SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

The Evaluation of the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) Interim Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long-term demographic trends have been reshaping the United States into a nation with a much larger share of older people. This graying of the population is evident in the labor force, which has an increasing proportion of workers age 55 and older. In recognition of this long-term demographic trend and the prospect of an increasing number of older workers seeking services from the workforce system, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) developed the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI). Under the initiative, ten local organizations (See Exhibit ES-1) were awarded grants of approximately $1 million each in the Summer of 2009 to explore new approaches for providing employment and training services to workers 55 and older. This interim report describes nine of these grantees and their early experiences implementing the AWI projects.

The AWI projects had three inter-related objectives: (1) to address the workforce challenges of aging workers; (2) to promote the value of older workers to employers by developing strategies that connect older workers to jobs in high-growth industry sectors; and (3) to build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Within those broad objectives, grantees had the option to focus on one or more specific activities or target groups, such as innovative training techniques, self-employment, career awareness, alternative career pathways, capacity-building of training or education providers, or disadvantaged older workers. In addition, each project was required to develop project partnerships with the public workforce investment system, employers, and education or training providers.

Evaluation of the Aging Worker Initiative

In June 2009, ETA contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), (with Mathematica Policy Research [Mathematica] as a subcontractor) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the AWI grants.

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Exhibit ES-1:
The Aging Worker Initiative Grantees

Grantee Name	City, State
Tecumseh Area Partnership	Lafayette, IN
Coastal Counties Workforce	Brunswick, ME
Quad Area Community Action Agency	Hammond, LA
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development	Towson, MD
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board	Clinton Township, MI
South Central Workforce Investment Board	Harrisburg, PA
Goodwill Industries of Houston	Houston, TX
Vermont Associates for Training and Development	St. Albans, VT
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County	Seattle, WA
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Neenah, WI

Note: SPR and Mathematica conducted site visits to nine of the ten AWI projects. The only project that was not included in on-site interviews was the Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. in Louisiana.

Key questions guiding the evaluation included:

- How did the current economic environments in the designated service areas influence the implementation of AWI grants?

- How did grantees plan for, implement, and administer the projects? How have community partners, including employers, been involved with this initiative?

- What types of services were provided to AWI participants?

- What strategies were used to promote the value of older workers to employers in high-growth industry sectors? Which strategies seemed most effective?

- To what extent did the AWI grants increase the capacity of the public workforce system to serve older workers?

- What are the characteristics of AWI participants and what were their employment outcomes after participating in the program?

The evaluation involves four sources of data:

- **Telephone reconnaissance calls.** Researchers conducted telephone calls during Spring 2010 to gather basic background information about the projects and will conduct two other rounds of calls.

- **Site visits.** The evaluation includes two rounds of in-depth site visits. Researchers conducted the first round during October and November of 2010. The second round will be conducted in 2012, roughly six months before the grants end.

- **Quarterly reports from grantees.** Researchers reviewed the required quarterly reports from grantees to ETA. These reports included information on implementation issues, enrollments, outcomes, and other aspects of project developments.

- **Participant data from grantees and ETA.** Grantees collected information on participant characteristics, service use, and project outcomes on elements required for the evaluation, either using the specially designed Aging Worker Data System (AWD) or an alternative management information system (MIS). The researchers will also examine Common Measure data generated by ETA from existing administrative records. [1]

This report focuses on the qualitative data collected during the first round of site visits and includes information gathered from telephone calls and a review of grantee quarterly reports. The final report will include analysis of the data from the second round of site visits, final reconnaissance calls, later quarterly reports and the participant data required of grantees.

Overview of AWI Grantees and Projects

Three different types of organizations were represented among grantees—local workforce investment boards (LWIBs), government organizations, and nonprofit agencies. Seven of the nine grantees visited were directly affiliated with the workforce system under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) either as LWIBs (which administer and oversee local workforce development) or as operators of the local American Job Centers. The remaining two grantees were non-profit agencies which were not responsible for administering WIA but had direct

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[1] In order to have common performance measures for programs with similar goals, ETA uses three Common Measures to evaluate program performance for most workforce programs serving adults. These three measures are "Entered Employment," "Employment Retention", and "Average Earnings." The Entered Employment rate is defined as the percentage of those participants unemployed (or anticipating unemployment) at program entry who were employed in the first quarter following the quarter in which they exited the program. The Employment Retention rate is defined as the percentage those participants who entered employment in the first quarter after program exit who were employed in both the second and third quarters following exit. "Average Earnings" is the mean of total second and third quarter earnings for participants counted in the Employment Retention measure.

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experience providing employment services. Overall, grantees that were LWIBs or American Job Center operators appeared to be better positioned to integrate older worker services into the workforce investment system; however, smaller nonprofit organizations appeared to have more organizational flexibility and more expertise serving older job seekers.

In nearly all of the study sites, grantees led or were involved with other local initiatives targeted to aging workers which began prior to AWI grants and included such elements as interagency steering committees, grant-funded research on the needs and employment patterns of aging workers, and outreach to and education of employers about older workers. Grantees sought AWI funding both to create new initiatives as well as to expand existing ones.

Grantees implemented AWI projects during the height of one of the worst economic downturns since the Great Depression. By the time AWI grants were awarded and the projects were being implemented, regional unemployment rates had increased an average of 2.3 percentage points across the project sites. At the time of the first site visits, regional unemployment rates averaged more than 8.1 percent. The economic downturn likely influenced the amount of employer involvement, the availability of job placement services and work supports in the local communities, and job placement outcomes.

In all projects, eligible participants had to be 55 years of age or older. However, most grantees had specific target populations they were planning to serve. All nine projects targeted dislocated workers, and four also targeted incumbent workers. One grantee, *Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County* (WA), also targeted ex-offenders, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities who were 55 year of age and older.

Among the grantees, the most commonly targeted industry sectors were information technology and healthcare, though some also focused on manufacturing and construction. However, according to program managers, the targeted industries and occupations were not always a good match with the abilities, skills, and interests of older workers participating in the projects, since lack of experience using computer technology and physical limitations sometimes decreased the employability of older workers in the targeted occupations.

Infrastructure for Providing and Overseeing Services

To achieve project goals, grantees had to develop an infrastructure to recruit participants, provide education and training services, engage partners, and reach out to employers. Key findings regarding staffing size and structure, partnerships, project guidance and oversight are discussed below.

Grantees' staffing structures reflected an emphasis on investing in direct-service staff members. The number of positions allocated to carry out these tasks is twice as high as administrative time

allocated for AWI activities. On average, a grantee used AWI funds to pay for 2.0 FTE direct-service personnel including case managers, navigators, and workshop instructors, compared to 0.9 FTE for project administrators. Grantees that also operated WIA programs typically used project funds to supplement positions supported with funds from other programs, thus allowing staff assigned to other programs to expand their focus to include AWI participants. However, AWI project budgets were perceived to be inadequate for covering the time project managers spent on day-to-day administration of their AWI grant.

Grantees had successfully engaged agency and organizational partners to help define project goals and activities, recruit participants, provide leveraged resources, and offer guidance and support for achieving outcome. Grantees generally relied on partnerships created prior to AWI to expand expertise and resources available to AWI projects. The average number of identified partners was ten, though the number ranged from five to fifteen across grantees. Partners included public workforce investment agencies, educational institutions and training providers, employers and economic development entities, and aging organizations. In most projects, a core group of three to five partner agencies were the most active and other organizations were used and consulted as needed. Grantees looked internally and to their partners for ongoing planning and guidance for AWI, and grantee governing boards and interagency steering committees not only provided guidance, but also helped to expand the resources available and encourage the sustainability of AWI projects. With the exception of two sites, grantees reported that employers and economic development entities were often difficult to engage and were less involved with the planning and design of the projects than originally hoped.

Recruitment and Enrollment

In most sites, recruiting aging workers to the projects was easier than expected. AWI program managers and staff members speculated that the economic downturn and high unemployment rates have encouraged aging workers to enroll in the program. Seven grantees reported that local American Job Centers were their primary referral sources. Other recruitment efforts included community meetings or forums, program fliers and outreach materials, targeted mailings, and referrals through community partners.

Some of the sites regularly co-enrolled AWI participants in WIA or the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Co-enrollment offered two advantages: it expanded a participant's access to WIA training funds, which are typically capped at a higher level than the AWI training funds, and it increased participant access to paid work experience placements and supportive services that might not be available through the AWI project.

Most AWI grantees projected that they would serve between 165 and 450 participants and at the time of this report, five of nine grantees had enrollment levels that were at least 40 percent of

planned enrollment levels. One project, *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX), had already reached over 70 percent of its enrollment goal, with 323 out of 450 older workers enrolled in project activities and services. The remaining four projects have reached less than 35 percent of their target enrollment levels and of these, two grantees in particular appeared to be experiencing difficulty, having reached less than one-fourth of their projected total enrollment. (See Exhibit ES-2.)

Exhibit ES-2:
Grantees' Enrollment Goals Compared to
Actual Program Enrollments as of December 31 2010
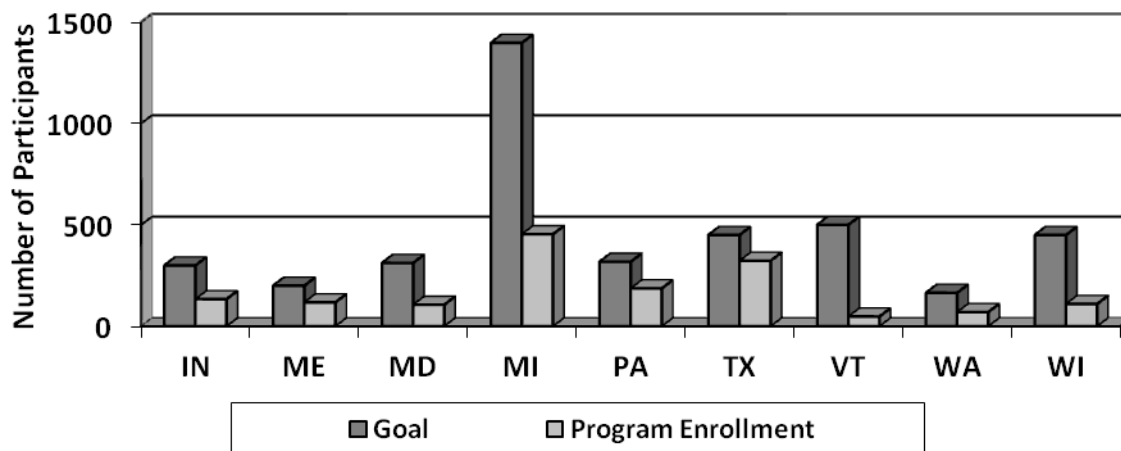
Employment and Training Services

Grantees offered a range of service options to increase the employability and mobility of the participating older workers, including (1) specialized assessment, (2) career counseling and employment planning, (3) job readiness activities, (4) training in basic computer skills, (5) occupational skills training, (6) training in small business development, (7) job search and job placement assistance, and (8) coordination of services by a case manager.

Because many AWI participants lacked important computer skills that are required to be competitive in the labor market, eight of the nine grantees provide at least basic computer training for AWI participants. Five of these grantees had designed new courses or modified existing curricula to serve this particular need. One grantee had created "reverse mentoring" arrangements whereby young people are assigned to work individually with aging workers to help them increase their computer literacy.

At the time of data collection for this report, participation in occupational skills training was lower than projects originally anticipated, as shown in Exhibit ES-3. Three projects have reached at least 35 percent of their education and training enrollment goals. The remaining projects were lagging far behind on their education and training enrollment, with attainment rates between 2 percent and 13 percent of the levels originally projected. Grantees reported that many aging workers are reluctant to pursue classroom-based training and/or were not interested in the occupations that the projects had targeted for training. A few grantees had anticipated using WIA or other training funds to fund training for AWI participants or to supplement AWI training funds; however, these funds were nearly depleted by the time grantees were enrolling AWI participants.

Because of the lower-than-expected rate at which participants elected to enroll in training, the other services offered by the projects—such as career counseling and employment planning, job readiness training, basic computer literacy, and job search assistance—had taken on increased importance in supporting participants in reaching their employment goals.

Exhibit ES-3:
Grantees' Training Enrollment Goals Compared to
Actual Training Enrollments as of December 31, 2010
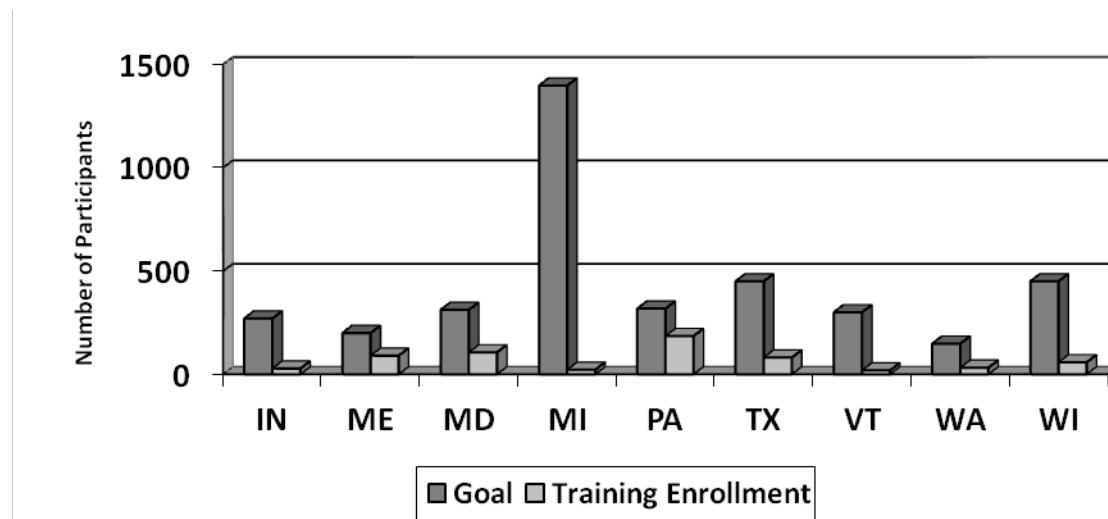
It was still too early in the grant period to assess project performance in terms of the total number of participants who enter employment or the proportion of participants who find training-related employment, as most AWI participants had yet to complete education/training programs. Even in the three projects that reported the largest numbers of participants who had entered employment after completing education and training services, employment rates among training completers were still low (between 28 and 36 percent), which is typical of early-exit cohorts (because they include individuals who drop-out without completing project services).

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Participation in occupational skills training programs in high-growth industries was not as frequent as had been expected. Though occupational skills training was a common focus across all projects, the types and intensity of training varied widely. The amount of training funds awarded to participants under the AWI grants (between $1,000 and $2,400 per participant) was typically less than that available to WIA participants. Training was also limited to a designated list of high-growth occupations, which may not have been of interest to aging workers. Training was often short-term, lasting three months or less.

Employer Involvement

The AWI grantees had a hard time recruiting businesses as committed partners in their projects. Several grantees succeeded in developing partnerships with industry associations or other business intermediaries to focus on updating the skills of older incumbent workers. These sites found that developing relationships with entities representing groups of employers had been a powerful way to reach out to employers. These organizations were more likely than individual firms to see the long-term benefits of developing a pipeline for skilled workers that might benefit their industry as a whole.

As the economy improved, a number of projects were beginning to roll out employer outreach activities designed to teach employers about the benefits of hiring older workers and provide them with specific advice about managing an aging workforce.

Building and Sustaining System Capacity to Serve Aging Workers

Grantees had made substantial progress in increasing the availability of services to older workers using AWI funds and in some sites were able to significantly improve the responsiveness of American Job Centers to the needs of older workers. This was accomplished by (1) developing new and innovative outreach activities to draw older workers into American Job Centers; (2) designating and training individual American Job Center staff members as "aging worker specialists;" and (3) developing a range of additional services sensitive to the needs of aging workers.

Successes and Challenges in Implementing AWI

When visited at roughly the midpoint of their 36-month grant period, the AWI grantees had achieved noteworthy successes in implementing their AWI projects and they had also encountered some unexpected hurdles. Some of the initial successes and challenges documented during the first round of site visits are summarized below.

Project Design and Initial Implementation

- Most of the AWI projects had succeeded in recruiting and serving a broad range of older workers.

- The AWI grantees had been ambitious in establishing projects to increase the services for older workers across large geographic service areas.

- Projects had capitalized on the investments they made prior to the AWI grants in developing relationships and identifying resources relevant to improving services to older workers.

Project Infrastructure and Collaborative Partnerships.

- AWI project budgets appeared to be inadequate for covering the time project managers spend on day-to-day administration of their AWI projects.

- Projects were generally well connected to the workforce investment system, which increases the potential for long-term systems change in serving aging workers.

- Grantees had successfully recruited agency and organizational partners to help define project goals and activities, recruit participants, provide leveraged resources, and offer guidance and support for achieving outcomes.

- With the exception of two sites, employers and employer associations were less involved with the planning and design of the projects than originally hoped.

Employment and Training Services

- In responding to the identified needs of older workers, the AWI projects had developed broad ranges of services that usually included assessment, career counseling and employment planning, job readiness activities, job search support, ongoing case management to coordinate services for individual customers, and training in basic computer skills, occupational skills, and small business development,

- The AWI grantees had developed a wide range of occupational training offerings to prepare older workers for employment in high-growth occupations. However, in an economic environment with so many other unemployed workers with skills and experience seeking employment, it was not clear that the training available from AWI projects would enable participants to compete successfully for jobs in the targeted occupations.

