWBH program, available to residents in two different neighborhoods. ARI and MAN staff who worked on SWBH exchanged information on employers, events, and best practices to improve services at both agencies. SWBH staff from both organizations met regularly, with the meetings including opportunities to discuss new contacts with employers, experiences with applications procedures, and progress and problems with trainings and other SWBH activities.

In another sign of collaboration, SWBH operated with a single Program Coordinator, who was based at ARI and given office space at MAN, where she spent two days a week. The agencies co-sponsored two job fairs, developed collaborative Memoranda of Understanding and partnerships, and worked together to build an internal SWBH evaluation. Asked about why

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<sup>113</sup> The other is the Chinatown Service Center in Los Angeles.

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.mutualassistance.org>

SWBH functioned so well, one staff person answered, "... it's about the true spirit of partnership."

The spirit of cooperation among the two partners seemed to extend to their relationships with other agencies that focus on Sacramento's disadvantaged groups and neighborhoods. One SWBH program manager said:

... the sharing of information is huge. We've had agencies that come in and say, "We'd like to see your proposal that you sent in for The Endowment," and we hand it over. These things are to better communities.

#### **D. The SWBH Theory of Change (TOC) Plan**

The original SWBH TOC plan called for grassroots advocacy campaigns to secure hiring agreements and for training residents to lead those campaigns. But once SVOC, which was expected to be in charge of the advocacy activities, left the collaborative, ARI and MAN decided that advocacy was not the best route to hiring agreements. Instead, the partners preferred to capitalize on their existing relationships with government and business entities and to focus on job development. An SWBH staff member observed that local businesses were already open to the idea of hiring from the neighborhood: "We don't have to fight at the level of other cities to get what we want."

Thus, for Phase II, ARI and MAN, with the approval of the funders, modified its plan for advocacy. The idea of training local leaders and deploying them in advocacy campaigns – originally SVOC's responsibility – remained: Every year 10 Targeted Neighborhood residents (five from each neighborhood) would be trained and then would form Policy Advocacy Groups (PAGs), which would undertake collective advocacy efforts focused on their neighborhoods. Because SWBH advocacy was no longer going to be focused on securing hiring agreements, the policy issues to be addressed would need to be identified. Thus, over the course of a year after finishing the training, each cohort of PAG members would select policy issues that would be in some way related to promoting employment and health in each of the Targeted Neighborhoods and then would develop a plan for addressing the issue.

## Sacramento Works for Better Health

### Table 4.2

#### Sacramento Works for Better Health Phase II Theory of Change

Theory of Change Strand	Deliverables
Sustainable Regional Industry and Sector Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify two industries to target for hiring agreements using projections and trends.</li> <li>• Place 400<sup>115</sup> SWBH clients in jobs (200 placements from each agency).</li> </ul>
Pathways into Healthy Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Pre-employment/Healthy Job Curriculum.</li> <li>• Conduct one Pre-employment/Healthy Job training for staff.</li> <li>• Promote the adoption of the Healthy Job &amp; Pre-Employment Curricula among employment service providers and partner agencies.</li> <li>• Incorporate Pre-employment/Healthy Job training into client activities.</li> <li>• Create a client training to be used prior to employer hiring event.</li> </ul>

Source: SWBH, “Revision of Grant Deliverables,” Letter to Earl Johnson from Steve Ly and Richard Dana, February 2, 2006.

A key aim of the Phase II TOC plan was to improve employment in Targeted Neighborhoods by helping residents to secure “healthy jobs,” instead of low-wage positions without benefits. The criteria for a healthy job expanded over the course of the initiative, but its core components were: medical benefits; opportunities for career advancement, paid vacation and sick leave; and a safe and healthy workspace.<sup>116</sup>

As shown in Table 4.2, the TOC proposed to help targeted residents secure healthy employment through two strands of work. The first strand was targeting industry sectors for hiring agreements. Phase I research had identified health and telecommunications as growth sectors with job opportunities that met the healthy-jobs criteria. Thus, the original Phase II TOC Work Plan called for SWBH to identify 50-75 local telecommunications and health care employers to target for partnerships and hiring agreements, with the goal of securing agreements from at least two of the employers.<sup>117</sup> The collaborative also planned to target redevelopment initiatives such as the conversion project for the former McClellan Air Force Base. Overall, for

<sup>115</sup> As will be discussed later, the original goal was to place 350 clients during Phase II, but the target number was subsequently raised to 400.

<sup>116</sup> Additional criteria included a workforce of which at least 80 percent of employees are full-time; accessibility to public transportation; receptivity to hiring ex-offenders, welfare recipients, limited-English speakers, and those with poor work histories; and opportunities for staff development and educational reimbursement.

<sup>117</sup> SWBH’s targeted sector job development strategy corresponds to the Sacramento County WIB’s giving priority to targeted sectors – which include health care and telecommunications – for limited workforce development funding and resources, in the effort to generate well-paying, sustainable employment in the region.

Phase II, SWBH started out by setting the goal of placing 350 participants in jobs, with 150 of those placements to be within targeted industries.

The key objective for the second strand of the TOC was to develop pre-employment training, to be guided by a SWBH curriculum that would be focused on finding healthy jobs and disseminated to other agencies. The next two sections discuss how SWBH pursued its TOC goals, including how those goals were reshaped as Phase II unfolded.

## **E. Linking Residents to Healthy Jobs**

During Phase II, ARI and MAN each operated an employment center for residents of the Targeted Neighborhood that the agency was already serving.

### **Box 4.1**

#### **Sacramento Works for Better Health Phase II Collaborative Partner Service Locations**

##### **ARI SWBH Employment Center**

5709 Stockton Boulevard

The center is located in a busy strip mall on the main business thoroughfare of the Fruitridge area. The mall contains businesses of all sizes (many owned by Southeast Asians) and is just a short walk away from a Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance branch office. The center is co-located with ARI's administrative offices, youth programs, and refugee services.

The center comprises a reception area, cubicles for the Employment Specialists, who counsel participants, and several sizeable meeting rooms, which are used for center and other ARI events and classes. One of these rooms, brightly furnished in retro 60's décor and equipped with computers with Internet access, is widely used by ARI's youth program participants, who played a leading role in designing the space.

##### **MAN SWBH Employment Center**

810 Grand Avenue

The center is co-located with MAN's Family Resource Center in a renovated red-brick fire station, known as the Firehouse Community Center, which is across the street from MAN's main office in Del Paso Heights. In contrast to the bustling business setting of ARI's center, these two buildings are surrounded by stretches of empty lots, interspersed by clusters of housing and a few small shops. Nevertheless, the parking lots of MAN's buildings are always filled with cars and vans.

The center's building contains a large multi-purpose room, equipped with computers, where many SWBH activities such as job fairs have been held. There is also a classroom and offices for the ERC's Employment Specialists and other program staff.

## **What Were SWBH's Outreach Strategies and Approaches to Intake?**

Efforts to encourage local residents to use the centers and their services were primarily for specific SWBH programs, for instance, Jobs Connections at MAN or industry-specific job trainings hosted by California Association of Employers (CAE), as opposed to general employment services.

Following an extended period of steadily increasing monthly enrollments in SWBH services, intake rates across both agencies stabilized at about 40 to 60 people per month. Most enrollees were not attracted by special outreach efforts: The two top reasons that people gave for coming to the centers were that they had information from friends or relatives (40 percent of all intakes) and that they were self-referrals (32 percent). Presumably a number of the self-referred enrollees wanted to take part in SWBH because they had already been using other ARI and MAN services.

But ARI and MAN did make some special recruitment efforts – mainly consisting of distributing fliers at community centers and local employment offices. At one point, ARI made public service announcements on Hmong and Vietnamese radio stations, but according to an ARI staff person, the response was so overwhelming it was difficult for staff to handle the rush of new clients. (Overall, media announcements, the third highest source of intakes, accounted for 10 percent of reasons why participants came to the center.)

SWBH originally required that its clients live in one of the two zip codes where the Targeted Neighborhoods were located. This restriction was lifted at the end of 2005, but the change made little difference because at that point the partner agencies were more interested in concentrating on existing clients than on recruiting new ones. However, toward the end of Phase II, MAN did do some recruitment in Natomas, a booming area of the city that borders Del Paso Heights. Staff reached out to this area in hopes of recruiting better skilled jobseekers with more work experience than typical MAN clients.

The Natomas outreach did not yield any enrollees, but it does highlight a conflict faced by both MAN and ARI: While the partners originally viewed being part of CWBH as an opportunity to work more intensively with disadvantaged jobseekers, as Phase II advanced, ARI and MAN saw a need to attract at least some better prepared jobseekers to their services. For example, staff sometimes talked about trying to bring so-called “Level One” clients to the centers. Under SWBH intake definitions, Level One clients had been assessed as the easiest-to-place jobseekers, mainly because they had substantial work histories and/or educational levels. (“Level Two” clients were assessed as needing additional training or education to become job-ready, while Level Three clients had still more significant barriers to employment – for example, limited skills in English or felony convictions.)

Two interconnected reasons help explain the centers' interest in attracting some better prepared clients to their services. To start, consistent with its TOC, SWBH did identify job openings that offered benefits in better-paying industries. But realistically, it sometimes seemed to make more sense to match these trainings and positions with Level One-type jobseekers. And

adding weight to any decisions to seek out better prepared jobseekers was the need to meet the Phase Two targets for job placement rates.

### **Who Enrolled in SWBH Employment Services?**

“SWBH participants” discussed here are people who, over the months between March 2004 and September 2006, signed informed consent forms to participate in the MDRC research study. During this period there were 781 SWBH participants -- 47 percent enrolled at ARI’s employment center and the other 53 percent enrolled at the MAN center. With the two centers readily referring clients to one another as needed, the collaborative did not distinguish between ARI and MAN enrollees. For the research, however, this distinction is used to highlight any differences in the backgrounds and service take-up rates of ARI and MAN clients.

Of the 781 SWBH participants who signed consent forms, 775 of them went on to complete an intake and assessment process with the SWBH staff.<sup>118</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following background information is mainly drawn from participants’ intake and assessment records as reflected in SWBH MIS data. Occasionally it also draws on a small survey of SWBH, called the “SWBH Wave I Survey,” which was conducted by CWBH in the summer of 2006. The 51 survey respondents were not a representative sample of SWBH participants,<sup>119</sup> but the survey results do complement and expand on the MIS data.

**Participants’ race/ethnicity and language proficiency consistent with ARI and MAN histories:** The largest racial and ethnic groups of participants were Asian (38 percent) African-American (36 percent), and Hispanic (11 percent).<sup>120</sup> But the patterns at the two agencies were different: Over two-thirds (67 percent) of ARI clients were Asian, with a large percentage of Hmong (37 percent of the total) and Vietnamese (20 percent of the total) participants. ARI also attracted Hispanic (7 percent) and African-American (12 percent) clients.

ARI’s high proportion of Asian clients greatly exceeds the proportion of Asians living in Fruitridge. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the area’s population was only a little more than one-quarter (27 percent) Asian.<sup>121</sup> But the predominance of Asians in ARI’s clientele does reflect the agency’s origins.

African-Americans made up a little over half (53 percent) of MAN clients. (Other groups served included Hispanics: 15 percent; Hmong people: 8 percent; and whites: 7 percent.) In past

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<sup>118</sup> Although the number of people who opted to sign consent forms is slightly higher than the total number the centers actually enrolled, the difference is sufficiently small to indicate that the MIS data discussed in this section is representative of the SWBH clientele.

<sup>119</sup> For example, the ethnic breakdown of the survey participants was very different from the breakdown revealed in the MIS data: 53 percent of survey respondents were African-American; only 22 percent were Hmong and there were no Latino respondents.

<sup>120</sup> Neither of the two SWBH employment centers targeted or excluded persons of any particular racial/ethnic background.

<sup>121</sup> Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (June 2003), p. 3.

decades, African Americans constituted Del Paso Heights' largest ethnic minority and they were MAN's original client base. However, 2000 Census data shows that the African American share of Del Paso Heights' population dropped to 22 percent, with Caucasians the largest racial group (35 percent), and most of the rest of the population either Hispanic (19 percent) or Asian (17 percent).<sup>122</sup>

Although 69 percent of all SWBH participants reported English as their primary language, the percentage was lower (52 percent) for ARI clients, and much higher (84 percent) for MAN clients. Hmong was the primary language for 21 percent of ARI clients, Vietnamese for 16 percent, and Chinese for 4 percent. Similarly, while 13 percent of SWBH participants said they were not proficient in either reading or writing English, among ARI clients, this figure rose to 21 percent. At intake, 12 percent of ARI's clients were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) or Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses.

**Many participants apparently income-eligible for welfare receipt but some may have reached lifetime limits:** Most participants (61 percent) were women and somewhat more than half (56 percent) had never been married. Sixty-six percent of participants (and three-fourths of ARI clients) had one or more children living in their households, and of these, more than a third had three or more children. Monthly earnings of participants averaged just \$277, with earnings substantially lower for ARI than for MAN clients (\$217 versus \$372, respectively). To subsidize earnings, these households relied on non-employment income sources, which averaged \$360 a month.

The large percentage of low-income households with children suggests a population eligible for public assistance. However, it may be that participants included a disproportionate number of parents who had reached a lifetime limit for (or "timed out" of) receiving benefits. Broadway One-Stop staff reported that Sacramento One-Stops had been encouraged to refer hard-to-employ residents of SWBH zip code areas to SWBH for intensive job search assistance - - and the hard-to-employ included people who had timed out of benefits or were at risk of doing so. This may explain why although 45 percent of Wave One survey participants were responsible for children under 18, and 69 percent had annual household incomes below \$25,000, only 20 percent reported welfare receipt.

**Active labor market participants:** The great majority of SWBH participants (84 percent) were unemployed at intake and looking for work. But only 8 percent of them had never worked, and 56 percent had been out of a job for six months or less. These figures suggest that most unemployed participants were well attached to the labor market.

**Part-time, no-benefit jobs for many working participants:** Of participants who were employed at intake, only 22 percent were in full-time permanent jobs and just 15 percent had jobs that offered paid vacation; 8 percent had employer-provided retirement or a pension plan and 6 percent reported advancement opportunities.

