WorkAdvance

A promising sector-focused strategy to improve economic mobility for low-income adults

A decline in earnings among workers without postsecondary credentials has increased the need for services that help low-skilled job seekers enter and advance in the labor market.



JOB SEEKERS

SERVICES FOR Ensure that they can

JOB SEEKERS benefit from training

WorkAdvance connects low-income job seekers to high-demand sectors that offer quality jobs with strong career pathways.



EMPLOYERS

The Program Model

WorkAdvance takes a "dual customer" approach to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers.

SERVICES TAILORED TO TARGETED SECTORS Intake and screening

and can meet sector

requirements

Help them understand the needs of their chosen sector and develop "soft skills"

Career

Occupational skills training readiness

> Provide training that leads to industryrecognized credentials for in-demand jobs

have been trained

Retention and advancement

job seekers.

Middle-skill jobs are

growing in many

sectors and often

specific skills and

credentials, which has

increased the need

for employer input in providing services to

require sector-

Support job performance and career mobility after initial job placement

More informed and

EMPLOYER BENEFITS

Increased pool of qualified applicants to make recruitment easier and less costly

The Research Evidence

MDRC conducted a random assignment evaluation of WorkAdvance at four providers from 2011 to 2015. The program recruited groups who have traditionally faced substantial barriers in the labor market, especially in certain high-growth sectors.

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKADVANCE SAMPLE

Male Black or Hispanic

Unemployed

65%

73% 67%

Unemployed for at least 7 months

No college degree or credential in targeted sector

80% 36% Job development and placement

Facilitate entry into jobs for which they

supported workforce

WorkAdvance increased participants' average earnings two years after program entry.

EARNINGS GAIN RELATIVE TO

A CONTROL GROUP

Impacts varied across the four providers.

Impact of WorkAdvance Across Providers

The variation in results across providers closely matched each provider's experience in running sectoral programs and its ability to adapt to changes in demand.

Difference in outcomes between WorkAdvance participants and a control group

ST. NICKS

ALLIANCE

New York City

Difference is statistically significant

ges in demand.

New York City

PER

Information Environmental technology remediation

MADISON STRATEGIES GROUP

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Transportation, manufacturing

EMPLOYMENT Cleveland, Ohio

TOWARDS

Health care, manufacturing

TARGETED SECTOR

EMPLOYMENT IN THE TARGETED SECTOR

▲ 60%

▲ 34%

▲ 49%



JOB OFFERED ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

▲ 3%

▲ 19%

▲ 18%



+\$3,747

▲ 25%

+\$191

+\$1,837 Full +\$1,621

-\$77

Early +\$132

+\$4,125

Late +\$2,996

To produce employment and earnings impacts, programs needed to increase employment in the targeted sector, and those jobs had to have better wages and benefits than jobs outside the sector.

Per Scholas also **increased total income** and reduced the use of public assistance for WorkAdvance participants. Programs at the other providers had little to no effect on total income.

At Madison Strategies Group and Towards Employment, impacts were considerably larger for those who enrolled later in the evaluation.

Early enrollees experienced a less mature program, and many were offered job placement services before formal occupational skills training.



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For more information on the WorkAdvance findings, see the full report:

