

**Process Evaluation and Outcomes Analysis:  
Twin Cities RISE!  
Performance-Based Training and Education  
Demonstration Project**

**Final Report**

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## **Executive Summary**

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) contracted with Coffey Consulting, LLC (Coffey) to conduct a process evaluation and outcomes analysis of the Twin Cities RISE! (TCR!) *Performance-Based Training and Education Demonstration Project* and two related grants: a continuation of the Demonstration Grant and an Earmark Grant primarily for supportive services. The purpose of this Evaluation Report is to document the project processes, based on what was learned during three site visits that took place between September 2009 and December 2010, and to analyze data and program documents, and review reports provided by TCR!.

### **A. Demonstration Project**

The TCR! demonstration project implemented a training and education-based approach designed to assist ex-offenders, low-income individuals, and those at-risk of court or gang involvement with community reentry and obtaining and retaining jobs offering good wages and career prospects. The demonstration project focused on the services offered through the Awali Inside/Out program and Awali Place program and, to a lesser extent, the Core Program, which is TCR!'s mainline anchor program. Awali is based on a Swahili word meaning "beginning" and is intended to convey the notion that preparation is taking place *inside* the prison for a new beginning *outside* of it. Awali Inside/Out serves men who are incarcerated, while the Awali Place program served low-income individuals, the majority of whom had criminal backgrounds and were transitioning from prison to communities. Awali Inside/Out services consist of the basic

Empowerment Training (a cognitive restructuring component) which involves 24 hours of classroom training over an eight-week period, or three hours per week.

The Awali Place program featured transitional employment, shorter program sessions, more time devoted to the Empowerment Training and soft skills training, more graduated rules around dress and punctuality, and a greater emphasis on mentoring by other African American men. It was designed to be a feeder program into TCR!'s Core Program.

The three DOL/ETA grants were essentially used to fund an effort to extend services beyond TCR! into the prisons (Awali Inside/Out) and prepare more individuals, after their release from prison (Awali Place), to enter and remain in TCR!'s Core Program.

These programs were funded as follows:

- A \$300,000 Demonstration Grant for the period January 2007 – January 2009 focuses on the Awali Inside/Out and Awali Place program;
- Another \$454,628 demonstration (Continuation) grant for the period January 2009 – December 2010 which continued the above project and added a focus on the Awali Place/Foundation phase; and
- A \$243,667 Earmark Grant for the period January 2009 – March 2010 for additional supportive services to “hard-to-employ” African American men in the form of housing services for a small group of participants, additional coaching, and additional job development support.

## **B. About TCR!**

As described in its 2008 Annual Report, “The mission of TCR! is to provide employers with skilled workers – primarily men from communities of color in the Twin Cities area –

by training underemployed and unemployed adults for skilled jobs that pay a living wage of at least \$20,000 annually” with benefits. The program was founded in 1994 by a former local business executive who served as TCR!’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the first six years of operations. Since the beginning, TCR! has had a business-led board and has maintained a market-driven, outcomes-based approach that puts the needs of employers first and places emphasis on the achievement of a “gold standard” job, which is career-focused and pays a living wage (usually defined by the program as \$20,000/year with full benefits - healthcare and paid leave). TCR! reports that most participants who meet the “gold standard” spend an average of 15 months in the program prior to final job placement. TCR! is longer in length than most publicly-funded employment programs. For example, DOL/ETA reports that “for WIA Title II B programs, looking at 2007 outcomes, the average length of training for WIA adults was 30 weeks.”<sup>1</sup> Also, participants in DOL/ETA’s Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI) received services for an average of 12 weeks prior to exit.<sup>2</sup>

The TCR! program distinguishes itself primarily through two components: 1) a Coach is assigned to each participant and 2) everyone participates in Empowerment Training, a cognitive restructuring component aimed at helping participants develop responsible personal behavior through increased self-esteem, self-regulation, and respect for others. This programming involves classes, individualized coaching, and group sessions. All

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<sup>1</sup> USDOL/ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 24-08, May 21, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of the Prisoner Re-Entry Evaluation Final Report, Coffey Consulting, LLC, January 13, 2009

staff members are required to complete Empowerment Training courses (as participants) after being hired by TCR!.

When considering the target population of TCR!'s program, it is important to note that there is much data to suggest that the relative disparity based on race for unemployment<sup>3</sup> and other variables for the Minneapolis metropolitan area may be among the worst in the nation. Also noteworthy is that the period of performance of the DOL/ETA grants coincides with a major nationwide economic recession.

The TCR! program places a focus on continuous improvement which, while beneficial from a programmatic point of view, adds complexity to the evaluation process because the program model changed several times while the evaluation was being conducted.

### **C. Process Evaluation**

Through in-person visits and classroom observations to TCR!'s well-equipped facilities in Minneapolis and St. Paul, much was learned about the features and components of the program's operation. Following are some highlights of the key findings related to TCR!'s practices:

#### **1. Organization and Staffing**

- TCR! has a business-led Board of Directors and CEO. There is a conscious effort to maintain a staff with half of the members having a corporate background and the other half an educational/nonprofit background.

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<sup>3</sup> Economic Policy Institute: *Uneven Pain – Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race* by Algernon Austin – June 8, 2010



- Each staff member has an Individual Development Plan, and training opportunities are available throughout the year.
- TCR!'s staff is supplemented by a highly developed volunteer program. There are more than 200 active volunteers with 45 of them regularly scheduled. The volunteer effort is managed by a full-time staff position responsible for activities such as recruitment, orientation, and scheduling.

## 2. Funding Streams

- Despite the economic recession, TCR!'s funding increased over the past three years, due to multi-pronged fundraising efforts. It also earns income through its Empowerment Institute, which offers Empowerment Training to other organizations and businesses for a fee. Government grants accounted for only 19 percent of its funding in 2010.
- TCR! has become known for its pay-for-performance model whereby it is eligible for a payment from Minnesota State general funds for every participant placed in a job paying \$20,000 or more annually with health benefits and who has improved his or her prior income by at least \$10,000 per year. TCR! is eligible for another \$9,000 payment if the graduate remains in the job for one year. The model is based on cash benefits accrued to the state from the increased earnings. Benefits are derived from increased sales and incomes and decreased public subsidies.
- TCR! recently received a \$50,000 monetary award and international recognition for its program and pay-for-performance model through a competition for innovative programs sponsored by E-Bay and Ashoka Changemakers.

## 3. Recruitment

- TCR! employs a variety of recruitment methods but relies primarily on street recruitment – talking to people in the streets about the program. The program is successful in generating more than five and one-half times more applicants than it has enrollment slots.
- One of TCR!'s recruitment methods called “Bonus Bucks” pays currently enrolled participants for recruiting new participants.

## 4. Empowerment Training (Cognitive Restructuring) Component

- Empowerment is the keystone of the TCR! program and is designed to increase an individual's capacity to control his/her internal state of mind. It is based on a cognitive restructuring model that posits changes in beliefs generate changes in

thinking and feelings and that it is our beliefs, thoughts and feelings that determine our behavior.

- Empowerment is a part of each student's course of study and is integrated into every stage of their training, consisting of 2.5 hours of training every week (36 hours for the typical 8-week session in the Core Program), supplemented and reinforced by Coaches and instructional staff. There are five successive levels.
- All staff members must complete the Empowerment Training course.
- Staff members and participants speak of the major positive impact that Empowerment Training has had on their lives.

## 5. Curriculum

- Upon completion of Foundation 1, the first eight weeks of the Core Program, each continuing participant signs an agreement that includes a loan provision, stating that s/he will be required to make a \$7,500 loan repayment if the participant fails to keep his or her agreement to participate and remain in the program and that the loan converts to a gift when the participant has worked in a final placement job for at least one year.

## 6. Coaching

- Coaches follow a participant throughout and are responsible for reinforcing what has been learned in Empowerment. Coaches also follow through with each participant on his/her Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and help to stabilize the participant.
- An individualized coaching model with one Coach following a participant throughout was replaced in 2010 by a triangulated approach in which participants are supported by multiple Coaches at each stage. This was done to reduce caseloads and ease the burden on Coaches.

## 7. Motivational Practices

- TCR! employs a number of motivational practices to encourage participants to maintain their attendance and strive for excellence. These include group sharing and celebration sessions, public recognition, and monetary awards.

## 8. Employer Services and Internships

- TCR! staff encourage employers to participate in a variety of ways. For example, there is an Employer Advisory Committee that reviews the curriculum every quarter.
- Employer Services staff focus on marketing the participants to employers, working to continue to strengthen their level of employment readiness, preparing them for interviews, and continuing to reinforce Empowerment Training with them. They also respond to employers' requests for assistance in the case of a workplace issue with a TCR! graduate. Recently, they added an Employment Strategies class for participants.
- The internship effort was born as a result of the recession and the need to provide some paid work experience for its participants. An impetus for its growth was the Earmark Grant, which had a goal of placing 55 individuals in either internships or training opportunities. Ninety percent of the opportunities are in the nonprofit sector and include such jobs as administrative office and warehouse work.
- The internship program grew from serving seven participants in 2007, to 97 participants for 2010.
- Some internship sites have hired their interns into "gold standard" jobs.

### **D. Outcomes Analysis**

#### 1. Availability of Data

One of the challenges faced in evaluating the program is the lack of individual participant data. Coffey had been advised by DOL/ETA at the onset of the evaluation that obtaining the desired data may prove challenging. It appears that only aggregated data were tracked using an Excel spreadsheet during the first 18 months of the original Demonstration Grant (2007 – 2008). According to DOL/ETA, technical assistance and prompts to begin tracking data by individual participant were provided in the initial stages. TCR! lost its part-time staff person responsible for data management and DOL/ETA's guidance regarding data collection was never followed. A new part-time staff person was hired by TCR! midway through 2009 to manage the data and create an

electronic database for TCR!'s overall program. Discussions regarding the availability of the specific individual participant data requested by Coffey took place in early summer of 2010 involving TCR!'s Chief Operating Officer (COO) and data staff, Coffey's evaluation team, and DOL/ETA staff. TCR! explained that only aggregate data were available for the original Demonstration Grant and that data for the Continuation and Earmark Grants had to be collected and compiled from records in folders of staff. All parties agreed that the evaluation team would use the aggregate data for the Demonstration Grant, but TCR! would provide the data requested for the Continuation and Earmark Grants. The data requested were compiled and provided in Excel spreadsheets in installments beginning in the fall of 2010.

## 2. Performance Outcomes

TCR!'s data, particularly for the Demonstration and Continuation Grants, show a pattern of large numbers of participants at the point of intake with large numbers of dropouts at each successive stage of the program. The enrollment goals for each of the three grants were not only met but also, in the case of the original and continuation grants, greatly exceeded. For example, enrollments in Awali Inside/Out (828) were 331 percent of goal (250). Despite the high enrollment levels, based on the data available, positive outcome goals were not met at their anticipated levels for most measures. At the same time, current (and some former) participants who were interviewed credit the program with significantly altering their lives in a positive manner. Staff reported that the program intentionally focuses on high-quality outcomes as opposed to serving large numbers because they think it takes time to achieve quality and lasting results.

Earmark Grant participants were more similar to TCR!'s Core Program participants than were participants in the Demonstration and Earmark Grants. For example, a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) is a requirement of the Core Program, and Earmark Grant participants all had high school diplomas or GEDs, compared to only 26 percent of the Continuation Grant participants. Earmark Grant participants were also older than the Continuation Grant participants and demographically more similar to TCR!'s general population. In general, the DOL/ETA grants served younger participants, more men, and more African Americans than TCR!'s Core Program.

### 3. Demonstration Grant

The evaluation team sought to examine the relationship between participant demographics, services received, and retention and achievement of the various program benchmarks, with the expectation of shedding some light on factors contributing to dropout from the program and/or success in the form of "gold standard" jobs. This could not be done for the original demonstration grant since only aggregate data were available. Data were obtained from TCR!'s Quarterly Reports and performance dashboards. Following are highlights of reported performance outcomes:

- The number of individuals served in Awali Inside/Out was 331 percent of goal, or 828 participants. Of these, 413 completed the personal Empowerment Training, representing nearly 50 percent of those served (versus the stated goal of 60 percent).
- Only 17.7 percent (73 individuals) of those who completed the personal Empowerment Training entered Awali Place or the Core Program as compared to a goal of 150 individuals.

- Ten participants earned a GED while in the program, 29 increased basic skills by one or more grade levels, eight attended additional training at another postsecondary institution, and 40 attended an advanced phase of training or additional training at TCR!. This is short of the goal of 100 individuals.
- Nine individuals earned a “Gold standard” job, with an additional 28 employed full-time without benefits and 18 employed part-time. This combined total of 55 fell short of the combined goal of 60 participants.

Data on retention and recidivism were not maintained. Because participants from three of the four Awali Inside/Out correctional sites were simply not continuing on to the TCR! program once released, the sites were discontinued in 2008, leaving only one site (Ramsay County). Staff members attribute participants’ lack of continuation to such factors as varying prison regulations and staffing patterns, length of the program, and the distance between where the ex-offenders resided after release and the site of the TCR! program in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and receptivity and accommodations within the correctional facilities.

#### 4. Continuation Grant

Individual participant data were provided for the Continuation Grant for both 2009 and 2010, although considerable data from the Continuation Grant were not available, especially for the first year, 2009. While data were more complete for 2010, outcome data were minimal. Highlights compiled from individual participant records include the following:

- Participants identified just over four challenges each. The top five identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, no high school diploma or GED, criminal conviction, history of substance use or abuse, and unemployed 12 months or longer.

- For those individuals for whom there are admission and exit dates, 2009 participants stayed in the program an average of 43 days and 2010 participants an average of 48.5 days (combined range = 4 to 314 days).
- The most commonly identified reason for exit was that the program had lost contact with the participant. Combining these with those for whom the reason for exit was “unknown” accounts for 47 percent of the participants. Individual barriers or issues also seem to be a big contributor to exits.
- As of December 31, 2010, the end of the grant period, TCR! had exceeded the service goal by 58 percent: 316 individuals had been provided Awali Place or pre-program activities compared with the goal of 200. Despite that, only 78 of the 316 (25 percent) achieved a positive outcome and only 9 percent (27) continued into the Core Program compared to goals of 50 percent and 25 percent, respectively.
- One of the goals was employment improvement. A combined 28 individuals across both years were coded as having gained employment. Employment information is spotty and none appeared to be “gold standard” or “final” placements.

The Awali Place program was refined a number of times during the period studied because participants were not continuing on into the Core Program. Staff members suggest that factors such as lack of a high school diploma or GED and substance abuse issues may have played a role. The Awali Place program was phased out by July 2009 and eventually fully incorporated into the Core Program.

## 5. Earmark Grant

Data were most complete for the Earmark Grant under which 119 participants were served (goal = 110). The emphasis of the Earmark Grant was on providing support services to hard-to-serve men and providing additional coaching and job development support in route to “gold standard” jobs. The following are among the findings obtained from an analysis of individual participant data:

- Challenges and barriers identified by participants after meeting with their Coaches averaged 7.68. On average, five needs were met or addressed for each participant. This exceeded the goal of 1.5 per participant.
- The top five challenges and barriers identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, criminal conviction history, substance use or abuse, low literacy skills, and homeless/transitional housing unstable. The top four challenges/barriers reported to have been met or addressed with the greatest frequency in order of frequency are: transportation, attainment of work experience, housing, and financial assistance.
- Thirty-seven percent were retained in the program. While this did not meet the goal, TCR! reports that this retention percentage is higher than for the total program population.
- The Earmark Grant catalyzed a major expansion of TCR!'s internship program. Twenty-two percent (26) of the participants obtained internships as compared to the goal of 50 percent. Of these 26 individuals, only nine did not obtain any other paying jobs. Eight individuals were among those obtaining a final placement.
- Eighteen percent (21) obtained intermediate level jobs compared to the goal of 40 percent.
- Eleven participants (9 percent) obtained "gold standard" jobs compared to the goal of 13 (12 percent). It appears that eight of these were still working at the time the data were compiled in the spring of 2011.

Because the attainment of "gold standard" jobs is the zenith of participation in the TCR! program, the evaluators wanted to examine the relationship between demographic and service variables and the attainment of these jobs. Unlike the other two grants, the individual participant data from the Earmark Grant are sufficiently complete, and the number of "gold standard" placements is of sufficient sample size to attempt an analysis to determine if any relationships exist, and if they are statistically significant.

Statistically significant relationships were found for the following:

- No one, who had volunteered that they had previously received treatment for a chemical dependency, obtained a job ( $p < 0.05$ ).



- Comparing those who obtained “gold standard” jobs to those who did not, those who did: 1) spent more time in the program ( $p < 0.05$ ), 2) had superior class attendance ( $p < 0.05$ ), and 3) had more interim jobs and internships ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## 6. Empowerment Training

In an effort to understand more about the impact of Empowerment Training, which is at the heart of the TCR! program, pre- and post-assessments were administered to one cohort of participants in the first of five segments of the Empowerment Training. These were intended to assess if the training had any discernable impact on the constructs of self-esteem and the sense of being in control of their environment and lives (locus of control). These are two outcomes which staff cited most frequently as the contribution of Empowerment Training. After accounting for dropouts and non-matching pre- and post-assessments, the remaining sample was small but yielded a statistically significant result for self-esteem ( $p < 0.001$ ). Of course, this difference could be attributed to factors other than, or in combination with, Empowerment Training. No significant differences were observed for locus of control; however, a longer measurement period may have produced different results. The evaluators recommend a controlled study to look more closely at the contribution of this compelling aspect of the TCR! program.

## E. Conclusions

The TCR! program has a solid track record of longevity in the Twin Cities community and a budget that has grown even during the recent recession when many other programs have struggled. It has a number of well-developed components which are notable practices that may be of interest to other job placement programs. Among

these are TCR!'s Empowerment Training, volunteer program, internship effort, employer services, development efforts, and pay-for-performance model - all are potentially replicable features of the program.

As noted above, the population served by TCR! under the DOL/ETA grants (especially the Demonstration and Continuation Grants) was demographically different than the population typically served under in their Core Program. While performance fell short of established goals on many of the outcome measures, TCR!'s focus on continuous improvement should ensure that the program will continue to refine itself as it seeks to impact the lives of many disadvantaged citizens living in the Twin Cities area who are well outside the mainstream of society.

## **I. Introduction**

In August 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) contracted with Coffey Consulting, LLC (Coffey) to perform a process evaluation and outcomes analysis of the Twin Cities RISE! (TCR!) *Performance-Based Training and Education Demonstration Project* and two related grants: a continuation of the Demonstration Grant, and an Earmark Grant primarily for supportive services. The term “RISE” as used in the program name is an acronym for “Responsible – Independent – Skill – Empowerment.” This is little known and seldom used within program circles and everyone uses the “TCR!” abbreviation.

This study has been designed to document the project processes and analyze participant outcomes. It examines the project goals and the grantee’s success in achieving them. This Evaluation Report presents the findings from an analysis of participant data provided by TCR! as well as information gleaned from three site visits in addition to a review of proposals, contracts, and other pertinent information about the program. The visits took place in September 2009, April 2010, and December 2010 and focused on reviewing and documenting the program processes. Each site visit spanned 1 ½ days at both the St. Paul and Minneapolis sites; and it included staff and participant interviews, class observations, and case management file document/data reviews to inform and evaluate the use and potential impact of this funding.

TCR!’s mainline anchor program is known as their Core Program, which serves low-income individuals who have earned either a high school diploma or General

Educational Development Test (GED). The three DOL/ETA grants were essentially used to fund an effort to extend services beyond TCR! into the prisons (Awali Inside/Out) and prepare more individuals, after their release from prison (Awali Place), to enter and remain in TCR!'s Core Program.

These two programs were funded under three different grants:

- A \$300,000 Demonstration Grant for the period January 2007 – January 2009 focuses on the Awali Inside/Out and Awali Place program;
- Another \$454,628 Demonstration Continuation Grant for the period January 2009 – December 2010 which continued the above project as well as added focus on the Awali Place/Foundation phase; and
- A \$243,667 Earmark Grant for the period January 2009 – March 2010 for additional supportive services to “hard-to-employ” African-American men in the form of housing services for a small group of participants, additional coaching, and additional job development support.

The TCR! demonstration project implemented a training and education-based approach that includes community re-entry and employment and retention in jobs that have a future and pay good wages designed to assist ex-offenders, low-income individuals, and those at-risk of court or gang involvement. Awali Inside/Out serves incarcerated men. According to staff the word “Awali” is based on a Swahili word meaning “beginning.” The name is intended to convey the notion that preparation is taking place *inside* the prison for a new beginning *outside* of prison. The Awali Place program serves individuals who are low-income, the majority of whom have criminal backgrounds, are transitioning from prison, and do not have high school diplomas or GEDs.