**Ex-offender status and substance abuse:** Data from the small Wave One survey showed that somewhat less than one-third of respondents had been convicted of a crime, some

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<sup>122</sup> Community Services Planning Council, Inc. (June 2003), p. 3.

with felony convictions. Small percentages of respondents indicated that they felt they should cut down or stop drinking and/or using drugs. A few people had been in a treatment program in the past 12 months, and 10 percent were attending self-help meetings for people with alcohol or drug problems.

**Scarcity of health insurance:** Approximately half of respondents to the Wave One Survey reported that they had been uninsured during the month before they took the survey; and about a fifth of them percent reported that should have gone to a doctor or hospital in the past 12 months, but had not done so because of lack of money or health insurance.

Overall, the demographic profile of participants – many of whom were custodial parents, or had language and education barriers to working, and some of whom had substance abuse and physical and mental health problems, or criminal records – shares many of the characteristics of the most disadvantaged participants of welfare-to-work programs.<sup>123</sup>

### **What Kind of Services Did SWBH Offer?**

**Cross currents affecting SWBH priorities:** Collaborative members initially believed that CWBH's flexible funding would allow them to assist jobseekers without pressure to meet the job placement outcomes typically required by public funding sources. The partners hoped to give all participants a chance to receive individualized job search assistance, intensive case management, and access to vocational training, along with a somewhat more intangible benefit -- enough time to maximize their chances of finding healthy jobs. Staff also looked forward to having the luxury of more time for their own efforts. "We can spend a lot more time," said one staff member, "... with planning and providing training to our clients and making the most of our connections with our employers."

Collaborative members were subsequently disappointed by CWBH Phase II requirements that looked a lot like traditional WIA employment outcome measures, and by the abbreviation of Phase II from seven to three years. But it became clear to SWBH that there was still much that could be tried. Discovering that most people came to the centers wanting jobs as soon as possible and were generally uninterested in long-term career advancement, the collaborative adjusted its focus to finding its constituents better quality entry-level jobs. Another change was that the partners eventually tried to reach out to more job-ready clients.

**Individualized job search assistance and intensive case management:** Despite the strategy shift to rapid-entry job placement, providing one-on-one job search assistance and intensive case management remained top priorities for the collaborative. Each participant was assigned to an Employment Specialist, who worked with that person to develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP), a document that allowed clients to map out immediate employment needs and long-term career goals, along with steps to make progress toward both. Initially, the Specialists tried to contact participants at least weekly to keep them on track with their IWPs.

This kind of job search assistance was significantly more individualized than what was typically available to One-Stop jobseekers in universal access rooms, or even to those eligible for

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<sup>123</sup> See pp. 16-17 in Chapter 1 above.

One-Stop intensive case management services. Indeed, One-Stops were encouraged to refer hard-to-employ jobseekers living in the SWBH zip code areas to MAN and ARI for one-on-one attention. One Employment Specialist said:

[We] will sit down with someone at a computer when they have to do an online application and make sure that all of the words are spelled correctly and the person is using the right tense...[F]rom my understanding, the One-Stops don't do that.

**Taking support services seriously:** SWBH also guided participants to social services needed to help them become job-ready. While much of this guidance, which SWBH considered the case-management component of the overall program, involved referrals to other agencies, MAN operated a variety of on-site programs to which participants could be referred for family services and for health and financial education.

SWBH viewed support services as playing an important role in helping people find and keep jobs. One Employment Specialist said:

... You have to get them in a place where they are ready to look for a job; you have to deal with the personal issues. What they are going through with their families, what their needs are.

The Employment Specialists were trained in general case management, and attended presentations offered by local nonprofit organizations that focused on how to address the social service needs of low-income jobseekers. Also, a key element of the intake and assessment process involved identifying social service needs that required immediate attention.

**Partnerships with One-Stops:** The Employment Specialists referred participants to local One-Stops for employment services that were unavailable through SWBH – for example, particular workshops, job fairs, ESL and GED (General Education Development) classes, and WIA-funded training opportunities for those who qualified for them. Not surprisingly, in light of its own participation in the One-Stop system, ARI took particular advantage of what the One-Stops had to offer. The ARI-managed Broadway One-Stop arranged to co-enroll a number of SWBH participants in order to make them eligible for sought-after WIA-funded supportive services, such as transportation assistance. In return, ARI arranged for some SWBH funds to be used for Broadway One-Stop workshops, job fairs, and other activities that were open not only to SWBH participants but to all One-Stop customers.

**Job development for healthy jobs:** SWBH undertook a number of job development efforts. One of them -- contacting employers in the health and telecommunications industries that SWBH had identified as growth sectors and sources of healthy jobs -- was the responsibility of the two successive SWBH coordinators. They cold-called these employers to assess their needs and introduce them to SWBH. "We're approaching them as a partnership," one of the coordinators explained. She illustrated how she would present SWBH to an employer:

... we have this project, and we would like you to participate by being an employer, by giving us information at the front end so that we can prepare our clients [for openings] so that they are well-prepared.

Employers who were contacted were invited to participate in SWBH's Employment Development Trainings (EDT) – a type of job club activity, discussed in more detail later in this section – and in other SWBH employer events.

SWBH worked closely with some particularly promising employers in the targeted industries – for example, the AAA Call Center, MetroPCS, Tele-Direct, and the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) Medical Center. But the collaborative discovered that just because a sector or industry is projected for major regional growth, its entry-level positions do not necessarily meet the SWBH criteria for healthy jobs. One illustration of this is that many of the 20 participants who had been placed in targeted industries by August 2005 were without benefits or opportunities for career advancement. Moreover, most participants lacked the education and experience needed to fill the entry-level positions offered by the employers that had been cultivated by SWBH. And as noted, many of these participants preferred to find jobs immediately rather than investing in training.

SWBH's experience with UC Davis Medical Center illustrates the kind of difficulties that could manifest themselves even after SDBH had successfully established a relationship with a growth-sector employer. The Center sent representatives to SWBH's EDT sessions to talk to clients about its entry-level job opportunities -- mainly clerical and janitorial positions. (Speakers said that even though most openings were not health-care related, working in the medical center would give participants experience that would be valued if they later applied for health-care positions.) The speakers also invited participants to visit the hospital to observe the available jobs and their working conditions. But turnout for these presentations was low, and it became clear that most of those participants who were interested in working at the Center lacked the skills and experience to qualify even for its most entry-level positions. The SWBH Program Coordinator did follow up with the Medical Center's human resources office to ask about the progress of SWBH participants who applied for openings and about the job performance of successful applicants.

SWBH also negotiated a hiring agreement with Tele-Direct, a call center that hires customer service representatives. However, in exchange for SWBH preparing clients for Tele-Direct's screening interviews and qualifying tests, the agreement committed Tele-Direct only to giving SWBH feedback on its participants who applied for its jobs. Ultimately, the Tele-Direct effort was disappointing. Participants had a difficult time with the company's screening process, which included an assessment of the applicant's interpersonal and communications skills -- an exercise the applicants found confusing and intimidating.

In light of these kinds of experiences, in the middle of the second year of Phase II, SWBH refocused its employment services on general placements without restrictions on sectors and occupations. (An ARI staff member described general placements as ARI's historical "comfort zone" as a workforce development provider.) While the delineation between targeted and non-targeted industries was removed from the TOC workplan, the collaborative

simultaneously raised its goal for overall placements during Phase II from 350 to 400 participants.

**Group EDT workshops only moderately popular:** Besides individual assistance for jobseekers, participants could attend EDT workshops, which used a curriculum that had been developed by SWBH. Conducted by an ARI staff member and held at the ARI center, the sessions started with a four-day program of help with resume writing, job-search and interview skills, and an overview of employee rights and responsibilities, and it usually culminated with a presentation by, or visit to, a local employer, such as the UC Davis Medical Center. Several rounds of the EDTs were moderately attended, but by May 2005, attendance had dropped off sharply. Concluding that any SWBH participants who were likely to attend the workshops had already done so, SWBH ceased offering them.

**Community job fairs – not a big draw:** During Phase II, SWBH hosted two communitywide job fairs -- one in April 2005 in Del Paso Heights and the other in October 2005 in Fruitridge. Although the collaborative drew an impressive number of employers to these events, jobseeker attendance was somewhat disappointing, and SWBH began to explore other ways to bring employers and participants together.

**Smaller venues for employers more successful:** In November 2005, MAN began holding small job fairs, called “Jobs Connections,” at the MAN SWBH job center. Initially held weekly and later twice monthly, Jobs Connections typically consisted of presentations by two to five employers. In most respects, these sessions resembled the EDT presentations of individual employers held at the ARI center, but one difference was that the employers conducted on-the-spot screening interviews. Thus, jobseekers were encouraged to bring their resumes to the sessions. MAN staff tried to prepare participants for the interviews by offering resume writing and so-called “soft-skill” workshops (focusing on on-the-job performance issues such as promptness and getting along with colleagues) – originally, on the day before the Job Connections session and later, when it was found that attendance at these preparatory sessions was too low, just a few hours before the employers made their presentations.

Jobs Connections had a slow start, with the first few months of sessions attracting only an average of 5 to 6 participants. But as word of the event spread in the community and as staff became more experienced at finding employers that generated interest, attendance increased. For example, at the April 26, 2006, Jobs Connections session, Comcast and the California Association of Employers drew 52 interested jobseekers, with two Employment Specialists later reporting that they had clients who were hired by Comcast as a result of the event. In 2006, MAN began tracking attendance at Jobs Connections and enrolling attendees as SWBH participants. (See Table 4.3 for information on employers presenting and attendance levels.) According to a MAN staff person, 111 unduplicated participants attended the 2006 Jobs Connections sessions.

**Sacramento Works for Better Health**

**Table 4.3**

**2006 Jobs Connections Workshops at Mutual Assistance Network (MAN)**

Date	Employer(s)	Attendees
15-Feb	California Franchise Tax Board	5
15-Mar	Sacramento Bee	12
29-Mar	California Association of Employers (CAE)	8
12-Apr	CAE	7
26-Apr	Comcast, CAE	52
10-May	River City Staffing, Labor Connection	3
24-May	Cornerstone, Nelson Staffing	13
7-June	UPS, Motivational Systems	12
21-Jun	Grant Maritime Training, SMUD	46
19-Jul	Link Staffing Services, MAN	10
2-Aug	Spherion, Kragen, Worldwide Flight	24
16-Aug	Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Worldwide Flight, U.S. Army	15
30-Aug	Spherion, Worldwide Flight, Barrett Business Services, Inc. MAN	30
13-Sep	H&R Block, Trendwest, MAN	11
27-Sep	H&R Block, City Parks & Rec,	15
11-Oct	Link Staffing, Calif. Franchise Tax Board, TSA, MAN, Panera Bread	18
14-Oct	AmeriCorps, Fed-Ex, H&R Block, Spherion, TSA, River City Staffing, Calif. Franchise Tax Board	48
25-Oct	Panera Bread, MAN	10
8-Nov	CAE, Panera Bread, MAN	16
29-Nov	Calif. Franchise Tax Board, Calif. State Parks, ProTrades, MAN	20
Total Participants		383

SOURCE: MAN data

Although Employment Specialists reported that some of their clients had been hired as a result of attending a Jobs Connections workshop, as Phase II came to a close, MAN had not yet established tracking to determine if any job placements were due to Jobs Connections. But noting the popularity of these sessions, ARI planned to start holding its own Jobs Connections workshops during its next phase of SWBH funding.

**Targeted training:** The collaborative followed through on its original objective of helping constituents get training to qualify for better-paying jobs. The centers referred participants to existing training programs, but especially toward the end of Phase II, they began

to play a more active role in shaping and customizing training to make it convenient and accessible for SWBH participants.

For example, ARI worked with the Lemon Hill Health Care Career Center to recruit and enroll participants in a six-week Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, which was part of the local WIA workforce system's broader effort to address the region's need for nurses and health-care paraprofessionals. In October 2006, SWBH held an informational meeting about the program, and besides screening candidates for their commitment and ability to finish the training, ARI paid its \$575-per-person enrollment fee for prospective trainees. Fourteen SWBH participants graduated from the CNA training course, and two were placed as CNAs. ARI plans on co-sponsoring the CNA trainings every other month during the new SWBH funding cycle. In addition to getting clients into positions that have opportunities for career advancement, this partnership was viewed as an opportunity to address health disparities among the populations served by SWBH by increasing the diversity of the health care workforce.

SWBH also partnered with the California Association of Employers (CAE), a nonprofit group that provides human resource services and training to over 500 member employers statewide. Collaborative members first encountered CAE at the organization's five-day "boot-camp" trainings, which were held at area One-Stops and which aimed to rapidly introduce candidates to the skills and responsibilities of an industry-specific or sometimes firm-specific job. Subsequently, MAN asked CAE to conduct boot camps for SWBH participants. In November 2006, the first boot camp was held at MAN, introducing participants to basic skills for entry-level work on construction projects. Before the training, CAE conducted a prescreening of applicants, checking their references and giving them drug-use tests. These measures helped to attract potential employers to the final day of the training, where participants were assured of interviews with at least three construction-trade employers. Of the nine participants, two were placed. The collaborative plans to continue partnering with CAE during the next phase of SWBH, but also to develop Train the Trainer workshops to equip its own staff to conduct boot camps.

Final data on participation levels and employment outcomes for the two trainings just described are not available in time for this report. However, staff report that the response of SWBH constituents to the first round of trainings was strong.

**Small-business development:** Early in Phase II, SWBH staff discussed how to help participants they expected to have a particularly hard time finding jobs because of limited English proficiency, criminal backgrounds, and other steep barriers to employment. Concluding that microenterprise was a promising option, SWBH created two microenterprise projects. The first was Business Development Circles (BDCs), which encouraged business owners in the Targeted Neighborhoods to serve as mentors to people just starting businesses and which aimed to stimulate the hiring of community residents. BDC partners included Chambers of Commerce in both SWBH neighborhoods, local business associations, and CAE.