- Several sites have developed methods of classroom teaching that worked well for older adults, such as extending a course over a longer period of time to allow a more relaxed pace for classroom instruction and more time for questions.

- Some projects used co-enrollment in WIA and/or SCSEP to expand the resources available to the aging workers.

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Data Management and Reporting

- Many grantees were experiencing difficulties using the USDOL-provided data system (AWD) as a tool to provide the summary data required in federal reports. Unfortunately, there was only limited training and technical support on this data collection and reporting system available to grantees.

Next Steps for the Evaluation

A second round of site visits will be conducted in the spring of 2012. By that time, it is anticipated that all major AWI design elements will be implemented and grantees will be able to provide detailed insight into the services provided to aging workers and employers involved in the AWI. In addition, grantees will be working on their plans to sustain AWI activities after the end of the grant period. The evaluation team will also analyze MIS data on participant service use and outcomes for participants who exit the program through March 2012. A final evaluation report will be delivered in early 2013.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Long-term demographic trends have been reshaping the United States into a nation with a much larger share of older people in the population and labor force. In recognition of these trends and the possibility that an increasing number of older workers will seek or need services from the public workforce system, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) developed the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI). The project was designed to expand knowledge about the needs of aging workers, to test different combinations and types of services for them, and to identify possible models that might be of use in the workforce system.

The AWI projects had three inter-related objectives: (1) to address the workforce challenges of aging workers; (2) to promote the value of older workers to employers by developing strategies that connect older workers to jobs in high-growth industry sectors; and (3) to build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Within these broad objectives, grantees had the option to focus on one or more specific activities or target groups, such as innovative training techniques, self-employment, career awareness, alternative career pathways, capacity-building of training or education providers, or disadvantaged older workers.

Under the initiative, ten local organizations received awards of approximately $1 million each in the summer of 2009, in response to ETA's Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) 08-06, (Exhibit I-1 shows the geographical locations of the AWI grantees, while the grantees and their respective projects are described in detail in Chapter II.) ETA required the grantees to coordinate the design and implementation of their projects through regional partnerships that included economic development and workforce development agencies, as well as organizations with experience serving individuals 55 years of age and older, businesses and industry associations, educational institutions and training providers, and faith-based and community-based organizations.

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Exhibit I-1:
Aging Worker Initiative Projects
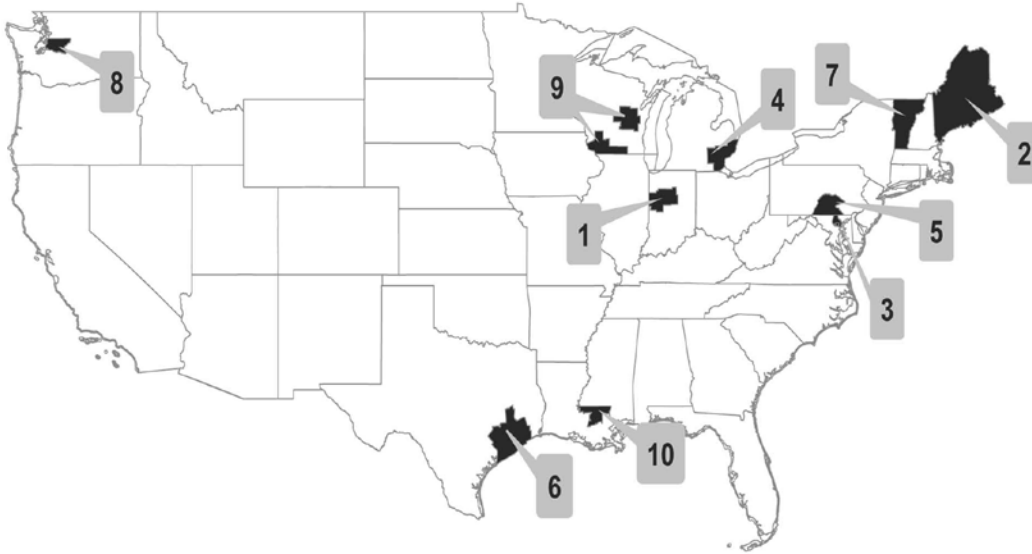
1. Tecumseh Area Partnership (IN)
2. Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)
3. Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)
4. Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)
5. South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)
6. Goodwill Industries of Greater Houston, Inc. (TX)
7. Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)
8. Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WA)
9. Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)
10. Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)

The Context for AWI

As noted above, the AWI project was developed in recognition of a demographic transformation occurring in the United States. Birth rates have decreased and life expectancy has reached an all-time high of 77.5 years (Congressional Research Service Report for Congress 2006). These trends have resulted in a population that is considerably older than it ever has been, with conspicuous consequences for the composition of the labor force. In 2007, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted that the median age of American workers in 2016 would be 42.1, compared with 35.4 only twenty years earlier (Toossi 2007).

In addition to an increase in the proportion of workers who are older, such workers are tending to remain in the workforce longer and retire later (Gendell 2008, National Institute on Aging 2007). Though the reasons for this delay in retirement are not yet completely understood, older workers today are healthier and more educated than those in previous generations, and both factors lead to higher labor force participation. The recent recession compounded this trend of postponed retirements, possibly as these workers felt the need to remain in the labor market to provide for themselves or their families, as spouses also lost jobs, retirement accounts lost value, and pension benefits were lost or reduced (Employee Benefit Research Institute 2009, Garr 2009).

The aging of America's workforce has, potentially, significant impacts on the workforce development system. Most obviously, if the system is called upon to respond to these demographic changes, training programs and supportive services must be made more conducive to the needs and preferences of aging workers. In addition, when those in the Baby Boomer generation do eventually retire, a younger and relatively inexperienced labor force in some industries may mean potentially reduced productivity and profits for employers thus creating a parallel problem in providing adequate training for these younger workers (Dohm 2000, Su 2007). Another potential challenge for the workforce system may arise from efforts to counter the discrimination some older workers experience in the labor market, due to negative stereotypes. These stereotypes include, but are not limited to, perceptions about aging workers' perceived lower physical and cognitive abilities, the belief that they lack technological acumen, and the fact that because of their seniority and expertise they often demand higher wages than younger workers thereby affecting an employers' profit margin.

AWI was therefore designed to develop information that could be used by the workforce system in responding to some of the challenges created by the increase in older workers, including possible greater demands from them for workforce services to remain employed or become re-employed and in assuring that employers are able to take advantage of these older workers' knowledge and skills.

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The AWI Evaluation

In June 2009, ETA awarded a contract to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), with Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) as a subcontractor, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the AWI grants. The design of the evaluation was based on a conceptual model that identified external factors such as economic conditions and existing partnerships organized around the needs of aging workers and internal factors such as project services and recruitment strategies, all of which are expected to influence projects' results in terms of employment and earnings for participants. Exhibit I-2 displays these factors as a series of concentric rings, which interact in bringing about project outcomes.   Factors incorporated into the conceptual model include the following:

- the local economic context in which a grantee operates its project,

- grantee characteristics and prior experience in serving aging workers in-house and through linkages with other workforce development agencies,

- the types of partnerships that existed prior to AWI and new partnerships that were created as part of the design process,

- relationships with training providers and employers that support service delivery to and employment of aging workers,

- the types of service strategies and activities being undertaken to address employers' skilled-worker needs and the employment and training needs of aging workers, and

- participant and employer outcomes.

To fully investigate each element in the conceptual model presented in Exhibit 1-2, the evaluation seeks to answer a host of research questions, summarized in the four categories below (while the complete set of research questions is available in Appendix A).

External Context and Public Systems
- How did local economic conditions (e.g. the local unemployment rate and major industries/employers) shape the design and implementation experiences of the AWI project?

- How did the recession affect the planning and implementation of the AWI project?

- What were the primary goals for each AWI grant? How were these goals identified?

Exhibit I-2:
Conceptual Model for the AWI Evaluation
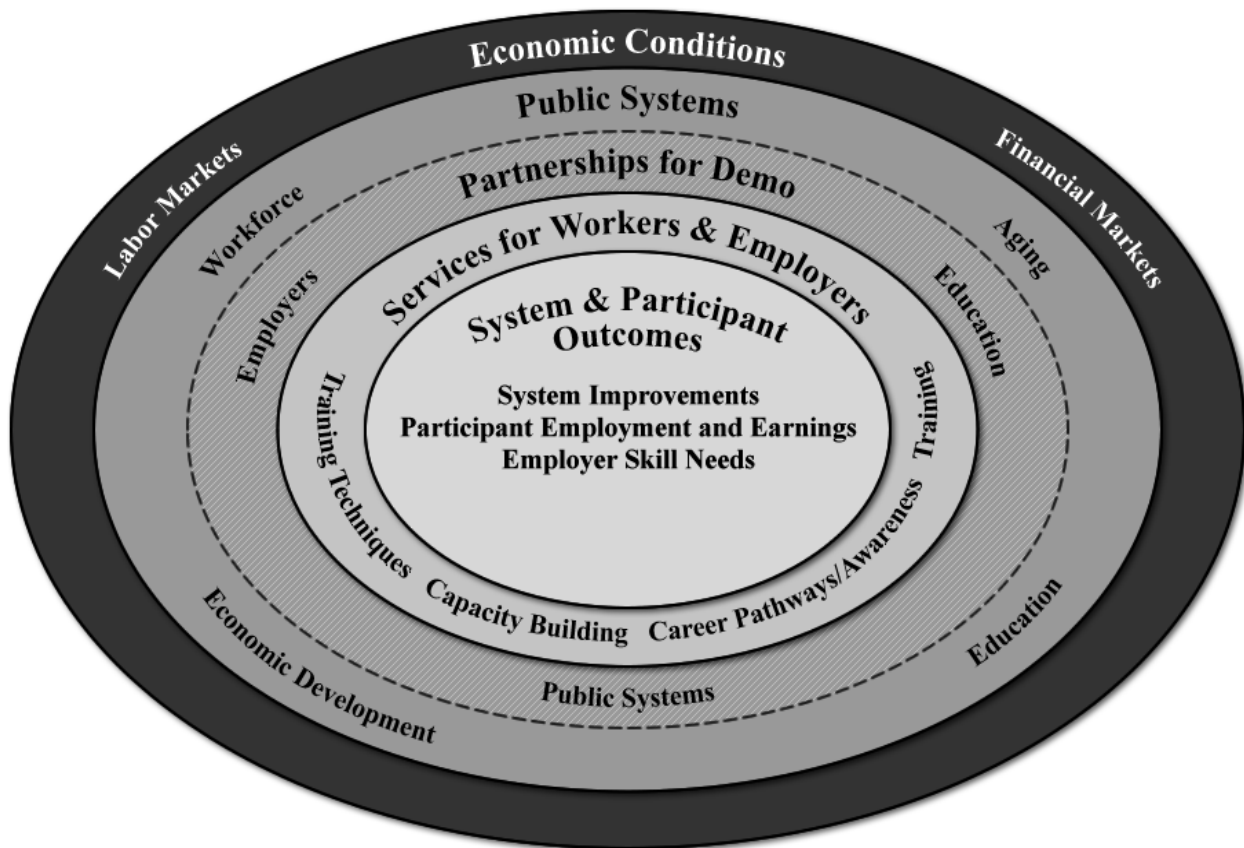
- Besides those provided by the AWI project itself, what other services are available to aging workers? How does the project interact with these related programs and resources?

Grant Administration and Partnerships

- What type of organization was responsible for implementing the AWI project?

- What staffing structure was used for the administration of the AWI grant?

- How much prior experience did grantees have in serving older workers?

- What types of organizations and individuals were recruited to participate as partners in the project and why?

- How did the grantee assess the involvement of partners? What were the most successful and challenging aspects of these partnerships?

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Service Design and Early Implementation Experiences

- What types of participants were targeted for participation?

- What were the industry sectors and occupations targeted for training and placement?

- What service planning, training, job placement, case management, and supportive services did participants receive?

- To what extent were project service components and training programs modified to address the specialized needs of aging workers?

- How were partners involved in delivering services to program participants? Are services delivered through existing American Job Centers or through other venues?

- What types of services were available for employers?

- Did the grantee receive any technical assistance? If so, what was the source and nature of this assistance?

System and Participant Outcomes

- How did the AWI grant change the service environment for older workers?

- What new service options were created that would not have been available without the AWI project? What additional services might be helpful?

- How successful has the grantee been in enrolling participants and helping them achieve employment outcomes?

- What are the characteristics of the AWI participants and what employment outcomes did they experience after participation in the grants?

- How has the project increased the capacity of the local workforce development system to serve aging workers and employers?

- What types of project deliverables are planned?

- What are the key problems or challenges in administering the AWI project?

- What are project successes to date?

- How does the grantee plan to expand, sustain, and/or replicate the AWI project after the end of the grant period?

To find answers to the preceding questions, the evaluation will use four sources of data:

- **Telephone reconnaissance calls.** Researchers conducted telephone calls during spring 2010 to gather basic background information about the projects and will conduct two other rounds of calls.

- **Site visits.** The evaluation includes two rounds of in-depth site visits. Researchers conducted the first round during October and November of 2010.

The second round will be conducted the 2012, roughly six months before the grants end.

- **Quarterly reports from grantees.** Researchers reviewed the required quarterly reports from grantees to ETA. These reports included information on implementation issues, enrollments, outcomes, and other aspects of project developments.

- **Participant data from grantees and ETA.** Grantees collected information on participant characteristics, service use, and project outcomes on elements required for the evaluation, either using a specially designed Aging Worker Data System (AWD) or an alternative MIS. The researchers will also examine outcomes on the Common Measures, using a report prepared by ETA from existing administrative records.

Data Sources Used in this Report

This Interim Report presents information and analysis based on the first round of site visits conducted at nine of the ten AWI grantees[2]   The report covers the economic context of the AWI projects; their organizational arrangements for designing, implementing, overseeing and staffing services; the types of partnerships developed; key service elements; and initial enrollments and other markers of progress in implementing their grants.

Telephone calls with grant managers and other key project staff members were made between July and August 2010 to identify the extent of project implementation and to determine whether projects had altered their scopes of work or project goals. These telephone conversations also helped to establish timelines for the initial site visits. During the site visit, researchers interviewed key AWI personnel, including the AWI grant manager and project director, local personnel responsible for delivering training and case management services to aging workers, education partners, economic development partners, community-based partners, and business partner staff. In addition, SPR used information from ETA's Quarterly Narrative Reports (ETA Form 9134) and Quarterly Financial Status Reports (ETA Form 9130) to help inform the analysis of grantees' implementation progress and grant activities.[3]

The first round of site visits was completed in November 2010; a second round of site visits will occur in early 2012. By that time, it is anticipated that all major AWI design elements will have been implemented and grantees will be able to provide detailed insight into the services provided

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[2]   The only project at which interviews were not conducted on-site was the Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. in Louisiana.

[3]   Because the grantees were in the early phases of implementation, this Interim Report does not include on individual client-level data. SPR is in ongoing communication with grantee sites to determine the types of client-level data that will be available from each project site for the AWI Final Report.

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and employers involved. In addition, grantees will be able to provide feedback on how to improve the workforce development system's capacity to serve aging workers and will have developed materials and resources that can be shared with other workforce development program staff members.

Organization of the Report

Chapter II provides an overview of the AWI grantees and their projects, describing the types of organizations funded, the types of participants targeted, the industries targeted, and strategies being used to achieve the goals of the initiative. Chapter III focuses on project staffing, the role of partner organizations, the leveraging of resources, and oversight structures while Chapter IV addresses participant outreach and recruitment and service delivery designs. Chapter V describes the types and levels of employer involvement, and how several projects have encouraged businesses to promote training for older workers already employed by their firms. Chapter VI addresses capacity-building activities and sustainability of the AWI projects. Chapter VII discusses data collection practices, reporting procedures, and initial project outcomes. Finally, Chapter VIII summarizes the themes identified in the previous chapters and identifies issues to consider as the projects enter their final year of grant operations. Appendix A presents the data collection protocol used to guide the evaluation's initial site visits and Appendix B contains brief profiles of the nine AWI projects included in the Interim Report.

II.   OVERVIEW OF AWI GRANTEES AND PROJECTS

This chapter introduces the reader to the AWI grantees and the key dimensions of their projects, including the characteristics and history of each grantee, their reasons for applying for AWI grants, the economic context for each project, subpopulations targeted, the high-growth industries and occupations targeted, and the strategies that each project adopted to achieve the three main goals of AWI.

Grantee Characteristics

Building the capacity of the workforce system to serve aging workers requires grantees to be part of or closely linked to that system. Because of this, the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) encouraged applications from entities that represent the local workforce investment system (i.e. local Workforce Investment Boards [LWIBs], or their administrative entities). Other entities that applied were required to either have a letter of concurrence from the LWIB indicating that the LWIB would be actively involved with the project or demonstrate how the AWI grant activities would build upon current LWIB initiatives to serve aging workers. Whether an LWIB or not, the grantee was responsible for defining the project purpose and goals, creating a project infrastructure and service delivery pathway, coordinating with grant partners, monitoring project activities, maintaining the Aging Worker Database (AWD) or other Management Information System (MIS), and submitting quarterly reports to USDOL. This section provides background about the grantees, including why they applied for the AWI grants and the service areas they cover.