During the course of the grant period, Awali Inside/Out was expanded to several prison sites then contracted to only one site. Also, the Awali Place program was refined a number of times over the course of these grants. Because of difficulty getting participants to transition from Awali Place into the Core Program, it was gradually modified to become what was referred to as the Expanded Core, then the Foundation Phase of Core, and was eventually fully subsumed into Core.

## **II. Evaluation Goals, Objectives and Research Questions**

The evaluation examines both process and outcomes. The process evaluation is designed to document the program procedures and service flow under the three grants and determine the program's replicability. It also serves to identify key lessons learned from the program's implementation. The outcome portion of evaluation examines the project goals over the four years of funding and documents the grantee's success in achieving them.

This study addresses the following research questions:

### **A. Process Evaluation**

- Was the recruitment and selection process effective and appropriate?
- Was the participant coordination/flow among the program components taking place as planned?
- Did program delivery adhere to program plan?
- Were appropriate supportive services obtained and utilized?
- What was the level of employer involvement and commitment to hiring?
- What barriers impeded participants' success?
- What participant characteristics contributed to their success?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of the program?
- What components of the program are replicable, sustainable, and/or scalable?
- What are the best practices that may be transferable to other programs?

## **B. Outcomes Analysis**

- Were planned outcomes achieved?
- What program elements contributed to a participant's success or challenges?
- What economic factors may have affected program outcomes?
- Were the programs's short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives/goals met?
- Does the modification of Awali Place improve the level of transition to the Core Program?
- Does the program lead to measurable success ("gold standard" job, grade-level advancement, GED completion, etc.)?
- Does the performance-based payment model improve performance outcomes?
- Does the program lead to a reduction in recidivism?
- Did increased coaching and supportive services improve participant success rates?

### **III. History and Overview of TCR!**

TCR! was founded in 1994 to assist men in entering into careers that would lift them out of generational poverty. It targets individuals in deep economic poverty, especially those with multiple barriers to success. “The mission of TCR! is to provide employers with skilled workers – primarily men from communities of color in the Twin Cities area – by training under- and unemployed adults for skilled jobs that pay a living wage of at least \$20,000 annually”<sup>4</sup> with benefits.

Originally, TCR! was a highly individualized coaching program that served men of color. Later, the program recognized the need for training to ensure participant success, and a training component was added. At first, the program referred participants to external sources of training, but according to TCR! staff, this approach proved unsatisfactory as participants who were referred out were more apt to discontinue training. To address this problem, TCR! brought the training “in house” to ensure that the participants would stay engaged and complete the training.

#### **A. Key Principles**

The TCR! program is driven by five key principles:

1. *Market-driven Approach:* The program’s board has strong corporate participation. Employers are considered the primary customers of TCR!; therefore, TCR! seeks to keep a business person in the position of President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
2. *Accountability:* The program has a reciprocal accountability model in which the participants are given services from six months to two years or more, conditional upon signing a forgivable loan for the services provided. In addition, the program

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<sup>4</sup> Twin Cities RISE! 2008 Annual Report



uses a Return on Investment (ROI) Model for its funding from the State of Minnesota, and payments to TCR! are based on the number of graduates who secure and retain a “gold standard” job. According to the TCR! 2009 Annual Report, over a 12-year period the State had received a 442 percent ROI due to increased state tax receipts and reduced state subsidies related directly to TCR! graduates.

3. *Empowerment:* The “heartbeat” of the TCR! programming is Personal Empowerment, a cognitive restructuring training component through which participants develop responsible personal behavior through increased self esteem, self regulation, and respect for others. This programming is provided through classes, individualized coaching, and group sessions. A high value is placed on mutual respect between participants and staff and on respecting participant decisions.
4. *Outcomes-based:* The program’s primary outcome is the achievement of a “gold standard” job, a career-focused job that pays a living wage (usually defined by the program as \$20,000/year) with full benefits (health and paid leave).
5. *Continuous Learning:* Since its inception, according to staff, TCR! has had an emphasis on self-examination through evaluation and progress monitoring. The program staff formally reviews lessons learned every three months. At the level of the individual, the program uses weekly staff meetings to review participants’ progress as a basis for feedback to each participant. This emphasis is reflected in the numerous refinements to the program that have been instituted over the four years covered by this evaluation.

## **B. Offices in Minneapolis and St. Paul**

TCR! maintains an office in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. The corporate office is in Minneapolis where the program started and is larger and houses more programs and services than the St. Paul office. Staff members rotate on a scheduled basis between the two sites, which are located approximately 25 minutes apart. The Chief Operating Officer shares time between the two sites as well.

The Minneapolis office is located in a district that was once home to many warehouses that supported Minneapolis-based industries. TCR! is located on the second floor of a

historical building that was formerly occupied by the well-known equipment manufacturer, John Deere. The facility in St. Paul, home to TCR! for most of the period of performance for the DOL/ETA grants, moved to a newly renovated location in the fall of 2010.

### **C. TCR!'s Demographics in Context**

There is much data to suggest that the relative disparity based on race for unemployment<sup>5</sup> and other variables for the Minneapolis metropolitan area may be among the worst in the nation. Given TCR!'s recruitment focus and enrollment demographics, these and other data are presented in order to provide a socio-economic context for the work undertaken by the program and the challenges faced.

A breakdown of the demographics of TCR!'s Core Program is provided in Exhibit A below. These are provided for 2000, 2005, 2009, and 2010 to illustrate changes that have occurred in TCR!'s population served over the past decade. Most notably, the percentage of males served has grown from 52 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in 2010. During this same period, the percentage of refugees served has grown from four percent to 11 percent. Average age and ethnicity has remained stable over the decade.

Bureau of Labor Statistics data for March 2011 indicate a 6.8 percent unemployment rate for Minneapolis, two percentage points below the national average of 8.8 percent. However, given both TCR!'s focus on men of color and its work with ex-offenders,

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<sup>5</sup> Economic Policy Institute: *Uneven Pain – Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race* by Algernon Austin – June 8, 2010

particularly under the DOL/ETA grants, it is noteworthy that there are disaggregated data suggesting that the unemployment rate for men of color is much higher in the Minneapolis metropolitan area, and it is among the worst in the nation. According to a June 2010 report by the Economic Policy Institute,<sup>6</sup> the unemployment rate for African Americans in the Minneapolis was 20.4 percent, the second highest in the country, compared to 6.6 percent for whites. This 13.8 percent difference in the two rates is reported as the highest in the country by 3 percent. Also, the report goes on to note that this imbalance cannot be explained by differences in education. For example, “African Americans with a high school diploma or GED were three times as likely to be unemployed as whites with the same level of education.”

Additionally, Minnesota’s black-white imprisonment ratio is 9.14:1, which means that 9.14 African Americans are imprisoned for each white. This is the twelfth highest in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Despite the fact that African American’s comprise 4.6 percent of Minnesota’s population, the state’s prison population is 34.7 percent African American.<sup>8</sup> These statistics underscore the unique challenges faced by TCR! in serving men of color in the Twin Cities region.

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Policy Institute: *Uneven Pain – Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race* by Algernon Austin – June 8, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Council on Crime and Justice. “Reducing Racial Disparity While Enhancing Public Safety: Key Findings and Recommendations.” <http://www.racialdisparity.org/files/Final%20Report-Reducing%20Disparity%20%20Enhancing%20Safety.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Myslajek, C. “Racial Disparity of Child Poverty in Minnesota: The Hidden Consequence of Incarceration.” 2009. <http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/50655/1/Myslajek,%20Crystal.pdf>

## Exhibit A: TCR! Program Demographics from 2000 to 2010\*

Participant Characteristics	2010	2009	2005	2000
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	66%	61%	43%	52%
Female	34%	39%	57%	48%
<b>Age</b>				
Average	33	35	33	34
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
African	7%	9%	9%	10%
African American	59%	58%	58%	57%
American Indian	4%	3%	3%	12%
Asian	3%	2%	2%	1%
Caucasian	17%	25%	25%	15%
Latino	3%	2%	2%	2%
Multi-Racial	5%	0%	0%	0%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%
Unknown	1%	1%	1%	3%
<b>Immigrant Status</b>				
Immigrant or Refugee	11%	5%	11%	4%
<b>Family Status</b>				
Parent (custodial/non)	52%	50%	63%	--

\* Demographics for each year's new traditional participants only – from TCR! Executive Summary performance report

### D. Demonstration Grant

#### 1. Awali Inside/Out

Recognizing that 35-40 percent of the African American male target group were in prison, TCR! began a program to provide Empowerment Training in the Ramsey County Correctional Facility. Initiated in December 2004, this effort was originally called Project ReEntry but was later changed to Awali Inside/Out. By the start of the DOL/ETA Demonstration Grant in January 2007, TCR! had expanded the program to several other correctional facilities (Stillwater, Fairbault, and Moose Lake) so that services were provided to incarcerated men prior to their release in three state prisons and two community correction facilities. The services consisted of the basic Empowerment

Training which offers 24 hours of classroom training over an eight-week period, or three hours per week. While the program remains in Ramsey County, participants from the other sites were simply not continuing on to the TCR! program once released, and the sites were discontinued in 2008. These reasons included high staff turnover, the distance between where the ex-offenders resided after release and the site of the TCR! program in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and receptivity and accommodations within the correctional facilities. In addition to the goal of reducing recidivism through the Empowerment Training, a second goal of the Demonstration Grant was to expand the Core Program by transitioning individuals from Awali Inside/Out (where they received Empowerment Training while still incarcerated) to Awali Place (a community-based foundational program), and then from Awali Place to the Core Program, the goal of which is to train participants for “gold standard” jobs that pay a living wage of \$20,000 per year with full benefits (health and paid leave).

## 2. Awali Place

Awali Place West opened in the fall of 2006 in North Minneapolis and represented a major expansion of the TCR! programming to serve African American men re-entering the community from prison and jail. Awali Place East opened in St. Paul in March 2007. The intention was for men who completed the Awali Inside/Out program in prison to enroll in Awali Place once they returned to the community. The Awali Place program featured transitional employment, shorter program sessions, more time devoted to the Empowerment Training and soft skills training, more graduated rules around dress and punctuality, and a greater emphasis on mentoring by other African American men. It

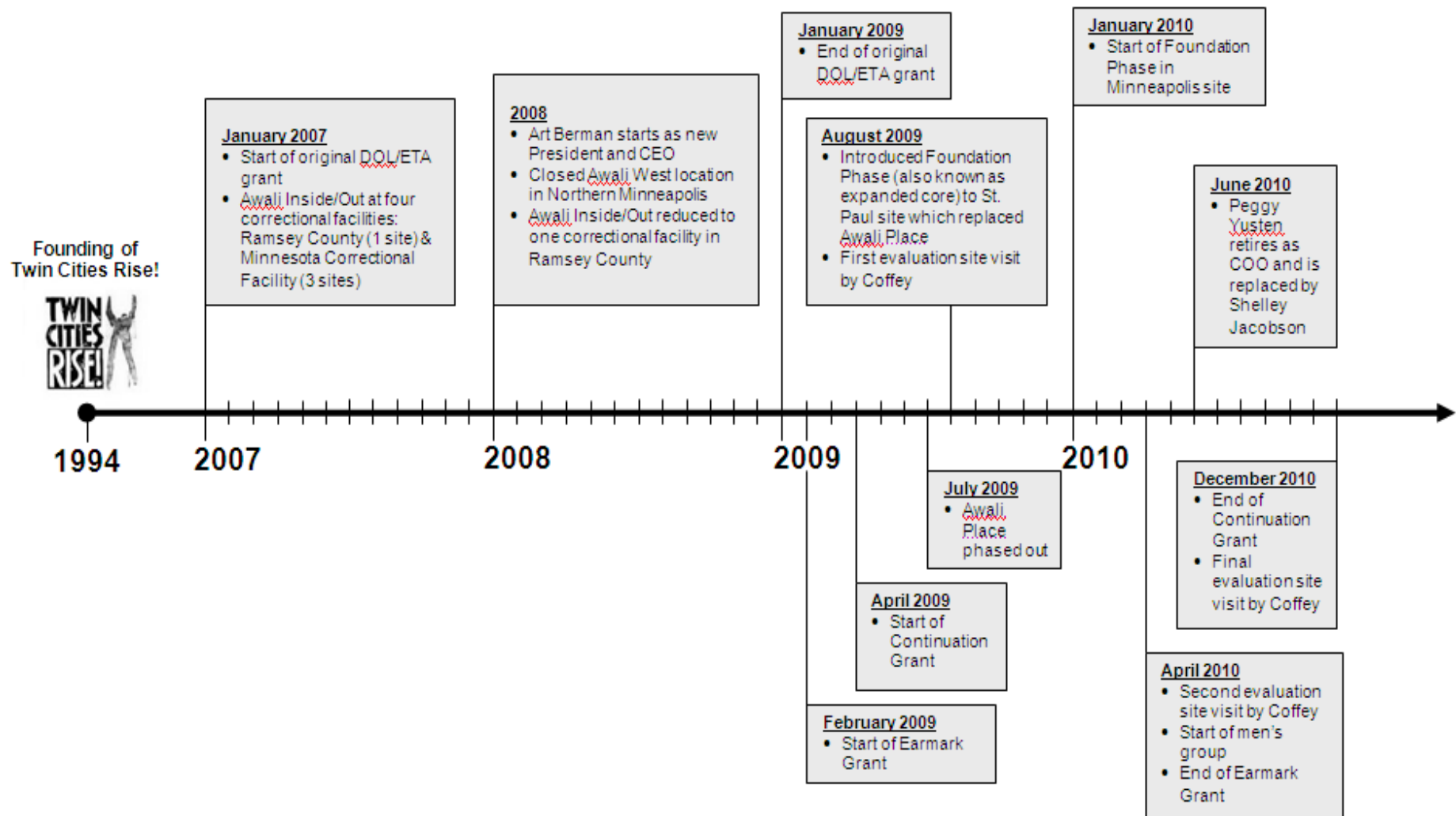
was designed to be a feeder program into the Core Program. However, the transition from Awali Place to the Core Program was “not as successful as hoped,” according to Peggy Yusten, TCR!’s former COO. She suggested that this was due to a variety of reasons, such as the fact that many Awali Place participants lacked their GED. The performance measures for 2007 and 2008 show that while 413 individuals completed the Awali Inside/Out, program only 70 were admitted to Awali Place. Of these, only three were admitted to the Core Program. Furthermore, of the 402 individuals enrolled in Awali Place in 2007-2008, only 41 (10 percent) were admitted to Core. Awali Place East and West were phased out by July 2009 and became known as Expanded Core in August 2009. It was later referred to as the Core’s Provisional Foundation Phase and included GED preparation, Empowerment Training, an open keyboarding lab, job search, and coaching. It officially became the Foundational Phase of the Core program by January 2010. The Minneapolis location was closed first due to low enrollment. It was thought that participants felt unsafe at the site due to violence and drug dealers in the neighborhood.

#### **E. Earmark and Continuation Grants**

In February 2009, the Earmark Grant began providing supportive services to African American men. Additionally, in April 2009, the Continuation Grant began continuation of the same services provided under the Demonstration Grant.

A timeline of these and other key events in the TCR! program is provided as Exhibit B.

## Exhibit B: TCR! Timeline of Key Events



#### **IV. Planned Outcomes**

As stated in the TCR! mission statement, the anticipated outcome for its Core program is a “gold standard” job – defined as full-time employment in career-track jobs at a wage of \$20,000 per year or higher with healthcare benefits and paid leave. Under the Demonstration Grant, 60 participants (24 percent of enrollees) were to obtain full-time employment of over \$20,000 plus health benefits within two years of release from prison, with over 83 percent (50) of this group retaining their job one year after placement.

The Continuation Grant provided \$454,628 in DOL/ETA funding for the two years ending December 2010 and after the initial \$300,000 two-year Demonstration Grant, the expected outcomes did not include the attainment of “gold standard” jobs. Instead, the focus of the Continuation Grant was on other positive outcomes for at least half of the 200 participants (who completed the program) that led to: improved emotional intelligence, progress toward and completion of GED, employment improvement, and continued education in the Core Program. The Earmark Grant proposed that 13 of 110 “hard to employ” participants would obtain a modified “gold standard” job, defined in the grant as a minimum of \$9 an hour and \$18,720 annual salary, full-time (36-40 hours per week) and full benefits (medical insurance and paid leave). The definition of a “gold standard” job is stated differently in the Earmark Grant document than in other TCR! materials. Exhibit C details the planned outcomes under each of the three grants.



## Exhibit C: Planned Outcomes for DOL/ETA Grants

### Demonstration Grant

- 250 inmates at penal institutions would receive 10 weeks of Empowerment Training (Awali Inside/Out) over two fiscal years (FY 2007 and 2008 but were CYs)
- 150 individuals would complete Empowerment Training in the corrections institutions
- Of the 150 individuals, 90 (60 percent) would not have returned to at-risk behaviors or prison
- 100 participants would enter either Awali Place or the Core Program upon their release from prison
- 60 of the participants who enter either Awali Place or the Core Program would complete training within 15 months
- 100 participants who enter Awali Place or the Core Program would either: 1) increase their basic math or language skills by one grade level; 2) obtain their GED; or 3) attend additional job/vocational training or another accredited educational institute
- 60 participants who enter Awali Place or the Core Program will either: 1) obtain full-time employment that pays over \$20,000 per year plus health benefits; 2) obtain a job that pays \$9 per hour with health benefits or work experience; or 3) if currently employed, increase their earnings by 20 percent
- 50 participants who obtain employment would be retained in their jobs for a minimum of one year, and 43 would be retained for a minimum of two years
- 45 participants who obtained employment would have an increase in salary or promotion
- TCR! would recruit 16 new employer companies to establish “pay-for-performance” partnerships.

## **Exhibit C: Planned Outcomes for DOL/ETA Grants (continued)**

### **Continuation Grant**

- 200 men would be enrolled and receive Awali Place/pre-program activities that include Empowerment Training, GED preparation, job search skills, men's support group, and coaching
- 50 percent of participants would achieve a "positive outcome" – defined as improved emotional intelligence,<sup>9</sup> progress toward and completion of a GED, employment improvement, and continued education in the Core Program
- TCR! would work on ways to collect information about whether recidivism occurs after program start

### **Earmark Grant**

- Enroll 110 participants between February 2009 and March 2010
- Lower the first session dropout rate of African American males from 76 percent to 50 percent (55 of 110 will remain enrolled in the project)
- Achieve an average reduction of 1.5 barriers among the African American male population group
- 55 project participants (50 percent) would complete/be working in an internship or be enrolled in additional training while enrolled with the program
- 40 percent of project participants (44 of 110) would obtain an intermediate level job (minimum of 15 hours per week)
- Increase percentage of African American males achieving "gold standard" job from 7 percent to 12 percent (13 of 110). "Gold standard" job is defined as a minimum of \$9 an hour and \$18,720 annual salary, full-time (36-40 hours per week) and full benefits (medical insurance and paid leave). The annual salary of \$18,720 is lower than the \$20,000 in the original grant. This change was proposed by TCR! to more closely reflect wages in the local labor market.

<sup>9</sup> The evaluation team requested that TCR! provide a definition of this outcome but were told it was never defined. Generally, emotional intelligence refers to those who have been successful in Empowerment Training and can deal more effectively in their environment.

## **V. Organization and Staffing**

### **A. Founder and Board of Directors**

From its inception, TCR! has been guided by a business-led Board of Directors. Its founder, Steven M. Rothschild, was an executive vice president with General Mills and served as TCR!'s President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the first six years of the program. He was assisted by an active advisory group that included the Mayor of Minneapolis and other local notables. Since stepping down as Executive Director, Mr. Rothschild has continued to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Board has continued to be predominantly business-led, composed of high-ranking local leaders from private sector businesses. The Board has been responsible for guiding the TCR! program from a private sector approach in accordance with the five key principles detailed earlier. Board members are active supporters of the TCR! program. This responsibility also includes participation in TCR! events and fundraisers.