The second project was the Dare to Dream workshops and associated support services, a project developed by ARI and MAN in partnership with the Asian-Pacific Chamber of Commerce, which conducted the workshops. SWBH participants interested in starting their own

businesses who attended the workshops were helped to create a business plan. Once it was produced and accepted, attendees were to be offered a small start-up grant, membership in their neighborhood Chamber of Commerce, and monthly counseling from CAE. They would also be mentored by established local business owners.

Recruitment for the workshops included advertisements on Hmong, Vietnamese, and Russian radio stations. Two ARI-sponsored workshops attracted 11 people during 2006, and MAN's first workshop, which was also held in 2006, added another 11 attendees to the total. While collaborative members were pleased with the response to the workshops, they concluded that they needed to be more rigorous in determining both the feasibility of the business plans and participants' level of commitment to becoming business owners. At the end of Phase II, the collaborative was also working out the details of Dare to Dream mentorships.

**Career advancement counseling evoked little interest:** Employment Specialists stood ready to give participants career and career-change counseling, but as noted, jobseekers were reluctant to pursue activities that did not lead directly to employment. Once participants were working, some of them, particularly those caring for young children, told staff that they had little time or energy for career development.

SWBH did try to persuade employers of participants whom the program had placed to provide on-the-job training and education for these employees, but the collaborative did not succeed in making this happen and thus participants had to find time for education and training outside of work hours. Another barrier to career advancement was that some participants hesitated to consider new occupations and sectors. One staff member said:

A lot of them don't want to move forward...We have job openings that are in the health industry, but they don't have an interest...They think that [food service, housekeeping, etc.] is all they can do.

**Post-employment outreach to employers and participants:** Employers of a SWBH participant were told that if they were having difficulty with that person's performance, they could call the Employment Specialist to ask that staff member to speak to the employee and try to solve the problem. Similarly, participants who had been placed in jobs were invited to ask a Specialist to discuss a problematic job situation with that person's employer. However, little of this activity occurred during this reporting period.

**Education about healthy jobs:** Information about workplace health, health insurance, and the environmental and safety standards that employees should expect from employers was included in the curriculum for EDT trainings. But once these sessions were discontinued, formal efforts to convey information about workplace health and safety also ended. SWBH managers decided that helping participants find positions that would meet its healthy jobs standards was a more effective way of ensuring their workplace health and safety than offering them health education.

SWBH also produced a “Healthy Jobs Handbook” for distribution to employers, but found it attracted little interest. The collaborative decided that it was preferable for project job developers to try to interject discussions of workplace health and safety issues into their conversations with employers.

**Creating a learning culture:** MAN brought to SWBH a strong tradition of institutional learning and quality improvement. The agency’s internal process for designing, operating, and evaluating services incorporates employees at all levels; in fact, MAN programs are typically vetted first with employees, since many are also residents of Del Paso Heights. ARI has subsequently adopted many of MAN’s quality improvement practices – and overall, SWBH planning has been marked by a commitment to ongoing learning from performance and using that information to improve services.

**Contending demands of individualized assistance, program development, and meeting outcome standards:** The need to both develop new group employment services and provide to individualized assistance to participants took a toll on SWBH staff. In a focus group held toward the end of Phase II, Employment Specialists at both agencies complained of stress and exhaustion in the face of these conflicting demands: “You just can’t focus 100 percent on a person,” said one Specialist. “We’re focusing on workshops, getting things done, we’re feeling very split.” Instead of attending mainly to individualized counseling, this staff member said she found herself translating materials for a workshop or creating fliers for the CNA training. “I’m stretching in so many directions,” she said, “I don’t even know where to begin.”

Another related stress was that SWBH was required to meet enrollment and placement numbers that were typical of publicly funded programs, which have far more modest expectations for how much individual attention they should give to clients. However interviews with clients suggest that Employment Specialists, who reportedly had caseloads of close to 200, did manage to make clients feel that they and their needs were taken seriously. Interviewees repeatedly said that the most helpful part of the program was the personal attention their Employment Specialists gave them. “These people here,” said one client, “they care about you. They do. They know you when you walk in.”

### **What Types of Services Did SWBH Participants Use?**

Because the information in this section and the next one relies on MIS data that was analyzed for participants who enrolled from March 2004 through September 2006, it covers usage patterns and outcomes for a significant portion, but not all, of Phase II.

**Individualized job search assistance most common service:** Following intake, assessment, and case management, the services that were used the most were: receiving job leads from the job developers (52 percent of participants); job search assistance (29 percent); and resume assistance (21 percent). Twenty percent of participants received referrals to job fairs and/or Jobs Connections sessions. (Usage percentages total more than 100 percent, because many enrollees reported using more than one service.)

**Skills development, career advancement and job retention services:** Only 7 percent of clients availed themselves of SWBH career counseling, 3 percent of career-change counseling and fewer than 8 percent engaged in any type of educational or training services. For instance, even though a sizeable number of participants lacked English proficiency or a high school diploma/GED, only 2 percent took part in ABE, GED, or ESL classes. While data for participants who enrolled through September 2006 show that only 1 percent of them used vocational training, this finding does not account for participation in many of the CAE, Dare to Dream, and CNA trainings that took place after the cut-off point for data analysis.

Take-up rates for pre-job guidance, job readiness activities (such as the EDT training), and interview training, were 12 percent, 6 percent, and 8 percent respectively. Only 5 percent of participants were involved in the job retention activities that involved either the employees themselves or their employers contacting Employment Specialists for help in solving work-related problems.

**Sizeable demand for case management:** Fifty-nine percent of participants used case management services, meaning that they were referred by Employment Specialists to support services such as sources of assistance with health care and transportation needs and to financial assistance. However, only 2 percent of clients were referred to so-called “basic-needs services” - - emergency help to meet needs for food, housing, and clothing.

**Indications of short-term use of services:** Staff were asked to follow up with participants 6, 12, and 18 months after intake and were expected to complete a form if someone exited the program, either explicitly by declining more services, or because staff had lost contact with that person. Staff were also asked to try to conduct exit interviews with participants. Among the CWBH-funded employment programs, SWBH was particularly diligent about these procedures; still, staff reported 6-month follow-up contact with only 125 of the 781 participants. This number declined to 36 participants after 12 months, and to 18 after 18 months. Staff conducted exit interviews with 32 participants. All of these data suggest that participants’ involvement with the program was typically fairly brief and often confined to the initial job search.

### **How Well Did SWBH Meet Its Employment Goals?**

SWBH MIS data suggest that SWBH managed to help part of a very disadvantaged clientele make gains on the employment front:

**Success in helping numerous clients find full-time, above-minimum-wage jobs:** From March 2005 through September 2006, 307 out of 781 SWBH participants began working, giving SWBH a placement rate of 39 percent – within the range of the rates of the most disadvantaged treatment subgroups of the welfare-to-work demonstrations. On average, the participants who found jobs earned \$9.41 per hour – in contrast to the state hourly minimum wage of \$6.75 during this period -- and they worked 35 hours per week, suggesting that many of them secured full-time employment.

**Diversifying and improving occupations:** SWBH was quite successful in this aspect of its work. The percentage of participants in management/professional employment positions rose from 8 percent to 17 percent, and in office work from 3 percent to 10 percent. However, a fifth of successful jobseekers found retail and sales positions, which tend to be low-paying. The 21 percent of participants who secured “other-service” employment includes participants who took advantage of the entry-level health-care paraprofessional jobs cultivated by the collaborative. In comparison to only 9 percent of the MAN placements, 28 percent of ARI’s were in manufacturing -- a difference probably explained by the ARI’s adeptness in helping jobseekers with limited English find assembly and packaging jobs in manufacturing firms, positions in high demand among limited English speakers in the Targeted Neighborhoods.

**Positive trajectory for placements with benefits:** About a third (34 percent) of the jobs secured by SWBH offered medical insurance; 22 percent offered paid vacations, and 11 percent retirement or pension plans. The percentage of MAN clients who secured jobs with medical insurance benefits was significantly higher (43 percent) than the percentage for ARI clients (26 percent). One likely reason for this difference is that, as noted, substantially more ARI clients than MAN clients found entry-level jobs in small manufacturing firms, and these positions often do not offer benefits.

**Job retention:** Only 40 percent of participants placed in jobs were in contact with staff at the program’s six-month follow-up point. Of these, 56 participants (45 percent) were still in their jobs at that point. But the large amount of data missing for this and subsequent follow-ups makes it impossible to draw firm conclusions about retention rates.

#### **Box 4.2**

#### **Getting a Second Chance through SWBH**

**Pete Hampton** greets the SWBH Employment Specialists at MAN’s Firehouse Community Center, which he visits regularly. (This individual’s name has been changed.) An African-American in his late 20s, Mr. Hampton grew up in the Del Paso Heights area. He was incarcerated for nine years for a drug-related offense, but has been out of prison, “clean,” and working for a year. Like many MAN clients, Pete first heard about the agency from a relative. His brother, who had participated in MAN’s programs, arranged for a MAN staff member to visit Pete while he was still in prison: “[The staff member] told me that once I got out of here, he would assist me.” Mr. Hampton said it was like someone was waiting for him when he got out of prison - and not just someone from the “hood,” who might get him back into trouble.

Mr. Hampton is a very purposeful young man. In prison, he took advantage of every education and training opportunity available to him. He says that such opportunities exist, but much depends on the prisoner’s initiative: “They don’t rehabilitate. You have to rehabilitate yourself. I learned how to weld. I took a small business management course. I worked on computers.” Pete thus left prison in a good position to start looking for work.

(continued)

### Box 4.2 (continued)

He first went to Community Connections in Downtown Sacramento, an organization that specializes in working with ex-offenders. “They teach you not to lie about your conviction, but how to explain it. And how to fill out applications and do resumes.” He also went to MAN, and was directed to its SWBH program. Since he had already received some work readiness preparation from Community Connections, his MAN Employment Specialist focused on his job search. She helped him consult Internet job listings, sent him job postings, and referred him, with a MAN reference, to a temporary staffing agency, which hired him for a warehousing job. Pete has since moved into a permanent job in the distribution division of a door manufacturing company. He feels very supported by his Employment Specialist, who continuously followed up with him both during his job search and after he was placed. He stresses the importance of the MAN reference in having helped him – an ex-offender – get through the door to employers.

There were also some differences between participants who were and were not placed:

- **Asians had particular success in securing jobs:** Even though they were only 38 percent of participants, Asians accounted for half of the job placements.
- **Postsecondary education and vocational training was an advantage:** Participants who had postsecondary education at intake constituted 32 percent of those placed and 24 percent of the not-placed. Fourteen percent of people placed had been participating in postsecondary education or vocational training when they enrolled, but at enrollment only 7 percent of the not-placed were involved in these activities. Conversely, participants who lacked a high school diploma constituted 22 percent of the not-placed but 12 percent of people placed.
- **Some barriers to employment that participants noted at enrollment apparently made little difference:** At enrollment, 7 percent of people who were subsequently not placed and 3 percent of those who found jobs (a fairly trivial difference) cited lack of transportation as a barrier to employment. Similarly, 3 percent of the not-placed and 1 percent of the successful jobseekers had initially cited lack of child care as a barrier to employment. Staff often mentioned criminal records as an obstacle to clients’ employment. Yet while 9 percent of the not-placed were ex-offenders, so were 6 percent of those who found jobs. Interestingly, participants who were placed included a smaller percentage of those who reported English as their primary language at enrollment (60 percent, compared to 75 percent of those not placed).

**Hurdles to enrolling in company health plans:** Follow-up interviews and focus groups held with some participants indicate that many participants saw health insurance as a very important benefit. One participant said:

Having benefits to go see a doctor when you're feeling down or think something is wrong, without having to pay a fortune, that's going to make you feel great about going to work each day.

But finding jobs with employers that offered health insurance benefits did not end obstacles to getting on company plans. One participant, who worked at a nationally known discount retailer, said she would qualify for the plan only after a year of full-time employment. Especially because she had an untreated ulcer, she was eager to enroll, even though the plan would require her to contribute \$120 per month out of her \$8.50 per-hour earnings. (See Box 4.3 for another example of issues with employer-provided health care even though the job placement was a success.).

### **Box 4.3**

#### **Building a Health Care Career through SWBH**

**Macy Leu**, a pseudonym for a child of Hmong refugees, grew up in the U.S. Now in her 30s, and living with her husband and two teenage children in the Fruitridge area, she came to SWBH with a stronger educational and work history than many participants. At the point when she turned to the ARI center for help in finding a new job, she already had clerical experience and a certificate in business administration from a technical college. She told her Employment Specialist that she was interested in the health care field and was directed to SWBH job readiness training, where she was helped to update her resume and given job leads.

Eventually, Ms. Leu was offered a job as a staffing manager for a home health care company. The manager who hired her stresses how impressed she has been by all of the candidates that ARI has sent to her. She says their resumes were very well put together, they had the requisite backgrounds, and they performed well in their interviews. (She adds that she often meets with applicants wearing clothes more suited to the gym or grocery shopping than to an interview.) The manager had a difficult time choosing from among a number of suitable candidates from ARI but hired Macy because she had had experience in scheduling personnel. Ms. Leu now works full-time, is paid \$2,800 a month, and was offered medical insurance after working at the firm for three months (although Macy says that MEDICAL, which she received before she started this new job, offers better coverage than her employer's insurance). Macy wants to advance in the health care field, and her Employment Specialist has helped her to enroll in evening nursing classes. With two more years of classes to go, Macy looks forward to earning her degree as a Registered Nurse.

## **F. Fostering Resident Leadership**

For Phase II, SWBH modified its plan for advocacy, focusing on training local leaders and deploying them in advocacy campaigns. Every year, 10 Targeted Neighborhood residents (five from each neighborhood) would be trained and then would form Policy Advocacy Groups (PAGs) to undertake collective advocacy efforts focused on their neighborhoods. Over the

course of a year after finishing the training, each cohort of PAG members would select policy issues that would be in some way related to promoting employment and health in each of the Targeted Neighborhoods and then would develop a plan for addressing the issue. Two cohorts of PAG members were formed during this reporting period. Following is a summary of their experiences.