Organizational Types and Histories

Three different types of organizations were awarded AWI grants: local workforce investment boards (LWIBs), agencies (both government and nonprofit) responsible for administering Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, and nonprofit agencies not responsible for WIA programs (see Exhibit II-1).

Exhibit II-1:
Characteristics of AWI Grantees

Grantee Location	Grantee	Type of Organization	Provided Direct Services to Older Workers Prior to AWI	Had Informational Initiatives or Steering Committees on Older Worker Services Prior to AWI	AWI Service Area: Number of Workforce Areas	AWI Service Area: Number of Counties	Population of AWI Service Area[a]
Indiana	Tecumseh Area Partnership	Non-profit [b]	No	Yes	1	12	489,000
Maine	Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.	LWIB	No	Yes	4 (Statewide)	16	1.3 million
Maryland	Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development	Administrative Entity for LWIB	No	Yes	2 (City and County)	2 jurisdictions (on (Baltimore City is not part of Baltimore County)	1.5 million
Michigan	Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.	LWIB	Yes	No	6	7 (includes Detroit)	4.5 million
Pennsylvania	South Central Workforce Investment Board	LWIB	No	No	1	8	1.3 million
Texas	Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.	Non-profit	No	No	1	13 (includes Houston)	5.7 million
Vermont	Vermont Associates	Non-profit	Yes	Yes	5 (Statewide)	14	600,000
Washington	Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council	LWIB	Yes	Yes	1	1 (includes Seattle)	1.9 million
Wisconsin	Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	LWIB	Yes	Yes	2	13	897,000

[a] *Population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. Figures are rounded.*

[b] *Operates American Job Centers in the service area.*

These variations in organizational type and role are potentially important, because they have a bearing on each grantee's ability to influence local workforce development policy and American Job Center operations as well as to develop partnerships with other public and private workforce development agencies. Five of the nine grantees are LWIBs, which administer and oversee local workforce development activities. One grantee, *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI), equally split grant funds between two LWIBs, the Fox Valley and the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development areas. Services in these areas are locally defined and operate independently. LWIBs bring to the AWI projects an ability to shape workforce development policy for the entire region and are influential in shaping services directed to the business community. However, they typically play an administrative role in service delivery, contracting with other entities to provide case management, education and training activities, and job placement services.

Two other grantees—*Tecumseh Area Partnership* (IN) and *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD)—provide workforce development services as operators of their local American Job Centers. *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development*, which is a public workforce development agency, is responsible both to local elected officials and its advisory board, the Baltimore County Workforce Development Council. In contrast, *Tecumseh Area Partnership*, a nonprofit workforce intermediary, collaborates with both public and private agencies in its role as a AJC program operator for the West Central Indiana workforce investment area.[4] As AJC operators, these grantees can usually coordinate grant-funded activities with other services provided within the American Job Center setting.

The remaining two grantees—*Goodwill Industries of Houston* (TX) and *Vermont Associates for Training and Development* (VT)—are non-profit agencies that also have direct experience providing employment services but are not responsible for overseeing or operating American Job Centers. *Goodwill Industries of Houston* is a local affiliate of a large nonprofit organization that serves individuals with disabilities and other job seekers. Vermont Associates is the state SCSEP provider and an agency well known in the community for serving the aging population. Both organizations used an individualized case management approach and bring relevant experiences and resources to their respective projects. As independent entities without formal roles in the American Job Center system, these grantees have more flexibility to invent new service delivery models for aging workers, but less influence over the local American Job Center system.

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[4] This region is currently being transformed from a regional economic development area responsible to the Indiana Department of Labor to a local workforce service area that will be administered by a local workforce investment board.

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Four grantees directly served aging workers prior to AWI. Three of the grantees—*Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board* (MI), *Vermont Associates* (VT), and Fox *Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI)—are also responsible for providing or overseeing services under SCSEP. The fourth grantee, *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA), has promoted and overseen the delivery of services targeted to older workers within its American Job Centers under recent initiatives.

While only four grantees had direct experience serving aging populations, the other grantees had some experience with planning or promoting policies and practices responsive to the needs of aging workers. Thus, in nearly all of the study sites, grantees led or were involved with local initiatives targeted to aging workers and had experience on interagency steering committees, grant-funded research projects to assess the needs and employment patterns of aging workers, or outreach to employers about the benefits and needs of an older workforce. For example, in Maryland, the grantee was part of the Silver Tsunami Commission, which identified projected labor force shortages due to retiring workers as well as employment challenges faced by aging workers. In Indiana, *Tecumseh Area Partnership* was awarded a Retirement Research Group Grant to conduct a needs assessment for older workers. Under a separate USDOL Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant, this grantee developed materials for workshops targeted to aging workers: the "Maturity Matters" curriculum for employers and, for aging job seekers, workshops, titled "Where Do I Go From Here?" that focused on skill building.

Impetus for Applying for AWI Grants

Grantees sought funding to both create new initiatives as well as to expand existing ones. Respondents in seven of the nine projects described how existing initiatives motivated their application for AWI. Typically, they were looking to fill existing service gaps or address unmet needs identified through initiatives prior to AWI. In Pennsylvania, the WIB and local industry partners were looking for ways to expand training opportunities available to incumbent workers. Members of the Older Worker Steering Committee in Maine encouraged *Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.* to apply for AWI funds to expand resources available for retraining aging workers throughout the state. As SCSEP providers, the grantees in Vermont and Wisconsin explicitly used grant funds to expand services to aging workers who do not meet the eligibility criteria for SCSEP. As described below, in Seattle-King County, the Mature Worker Alliance (MWA), an interagency collaborative created in 2005, became the foundation for this grantee's AWI initiative, Reinvesting in Older Workers (ROW).

Case Example: Pre-Existing Alliance as Foundation for AWI

Mature Worker Alliance in Seattle–King County Jump-starts AWI Project

The Mature Worker Alliance (MWA), operating for more than five years in Seattle-King County, represents a public–private partnership seeking to "empower mature workers and support the productive presence of age and experience in the workforce." MWA was pivotal in the initial planning and ongoing implementation of AWI and served as a formal advisory committee to the AWI project. MWA sponsored workshops, job fairs, and education to employers, all targeted to workers 50 and older. It also offered employers a tool for assessing how "mature worker friendly" they are and provided resources for improving the quality of the workplace for aging workers (see www.employexperience.com). In all, there were 13 collaborative partners involved in MWA, including AARP, Boeing Reemployment Team, City of Seattle Human Services, Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens, National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, Senior Services of Seattle-King County, the Washington State Employment Security Department, U.S. Small Businesses Administration in Seattle, and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, among others.

Local Service Areas

The number of counties covered by each project varied dramatically, as did the total populations of their respective service areas. The populations of the project service areas ranged from 489,000 to 5.7 million residents (see Exhibit II-1). Most grantees included either one or two local workforce investment areas (LWIAs). However, the geographic coverage of the AWI projects tended to be large, even for grantees serving only one or two LWIAs. Across all grantees, the number of counties served ranged from one to 16, with an average of 9.5 counties.

Serving multiple workforce service areas expanded the reach of AWI services, but may limit the intensity of services and create challenges reaching all participants, particularly in rural areas. Five sites elected to provide AWI services in multiple workforce service areas. The *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI) divided the grant funding between two LWIBs and allowed each to define the goals and services available to aging workers. Two other grantees—*Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) and *Vermont Associates* (VT)—operated statewide, serving four and five service areas respectively (see Exhibit II-1). Both states were relatively rural and had some of the highest concentrations of older workers in the nation. According to the AWI project manager in Maine, the state houses the oldest workforce in the country, with a median age of 41 compared to a national average of 36. Structured as a collaborative, the AWI grantee in Michigan, *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board*, partnered with five LWIBs to serve seven counties, including the city of Detroit. Expanding AWI to multiple LWIAs resulted in

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both costs and benefits -- project staff members were required to cover a large geographic area and in some cases, this diluted the intensity of services available to aging job seekers. However, this approach may bring opportunities to job seekers who might not have been served otherwise, especially in rural areas where services are scarce.

Economic Contexts

Grantees originally designed their projects to account for local and regional economic conditions, and ETA selected grantees based in part on local economic needs though the economic downturn altered the economic contexts in which many of the projects were designed. Exhibit II-2 below provides unemployment data obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the state and metropolitan area(s) most closely aligned to the project service areas of the individual AWI projects (www.bls.gov, data extracted February 2011). As illustrated in Exhibit II-2, economic conditions (as measured by the unemployment rate) worsened substantially between the time that the AWI projects were proposed and the time they were implemented. At the time the AWI project proposals were written, unemployment ranged from a low of 4.7 percent in Vermont to a high of 9.2 percent in Michigan. By the time the AWI grants were awarded and projects were being implemented, unemployment had increased an average of 2.3 percentage points across the project sites. While all nine AWI grantees have varied demographic and economic contexts, each one faced significant challenges as a result of the recession, including, most importantly, the evaporation of demand for new workers, even in the occupations and industries designated as high-growth sectors of the economy.

In addition, the recession created a sharp increase in the demand for workforce development services within American Job Centers. Many of the grantees commented that this high demand forced their AWI projects to take a "back seat" to the workforce development services for dislocated workers. Furthermore, spending AWI funds usually was a lower priority than utilizing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, which had to be spent quickly. In fact, respondents in a few projects commented that while they had planned to target both incumbent and dislocated workers in equal parts for the AWI project, they altered their focus to target dislocated workers due to the high demand for workforce services among recently unemployed individuals.

Finally, according to staff members in a number of projects, the harsh economic conditions experienced as the projects were being implemented had negative impacts on their ability to engage employers in AWI activities.

Exhibit II-2:
Changes in the Regional Unemployment Rate

Grantee	Unemployment Rate at Inception of AWI (November 2008)	Unemployment Rate at Time of First Site Visit (November 2010)
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	5.2%	8.2%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	6.1%	7.4%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	5.4%	7.7%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	9.2%	11.3%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	4.9%	7.4%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	5.4%	8.6%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	4.7%	5.6%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	5.7%	9.2%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	5.8%	7.6%

Targeted Participant Groups

ETA required AWI projects to provide services to individuals who are 55 years of age or older. Beyond this age requirement, grantees were free to target services to specific subpopulations within this age group. As a result, there was variation among the AWI projects as to the types of aging workers targeted for participation, as shown in Exhibit II-3. Most of the projects defined the eligibility criteria for program participation broadly and did not use the criteria typical of programs such as SCSEP, which has income limits, or of the WIA Dislocated Worker program, which also has specific eligibility criteria. As noted above, a number of the administrators who applied for the AWI grants viewed the less-stringent eligibility requirements of AWI as a positive feature because it allowed them to serve a broader group of aging workers than other programs and recruit participants with a broader array of needs.

Exhibit II-3:
Participant Groups Targeted, by Grantee

Grantee	Identified Target Groups
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Adults, dislocated workers and incumbent workers who are 55 years of age or older and who are interested in pursuing employment in one of four targeted industry sectors.
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Adults, dislocated workers and incumbent workers who are 55 years of age or older. (Grant application claims a special focus on serving retired veterans and/or military spouses and individuals who have been out of the labor market for long periods of time and who are attempting to obtain reemployment.)
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	Adults and dislocated workers who are 55 years of age or older and who are interested in pursuing employment in specific positions within the healthcare industry sector.
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Dislocated workers who are 55 years of age or older.
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Adults, dislocated workers and incumbent workers who are 55 years of age or older. Incumbent workers must be willing to pursue training in one of the three targeted industry sectors. The project also targeted adults and dislocated workers interested in pursuing entrepreneurial training and starting their own businesses. Special emphasis was placed on individuals seeking full-time employment.
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Dislocated workers who are 55 years of age or older.
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Dislocated workers and incumbent workers who are 55 years of age or older and interested in pursuing employment in one of four industry sectors. This project also targeted SCSEP co-enrollees for project participation.
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	Adult and dislocated workers who are 55 years of age or older with special barriers to employment, including ex-offenders, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities.
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Dislocated workers age 55 years of age or older who are interested in pursuing full-time employment in one of three targeted industry sectors.

Dislocated Workers. All nine projects specifically targeted services to older workers who had been dislocated from their jobs. Some projects initially targeted dislocated workers who were recently unemployed and "new customers" of the American Job Center system who had extensive employment histories. For example, *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) and *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) targeted AWI services to recently unemployed individuals while *Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.* (ME) and *Macomb/St, Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) targeted dislocated workers who had been out of the workforce for long periods of time. Several AWI projects that targeted older dislocated workers adapted

their project designs to serve highly-skilled individuals who were seeking services to upgrade their skills enough to enable them to return to work quickly.

Incumbent Workers. Six projects—those of Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN), Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD), Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX), Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME), South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA), and Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)—also identified already-employed individuals (incumbent workers) as a group they wanted to reach with AWI project services. Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. initially targeted both unemployed and employed older workers for its project, but found that it needed to focus on providing AWI services to dislocated workers, because the recession brought so many recently unemployed individuals to its "front door." In contrast, one third of the participants enrolled by the South Central Workforce Investment Board project were employed aging workers. This project was working closely with three of its local area industry partners to help identify older employed workers who may need skills-upgrading to maintain their employment.

Older Workers with Specific Employment Barriers. Only one project, that of *Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County* (WA), specifically targeted its AWI services to individuals with barriers to employment, such as ex-offenders, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited English proficiency. These groups were selected because they were thought likely to have an "even harder time finding suitable employment," as staff noted, and could benefit greatly from employment and training interventions. The project designers anticipated that they would first find out what was effective with these special target populations and then would be able to expand services to meet the needs of a broader group of older workers after the end of the grant period.

Targeted Industry Sectors

The SGA called for the AWI grantees to develop strategies "to retain and/or connect older workers to jobs in high-growth, high-demand industries critical to the regional economy." As Exhibit II-4 illustrates, information technology (IT) and healthcare were the two most widely targeted industry sectors, with six projects specifically targeting IT and seven projects targeting a variety of healthcare occupations. Other industries that were widely targeted by AWI projects included advanced manufacturing and construction. Staff members at AWI projects that targeted construction said the main focus was on occupations geared towards energy-efficiency initiatives.

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Exhibit II-4:
Industry Sectors Targeted, by Grantee

Grantee	Industry Sector Targets
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	• Advanced Manufacturing • Healthcare • Information Technology • Transportation
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	• Construction (green) • Energy • Information Technology
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	• Healthcare Specific occupations in the healthcare industry are targeted
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	• Any H-1B industry
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	• Advanced Manufacturing • Healthcare • Information Technology Industry sector targets were applied only to individuals interested in receiving training. Enrollees not interested in training could receive job search assistance to look for employment in any field.
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	• Construction • Healthcare • Financial Services • Information Technology
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	• Construction (green) • Financial Services • Healthcare • Information Technology
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	• Construction (green) • Healthcare • Information Technology
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	• Advanced Manufacturing • Healthcare • Telecommunications

Rather than target specific occupations, most of the grantees defined their targeted industry sectors rather broadly. For example, within the IT sector, projects might allow an older worker to be trained and employed as a receptionist in an IT company—in contrast with a narrower targeting strategy that would have limited the training to occupations related to the core skills in demand for that industry (e.g., software development). One exception was *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD*),* which targeted six specific occupations within the healthcare sector (e.g., medical coding, medical billing, surgical technician, central sterile

processing, nurse support technician, and certified nurse assistant/geriatric nurse assistant). Because the recession limited job availability within these occupations, the managers of this project found that they had to request a grant modification to broaden the range of healthcare occupations in which individuals could seek training and employment.

Three other projects [*Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc*. (IN), *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME), and *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA)] also reevaluated the industry sectors they had targeted, as the number of available jobs in these industries in their states and regions were not available, thus affecting the number of older workers receiving occupational skills training and reemployment services oriented toward those industry sectors. For example, *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) originally planned to target eleven industry sectors, but found that only three were hiring new workers and thus limited the menu of available training services to those three industry sectors.

Another difficulty with targeting, as noted by AWI project staff, was that there was not always a good match between the abilities, skills, and interests of older workers and the targeted industry sectors or occupations. Industry sectors were targeted because state labor market information (LMI) data showed that the number of jobs in occupations within this sector was expected to grow, not because they were particularly suited to the aging workers who sought services. For example, none of the participants in the Indiana project had the requisite background for pursuing in-demand careers (such as software engineer or systems analyst) in the targeted industry of information technology, though participants could train for positions that required lower levels of skills, such as for receptionists at IT firms.

Strategies for Achieving Project Goals

AWI encouraged grantees to develop strategies to reach the AWI project's multiple objectives:

- Address the workforce challenges of aging workers,
- Recognize and promote the value of older workers by developing strategies that connect older workers to jobs in high-growth industry sectors, and.
- Build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers.

To address these objectives, AWI staff and partners were to develop strategies and activities that reflected the unique circumstances of their regional economy, the existing resources available for serving aging workers, project planners' and staff's understanding of and prior experience serving older workers, staff ability to engage with the business community, and the grant resources available. Below, we describe the different strategies adopted by the projects to address the objectives and requirements of the Initiative. Exhibit II-5 illustrates how these strategies are woven together in the design of a "typical" AWI project. Exhibits II-6, II-7 and II-

8 show the different strategies the projects are using to achieve each of the identified initiative goals.

Objective 1: Address the Employment Challenges of Aging Workers

Grantees' strategies for addressing the employment challenges of older workers focused on occupational training, computer skills and specialized career exploration and support services. These three strategy areas are discussed below and in Exhibit II-6.