### **B. Staffing Structure**

The staffing structure and assignments change periodically at TCR! This is a result of the organization's ongoing focus on change in an effort to improve performance. The Employer Advisory Committee meets quarterly to review the curriculum and recommend any changes warranted. The organization chart for TCR!, which was effective for the greater part of 2010, is shown below as Exhibit D. Accounting, Development and Communications, and the Empowerment Institute (a fee-earning arm of the organization) report to the President and CEO, Art Berman, as does the Chief Operating Officer (COO). All other operations report to the COO, including Educational Services,

Recruiting and Special Projects, Employer Services, Coaching, Information Technology, and Volunteer Management. Staff members were added in the second half of 2010. At the time of this mid-year snapshot, however, there were approximately 35 full-time staff members and four to five part-time staff, according to Cynthia Micolichuk, Director of Human Resources/Special Projects, who formerly had responsibility for recruitment.

These staff members include:

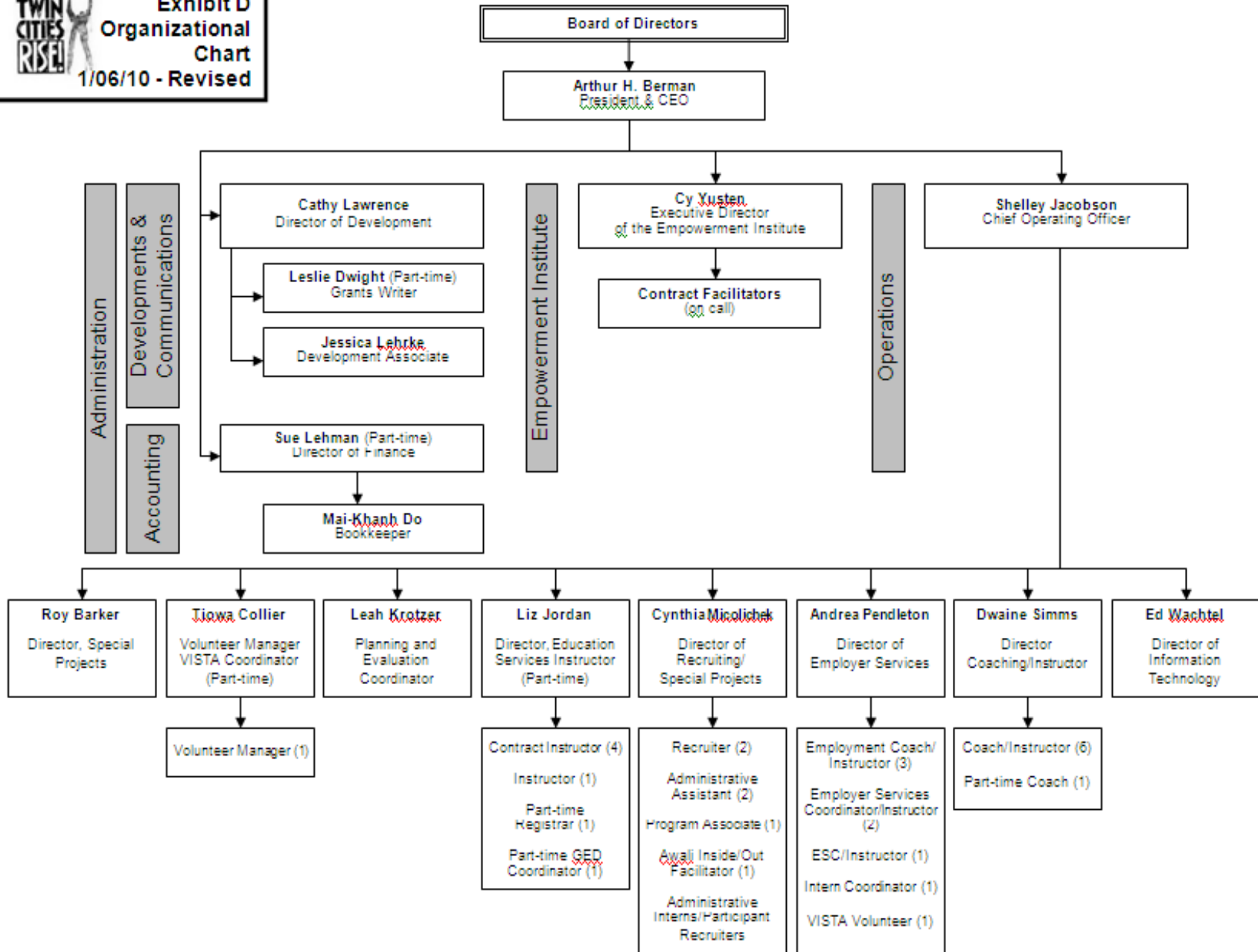
- 5 educational instructors (4 are contract employees)
- 1 part-time volunteer manager/VISTA coordinator
- 8 employer services staff (employment Coach/instructors)
- 8 Coaches
- 1 information technology director
- Staff includes nine graduates of the TCR! program

With this level of staffing, TCR! served about 828 Demonstration, 316 Continuation, and 119 Earmark participants during the grant period, in addition to its regular population. Participants served under the DOL/ETA-funded grants benefitted from overall TCR! staffing and infrastructure since TCR!'s core program and the DOL/ETA-funded grants share the same structure and ultimate goals.

### **C. Staff Recruitment and Retention**

TCR! prides itself on the quality of its staff and attributes much of its success (defined as “gold standard” jobs) to the high caliber of its people. There is a conscious effort to maintain a staff with half of the members having a corporate background and half an educational/nonprofit background. TCR! uses a rigorous interview process which includes six to seven interviewers over two-to-three rounds of interviews, and staff are active participants in the selection process. Coaches are generally hired from within

**TWIN CITIES RISE!**  
**Exhibit D**  
**Organizational Chart**  
**1/06/10 - Revised**



and include former program participants. When hiring for key managerial positions, TCR! hired individuals externally. In summer 2010, the COO and the Director of Educational Services positions were filled with external candidates.

Both staff and administrators report that staff turnover has not been an issue. They attribute this to a high degree of job satisfaction and salaries that are “more than competitive” for a nonprofit organization in the Twin Cities. The COO reports that salary levels are determined based on area salary studies for comparable positions. In support of the comment that staff turnover is low, one respondent reported that she had been with TCR! three years and still considered herself a “newbie.”

#### **D. Staff Training and Development**

The organization is relatively flat, and staff report that their ideas matter. All staff must successfully complete the Empowerment Training that is provided to participants, and they incorporate it into their work. They report that they apply the Empowerment Training into their personal lives. As a result, according to Cynthia Micolichek, the TCR! staff is “pretty healthy” in its approach to problem solving and working through issues. Each staff person has an Individual Development Plan (IDP), and managers use it with staff to look at growth opportunities and areas for further development. In both site visits, while job satisfaction was reported to be high, the issue of staff exhaustion was raised as an occupational hazard due to the intensity of the work and large case loads (inflated by the large number of enrollees who do not complete the full program). Staff development is valued, and as a result, there are quarterly in-house trainings or

seminars for the frontline staff, and 10 training/development opportunities per year for other staff.

#### **E. Volunteer Program**

TCR!'s staffing is augmented by a highly developed volunteer effort that has grown considerably over the past two years. It is one of TCR!'s notable practices that may be of interest to other programs unable to support the number of paid staff needed. The effort started two years ago with 17 volunteers and was initially very loosely organized. Today, it is highly organized and has more than 200 active volunteers, approximately 45 of them regularly scheduled for daytime and evening assignments. Importantly, turnover is very low. One of the keys to the program's growth was assigning a director to oversee and manage the effort. Tiowa Collier, Director of Volunteer Services, has developed a management infrastructure which includes such things as job descriptions, time cards, and logistics tracking using Excel spreadsheets. Volunteers are recruited largely through word-of-mouth. TCR! utilizes its Web site and the web-based "Volunteer Match" service to attract candidates from the Twin Cities area. Some of TCR!'s board members are volunteers and others come from the companies represented on the board. Orientations for volunteers are held once a month to familiarize them with the TCR! program. Volunteers do not have to go through Empowerment Training, but they do attend an "Empowerment Event" which provides them with an overview of what Empowerment Training is all about. Volunteers assist the program in a wide array of roles from envelope stuffer to GED instructor. Following is the list of Volunteer Jobs listed on the TCR! Web site: Administrative Assistant, Envelope Stuffer, Grant

Researcher, Instructor Assistant, Mock Interviewer, Public Relations, Special Event Planner, Special Projects Volunteer, Tutor, Speaker, and Other.

According to Ms. Collier, volunteers become “sales people” for the program. One volunteer was so enthusiastic about his experience that he recently wrote an article for the local paper recommending volunteering. The evaluation team spoke with several volunteers. They were knowledgeable about the program and, as noted by Ms. Collier, were enthusiastic and eager to talk about their contribution.

**Organization and Staffing:  
Key Findings**

- TCR! has a business-led Board of Directors and CEO. There is a conscious effort to maintain a staff with half the members having a corporate background and the other half an educational/nonprofit background.
- Staff salaries are competitive and turnover has not been a problem.
- All staff must complete the same Empowerment Training that is given to participants, and they incorporate it into their work.
- Each staff member has an Individual Development Plan and training opportunities are available throughout the year.
- Staff exhaustion may be a potential issue due to large caseloads.
- TCR!’s staff is supplemented by a highly developed volunteer program. There are more than 200 active volunteers with 45 of them regularly scheduled.
- The volunteer effort is managed by a full-time staff position responsible for recruitment, orientation, scheduling, etc.



## VI. Funding Streams

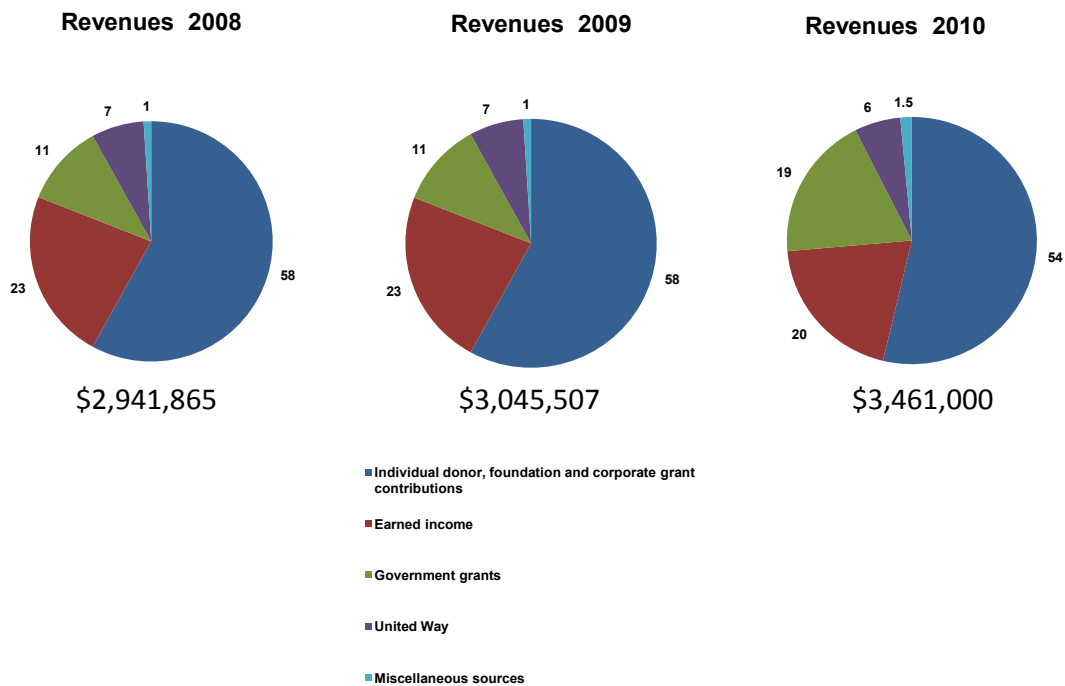
In addition to the three DOL/ETA grants, TCR! receives funding from the State of Minnesota (under a pay-for-performance model), corporate and individual donations, foundation grants, and United Way. It also earns income through its Empowerment Institute, which offers Empowerment Training to other organizations and businesses for a fee.

In 2008, 56.7 percent of its \$2,941,865 revenue came from: individual donor, foundation, and corporate grant contributions; 28.9 percent from earned income; 5.4 percent from government grants; 7.5 percent from United Way; and 1.5 percent from other miscellaneous sources. Exhibit E below<sup>10</sup> compares funding levels and the distribution of revenue sources for the three-year period 2008 – 2010. It is noteworthy that during this period of (the great) economic recession, TCR!'s revenues grew by \$519,135. Most notably, the percentage of revenues from government grants grew from eight percent in 2008 to 19 percent in 2010 (eight percent gain). This is attributable in part to an Earmark Grant of approximately \$500,000 awarded to TCR! in 2010 from the Department of Justice, which will allow TCR! to build the benefits of non-recidivism into its ROI model. TCR!'s multi-pronged approach to revenue generation has resulted in the overall growth of revenues during severely strained economic times. Furthermore, this diversity in funding may/should provide some level of sustainability in the event of a reduction or elimination of any single source of revenue.

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<sup>10</sup> Twin Cities RISE! 2008 Annual Report

## Exhibit E: TCR! Funding Streams by Year (2008-2010)



### A. Development Efforts

One of the reasons that TCR! has been able to grow its funding during an economic recession is likely due to its multi-tiered development effort. Cathy Lawrence, Director of Development, referred to her development efforts as “friend raising.” A review of the companies and individuals credited with donations suggests that TCR! has been quite successful in making many “friends” over the years in the business and government sectors as well as among the general public. Ms. Lawrence, who is assisted in her development efforts by a full-time development associate and a part-time grants writer, reported that a large number of volunteers are donors. TCR! looks for opportunities to showcase successful graduates and their stories in the electronic and print media and

at special events. In February 2009, TCR! initiated an electronic newsletter. Copies of its newsletters and annual reports can be found with a great deal of other information on TCR!'s website ([www.twincitiesrise.org](http://www.twincitiesrise.org)), which is updated regularly. It has also ventured into the realm of social media with a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Each year TCR! sponsors a stakeholders luncheon which provides donors and prospective donors with the opportunity to meet successful graduates. Another high-profile endeavor is a fundraising event known as "Music on the Mississippi" which attracts many local business and government leaders. These events are important to TCR! because they keep the program in the public eye and are critical to revenue generation since TCR! relies on donor fundraising for more than 50% of its operating budget.

## **B. Employer Fee**

Both the TCR! demonstration proposal and grant agreement contain the statement that "employer customers pay TCR! a placement and retention fee when they successfully hire a TCR! graduate, much the same as they would pay a for-profit staffing agency." This is a reference to a fee that was negotiated with some employers to reinforce TCR!'s "philosophy of providing value-added services for ...(their) business customers." The fee, however, was not paid by all of them. The revenue went into general funds for continued program funding. This practice was stopped effective December 31, 2007

due to employers' unwillingness to continue to pay fees in a changed labor market where there was a more than adequate labor pool from which to choose employees.

### **C. Pay-for-Performance Model**

TCR! worked with Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development to create a funding stream in which TCR! is paid \$9,000 from general funds when TCR! provides documentation that it has placed one of its graduates in a job that pays \$20,000 or more annually with health benefits and has improved his or her prior income by at least \$10,000 per year. TCR! is eligible for another \$9,000 payment if the graduate remains in the job for one year (see Attachment 1).<sup>11</sup> The model is based on cash benefits accrued to the state from the increased earnings. Benefits are derived from increased sales and incomes and decreased public subsidies. TCR! reports this gain was calculated at \$31,000 of which \$18,000 is made available to pay-for-performance payments.

This pay-for-performance model is often wrongly assumed to operate like a performance-based contract, which is based on the actual cost of providing services and includes a margin above and beyond cost as an incentive for superior performance. In the case of the pay-for-performance model, the money drawn down by TCR! has no relation to cost but is strictly a contribution of a portion of the funds from the state from its accrued economic benefit of having a tax paying citizen earning more and taking less from the state coffers in the form of subsidies.

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<sup>11</sup> Twin Cities RISE! Alternative Financing Model for Serving the Hardest to Employ – produced by TCR!

The pay-for-performance funding from the state is clearly supplemental. Given the relatively small number of “gold standard” placements that meet the state’s criteria and the large number of participants TCR! serves during a year, TCR! could not operate only on pay-for-performance dollars. The model though could be replicated elsewhere by organizations interested in additional funding streams to help support program efforts.

#### **D. International Recognition**

TCR!’s program or, more specifically, its pay-for-performance model, has recently received international attention. In September 2010, TCR! was awarded \$50,000 from the E-Bay and Ashoka Changemakers competition for its submission entitled “Non-Profit Innovation through Pay-for-Performance Funding.” TCR! was one of five winners and the only winner from the United States. There were 873 applications from 83 countries.

#### **Funding Streams: Key Findings**

- Despite the economic recession, TCR!’s funding increased over the past three years, due to multi-pronged fundraising efforts. It also earns income through its Empowerment Institute, which offers Empowerment Training to other organizations and businesses for a fee. Government grants accounted for only 19 percent of its funding in 2010.
- Due to the recession and resulting availability of labor, TCR! discontinued its practice of collecting an employer fee for placing participants in the private sector.
- TCR! has become known for its pay-for-performance model whereby it is eligible for a \$9,000 payment from Minnesota State general funds for every participant placed in a job paying \$20,000 or more annually with health benefits and who has improved his or her prior income by at least \$10,000 per year.

**Funding Streams (continued):**  
**Key Findings**

- TCR! is eligible for another \$9,000 payment if the graduate remains in the job for one year. The model is based on cash benefits accrued to the state from the increased earnings. Benefits are derived from increased sales and incomes and decreased public subsidies.
- The pay-for-performance model, sometimes confused with a performance-based contract, is replicable.
- TCR! recently received a monetary reward and international recognition for its program and pay-for-performance model through a competition for innovative programs sponsored by E-Bay and Ashoka Changemakers.

## **VII. The TCR! Program**

### **A. Recruitment, Selection, and Orientation**

Recruitment is accomplished through a variety of methods. Primarily, TCR! staff engage in street recruitment – talking to people on the streets about the program. They also contact agencies that might be referral sources – halfway houses, recovery programs, shelters (to some extent) – and work with probation officers, particularly in Ramsey County. In addition, they use a variety of print media to promote the program. In 2010 there were 2.5 persons dedicated to recruitment – one was added to the staff in December 2009 to solidify the TCR! presence in St. Paul.

For recruitment under the DOL/ETA grants, TCR! recruiters contacted niche agencies such as faith-based organizations, prison ministries and the Department of Corrections. The Recruitment Manager reported that the “recruiters do a nice job selling the program,” but she would like to see a more consistent message in the community about the program. They are currently working on “freshening the image” on their bus stop posters, brochures and flyers, and expanding their placement of materials.

#### **1. “Bonus Bucks” Recruitment Technique**

One notable practice TCR! employs in its recruitment efforts is called “Bonus Bucks.” TCR! appeals to currently enrolled participants whose lives have been positively impacted by the program, to share their positive experience with others, refer them to the program, and earn some extra cash. To be eligible for “Bonus Bucks,” an individual must be an active TRC! participant, must write his or her name on the application of the

individual they referred, and must attend the orientation session and a week of classes with the newly referred individual. The participant receives \$25.00 for referring one individual, \$50.00 for referring two, and \$100.00 for referring three. Staff says that this practice has resulted in the enrollment of a number of new participants, although no figures are available.

## 2. Recruitment Numbers and Attrition

TCR!'s overall enrollment goal for all programs for 2010 was to admit 650 new participants into five sessions (130 per session). In 2010 TCR! generated 3,862 applications through the efforts described above. Of these, 805 were admitted, 568 were oriented, 172 completed the Foundations 1 introductory eight-week session, and 130 signed a contract and began active participation in the program. Only 21 percent of those recruited were admitted and only just over three percent became signed, active participants. The same pattern holds for recruitment for the individual sessions that occur throughout the year. For example, for the session that began in March, prior to the second site visit, 943 applications were completed by prospective participants who had been recruited for the program. Of these, 169 were admitted, 117 oriented, 37 completed the initial eight-week Foundations 1, and 28 (three percent) became signed, active participants. In the past, there was not a hard deadline on the recruitment, and some individuals were admitted after the session had started, which, the Coach Manager reports, had a negative impact on their retention. This is a policy which has recently changed in an effort to improve retention. Potential participants must now wait until the next intake to matriculate.



Staff are concerned about the large falloff in participants at every stage from application onward. Staff report that two thirds of the recruited individuals are not admitted into the program because they: failed the drug testing, are not ready for life changes, cannot pass the reading test, lost child care or housing, or landed a job on their own.

### 3. Entrance Requirements

Those interested in entering the program must attend an information session where they complete a written pre-application form, followed by attendance at a one-hour orientation session that includes a program presentation, a brief demographic survey and a reading assessment. In some cases, an interview may also be required.