**First PAG cohort – in need of a roadmap:** The first cohort of PAG members found that they were unsure about what policy issues to address. In part because the TOC had not focused on how the PAGs would get an advocacy campaign off the ground or what kinds of outcomes it was hoped the PAGs would achieve, SWBH staff shared much of this uncertainty.

To help clarify matters, SWBH staff held a March 2005 retreat with PAG members. As a springboard for determining advocacy issues to focus on, staff asked the PAG retreat attendees to identify the steepest barrier to employment in their neighborhoods. Participants from the Fruitridge area selected substance abuse, particularly abuse of prescription drugs, while Del Paso Heights PAG members identified limited English skills. Some PAG members who took part in the retreat reported that it had given them enthusiasm for moving ahead.

But soon after the retreat, it became clear that there was not enough people power to work on two different policy issues. At that point, PAG membership had dwindled to five people, and SWBH suggested that these remaining members meet as a single group to develop an agenda centered on one of the two issues. With strong persuasion from some of its members, the group chose substance abuse. But the PAG was not able to formulate concrete next steps to take. Due to frustration over this impasse and to personality conflicts in the group, only three people were attending PAG meetings by July 2005. By the year's end, no decisions had been made about what to do next.

**Second cohort – SWBH tries new ideas to strengthen PAG:** Concluding that it was asking too much of PAG to independently identify a policy issue and that this process would best be handled with facilitation by someone outside SWBH rather than in a SWBH-sponsored retreat, SWBH asked a legal services lawyer who had been involved in its Phase I planning process to facilitate PAG meetings. To give PAG members a concrete starting point for their selection of a policy issue, she worked with SWBH staff to develop a menu of issues that were related to employment barriers in the Targeted Neighborhoods and gave PAG members background information about the issues. (She also helped PAG develop its governance structure.)

Another change in procedures for the second round of PAG was that recruiting participants became more targeted. In order to identify prospective trainees who were emerging leaders and interested in SWBH policy issues, staff made special efforts to find Targeted Neighborhood residents who were involved in local politics or were small business owners. All of these changes seemed to make PAG attendance more consistent than it had been for the first cohort, and the changes helped keep PAG discussions on topic. Ultimately, though, only six active PAG members were retained.

The second PAG decided to address two issues: health access information for youth, and on-campus career centers and job development for youth. Nothing was done on the first issue, but the group did work on the second one. To help local youth understand more about the important role that health insurance can play in someone's employment life, PAG members received permission from one high school in the Fruitridge area and one in Del Paso Heights to provide their students with information sheets about the need for workers to try to secure health insurance. PAG then began developing information sheets, which were to include a list of public and private health insurance options and which were to be inserted in the graduation packets for high school seniors. PAG also met with school administrators to encourage them to include a section on health insurance in senior-level health classes.

This educational effort -- directed at changing the behavior of individual high school seniors -- was much more modest than the policy changes to be brought about by resident-led, advocacy campaigns that were envisioned by the CWBH initiative or the original SWBH TOC. Nevertheless, this PAG's term was extended beyond Phase II to February 2007, in order to allow the group to complete the information for high school graduates.

## **G. Conclusions**

A review of the SWBH Phase II experience highlights several broad themes that marked the collaborative and its activities.

**Genuine collaboration:** Throughout the initiative, the two SWBH partners demonstrated a high level of commitment to cooperation, working hard, for example, to develop a single employment program that operated at two sites, rather than settling for two disparate programs. While it is usually easier to manage a relationship between two partners than it is to bring together multiple members of a collaborative venture, SWBH's accomplishments in this area are nevertheless noteworthy.

**Strong job placement rates:** SWBH achieved the highest *collaborative* placement rate of any of the CWBH sites (39 percent) and also managed to meet a key CWBH goal of improving wages, occupational categories, and workplace conditions of the participants they placed.

**Adding to the members' repertoires for job development and employment assistance activities:** The two collaborative members took advantage of CWBH funding to try out workforce development approaches that were new to them. They cultivated new relationships with employers, jointly hosted job fairs, sponsored smaller events that brought employers together with participant jobseekers, brought two specialized training programs on site, and conducted small-business development training. Not all of these efforts were successful, but they all show that the grantees made strong efforts to use the funding to create something different and collaborative rather than to augment their existing services.

**Cross-pressures on staff:** Collaborative staff members were committed to providing individualized and sometimes time-consuming assistance to clients, and at the same time they

had to meet high job placement rates. It speaks to their dedication that they were able to achieve both goals. But in trying to reach the job placement goals, they sometimes tried to recruit job-ready clients, rather attempting to work exclusively with hard-to-employ jobseekers. Another tug on their time and effort was the need to attend to the details of developing and running group activities without sacrificing the program's interest in individual counseling.

**Advocacy a relatively minor concern:** With the departure of SVOC from the collaborative, plans to conduct grassroots advocacy campaigns to secure hiring agreements ended – and ARI and MAN ultimately concluded that for their local area, job development efforts, not an advocacy campaign, was the more realistic route to making these agreements happen. But this decision left the training of community leaders as the one item on SWBH's advocacy agenda, and that activity was not a major focus of its work.

**Disappointing outcomes for resident leadership trainings:** The decision not to pursue an advocacy campaign that focused on hiring agreements also left the Policy Advocacy Groups - - the groups of resident leaders trained by SWBH -- without a ready-made issue around which to mobilize. With the help of a facilitator, the second cohort of trainees did reach consensus on an issue to work on, but the effort they undertook – providing information about health insurance to high school seniors -- cannot be described as community organizing. Moreover, the number of participants who stayed with either PAG group was low. Given these problems, it is not surprising that the PAGs failed to plan and implement true advocacy campaigns.

## CHAPTER 5: San Diego Works for Better Health

The San Diego Works for Better Health (SDWBH) initiative took place in what is essentially a transnational region along the U.S.-Mexico border area. Here residents of both nations regularly travel back and forth – legally and illegally -- for employment, health care, social services, housing, and education. Proximity to Mexico gives San Diego employers ready access to Mexican jobseekers, generating intense competition for the area’s entry-level jobs, and complicating efforts to improve the wages and conditions of these positions. Furthermore, as one of the nation’s fastest growing regions, San Diego County is an area considered by some to be a “developer’s paradise,” where enthusiasm for unfettered expansion and development overtakes considerations such as providing affordable housing or employment opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers.

In this complex environment, SDWBH was charged with trying to improve the employment outcomes and well-being of its low-income constituents, many of whom were ex-offenders or lacked English proficiency or even the legal right to work in the U.S. Unfortunately, the combination of an initial inability of SDWBH partners to coalesce and a loss of two of the original partners as the project transitioned into Phase II undercut SDWBH’s capacity to implement its Theory of Change (TOC).

SDWBH did participate in a successful campaign to secure benefits for local jobseekers from a \$1.5 billion-dollar development project (although the project has been delayed). Also with the support of Phase II funding, a fledgling nonprofit organization that had never been a service provider and one that had never focused heavily on job readiness services took on a challenging new role. Their Phase II story highlights the risks of investing in undertakings of organizations that are novices or relative novices in the work they are expected to pursue.

This chapter examines the background, implementation, and outcomes of SDWBH’s Phase II activities. During this period, the collaborative partners were: the Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI), the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC) Project, and the United African American Ministerial Action Council (UAAMAC).

### **A. The Local and Regional Context for SDWBH Activities**

Encompassing an area about the size of Connecticut, San Diego County is located in the southwestern-most corner of the continental U.S. Over the past two decades, the county has experienced considerable economic growth. In 2006, its gross regional product was forecast to reach \$155 billion, up nearly 7 percent over the 2005 level.<sup>124</sup> The county’s population grew by 300,000 during the 1990s, and with over three million people in 2006, it was the sixth most populous county in the U.S.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> San Diego Workforce Partnership (2006), p 2.

<sup>125</sup> “Community Overview.” San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation website <http://www.sandiegobusiness.org>.

In recent decades, government-business partnerships have sought to diversify the regional economy beyond its reliance on defense-related federal spending by bringing commercial high-tech investment into the area. Meanwhile, the defense industry itself has sought to recruit highly educated and skilled workers to come to San Diego. These efforts have apparently paid off: According to the 2000 census, while the statewide proportion of the population 25 years and older who were high school graduates was 77 percent and the proportion for college graduates was 27 percent, in San Diego County the corresponding proportions were 83 percent and 35 percent. (However, the concentration of educated workers in the area suggests that less educated, low-income workers will have a hard time competing in the local labor market.)

Over the past 30 years, billions of development dollars – including \$780 million of public investment – have gone towards revitalizing Downtown San Diego. City officials have proudly pointed to over 15,000 net new private sector jobs that were created in the downtown area between 1980 and 2004. However, these jobs did not substantially translate into improved wages. In 2004, the median wages of the 10 largest Downtown occupations were under \$8 per hour, and 46 percent of all employees earned less than \$11.38 per hour, which is considered the self-sufficiency wage in high-cost San Diego.<sup>126</sup>

Other worrisome patterns have darkened the generally rosy picture of San Diego's economy:

**High cost of living, growing inequality:** The cost of living in the region has soared along with its booming economy. For instance, the median housing price in San Diego Metro Area for a single-family home in 2004 was \$557,040, with an affordability index (the percent of households able to afford a median-priced home) of 11 percent. This was a sharp increase from the median housing price in 2000 -- \$269,410, with an affordability index of 24 percent.<sup>127</sup> From 1980 to 1997, even as the region was expanding economically, income inequality grew more quickly in San Diego County than in the rest of the state.<sup>128</sup> In 2004, about 11 percent of the county's population lived in households with incomes below the poverty line.

**Transnational living:** For all practical purposes, the San Diego region encompasses Tijuana and Baja, California as well as much of Southern California. In this greater San Diego-Tijuana region, in addition to bi-national trade and industrial production, a "community of transnational citizens" has emerged, whose members – both U.S. and Mexican citizens --

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<sup>126</sup> Karjanen, David J. (July 2005), p. 4. Furthermore, a survey of low-wage Downtown service workers showed that 64 percent had no paid sick days, 58 percent had no paid holidays, and 42 percent no health insurance. Of the 58 percent who had access to employer-provided insurance, only 34 percent were enrolled, with 58 percent of those who had not saying that they could not afford the monthly premiums, which averaged \$94.20. Center on Policy Initiatives (December 2004), p. i.

<sup>127</sup> San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, "Single Family Affordability Index," using California Association of Realtors, 2005 data, [http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/MarketIntelligence\\_print.asp?MarketID=76](http://www.sandiegobusiness.org/MarketIntelligence_print.asp?MarketID=76).

<sup>128</sup> Marcelli, Enrico A. (2000).

purchase land and housing, work, send their children to school, and consume products and services on both sides of the border.<sup>129</sup> Local social service and workforce development policies and programs must take these patterns into consideration. Proximity to the border also permits regional employers to draw on a labor pool of legal and illegal Mexican workers. Researchers disagree, but some believe this exerts downward pressure on the region's already low-wage jobs.<sup>130</sup>

**Latino need for education and workforce development:** In 2006, almost a third of the region's population was Latino, with that percentage expected to double in size by 2030.<sup>131</sup> Unemployment rates among Latinos in the region are substantially higher and educational attainment levels lower than those of the general population.<sup>132</sup> For instance, in 2005 Latinos constituted 52 percent of county residents living below the federal poverty level, and had the lowest median income among all racial/ethnic groups. (Among full-time workers, 44 percent earned less than \$25,000.)<sup>133</sup>

**Hurdles to accessing Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop job search services and training:** Low-income, minority members of the regional workforce can find it difficult to get training and job search assistance from San Diego's WIA One-Stop system. One-Stops must meet federal performance criteria, including job placement rates, to receive their funding allocations. As a result, these facilities are reluctant to enroll jobseekers with, for example, a criminal record, limited English proficiency, or no GED or high school diploma.

While the One-Stop "universal" services (for example, resource rooms to undertake computerized job searches and job search workshops) are open to anyone, including undocumented workers, a certain degree of autonomy is required to use them. Clients with limited English proficiency or limited experience with office technology are likely to need individual help, particularly from Spanish-speaking staff. But "there's almost no one who speaks Spanish," complained a SDWBH participant who had tried a One-Stop and refused to return. One-Stop staff who were interviewed for this report confirmed that Spanish-speaking staff are clustered at the South County Career Center, with minimal Spanish-speaking assistance at other centers.

## **B. The SDWBH Targeted Neighborhood**

SDWBH originally sought to focus on a three-square-mile area, known as the Imperial Corridor, which lies next to the San Diego Bay, south of Downtown San Diego. The area

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<sup>129</sup> Herzog, Lawrence (1999 and December 4, 2003).

<sup>130</sup> Borjas, George J. (2003 and 1999); Knowledge @ Wharton (May 17, 2006).

<sup>131</sup> SANDAG INFO Update (August 2001).

<sup>132</sup> Mason, Cheryl (2000).

<sup>133</sup> Center for Policy Initiatives (2006).

encompasses eight Year 2000 census tracts and six neighborhoods: Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Memorial, Sherman Heights, Stockton, and Grant Hill.<sup>134</sup>

During the time when the TOC proposal was being written, the Targeted Neighborhood was reduced to just one neighborhood, Barrio Logan. However, at the start of Phase II, after the departure of the two collaborative members with organizing bases in Barrio Logan, it made sense to expand the geographic focus of the two remaining collaborative partners, especially since UAAMAC wanted to work with ex-offenders from its member congregations throughout the southeast sections of the city, and because MAAC wanted to expand its focus on Barrio Logan by serving clients from its programs based elsewhere in the county. The funders agreed to this change, allowing the grantees to retroactively enroll non-Targeted Neighborhood residents into SDWBH. Ultimately, most MAAC clients were from Barrio Logan, but UAAMAC participants came from all over the mid-city and southeast San Diego area.

The following discussion<sup>135</sup> presents characteristics of the original Imperial Corridor area. Imperial Corridor includes neighborhoods, particularly Barrio Logan, that supplied most of the clients served by MAAC. In addition, the area encompasses many neighborhoods that the collaborative hoped would benefit from SDWBH efforts to secure a hiring agreement for workers at a proposed development for Downtown San Diego known as Ballpark Village. (The Ballpark Village campaign is discussed later in the chapter.)