Strategy 1: Occupational Training

All nine projects provided occupational skills training for aging workers in one or more high-growth industry sectors but most did not develop new programs specifically for older workers. Rather they referred participants to existing classroom training programs. Managers in these projects said it was either cost-prohibitive to tailor existing training courses or that training providers were reticent to alter their curricula because the courses would need to be reviewed and approved by advisory organizations and agencies (e.g., State Department of Education or Chancellor's Office). However, one project [*Workforce Development Council Seattle/King County* (WA)], reported they had designed new curricula with local community colleges to develop new occupational on training in "the fundamentals of healthcare" and "an introduction to occupations in green industry" for aging workers with limited English proficiency.

Also, two grantees—*Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) and *Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County* (WA)—persuaded local providers to offer separate "sections" of occupational skills training courses for older workers, in order to increase interactions among these participants and to raise their comfort level. Further, the Houston grantee arranged with the local community college to hold credit-bearing courses taught by community college instructors in a classroom located within the AWI project's offices.

Strategy 2: Computer Skills Training

A number of projects identified limited familiarity with computers and the lack of basic computing skills as an employment barrier for many older workers. To provide project participants with the computer knowledge and keyboard skills required for today's job market, eight projects provided computer skills training as part of their menus of AWI services, using existing or new curricula. These computer skills training programs ranged from teaching basic

Exhibit II-5:
Model of Typical Aging Worker Initiative Project

Partnerships that Include Employers/Industry Representatives, Education/Training Providers, Workforce Development System Representatives, and Community Agencies with Expertise in Serving Aging Individuals

Project Management Team

Project Design

Identify Target Groups

- Designate target groups of older workers
- Identify employers in targeted industries and occupations
- Develop outreach and recruitment strategies for older workers and targeted employers

Assess Needs of Target Group and Design Appropriate Services

- Occupational interests
- Transferrable skills
- Interest in training
- Desired working conditions
- Income requirements

Assess Employer/Industry Needs

- Expected job openings
- Specific skills required
- Working conditions
- Willingness to be involved with project

Design Strategies for Employer Involvement

- Identify needed skills
- Select , develop, or provide training options
- Provide internships
- Train incumbent workers to promote job retention and career advancement
- Consider project participants for available job openings

Provide Services to Older Workers

Offer Front-End Services

- Orient participants to available services
- Identify individual interests, skills, and employment goals
- Provide pre-employment and job readiness skills
- Arrange for peer support

Develop Individualized Service Plan and Goals

- Discuss career options
- Review available training
- Select training or immediate job search strategy
- Identify individualized employment goal (short-term and long-term)

Provide Training to Prepare Customers for Targeted Occupations

- Prerequisite skills
- Training setting, intensity, and duration
- Case management and support during training

Provide Job Search and Placement Support to Help Match Participant to Training-Related Job or Job in Targeted Occupation

- Job search services
- Case management and support during job search

Provide Post-Placement Supports or Follow-up Services

- Job coaching
- Follow-up services
- Reemployment assistance if needed

Increase and Sustain System Capacity to Serve Older Workers

Train One-Stop Staff to Serve Older Workers

- Activities during grant period
- Strategies for sustainability after grant ends

Promote Training and Service Designs Effective for Older Workers

- Activities during grant period
- Strategies for sustaining effective practices after grant ends

Maintain Ongoing Focus on Potential of Older Workers

- Assess ongoing role for aging worker partnerships after end of grant
- Promote policies to promote aging workers within workforce development system

Change Employer Perceptions, Hiring Practices, and Job Descriptions

- Disseminate general media messages
- Incorporate messages about value of older workers into ongoing One-Stop employer services
- Work with particular "older worker friendly" employers

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Exhibit II-6:
Strategies for Addressing the Employment
Challenges Aging Workers Face

Grantee	Develop and Provide Occupational Skills Training	Respond to Other Training Needs of Aging Workers	Deliver Specialized Career Exploration and Employment Readiness Services
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X	X
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	X		
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	X		X
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	X	X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X	X	X
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	X	X	X
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	X	X	
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	X		X

computer skills to more elaborate programs that help older workers understand how their computers work and troubleshoot common computing problems.

In most projects, the computer skills training was not intended to give participants enough skills to enable them to obtain jobs in the IT field. For example, the goal of the "Empowering the Talents of a Silver Workforce" course offered by the Vermont project was to provide participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop their own resumes on the computer and submit the resume online or send it via e-mail in response to a job listing.

Strategy 3: Specialized Career Exploration and Employment Readiness Services

All of the AWI projects developed specialized employment services for older workers including (a) career awareness and job search tools and (b), workshops to help them better understand high-growth occupations, determine what skills are transferable, and learn interviewing skills.

As shown in Exhibit II-6, seven of the nine AWI projects had career exploration and employment readiness services specifically geared to providing older workers with tools and resources for their job searches. Staff members in one project, *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA), stated that older workers felt less inhibited in these customized job clubs because they could discuss issues and concerns without fear of being judged by younger workers. These specialized sessions also helped older workers tailor their resumes so as not to bring attention to their age, but rather focus on their employment experiences and skills sets.

A few projects used assessment tools specialized for older workers. The Maine project developed an initial assessment process to help counselors understand the existing skills sets of older workers and how those skills are applicable in new high-demand industry sectors. Most projects, however, used standardized assessments that had validity and reliability in the workforce development field, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), The COPS System Career Measurement System, Job Fit, and WorkKeys.

Objective 2: Recognize and Promote the Value of Aging Workers and Connect them to Jobs in High-Growth Industries

AWI projects had to promote the value of older workers and to encourage employers to hire or retain them, particularly in high growth industries. Grantees were encouraged to define "high-growth industry sectors" in the context of their local or regional economies and to target industries that were vital to sustained economic development. Exhibit II-7 provides an overview of the strategies that projects are using to connect aging workers to high-growth industry sectors.

Strategy 1: Training for Jobs in High-Growth Industries

All nine projects funded training to prepare workers to take advantage of job opportunities in high-growth, high-demand industries such as health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing, where there were likely to be solid career paths.

Strategy 2: Retention and Career Advancement of Incumbent Workers in High-Growth, High- Demand Industries

A few AWI projects were working closely with local employers to provide training to incumbent older workers in high-growth industry sectors. Three AWI projects—those in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Vermont—planned to provide or were providing skills training to employed older workers using AWI funds in order to help these individuals keep their skill sets up-to-date and remain employed. These projects were also hoping to help older workers progress up the career ladder and compete for higher-wage and higher-skill-set jobs within their designated industry sectors.

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Strategy 3: Outreach to Employers

Five projects reported that they were developing written materials about the benefits of hiring and retaining older workers for their local employer communities. For example, in Maine, the *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* project staff held dialogues with employers across the state to help dispel many of the negative perceptions employers have about hiring older workers. This project was also developing an assessment tool that employers could use to gauge their sensitivity to hiring and retaining older workers as well as a toolkit to help human resource department staff members review existing policies and procedures in order to make them more "senior-sensitive."

Exhibit II-7:
Strategies for Connecting Aging Workers to High-Growth Industries

Grantee	Training for New Jobs in High-Growth Industries	Upgrade Incumbent Worker Skills in High-Demand Industries	Improve Employer Perceptions of Older Workers
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X	
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	X	X	X
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	X		
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	X	X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X	X	
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.(VT)	X	X	X
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	X		X
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	X		

Objective 3: Build the Capacity of the Public Workforce Investment System to Serve Aging Workers

In order to ensure their efforts would be sustained after the AWI funding ends, a number of grantees were working to increase the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Exhibit II-8 provides a brief overview of such activities At the time of the site visits, many projects were in the beginning phases of developing materials and resources that could be used to improve service delivery to aging workers; more strategies may be identified during the second round of site visits.

Strategy 1: Train American Job Center and/or Partner Agency Staff Members about the Needs of Aging Workers

Respondents in six projects commented that in order to improve services to aging workers they planned to develop training for intake and case management staff on the needs of aging workers and how best to improve service delivery to this target group. This training was to be offered to staff members in their American Job Centers as well as partner program staff members. For example, the *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) conducted an internal assessment of all the available services to aging workers and provided full-day training to local American Job Center staff and partner agency staff on how to engage and address the employment and training needs of aging workers.

Strategy 2: Provide Special Service Locations or Staff for Older Workers

As shown in Exhibit II-8, seven of the nine projects had either created special service locations or had hired staff members that specialize in providing employment-related services to older workers. *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.*, for example, had created specialized kiosks in community-based organizations that serve a high volume of individuals 55 years of age and over. Across the AWI sites with staff and resources dedicated to older workers, staff members stated that these resources were particularly effective in providing a support system and guiding older workers to transition to reemployment or move into new career paths. AWI project staff from these sites said that participants in their projects tended to need more "hand-holding" and that having dedicated staff to motivate and encourage older workers was vital to their projects' success in serving older workers.

Strategy 3: Increase Integration of Project Services within the Existing Workforce Development System

Four projects had service designs that were intended to be highly integrated with other American Job Center services (i.e., WIA-funded core, intensive, and/or training services). A majority of these projects used existing American Job Center staff members to identify older workers from among the customers using their resource rooms and refer these older workers to the AWI project. In *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) and *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board*

Exhibit II-8:
Capacity-Building Activities

Grantee	Train American Job Center and Partner Staff	Provide Special Service Locations or Staff	Integration with One-Stops	Integration with SCSEP
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	High	Minimal
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X	Moderate	Minimal
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	X	X	Low	Minimal
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	X	X	High	Low
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	X	High	Minimal
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)		X	Moderate	Low
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)			Low	High
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	X	X	High	High
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)			High	High

(WI) participants were automatically enrolled in the adult or dislocated worker WIA programs and receive dual case management services from WIA and AWI program staff. Both of these projects were working to maximize training funds by combining available funding from existing programs (i.e., WIA or SCSEP) with AWI training funds.

Three AWI projects were trying to increase program integration by targeting SCSEP participants for co-enrollment in AWI. In Vermont, the SCSEP program operator was also the organization that provided pre-employment and case management services to AWI participants. The project also arranged for SCSEP work experience participants to serve as "navigators" or case managers for AWI participants. Staff in the Vermont project said that about one-third of AWI participants were co-enrolled in SCSEP in order to broaden the range of services available to participants in both programs (i.e., by combining work experience and training).

The remaining five projects had minimal integration and co-enrollment with SCSEP. Staff in these five projects commented that SCSEP customers, because of their lower skills and educational attainment levels, were not well suited to the industries targeted in AWI projects, as compared to recently dislocated older workers and sectors.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Building on the existing capacity of the workforce investment system and its partners and the need to build linkages with employers in high-growth industry sectors, each AWI grantee had developed specific project objectives that reflected the unique circumstances of the local economy and needs of aging workers.

- Grantees that are LWIBs or American Job Center operators were better positioned to integrate older worker services into the workforce investment system; however, smaller, nonprofit organizations offer more organizational flexibility and expertise serving older jobseekers.

- Local aging worker initiatives that existed prior to AWI were used to identify service gaps for job seekers, build education and outreach efforts to employers, and provide guidance and support to AWI projects.

- Serving multiple workforce service areas expanded the reach of AWI services, but may have limited the intensity of services and created challenges in reaching some participants, particularly older workers living in rural areas.

- Most of the projects were targeting recently dislocated older workers for AWI services; however, four projects also targeted employed older workers as well.

- Each project had developed strategies to further the three AWI goals.

- Industry sectors were targeted because state LMI data showed that occupational employment in these sectors was expected to increase, not because these occupations were particularly suited to the interests and skill sets of the AWI participants. Ensuring that the skills, abilities and interests of these older workers were related to targeted industries and occupations was a challenge in developing appropriate service strategies

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III. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROVIDING AND OVERSEEING SERVICES

To be successful in implementing the AWI grants and potentially build the capacity of the workforce system, grantees had to develop strong infrastructures that allowed them to recruit participants, provide education and training programs, and respond to the unique needs of aging workers. This chapter examines four important aspects of that infrastructure: staffing, community partnerships, leveraged resources, and project guidance and oversight.

Project Staffing

Grantees created relatively simple staffing structures to operate the projects, as grant funds were limited. While the overall amount of each award appears to be large, the dollar amount per year was relatively small and spread across large geographical areas. Investing heavily in staff salaries and benefits could reduce the amount and types of services available to participants. As a result, grantees looked to their partners to supplement the cost of AWI staffing and direct services. Nonetheless, some level of staff effort was required to administer and operate the project. Personnel involved with the project typically included a grantee agency administrator, an AWI project manager, some number of AWI case managers/navigators, and MIS data entry and/or fiscal staff members.

- **Grantee administrator.** Grantees typically used AWI funds to cover a small portion of the WIB or nonprofit administrator's time to provide guidance and oversight to the grant (see Exhibit III-1). Additional responsibilities included hiring the project manager and other staff members. The amount of time allocated to the project was between 0.10 and 0.45 FTE; this was divided among multiple administrators such as a Chief Executive Officer and a Chief Financial Officer. The projects that did not charge the grant for the time of grant administrators often relied on leveraged administrator time to perform these functions.

- **AWI project manager.** Across the projects, project managers carried the bulk of the project design and administrative workload. Responsibilities of project managers included developing the project's service design, defining policies and procedures, leading project outreach and recruitment efforts, training in-house and contract staff, coordinating with AWI partners, monitoring contracted service

providers, ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the data reporting system, and completing the quarterly federal reporting.

- **AWI case managers/navigators.** Projects relied on AWI case managers or navigators to work directly with participants. These staff members conducted formal or informal assessments, provided workshops for older workers, assisted with job search activities, identified training options, made referrals to service providers in the community, and monitored and tracked participation. Projects typically hired one or two case managers or navigators to work directly with participants. The intensity of their involvement varied by project.

- **MIS data entry/fiscal staff members.** A couple of projects used grant funds to pay for additional staff members to enter data into the MIS system and/or to manage fiscal responsibilities. For example, data security issues in Michigan require that one person enter all the data collected by the 30 AWI navigators. He or she spent roughly 30 hours per week on this activity. In other sites, these responsibilities were handled by the AWI project manager and/or case managers/navigators.

As shown in Exhibit III-1, six grantees used AWI funds to pay for a portion of the salary of grantee administrators. On average, they covered 0.9 FTE of combined administrator and AWI project manager salaries. All of the projects invested in an AWI project manager, though only three projects hired someone full-time and the rest allocated 20 hours per week or less to the staff member charged with carrying out administrator responsibilities. Staff members in these positions often either worked part-time or juggled multiple projects including AWI. In Wisconsin, where grant funds were split between Fox Valley and Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development areas, each service area had 0.25 FTE to manage the project and 0.5 FTE to handle case management responsibilities. In nearly all of the projects, the AWI project managers said that the time allocated to the AWI project did not adequately cover the actual time required. Underestimating the time required to administer the grants, most grantees had leveraged resources from other funding sources such as federal and state agencies and foundations to cover administrative and operating expenses.

Direct-service staff time was twice as high as the administrative time allocated for AWI activities. On average, grantees use AWI funds to pay for 2.00 FTE direct service staff members including case managers, navigators, and workshop instructors, compared to 0.90 FTE for project administrators. In addition, grantees often leveraged staff internally and through their partners in order to provide direct services to participants. For example, in Michigan, the grantee created 30 navigator positions housed within local American Job Centers and several nonprofit agencies across the service area. The grantee gave each participating agency $7,000 to cover a portion of the position; the remaining navigator costs were leveraged. *Vermont Associates* (VT) used SCSEP participants to serve as navigators, and their salary is covered by SCSEP.

Exhibit III-1:
Number of Paid Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) Devoted to AWI

Grantee	Grantee Administrator(s)	AWI Project Manager	AWI Case Manager/Navigator	Other [a]	Total
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	0.35	0.50	2.00	—	2.85
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	—	0.50	2.50 [b]	—	3.00
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	0.30	1.00	1.50 [b]	—	2.80
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	—	0.25	30 staff members ($7,000 per worker)	0.75	7.00 [c]
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	0.25	0.60	—	0.10	0.95
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	0.45	1.00	3.50 [d]	—	4.95
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	0.20 [e]	1.00	—	—	2.20
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	0.10	0.50	1.25 [b]	—	1.85
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	—	0.50	1.00 [b]	—	1.50

[a]   MIS data entry, invoicing, administrative functions. Michigan hired an MIS data entry at 0.75 FTE. Pennsylvania allocated 0.10 FTE to handle invoicing responsibilities.

[b]   Maine, Maryland, Washington, and Wisconsin contracted with American Job Centers to hire AWI staff members. Maryland contracted with the Center for 0.50 FTE for AWI staff members. The remaining 1.0 FTE are AWI grantee staff members.

[c]   Assumes each of the 30 navigators is staffed at 0.20 FTE.

[d]   Texas hired a full-time curriculum developer/instructor and a client services/data specialist who is hired at 0.50 FTE. Administrator time estimated based on grant application.

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Three grantees, *Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.* (ME), *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD), and *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board* (MI), relied on contracted service providers to handle AWI case management/navigator responsibilities.