To enter the program, applicants must either have a GED or high school diploma and attain a 6.0 reading level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), or, if they do not have a GED or high school diploma, an 8.5 reading level is required for program entry. TCR! does not accept participants who have a graduate degree or a four-year undergraduate degree from a U.S. institution. Those who are eligible complete a full application and take an additional assessment of their math and writing skills for class placement purposes.

### 4. Participant Selection

Program Coaches make the selection decision as a group in a weekly meeting, and the decision to enroll an individual must be unanimous. The factors they look for beyond basic eligibility include:

- Long-term focus – does the applicant understand that TCR! participation requires up to 15 hours of on-site classes per week, over an average span of 15 months?
- Stability of housing situation
- Mental stability and freedom from chemical dependence (TCR! will verify that if someone is on medications, the medications are being taken as prescribed)
- Absence of arson or criminal sexual offenses
- Not on Supplemental Security Income
- Stability of life situation – if someone is going through life changes, such as a change of housing, divorce, etc., s/he may not be able to continue with the program

In addition, TCR! prefers individuals who are motivated to be in the program. According to Sheresse Turner, Director of Internships, who has recently also assumed responsibility for recruitment, staff look for “change talk;” they are looking for individuals who want to do something different with their lives. Dwaine Simms, Director of Coaching, volunteered that there is a “magic question” that is meant to screen for “change talk” that has been very helpful in determining who should get accepted into the program – “Why should I accept you into the...program?” Staff members look for responses which indicate that the prospective enrollee is “contemplative” and recognizes that s/he is in a period of transition, needs to make better decisions, needs to do something different, and is willing to invest time to fulfill the goal of obtaining and retaining a living wage job. Some examples of “change talk” from enrollees include the following:

- “I have been out of work for a very long time. I want to become a competitive and dependable worker again; also, to provide for my kids.”
- “My life has changed in the last two years and I need some guidance and personal encouragement. I am a hard worker and I love to learn. Being a bartender pays the

bills but I don't find it rewarding. I can do better and would like to prove that to myself.”

- “...I am willing to be taught, and also a fast learner. Given a chance is all I need, with that chance, I'll make my stand to better myself and the ones around me!”
- “Because of my past, I am having a very hard time getting a job. I have a home and young children depending on me. I need all the help I can get. I've completed probation, and I just need a chance to show everyone that I've learned from my mistakes.”
- “I think it would be a big step forward for me to learn something in a positive environment, to reach goals I've set to better myself, as a working man and to become a positive role model for the people around me.”
- “I would like to be admitted into the Twin Cities RISE! program to help me secure a chance at a better and more stable future. I am a motivated person and dedicated to turning my life around.”

If an applicant is admitted, s/he is notified by phone (up to six calls are made) and by mail (two postcards are sent), and assigned a Coach. Coaches are responsible for selection, and the emphasis on recruitment is seen by some staff as detrimental to current participants who may not approach a Coach because the Coach appears to be busy.

## 5. Participant Retention

According to one of the Empowerment Facilitators, about half of those who enter the program drop out midway into the program. Reasons for exit are provided for the Continuation Grant and the Earmark Grant in Exhibits L and Q, respectively, in the upcoming section on program performance. The reasons for a large percentage are “unknown” or “lost contact,” while others relate to individual barriers or challenges. During the final site visit, the evaluation team attempted, through interviews with

individual staff members, to explore the issue of retention in more depth. Staff shared the concern about retention but seemed at a loss for a remedy. Ms. Turner suggested that the recruiters need to focus more attention on finding a good fit, generating fewer applicants, but ones who are more likely to succeed in the program. She noted that she would be examining the participant information session, which some staff believe is too structured and contains information that may be of no interest to participants (i.e., information about TCR!'s founder). She also noted that some staff members think that some of the material covered in the orientation might be better placed in the information session. Finally, Ms. Turner shared plans about convening a “think tank” to brainstorm on ways to improve retention and reduce the amount of effort that goes into evaluating and processing so many applications.

The evaluation team attempted to collect as much data as possible so that the analysis of the data might provide some clues as to demographic or service variables that affect retention. As is evidenced below in the performance analysis, there were no clear indications that any one or more variables were more closely related to retention than any others.

## **Recruitment, Selection, and Orientation: Key Findings**

- TCR! employs a variety of recruitment methods but relies primarily on street recruitment – talking to people in the streets about the program.
- One of TCR!'s recruitment methods called “Bonus Bucks” pays currently enrolled participants for recruiting new participants.
- TCR!'s ratio of applications to admitted participants is typically very high. For example, in 2010, the program generated 3,862 applications of which 805 were admitted.
- Applicants must meet numerous entry criteria to be admitted to the program. Program Coaches make the decision, which must be unanimous. In addition to the entry criteria, Coaches look for participants who are motivated to change and do something different with their lives. Staff members look for “change talk” on the part of applicants, indicating why they want to enroll in the TCR! program.
- Staff members are concerned about the large falloff of participants at every stage of the program from application onward. They are searching for ways to identify participants who will be a better fit and want to reduce the number of applications that need to be generated.

## **B. Empowerment Training Component**

Empowerment is the keystone of the TCR! program and is designed to increase an individual's capacity to control his/her internal state of mind. It is based on a cognitive restructuring model that posits changes in beliefs generate changes in thinking and feelings and that it is our beliefs, thoughts and feelings that determine our behavior.

### **1. Cognitive Restructuring**

The cognitive restructuring approach which is used today in many different forms has roots in the work of Albert Ellis, a Clinical Psychologist who popularized the cognitive

approach to behavior therapy in the 1960s<sup>12</sup> and 1970s<sup>13</sup>. Research funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has cited cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as “among the more promising rehabilitative treatment for criminal offenders” and cited three reasons for its widespread use: 1) it ranks in the top tier in terms of effects on recidivism, 2) it has a well-developed theoretical basis and specifically assumes that “criminal thinking” is a contributing factor to deviant behavior, and 3) it can be adapted to a wide range of offenders, delivered by both professionals and paraprofessionals, and set in either institutional or community settings.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. TCR!'s Empowerment Training Theory and Curriculum

The focus of TCR!'s Empowerment Training is on restructuring one's cognition and being able to separate behaviors from core concepts of self worth. According to TCR! staff, Empowerment provides participants the “opportunity to know themselves from the inside out” and to recognize that they are “lovable, important and valuable.” Empowerment theory is based on the tenet that every behavior is a choice, and each individual is always responsible for the choices that s/he makes. When properly applied, it helps individuals contemplate the impact of their actions by teaching ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are more conducive to success. The goal is to teach participants how to apply this learning to every aspect of their lives, including their jobs.

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<sup>12</sup> Ellis, Albert (1962). *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*. New York, NY. Lyle Stuart

<sup>13</sup> Ellis, Albert (1973). *Humanistic Psychotherapy: The Rational-Emotive Approach*. New York, NY. The Julian Press

<sup>14</sup> Lipsey, Mark and Landenberger, Nana (2006). “Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions” in *Preventing Crime*. (Brandon C. Walsh and David P. Farrington, Editors) Great Britain. Springer. p.57

The curriculum is based on the work of Dr. Steven Stosny, the founder of Compassion Alliance, and it was developed jointly with TCR! founder Steven Rothschild. Stosny's book, *The Powerful Self*,<sup>15</sup> and Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence*,<sup>16</sup> provide much of the theoretical and empirical basis of the Empowerment curriculum. Stosny writes, "Psychologists agree that human beings need to feel internally powerful, proactive rather than reactive, and in control of their internal experience. We simply cannot do well in life or come anywhere near achieving our fullest potential when feeling powerless over our own emotions and reactions to everyone else's. Powerless feelings signal impaired ability to regulate internal experience, i.e., one's own thoughts, emotions and behavior. When not internally regulated, they seem controlled and manipulated by other people." (p.6)

At TCR!, Empowerment is a part of each student's course of study and is integrated into every stage of their training, consisting of 2.5 hours of training every week (36 hours for the typical 8-week session in the Core Program), supplemented and reinforced by Coaches and instructional staff. There are five successive levels. Classes in financial empowerment that focus on issues such as income and debt management are also offered.

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<sup>15</sup> Stosny, Steven (1996). *The Powerful Self*. North Charleston, SC. Book Surge, LLC.

<sup>16</sup> Goleman, Daniel (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY. Bantam Dell.

### 3. Empowerment Training Topics

Topics in the Empowerment Training include Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation, and Empathy. The Empowerment Training is framed into the following five successive levels.

1. *Life Skills* – this class is directed towards the GED students and focuses on time management;
2. *Empowerment Foundation* – the class covers core values and core hurts, weak mode versus power mode, thinking and behaviors, and emotional regulation. The Empowerment Training in Awali Inside/Out is essentially the Empowerment Foundation class;
3. *Empowerment Framing* – this class addresses the application of empowerment concepts to change behavior;
4. *Empowerment Maintenance* – this class provides further applications of empowerment; and
5. *Success on the Job* – this evening class is offered to those who are employed (but have not necessarily graduated yet), that addresses the culture of a new job.

The aspects of personal and social competence and related competency-based behaviors that the Empowerment Training purports to engender are shown in Exhibit F.



## Exhibit F: THE FRAMEWORK OF PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT TRAINING<sup>17</sup>

	Personal Competence	Competency-based Behaviors
<b>SELF-AWARENESS</b>	<b>Emotional Awareness:</b> Recognizing one's emotions and their effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the emotions I am feeling and why</li> <li>• Realize the links between my feelings and what I think, say and do</li> <li>• Recognize how my feelings affect my performance</li> <li>• Have a guiding awareness of my values and goals</li> </ul>
	<b>Accurate Self-assessment:</b> Knowing one's strengths and limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of my strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Reflective, learning from experience</li> <li>• Open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development</li> <li>• Able to show a sense of humor and perspective about myself</li> </ul>
	<b>Self-confidence:</b> A strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present myself with self-assurance; have "presence"</li> <li>• Can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right</li> <li>• Decisive, able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures</li> </ul>
<b>SELF-REGULATION</b>	<b>Self-control:</b> Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage my impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well</li> <li>• Stay composed, positive and unflappable even in trying moments</li> <li>• Think clearly and stay focused under pressure</li> </ul>
	<b>Trustworthiness:</b> Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act ethically and am above reproach</li> <li>• Build trust through their reliability and authenticity</li> <li>• Admit my own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others</li> <li>• Take tough, principled stands even if they are unpopular</li> </ul>
	<b>Conscientiousness:</b> Taking responsibility for personal performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet commitments and keep promises</li> <li>• Hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives</li> <li>• Are organized and careful in their work</li> </ul>
	<b>Adaptability:</b> Flexibility in handling change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change</li> <li>• Adapt my responses and tactics to fit fluid circumstances</li> <li>• Flexible in how I see events</li> </ul>
	<b>Innovation:</b> Being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches and new information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources</li> <li>• Entertain original solutions to problems</li> <li>• Generate new ideas</li> <li>• Consider fresh perspectives and take risks in their thinking</li> </ul>
<b>SELF-MOTIVATION</b>	<b>Achievement drive:</b> Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results-oriented, with a high drive to meet my objectives and standards</li> <li>• Set challenging goals and take calculated risks</li> <li>• Pursue information to reduce uncertainty and find ways to do things better</li> <li>• Learn how to improve my performance</li> </ul>
	<b>Commitment:</b> Aligning with the goals of the group or organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readily make sacrifices to meet a larger organizational goal</li> <li>• Find a sense of purpose in the larger mission</li> <li>• Use the group's core values in making decisions and clarifying choices</li> <li>• Actively seek out opportunities to fulfill the group's mission</li> </ul>
	<b>Initiative:</b> Readiness to act on opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready to seize opportunities</li> <li>• Pursue goals beyond what's required or expected of me</li> <li>• Cut through red tape and bend the rules when necessary to get the job done</li> <li>• Mobilize others through unusual, enterprising efforts</li> </ul>
	<b>Optimism:</b> Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persist in seeking goals despite obstacles and setbacks</li> <li>• Operate from the hope of success rather than fear of failure</li> <li>• See setbacks as due to manageable circumstance rather than personal flaw</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> From Empowerment Institute flyer; Sources: cross-referenced comparison of *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman (1995), *Working with Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman (1998) and the Personal Empowerment Training curriculum developed from *The Powerful Self* (1996) by Steven Stosny.

	Social Competence	Competency-based Behaviors
<b>EMPATHY</b>	<b>Understanding others:</b> Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, taking an active interest in their concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attentive to emotional cues and listen well</li> <li>• Show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives</li> <li>• Help out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings</li> </ul>
	<b>Developing others:</b> Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge and reward people's strengths and accomplishments</li> <li>• Offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for further growth</li> <li>• Mentor, give timely coaching, and offer assignments that challenge and foster a person's skills</li> </ul>
	<b>Service orientation:</b> Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand customers'/clients' needs and match them to services and products</li> <li>• Seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty</li> <li>• Gladly offer appropriate assistance</li> <li>• Grasp a customer's perspective, acting as a trusted advisor</li> </ul>
	<b>Leveraging diversity:</b> Cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds</li> <li>• Understand diverse worldviews and are sensitive to group differences</li> <li>• See diversity as an opportunity, creating an environment where diverse people can thrive</li> <li>• Challenge bias and intolerance</li> </ul>
	<b>Organizational Awareness:</b> Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately read key power relationships</li> <li>• Detect crucial social networks</li> <li>• Understand the forces that shape views and actions of clients, customers, or competitors</li> <li>• Accurately read organizational and external realities</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL SKILLS</b>	<b>Influence:</b> Wielding effective tactics for persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled at winning people over</li> <li>• Fine-tune presentations to appeal to the listener</li> <li>• Use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support</li> <li>• Orchestrate dramatic events to effectively make a point</li> </ul>
	<b>Communication:</b> Listening openly and sending convincing messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective in give-and-take, registering emotional cues in attuning my message</li> <li>• Deal with difficult issues in a straightforward manner</li> <li>• Listen well, seek mutual understanding, and welcome sharing of information fully</li> <li>• Foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good</li> </ul>
	<b>Conflict management:</b> Negotiating and resolving disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact</li> <li>• Spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open and help to de-escalate</li> <li>• Encourage debate and open discussion</li> <li>• Orchestrate win-win solutions</li> </ul>
	<b>Leadership:</b> Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission</li> <li>• Step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position</li> <li>• Guide the performance of others while holding them accountable</li> <li>• Lead by example</li> </ul>
	<b>Change Catalyst:</b> Initiating or managing change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the need to change and remove barriers</li> <li>• Challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change</li> <li>• Champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit</li> <li>• Model the change expected of others</li> </ul>
	<b>Building bonds:</b> <b>Nurturing</b> instrumental relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks</li> <li>• Seek out relationships that are mutually beneficial</li> <li>• Build rapport and keep others "in the loop"</li> <li>• Make and maintain personal friendships among work associates</li> </ul>
	<b>Collaboration and cooperation:</b> Working with others toward shared goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance a focus on task with attention to relationships</li> <li>• Collaborate; sharing plans, information and resources</li> <li>• Promote a friendly, cooperative climate</li> <li>• Spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration</li> </ul>
	<b>Team capabilities:</b> Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model team qualities like respect, helpfulness, and cooperation</li> <li>• Draw all members into active and enthusiastic participation</li> <li>• Build team identity, esprit de corps, and commitment</li> <li>• Protect the group and its reputation, and share credit</li> </ul>

#### 4. The Empowerment Trainers

Training to become a certified Empowerment Training instructor takes at least 12 to 15 months. Candidates must first complete Empowerment Foundation and Empowerment Framing twice, first as participants and again as observers. Then, completers must teach both classes under the supervision of a certified Empowerment instructor. They also receive instruction in facilitation skills and acquire some of the theory behind the Empowerment curriculum. Their development program includes completing observation sheets, making presentations to peers, and reading five or more assigned books, in addition to various other assignments. Ten people on the staff are trained to facilitate Empowerment classes. The length of time required to become a certified Empowerment trainer is something which must be taken into account when planning changes in service delivery. It also requires advance planning in anticipation of staff attrition.

#### 5. Staff Assessment of Empowerment

In an effort to better understand the perceived impact Empowerment Training has on participants, all staff interviewed were asked how they viewed its contribution or “impact.” All staff members spoke about its critical nature, usually before comments were solicited. The two factors most frequently mentioned by staff were that participants who have gone through the Empowerment Training feel more “in control” of their lives and that they exhibit improved self-esteem. The comments included below are ones that best represent the range of responses. In absence of much quantitative

data (see outcomes), these offer some important insights into the role Empowerment Training is expected to play.

- “Empowerment makes them able to connect to what makes them hurt, drink or do drugs. Lets you see the root of the problem and know how to fix it.”
- “Empowerment improves retention. It leads to acceptance, self esteem, self confidence; makes one less afraid, more open, [and] able to cross racial/cultural barriers. They start valuing themselves. It is powerful and impactful. It helps participants value themselves and helps propel them into successful lives.”
- “We try hard to live empowerment as a staff.”
- “It’s the strength of our program – how we treat them [participants] as people and recognize their value. We don’t pass judgment; we respect them.”
- “Empowerment is a right of all humanity. It causes compassion and empathy and recognition of others’ individuality.”
- “Doesn’t work with everyone – the more you put in, the more you get out.”
- “There is no profile of who benefits from Empowerment – it’s been successful with boards of directors, seventh graders, and men in prison.”
- “In Empowerment, they [participants] learn to be assertive, not aggressive, and to incorporate contemplation of actions and preparation. They learn ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are more conducive to success.”
- “I saw we were the same, the participants and me. Because of Empowerment, I can see why I do things versus ignoring and pretending all is ok when it isn’t. It has helped me, not just the participants. I think differently, I have real passion, I’m a better mom, a better friend, a better daughter.”

**Empowerment Training Component:  
Key Findings**

- Empowerment is the keystone of the TCR! program and is designed to increase an individual’s capacity to control his/her internal state of mind. It is based on a cognitive restructuring model that posits changes in beliefs generate changes in thinking and feelings and that it is our beliefs, thoughts and feelings that determine our behavior.

**Empowerment Training Component (continued):  
Key Findings**

- Empowerment is a part of each student's course of study and is integrated into every stage of their training, consisting of 2.5 hours of training every week (36 hours for the typical 8-week session in the Core Program), supplemented and reinforced by Coaches and instructional staff. There are five successive levels.
- TCR!'s goal through Empowerment Training is to teach participants how to apply this learning to every aspect of their lives, including their jobs.
- The two factors most frequently mentioned by staff were that participants who have gone through the Empowerment Training feel more "in control" of their lives and that they exhibit improved self-esteem.
- Staff members speak of the major positive impact that Empowerment Training has had on their lives.
- Training to become a certified Empowerment Training instructor takes at least 12 to 15 months and involves numerous levels of preparation.

**C. Provisional Foundation Program**

Because TCR! continually reevaluates its curriculum, this description is what the program looked like at one point in time during the period of performance. The provisional program is for individuals who have not attained their GED or high school diploma. It includes GED instruction, Empowerment Life Skills (group coaching on basic empowerment concepts and issues such as goal setting and time management), an open keyboarding lab, and job search. It also includes the development of an IDP and a transportation plan.

**1. The GED Component**

The Provisional Foundation Program, which helped participants earn a GED and prepare for entry into Core, was formerly known as Awali Place, has been known by

other names, but has since been integrated into the Core Program. In December 2009, TCR! hired a GED Coordinator to teach the GED classes and be responsible for placing participants at the appropriate academic level. Previously, the GED component was staffed entirely by volunteers. While it is still primarily staffed by volunteers, they are managed by the GED Coordinator. The volunteers are not educators but individuals with good academic skills.

Orientations for the GED phase are held twice a month and generally attract 5-20 individuals. Students are expected to earn their GED within 10-20 weeks and then enter the regular Core Program, although the actual length depends on the participant's IDP developed in conjunction with their Coach. The classes are offered during the day because evening classes did not attract many attendees. Holding day classes work because most participants requiring a GED, staff report, are also unemployed. The program uses Houghton Mifflin's Skills Tutor computer program, using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) results to locate the participant at the appropriate level, supplemented with booklets and one-on-one tutoring for those who need or request it. The GED is taught in a class format, which staff finds easier when working with fast and slow learners.

While it was hoped that the GED program would serve as a feeder program, staff found that it is not uncommon for participants to earn their GED and not continue in the program. Some staff members think that part of TCR!'s attraction may be that it pays the students' fees for the GED test and that participants may be coming into the GED

segment with no intention of continuing in the program after receiving their GEDs. As evidence in the outcome data, the GED program was successful in assisting a number of individuals in obtaining their GEDs. Because participants were not continuing in the program after completing their GED, TCR! discontinued the program in 2011 and will use outside vendors to provide GED classes.