Key characteristics of the area were:

**Mostly Hispanic, with a sizeable minority of undocumented immigrants:** More than 80 percent of the Imperial Corridor residents were Hispanic, compared to only about a quarter of the population in the City and County of San Diego. Nearly three-quarters of residents over age five spoke primarily Spanish at home. Approximately one-third of the Imperial Corridor's population was estimated to be undocumented immigrants. Only 10 percent of the area was African-American.

**High unemployment and poverty rates, with employment in low-wage jobs:** According to the 2000 Census, the per capita income of the over 32,000 residents of Imperial Corridor was \$7,898 – less than one-third of the per capita income of the City and County of San Diego (\$23,609 and \$22,926, respectively). Approximately 44 percent of the area's residents lived below the federal poverty level (compared to 15 percent and 13 percent for the City and County of San Diego, respectively). The unemployment rate was three times that of the City and County of San Diego, and employment was primarily in low-wage service occupations.

**Serious barriers to employment:** Education levels were low, with less than 4 in 10 people over age 25 with high school diplomas. Ex-offender status was an additional barrier to

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<sup>134</sup> The Imperial Corridor overlaps with the following zip codes: Barrio Logan (92113), Grant Hill (92102), Logan Heights (92113), Memorial (92136), Sherman Heights (92102) and Stockton (92102).

<sup>135</sup> The discussion draws on UCLA Advanced Policy Institute (May 19, 2003), "Neighborhood Indicators Report, California Works for Better Health – San Diego." The UCLA Advanced Policy Institute was engaged in by the collaborative to report on key demographic features and economic conditions to inform the TOC planning process.

employment. (A sign of the likely prevalence of ex-offenders in the area is that over the next decade, 12 percent of San Diego ex-offenders are projected to return to Imperial Corridor neighborhoods.) One special problem faced by California's ex-offenders is their automatic exclusion, by state law, from 55 occupations.<sup>136</sup>

### **C. The SDWBH Collaborative Partners**

**The Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI).** Founded in 1997, CPI seeks economic development that includes public participation and that provides individuals and communities with living-wage jobs, affordable housing, and healthy environments. In partnership with advocacy groups and labor unions, CPI uses community organizing, advocacy, and research to support these goals. The organization's co-founder, formerly the Political Director of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, is now a consultant to the Labor Council. This connection allows CPI to work closely with the region's labor organizations.

CPI was not a collaborative member during Phase I, but it did serve as a consultant to the collaborative, supplying it with local economic and labor market data that was used during the TOC planning process. Owing to CPI's research and advocacy experience, SDWBH subsequently invited it to become a collaborative member for Phase II. It was expected that CPI's main responsibility as a partner would be to spearhead advocacy to secure agreements favorable to the SDWBH target population from local development projects.

**Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC) Project** seeks to promote self-sufficiency for low- and moderate-income families and communities in the San Diego region. Founded in 1965 and originally called the Mexican American Advisory Committee, MAAC emerged out of the Chicano movement and is still a major institution for Hispanics in the region, although its services are open to all groups. MAAC is known for offering its users culturally-competent social and health services, affordable housing, youth activities, and educational programs, including a charter school. In 2004, MAAC provided almost \$22 million in services, and reported more than \$30 million in assets that included several low-income housing complexes.<sup>137</sup> MAAC had some experience in providing employment assistance to neighborhood residents before SDWBH began: MAAC operates five social service centers in San Diego County neighborhoods, and these facilities did provide some employment referrals for clients. However, the centers were not heavily focused on employment matters, and MAAC had no experience in seeking out employers in order to find openings for jobseekers.

**United African American Ministerial Action Council (UAAMAC)** originated as a private association of African American churches. At the time CWBH began, UAAMAC was waiting for approval of its nonprofit tax exempt status and was in the process of recruiting paid staff. In order to help grow the organization, the executive director of Los Angeles Metropolitan

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<sup>136</sup> By federal law, ex-offenders convicted for drug-related reasons are barred for life from public assistance, Food Stamps, and publicly subsidized low-income housing.

<sup>137</sup> MAAC Project 2004-2005 Annual Report, p. 12.

Churches (LAM)<sup>138</sup> had been invited to serve as a UAAMAC consultant. It was hoped that UAAMAC, and thus SDWBH, would profit from LAM's expertise, state legislative contacts, and advocacy work. However, in an effort to develop its independent identity and direction, UAAMAC later asked the LAM executive director to step back from involvement in its day-to-day operations. As a result, any UAAMAC organizing capacity that might have arisen from association with LAM was never realized. UAAMAC was also included in the collaborative in the hopes that its membership of African American pastors and congregations would help engage African American residents, particularly those from southeast San Diego, in SDWBH activities. While, the Barrio Logan Targeted Neighborhood did not have a high proportion of African Americans, one of the predominantly African American congregations in the UAAMAC coalition was based there.

The two Phase I partners that did not continue into Phase II were the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), a 20-year-old organization dedicated to the prevention and cleanup of toxic pollution, and the San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP), a community organizing entity affiliated with the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) faith-based network.

#### **D. SDWBH Theory of Change (TOC)**

During Phase I, the collaborative partners struggled with substantial differences between their respective missions, priorities, cultures, and capacities. The group had difficulty in creating an integrated TOC, with members even finding it hard to get together for working meetings. This lack of cohesion produced a Phase II plan that basically expanded on what each partner was already doing or planning to do, but now with the benefit of CWBH funding.

SDWBH described the ambitious objectives of its TOC as follows:

[A]ccountable development that will bring better jobs to the [targeted] area, a neighborhood based employment resource center that will prepare residents to attain those jobs, grassroots land use planning to improve health and quality of life, reentry management policy changes and programs to help alleviate the transitional difficulties faced by ex-offenders, and policy change based on increased resident empowerment. All of these activities are intertwined, as they are all based in community empowerment and organizing efforts that will engage residents and develop leadership. Our overarching goal is to give residents the tools to create the lasting, positive changes they want to see in their own neighborhoods.

The TOC set forth three overlapping strands: *Accountable Development*, *Community Revitalization for Jobs and Health*, and *Employment Resource Centers (ERCs)*.

The *Accountable Development strand* proposal was to secure living-wage jobs with benefits for Targeted Neighborhood residents. A living wage was defined by CPI as \$12.48 per hour for a single person without dependents, \$25.04 per hour for a single parent with two school-

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<sup>138</sup> LAM organized a number of African American and Central American churches in South Los Angeles, and conducted a successful advocacy campaign that secured state legislation and millions of dollars in funding for faith-based literacy, GED, and employment services for ex-offenders.

age children, and \$13.05 per hour for each parent in a two-parent family with two school-age children.<sup>139</sup>

The primary means of securing living wages would be advocacy designed to bring developers to the table to negotiate Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs), under which they would agree to provide benefits to the community as part of a development or redevelopment project. The TOC called for a focus on projects in areas adjacent to the Targeted Neighborhood. The CBAs were to ensure that Targeted Neighborhood residents would be the first source for hiring to fill jobs generated by the development projects. Besides providing living wages and benefits, development projects would also be required to use healthy and environmentally sound construction and land-use practices -- for example, including parks for public use in their plans.

The TOC's *Community Revitalization Agenda for Jobs and Health* strand was originally designed as leadership training for local residents, culminating in a community-driven plan to revitalize the Targeted Neighborhood. This strand was dropped after the departure of EHC and SDOP at the beginning of Phase II.

Finally, the SWBH collaborative would establish an *Employment Resource Center (ERC)* in Barrio Logan to prepare and channel local residents and ex-offenders into the jobs and training slots set aside in any CBAs won through advocacy efforts.

## **E. Important Changes to Phase II Plans**

The SDWBH lost two of its partners at the beginning of Phase II, which dramatically changed the collaborative's capacity to realize its Phase II plans. Changes in the planned ERC also occurred when operational difficulties emerged.

**Two SDWBH grantees accept tie-off grants:** Going into Phase II, the funders had grave misgivings about the ability of the rather rocky San Diego collaborative to achieve their Phase II plans. For this reason, the grantees were offered tie-off grants. Two of the grantees, the Environmental Health Coalition and the San Diego Organizing Project, concerned that the change in direction would divert them from their missions and core activities, chose to accept the tie off grants in early 2004.

**Resulting lack of capacity for advocacy:** The absence of these two organizations undercut the collaborative's capacity to implement the resident leadership training and community organizing components of the TOC. For instance, under the original TOC, SDOP had been designated to conduct the resident leadership trainings and to work with EHC in mobilizing residents to support advocacy campaigns. Among the partners that remained for Phase II, MAAC and UAAMAC lacked the experience and infrastructure to mobilize sizeable numbers of constituents and more generally, to engage in advocacy.

MAAC had been selected to join CWBH partly because of its origins in Latino political movements – as noted, the organization had been founded in the 1960s to address political and public issues relevant to Chicanos in San Diego -- but in recent decades, it had become a

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<sup>139</sup> Center for Policy Initiatives (2005), p.1.

community development corporation and social service provider rather than a mobilizing organization. Ultimately, participation in CWBH would help MAAC rediscover some of its advocacy roots. CWBH's Phase I emphasis on advocacy gave more legitimacy to the views of some MAAC staff – including the Phase I coordinator – who believed that service delivery and economic development efforts are not enough to substantially improve the lives of the agency's constituents. The Phase I coordinator subsequently founded Justice Overcoming Boundaries (JOB), which took the lead in organizing the major April, 2006, march for immigration reform, and MAAC became a supporter of JOB campaigns. Nevertheless, at the outset of Phase II, MAAC was not an organization that was steeped in advocacy and mobilizing techniques.

UAAMAC was similarly inexperienced when it came to advocacy campaigns and had even less community organizing experience. As discussed, the expectation that UAAMAC would work closely with LAM and thus bring advocacy expertise to Phase II was not realized.

Unlike MAAC and UAAMAC, CPI did have advocacy experience, but more as research support for coalitions of community agencies rather than as an organization that mobilized individual community residents. Given the limitations of the three Phase II partners, the community organizing and leadership development components of the SDWBH TOC were first revised and later, with the funders' agreement, eliminated from the Phase II TOC deliverables.

While SDWBH did not develop its own advocacy campaign, MAAC and UAAMAC did ultimately join with CPI and its allies (including EHC and SDOP) in an existing campaign to secure a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) from the developers of the Ballpark Village project – a development that was expected to be extremely large. The campaign is discussed later in the chapter.

**Two different ERCs:** Meanwhile, on the employment-services front, it was planned that an ERC, based in Barrio Logan and co-sponsored by MAAC and UAAMAC, would prepare residents to take advantage of job opportunities secured through efforts such as the Ballpark Village campaign. Under this plan, MAAC would be responsible for the logistics of operating the ERC and providing its employment services, and UAAMAC would offer expertise in working with ex-offenders, with a UAAMAC staff member located at the ERC.

It soon became obvious that there were problems in integrating two different visions for the ERC: MAAC's conception was a neighborhood-based ERC with bilingual staff that could present a non-threatening face to local, primarily Hispanic, residents. UAAMAC wanted to create a Special-Needs ERC serving ex-offenders recruited from its African American congregations throughout the southeast county. In response to these different orientations, the funders agreed to the creation of two separate ERCs. The MAAC ERC would remain in Barrio Logan, and the other facility, which would specialize in serving ex-offenders, especially recently released parolees, would be based at UAAMAC offices at the intersection of two major freeways in southeast San Diego County. The plan was for MAAC to refer ex-offenders who first sought out its services to the UAAMAC ERC -- but this arrangement ultimately proved to be impractical because many of these clients said that it was inconvenient for them to travel to the facility.

The collaborative partners were further encouraged to operate autonomously during Phase II when the foundations negotiated separate contracts, including specification of grantee-specific deliverables, with each of the partner organizations. With continued funding resting on providing these deliverables, the grantee-specific outcomes became more of a priority than the collaborative-wide TOC outcomes, which were never updated after the departure of the two partners at the beginning of Phase II. The account of SDWBH activities in this chapter therefore focuses on work undertaken by the individual partner organizations.

## **F. Preparing Residents for Job Opportunities**

The MAAC ERC was officially inaugurated in its own space in September 2004. UAAMAC's ERC, known as The San Diego Center for Re-Entry Management, began operations in January 2005. Descriptions of these facilities appear in Box 5.1 below.

### **Box 5.1**

#### **The San Diego Works for Better Health Employment Resource Centers (ERCs)**

##### **MAAC ERC**

1102 Cesar E. Chavez Parkway

The ERC occupies a converted house in the heart of Barrio Logan, just a few blocks from the Interstate-5 and the trolley line. The older-style house provides a professional environment while retaining the comfort of a smaller, domestic space. There are offices for the case managers and the ERC director, and, until recently, when the space was converted to an office, a resource room with computers.

##### **UAAMAC ERC**

995 Gateway Center Way

This facility occupies a suite of offices on an industrial estate near the intersection of I-15 and I-94, in southwest San Diego. The nearest public transportation is a mile away and to save clients the walk uphill, the ERC staff would sometimes collect them from the bus stop.

As discussed, the TOC called for the ERCs to recruit and prepare Targeted Neighborhood residents for the living-wage job opportunities generated by CBAs, especially any opportunities that were generated for Ballpark Village. Unfortunately, despite an ultimately successful Ballpark Village CBA campaign, the development has yet to break ground. Thus, MAAC and UAAMAC were deprived of a dedicated source of employment for their clients and were forced to rely on job leads from the WIA system or to find them on their own.

While this kind of effort was new UAAMAC and mainly new to MAAC, the agencies saw reasons to undertake it. For UAAMAC, as noted, an ERC offered a venue for addressing the needs of ex-offenders, including but not limited to employment. For MAAC, the ERC offered an opportunity to develop and offer employment assistance that was neighborhood-based and culturally competent, assistance that the San Diego Workforce Partnership One-Stops were not always able to provide. Although the "universal" services at the One-Stops are advertised as accessible to anyone, including undocumented workers, a certain degree of autonomy is required

to use the resources. Clients with limited English proficiency, or limited experience with office technology, are likely to require individual assistance, particularly from Spanish-speaking staff. It was also appealing to MAAC to open an ERC in Barrio Logan, where the agency had built an affordable housing apartment complex and was sponsoring a playschool and some classes, but not providing any employment-oriented services.