Supplementing AWI project manager and case manager/navigator time with other funds expanded the resources available to the AWI project, but it often stretched staff thin. In most sites, AWI project managers split their time across multiple projects. In some sites, this was also true for direct service staff. Splitting time across multiple projects required project managers and staff members to learn policies and procedures, recruit participants, implement services, coordinate with project partners, and complete regular reporting requirements for each project for which they were responsible. Some reported that they were pulled in multiple directions with not enough time to juggle all the required tasks. The benefit of this arrangement was that it reduced the administrative and staffing costs to the AWI project and, in some cases, expanded resources available to AWI participants (for example, by co-enrolling them in SCSEP and WIA-funded programs).

Community Partners

Helping aging workers to overcome workforce challenges requires widespread efforts by workforce system partners, employers, educators, and workers. For this reason, strategic partnerships were included in the SGA as a critical element of AWI grants. Applicants were required to have partnerships with the public workforce investment system, educational institutions and training providers, and employers, industry associations, or business intermediaries (for example, chambers of commerce). Recommended partners included national, state, or local aging organizations (including SCSEP grantees); apprenticeship programs; and faith- and community-based organizations.

Grantees used AWI funds to build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. Existing partnerships were particularly important, as described earlier. Grantees in Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Washington, and Vermont all had partnerships that were built from previous older-worker initiatives. For example, in Vermont, the Vermont Older Workers Policy Summit held in 2008 provided the opportunity for Vermont Associates, the Vermont Department of Disability and Aging, and the state Department of Labor to convene to begin to design the AWI project.

Four grantees used the AWI project to forge new relationships with partners that they had not worked with in the past. Three of these grantees brought on one new partner, while the other brought on multiple new partners. For example, *Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.* (ME) hired Seasoned Workforce LLC, a new business owned by an older worker, to conduct Seasoned

Worker Forums (intended to motivate aging job seekers to reenter the labor market and to educate them about the training and job placement resources available through the AWI project). The *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) created a new partnership with Washington Community Alliance for Self-Help (CASH), a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that helps individuals create small businesses. In Michigan, the grantee formed a new relationship with the AARP Foundation. These partnerships may expand the resources available to grantees once the AWI grant ends.

In most of the projects, all the major partners—the public workforce investment system, educational institutions and training providers, employers and economic development entities, and aging organizations—were involved with the AWI grants. Exhibit III-2 provides a snapshot of the types of partners involved with the grants. Eight of the nine grantees engaged at least three different types of partners and most included multiple agencies within the same category. On average, a grantee had ten partners with whom it worked on the AWI project; the total number of partners ranges from five in Wisconsin to fifteen in Washington. Across the projects, there was typically a core group of three to five active partners while the remaining organizations were available as needed.

Exhibit III-2:
AWI Project Partners
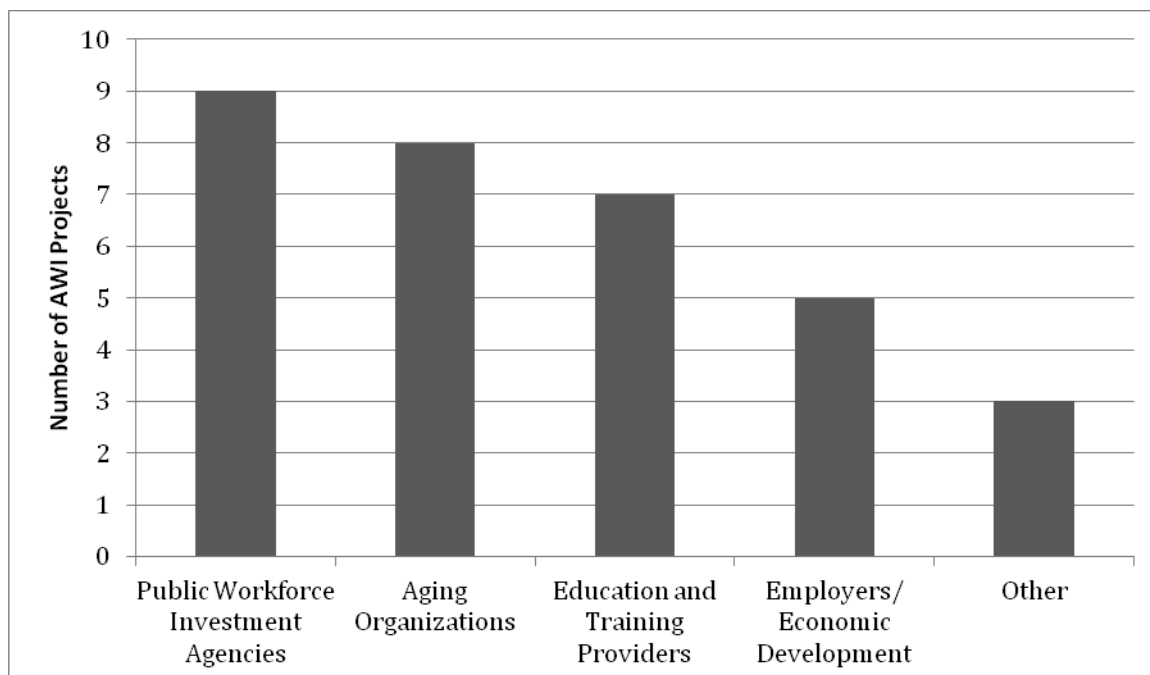
An important distinction can be made between partners that received AWI funds and those that did not. As shown in Exhibit III-3, seven grantees used AWI funds to pay for services provided by education and training providers, six for services provided by public workforce investment partners, three for services provided by aging organizations, and two for services provided by employers and/or economic development agencies.

Exhibit III-3:
Partners Receiving AWI Funding from Grantees

Grantee	Public Workforce Investment Partners	Education and Training Providers	Employers/ Economic Development Entities	Aging Organizations
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)		X		
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X		X
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	X	X	X	
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	X	X		X
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	X	X	X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)		X		
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)		X		
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	X	X		
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	X			

Relationships with partners also varied in their degree of formality. Generally, when a monetary exchange was involved—as is the case for the partnerships summarized in Exhibit III-3—the partnership was formalized with a subcontract. Seven grantees—those in the states of Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington—had formal subcontracts with at least one partner. Most partnership agreements, however, involved no monetary exchange and were governed by informal agreements or memoranda of understanding.

The types of partners and their roles are described in greater detail below.

Public Workforce Investment Agencies

In most of the AWI projects, workforce investment agencies were active partners that provided referrals, training opportunities, job placement services, and leveraged resources. In some sites, workforce agency administrators also participated as members of AWI project steering committees.

Five grantees created strong links to workforce investment agencies by arranging with local American Job Centers to provide AWI services. For example, the *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board* in Michigan and its partner LWIBs already had service provider contracts in place with the entities operating each of the 27 American Job Centers within the project's service area. To deliver case management services to AWI participants, the LWIB allocated contractors an additional $7,000 for each American Job Center, to help support the time of an individual designated as the "AWI navigator" in each Center. It also provided funding to three nonprofit agencies to help support a part-time AWI navigator. American Job Center managers handpicked staff members that they thought would make good AWI navigators and supported the remaining portion of the navigator's salary and all fringe benefits[5]. In some centers, the navigator worked full-time on AWI; on other projects he or she served a mix of AWI and WIA participants. In Pennsylvania, the grantee contracted with the Harrisburg Area Community College, which is also the local American Job Center provider. In Maine, the grantee contracted with its partner LWIBs to hire five part-time (0.5 FTE) AWI navigators. Some navigators split their time across multiple American Job Centers in order to cover the rural areas of the state. Most of the grantees relied on American Job Center staff members or co-located contractor staff members. Co-location of AWI staff members within American Job Centers provided a direct connection to the workforce investment system.

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[5] The portion of the navigator's time dedicated to the AWI project varied considerably across the Centers.

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As mentioned, two additional grantees—*Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD) and *Tecumseh Area Partnership* (IN)—were also the designated local American Job Center operator in their local area. Both organizations used their ability to influence the delivery of One-Stop core and intensives services to improve access to Center services by AWI participants. In Indiana, *Tecumseh Area Partnership* co-enrolled all AWI participants in WIA programs as a matter of policy. In the project operated by *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development*, unemployed participants (as distinguished from incumbent workers) were immediately enrolled and engaged in American Job Center services.

Despite having formal or informal relationships with WIA providers, grantees that were not also One-Stop providers still expressed some desire for stronger connections with the American Job Centers. Respondents at several AWI sites said that they should have involved American Job Center managers more in project planning to increase their buy-in to the project. Grantees who were nonprofit service providers and not formally connected with a American Job Center, such as *Vermont Associates* (VT) and *Goodwill Industries* (TX), made a more concerted effort to create relationships with Center administrators and staff members. For example, as the SCSEP provider, *Vermont Associates* (VT) has close ties with the workforce development system; in some service areas, SCSEP workers who were co-located in the Centers also served AWI participants who were eligible for SCSEP. *Goodwill Industries* was working to strengthen the relationship with the Gulf Coast WIB and engage it in the project. These grantees often referred participants to the American Job Centers. However, American Job Center staff members in these sites were typically not trained to serve older workers.

Educational Institutions and Training Providers

Educational institutions and training providers were central figures in providing skill-building activities for aging workers. All but one grantee included education and training providers as key entities in project activities. (The grantee referred individuals to existing courses at local technical colleges, after plans to work with two colleges to develop new training programs for aging workers fell through.) Most grantees partnered with one or two training providers. The exceptions were the grantee site in Vermont, which worked closely with five training providers, mostly public education institutions, and the grantee site in Washington, which involved both community colleges and a nonprofit agency.

Grantees relied on three different types of education and training providers, public postsecondary institutions, for-profit providers, and nonprofit organizations. The traditional public post-secondary educational institutions included local community and technical colleges that provide occupational training targeted toward a specific industry sector such as health care, manufacturing, or green jobs. Eight grantees had relationships with these entities. For example, the Pennsylvania grantee worked with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), one of the

largest training providers of workforce development programs in the region. HACC was involved with designing the AWI project and, at the time of the site visit, served on the AWI Project Advisory Committee. The University of Southern Maine was actively involved with the Maine grantee's AWI project. The University's Muskie School of Public Service trained employers by holding "Employer Dialogue" workshops designed to "sell" employers on the benefits of hiring aging workers. In addition, AWI participants could enroll in one of the many high-growth education and training programs offered at the University. In Texas, Houston Community College provides training onsite at *Goodwill Industries* (see boxed case example below). The benefit of involving local community colleges and vocational education providers was that they could provide training at a relatively low cost. The downside was that AWI participants were trained with other students who were typically younger, which could be challenging for some aging workers, particularly in courses that relied on computers or other learning technology.

Grantees also contracted with for-profit companies that provided customized training, typically computer training. For example, the Indiana grantee contracted with ExecTrain for a basic computer skills training course called "Build Me/Keep Me" while the grantee in Vermont contracted with Knowledge Wave to provide computer courses tailored to older workers. Respondents said that these courses were designed to engage and support those with limited computer experience. While these services were often more costly than other public-sector-based trainings, they were thought by respondents to use a pedagogy adapted to the needs of older learners.

Finally, some grantees forged partnerships with local nonprofit agencies to provide customized training. In Washington, Washington CASH, a microenterprise development organization, offered entrepreneurial classes to AWI participants. In Texas, *Goodwill Industries* used grant funds to pay for training provided by the Goodwill Academy of Career Development, which offered self-paced training in a variety of office skills courses such as Microsoft Office, customer service, and accounting/bookkeeping. At the time of the site visit, this grantee was in the process of adding the Alliance for Multicultural Community Services to the provider list to conduct entrepreneurial training. Nonprofits typically had strong ties to the community and were able to recruit participants to the AWI project. In addition, they typically were through to understand and be responsive to the needs of disadvantaged populations.

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Case Example: Education Provider Improving Accessibility

Houston Community College Holds Classes Onsite at Goodwill Industries of Houston

Houston Community College (HCC) provided a variety of occupational skills and educational training to AWI participants. Unique to the AWI project was the provision of classes onsite at the grantee's location as well as on campus. In addition, onsite training courses were targeted to aging workers and designed with these workers' needs and strengths in mind. At the time of the site visit, HCC had two computer courses at *Goodwill Industries* (TX). Each course was held four hours per week for six weeks and served up to eight participants. Still in the planning stage at the time of the site visit was a comprehensive office training course for up to 15 AWI participants. This 40-hour course was to be structured as a one-week training session and tailored to an older population.

Employers and Economic Development Agencies

Employers, industry associations, and business intermediaries were listed in the SGA as key players to help shape the project's strategies and goals. ETA envisioned that employers would be actively involved with promoting flexible work arrangements, identifying needed skills and competencies for training purposes, and hiring qualified graduates.

Even though five grantees named employers and economic development agencies as partners, their level of involvement varied considerably. Indeed, employers, industry associations, and business intermediaries were less involved with AWI grant activities than grantees had hoped. Most grantees had peripheral relationships with employers in which the employers served on steering committees for local aging initiatives or where there was an effort to educate employers about the benefits of hiring aging workers.

Two grantees had created mutually beneficial relationships with the business community. In these projects, the business entities had encouraged the grantee to apply for AWI funds in order to strengthen and expand their respective industries. In Maryland, the healthcare industry had been a leader in encouraging and supporting the AWI grant. The Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH) helped write the original grant application and had been involved with formulating the ongoing project goals and operations. Both BACH and LifeBridge, a consortium of health care providers, received AWI grant funds to support their roles in project operations. In Pennsylvania, local Industry Partnerships initiated by the LWIB under a previous initiative, encouraged the board to apply for grant funds to expand incumbent worker training to older employees in the targeted high-growth industries. Through the Industry Partnership, three employer associations—the Technology Council of Central PA, Executive Directions, and the Manufacturing Association of South Central PA—were actively involved in grant planning,

providing leveraged resources, and providing services (as contractors) in the AWI project. The Industry Partnerships also developed relationships with educational institutions and training providers to provide industry-appropriate training opportunities.

Engaging employers to serve older workers or disadvantaged populations was often difficult, for several reasons. First, businesses that were not actively hiring may not have seen the value in participating in AWI and even though the economy was reportedly in recovery, job growth was slow. Second, the high-growth industries targeted for the project (for example, health care and information technology) may not have been a good fit for the older population. These jobs typically required heavy lifting and/or the use of computer technology, both of which were sometimes barriers to employment for older workers. Finally, staff time for engaging the business communities was limited. Given the demands during the initial start-up period, AWI project managers may not have had time to engage the business community fully. In projects that had strong relationships with the business community, these partnerships were created prior to AWI.

Organizations Serving the Aged

Organizations providing services to older workers were important partners. They were able to bring content expertise and connections to the aging population. AWI grantees engaged these organizations to obtain input during the planning and development phase as well as to provide content recommendations for curriculum and skill-building training programs for older workers. Some grantees also relied on these organizations to educate employers about the benefits of hiring older workers.

All but one of the grantees actively partnered with at least one organization serving older individuals. As mentioned, three of the grantees were SCSEP providers and most of the other grantees had strong connections with this program. For example, in Maine, one of the contracted American Job Center operators, *Goodwill Industries*, also operated the SCSEP program in the area. The "navigator" hired to work with AWI participants split her time between the AWI and SCSEP programs, which allowed her to co-enroll eligible participants. The Vermont grantee, a recognized leader in aging services for more than 27 years, was the primary SCSEP provider and was described as the "go to" resource for older workers in the state of Vermont.

State and local departments of aging also could provide AWI grantees with relevant expertise on aging adults and information on the local service environment and federal and/or state policies and resources available to aging workers. Five AWI projects indicated that they had involved state and/or local aging departments. In Maryland, the Baltimore County Department of Aging (DOA) was an active partner in the AWI project from the beginning. DOA staff members marketed the AWI project to job seekers and employers and trained employers on how to

effectively use aging workers to increase productivity. *Vermont Associates* had a longstanding working relationship with the Vermont Department of Aging and Disabilities, where they provide work supports and accommodations for aging workers, including AWI participants.

AARP was involved in four of the nine projects. In Michigan, AARP gave AWI participants unlimited access to the WorkSearch assessment tool, which was designed to identify the career interests of workers. In other states, AARP participated on the steering committees for AWI.

Other Community Partners

Other types of organizations partnered with AWI grantees, but typically weren't active players in the projects. They served on a project's steering committee or provided supportive services to the aging population as needed. The Michigan grantee included Southeast Michigan Community Foundation, United Way of Southeast Michigan Senior Collaborative, and Jewish Vocational Services in its initial grant planning. These organizations have not played a major role since the initial implementation, but were available if needed. In Texas, *Goodwill Industries* referred participants to agencies in the community for supportive services. In addition, volunteers at the Senior Corps of Retired Executives helped facilitate mock interviews with AWI participants and were planning to create a volunteer mentoring program and networking training for aging jobseekers.

Leveraged Resources

Grantees and their partners brought a wealth of monetary and nonmonetary resources to the AWI projects in addition to their federal grant funds. However, according to grantee administrators, the amount of leveraged funds reported to the Department of Labor was often lower than the amount actually leveraged. According to the federal reporting requirements, leveraged funds must be documented well enough that an auditor could verify the reported amount. Some AWI project managers said that they had not been able to report the total amount of leveraged resources because it would have been very time consuming and burdensome for their partners if they had asked for the documentation necessary to substantiate the amounts of leveraged resources, should they be audited. The standard practice of co-enrolling AWI participants in SCSEP- or WIA-funded services was another reason for the possible under-reporting of leveraged resources as the additional work supports, and specialized services they made available to participants were difficult to document as leveraged resources.