**Provisional Foundation Program:  
Key Findings**

- The Provisional Foundation Program, which helped participants earn a GED and prepare for entry into Core, was formerly known as Awali Place, has been know by other names, but has since been integrated into the Core Program.
- TCR! hired a GED Coordinator whose efforts were supplemented by volunteers. TCR! found that GED completers were not continuing into Core, so the program was discontinued in 2011 and TCR! will use outside vendors for GED classes.

**D. Foundation 1**

Foundation 1 consists of:

- *Empowerment Foundation* (includes core values, core hurts, self-regulation)
- *Career Fundamentals I* (goal setting, time management, career assessment using Minnesota's electronic ISEEK skills/occupations matching tool, initial development of work history, and the gathering of the information necessary to build a resume)
- *Computer Applications I* (as of May 2010 this course combined what were previously two separate courses: Introduction to Computer Applications and Computer Applications I)
- *Writing Fundamentals* (or test out) or *Applied Math* (or test out), depending on the career track chosen
- *F1 Keyboarding*

Foundation 1 takes up the first eight weeks of the Core Program, and participants are considered provisional during this time period. Upon the completion of the first eight weeks of training, they are offered the opportunity to sign a partnership agreement for a loan to continue training. The agreement states the responsibilities of TCR! towards the participant, and the participant's responsibilities for staying in good standing in the program. The statement that the participant signs indicates that TCR! "invests approximately \$18,000 for an average participant to complete his/her training." It goes on to indicate that participants are responsible for up to \$7,500 in loan repayment if the participant fails to keep his or her agreement and that the loan converts to a gift when the participant has worked in a final placement job for at least one year. When asked whether this agreement is routinely enforced, staff responded by saying that it is a binding contract and that efforts have been made to collect on it when participants fail to fulfill the agreement. The evaluation team expected that the contract would be a major topic of discussion among staff and participants and that it might be part of the reason why so few individuals sign and enter active status. Surprisingly little is said about the contract, however, and staff members do not appear to view it as a significant issue.

Throughout the TCR! program, participants take four to five day and evening classes at all times.



## **Foundation 1: Key Findings**

- Foundation 1 takes up the first eight weeks of the Core Program, and participants are considered provisional during this time period.
- Upon completion, continuing participants sign an agreement, that includes a loan provision, stating that they will be required to make a \$7,500 loan repayment if the participant fails to keep his or her agreement to participate and remain in the program and that the loan converts to a gift when the participant has worked in a final placement job for at least one year.

## **E. Foundation 2**

Foundation 2 courses include:

- *Empowerment Framing* (co-dependency identification, effective communications, differentiating between criticism and feedback)
- *Career Fundamentals II* (cover letters, resume creation using WIN-WAY resume-writing software, and the building of reference lists)
- *Speechcraft* (modeled on the Toastmasters program and is staffed by Toastmasters volunteers)
- *One career track course* (career track courses include writing workshop, business correspondence, computer applications I-IV, internship class, safety training, work experience, financial empowerment I and II, and others)

## **F. Foundation 3**

The courses included in Foundation 3 are:

- *Empowerment Maintenance* (demonstrating effective use of empowerment skills)
- *Employment Readiness* (interviewing skills, including four mock interviews and one mock phone interview, resume development, grooming and dress, and analyzing compensation packages, including employment offers; participants are encouraged to work at least part-time at this point)
- *Two career track courses*

## **G. Advanced**

The following courses compose the advanced phase:

- *Empowered Critical Thinking*
- *Advanced Job Search*
- *Computer Applications III*
- *Other career track courses*

## **H. Final Placement**

The courses in the final placement phase are:

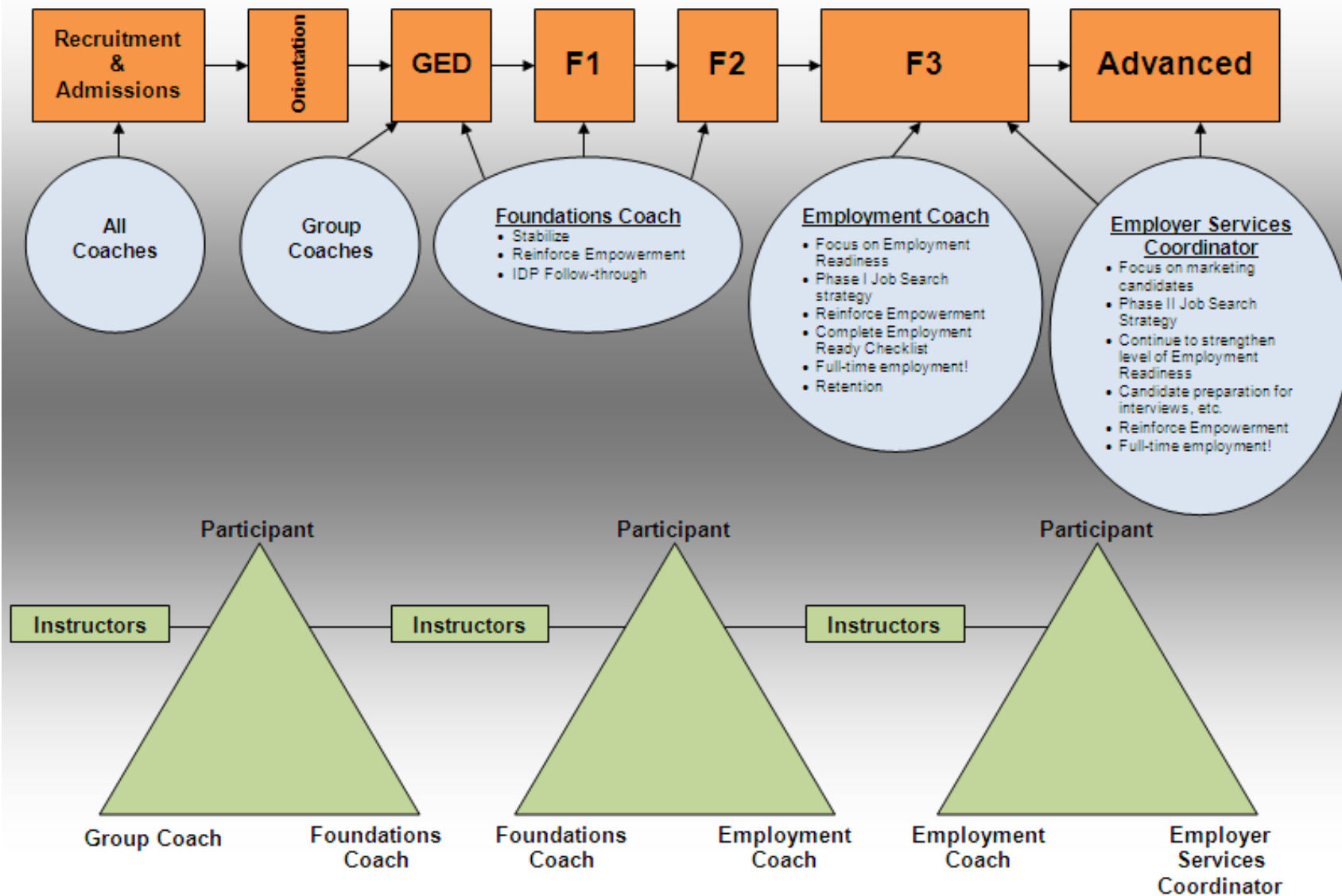
- *Career track courses (e.g., Financial Empowerment I and II)*
- *Job Search Strategies (introduced in March 2010)*
- *Computer Applications IV (introduced in October 2009)*

## **I. Coaching**

Coaching is an integral part of the TCR! program (at the beginning, TCR! was solely a coaching program) and is fundamental to all program phases. It is one of the two features, along with Empowerment Training, that separates TCR! from other programs. Coaches make the initial admissions decision on the applicants. While enrolled in the provisional GED phase, participants have a group Coach as well as a foundations Coach. The foundations Coach follows the participants through the F2 phase (2-3 program sessions, or about 20-30 weeks) and is responsible for reinforcing what has been learned in Empowerment. Further, the Coach follows through with each participant on his/her IDP and helps to stabilize the participant. After the provisional

GED phase, the group Coach is replaced by an employment Coach who works with each participant on employment readiness through the first year of employment and in conjunction with the foundations Coach. In the F3 phase, the foundations Coach phases out and is replaced by an employer services coordinator who focuses on marketing the candidates and strengthening the level of their employment readiness - working in tandem with the employment Coach. This triangulated approach to coaching was introduced in 2010 to replace the individualized coaching model. The reason for developing this new approach was to reduce the caseloads and burden on the Coaches and to provide the participant with the benefit of the talents and skills of multiple individuals. The approach is characterized by each participant being supported by two Coaches at each program phase, as shown in Exhibit G below. Despite the new model, Coaches say that their caseloads are still very high. While different numbers have been cited for the size of coaching caseloads, one long-time Coach said that the number is now swelling to as many as 65 participants per Coach.

### Exhibit G: Triangulated Approach to Coaching



**Coaching:  
Key Findings**

- Coaching is an integral part of the TCR! program (at the beginning, TCR! was solely a coaching program) and is fundamental to all program phases.
- Coaches follow a participant throughout and are responsible for reinforcing what has been learned in Empowerment. Coaches also follow through with each participant on his/her IDP and help to stabilize the participant.
- An individualized coaching model with one Coach following a participant throughout was replaced in 2010 by a triangulated approach in which participants are supported by multiple Coaches at each stage. This was done to reduce caseloads and ease the burden on Coaches.

### 1. Motivational Practices

TCR!'s Coaches and staff employ various motivational practices to encourage participants to maintain their attendance and strive for excellence. One of their practices is to sponsor a monthly get-together over donuts and coffee. The evaluators had an opportunity to participate in one of these events. Participants gather informally with Coaches and staff and discuss what is working for them in the program and which aspects of the program they think need improvement. At the beginning of the meeting, a Coach gives a report on what was discussed at the previous session and what was done in response. This is a form of empowerment in action.

After each session, there is a special "Celebration" activity where participants are acknowledged for their achievement. Families are invited and food is provided. One of the awards given at the Celebration is known as the "Ralph Award." It is named after Ralph Pruitt, one of the senior coaching staff members. A monetary gift card is

presented along with a “Ralph” award pin. In order to receive the “Ralph Award,” participants must have perfect attendance for the most recent session completed.

Another motivational practice that the evaluators experienced firsthand is called the “Bell Ringing.” There is a large, gold bell at the Minneapolis office that is rung when a participant obtains a “gold standard” job, or final placement, as it is commonly referred to by staff members. When the bell is rung, everyone stops what they are doing and gathers in the main lobby where the announcement is made, and the individual’s accomplishment is acknowledged and celebrated by all. The individual will have his or her picture taken, framed and added to the posted collection.

The biggest award, named after Robert Morris, a retired former TCR! staff member, is the Robert Morris Empowerment Award. This monetary reward of \$1,500, made each year at the October Celebration, recognizes a TCR! “gold standard” final placement. To be eligible, a participant must have obtained a final placement, been on the job for at least 90 days, and in good standing with the TCR! program and his or her employer. In order to apply for the award, participants must submit a letter explaining how they are applying personal empowerment. In addition, they must submit two letters of support and an explanation of what they would do with the \$1,500 cash award.

**Motivational Practices:  
Key Findings**

- TCR! employs a number of motivational practices to encourage participants to maintain their attendance and strive for excellence. These include group sharing and celebration sessions, public recognition, and monetary awards.

## 2. Relationship with Local One-Stops

When asked about their relationship with local One-Stops, staff responded that there have been efforts to develop a relationship. At least during the grant period, the contact between TCR! and the One-Stops appeared to be minimal, at best.

## **J. Employer Services and Internships**

### 1. Employer Involvement

TCR! uses a corporate model for its program and staff members encourage employers to participate in a variety of ways. There is an Employer Advisory Committee that reviews the curriculum every quarter. For example, in April 2010, the focus was on addressing the requirements of green jobs. Employers are also involved in conducting mock interviews with participants and in making presentations to students on workplace requirements. In addition, many of the tutors for the GED program come from TCR!'s corporate partner companies.

The employers working with TCR! represent a variety of industries: banking, hospitality, insurance, and manufacturing. Approximately 90 percent of all placements are with nonprofit organizations such as human service organizations, food banks, community services, shelters, and the YMCA. The recent downturn in the economy had an impact on TCR!'s final placements. While 60 people were placed in 2008, only 40 were placed in 2009 (these are full-time jobs with benefits). However, TCR! reports that the number of final placements for 2010 increased to 53.

Several staff report that the one-year job retention rate is 82 percent and attributed this to the Empowerment Training and follow-up by Employer Services Coaches. Employer Services staff gave an example of the success of empowerment in helping students adjust to workplace conflict. A participant placed in a job was experiencing conflict in the workplace and told staff that his typical response would have been to “get his rifle and shoot” his adversary but instead came to TCR! and worked with his Coach and the staff to develop an effective strategy for resolving the conflict using his empowerment skills.

## 2. Role of Employer Services Staff

Employer Services staff focus on marketing the participants to employers, working to continue to strengthen their level of employment readiness, prepare them for interviews, and continue to reinforce Empowerment Training with participants. These staff members report that participants are productivity- and activity-driven. Employer Services staff also teach participants how to match their skills to jobs and help students navigate their new jobs and do some follow-up with the employer in the form of a letter of support and, in some cases, follow-up calls. Staff report that workplace managers vary as to how open they are to working with a third party concerning a new employee. Employer Services staff also respond to employers’ requests for assistance in the case of a workplace issue with a TCR! graduate. Recently, they added an Employment Strategies class for participants.



To support participants in keeping their jobs, the employment Coach stays in touch with them during the first full year of employment.

### 3. Internships

One growing component of the TCR! program that is enthusiastically welcomed by TCR! staff members is the internship program. Headed by Shereese Turner, who has also recently assumed responsibility for recruitment, the effort has grown from serving 7 participants in 2007, to 23 participants in 2008, to 84 participants in 2009, to 97 participants for 2010. The internship effort was born as a result of the recession and the need to provide some paid work experience for its participants. An impetus for its growth was the Earmark Grant, which had a goal of placing 55 individuals in either internships or training opportunities. Ninety percent of the opportunities are in the nonprofit sector and include such jobs as administrative office and warehouse work. Issues related to liability (i.e., working with machinery and heavy equipment) have limited the growth of internships in the private sector. Of the 34 internship sites, 27 are located in Minneapolis and seven are located in St. Paul. Efforts are underway to increase the number of sites, particularly in St. Paul.

#### a. Site Development

Whenever there is an opportunity to share what TCR! does, Ms. Turner uses the occasion to include information about the internship program in an effort to develop new sites. Opportunities include meetings in the community and with collaborative and coalition groups which include reentry, nonprofit and social services agencies. In

addition, Ms. Turner regularly reaches out to organizations that are members of the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits. Word-of-mouth is also an important avenue for site development; non profits frequently talk with each other and share positive experiences related to the internship program.

Once a site has been identified, Ms. Turner conducts a site visit and meets with managers and staff to ensure that the site is a clean and safe environment for the TCR! participants and that the activities performed will be consistent with the needs of participants. Once it has been established that the site is a good fit based on their purpose/mission and their understanding of TCR!'s purpose/mission, the agency signs an internship agreement spelling out expectations and responsibilities, then the selection of the interns begin.

#### b. Participant Benefits

Participants receive a stipend of \$75-\$150 per week for their work, based on the number of hours worked. Twelve hours per week is average, with a range of 10-17 hours per week in eight-week increments. Students can work up to a total of two sessions (16 weeks) in an internship. Internship participants take an internship class while they work as interns. Students must apply to obtain an internship, and the selection criteria are: must be in good standing and have good soft skills development with no anger issues or confrontational approach.

### c. Results

Results to date, as reported by TCR! staff, are as follows:

- The perfect attendance rate for internship participants went from 77 percent to 89 percent for the year ending 2009
- In 2009, seven students received their final placement from the internship placement program
- In 2010, five final placements were hired by their internship site and five more were hired at jobs (non-final placements both full- and part-time)

Ms. Turner reports that building confidence for participants with little or no work history is the greatest contribution of the internship program. Coaching is provided to the participants to assist them in working through issues related to the work place, and staff members intervene at times with employers when issues arise (i.e., lateness) that might have otherwise resulted in a participant's termination from the internship.

At present, demand is high for candidates among the internship sites. Ms. Turner noted that expansion is limited because there is a need for more staff to manage the internships. Another issue that has developed as the internship program has grown is the need to identify sufficient funds to cover participants' stipends. Because of the success of the effort, TCR! is turning attention to seeking a solution to enable the internship effort to continue to grow.

## **Employer Services and Internships: Key Findings**

- TCR! staff encourage employers to participate in a variety of ways. For example, there is an Employer Advisory Committee that reviews the curriculum every quarter.
- Employer Services staff focus on marketing the participants to employers, working to continue to strengthen their level of employment readiness, prepare them for interviews, and continue to reinforce Empowerment Training with participants. They also respond to employers' requests for assistance in the case of a workplace issue with a TCR! graduate. Recently, they added an Employment Strategies class for participants.
- The internship effort was born as a result of the recession and the need to provide some paid work experience for its participants. An impetus for its growth was the Earmark Grant, which had a goal of placing 55 individuals in either internships or training opportunities. Ninety percent of the opportunities are in the nonprofit sector and include such jobs as administrative office and warehouse work.
- The internship program grew from serving 7 participants in 2007, to 97 participants for 2010.
- Participants receive a stipend of \$75-\$150 per week for their work, based on the number of hours worked. Twelve hours per week is average, with a range of 10-17 hours per week in eight-week increments. Students can work up to a total of two sessions (16 weeks) in an internship. Internship participants take an internship class while they work as interns.
- Some internship sites have hired their interns into "Gold standard" jobs.

## **VIII. Program Performance and Outcomes**

Performance outcomes were reported to DOL/ETA by TCR! throughout the grant period by quarterly reports and dashboards. In order to allow for a more thorough analysis of program performance for the original Demonstration Grant and the Continuation and Earmark Grants, following the second site visit in April 2010, Coffey requested a database of individual participant records for those enrolled in the programs. Coffey had been advised by DOL/ETA at the onset of the evaluation that obtaining individual participant level data may prove challenging. In fact, it appears that only aggregated data were tracked using an Excel spreadsheet during the first 18 months of the original Demonstration Grant (2007–2008). According to DOL/ETA, technical assistance and prompts to begin tracking data by individual participant were provided in the initial stages. TCR! lost its part-time staff person responsible for data management and DOL/ETA's guidance regarding data collection was never followed. The data management position had been vacant for awhile and was filled on a part-time basis in mid-2009, prior to the first site visit by the evaluation team.

Discussions regarding the availability of the specific individual record data requested by Coffey took place in early summer 2010 involving TCR!'s COO and data staff, Coffey's evaluation team, and DOL/ETA staff. TCR! explained that only aggregate data were available for the original Demonstration Grant and that data for the Continuation and Earmark Grants had to be collected and compiled from records in folders maintained by staff. The new part-time staff person would have to collect and organize the data in addition to other responsibilities. All parties agreed that Coffey would use the aggregate

data for the Demonstration Grant but that TCR! would provide the data requested for the Continuation and Earmark Grants. The requested data were compiled and provided in Excel spreadsheets in installments beginning in fall 2010. All data were delivered by the middle of March 2011. Unique numerical identifiers were used for all participants to protect their privacy. The evaluation team merged the spreadsheets and engaged in ongoing dialog with the TCR! staff related to questions about the data and other aspects of program operations.

Data below on program performance for the original Demonstration Grant are based on aggregate data provided by TCR! as reported in the project's quarterly reports and dashboards. The analysis of performance for the Continuation and Earmark Grants is based upon actual individual record data as well as information available in TCR's quarterly reports. A considerable amount of data is missing or unknown for the Continuation Grant, especially for 2009, during much of which TCR! did not have a person responsible for data management. The 2010 Continuation Grant data are more complete, although some key information, especially about outcomes, is missing or unknown. The Earmark Grant data are the most complete of the data sets provided by TCR!

#### **A. 2007 – 2008 Original Demonstration Grant Performance**

The service model for the original Demonstration Grant envisioned a flow of participants from the prison-based program, Awali Inside/Out, into Awali Place, and from Awali Place into the Core Program. Service was anticipated for a total of 250 individuals, with

60 percent (150) of participants completing the program and entering Awali Place or the Core Program.