**A need for the ERCs to do their own job development:** Although MAAC and UAAMAC recognized the need to create their own employer contacts, both ERCs faced daunting challenges in trying to find living-wage jobs for very disadvantaged clients.

MAAC, which operates numerous publicly subsidized Section 8 housing developments, was particularly attuned to the need to strive for living-wage incomes. According to staff, helping residents get only marginal increases in wages and incomes risked making them ineligible for Section 8 housing, thereby leaving them worse off than before. One staff member observed:

They don't want to make one or two dollars more than they are making now because they'll become ineligible. If you make one or two dollars more, you're not going to be able to afford a house in San Diego now. Housing is so expensive here.

MAAC, primarily a social service organization, and UAAMAC, an organization that had only recently begun the transition from association of churches to service provider, would not only have to develop networks for generating employer contacts, but would be required to build case-management and client-tracking capacities. The following sections describe the experiences of each ERC in confronting the challenges that have just been discussed.

### **What Were the ERCs' Outreach Strategies and Approaches to Intake?**

**Recruitment:** The number of ERC enrollees steadily increased over the course of Phase II, reaching a steady rate of about 20 to 40 monthly intakes by summer 2005. The change may be due to improvements in outreach strategies.

Initially, to recruit clients, the MAAC ERC depended on word-of-mouth information among Barrio Logan residents, on referrals from MAAC housing developments and other MAAC programs, and on visitors to the ERC's next-door neighbor, a temporary placement agency, who also stopped by the ERC. In January 2005, a little more than six months after the ERC had been operating, MAAC attempted a more deliberate and less low-key outreach technique by holding an Open House. The MAAC marketing department used its contacts with Univision, a Spanish-language television station to provide live coverage of the event.

The broadcast generated some 400-500 new contacts for the ERC – so many people that staff were overwhelmed by the number of walk-in clients. As an alternative to one-on-one interviewing, staff held three group informational sessions, with each session attended by approximately 35 people. When asked why MAAC had not previously used its Univision contact to publicize the ERC, one MAAC staff member said that it took time for the larger MAAC organization to have confidence in the ERC, "but now the ERC has proved itself."

The UAAMAC staff initially recruited ex-offenders from among its member congregations, but this strategy failed to generate many clients. In the second year of Phase II, UAAMAC began to recruit at Parole and Community Team (PACT) monthly meetings, which orient recently released parolees to community services. However, parolees could choose from among a wide range of community providers, many of which had better name recognition than UAAMAC. “Out of 112 at a PACT meeting,” said one UAAMAC staff member, we might get four [to make an appointment], and only two return.”

**Approaches to newcomers:** When prospective clients appeared, the MAAC ERC did not appear to turn away anyone, including undocumented immigrants (“We accept everyone, as long as they’re willing to try,” said a staff member), and the facility assisted people on both an appointment and drop-in basis. Staff saw accessibility, flexibility, and informality as hallmarks of a neighborhood-based provider. Indeed, during the first year of operations, one staff member assisted residents with housing applications and other needs even if they had no interest in employment services.

In its approach to enrollment, the UAAMAC ERC had a very different ethos than the one that characterized the MAAC facility, discouraging drop-in clients and operating on an appointment-only basis. Also, as will be discussed in more detail later, this center tended not to follow up with people who made appointments for intake but did not show up.

### **Who Came to the ERCs for Help?**

SDWBH participants discussed here are people who enrolled in one of the ERCs and signed an informed consent form to take part in SDWBH research.<sup>140</sup> According to the SDWBH MIS data, from August 2004 through September 2006, the number of participants totaled 609, with most (489) being MAAC ERC enrollees. The following paragraphs, which are based on the MIS data, provide more detail about the enrollees:

**Not the typical social service client:** SDWBH appears to have recruited people who were ineligible for categorical programs for low-income households such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the federal welfare program). Unlike these clients, who typically are single mothers with young children, more than half (55 percent) of SDWBH participants were men. The large proportion of males among UAAMAC clients (78 percent) reflects its focus on ex-offenders, most of whom are male. Most (71 percent) of UAAMAC clients, and overall, about half (48 percent) of the SDWBH participants, did not have children living in their households. This is almost certainly why only 3 percent of SDWBH participants cited lack of childcare as a barrier to employment.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Virtually all ERC enrollees signed the informed consent forms: thus, the data reported here should be representative of the overall clientele of both ERCs.

<sup>141</sup> In answering an intake-form question about barriers to employment that is the source for information about the barriers in this section, respondents could cite more than one obstacle.

**Race and ethnicity consistent with histories of MAAC and UAAMAC:** The largest racial and ethnic groups in SDWBH’s clientele were Hispanic (68 percent) and African American (22 percent), but the distribution of groups between the individual agencies was uneven. MAAC’s clientele was 80 percent Hispanic and UAAMAC’s 68 percent African American. (Sixteen percent of UAAMAC clients were Hispanic, while 10 percent of MAAC clients were African American.)

**Limited education and English proficiency:** More than a third (36 percent) of SDWBH participants lacked a high school diploma or a GED. Many MAAC clients (30 percent) were not proficient in either speaking or reading English. (In contrast, less than 1 percent of UAAMAC clients were in this situation.) Almost a quarter (24 percent) of all SDWBH participants were participating in education and training courses at the time of program intake.

**Unemployed jobseekers with work experience:** Seventy-five percent of SDWBH participants were unemployed at intake. Still, only 7 percent of these unemployed participants had never worked before, and 51 percent had recently become unemployed (during the last 6 months or less). But even though most participants seemed to be attached to the labor force, 29 percent of them cited an insufficient or poor work history as a barrier to employment.

**Need for transportation assistance:** Lack of transportation was cited as a major barrier to employment by a substantial number (37 percent) of SDWBH participants. According to some ERC staffers and participants interviewed, San Diego’s public transportation is limited in its reach and service hours, and employers often require job applicants to have driver’s licenses and access to cars. (“No employer is going to look at you if you don’t have auto transportation and a valid driver’s license,” said one interviewee.)

**Ex-offender status:** Because the UAAMAC ERC targeted ex-offenders, it is not surprising that 84 percent of its clients cited ex-offender status as a barrier to employment. Interestingly, 16 percent of MAAC clients also cited this status, with the pattern probably reflecting the large number of parolees released into Barrio Logan and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Undocumented immigrants:** According to staff, the undocumented immigrants who enrolled in the MAAC ERC were primarily from Mexico. One case manager estimated that up to half of the MAAC ERC clients were undocumented immigrants.<sup>142</sup>

**Employed in low-wage jobs:** The quality of the jobs held by employed SDWBH participants at intake was poor: Average monthly household income from earnings was \$277 (\$185 for UAAMAC clients, and \$300 for MAAC clients), and 74 percent of participants had no health insurance. The work also appeared to be unstable: Most employed participants (54 percent) had held their current jobs for six months or less.

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<sup>142</sup> The MIS data cannot verify this, because to protect applicants from legal scrutiny, the collaborative excluded questions about citizenship and immigration status from intake forms. But, since an undocumented status would be important in deciding how to help enrollees, MAAC ERC staff reported that they usually tried to informally ask participants about their immigration status.

**Most with no health insurance.** Seventy-four percent of participants had no health insurance. (Among those who did, it was typically provided not by employers but through other sources such as the U.S. Veterans Administration.) Lack of insurance was common among clients who were non-custodial parents, and therefore did not qualify for Medi-Cal. One ERC client who was an ex-offender said he relied on over-the-counter medication, body-building, and prayer to stay healthy. A MAAC client said that her children had been enrolled in the state Healthy Families program, but that after a job loss, she could no longer afford it (“six dollars each month for each child”). Like many Mexican immigrants in San Diego, she goes to Tijuana for cheaper health care and prescription medicines.

## **What Types of Services did SDWBH Participants Receive?**

### **MAAC ERC Services**

Capitalizing on its familiarity with the challenges facing neighborhood residents in looking for work, MAAC developed a number of services and practices to respond to these problems:

**Bilingual, individualized job search assistance:** All MAAC ERC staff were able to provide one-on-one job search assistance in Spanish as well as English. This help encompassed a variety of activities -- guidance in preparing resumes and applications, mock interviews, and assistance from the job developer.

**Construction trades apprenticeships:** Along with UAAMAC, MAAC established an informal relationship with a key trade union representative participating in the CBA negotiations. This led to a small number of SDWBH clients being accepted for coveted apprenticeship slots in the construction trades.

### **Client Stories: Moving up**

Before enrolling in the MAAC ERC, **Pete Smith**<sup>143</sup> had been a minimum-wage worker for a temporary service agency: “I was always getting laid off, and they wouldn’t give me a raise,” he recalls. The ERC helped him secure an apprenticeship with the carpenter’s union, where he now earns \$13.30 an hour and receives health benefits through the union. ERC staff helped him to pay for his toolkit and transportation. He likes to visit the ERC staff “to let them know how much I appreciate them.”

**Jim Wallace** drives along the San Diego Bay towards the majestic Coronado Bridge. Beneath it is the massive construction shipyard of the General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO), a major employer in the region. Mr. Wallace has lived for eight years with his family in Barrio Logan, which is only a few minutes drive from the shipyard. He and his wife have the care of six children, including two nieces and a baby, all under age 11.

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<sup>143</sup> All names used in the profiles of individual participants have been changed.

Awhile ago, Jim saw the sign outside the MAAC ERC and stopped by. At that point he needed to update his resume to search for a better paying job that would be closer to home so that he could help more with childcare. The ERC staff sat down with him to review his past employment and skills and help him rewrite his resume. Jim came away from the ERC motivated to go to NASSCO with his newly polished resume in hand to apply for a job – something he had dreamed of doing for years. To his surprise, he was accepted the next day for a six-month paid training program, with a starting wage of \$9.57 an hour, to increase as he moved through the training to \$12.67, followed by raises of one dollar per hour every six months of work so long as he passed required exams. Jim commended the ERC staff, whom he said “care...[and] call you to see how you are doing” and are “not just going through the motions.”

**Veronica Gonzalez** has lived in Barrio Logan for the past decade. Seated on the sagging steps of an apartment complex, she shucks corn for dinner while watching her three grandchildren play. Ms. Gonzalez cares for them after school while her son and his wife are at work. Four days a week she stays with the children after she has completed her housekeeping shift at a local hospital, which starts at 5:30 AM. At 58, Ms. Gonzalez, who lives with her son’s family in a crowded two-bedroom apartment, uses part of her wages to support her mother in Mexico.

The MAAC ERC helped Veronica secure the hospital job, which pays \$7.50 per hour. Despite the low wage and no advancement opportunities, Veronica believes that this is the best job she can get, since her English is poor. Most important for someone at her age, the job offers health insurance, including dental and optical care, allowing her to finally schedule a full physical exam - to “check everything – like blood pressure!” she says happily.

**Sergio Vila** sits in the waiting area of the MAAC ERC. A Mexican immigrant with three young children, Mr. Vila has a work permit, but can barely speak, read, or write English. Today he is dressed in his best clothes, ready to go to court with an ERC case manager who is helping him seek redress from a former employer at a car rental agency where he drove cars. The employer refused to give Sergio pay stubs detailing his hours and wages, or to pay him overtime, and threatened to fire him if he persisted in his requests. At one point, the employer told Sergio and his co-workers to re-apply for their current jobs through a temporary agency -- apparently to turn back the clock and re-establish their status as temporary workers. “I was treated like a slave,” said Mr. Vila, who, with his lack of English, felt he had to hold on to the job.

One day, the boss’s secretary ran into a company car that Mr. Vila was driving and injured him badly. He was taken to the emergency room. The employer did not provide health insurance, so told Sergio to go to Mexico for any additional medical care, and absolutely not to speak to a lawyer. The hospital subsequently sent Sergio medical bills, which he submitted to his employer. When the employer refused to pay, the bills went to a collection agency, which has been pursuing Sergio ever since. Behind in his rent and unable to get a response from the Department of Health and Human Services to his application for emergency assistance, he went to the MAAC ERC for help.

The ERC case manager helped him contact the Employment Development Department (EDD) office to ask about collecting Unemployment Insurance. It was at this point that he -- and EDD -- discovered that his employer had not been contributing to Workers Compensation for

him. Meanwhile, the employer sued Sergio for damage to the car he had been driving when he was injured.

The ERC staff helped Mr. Vila gather documentation of the employer's abuses, to fight both the lawsuit and the medical bills, and to collect compensation from the employer and EDD for his family. Staff have also been helping him find another job. Sergio says that the ERC has been more helpful than the lawyer from Workers Compensation; indeed, the ERC's letters and calls to EDD prompted Workers Compensation to take his case and send him to a doctor. Sergio credits the ERC with his resurgence of hope: "They've given me a lot of confidence."

**Clelia Sanchez**, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Mexico, steps out of MAAC's ERC, heading to her car. The ERC, to which she was referred by another MAAC program, has been helping her look for work. Married and the mother of three children, including a disabled adolescent, she needs to bring additional income into a household where her husband has found a job only recently after a long bout of unemployment. Ms. Sanchez herself has "timed-out" out on the five-year lifetime limit for receiving cash public assistance.

Ms. Sanchez' inability to find work is not for lack of trying. After losing her welfare payments, she took out a \$10,000 loan to enroll in a pharmacy technician training offered by one of the county's many for-profit private colleges and diligently completed the nine-month course. But the training did not include job placement help, leaving her with a training certificate, a loan that she is still paying back, and no pharmacy-related work. She had originally hoped for a pharmacy position in a hospital until she discovered that hospitals require several years of experience, not including store-based pharmacy experience. Clelia did look into getting a store-based pharmacy job, but now has lowered her expectations and would settle for a cashier's position.

Clelia has visited the ERC five times, where she has been given job leads and help in preparing her resume and applications to chain supermarkets. She emphasizes that she much prefers the ERC to the local One-Stop, which she once visited but refuses to return to because "there's almost no one who speaks Spanish," and, "you have to wait two weeks for an appointment" for any assistance beyond the universal resource room.