Grantee administrators and AWI project managers identified the following sources of leveraged resources:

- **Staff Salary/Time.** Staff salary and time were donated to the AWI project at two levels. First, partner agency administrators give their time to participate in project

planning meetings and oversight committees for the ongoing implementation of AWI projects. Second, projects leverage staff salary and time to provide direct services. All or a portion of navigator and/or case management staff members were leveraged from other funding sources, such as WIA, state grants, and private foundations. For example, in Maine, the grantee leveraged the cost of the time that American Job Center managers spent supervising AWI navigators who worked within the American Job Centers. Grantee staff also leveraged the cost of the time spent by individuals who participated in the AWI Grants Management Team.

- **Operating Expenses/Overhead.** Staff members from six of the projects said they leveraged funds internally or from their partners to cover project operating expenses and overhead. These resources included office space, computer equipment, telephones, and classrooms.

- **Direct Services/Training.** Nearly half of the grantees said that they leveraged the cost of providing direct services, such as workshops and job placement services. For example, in Pennsylvania, the employer pays 25 percent of the cost of training for incumbent workers while the AWI project funds the remaining 75 percent. In Maine, the grantee leverages the cost of computer classes provided by the Auburn Library. As previously mentioned, co-enrolling participants in WIA and/or SCSEP helps expand the direct services, training, and supportive services resources available to participants.

Project Guidance and Oversight

Guidance and oversight ensured that the AWI projects stayed on track toward accomplishing the intended objectives of the grants. AWI grantees used several mechanisms for such monitoring and oversight, including formal agency governing boards, internal AWI project teams, and external steering committees. These entities, which helped to define AWI policy, exchange information about aging workers, identify needed community resources, and develop sustainability plans for continuing services once the grant ended, are described below.

- **Agency Governing Boards**. Each of the grantees worked under a board that was responsible for providing guidance on the agency's goals and overseeing its operations. These boards were concerned primarily with the health and well-being of the grantee agency as an organization and typically included individuals within the community and top agency administrators. The boards discussed issues related to AWI as needed but they had the potential to expand the marketing outreach of the AWI project and increase the types and amount of resources available.

- **Internal AWI Project Teams**. Four of the grantees created formal internal project teams that meet regularly to discuss AWI project operations and identify and resolve issues. These teams differed from the grantee governing boards in that they are made up entirely of grantee staff members and, if relevant, staff members and administrators of contracted service providers. In addition, these

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teams' sole focus was the AWI project. For example, in the Indiana project, the AWI Implementation Team included the agency Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operations Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and the AWI project manager. They met monthly to review project goals and progress. Managers leading projects that didn't create formal AWI teams said that they contacted agency administrators as needed for any major project decisions.

- **Interagency Steering Committees**. Six of the grantees had interagency AWI steering committees or project advisory teams with representatives from the grantee and from outside partners. These committees met regularly, typically monthly or quarterly, to provide feedback and advice for operating and sustaining the projects for which they are responsible. Grantees used these teams to exchange information and leverage resources from project partners. In Maryland, the steering committee meets every other month, or more frequently if needed, and creates subcommittees to explore ideas for improving employer outreach and expanding training opportunities. In Pennsylvania, the AWI Project Advisory Team held a strategic planning retreat to discuss the goals and operations of the AWI project. Interagency steering committees brought to their AWI projects the same community outreach benefits as agency governing boards. However, the steering committees were typically more focused on the quality of the service environment for older workers and less focused on the grantee's organizational health.

- **Technical Assistance.** Using a grant received from Atlantic Philanthropies, the Center for Adult Education and Learning (CAEL) provided training and technical assistance (TA) to AWI grantees. CAEL paid for the grantees to come together for periodic meetings and workshops, provided onsite program assessments and technical assistance, and offered ongoing guidance and support to AWI project managers.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Direct service staff time was twice as high as administrative time allocated for AWI activities. Grantees typically supplemented these positions with other funds, which stretches staff members across multiple projects.

- Grantees relied on partnerships created prior to AWI to expand expertise and resources available to AWI projects; however, employers and economic development entities were often difficult to engage.

- Projects leveraged many different types of resources from project partners, but some grantees were not fully documenting the leveraged funds.

- Grantee governing boards, internal AWI project teams, and interagency steering committees provided guidance, expanded resources, and encouraged the sustainability of AWI projects.

IV. TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED

A central objective of the Aging Worker Initiative is to develop effective services to help older workers achieve their employment goals. In this chapter, we examine both *what* services were offered, and *how* they were provided. The chapter discusses the broad principles which seemed to underlie service delivery as well as services in multiple areas: recruitment, assessment, career counseling and employment planning, job readiness activities, training in basic computer skills, occupational skills training for unemployed workers, entrepreneurship training, case management, and job search and placement assistance. A final section describes how projects have used service linkages with other programs, such as WIA and SCSEP, to further the goal of meeting aging workers' employment needs.

Principles for Tailoring Services to Aging Workers

After talking with the AWI grantees and reviewing their service philosophies and designs, the evaluation staff identified six principles of customer service that seemed to guide most of the AWI projects (though each project implemented these principles in different ways). The principles were:

- Support and build customer confidence.

- Help customers develop clear employment goals.

- Provide instruction about up-to-date and effective job search practices and provide support for job search activities.

- Improve customers' facility with computers and provide opportunities to practice computer skills.

- Offer customers opportunities to participate in occupational training relevant to their interests and needs.

- Help customers prepare for career paths that will generate a desired level of income, and support their career advancement over time.

Below we summarize what program managers have told us about the typical needs of older workers, how these needs translate into the principles, and how the principles influenced the

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design of AWI project services. Exhibit IV-1 summarizes how the six principles were reflected in specific services offered by the AWI projects.

Support and build customer confidence. AWI staff at the different projects agreed that older workers usually benefitted from a higher level of individualized attention than other American Job Center customers, due to their relative inexperience looking for a job and their lack of confidence. "Lots of personal interactions and a high level of customer support is what sets the AWI program apart," said one AWI case manager. The AWI case managers in another project say their focus is on creating a safe and supportive environment for the mature worker, based on the development of a trusting and supportive relationship with project staff. Projects employed two different strategies to provide individualized support: 1) using case managers that are able to provide such support and 2) creating opportunities for older workers to build supportive peer relationships though such means as group workshops and having older workers attend training with a cohort of other project participants.

Help customers develop clear employment goals. Grantees reported that older workers were often out of touch with the variety of occupational choices available in the economy and didn't know how their previous experience and skills might be relevant to available jobs. As a result, key service components in most AWI projects included a sequence of activities to help older workers assess their interests and aptitudes, identify transferrable skills, focus on what kind of career path they wanted to pursue, and what they will need to do to reach their chosen employment goal. A few projects were trying to develop unpaid internships for older workers so that they could experience working in a particular field before they committed to participating in a training program in that field.

Provide instruction about effective job-search practices. AWI participants were often unfamiliar with current job search procedures and technologies. In addition, they often struggled to market their skills and experiences to potential employers. To address these needs, the AWI projects offered instruction in job search skills—including how to use online job search tools—in a variety of formats in both individual and group settings.

Increase customers' facility with computers and help them learn how to use the software most frequently used in the workplace. Staff members from all nine AWI projects said the lack of computer skills was an important barrier to employment for many older workers. It prevented many from using the online career exploration and job search tools available in American Job Centers and prevented them from submitting online resumes or filling out online

Exhibit IV-1:
How AWI Services are Designed to Benefit Older Workers

Support and build customer confidence	→	✓ Peer group support ✓ Intensive case management
Help customers develop clear employment goals	→	✓ Career exploration ✓ Assessment of transferrable skills ✓ Work with case manager to develop employment goals ✓ Internships in field of interest
Provide instruction about up-to-date job search practices	→	✓ Job search training ✓ Job search and job placement support
Improve customers' facility with computers and provide opportunities to practice computer skills	→	✓ Computer literacy and basic computer skills training
Offer customers opportunities to participate in training to update and enhance skills	→	✓ Courses adapted for older workers ✓ Cohort-size classes specifically for older workers ✓ Relatively brief courses ✓ Requirement to do research on training providers before requesting training
Help customers prepare for career paths likely to generate a desired level of income	→	✓ Labor market information and assistance developing an employment plan ✓ Job search training ✓ Recommendations for occupational skills training

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applications for available jobs. Furthermore, a lack of training and experience in using basic software applications in an office environment put many older workers at a disadvantage when looking for jobs in settings where computers were used as a work tool.   Most projects attempted to address the need for such computer skills and used three methods: embedding computer literacy skills into a larger pre-employment skills training workshop for older workers, offering free-standing computer training designed specifically for the AWI project, or referring participants to computer skills courses or workshops available in the American Job Center or other community agencies or institutions.

Provide opportunities for occupational training relevant to customers' areas of interest, preferences, and needs. Project designers said that aging workers could benefit from occupational skills training that gave them new skills relevant to a demand occupation or upgraded their existing occupational skills. Typically, however, older workers had not been in a classroom environment for a number of years, making the thought of enrolling in classroom training daunting. Furthermore, many AWI participants, particularly if they have been unemployed for an extended period of time, had pressing financial needs and wanted to find immediate employment. The projects developed a number of different strategies to make training responsive to the preferences and needs of their participants, including (1) relatively short-term training modules, (2) training on-site at the AWI project, (3) adaptations of existing curricula to present the content more slowly and with more opportunity for students to ask questions, and (4) arranged for older workers to attend classes as a group, so they would not be intimidated by other students who were able to progress at a faster rate. Several AWI projects encouraged participants to research available training providers and courses, sit in on classes, or complete pre-requisite activities or preparatory courses to help them decide prior to enrollment, if they want to participate in the occupational training available through the project.

Help prepare customers for career paths likely to generate a desired level of income. Many older workers seeking services through AWI programs had had long tenure in their previous jobs and expected the wages at their new employers to be similar to their prior wages. Sometimes these wage goals were not realistic for the jobs available to them. The labor market information and career exploration services mentioned as key project services were thus important to help participants understand the prevailing wages in the fields in which they were interested and the types of training they might need to get certain jobs. Project staff also sometimes encouraged participants to enroll in occupational training that would lead to career path with higher wages in the future.

Outreach and Recruitment

The recruitment of older workers for participation in the AWI projects could have posed serious challenges. Initially, projects anticipated that they would have to develop new outreach strategies to recruit older workers who were not already American Job Center customers. They feared that older workers would be less likely to know about the public workforce investment system and more reluctant to ask for help. However, according to case managers and program directors across all nine sites visited, the negative economic climate and high unemployment rates made recruitment of AWI participants easier than originally expected. For example, *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) and *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI) originally planned special activities to recruit older workers, but the high level of customer interest early in project implementation made these efforts unnecessary. At the time of the site visits, both grantees said the high level of interest in the AWI program has forced them to create waiting lists.

As shown in Exhibit IV-2, the most commonly used and successful recruitment strategies across the nine projects involved reaching out to existing American Job Center customers. Because five grantees are Workforce Investment Boards that oversee the delivery of services within American Job Centers, and two additional grantees are American Job Center operators, outreach to Career Center customers was a natural focus for AWI recruitment efforts. The remaining two grantees (in Texas and Vermont) also had good relationships with the public workforce development system, allowing for easy access to American Job Center customers and staff members for recruitment efforts. Seven sites (those in Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin) reported that referrals from American Job Centers were their primary sources of recruitment for older workers who are unemployed. Several sites estimate that 80 to 85 percent of all AWI participants were directly referred to the program by American Job Center staff members.

Strategies for recruiting American Job Center customers most often include giving presentations to case managers and staff members about the existence of the AWI program, the types of customers projects were seeking, and the services and benefits the AWI program could offer older workers in the community. *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD)*, Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI), *and South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) also had developed program-specific flyers and outreach materials to display at American Job Centers.

While American Job Centers were a major source for recruiting project participants, not all older workers were familiar with the existing public workforce system. Thus, referrals from partner organizations and agencies, typically those that also provided services to older workers, were also a significant source of project customers for a number of grantees. As shown in Exhibit IV-

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2, the most important referral sources, in order of frequency mentioned, included SCSEP program operators, other community-based organizations, Unemployment Insurance(UI)/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and adult basic education providers.

Exhibit IV-2:
Outreach and Referral Strategies

Grantee	Outreach to One-Stop Career Centers	Outreach to Organizations Serving Older Workers and Other Agencies	Broader or Specialized Community Outreach
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	SCSEP Operator, Adult Basic Education	• Presentations to community agencies • Letters mailed to all UI recipients over 55 years old
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	SCSEP Operator	• "Seasoned Worker" Forums • One-stop kiosks in agencies serving older workers
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	**X** **(unemployed workers)**		• Local "town hall" meeting • Presentations and flyers at local hospitals (incumbent workers) • Information posted on the state website
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	X	Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Services	
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	**X** **(unemployed workers)**	SCSEP Operator	• Industry Partnership Coordinators (incumbent workers)
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X		• Presentations and flyers to community agencies
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	X	SCSEP Operator	• Announcements in AARP newsletter • Project staff contact people on list provided by State Department of Labor (all 55+ workers who have contacted the state's about job listings)
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	X	SCSEP Operators	• Presentations to community agencies
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	X	SCSEP Operator	

*Note: Items in **bold print** are the outreach and recruitment activities that generated the largest number of participants for each project. (The projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania used different recruitment strategies to reach incumbent workers and unemployed workers)*

In addition to referrals from partner organizations and agencies, three grantees implemented distinctive recruitment strategies targeted to the community at large. *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) obtained unemployment insurance records from the state and conducted targeted mailings of recruitment materials to UI recipients in the area who are 55 years of age or older. Staff members estimated that 15 percent of project participants were recruited through the mailings. *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) developed a series of Seasoned Worker Forums to be held in locations throughout the state specifically for the AWI program. The forum, designed to reach 3,200 older workers over the course of the grant, were to provide information about AWI services, with AWI "navigators" present to answer questions and enroll interested individuals in the program. Similarly, in Maryland, the *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* held a "town hall meeting" to advertise the AWI program to potential participants. Staff members said that more than 100 individuals attended the meeting and that it was a positive recruitment tool for the program.

While most sites reported that the high demand for training and employment services among individuals over 55 had made recruitment easy, two sites experienced some enrollment difficulties. In both cases, the project's narrow definition for its targeted customers or targeted occupations caused or exacerbated the enrollment difficulties. The *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) had difficulties finding participants who were interested in the occupations it targeted. Its recruitment challenges were compounded by the project targeting older workers who had specific barriers to employment (limited English, ex-offenders, and disabled). Case managers said it was hardest recruiting ex-offenders for the program, as most of the potential participants who belonged to this subgroup were not interested in any of the industry tracks available. *Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.* (VT) also found that it was difficult to match the occupational skills, interests, and physical capacities of the older workers it recruited with the occupations it had targeted for training. Since this project did not serve participants unless they were interested in training, it was forced to turn away many of the older workers who initially responded to its outreach efforts. A late start-up also reduced enrollment numbers for this project. Despite these early impediments to recruitment, both Washington and Vermont improved their enrollment numbers and were on track to meet their enrollment targets.

AWI Service Components

The nine AWI grantees had developed a variety of services to address the needs of aging workers and their barriers to education and employment. Some sites had developed workshops or training programs designed specifically for older workers. Other sites tailored certain aspects of existing services to meet the needs of older workers. Still others packaged already-existing

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services used with the general public to make these services available to project participants using the AWI funding.

While grantees used similar service components, they packaged and sequenced these services differently. The service components generally fall into eight categories: assessment; career counseling and employment planning; job readiness activities; training in basic computer skills; occupational skills training; case management; training for small business development; and job search and job placement assistance. In this section, we describe how the various projects packaged these services to meet the needs of the older workers.

Assessment

Due to the high level of interest in the AWI projects and the limited funds distributed through the grant, grantees often used formal or informal assessment procedures to determine whether an applicant should be enrolled in the project. As a case manager from *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) said, "The first step in serving older workers is helping to determine if [the AWI program] will be beneficial for the individual and if they are really employable."

For many projects, this included an informal interview with prospective clients to assess whether they were interested in the services and had the background skills and abilities to be good candidates for the targeted occupations or industries.

Six of the nine sites integrated formal assessments into their older worker program. Projects that emphasized enrolling AWI participants in one of a pre-specified set of training options used formal assessments as part of the screening process to see if the applicant has the prerequisite background and educational skills needed to enter the proposed training. Projects that referred participants to employers for posted job openings often used formal assessments to determine if the individual had the skills that the employer is seeking.

Skill testing was part of the assessment process in many sites and projects found that existing assessment instruments were effective for use with aging workers. The two most frequently used formal tests were the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), which assesses an individual's mastery of basic writing, English language, and math skills, and WorkKeys, which tests foundational and personal skills as well as determining the compatibility of the test-taker's skills with specific jobs.

Career Counseling and Employment Planning

As described earlier, many AWI participants lacked information about current labor market opportunities. Career counseling services, therefore, became a critical service component for many AWI projects. As unemployed older workers embarked on new careers, it was important

for them to know what job opportunities existed in their local regions. According to the AWI case managers, it was also important to make sure customers understood how much they will be able to earn in the occupations they were considering, the amount of time and training that will be needed to reach their initial employment goals, and the opportunities that will be available for career and salary advancement.

The intensity and delivery of career counseling and employment planning services varied across projects. At a minimum, staff members from each site talked with customers about their career options and goals as part of the initial orientation or intake sessions.