The number of individuals served in Awali Inside/Out was 331 percent of goal, or 828 participants. Of these, 413 completed the personal Empowerment Training, representing nearly 50 percent of those served (versus the stated goal of 60 percent). Therefore, while the absolute number of those completing the program greatly exceeded the goal (completions were 275 percent of the goal of 150), enrollments were also unexpectedly high. Reasons for non-completion were not tracked; however, staff suggest that numerous issues such as varying prison regulations and staffing patterns, length of the program, and readiness for the program were likely factors.

The data reveal that the client flow from Awali Inside/Out into Awali Place and the Core Program did not occur as anticipated. Only 17.7 percent (73 individuals) of those who completed the personal Empowerment Training entered Awali Place or the Core Program as compared to a goal of 150 individuals. As reported in TCR!'s final Quarterly Report for the Demonstration Grant, when completers of Awali Place who came from Awali Inside/Out and those who were recruited from elsewhere are combined, only 41 participants over the two-year period were admitted to Core.

Two goals for those participants entering Awali Place or the Core Program were to have 60 complete the program within 15 months, and that 90 participants of those completing

the Awali Inside/Out program would not recidivate or return to at-risk behaviors. Information on completers is not available.

Recidivism for Awali participants was not tracked, nor was it tracked by TCR! for the Continuation or Earmark Grants. TCR! reports having begun a research study on recidivism at the start of 2010, funded by a grant from the Department of Justice (DOJ). Participants under the DOJ grant who have a self-identified conviction history prior to the program will be tracked for a period of three years following the completion or exit of the program. Meanwhile, TCR!'s 2010 annual report indicates figures made possible by the DOJ grant show a 12 percent rate of recidivism for TCR! graduate offenders compared to the 61 percent national average. Figures do not include DOL/ETA grant participants. No citation is provided in the annual report for the national average; however, the figure was taken from a document entitled *State and Federal prisoners returning to the community: Findings from the Bureau of Justice Statistics*, by Allen J. Beck, Ph.D., *Chief*, Corrections Services, April 13, 2000. This reports that "62% of released State prisoners (were) rearrested within 3 years; 41% returned to prison/jail."

One hundred participants who entered Awali Place or the Core Program were to either: 1) increase their basic math or language skills by one grade level; 2) obtain their GED; or 3) attend additional job/vocational training or another accredited educational institute. TCR! reports that 10 participants earned a GED while in the program, 29 increased basic skills by one or more grade levels, eight attended additional training



at another institution, and 40 attended an advanced phase of training or additional training at TCR!.

Sixty participants who entered Awali Place or the Core Program were to either: 1) obtain full-time employment that pays over \$20,000 per year plus health benefits; 2) obtain a job that pays \$9 per hour with health benefits or work experience; or 3) if currently employed, increase their earnings by 20 percent. TCR! reports that nine individuals earned a “gold standard” job, with an additional 28 employed full-time without benefits and 18 employed part-time. Data such as job title, occupation, etc., are not available nor are retention data available for participants who transitioned into employment from Awali Place.

Of those who obtained employment, 45 were to have obtained an increase in salary or a promotion. TCR! reports that 31 individuals either received a salary increase, promotion, or skill level increase.

The program was also to attempt to recruit 16 new employer companies across the two-year period and establish four “pay-for-performance” partnerships with new employers. No information on attainment of these goals is available.

Staff struggled with identifying reasons why more participants had not entered the TCR! Core program. Possible explanations offered by staff for the high drop rate include speculation that drug and alcohol abuse may have been a key factor. Additionally, the

need for more supportive services was identified, as well as the need for a lower ratio of participants to Coach. Coaching caseloads at the time were greater than 20 participants per Coach. Another explanation suggested by staff is that the transition was too difficult because of the lack of continuity from Awali Place to the Core Program. As a result, numerous modifications were made to Awali Place until it was eventually subsumed into the overall Core Program as discussed above.

**Original Demonstration Grant:  
Key Findings**

- Only aggregate data were available for assessing outcomes.
- The number of individuals served in Awali Inside/Out was 331 percent of goal, or 828 participants. Of these, 413 completed the personal Empowerment Training, representing nearly 50 percent of those served (versus the stated goal of 60 percent).
- Only 17.7 percent (73 individuals) of those who completed the personal Empowerment Training entered Awali Place or the Core Program as compared to a goal of 150 individuals.
- Ten participants earned a GED while in the program, 29 increased basic skills by one or more grade levels, eight attended additional training at another institution, and 40 attended an advanced phase of training or additional training at TCR!. This is short of the goal of 100 individuals.
- Nine individuals earned a “gold standard” job, with an additional 28 employed full-time without benefits and 18 employed part-time. This combined total of 55 is shy of the combined goal of 60 participants.

Exhibit H below lists goals for the original Demonstration Grant and provides performance numbers provide by TCR! separately for 2007 and 2008 and combined performance totals for the two-year period. A dash (---) indicates that goals were for a combined two-year period and were not broken down by year.

## Exhibit H: Original Demonstration Grant Performance: Goals vs. Actual

Original Grant January 2, 2007 – January 31, 2009	2007		2008		Total	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
<b>Benchmark A.1: Number Served</b> Number Served in Awali Inside/Out	125	395	125	433	250	828
<b>Benchmark A.2 : Completers</b> Number completing Empowerment	75	197	75	216	150	413
<b>Benchmark A.3: Entered Core/AP</b> Completers who Enter Core Program or Awali Place	—*	36 to Awali Place 3 directly to Core	—	34 to Awali Place 0 directly to Core	150 <sup>18</sup>	73
<b>Benchmark A.4: On Time Completions</b> Complete Core/Awali Place w/in 15 months	30	Information not available	30	Information not available	60/150	Information not available
<b>Benchmark A.5: Number of Non-recidivists/ Non-returners to at-risk behaviors</b>	—	Information not available	—	Information not available	90/150	Information not available
<b>Benchmark A.6: Educational Improvements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmark A.6.1: Increased math/language skills one grade level</li> <li>• Benchmark A.6.2: Obtain GED</li> <li>• Benchmark A.6.3: Attend additional training or accredited educational institution</li> </ul>	—	29 increased basic skills 1+ grade level  0 earned GED  32 in advanced phase/other training  5 additional training	—	10 earned GED  8 in advanced phase/other training  3 additional training	100/150	29 increased basic skills 1+ grade level  40 in advanced phase/other training  10 earn GED  8 additional training
<b>Benchmark A.7: Placement/ Earnings Improvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmark A.7.1: Final Placement (\$20k+/yr)</li> <li>• Benchmark A.7.2: Employment at \$9/hr+</li> <li>• Benchmark A.7.3: Health benefits/work experience</li> <li>• Benchmark A.7.4: Increased earnings 20%</li> </ul>	—	5 FT w/ benefits  14 employed FT, no benefits  11 employed PT	—	4 employed FT w/benefits  14 employed FT, no benefits  7 employed PT	60	9 employed FT w/ benefits  28 employed FT, no benefits  18 employed PT  Total = 55
<b>Benchmark A.8: One Year Retention</b> Retention for minimum of 1 year of those who obtain job/earnings goal	—	Information not available	—	Information not available	50/of those employed FT with benefits	Information not available

<sup>18</sup> As reported in TCR!'s Adjusted Work Plan and Evaluation Plan – Revised July 2007

Original Grant January 2, 2007 – January 31, 2009	2007		2008		Total	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
<b>Benchmark A.9: Two Year Retention</b> Retention for minimum of 2 yrs of those who obtain job/earnings goal	—	Information not available	—	Information not available	43/of those employed FT with benefits	Information not available
<b>Benchmark A.10: Salary increase/promotion</b> Increase in salary or promotion for those obtaining employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Benchmark A.10.1: Salary increase</b></li> <li>• <b>Benchmark A.10.2: Promotion</b></li> </ul>	—	8 “achieved some other measurable benefit” (promotion/salary increase or skill level increase)	—	23 “achieved some other measurable benefit” (promotion/salary increase or skill level increase)	45	31
<b>Benchmark A.11: Employers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Benchmark A.11.1: TCR! will recruit 16 new employers</b></li> <li><b>Benchmark A.11.2: TCR! will establish 4 new employer partnerships</b></li> </ul>	—	Information not available	—	Information not available	16 4	Information not available

\* Dash (--) indicates combined two-year goal.

## B. 2009 – 2010 Continuation Grant Performance

### 1. Participant Characteristics

Exhibit I below provides information on the demographic characteristics, including gender, age, race, ethnicity, parenting, criminal history, and education of the Continuation Grant participants for 2009, 2010 and both years combined. Of the 207 participants for 2009, gender information was available for 107 individuals. Ninety-two percent were male. Gender information was available for all 109 participants in 2010. Although not all gender data were available for 2009, the Continuation Grant admitted only males until August 2009. Based on the data available, the percentage of female participants increased from eight percent to 40 percent. Overall, for both years combined, 75 percent were male with an average age of 28.6 years at the start of the

year of participation. Half of the participants were 25 or younger. Eighty-two percent of the 2009 participants considered themselves African Americans compared with 73 percent for 2010, yielding a combined total of 77 percent. The next largest category, overall, was multi-racial (six percent overall) followed by Caucasian (five percent).

Forty percent of the 2009 participants were non-custodial parents compared with 15 percent for 2010. The combined average was 28 percent with 12 percent being parents in a two-parent household, 37 percent single or married without dependents, and 22 percent single (custodial) parents.

Overall, information regarding criminal history was unknown for 40 percent of the participants who did not complete the item on the application, while 32 percent indicated a prior felony, 10 percent a gross misdemeanor, and 18 percent a misdemeanor.



Data on education status were available for 192 of the 207 participants in 2009 and for all 109 participants in 2010. Sixty-four percent of the 209 participants did not have a high school diploma or GED. This figure increased to 91 percent for 2010, resulting in a combined total of 74 percent without secondary degrees. Overall, 17 percent of the participants had GEDs and nine percent were high school graduates.

When compared to the 2010 overall demographics of Twin Cities RISE!, Continuation Grant participants were more likely to be male (75 percent vs. 67 percent), African American (77 percent vs. 56 percent), younger (average age of 28.6 vs. 35 years of age) and parents, both custodial and non-custodial (62 percent vs. 50 percent). Additionally, because TCR! generally requires a high school diploma for admission into its Core Program, Continuation Grant participants were more likely to lack a high school diploma or GED (74 percent).

## 2. Challenges and Barriers

Participants in 2009 (199 records) identified an average of 4.4 challenges/barriers per person compared to 3.96 per person identified by 2010 participants (109 records). Exhibit J below provides the frequency with which participants, upon entering the program, identified challenges and barriers needing to be overcome in the pursuit of employment. Of the 15 challenges and barriers, the top five identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, no high school diploma or GED, criminal conviction, history of substance use or abuse, and unemployed 12 months or longer. Based on the challenges and barriers identified by the participants, it appears

that most consider themselves to be able-bodied; physical and mental health issues and learning disabilities are far less commonly identified challenges. Based on the experience of participants in the Earmark Grant discussed in the next section, it is likely that the number of challenges and barriers identified would grow following the intervention of the program Coach who could assist participants in more closely identifying their challenges and barriers.

### **Exhibit J: Challenges and Barriers Identified by Continuation Grant Participants\***

Challenges and Barriers	Frequency of Challenges/Barriers Identified by Participants		
	2009	2010	Combined
Criminal conviction	140	63	203
English language learner	2	2	4
History of physical or emotional abuse	4	6	10
History of substance use or abuse	111	45	156
Homelessness or in transitional housing at program start	74	12	86
Learning disability	20	3	23
Low literacy skills	65	20	85
Mental health or serious medical issues/conditions	14	8	22
No high school diploma or GED	128	107	235
Physical disability	5	1	6
Received chemical dependency treatment	61	16	77
Receiving Public Assistance within 12 months of start	2	NA	2
Unemployed 12 months or longer	83	56	139
Unemployed at program start	163	90	253
Unstable or no child care arrangements (custodial parents only)	NA	3	3
*2009 participants (199 records) identified an average 4.4 per person. 2010 participants (109 records) identified an average of 3.96 per person. NA = not available.			

### 3. Attendance

Unfortunately, attendance data for 2009 were not collected and presented in the same way as attendance data for 2010. The 2010 data identified a specific set of classes for



each participant and noted whether the individual was present, absent, or partially in attendance. The 2009 data list the same set of classes for each individual and records how many hours the participant spent in each. In a large number of cases where nothing is entered in a cell, there is no way of determining whether this is because the individual was a no-show or that he or she was not required to attend that class. The attendance tracking dataset also included admission and exit dates.

Exhibit K below provides aggregated attendance information for each month for 2009. The column of “Participants” is the total number of participants during that month. In almost every month, people were exiting the program and new people were admitted. A small number of participants who exited in prior months were later reinstated. “Number of exits” is the raw number of participants who exited the program during that month. As the total number of participants dropped almost every month, the number of exits exceeded the number of new admissions. A substantial proportion of participants did not log any hours of class time. Sometimes this is because someone exited at the beginning of the month or was added to the program at the end, but at other times this is not the case. “Total Classroom Hours” is the combined number of hours per month that participants attended scheduled classroom activities. “Number With 0 Hours” shows the number of participants who did not log any classroom hours that month.

## Exhibit K: Attendance Information for 2009 Continuation Grant Participants

Month	Participants	Number of Exits	Total Classroom Hours	Number With 0 Hours
January	98	17	445	32
February	88	43	609.75	35
March	67	8	479.25	36
April	70	12	389.25	23
May	65	8	324.75	17
June	75	1	289.75	20
July	73	13	287.80	15
August	30	2	225.5	12
September	37	4	525.5	24
October	35	11	373.5	18
November	26	9	189	14
December	20	0	154.5	13

After merging the data, nine records were dropped because of problems such as duplicate identification numbers, yielding attendance data on 206 unique individuals. Of the 97 individuals admitted to the program in January 2009, 43 were still involved in March, 38 in June, three in September, and one in December. There are exit dates for 66 individuals in this January group; these individuals stayed in the program for an average of 50 days, ranging from 12 to 314 days.

Of those 119 participants overall (2009) for whom there are admission and exit dates, individuals stayed in the program an average of 43 days. This figure ranged from 4 to 314 days. This does not include a small number of individuals who later returned to the program after exit. There are admission dates for 17 of the participants remaining in the program in December. These individuals had been in the program an average of 80 days, with the figure ranging from 21 to 364. For a sizeable number of other individuals,

the date of exit is missing. It is assumed that they did indeed exit since these individuals were not in the attendance records for December.

For 2009, individuals averaged 20.7 total hours in the program, although just over half of the participants (109 of 206) did not log any classroom hours. Considering only those individuals who logged any hours, the average per person was 44 hours. The per-person total ranged from 1.5 to 277.25 hours.

For 2010 participants, attendance data are available on 5,437 classes; however, 590 of these entries are coded “N/A” rather than “Present” or “Absent.” This leaves 4,847 applicable classes. For the 78 participants who had no inapplicable classes, the number ranges from 9 – 147, and the average number of classes per person is 50.7. Overall, 58.1 percent of (applicable) classes were attended; another 2.7 percent of classes had “partial” attendance. Participants were absent for the other 39.2 percent of classes. At the individual level, the average participant attended 53.4 percent of applicable classes; this figure ranged from 0 to 100 percent across participants.

#### 4. Reason for Exit

No reason for exit data is available for 2009 participants; however, these data are available for the 2010 participants. There are exit dates for 76 of the 109 individuals. The number of days in the program ranged from 4 to 154 days, with a mean of 48.5 days. TCR! staff confirmed that the 33 individuals with no exit date listed were still enrolled in the program as of December 31, 2010 when the grant ended. These

participants had been involved from 65 to 207 days, with an average of 86.3 days. While TCR! has not continued to maintain full data on these individuals, they noted that they will continue to track outcomes.

Reasons for exit for the 76 individuals in the data set are provided in Exhibit L below.

### **Exhibit L: Continuation Grant – Reason for Exit (2010 Participants)**

<b>Reason for Exit</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Change in Goals	3	3.94
Entered Military	1	1.32
Job	4	5.26
Legal Issues	1	1.32
Logistics (Childcare, Housing, Transportation, etc.)	5	6.58
Medical or Mental Health	1	1.32
No Contact	21	27.63
Not Interested	5	6.58
Other	2	2.63
Personal or Family Issues	6	7.89
Plans for Other Training or Education	6	7.89
Substance Abuse	2	2.63
Unable to Address Issues	4	5.26
Unknown	15	19.74

The most commonly identified reason for exit was that the program had lost contact with the participant (21). Combining these with those for whom the reason for exit was “unknown” (15), accounts for 47 percent of the participants. Individual barriers or issues also seem to be a big contributor to exits. Combining logistics, medical/mental health, personal/family issues, substance abuse, and “unable to address issues” accounts for 24 percent (18) of the exits. Another cluster of 14 individuals (18 percent) became uninterested in the program, changed their goals, or developed other plans. Jobs were

identified as the reason for exit for four participants. Only one of those jobs paid as much as \$9.00 per hour.

#### 5. Performance Outcomes: Goals vs. Actual

Exhibit M below lists goals for the Continuation Grant and provides performance numbers separately for 2009 and 2010 and combined performance through the end of the two-year contractual period.

## Exhibit M: Continuation Grant Performance: Goals vs. Actual

CONTINUATION GRANT (January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2010)	2009 Actual	2010 Actual (as of 12/31/10)	Total	
			Goal	Actual
<b>Benchmark B.1 Number Served in Awali</b> Number in Awali/pre-program activities	207 AP/Foundation	109 Foundation	200	Foundation served to date = 316
<b>Benchmark B.2: Positive Outcomes</b> Positive outcome achieved (i.e., improved emotional intelligence, progress toward/completion of GED, employment improvement, and continued education in Core) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Benchmark B.2.1: Improved emotional intelligence</b></li> <li>• <b>Benchmark B.2.2: Progress toward GED</b></li> <li>• <b>Benchmark B.2.3: GED completion</b></li> <li>• <b>Benchmark B.2.4: Employment improvement</b></li> <li>• <b>Benchmark B.2.5: Continued education in Core Program</b></li> </ul>	19 gained employment  19 completed GED  11 working on GED  21 continue education in Core  Total Unduplicated = 36  17% Success Rate  10% Continuation Rate	9 gained employment or pursued other education  9 completed GED  24 working on GED (passed 1-4 tests)  6 continue in program after GED completion  Total Unduplicated = 42 successes (those working toward GED, anticipating completion, GED completed, education or job)  39% Success Rate (percent that achieved a success in the program)  6% Continuation Rate (Percent that continued into program)	100 (50% successes & 25% continue)	Successes = 78 of 316 (25%)  Continuation = 27 of 316 (9%)

Under the Continuation Grant, 200 individuals were to be provided Awali Place or pre-program activities between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2010, another 25 percent of those served were to continue into the Core Program.

As of December 31, 2010, the end of the grant period, TCR! had exceeded the service goal by 58 percent: 316 individuals had been provided Awali Place or pre-program activities compared with the goal of 200. Despite that, only 78 of the 316 (25 percent) achieved a positive outcome and only 9 percent (27) continued into the Core Program compared to goals of 50 percent and 25 percent, respectively. One of the expected positive outcomes cited in the grant is that participants would achieve “improved emotional intelligence.” This term relates most directly to the potential impact of Empowerment Training, but it was never defined or measured by TCR! Another outcome goal that was not defined or tracked is “employment improvement.”

Positive outcomes were achieved for a total unduplicated count of 36 participants in calendar year 2009. The outcomes included 19 participants gaining employment, another 19 participants completing a GED, and 11 working on completing a GED.

From January 1, 2010 through October 31, 2010, positive outcomes were achieved for a total unduplicated count of 42 participants. The outcomes included 9 participants gaining employment or pursuing other education, 9 participants completing a GED, and 24 working on completing a GED.

The success rate in 2010 shows improvement over 2009 – a 39 percent success rate versus 17 percent in 2009. However, it still falls substantially short of the 50 percent goal for this measure. In addition, while 21 continued their education in the Core Program in 2009, only 6 participants continued on in the Core Program in 2010 after completing their GED. As noted earlier, Awali Place has been eliminated and all participants working on their GED became participants in Foundation 1 of the Core program. Because of the low number of GED completers who went on to the Core program, the GED program was abolished in 2011 and TCR! will rely on outside vendors for this service.