**Sandra Ortiz**, a Mexican immigrant, leaves the Mercado Apartments -- the affordable housing project that MAAC operates in Barrio Logan -- to drive to her job. Early in 2006, she and her two children moved into the attractive complex, with its Spanish colonial architecture, colorful decorative motifs, and flower-filled gardens. She became a resident with the help of the MAAC ERC, which she had heard about from a friend. Besides helping her to fill out the application for her apartment, the ERC assisted her to find her current job at a restaurant. Ms. Ortiz had previously been enrolled in a building-management training course while she was receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits. But she likes the restaurant job, even if it pays only \$8 per hour and offers no benefits, because her hours coincide with her children's school schedules.

Sandra has visited various county One-Stops, but says they were of "no help." The ERC, she says, was different. Besides guiding her to the apartment complex, it gave her job leads, help

with her resume, maps and directions to job interviews, and help applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Moreover, in contrast the One-Stops, which have few bilingual staff, all ERC staff members speak Spanish. Sandra said the ERC is a “good service,” and has gone to the staff there for help “many times.”

**Assistance for exploited workers:** With a heavily immigrant clientele, the MAAC ERC had a constituency that was particularly vulnerable to employer exploitation. One MAAC case manager reported:

We had a group of [undocumented immigrant] men come in. They were intimidated by an employer who had hired them and kept them on the brink of starvation and would not pay them. One time, one of them complained and the employer chopped off his finger and beat him. He ran back to Mexico... I got together with some of our union buddies from CPI and the ACCORD coalition....Since this was an ornamental ironworks shop, members of the ironworkers and sheet metal unions went wandering around and seeing what’s going on at this shop...The union partners said: “If this guy wants to play hard ball, we can too.” He can’t be treating people like that.

**Referrals to a career advancement program:** The ERC developed a Memorandum of Understanding with a Chula Vista One-Stop to refer employed applicants to the Project EARN demonstration that was being conducted by MDRC for the U.S. Department of Labor. Project EARN is a career advancement program to improve the earnings and income of low-wage workers, by offering participants a combination of workforce development for better-paying jobs, and enhanced access to work supports (such as, Food Stamps, Medi-Cal, and subsidized child care). Applicants, who are randomly assigned to either the demonstration’s treatment or no-treatment group, have a 50 percent chance of being enrolled in the program. A few MAAC clients were referred to this program, but the MAAC ERC did not have follow-up information on how they fared in the program.

**Organizational changes:** Although the organizational changes MAAC made during Phase II did not directly change activities at the ERC, they did have the potential of strengthening its services by connecting ERC activities more firmly to other programs in the agency.

Through involvement in CWBH, MAAC gained a heightened appreciation of the role employment services can play in efforts to help clients become self-sufficient. Propelled in part by this recognition, MAAC decided to train its human services staff in workforce development issues and approaches, and more broadly, to integrate a workforce development focus into its full gamut of services, reorganizing its internal divisions to do so.<sup>144</sup> Another impetus to take these

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<sup>144</sup> Along with the MAAC asset development programs, the ERC is under the auspices of the MAAC Community Development Division. Previously, this division and others -- Housing, Human Services, Recovery Homes, the Charter School, Head Start programs, and Weatherization and Energy Services -- all conducted their work independently of one another. However, MAAC has now realized that these divisions should work together to better help the agency’s constituents become self-sufficient.

steps was that MAAC's human service programs were funded through a county grant, which had changed its own focus to workforce development during this period. However, MAAC's willingness to integrate workforce development into its full spectrum of services, not just into its human services, indicates an important shift in the organization's thinking.

### UAAMAC ERC Services

For most of Phase II, UAAMAC was staffed by an executive director and staff members who had experience working with ex-offenders from their previous employment at a San Diego faith-based homeless shelter. Services at faith-based homeless shelters, or "missions," tend to be ad-hoc and client-driven, and since the activities are funded through private donations, they also tend not to be subject to the same level of accountability as government- or foundation-funded services. The resulting flexibility and accommodation to individual client needs<sup>145</sup> – along with a reluctance to work toward funder-specified outcomes or to develop more systematic ways of operating -- were reflected in the ERC's Phase II operating style.

As will be discussed next, the ERC's orientation was to services other than employment. As a result, the funder agreed to UAAMAC's request not to be held accountable for progress in reaching numerical employment goals, including job placements, during Phase II. (UAAMAC was, however, expected to keep records on these outcomes.)

Following are highlights of the UAAMAC ERC's approach to services:

**Pre-job services, referrals for job search assistance:** Staff were clear that most people came to the UAAMAC ERC with urgent needs for jobs. Besides basic economic support, employment is a condition of parole, and for parents, a condition of regaining custody of their children. Still, ERC clients were usually referred elsewhere for job preparation and job search assistance. One staff member said:

If they still have a jailhouse mentality, I send them to Second Chance. If they're ready, I send them to the South County One-Stop. If in between, to the Urban League.

One reason for this referral approach was that employment was just one of the elements the ERC considered necessary for successful re-entry into mainstream society, and it often took second place to basic survival needs – ranging from housing and substance abuse treatment to taking smaller but often important steps like obtaining eyeglasses and photo identification or even tattoo removal. According to one staff member, the main goal of the ERC was to:

...bridge the gap for them to resources to make their lives whole...Coming out of prison is like an alien dropping out of the sky. You develop a mindset, unable to take advantage of resources that are available.

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<sup>145</sup> However, at least in one respect -- insistence on appointments rather than acceptance of drop-in clients -- the UAAMAC ERC was actually less informal in its approach to employability services than the MAAC ERC.

The ERC used the term “case management” to describe its approach to service provision, but the approach did not use the practices of clinical case management, with case plans to document client goals and progress toward meeting them. Nor was this case management particularly focused on employment.

**Often short-term connections, but signs of some willingness to dig in:** A sizeable number of enrollees who were sent to other agencies for employment help did not return to the ERC and would, in the words of staff, “drop off the radar screen.” In fact, it appears that at least some staff members were not overly concerned that the ERC’s case management might occur only at the initial appointment, and that that one session might turn out to be the only time a client and staff member met face to face. One staff member said:

Once they’ve come once, we don’t recommend that they come back. We’re not centrally located.

However, staff became invested in certain clients and were willing to take on problems that involved, for example, grappling with significant amounts of red tape. One client came to the ERC with a background of having worked as a certified health care paraprofessional in another state before her incarceration in California. To return to this field in California, she had to first secure a California state waiver, which involved obtaining documents from a variety of institutions in her former state – an enterprise fraught with bureaucratic hurdles and fees. The ERC staff helped her with the whole process: “UAAMAC didn’t give up,” she said. Another client observed: “The UAAMAC folks will wake up 6 AM to take you to an appointment, such as court dates for child support issues.”

**Spiritual and psychological guidance to stay on track:** Most of the UAAMAC staff had experience working as “chaplains” in the mission, or in church leadership. Research suggests that some ex-offenders respond well to faith-based programs<sup>146</sup> and many clients seemed to value spiritual support as they struggled to stay sober, rebuild family relationships, secure employment, and deal with hostility and discrimination toward ex-offenders.

Psychological support was also welcome. “Sometimes you need someone to talk to,” said one client. An ERC user with a short-fuse temper that had repeatedly cost him jobs and landed him in jail said that the UAAMAC staff had been helping him “move my anger along different channels” that were more acceptable and productive. “You can’t help but to change, surrounded by people who are positive, who are happy to be about living.”

## **What Were the Key Impediments to Realizing the Full Vision of the ERCs?**

**Dearth of good quality entry-level jobs:** For job leads, the MAAC ERC had access to the employment websites used by the One-Stops, and the One-Stops also sent the ERC a daily list of local job openings. To supplement these leads, MAAC’s job developer and case managers

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<sup>146</sup> See, for example, Bloom (May 24, 2006), who noted that “some nonexperimental evaluation results suggest that faith-based programs can reduce recidivism,” citing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (no date) and the Prison Fellowship web site ([www.pfm.org](http://www.pfm.org)).

looked for openings to accommodate clients with barriers to employment. The positions they were able to find were usually in the service sector (for example, retail or health care positions) and did not always meet the ERC's wage and benefit criteria. Staff and clients both emphasized the shortage of good quality entry-level openings in a region where employers have ready access to so many immigrants, legal and illegal, who come from neighboring Mexico and who are willing to work at below-minimum wage. One MAAC client said:

It's difficult to find jobs in San Diego because lots of people come across from Mexico every day. They will work for less pay and less benefits.

**Not much done to connect clients with income and support services:** According to the MIS data, only 15 percent of all participants received some form of assistance with basic needs from either of the ERCs. The 15 percent largely represents referrals to other programs, and in some cases rides given by staff to interviews and other appointments. Furthermore, only an extremely small number of all participants-- 4 percent -- received help from the ERCs in accessing income maintenance programs such as TANF and Food Stamps. Very likely one reason why was that many users of both ERCs -- for instance, ex-offenders, non-custodial parents, and undocumented immigrants -- were ineligible for these kinds of benefits. A MAAC case manager also noted that clients tend to be wary of the bureaucratic procedures of the Department of Health and Human Services, and she seemed to sympathize with this outlook: "They put you through hell," she said.

**Hard to spark addition interest in education and training:** As noted, at intake almost a quarter of SDWBH participants were already involved in education and training. But despite additional needs for these activities -- almost a third of MAAC clients, for example, had low levels of educational and English proficiency -- people mainly came to the ERCs for help in finding a job immediately, not for educational counseling or testing or referrals to classes. Only a small number of SDWBH participants (73, or 12 percent) asked the ERCs for educational services.

Similarly, the ERCs had little success placing clients in training: The centers had no paid training opportunities to offer their clients, and many clients were ineligible for WIA-funded trainings, mainly because they were undocumented immigrants but there were also some who did not wish to comply with the requirement that they register with Selective Service. In all, what an ERC considered "career advancement" was often quite modest. For instance, a MAAC case manager talked about helping a person who had been working at minimum-wage in a hotel to get a second job as a driver that paid a dollar an hour more than the hotel work.

It is possible that some participants might have been interested in training and education for career advancement after they had been placed in jobs, but if so, it is likely the ERC missed them; many people did not respond to follow-up inquiries once they left the ERC with job leads. "Only one out of 12 comes back," said one staff member.

Additional factors may have limited UAAMAC's efforts to serve ex-offenders:

**Ex-offender recidivism:** Besides the ERC’s own lack of emphasis on ensuring that first-time service users returned to the center, another likely reason the ERC had a difficult time retaining clients is the high rate of recidivism among ex-offenders: “I lose about two-thirds because they drop off,” said one staff member of his caseload -- and his presumption was that they had gone “back to crime, to jail.” This supposition seems to be consistent with data from the U.S. Department of Justice, which estimates that approximately two out of every three people released from prison in the U.S. are re-arrested within three years.<sup>147</sup>

**Faith-based services – meaningful to some, but perhaps not to everyone:** It is possible that some parolees did not seek out UAAMAC services because they were not comfortable in a faith-based environment.

**New kid on the block:** As noted, when UAAMAC made recruitment presentations at PACT meetings, the organization could not rely on the same level of name recognition as some of the other presenting groups that had longer track records serving ex-offenders.

**Tough love may have limited initial recruitment efforts:** Like many programs for ex-offenders, ERC clients had to demonstrate that they were, in the words of staff, “ready to make a major life change” or were “motivated self-starters” before the ERC would work with them. “Hand holding,” according to staff, would undermine the ERC’s tough-love approach to fostering personal responsibility: As one staff member explained:”

I don’t want [us] to be enablers and co-dependents...If we intervene too much we’re just perpetuating the same old system.

Consistent with this approach, clients who failed to meet their ERC appointments were not pursued: “Over 50 percent don’t show up .... I don’t call to remind them,” said one staff member.

**Lack of program model and performance measures:** The ERC did not have a formal program model, nor did UAAMAC establish a hierarchy of client needs and a systematic way of addressing them. Without these elements of programming in place, staff expended a great deal of effort serving a modest number of clients, but with few job placements or other demonstrable outcomes to report. If UAAMAC had set concrete goals for the ERC, staff efforts might have been more focused. It may well be that the end result of the funders acknowledging the difficulties of working with ex-offenders and removing the obligation to achieve performance measures also removed an important incentive to think fully enough about what constituted success and to chart a course to achieve it.

### **How Well Did SDWBH Do in Meeting Employment Goals?<sup>148</sup>**

In the absence of a control group, the CWBH research cannot speak to a causal relationship between SDWBH employment services and the ERCs’ outcomes. But the outcomes

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<sup>147</sup> Harrison and Beck (April 2005).

<sup>148</sup> Unless otherwise stated, information in this section is based on SDWBH MIS data.

do provide information about whether SDWBH participants improved their employment situations during Phase II, and they do shed some light on the ability of the ERCs to implement services.

**Disappointing placement rates:** The job placement rate for SDWBH participants overall was 25 percent (151 of the 609 enrolled participants). The MAAC ERC was responsible for most of these placements (142 out of 489 participants) with a placement rate of 29 percent. The UAAMAC ERC recorded only 9 job placements out of 120 participants, with an 8 percent rate. This very low rate probably reflects the ERC's focus on services other than employment and its lack of extended contact with many enrollees. Overall, SDWBH placement rates fall well below those achieved by programs serving the most disadvantaged treatment subgroups of the welfare-to-work demonstrations and, in fact, they are closer to the rates of the control groups reported in demonstrations for hard-to-employ jobseekers.

**Improvements in wages and benefits:** Wages improved for participants who did secure jobs. The average starting hourly wage for SDWBH job placements was \$9.90 (\$9.84 for MAAC job placements, and \$11.26 for UAAMAC placements). These wages levels are substantially higher than California's minimum wage -- \$6.75 per hour during Phase II. However, given San Diego's high cost of living, they were nowhere near the living-wage levels to which the collaborative had initially aspired.