As shown in Exhibit IV-3, all nine projects offered career counseling and employment planning services to AWI participants. These services were most often provided one-on-one, allowing staff members to individualize the services to each individual. Case managers emphasize that career exploration and planning was an on-going process that starts during the first one-on-one session and continues until the participant achieves his or her employment goal. Most sites relied on pre-existing career counseling services available within the local American Job Center through Wagner-Peyser (Employment Service) or WIA funding. Projects in Indiana, Vermont, Michigan, and Wisconsin frequently referred AWI participants to self-service or to career exploration and employment planning services available within the local American Job Center.

Three sites offered career exploration services through activities that have been designed specifically for AWI participants. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the AWI project in *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) has developed "Seasoned Worker Forums," which, in addition to recruiting participants, included presentations by employers about job and career opportunities available to aging workers in the state. Similarly, *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) had employers give presentations to AWI participants about potential career options. *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) puts a lot of emphasis on making sure participants understand the time and effort necessary to achieve their desired career goals as well as the type of work they would actually be doing on a day-to-day basis once they found employment. Case managers required participants to talk with several different employers and training providers in their desired career fields and report on what they learn. These "homework" assignments occurred prior to AWI enrollment to make sure participants made informed career and training decisions.

Exhibit IV-3:
Career Counseling and Employment Planning Services

	Description of Services	Delivery Method
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Case manager assistance with career planning and IEP development	One-on-One
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Use of career awareness tools (O*Net) and American Job Center labor market exploration tools	Self-Service
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	**Career Transition Workshops** are targeted to older workers. Project offers workshops on many topics, including identifying transferrable skills and abilities.	Group Workshop
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	During **Older Worker Forums** employers talk about work opportunities for older workers	Group Presentation
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Individual career counseling sessions with AWI Navigator	One-on-One
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	Career coaches provide career guidance and help with career planning	One-on-One
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Individualized assisted career counseling	One-on-One
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development	One-on-One
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development	One-on-One
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	**"Yes You Can:"** mandatory 3-day workshop, designed for AWI participants, includes some career exploration and career planning exercises	Group Workshop
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Individualized career counseling and career exploration	One-on-One
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development	One-on-One
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling	One-on-One

Job Readiness Activities

Job readiness activities provided AWI participants with important skills to improve their abilities to find and keep jobs. Typically, the skills emphasized in job readiness activities included resume development, interviewing, writing cover letters, knowing what to expect in the workplace, team-building, and communication. When provided in a group setting, as many AWI programs elected to do, these services helped garner peer support among AWI participants and allowed them to develop relationships with fellow older workers for encouragement and advice.

While the career planning services discussed above were predominately provided one-on-one, most AWI projects provided job readiness activities in a group setting specifically designed for older workers (see examples in the box below). As one case manager from the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) remarked, it could be beneficial for AWI participants to know that "they are not the only ones trying to get back into the workforce."

As shown in Exhibit IV-4, five of the nine sites offered at least one specialized job readiness workshop/class for AWI participants. In contrast, four projects delivered job readiness services in one-on-one sessions with AWI case managers, and referred participants to job readiness workshops offered to the general public in American Job Centers. Only one grantee, the *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD), did not offer job readiness its menu of services.

Case Examples: Job Readiness Workshop(s) Developed Specifically for AWI Participants

Weekly Meetings with Rotating Job Readiness Topics

In the project run by *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN), AWI participants were required to attend at least one Career Transition Hub meeting per month, even after they had started occupational training. Staff members stated that these meetings were one of the key service components of the AWI program. Facilitated by the Aging Worker Specialists (with help from partner-funded program staff members), the weekly meetings were tailored to the needs of aging workers. Some sessions, such as one entitled "Top 60 Occupations," were specifically geared toward building career awareness.

A Comprehensive Job Readiness Workshop for Aging Workers

In Maine, *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* worked with CAEL to help modify a workshop developed for mature workers by the state's Adult Basic Education agency and the state's Department of Labor. *Work Ready 55+* was a comprehensive work readiness workshop covering a variety of topics including job search, job readiness, resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, and basic computer skills. The grantee planned to hold workshops five hours per day, four days a week for three consecutive weeks, for a total of 60 hours. Sixteen sessions were to occur across the state, with 10–15 participants per session. The goal was to have the *Work Ready 55+* classes up and running for the second and third years of the grant.

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Exhibit IV-4:
Job Readiness Activities

	Description of Services	Delivery Method
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Case manager provides pre-employment skills training as needed.	One-on-One
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	"Career Transition Hubs" are weekly meetings targeted to older workers and their needs. Topics rotate. Participants must attend at least one meeting per month.	Group Workshops
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	"Work Ready 55+" workshop curriculum, tailored for aging workers, covers job search, job readiness, resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, and computer skills	Group Workshop
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	None	N/A
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Staff members work with customers to make sure they are properly prepared for job search and employment.	One-on-One
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Project refers participants to American Job Center workshops as needed; workshops topics include interviewing, cover letters, dressing for success, computer basics, and resume development.	Group Workshops
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	AWI specialists help with minor pre-training skill development.	One-on-One
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Project refers participants to American Job Center workshops, if needed, for comprehensive job readiness training.	Group Workshops
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	"Set Up for Success"" is an optional two-day workshop, specially designed for AWI participants, that covers job readiness skills such as resume writing and interviews	Group Workshop
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	• "Empowering the Talents of a Silver Workforce" workshop trains participants to use computers to support job search efforts (e.g. how to create and send a resume). This course is tailored to the needs of older workers. The community and technical college system also offers a credential in work readiness.	Group Workshop
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	AWI case managers provide pre-employment skills training covering resume writing and interviewing.	One-on-One
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	The "Myths of the Mature Worker" is a job readiness workshop tailored to the needs of aging workers. This workshop was in place within the American Job Centers before the AWI grant started.	Group Workshop
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Refers participants to American Job Center workshops that are not tailored to the needs of older workers.	Group Workshops

Computer Literacy and Training in Computer Skills

Most AWI case managers cited the lack of familiarity with computers as being one of the biggest barriers facing AWI participants. To address participants' need for computer literacy in the current job market, a majority of AWI grantees had developed computer skills training for older workers. Even sites that did not develop such training usually referred interested AWI participants to local computer training courses. As shown in more detail in Exhibit C-1 in Appendix C, eight of the nine grantees arranged for interested AWI participants to access some type of basic computer training. Five of the grantees designed new computer-training courses for the AWI program or modified previously existing computer training programs to meet the needs of older workers. Some sites offered only a short introduction to computers or integrated a one-day-long computer literacy training into a more comprehensive pre-employment skills training.

With the exception of the projects in Indiana and Texas, the computer skills provided were "foundation skills." While important for building general job search and workplace skills, these foundation courses were not intended to prepare participants for specific computer-related occupations. In contrast, the projects in Texas and Indiana developed more intensive computer training programs for AWI grantees; the course developed in the Indiana project is described in the box below.

Case Study Example: Providing Computer Training for Aging Workers

Training Mature Workers to be Certified Computer Support Specialists

Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. contracted with ExecuTrain, a proprietary training institute, to design and provide a computer training course for older workers at the ExecuTrain facility. Staff members described this course as an intensive 96-hour training program for older workers with limited computer skills. The *Build Me Up* program covered basic computer skills related to computer operation, keyboarding, e-mail, internet navigation, and working with Microsoft Office/OS 7. The program, though, went beyond basic computer skills and taught participants about computer architecture, computer assembly, and troubleshooting for desktop computers. After successful completion of the training, a participant was a certified Computer Support Specialist and Customer Service Specialist through the International Business and Training Association (IBTA) and received a desktop computer and 17" monitor. The *Build Me Up* training program was modified for mature workers -- providing them with additional time to complete certain coursework, limiting the intensity of certain topics, and stretching the training over a longer time period.

Some of the grantees that did not elect to develop or customize computer training for AWI participants still recognized the importance of providing their customers with basic computer skills. Three grantees (Michigan, Vermont, and Wisconsin) believed that previously existing computer training workshops and services offered at local American Job Centers or by other community agencies were adequate to provide AWI participants with the necessary computer training.

Occupational Skills Training

Most AWI grantees emphasized enhancing the marketable skills of older workers to better equip them for employment in the current economy. In this section, we describe how the projects designed and were delivering occupational skills training to unemployed older workers. (In Chapter V, we describe how two projects developed training components for incumbent workers.)

Classroom training in occupational skills was the main strategy used to improve the skills and marketability of older workers. As shown in Exhibit IV-5, seven grantees (those in Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin) used grant funds to provide at least some participants with training in occupational skills as a core component of their AWI program services. These projects use two different service delivery arrangements: (1) training occurred in courses initiated specifically for the AWI participants and purchased on behalf of a class-size group of participants (first column in Exhibit IV-5), and (2) individuals enrolled in existing courses offered by educational institutions and other approved training providers and have the costs of the training covered by "individual scholarships" or "ITAs" (second column in Exhibit IV-5).

Two projects—those in Michigan and Vermont—referred participants to other sources of training (third column in the exhibit). In the case of the Vermont project, the decision to help broker training for older workers from other sources was based on the availability of training from other community agencies and state-funded programs. The Michigan project had hoped to be able to leverage WIA funding to provide occupational skills training for its enrollees. When WIA funds were not available as expected, this led to unforeseen difficulties in realizing this project's intended service design.

Exhibit IV-5:
Overview of Occupational Training Offerings

	Grant-funded Training		Training Available Primarily through Referral to Other Programs
	Class-Size Occupational Training for AWI Participants	Individuals Have Training Costs Covered by "Scholarships"	
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X[1]	X	
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)		X	
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	X[2]	X	
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)			X
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)		X	
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X[a]	X	
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)			X
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	X[b]	X	
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)		X	

Note: This exhibit does not include entrepreneurial training.

[a] *Cells with bold "X"s and shading denote services that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of aging workers.*

[b] *If there are enough AWI participants interested in a course at a given time, the community college will provide a section specifically for AWI participants. This has occurred several times for the Medical Billing and Coding course.*

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Paying for Individuals to Participate in Existing Training Courses

As shown in Exhibit IV-5, the most common method of providing occupational training to AWI participants is to purchase training for individuals from providers of existing training courses. In the WIA program, training is purchased on behalf of individual participants using a procedure referred to as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The AWI grantees that also oversee or manage WIA training funds tend to refer to their payments for training for AWI participants using the same terminology. Hence, they say they are providing training to AWI participants "using ITAs." They often use the same procedures to identify acceptable training providers and approvable courses for AWI participants as they do for WIA participants. The two grantees that are not as closely affiliated with the WIA program refer to the purchase of training for AWI participants using different terminology. These grantees often use the terminology "individual scholarships." These differences in terminology do not denote major differences in the practices of the two types of grantees.

Exhibit IV-6 describes the details of the individual training arrangements used by the seven projects identified in the second column of Exhibit IV-5. It covers types of training providers, how allowable training courses are determined, and whether there is a limit or "cap" on the amount of funding that an individual can receive for training. Although most sites encouraged AWI participants to pursue occupational training, limited funding prevents most sites from offering substantial amounts of training funds to participants. In most cases the ITA or "scholarship" amounts are significantly below the maximum training cost that can be approved for an individual participating in the WIA program. As a result, most AWI participants were enrolled in short-term training. Sites that wanted to encourage more expensive or longer-term occupational training used co-enrollment in WIA to leverage additional training funds through WIA.

Of the seven projects that use AWI grant funding to pay for participants to attend existing occupational training courses, five (those in Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Texas, and Washington) required that the training occur in one of the industries explicitly targeted by the AWI grant. The other two projects (in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania) were more lenient about approving an individual training plan as long as it is in a local high-demand occupation or industry.

Exhibit IV-6:
Grant-supported Training for Individuals[a]

	Training Providers	Allowable Training Programs	Cap on AWI Training Costs
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Community college	Project allows the customer "to drive the process" (pick an occupational training program) as long as it is within the four targeted industry groupings	$2,400
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Primarily community college	18 allowable certificate programs in targeted industries; generally two-month training programs	Roughly $1,000 allocated per individual
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	Community college	Six selected healthcare certificate programs and prerequisite courses	N/A (Courses included in program are pre-approved)
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Community college	For incumbent workers, four Industry Partnerships select courses that will support "in demand" skills sets. For unemployed workers, training can be approved in any demand industry/occupation.	$1,500[b]
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Public or proprietary educational institutions	Training courses in 60 occupations in four targeted industries	No cap; generally under $1,000, but has been as high as $4,000 in individual cases.
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	Any provider on eligible training provider list	Training limited to targeted industries	Any training program on the approved training list
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Technical/ community college	Training must be in high-demand occupation or industry. Community college uses a career pathways model with "stackable modules" of certificate-based courses	$2,500

[a]   *The projects in Michigan and Vermont are not included in this table because they do not use AWI grant funds to pay for occupational skills training for AWI participants.*

[b]   *In the Pennsylvania site, training funds provided by the AWI grant can be supplemented with training funds from other programs. Thus, if co-enrolled in WIA, an AWI participant may receive up to $5,500 in training funds from the combination of the two programs ($1,500 from the AWI grant and $3,500 from WIA funds).*

Two AWI programs, *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) and *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX), developed occupational training programs related to computer applications and computer service and repair. Both are discussed in the section of this chapter on "Computer Skills Training." The occupational skills training offerings developed by the *Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County* (WA) are described in the box below.

Case Example: Developing New Occupational Training Courses for Older Workers

Introductory Courses in "Green Occupations" and Healthcare Fundamentals

To prepare specific groups of older workers (those with limited English language skills, disabilities, or offender histories) for jobs in targeted high-growth industry sectors, the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) used AWI funds to develop new training options for jobs in one of three targeted industries ("green jobs," information technology, or healthcare).

Two of these training programs—*Sustainability @ Work* and *Healthcare Fundamentals*—targeted older workers with limited English proficiency. Both training programs were approximately 10 weeks long and provided a combination of language skills, pre-employment training, and basic technical/industry-specific training. Staff emphasize that these training programs were not intended to be the only training activity for these customers, but were a way to prepare older workers with limited English skills to transition to outside occupational skills training in the healthcare or "green" industries.

In addition to the two programs for those with limited-English-proficiency, the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) also developed two IT-focused foundation skills training courses for older workers. The first was a *Microsoft Computer Fundamentals* class that was in the process of being modified for older workers. The second was a professional networking class that the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) purchased from AARP. As with the occupational skills courses developed under AWI, project staff emphasized that these training programs were not intended as a stand-alone course, but rather to help participants transition to more intensive occupational skills training available in the community.

Training in Small Business Development

In an effort to promote self-employment among older workers, ETA encouraged AWI grantees to offer entrepreneurship training. Projects in seven sites (Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin) responded to this encouragement by identifying existing small business development programs to which they could refer AWI participants. However, only two grantees (Pennsylvania and Washington) had enrolled AWI participants in entrepreneurship and/or small business training at the time of the first site visit. Five other AWI grantees (those in Maine, Michigan, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin) said that it was possible for an AWI participant to pursue entrepreneurship training through partner programs. Additionally, *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) and *Vermont Associates for Training*

and Development, Inc. (VT) were both in talks with local training providers about the possibility of offering entrepreneurship training courses specifically for AWI participants.

The AWI program in Pennsylvania enrolled one individual in the Central Pennsylvania Community College's Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. As described in the boxed example that follows, the *Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County* (WA) enrolled 12 AWI participants in the course offered by its small business development partner.

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Case Example: Linkage to Existing Entrepreneurship Training Program

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WA)

To provide small business training to AWI participants, the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (WA) contractually partnered with the local non-profit organization Washington Community Alliance for Self Help (CASH), which has been supplying small business training and microloans to underserved and low-income individuals since 1995. The AWI grant allowed the program to expand its services to include older workers (in a mixed setting). A total of 12 AWI participants had completed the eight-week long entrepreneurship course at the time of the first site visit. Each week participants attend one 2.5-hour class and one 2.5-hour supplemental lab/hands-on session per week. At the end of the course all individuals complete a three-page business plan. After completing the initial class, each participant then sits down with a Washington CASH employee to look closely at the business plan and decide if he or she wants to move into a "business group." Business groups are made up of five to eight small-business class graduates. Each member of the group proposed his or her business idea to the group; if the group approves, they award that person a $1,000 loan supplied by Washington CASH. The loans are not collateralized and the interest rate is at the national standard rate. If any individual in the group stops paying back his/her loan then no else in that group can receive another loan, which, it is hoped, would induce other members of the group to pressure that person to pay back the loan. This forced group members to be very careful in approving individual business plans. If individuals pay loans back on schedule, they can take out additional loans, up to a ceiling of $35,000.

</div>

It was somewhat surprising that more AWI participants had not enrolled in entrepreneurship training, as it was anticipated that this option might appeal to older workers with substantial work experience who considered self-employment an attractive alternative to a traditional job. Project managers at sites that had yet to enroll individuals in entrepreneurship training said either very few participants showed interest in pursuing that type of training or case managers felt reluctant to approve training plans that involved small business development or entrepreneurship. Case managers appeared reluctant for two reasons: (1) they were concerned about how the project performance measures would be affected by outcomes for these individuals and (2) they frequently determined that the types of small businesses participants were interested in pursuing did not fit within the AWI program's targeted industries.