Exhibit N below focuses on the 19 participants from 2009 who were coded as having gained employment. As is evidenced from a review of this table, considerable data are missing. In particular, information about the industry and job title is missing for six of the individuals. The only information available for all 19 is placement start date, which is not shown in the table. No information is available on exit date for the jobs so it is unclear how long the jobs lasted. Only one of the 19 reported jobs was full-time (40 hours) and another was listed as varying between 32-40 hours. The full-time job was a placement wage of \$7.00 per hour and did not offer benefits. Only two jobs paid a wage of \$9.00 or more; both were part-time and neither paid benefits.



## Exhibit N: 2009 Job Outcomes for Continuation Grant

Identifier	Industry	Job Title	Hourly Wage	Hours per Week	Benefits	First Job Since Incarceration
#1						
#2	Sales	Sale Rep.	\$15.00			
#3	Construction	Laborer	\$ 7.50	20+	No	Yes
#4	Retail	Cashier	\$ 7.75	Part-time	Yes	
#5	Retail	Custodian	\$ 9.00	20	No	n/a
#6	Food	Restaurant Closer	\$ 7.00	35	No	No
#7				Part-time	No	n/a
#8	Retail	Customer Service		Part-time	No	No
#9	Construction	Laborer	\$10.00	30	No	Yes
#10						
#11						
#12	Food	Restaurant Opener	\$ 7.00	40	no	n/a
#13	Retail		\$ 7.00	32	No	No
#14	Services	Truck Driver	*			
#15	Retail	Sales Associate	\$ 7.25		Yes	
#16	Food	Cashier	\$ 8.00	37	No	No
#17					No	
#18						
#19	Retail	Stock	\$ 8.25	32-40	No	Yes

\* Wage is a percentage of employer's net profit

For 2010, of the nine participants reported as gaining employment or pursuing other education, one entered the military and four obtained jobs. Unfortunately, as was the case for 2009, information is not complete on these four individuals. Two of the jobs were part-time and the hours of the other two are unknown; none paid benefits. Job titles were unavailable for two. All of the individuals were African Americans, three were

male and one was female. None had a high school diploma or GED, and one was a previously convicted felon.

### **Continuation Grant Performance: Key Findings**

- Compared to the 2010 overall demographics of Twin Cities RISE!, Continuation Grant participants were more likely to be male, African American, younger, and parents (both custodial and non-custodial). Additionally, because TCR! generally requires a high school diploma for admission, Continuation Grant participants were more likely to lack a high school diploma or GED (74 percent).
- Participants identified just over four challenges each. The top five identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, no high school diploma or GED, criminal conviction, history of substance use or abuse, and unemployed 12 months or longer.
- For those individuals for whom there are admission and exit dates, 2009 participants stayed in the program an average of 43 days and 2010 participants an average of 48.5 days (combined range = 4 to 314 days).
- The most commonly identified reason for exit was that the program had lost contact with the participant. Combining these with those for whom the reason for exit was “unknown” accounts for 47 percent of the participants. Individual barriers or issues also seem to be a big contributor to exits.
- As of December 31, 2010, the end of the grant period, TCR! had exceeded the service goal by 58 percent: 316 individuals had been provided Awali Place or pre-program activities compared with the goal of 200. Despite that, only 78 of the 316 (25 percent) achieved a positive outcome and only 9 percent (27) continued into the Core Program compared to goals of 50 percent and 25 percent, respectively.
- One of the goals was employment improvement. A combined 28 individuals across both years were coded as having gained employment. Employment information is spotty and none appeared to be “gold standard” or “final” placements.

## **C. 2009 – 2010 Earmark Grant Performance**

### **1. Participant Characteristics**

Exhibit O below provides information on the demographic characteristics of the Earmark Grant participants. Each field in the data set included information for no less than 115 of the 119 participants. All of the participants were male. Half of the participants were 36 years of age or younger. Eighty-three percent of the participants considered themselves African Americans. The categories African, Multi-Racial, and Caucasian, were each checked by four percent of the participants.

Thirty-seven percent of the participants were non-custodial parents, 14 percent parents in a two-parent household, and nine percent single parents, leaving 40 percent single or married with no dependents.

Overall, information regarding criminal history was unknown for 23 percent of the participants who did not complete the item on the application, while approximately 38 percent indicated a prior felony, 11 percent a gross misdemeanor, and 28 percent a misdemeanor.

All of the participants had secondary level education credentials; 65 percent of the participants had a high school diploma, and the remaining 35 percent had GEDs.

## Exhibit O: Earmark Grant: Participant Demographics

Participant Characteristics	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	118	100.0
Female	0	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African	5	4.0
African American	97	83.0
Caribbean	2	2.0
Caucasian	5	4.0
Latino	3	3.0
Multi-Racial	5	4.0
Unknown	2	1.68
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 24	28	24.0
25 - 34	24	21.0
35 - 44	33	29.0
45 - 54	26	22.0
55+	5	4.0
Average Age = 36		
Median Age = 36		
<b>Family Status</b>		
Non-Custodial Parent	43	37.0
Parent in 2 Parent House	16	14.0
Single or Married – No Dependents	47	40.0
Single Parent	11	9.0
<b>Criminal History</b>		
Felony	45	<38.0
Gross Misdemeanor	13	11.0
Misdemeanor	34	28.0
Non Listed/Unknown	29	23.0
<b>Education</b>		
HS Diploma	75	65.0
GED	40	35.0

The most salient demographic difference between the Continuation and Earmark Grant participants is that the Earmark Grant participants were more likely to be African American, were older by an average of seven years, and all had either a high school diploma or GED as compared to 26 percent for the Continuation Grant participants.

## 2. Challenges and Barriers

Barrier reduction was one of the primary goals of the Earmark Grant. The TCR! Earmark Grant data set contains challenges and barrier information for 77 participants. The number of challenges/barriers initially identified by participants averaged 3.35. After meeting with their Coach to assess these, the number of challenges per participant averaged 7.68. Exhibit P above provides frequency data for the challenges/barriers identified.

### **Exhibit P: Initial and Additional Challenges and Barriers Identified by Earmark Grant Participants**

<b>Challenges &amp; Barriers</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Challenges &amp; Barriers</b>	<b>n</b>
Child Support Debt*	21	Need Tutoring for Skills Deficiency*	10
Criminal Conviction History	14	Need Work Experience*	36
English Language Learner	7	No Health Insurance *	25
Financial Issues*	22	No High School or GED	7
History of Physical/Emotional Abuse	2	Physical Disability	3
Homeless/Trans. Housing Unstable	68	Physical Needs	32
Learning Disability	3	Received Chemical Dependency Treatment	50
Legal Issues*	16	Receiving Public Assistance	43
Low Literacy Skills	69	Substance Use or Abuse	10
Mental Health Issues/Other Serious	25	Unemployed $\geq$ 12 Months	67
Need Class or Interview Attire*	25	Unemployment at Program Start	16
Need Driver's License*	39	Unstable or No Child Care*	6
N= Frequency identified by participants			
* Challenge or barrier identified only after consultation with Coach			

The data set provided by TCR! includes “number or needs met or addressed” for 45 participants (for the rest it is unclear if none of their needs was met or addressed, if these measures were not applicable, or if no data were collected). These participants averaged approximately nine needs with a range of 0 to 11. Data indicate that an average of five needs were met or addressed for each of these 45 participants. The source of the data was raw notes kept in participants folders regarding the barriers met or addressed. A TCR! staff member reviewed the notes and tabulated the information on an Excel spreadsheet.

Of the 24 challenges and barriers, the top five identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, criminal conviction history, substance use or abuse, low literacy skills, and homeless/transitional housing unstable. The top four challenges/barriers reported to have been met or addressed with the greatest frequency in order of frequency are: transportation, attainment of work experience, housing, and financial assistance. Transportation was largely remedied through the use of bus tokens/passes. At one point during the grant, taxi service was arranged for participants to enable them to travel back and forth from the St. Paul to Minneapolis locations to attend classes. Financial assistance was provided by helping participants access a “micro grant” program established by area philanthropists to address such emergency needs as money for payment of rents, utilities, etc.

### 3. Attendance

Overall, 72 percent of 7,217 applicable classes in which participants were enrolled, were attended. Another three percent of classes were partially attended. On the individual participant level, 119 participants were enrolled in a mean of 60.6 applicable classes. This figure ranged from 2 to 262 across the data set. On average, participants attended 60.8 percent of those classes. Attendance rates ranged from a minimum of 10.7 percent to a maximum of 100 percent.

### 4. Reason for Exit

Exhibit Q below provides reasons for exit and their frequencies. The Earmark Grant data set contains exit data for 97 individuals. Participants averaged 116 days between admission and exit.

#### **Exhibit Q: Earmark Grant – Reason for Exit**

<b>Reason for Exit</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Change in Goals	4	4.12
External Influence	1	1.03
Job	3	3.09
Job at or Above \$9 Per Hour	7	7.22
Legal Issues	3	3.09
Logistical (Childcare, Housing, Transportation)	5	5.15
Medical or Mental Health	7	7.22
No Contact	4	4.12
Non-Retained Final Placement	1	1.03
Not Eligible	1	1.03
Not Interested	7	7.22
Other	3	3.09
Program Graduate (Completed 1 Year at Job)	1	1.03
Personal or Family Issues	3	3.09
Plans for Other Training or Education	7	7.22
Substance Abuse	4	4.12
Unable to Address Issues	7	7.22
Unknown	29	29.89

By far, the most common reason was “unknown” (29.98 percent). There was “no contact” for another 4.12 percent. Combining challenges related to logistics, medical/mental health, personal/family issues, substance abuse, and “unable to address issues” accounts for 22.68 percent of the exits.

#### 5. Performance Outcomes: Goals vs. Actual

Exhibit R below lists the benchmarks and numeric goals for the Earmark Grant and provides actual performance numbers through October 2010.

### Exhibit R: Earmark Grant Performance: Goals vs. Actual

<b>EARMARK GRANT</b> (January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010)	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actual (as of 12/31/10)</b>
<b>Benchmark C.1: Enrollments</b> Participants enrolled	110	119
<b>Benchmark C.2: Participant Retention</b> Lower first session dropout rate of African American men	55 (50%) retained	44 of 119 retained (37%)
<b>Benchmark C.3: Barriers Reduction</b> Reduce # of barriers for African American males	1.5 barriers reduced	Avg. 5 of 9 barriers reduced
<b>Benchmark C.4: Internship/Training Enrollments</b> Enroll in internship or additional training while enrolled in program	55 (50%)	26 of 119 (22%)
<b>Benchmark C.4: Intermediate Level Placements</b> Attain intermediate level job	44 (40%)	21 of 119 (18%)
<b>Benchmark C.5: “Gold Standard” Job Placement</b> Attain “gold standard” job	13 (12%)	11 of 119 (9%)



The premise of the Earmark Grant was that improved program retention and employment attainment would be achieved for African American men if a stronger set of supportive services was provided. The grant ended on March 31, 2010.

A total of 119 participants were admitted to the program, somewhat exceeding the goal of 110 enrollees. Of these, 44 (37 percent) were retained in the program, compared with the goal of 55 participants retained (50 percent). While the 50 percent retention rate for African-American men was not met, TCR! notes in its final quarterly report for the period ending June 30, 2010, TCR! is “achieving a rate that is higher with this population than with the total program population – something that was not happening before this project.” This implies that TCR!’s opinion is that some aspect of the Earmark Grant had a positive association with retention. During the same time period, TCR! served 440 additional participants and realized a 29 percent retention rate, which is eight percentage points lower than experienced for the Earmark Grant. Possible reasons for improved retention are attributed by program staff to the focus on barrier removal via more intensive coaching sessions and, most of all, the impact of the internship program.

As noted earlier, barriers experienced by participants included unemployment, criminal history, and substance abuse, among others. The TCR! challenges/barriers data set indicates that an average of five barriers were reduced compared with a goal of 1.5.

## 6. Internships

As noted earlier in this report, the growth in TCR!'s internship program is viewed by staff as possibly the single greatest contribution to the TCR! program resulting from the Earmark Grant experience. Interest in developing internships to provide much needed work experience to Earmark Grant participants resulted in major expansion of the internship program, which not only benefitted Earmark Grant participants, but also other TCR! program participants as well.

The goal was to enroll 55 (50 percent) of Earmark Grant participants in internships or additional training. This goal was not met; however, 26 individuals (22 percent) benefitted from 31 internship opportunities, with five of these individuals enrolling in two internships. Most all of these experiences were in nonprofit organizations with Warehouse Associate or some form of Office Assistant frequently cited as job titles. Most earned stipends of \$75.00 per week. Of the 26 individuals with internships, nine (35 percent) had other paying job placements as well, eight went on to achieve a final placement (30 percent), and nine had the internship experience but did not obtain any other paying job.

## 7. Intermediate Level Jobs

Intermediate level jobs are ones that do not have the wages or benefits of the "gold standard" or "final placements" as referred to by TCR!. The goal was for 44 participants (40 percent) to obtain this type of job placement; 21 participants (18 percent) obtained 25 intermediate level jobs. Seventy-two percent of the placements were part-time.

Seven (28 percent) were for a full 40 hours per week; overall, hours averaged 27 per week. The average hourly rate was \$10.50 with a median of \$10.00 per hour.

#### 8. “Gold Standard” or Final Placements

The attainment of a “gold standard” job or “final placement” as most staff refer to it, is the pinnacle of success at TCR!. A “gold standard” job was defined in the Demonstration Grant as a job paying a minimum of \$10.00 per hour, annual salary of \$20,000, full-time (36-40 hours per week) and full benefits. This definition was changed for the Earmark Grant to \$9.00 per hour jobs (\$18,720) to more closely reflect wages in the local labor market. The goal under the Earmark Grant was to place 12 of the 110 participants (13 percent) into “gold standard” jobs. Of the 119 participants, 11 individuals (9 percent) met the criteria; two placements short of the goal. An additional individual was placed in a job paying \$14.00 per hour with full benefits, but it only offered 27 hours or work per week. Exhibit S below provides the industry, job title, wage, and hours of each of the placements.

#### **Exhibit S: Earmark Grant “Gold Standard,” Final Placements**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Hours Per Week</b>
Services	Sanitation Worker	\$10.50	40
Financial	Associate-Document Imaging	\$14.42	40
Sales	Sales Associate	\$9.75	40
Financial	Machinist II	\$11.27	40
Nonprofit	Custodial/Maintenance	\$10.00	40
Manufacturing	Machine Operator	\$11.25	40
Services	Machine Operator	\$16.00	40
Nonprofit	Warehouse Staff	\$12.00	40
Nonprofit	Receptionist	\$12.00	40
Financial	Teller	\$12.00	40
Education	Education Assistant	\$12.00	40

The average hourly wage was \$11.93. Eight of the jobs were with private sector companies, and the remaining three were in the nonprofit sector. It is not clear from the data set whether any of the three nonprofits hired individuals who had previously worked for them as interns, but it appears that this could have been so for one or two of the hires.

Because the attainment of “gold standard” jobs is the zenith of participation in the TCR! program, the evaluators wanted to examine the relationship between demographic and service variables and the attainment of these jobs. Unlike the other two grants, the individual level data from the Earmark Grant are sufficiently complete, and the number of “gold standard” placements is of sufficient number to attempt a review to determine if any relationships exist and if they are statistically significant. These data were obtained by TCR! staff from case folders for the participants.

Earmark grant participants were nearly all African American or African, and all had either a high school diploma or GED, so this eliminated consideration of race/ethnicity and education attainment. Interestingly, there were only two “English Learners” among the Earmark Grant participants and both obtained “gold standard” jobs. Also, no one who had volunteered that they had previously received treatment for a chemical dependency obtained a job, and this was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Participants who obtained “gold standard” jobs spent significantly more time in the TCR! program than anyone else ( $p < 0.05$ ). A mean of 321 days passed between the program

admission date and the start date of the “gold standard” job. The mean for all other participants was 162 days (this figure counted those with no exit date identified as days from program admission to March 1, 2011, the time at which data was submitted by TCR!).

Participants with “gold standard” jobs had been in those jobs an average of 296 days (range of 141 to 547 days) as of March 1, 2011. Two placements had already left their jobs at that time. They stayed on their jobs for 174 and 241 day, respectively. A third individual had left the program, but no exit date was provided.

As might be expected, those individuals who obtained “gold standard” jobs had superior class attendance rates than those who did not. This was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, those who obtained “gold standard” jobs had significantly more interim jobs and internships than those who had been placed in an interim job or internship but did not obtain a “gold standard” job ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Essentially, individuals who obtained “gold standard” jobs attended the TCR! program for a longer period of time, had better class attendance, and had more interim jobs and internships than those who did not obtain “gold standard” jobs.

By comparison, Shelley Jacobson, TCR!’s COO, reports that TCR!’s overall number of “final placements” for 2010 was 53, which included 9 of the Earmark Grant participants.

## **Earmark Grant Performance: Key Findings**

- A total of 119 participants were admitted, exceeding the goal of 110.
- Compared to Continuation Grant participants, Earmark Grant participants were more likely to be African American, were older by an average of seven years, and all had either a high school diploma or GED as compared to 26 percent for the Continuation Grant participants. They were more similar in demographics to TCR!'s overall population.
- Challenges and barriers identified by participants after meeting with their Coaches averaged 7.68. On average, 5 needs were met or addressed for each participant. This exceeded the goal of 1.5 per participant.
- The top five challenges and barriers identified in order of frequency were: unemployed at start of program, criminal conviction history, substance use or abuse, low literacy skills, and homeless/transitional housing unstable. The top four challenges/barriers reported to have been met or addressed with the greatest frequency in order of frequency are: transportation, attainment of work experience, housing, and financial assistance.
- On average, participants attended 60.8 percent of scheduled classes.
- Participants averaged 116 days between admission and exit.
- Thirty-seven percent were retained in the program. While this did not meet the goal, TCR! reports that this retention percentage is higher than for the total program population.
- The Earmark Grant catalyzed a major expansion of the internship program. Twenty-two percent of the participants obtained internships as compared to the goal of 50 percent. Of these 26 individuals, only nine did not obtain any other paying jobs. Eight individuals were among those obtaining a final placement.
- Eighteen percent obtained intermediate level jobs compared to the goal of 40 percent.
- Eleven participants (9 percent) obtained "gold standard" jobs compared to the goal of 13 (12 percent).

**Earmark Grant Performance (continued):  
Key Findings**

Statistically significant relationships were found for the following:

- No one who had volunteered that they had previously received treatment for a chemical dependency obtained a job ( $p < 0.05$ ).
- Comparing those who obtained “gold standard” jobs to those who did not, those who did: 1) spent more time in the program ( $p < 0.05$ ), 2) had superior class attendance ( $p < 0.05$ ), and 3) had more interim jobs and internships ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**D. Empowerment Training****1. Need for Assessing Contribution**

Given the enthusiasm for Empowerment Training expressed by staff and participants, and the fact that it is acknowledged by all parties to be the key feature of the TCR! model, some empirical data to assess its impact would be useful. To examine the impact of Empowerment Training, with proper controls, an assessment would need to have been planned and initiated prior to the start of the performance period of the grant. In an effort to learn something more about the potential impact of the training, the evaluation team sought to gather at least a modicum of empirical data that would suggest potential areas for future study. The original Demonstration and Earmark Grants had already ended, and the Continuation Grant was nearing the end of the performance period. Administration of pre- and post-assessment measures promised to be the most efficient technique to employ within the time available.

## 2. Selecting Assessment Tools

The evaluation team sought assessments widely documented and used by social science researchers. The decision as to which assessments might be most appropriate to capture any impact of the Empowerment Training was shaped by the fact that the two factors most frequently mentioned by staff are that participants who have gone through the Empowerment Training feel more “in control” of their lives and exhibit improved self-esteem.

After researching potential assessments, two pre-post measures were selected. One of these is the widely used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale<sup>19</sup>. It is designed to measure an individual’s self-worth and self-acceptance. The other is Duttweiler’s Internal Control Index<sup>20</sup>, which evolved from the widely used Rotter Scale<sup>21</sup> that measures internal versus external locus of control. The term, locus of control, extensively used in the field of psychology, refers to the extent to which people believe they can control events that affect them versus believing that they are at the mercy of forces or events beyond their control. People who believe that they can control their lives by their own actions and behavior are said to have an internal locus of control while those who believe that the environment, a higher power, or luck control their lives, are said to have an external locus of control. Both the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Duttweiler’s Internal Control Index are Likert-type scales. The Self-Esteem Scale consists of ten items for which individuals are asked to respond on a four-point continuum from “Strongly Agree”

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<sup>19</sup> Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the Adolescent Self-image*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press

<sup>20</sup> Duttweiler, P.C. (1984). *The Internal Control Index: A Newly Developed Measure of Locus of Control*.