Almost a third (31 percent) of the jobs secured by MAAC clients offered medical insurance coverage (in contrast to the 20 percent of employed MAAC clients who were receiving work-based health insurance at intake), a quarter offered paid vacation (versus 10 percent of jobs of those employed at intake), and 20 percent offered a pension plan (versus 5 percent of jobs of those employed at intake). Despite the high average hourly wage for the 9 UAAMAC ERC placements, none of these jobs offered benefits, health insurance, paid vacation, or a retirement/pension plan.

**Improvements in occupations:** A little more than half (53 percent) of the placements were in leisure/hospitality, retail, and other services, (the proportion was 54 percent at intake). However, percentages in several occupational categories with better paying jobs and work conditions were somewhat improved: 13 percent in manufacturing (versus 3 percent at intake), 12 percent in office employment (versus 1 percent at intake), 8 percent in transportation (versus none at intake). The transportation jobs usually involved driving commercial vehicles such as vans for rental car companies, and were sought after by clients for their relatively good wages and benefits.

**Little difference between characteristics of successful and unsuccessful jobseekers:** Measured by the MIS data on characteristics of participants at intake, it appears that there were only slight differences between those who subsequently did and did not secure jobs. Successful jobseekers were only slightly more likely at intake to have had a stable history of work with higher earnings, an involvement in skills development, and fewer problems with criminal records and transportation.

**Some focus on health care:** The ERCs made a small number of health-related referrals. Twelve clients were referred to health care services (exactly which kind of providers is unknown) and 53 to mental health services. Several UAAMAC ERC clients mentioned that UAAMAC helped them get eyeglasses. UAAMAC, which was familiar with the health needs of ex-offenders as a result of the Medical Advocacy Project, which was funded by The California Endowment during Phase I of CWBH, assisted ex-offenders from its member congregations in getting medical and dental care.<sup>149</sup> In addition to health status/health care information collected for the SDWBH MIS database, UAAMAC also conducted its own health assessment, which was geared to its ex-offender clientele.

**Not enough data to speak to job retention rates:** The ERCs had six-month follow-up data for less than a third (29 percent) of the jobseekers they placed, and there was a large proportion of missing data for subsequent follow-ups. Thus, while it is known that a little more than half of successful jobseekers who remained in contact with the ERCs were still working at the six-month follow-up point, in general, the large amount of missing data makes it impossible to draw conclusions about SWBH job retention patterns.

## **G. Seeking Accountable Development in a Developer's Paradise**

The Accountable Development strand of the SDWBH TOC sought to improve the lives of Targeted Neighborhood residents by advocating for CBAs and hiring agreements that would help them get living-wage jobs. Even though SDWBH never developed its own CBA campaign, the agencies did join the existing Ballpark Village effort, which was designed to secure an agreement from developers of the proposed Downtown complex to accommodate the environmental, employment, and affordable-housing concerns of low-income neighborhoods surrounding Ballpark Village (which included the SDWBH Targeted Neighborhood). This section presents information on the campaign.

**Backdrop for the campaign:** Both before CWBH was under way and during Phase I, concern about negative impacts of Downtown development on surrounding low-income neighborhoods like Barrio Logan was on the rise. These neighborhoods were experiencing higher housing costs, higher levels of traffic congestion and traffic- and construction-related pollution, and an influx of homeless people who had previously inhabited Downtown.<sup>150</sup>

Barrio Logan was a case in point. For over a century, the neighborhood has been settled by Mexican immigrants and at one point was California's largest Mexican-American community. For generations of the working poor, Barrio Logan provided affordable housing along with local support networks and CBOs that helped residents get by. However, in the years immediately before CWBH and going forward into Phases I and II, this environment was undergoing striking changes. High-end development, with sparkling new skyscrapers that house office suites and condominiums, was encroaching on Barrio Logan, raising the neighborhood's property values and rents. While the neighborhood is still dotted with welding shops, food

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<sup>149</sup> In 2006, UAAMAC received further funding from The California Endowment to run a peer-educator health program in five satellite churches, although this service was not geared specifically to ex-offenders.

<sup>150</sup> SANDAG (2004); Hanak and Barbour (2005).

processing plants, and storefront churches, blocks of Victorian homes and flats are being renovated and converted into expensive condominiums. Affluent professionals who commute to work in the Downtown area are gradually transforming the neighborhood's character. A MAAC ERC staff member observed:

We can play along for a couple of years, but the reality... is that this community faces extinction... If you look over to the right and step out into the street, you'll see cranes. They're coming closer and closer. It's like, 'It's coming!' And these people are wandering around almost oblivious to the fact that their community is about to be destroyed, and they have nowhere to go... This community is about to be eliminated through gentrification... The question is whether we can build a community that will work for the people who live here.

**Building the CBA campaign:** Given all these pressures and changes, when the \$1.5 billion Ballpark Village project was proposed for Downtown San Diego, a coalition known as ACCORD (A Community Coalition for Responsible Development) immediately mobilized to secure a CBA, which would be the first such agreement in the area. In doing so, ACCORD hoped to set a precedent for accountable development in San Diego. One member observed:

We want City Council members to [ask] each time a big development deal comes forward, "Where's your job training program? What kind of jobs? Make sure they aren't going to be poverty-level jobs. What are you going to do about this community's needs?" We want to see institutionalized, culturally, the expectation of higher standards.

ACCORD eventually included 27 different housing, labor, community, environmental, and religious groups. (See Box 5.2 for membership list.) CPI was a founding member of ACCORD as were the Phase I collaborative members, EHC and SDOP. Some of the issues that were focal points of the campaign went beyond the core issues of SDWBH: EHC and other environmental groups wanted to ensure that green construction standards were enforced at Ballpark Village, and CPI and its labor union allies wanted the opportunity to organize development workers. Other ACCORD issues, the ones focused on job training and preferential hiring, reflected the SDWBH agenda.

## **San Diego Works for Better Health**

### **Box 5.2**

#### **ACCORD Member Organizations**

The following were members of A Community Coalition for Responsible Development (ACCORD) during the period of the CBA campaign in San Diego:

ACORN San Diego  
Affordable Housing Coalition of San Diego County  
Caring Council  
Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI)  
Cement Masons Local 500  
Carpenters/Contractors Cooperation Committee  
Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) (EHC left ACCORD and rejected the CBA soon after it was negotiated)  
IBEW, Local 569  
International Association of Machinists, DL 725  
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice  
Ironworkers Local 229  
MAAC Project  
Mid City CAN  
San Diego Baykeeper  
San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council  
San Diego - Imperial Counties Labor Council  
San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP)  
SEIU Local 2028  
Surfrider Foundation, San Diego Chapter  
UFCW Local 135  
United African American Ministerial Action Council (UAAMAC)

**Seizing the political moment:** San Diego is generally viewed by people on both the left and right of the political spectrum as a developer-friendly, anti-union region, and therefore hardly an auspicious environment for community groups pursuing a CBA. An ACCORD member observed:

The way development traditionally happens in this area, it happens so fast without public input...Even the subsidized stuff happens so fast. This is a developer's dreamland.

However, the CBA campaign was able to capitalize on a political window of opportunity: At the point when the City Council was deciding on whether to approve the plan for Ballpark Village, opponents of the project were claiming that it lacked community support. At the same

time, two of the eight Council members had recently been forced to resign and under these circumstances, the remaining members were particularly reluctant to proceed with a proposal that seemed to fly in the face of public opinion. They instructed the developers to secure community support for the plan before submitting it to the approval process. One of the developers already had a relationship with the Labor Council and CPI and thus it was natural for the developers to approach ACCORD for the required community support.

Taking advantage of this turn of events, ACCORD followed the example of previous CBAs in Los Angeles and other parts of the country and rapidly put together a CBA for the Ballpark Village project. It guaranteed employment, environmental, and housing benefits to the community – and at the same time, seemed to satisfy the developer’s need for community input. The result was that in October 2005, when the Ballpark Village proposal, along with the CBA, was presented to the City Council, evoking over five hours of testimony, it was ultimately approved, 5-1.

**CBA employment measures:**<sup>151</sup> Under the agreement, the developers will endeavor to have 20 percent local participation in Ballpark Village construction jobs, and contribute \$1.5 million to construction pre-apprenticeship training and support services for so-called “Targeted Applicants” – who will either low-income residents of the “Neighboring Communities” or ex-offenders living in San Diego.<sup>152</sup> Once construction is completed, Ballpark Village employers are required to fill no less than 30 percent of their openings during any six-month period with Targeted Applicants, and to give these employees living wages and benefits. ACCORD is to disseminate job notifications from Ballpark Village employers to the Neighboring Communities; recruit, screen, and refer Targeted Applicants to employers; and monitor employer compliance with the first- source agreement.

In addition to playing an active role in negotiating the CBA, CPI worked with the Labor Council, which, as noted, is a CPI ally, to ensure that the Ballpark Village accord included a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) -- a collective bargaining agreement under which the developer agrees to basic terms and conditions for labor in return for a guarantee of no work stoppages. (This was the first time the developers into an agreement with unions.) The PLA was negotiated directly between the trade unions and the developers, with no participation of the ACCORD community groups.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> The CBA also included environmental and housing measures.

<sup>152</sup> Targeted Applicants meet the following criteria:

- *Low-income*, with a household income no greater than 80 percent of Area Median Income, adjusted for household size
- *Resident* of one of the Neighboring Communities, an area bounded by Highway 94 on the north, the San Diego Bay on the south, Interstate 15 on the east, and the Ballpark Village site.
- *Ex-offenders* who meet these income and residency requirements need to be participating in a rehabilitated offender job training program.

<sup>153</sup> An ACCORD member claimed that the unions have agreements with less than a handful of developers in the region, and none with the ones that build the multi-million dollar projects favored by the City and County.

**Implementation - the devil in the details:** The delay of the Ballpark Village project is due to a number of factors, including a dip in demand for Downtown condominium housing. When and if construction goes forward, ACCORD must work to ensure that the developers and - at a later point, the employers in the completed Village -- do more than comply with the CBA's minimal requirements. For instance, under the CBA, Ballpark Village employers are not required to hire any of the CBA targeted populations so long as they make "good-faith" efforts to advertise their openings. Thus, it will be up to ACCORD members to make certain that jobseekers in targeted groups are aware of the openings and prepared to apply for them.

Planning for CBA implementation has also highlighted differences between the building-trade unions and non-union members of the coalition. After the City approved the CBA, the unions proceeded to work out the terms of the PLA with the developers without ACCORD participation. To non-union ACCORD members, this was very disconcerting because the PLA is the document that will determine the conditions of Ballpark Village construction jobs and apprenticeships that groups like MAAC and UAAMAC are hoping their clients will fill. Some community groups suspected that they had been used - that the unions had piggy-backed on community support for a CBA to secure a PLA. Interestingly, CPI acknowledges that it has learned a great deal from the CBA negotiations, but the organization, which, as noted, is closely allied to the Labor Council, does not view the distrust that community groups felt about the union role in the CBA process as a problem.

Some ACCORD members observe that when and if the CBA goes into effect, the coalition should make certain that ACCORD's union members do not stand in the way of Targeted Neighborhood residents and ex-offenders being given genuinely preferential consideration for pre-apprenticeship training and construction jobs. (In the words of one non-union member, there was the danger that the unions will "just give us the scraps.") Furthermore, non-union members point out, jobs need to include union apprenticeship slots, which are critical for advancement.

**A catalyst for stronger collaboration:** Viewed through the lens of SDWBH, the CBA campaign had a positive effect on the relationship between MAAC and UAAMAC. These disparate organizations, which had gone their separate ways when it came time to establish an ERC, found common ground in the campaign and worked together as genuine collaborators. In an example of the benefit of MAAC-UAAMAC contact either through CBA discussions, through CWBH, or through both, a MAAC administrator observed that UAAMAC has helped MAAC become more aware of the substantial numbers of Hispanic ex-offenders - many in families served by MAAC programs - who live in the region.

**Challenges Ahead:** As all ACCORD members anticipate the implementation of the CBA, the ERCs must prepare themselves to be able to offer viable candidates for the pre-apprenticeship training for the Ballpark Village construction. Doing so will require them to persuade many clients to earn a high school diploma or GED, which are prerequisites for the training. The ERCs will also need to find additional resources to address needs such as transportation and substance abuse treatment. One important source of help might be funds that will be awarded to agencies that make winning bids for the support services contracts that will be offered to enable them to help pre-apprenticeship candidates make the grade. But in a chicken-

egg syndrome, to win these contracts, the ERCs will likely first need to demonstrate a reasonably high level of knowledge of how to provide employment, training, and related support services to disadvantaged clients. While the CWBH experience was intended to help the ERCs gain expertise in these areas, by the end of Phase II neither of the ERCs had established a strong track record as providers of employment services.

## **H. Conclusions**

The SDWBH experience suggests the following conclusions:

- **Mixed story on working together:** CPI, MAAC and UAAMAC did not function as a true collaborative, but MAAC and UAAMAC did strengthen their connections with one another through participation in ACCORD's CBA campaign.
- **MAAC—reclaiming some of its advocacy roots:** Exposure to advocacy approaches both through participation in CWBH and through the CBA campaign made MAAC more receptive to the kind of advocacy activities that had marked its early history.
- **Relatively modest placement rates:** Two interrelated factors help to explain SDWBH's 25 percent job placement rate: the delay of the Ballpark Village CBA, which deprived the ERCs of direct leads to jobs; and inexperience of in doing the job development work needed to fill the gap when these direct leads did not materialize. Another reason for the low placement rates is that among the range of services and supports needed by ex-offenders, UAAMAC did not single out job readiness or employment for special attention.
- **UAMAAC ERC – need for more structure:** The UAAMAC ERC's informality may have been appreciated by some of the small number of clients served in Phase II. However, better planning that sets forth clear goals and strategies would have helped to bring any positive aspects of the facility's operations to scale. Also, because keeping clients connected to the facility was not always a priority, the ERC may have missed opportunities to provide ongoing case management to people trying to adjust to life out of prison.
- **MAAC ERC – role for neighborhood employment services:** Suggesting that there is a productive role for a community-based agency to play in serving as a kind of satellite to a more impersonal WIA system, the MAAC ERC provided flexible, friendly, and bilingual services that were welcomed by a number of the people who sought out its help.

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