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**Employment and Training Occasional Paper 2007-16**  
**Collaborating with Faith- and Community-Based Organizations:**  
**Lessons Learned from 12 Workforce Investment Boards,**  
**Final Report**

**Collaborating with Faith- and Community-Based Organizations: Lessons Learned from  
Twelve Workforce Investment Boards, Final Report**

**Summary and Implications\***

**Background**

In July 2004, ETA awarded demonstration grants to twelve Workforce Investment Boards to promote sustainable collaborations between faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) and the workforce investment system. The grants were intended to: 1) increase access to the workforce investment system among underserved populations; 2) provide new or enhanced services to job seekers; and, 3) build FBCOs' capacity and enable their ongoing participation in the workforce investment system.

The final report describes three different models implemented by the WIBs for integrating FBCOs into the workforce investment system, each of which represents a different combination of possible FBCO roles. The three approaches are: a) *Recruit and Refer*, wherein FBCOs conduct outreach, provide supportive services, and then refer clients to One-Stop Career Centers for placement, b) *Provide Specialized Job Readiness Training*, wherein FBCOs provide training tailored to target populations and job placement or referral to the One-Stop Career Center after training completion; and, c) *Offer Comprehensive Services*, wherein FBCOs provide a range of employment and social services in an accessible location within the community.

The report describes the resources leveraged from the community by the FBCOs in order to meet the needs of their clients and also presents a limited amount of information on the employment outcomes of project participants. In conclusion, it provides the lessons learned from the demonstration according to the three main research questions: 1) Why should the workforce investment system collaborate with FBCOs? 2) What are the main barriers to collaboration? and 3) What steps can be taken to build productive partnerships between the workforce investment system and FBCOs?

**Final Report**

The lessons identified by the evaluators and presented in the report include:

1. Partnerships with FBCOs can extend the workforce investment system's reach to underserved populations.
2. FBCOs can provide services tailored to meet the needs of hard-to-serve job seekers.
3. Carefully selected FBCOs can help job seekers with significant barriers to employment.
4. FBCOs can successfully leverage other community resources for meeting client needs.



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5. FBCOs may be reluctant to collaborate with the workforce investment system for a variety of reasons, which requires more effort to bring them into the family of service providers.
6. One-Stop Career Centers and FBCOs have different organizational cultures, which must be bridged before successfully partnering for serving clients.
7. Partnering with intermediary organizations – which have experience with both One-Stop Career Centers and FBCOs, will facilitate successful relationships.
8. Selecting FBCOs with sufficient capacity to manage grants and provide services reduced the “learning curve” for both themselves and their workforce investment system partners.
9. Drawing on each partner’s strengths, particularly FBCOs’ ability to recruit clients, enabled the workforce investment system to successfully serve new populations.
10. Designating a liaison for client referrals at the One-Stop Career Center or co-locating FBCO staff at the Center were valuable tools in cultivating strong relationships between the workforce investment system and faith-based and community organizations.

### **Policy Implications**

The results of the WIB-FBCO Collaborations Project clearly demonstrate that successful partnerships require a bridging of the cultural gap between the two organizations. Approaches for achieving collaboration include using intermediary organizations that understand both entities and can facilitate communication and the development of working procedures. However, the use of intermediaries requires additional governance costs and limits the ability of One-Stop staff to directly promote, for all clients, access to a more comprehensive array of employment and training services. Thus, co-location of FBCOs at One-Stop Career Centers, or the designation of a liaison at the One-Stop Career Centers may prove to be more feasible steps for developing successful partnerships and, ultimately, both serving more clients through the workforce investment system and providing more services to those already receiving services.

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\* This Summary and Implications was prepared by the Employment and Training Administration and does not necessarily reflect the study authors’ opinions.