<sup>21</sup> Rotter, J.B. (1954). *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology*. New York, NY. Prentice-Hall



to “Strongly Disagree.” The Internal Control Index consists of 28 items for which individuals are asked to describe their usual attitudes, feelings, or behaviors, on a five-point scale (Rarely, Occasionally, Sometimes, Frequently, or Usually).

### 3. Pre- and Post- Assessments

Pre-assessments were completed using a computer in January 2011 by a cohort of participants beginning their first eight-week segment of Empowerment Training. Post-assessments were completed using a computer in March 2011, following the completion of the first segment. The post assessment numbers for both the Self-Esteem Index and the Internal Control Index were smaller because a number of participants did not complete the class, and some may have simply decided not to complete the assessment during the allotted time. Additionally, as participants dropped out, some new ones who had not taken the pre-assessment were added. Finally, there were five cases for the Self-Esteem Index, and seven cases for the Internal Control Index where pre- and post-scores could not be definitively matched; they were dropped from the sample. A few assessments with excessive missing responses were also removed from the sample.

#### a. Self-Esteem

The Self-Esteem Scale pre-assessment was completed by 57 participants and the post-assessment by 40 participants. Clean matches were available for 22 participants. Exhibit T below provides summary information on these 22 matches.

## **Exhibit T: Pre- and Post-Assessment Results for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale\***

	<b>Pre-Assessment</b>	<b>Post-Assessment</b>
Average Score	21.86	24.82
Median	22	26
Minimum Score	11	14
Maximum Score	30	30
* Possible scores range from 0 – 30. Pre- and Post-assessments are for 22 individuals.		

Scores on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale can range from a low of 0 to a high of 30 points. Scores between 15 and 25 are considered within the normal range. Scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem. The pre-assessment mean was 21.86 and the post-assessment mean was 24.82. A paired sample t-test indicates that this 2.96-point difference in means is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This increase in self-esteem, however, cannot necessarily be attributed to the impact of Empowerment Training because other factors such as participants' experiences in other courses may have contributed to this difference. Additionally, making inferences about factors that may have contributed to this difference based on a small sample can be misleading. Isolating the impact of Empowerment Training would require a controlled study comparing scores in self-esteem for groups that went through the normal program with all variables held constant except for Empowerment Training. Also, these results were evidenced over the course of just one of the five Empowerment segments. It would be interesting to compare pre- and post-scores at the beginning and end of all five segments.

Interestingly, the overall mean pre-assessment score for all of the 57 participants was 22.25, well within the normal range for self-esteem. This is surprising given the challenges and backgrounds of the participants. A likely hypothesis may have been that new participants would score lower than normal in self-esteem. One possible explanation as to why the pre-assessment scores were in the normal range is that prior to the start of the Empowerment Training, the experience of applying, being selected, and matriculating in the TCR! program may, in- and-of itself, have had a positive impact on the scores. Another viable explanation is that as a result of its rigorous screening and selection process, TCR! staff may have unwittingly selected participants who exhibited higher self-esteem than the other applicants who were not selected for participation.

The evaluation team also conducted a t-test (not paired samples) on the difference in the mean pre-assessment scores for individuals who had no post-assessment scores versus individuals who did have a post-assessment score. This was to see if there was a difference between those who left the program or did not take the post-assessment and those who completed. The 0.65 point difference in means is not remotely statistically significant.

b. Locus of Control

The Internal Control Index pre-assessment was initiated by 64 participants. Seven participants completed only a portion of the assessment so their scores were dropped from the sample, leaving 57 pre-assessments. A possible reason for this is that the

Internal Control Index contains nearly three times more items than the Self-Esteem Scale, which may have resulted in people losing interest in completing the assessment. Clean matches of pre- and post-assessment scores were available on 28 participants. Exhibit U below provides summary information on these 28 matches.

### **Exhibit U: Pre- and Post-Assessment Results for the Internal Control Index\***

	<b>Pre-Assessment</b>	<b>Post-Assessment</b>
Average Score	105.04	105.89
Median	103.5	107.5
Minimum Score	77	76
Maximum Score	125	127
*Possible scores range from 28 – 140. Pre- and Post-assessments are for 28 individuals.		

Scores on the Internal Control Index can range from 28 to 140 - the higher the score, the higher the internal locus of control. The mean pre-assessment score was 105.04 and the post-assessment was 105.89. This miniscule difference in means is not statistically significant. Also, scores for those participants with only pre-assessments were compared to scores for those with both pre- and post-assessments. The 0.24 difference in means is also not statistically significant.

Interestingly, the median post-assessment score was four points higher than the pre-assessment median. While 19 participants had higher post-assessment scores than pre-assessment scores, nine participants actually had post-assessment scores that were lower than their pre-assessment scores which lowered the average post-assessment score. While most of the differences were small, in one case the post-

assessment score was lower by 12 points, and in another case, 10 points. There is not a readily apparent explanation for this.

In concluding the discussion of the locus of control assessment, it is important to note that because the Empowerment curriculum covers different topics in the five eight-week segments, and because staff members claim that the effects are cumulative, there may have been a very different result if the assessment had been given before and after one of the other segments. The same can be said for the Self-Esteem Scale.

TCR! staff members were supportive of the idea of administering assessments to potentially gauge the association between Empowerment Training and the TCR! program in general. In fact, they have decided to incorporate the administration of the two scales used here into their ongoing assessment process.

**Empowerment Training:  
Key Findings**

- The two things most frequently mentioned by staff are that participants who have gone through Empowerment Training feel more “in control” of their lives and exhibit improved self-esteem.
- Pre- and post- assessments were administered to participants in the first seven-week segment of Empowerment Training. A statistically insignificant increase ( $p > 0.0001$ ) in self-esteem scores was evidenced on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. No significant difference was found on Duttweiler’s Internal Control Index.
- Length of time in Empowerment Training may be an important variable to consider in assessing changes in assessment scores. Also, in absence of a controlled study, it is clear that any significant changes may be attributable to factors other than Empowerment Training.

## **IX. Discussion of Findings and Suggestions for Further Study**

Findings are based on information gathered during the three site visits that took place between September 2009 and December 2010 as well as data on key project benchmarks provided to the evaluation team by TCR!. Quarterly and Annual Reports were also reviewed along with many internal TCR! documents and videos shared by TCR! staff leadership.

### **A. Key Research Questions**

Findings for the following research questions are discussed in the following pages:

- Were intended outcomes achieved? Were the program's short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives/goals met?
- Was the recruitment and selection process effective and appropriate?
- Was the participant coordination/flow among the program components taking place as planned?
- Were appropriate supportive services obtained and utilized?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses of the program? What are the best practices that are transferable to other programs?
- Is the program replicable, sustainable, and/or scalable?

#### **1. Were intended outcomes achieved?**

The outcomes analysis was hampered by the program's lack of an electronic participant database for 2007 through 2009. The Coffey evaluation team had to rely primarily on TCR!'s report of aggregate data for a review of outcomes for the Demonstration Grant. Individual record data were provided for the Continuation and Earmark Grants, although

missing data limited conclusions that could be drawn about performance. For all three grants, TCR! was successful in meeting its enrollment goals:

- In the original Demonstration Grant, enrollments in Awali Inside/Out was 331 percent of goal (828 versus the goal of 250);
- In the Continuation Grant, 316 participants were enrolled in Awali Place versus the 200 planned; and
- In the Earmark Grant, 119 participants were served versus the 110 planned.

Due, no doubt, to the large number enrolled, the original grant goal for completions was greatly exceeded (413 versus a goal of 150). Despite this, the goal for transition to the Core Program or Awali Place was not met.

For the Continuation Grant, the goal of 50 percent (100) positive outcomes proved out of reach, and positive outcomes were achieved for only 60 participants, despite the large number of individuals served in the program.

The Earmark Grant showed a similar pattern. Despite a larger-than-planned enrollment level, only 44 individuals were retained in the program versus the 55 planned. These numbers represent a 37 percent retention rate versus the goal of 50 percent.

Staff reported that the program intentionally focuses on high quality outcomes as opposed to serving large numbers because they believe that it takes time to achieve quality and lasting results. While the program did not meet its outcome benchmarks, it is possible that participants' lives have been positively impacted.

## **2. Was the recruitment and selection process effective and appropriate?**

As indicated above, TCR! was successful in meeting its service goals. It accomplished this by generating over three times as many applicants as it accepted into the program, as described earlier in this report. While staff expressed some concern that there needed to be greater congruity among recruiters on “the message,” judging by the numbers alone, the recruitment process appears to be effective. The goal for 2010 was to recruit 650 new participants into five sessions (130 per session) which is anticipated to require recruitment of close to 1,900 individuals. This number was greatly exceeded. This funneling approach is a planned TCR! strategy for generating enrollments. Once basic program criteria have been satisfied, selection of participants is made based upon a unanimous decision of the Coaches. The recruitment and selection process was discussed in a section above. This has become an issue of focus for TCR! staff members who are hoping to find a way to do a better match up-front to reduce the high numbers of applicants, initial enrollments, and subsequent dropouts.

## **3. Was the participant coordination/flow among the program components taking place as planned?**

Under the original Demonstration Grant, the participant flow from Awali Inside/Out to Awali Place and subsequently to the Core Program and a “gold standard” job did not take place as planned. TCR!, recognizing the challenges they faced, integrated Awali Place into the Core Program and renamed it the Provisional Program. In 2009, there was a 10 percent continuation into the Core Program from Awali Place. In 2010 only nine percent of the Awali Place participants continued into the Core Program for the year; however, the elimination of Awali Place and its merger into the Core Program took



place in the summer of 2010. There is some speculation on the part of staff that TCR! was attracting individuals into the Provisional Program, which is an enhanced GED program, whose goals do not extend beyond getting a GED.

Another hypothesis, embodied in the Earmark Grant, was that the dropout of African American men was due to a need for increased supportive services and coaching. These enhanced services were provided under the Earmark Grant, and while they did have a positive outcome on participant retention, the success was not as great as had been anticipated.

#### **4. Were appropriate supportive services obtained and utilized?**

TCR! provides bus passes to students and uses a program called Dress for Success to assist participants in obtaining appropriate clothes for work and interviews. They also have a partnership with NorthPoint Clinic to conduct mental health assessments. Housing continues to be a key issue. Under the Earmark Grant, TCR! experimented with renting a house to use as a transitional housing facility. They found quickly that laws restricting the number of non-related housing occupants limited the number of participants who could be served, so they ceased rental of the housing unit. There have been discussions about setting aside funds from a recently-acquired Department of Justice earmark grant to obtain services from pre-existing housing programs. While chemical dependence testing and treatment are much needed supportive services, TCR! only conducts one random drug test. However, TCR! would like to do more, and staff are exploring whether Hennepin County would subsidize the cost of treatments.

**5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? What are the best practices that are transferable to other programs?**

The Empowerment Training appears to be the core strength of the program. This cognitive restructuring approach not only provides valuable methodology for students to reframe their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and actions, but also serves as a unifying framework for the program as a whole. In fact, it defines the culture of the organization and binds the staff to one another and to the participants. Other program strengths include coaching, focus on accountability, pay-for-performance model, internship program, volunteer program, culture of learning from the past, and quality of staff. When staff members were asked about the most salient strengths of the Program, Empowerment Training and the high talented, compassionate staff members were the most common responses.

Program weaknesses appear to be data collection, staff exhaustion, and the inability to retain participants. A change to the triangulated coaching model was intended to help ameliorate the issue of staff exhaustion. Another idea suggested by staff members was to grant “sabbatical” leave to staff on some basis to allow time for staff members to unwind and decompress from the intensity of dealing with a large caseload of participants with multiple challenges and barriers.

**6. Is the program replicable, sustainable, and/or scalable?**

Since most of the performance benchmarks for the DOL/ETA grant were not met, the issue of replication of these efforts as originally planned and implemented may not prove to be fruitful. However, TCR! is constantly evaluating its performance and making

design changes it thinks will improve outcomes. Furthermore, the TCR! program has some notable features. The Empowerment Training itself is already being replicated through TCR!'s for-profit arm, the Empowerment Institute, which trains staff of other agencies and local businesses for a fee. Replication of the program would likely require both a licensing agreement with TCR!, as the Empowerment Training curriculum is a proprietary product, and a contractual agreement for training the other program's staff via its Empowerment Institute.

TCR!'s volunteer program, internship effort, employer services, and development efforts are all potentially replicable features of the program. Another replicable feature is the emphasis on accountability that is a hallmark of the TCR! program and is exemplified by the training contract each TCR! participant signs agreeing to be responsible for a loan for the costs of training, which is forgiven when the participant achieves one year of placement retention.

While TCR! asserts the pay-for-performance model is also replicable, it requires a strong base of other funding to sustain it. Although the State of Minnesota provides performance payments on a per capita basis for participants who are placed and retained in "gold standard" jobs, it is clear that this funding alone is insufficient to cover all costs associated with a participant's training over the course of the 13 – 15 months required for most participants to complete and achieve the desired benchmarks. Nevertheless, the model is a replicable one that could contribute much-needed supplemental funding to programs engaged in similar work.

## **B. Other Findings**

- 1. The program staff appears to be less inclined to enter into a partnership, with a belief that participant successes are more readily achieved if needed program features are retained in-house.**

For example, TCR! originally referred out for the GED component but then decided too many participants were being “lost between the cracks” and decided to incorporate these services into their program. In the case of housing services, TCR! tried offering these services directly through a contract with a housing provider and is now ready to try existing housing providers instead. Although TCR! does not have a strong technical training component, there seems to be little effort to develop partnerships with technical schools or other education or training institutions. One staff member pointed out that “it takes a village,” but the TCR! approach generally is to bring services in-house.

- 2. The program model is focused on personal transformation and staff members attribute the participants’ high job retention rates to the Empowerment Training.**

While TCR reports high job retention rates, the average stay of 15 months to complete the program makes participant retention an issue. TCR!’s board has expressed interest in improving the retention rate, and ideas are currently being generated for improving the selection process in order to accept participants who are more likely to stick with the program.

- 3. Empowerment defines the organizational culture for both staff and participants.**

The language used, the approach to problem solving, and the ways of interacting with each other are all defined by the empowerment framework. There was a consistency of

the message around empowerment and a common belief in its power to transform the lives of those who embrace it.

**4. Supportive services are critical for this population and could be strengthened.**

Relationships with agencies that provide clothing and mental health services have been developed and bus passes are provided. The program also helps participants get their drivers licenses reinstated by paying the fees for their Driving Under the Influence (DUI) tickets through a local program and the Earmark Grant funds. However, housing, chemical dependency, and child support stand out as key barriers that require additional attention. There appears to be some discussion about developing relationships with existing housing programs, and a desire to do more random drug testing. Also, TCR! has initiated funding a part-time staff member to address chemical dependency issues. This was an idea that grew out of the Earmark Grant.

**5. The internship program has been significantly strengthened in the last year and has become an important program element, particularly during the recession and its aftermath when jobs for offenders have been especially scarce.**

This program has proved to be a stepping stone to more permanent positions and provides a valuable source of work experience and needed income for participants.

**C. Suggestions for Further Study**

The Coffey evaluation team proposes that the following areas be further examined:

## **1. Admissions and Selection Criteria and Process**

There is a significant loss of participants at each service stage that needs further investigation. In addition, the criteria for selection of participants used by the Coaches needs to be further elucidated in order to determine to what extent program successes are attributable to the program model or to “creaming” in the selection of participants.

## **2. Empowerment Training**

A controlled study of the impact of TCR!’s cognitive restructuring effort, known as Empowerment Training, would shed light on its contribution to participants’ job readiness, placement and retention, and overall wellbeing.

## **3. Documentation of Programmatic Changes**

When making programmatic changes, consideration should be given to documenting the change and date, taking a snapshot of program performance at the point of change, and noting all relevant concurrent circumstances. This should be repeated at some pre-determined future point in time. Short of a carefully designed study, this will help to establish a more empirically based model for assessing the impact of the programmatic change.



## **Twin Cities RISE! Alternative Financing Model for Serving the Hardest to Employ**

Twin Cities RISE! (TCR!) has created a highly successful alternative financing model in partnership with the State of Minnesota that not only provides a totally new source of revenue for job training programs, but also provides an incentive for assisting the hardest to employ, instead of being forced to “cream” participants in order to reach performance goals. This model has the potential to be replicated in other states and may provide a solution for states and localities searching to provide an adequate level of training and related services to participants despite diminishing federal formula funding.

TCR! was started over a dozen years ago to make a concerted effort to reach a population that the workforce system has had great difficulty successfully serving, very low income participants with multiple barriers to employment and place them in living wage jobs with health benefits. TCR! needed a different approach to serve this population than used in traditional training programs, as current models are forced to meet rigorous performance goals by assisting those participants that needed less, rather than more, services to gain employment.

TCR! worked with the State of Minnesota to create a state workforce development fund that provided the greatest returns for services to the hardest to serve participants. TCR! recognized that a funding mechanism that provided an accountability based payment to providers investing in assisting the hardest to employ would have strong political support from both parties. TCR! sought a separate state statute to provide an incentive for organizations to train the hardest to employ, particularly men of color, for living wage jobs. This effort resulted in a “pay for performance” model born in partnership with the state.

Here’s how it works: the state pays TCR! \$9,000 when TCR! demonstrates that it has placed one of its graduates in a job that pays at least \$20,000 annually with health benefits and has improved that graduate’s income from training by at least \$10,000. TCR! qualifies for another \$9,000 payment if the graduate remains in that job for one year. Employers authenticate graduate’s employment. This pay for performance payment is available to other organizations that meet the criteria.

TCR! initially worked with the staff of then Governor Carlson and key members of the legislature to write the legislation. The original financial model was developed by TCR! with the aid of Art Rolnick, Chief Economist of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank.

The economic value to the state is what drove the creation of this model and provides the opportunity for replication in other states. The analysis by economists from the State of Minnesota in the development of this fund showed that the state would obtain cash benefits of \$3,800(1995 dollars) per year for each individual whose income could increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The benefits derive from increased sales and income taxes and decreased public subsidies. The present value of this gain was calculated at \$31,000, of which \$18,000 is made available to pay for performance payments. Funding is provided by an appropriation in the general fund. TCR! draws down the amount until it is used up. The program is

administered by the State's Department of Employment and Economic Development, responsible for all state workforce spending.

Over the last ten years, three governors from different parties and bi partisan legislatures have supported this legislation. The appropriation has grown steadily and was increased by 50% in 2007 due to demonstrated, outstanding performance for the state. Since its creation, the state of Minnesota, by its own formula, has received \$1.80 for each \$1 it has paid out, an 80% return on its investment. Over time this return will grow as graduates continue to earn income.

The advantage of this funding mechanism has proven to be manifold for the state. It pays only for success at a very high standard. No payments are made for drop outs or partial successes putting the emphasis on meaningful improvements. Half the payment is made only after one year in the job (TCR! average is 83% retention) emphasizing longer retention. New funding has been provided to the workforce system; targeted funding has been made available for the hardest to employ. The State's return on its investment is very high and more than self funds the program.

Due to "pay for performance success" some philanthropic foundations that TCR! is supported by also pay TCR! with pay for performance payments. Other contributors have greater confidence that their support is better spent knowing that TCR! is required to achieve success with its participants.

This pay for performance approach has enabled TCR! to finance part of its program with state support that would not otherwise be available. It has garnered support from all over the political and economic spectrum due to its investment in the hardest to employ and its demonstrated financial accountability for that investment.

One of the areas of confusion about this model is that it is "benefit based" not "cost based" like most government financing for training programs. Some mistakenly compare the \$9,000 payment TCR! receives for a successful graduate with the cost of providing training to the many. This is like comparing apples to oranges since pay for performance is outcome based, paying only for success, instead of process based payments for the provision of services.

In an analysis conducted for TCR! by Richard Gehrman and Associates it was shown that TCR!'s cost/ person placed and retained in quality jobs was lower than welfare programs and other job training programs for the hard to employ group.

TCR's innovative approach has gained interest at the federal level. Senator Coleman is spearheading a federal law, in the WIA pilots and demonstrations section, that would establish pay for performance payments for a similar population. Economic analysis of the federal benefit far exceeds the state's gain because tax receipts and subsidy payments are higher for the same gain in income.

TCR! is available to provide technical assistance to others interested in bringing the "pay for performance" alternative funding to their state or local area. For more information contact Steve Rothschild, Founder and Chair, TCR! at [SRTC1@AOL.COM](mailto:SRTC1@AOL.COM) or at 612 279 5813.