Case Management

In the public workforce development system, case managers are responsible for identifying customer needs, developing service plans, and coordinating available services on behalf of individual customers receiving intensive and training services. For the Aging Worker Initiative, case managers—also variously referred to as coaches, navigators, or older worker specialists—were responsible for coordinating the delivery of all the services available to project participants. They were critical to participant success because they were the individuals who most often developed supportive personal relationships with participants and provided encouragement to them during all phases of project participation. In this section we describe some of the variations in the type, level, and scope of the case management services provided to AWI participants

Across the AWI projects, the staffing arrangements for providing case management services to AWI participants varied. The limited grant funds and the time-limited nature of the AWI case manager position constrained the staffing arrangements developed by the projects. For example, it was not always possible for projects to designate the AWI case manager job as a full-time position. However, as noted in Exhibit IV-7, projects used various strategies to ensure that AWI case managers would be effective in working with older workers:

- Three sites (those in Indiana, Texas, and Vermont) recruited and hired case managers specifically for the AWI project.
- A number of sites selected older workers as AWI case managers or selected individuals who had previously worked with older workers.
- Two projects arranged for special training for AWI case managers at the beginning of the project.
- Seven projects designated specific case managers to work with AWI participants, although only three of them were able to assign these individuals to full-time positions with the projects.

In some of the AWI projects, case managers worked with participants from their earliest contact with the project to the very end of their participation. In other projects, case managers were more focused on specific issues, such as providing career counseling and helping the customer develop an employment goal, or developing and monitoring a training plan. Exhibit IV-8 describes the range of issues with which the case managers were concerned. At all projects, case managers were most involved with the services that were individually designed to meet the needs of each customer and provided in a one-on-one setting. Thus, developing individual service plans and monitoring individuals' training progress were a part of the case managers' responsibilities at all AWI projects.

Exhibit IV-7:
Case Management Services

	Areas of Case Management Focus					Case Management Staffing Arrangements
	Provide Career Counseling	Develop Employment Goals/ Service Plan	Provide Job Readiness Training	Monitor Training Progress	Provide Job Search Support	
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	X	X	X	Two dedicated and trained AWI case managers employed by project
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)		X		X	X	Five AWI Navigators assigned 50% time to project; no specialized training or experience
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)		X		X		Career coaches oversee narrow function of enrolling participants in training
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)		X		X	X	Case managers are AJC (WIA) staff who serve mixed caseloads
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	X	X	X	X	Designated AWI specialists located at 4 of 6 AJC centers
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X	X	X	X	X	Two full-time AWI case managers employed by project
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)		X		X		SCSEP participants will be recruited as AWI specialists; only one hired
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	X	X	X	X	X	Three part-time AWI case managers, all of whom have previous experience with older workers and/or special targeted subgroups
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)		X		X	X	Three part-time AWI case managers, some of whom have previous experience with older workers

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In four projects, case managers were also the key providers of career counseling services and job readiness services. In the remaining projects, these services were either provided by other American Job Center staff members before the older worker is referred to the project, or were provided to AWI participants in a group setting, such as in a project workshop. As described in the next section, coordinating and guiding participants' job search activities is a case management role that had not yet been fully developed in all projects, particularly in projects where most participants were still enrolled in training.

In the final site visits, we look forward to talking with participants about how satisfied they were with the quality of their relationships with their case managers and how well those individuals coordinated the available AWI services.

Job Search and Job Placement Assistance

All the AWI program managers emphasize the importance of job placement assistance. A majority drew on existing job placement tools to serve AWI participants. At the time of the first round of site visits, a number of sites were developing job placement services specifically for AWI participants. These grantees planned to implement more comprehensive job placement support services as more participants complete their training and begin the job search phase of the program.

As shown in Exhibit IV-8, in five sites (those in Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Vermont and Wisconsin) the job placement services were almost identical to those available to other American Job Center customers, including WIA participants. The services involved AWI case managers assisting participants with online state and/or local job banks (and tailored job leads and referrals when possible). Two sites (those in Indiana and Michigan) also utilized the "business services" staff within the American Job Center to help recruit employers to hire older workers.

In the remaining four sites, job placement activities were being developed specifically for AWI participants. Two sites (those in Maryland and Texas) were still finalizing plans for job placement services. The AWI program operated by the *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* was working on a system for placing dislocated participants and for helping incumbent workers find employment at their current employers or at other hospitals. *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) was also looking to refine the job search and placement services it provides. The Employment Specialists (AWI case managers) in Texas provided clients with job leads and helped them prepare for interviews, but the site wanted to improve these services by improving project relationships with staff in the human resources departments at potential employers. (See the box that follows for examples of two sites that have well-developed placement supports for older workers.)

Exhibit IV-8:
Job Placement Assistance Services

	Delivery Method	Description of Services
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	One-on-One	Participants are referred to job search tools available within American Job Centers. Job placement tools are not tailored to the needs of older workers
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	One-on-One	Case managers will help with job leads. Refer to other programs or agencies for more specialized job placement assistance
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	Still under development	Still being developed, since most participants are still in training
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	One-on-One	Participants are referred to job search tools available within American Job Centers. Job placement tools are not tailored to the needs of older workers
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Job Club for Aging Workers	Partnered with SCSEP Operator to design and offer specialized Job Clubs for aging workers
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	One-on-One	Case manager assistance includes sending clients job leads, strategizing about how to make their transferable skills applicable to more types of jobs, networking with employers
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Self Service or Group Workshops	Participants are referred to job search tools available within American Job Centers. Job placement tools are not tailored to the needs of older workers
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	Mature Workers Job Club	One-month-long job club for older workers was in place prior to AWI grant
	Professional Networking 1-day Workshop	Still in development. The workshop will help AWI participants use online professional networking tools (LinkedIn, etc.)
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	One-on-One	Participants are referred to job search tools available within American Job Centers. Job placement tools are not tailored to the needs of older workers

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AWI Service Linkages with Other Programs

To serve older workers, most of the AWI projects had taken advantage of existing services available in American Job Centers, including services available to the general public and services available to participants in the WIA program. SCSEP program resources were also viewed as complementary resources, for older workers who are eligible for that program. AWI program managers viewed co-enrollment in multiple programs as an effective strategy for increasing the breadth and depth of the services available to individual AWI participants. Some projects also viewed co-enrollment in WIA as a way to "stretch" the amount of training funds available from the AWI grants.

Linkages with Core Services Available from American Job Centers

As shown in Exhibit IV-9, seven of the nine AWI projects had strong linkages to make core American Job Center services available to older workers enrolled in the project. In these projects, core services were an important supplement to the services funded with the AWI grant. The paths by which older workers accessed core services varied from project to project. In six sites (those in Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin), AWI participants often become customers of the American Job Center first and were referred to the AWI project

Exhibit IV-9:
AWI Service Linkages

	Participants Use Core One-Stop Services	Participants are Co-Enrolled in WIA	Participants are Co-Enrolled in SCSEP
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Often	100%	Some
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Sometimes	Some	Some
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)[a]	Sometimes	Not many	Few
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Often	Some	Some
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	Often	20% – 25%	Few
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Sometimes	Few	None
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Often	Yes (if complementary resources)	Many (Goal is 50% co-enrollment)
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	Often	Not many	Many (About 25% are co-enrolled)
Fox Valley WIB (WI)	Often	At least 85%	Many

[a]   The services linkages included in this chart apply to AWI participants who are unemployed workers. In the two projects that serve incumbent workers— Maryland and Pennsylvania—incumbent workers enrolled in the project typically do not access services from other public workforce development programs.

only after they received some core services. As noted earlier in this chapter, these projects depend upon referrals from American Job Centers as their most important source of project participants. In the projects in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, older workers had to have already used other services to identify training as an objective before they could enroll in the AWI project. Two projects that recruited the majority of their AWI project participants from sources other than One- Stop referrals—those in Washington and Maine—coordinated participant use of One-Stop core services after older workers enrolled in the AWI project, as described in the box below.

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> **Case Examples: Helping AWI Participants Access Core Services**
>
> **Referring Participants to Existing Core Services for Older Workers**
>
> In *The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County* project, AWI case managers helped participants take advantage of older worker services already in place within local American Job Centers. Core services tailored to the needs of older workers include a front-end pre-employment workshop and a mature workers job club. All older American Job Center customers in the region were encouraged to participate in these services.
>
> **Helping Participants Take Advantage of All Core Services Available Within American Job Centers**
>
> Older Worker Navigators for the *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* project helped participants take advantage of services available to all customers within American Job Centers. Although the older workers served by this project tend to be more highly educated than other American Job Center customers, one core service that was a good match for their needs was a job search support group for unemployed professionals.

Linkages with WIA Services

The AWI projects varied in the extent to which they promoted co-enrollment of AWI participants in the WIA program. As illustrated in Exhibit IV-9, three of the nine AWI projects encouraged co-enrollment in WIA in order to maximize the services available to individual customers, particularly in instances where it appears that co-enrollment in the two programs would be beneficial for a particular AWI participant. Co-enrollment was particularly important in sites that wanted to use WIA training funds to supplement the training funds available from the AWI grant. The remaining five projects either did not co-enroll a significant percentage of AWI participants in the WIA program or actively discouraged co-enrollment because they did not see any benefit from it.

Linkages with Services Available from SCSEP

Because SCSEP participants must have a family income no more than 135% of the federal poverty level, not all AWI participants were eligible for the SCSEP program. As illustrated in Exhibit IV-9, three of the AWI projects that received a significant number of their referrals from SCSEP program operators—those in Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin—encouraged co-enrollment of AWI participants in the SCSEP program (if they are eligible for it) and vice versa, because they viewed the services provided by these two programs as complementary.

Project managers emphasize that the AWI grants did not duplicate the services provided to older workers under SCSEP. For older workers already participating in subsidized work experience

under SCSEP, the receipt of training under the AWI project could help individuals make the transition from subsidized to competitive employment. Although not all projects interpreted federal policy as permitting simultaneous enrollment in SCSEP and the AWI project, most identified the movement from SCSEP subsidized work experience through AWI-funded occupational skills training to competitive employment in the private sector as a desirable path for individuals who were capable of and interested in competitive employment. In each of the three projects mentioned above, between one-fifth and one-third of all AWI participants were co-enrolled in SCSEP. The remaining six AWI projects had co-enrolled only small numbers of SCSEP participants.

Summary of Findings

- To recruit participants, many projects relied on the referral of existing American Job Center customers or SCSEP participants to the AWI projects. Several projects had developed broader outreach and recruitment strategies.

- In designing AWI services, project planners addressed what they perceived to be the typical needs of older workers. These included the need for supportive relationships with case managers and other aging workers, help exploring career options, training in up-to-date job search skills, computer training, and training in occupational skills in demand in high-growth sectors of their local economies.

- Most AWI projects had developed pre-employment skills workshops and case management services that are tailored to meet the needs of older workers.

- Only a few AWI projects had designed new occupational skills training courses specifically for older workers.

- Many AWI projects have developed referral linkages to American Job Center core services and co-enrollment linkages with the WIA and SCSEP programs in order to expand the services available to project participants.

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V. EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT AND TRAINING FOR INCUMBENT WORKERS

According to the SGA, the AWI grants were to address the workforce challenges facing older individuals by developing models for talent development in regional economies that "recognize older workers as a valuable labor pool and include employment and training strategies to retain and/or connect older workers to jobs in high growth, high demand industries critical to the regional economy."[6] To realize this mandate, the projects had to develop effective strategies to involve employers. According to an evaluation of early grantees under HGJTI, involvement of "employers and/or industry groups [is]… critical for accurately defining the workforce challenges and, as many grantees found, in articulating the specific skills required to meet their workforce needs."[7]

It is never an easy task to convince employers to join a public workforce development partnership. To be successful in recruiting firms, project staff members must convince employers that they will benefit as a result of participation. Given the short timeframe of demonstration projects and the other pressing responsibilities facing staff members (e.g., the pressure to get the project up and running), project managers and direct service staff members often do not have much time to cultivate strong relationships with the business community. For their own part, business owners, particularly owners of small- to medium-sized businesses, often cannot afford to devote time to public–private partnerships.[8] Furthermore, they are cautious about making commitments to hire from particular groups, such as older workers, due to concerns about equitable hiring requirements. During an economic downturn, the incentive for employers to participate is further reduced by employer uncertainty about whether they will have

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[6] Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications for the Older Worker Demonstration, SGA/DFA PY–08–06, *Federal Register*. Vol. 73, No. 245, p. 77844.

[7] The Urban Institute, "Implementation and Sustainability: Emerging Lessons from the Early High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI) Grants" April 2007, p. v.

[8] One of the goals of the American Job Center system is to streamline employer involvement by providing employers with a single point of contact—a business service representative who can coordinate a range of services to meet employer needs.

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to lay off workers, whether they will be able to hire new workers, and cutbacks in management budgets and staffing. It is no surprise, then, that the AWI projects did not have an easy time involving employers.

In this chapter, we describe the efforts made by the AWI projects to involve employers in meaningful ways. After describing the objectives the AWI projects have for employer involvement, we describe how the projects have involved employers in the design and delivery of services to older workers under the AWI, how they have encouraged employers to train older incumbent workers in the targeted high-growth industries, and the limited extent to which they convinced employers to hire AWI participants. In the final section, we describe the activities projects had used to educate employers about the advantages of hiring and retaining older workers.

Objectives for Employer Involvement

Most projects wanted to involve employers in various aspects of AWI project planning and implementation. Their objectives for employer involvement included the following:

- Involve employers in designing and delivering the grant-funded services provided to older workers,

- Encourage employers to develop the skills of older incumbent workers by investing in their training,.

- Arrange for employers to hire AWI participants after they complete project services, and

- Change employer attitudes about older workers and the practices they use to hire them.

Exhibit V-1 describes the varied objectives expressed by different AWI projects for employer involvement. Most project managers had more than one reason for wanting to involve employers in the AWI project. Only one project did not feel any need to involve employers in the planning or implementation of its AWI-funded activities. This project referred participants to existing courses in previously identified high-growth industries.

Exhibit V-1:
Objectives for Employer Involvement in the AWI

	Participate in Project Design and Services	Train Incumbent Workers	Hire Project Graduates	Recognize Value of Aging Workers
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X		X	X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X		X	X
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)		X	X	X
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)			X	
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)		X		
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X		X	
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	X	X		X
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	X			X
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)				

Participation in the Design and Delivery of Services

Five of the nine projects had invited employer representatives to participate in the design and/or delivery of project services. Projects wanted to ensure that the AWI activities they provided would be responsive to employer needs and made the older workers who participated in the project attractive to employers at the end of training. To accomplish this objective, some projects had invited representatives of individual employers to participate in project planning or leadership teams. However, several factors, including the economic downturn and the short timeframe available for project planning made it difficult for most projects to engage individual businesses.

Several grantees found that involving employer intermediaries or employer associations was more effective than involving individual business representatives. Industry associations were more often able to take the "longer view" during the recession, when individual employers were concentrating on trying to stay in business. Employer associations were also able to reach out to their business members to encourage participation. The manager of one project explained that

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employer intermediates were able to "play the dual role of connecting businesses, workers, and training providers to address human capital needs using an industry-defined skill set."

Case Examples: Involving Industry Associations in Project Design

Employer Intermediary Assists in Outreach to Employers

Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD) used its relationship with an employer intermediary—Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health Care—to help the project connect to hospitals that would participate in the project.

Individuals with Industry Experience Serve as Project Consultants

The *Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County* (WA) recruited individuals with experience in the targeted industries to advise the project. This project's Information Technology (IT) sector representative was a former Microsoft employee who was still connected to local IT industry; the health industry representative was a member of a local health workforce initiative; and the green industry representative was a consultant who worked with green businesses. These industry representatives helped review proposed curricula for new occupational skills training classes for older workers in the targeted industries.

Two projects (those in Vermont and Indiana) had expressed a desire to involve employers in providing internship opportunities for AWI participants to enable them to get hands-on experience in the occupations in which they are interested. At the time of the first site visit, both projects were encountering difficulties getting employers to commit to creating internships for older workers. In its AWI proposal, *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) described internships as one of the project's core service components. Case managers encouraged individual participants to contact employers directly to try to arrange internships. Employers were slow to respond to the invitation from the project to obtain a free "skilled intern." The project was planning to increase employer awareness of the internship opportunity using a mass mailing with follow-up phone calls to regional employers in the targeted industries.

Encouraging Employers to Participate in Training Incumbent Workers

As shown in Exhibit V-1, three of the nine projects—those in Vermont, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—conducted outreach to businesses to encourage employers to make training available to update the skills of currently employed older workers, to support job retention or promote upward career mobility. Two projects, described in the box below, had succeeded in involving employers in developing training for incumbent workers. The AWI projects in

Case Examples: Promoting Training for Incumbent Workers

A Consortium of Healthcare Providers Encourages Training for Incumbent Workers

The AWI project operated by the *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD) was designed to promote career advancement for older workers in the healthcare industry by developing a partnership with area hospitals. With assistance from the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare, the grantee has recruited a consortium of four hospitals to participate in training incumbent healthcare workers for more advanced positions. The project paid 50 percent of the salary for a career coach employed by the participating hospital consortium, who worked with the incumbent workers interested in training. This coach assessed readiness for training, identified needed prerequisite courses, and helped the participants enroll in training. Employers did not have to contribute to the cost of training the participants in this project, because the workers might have ended up working for a different hospital in the consortium after they completed training.

At the time of the first site visit, fourteen incumbent workers were enrolled in the project. The sequence of training for most participants included prerequisite classes at the Community College of Baltimore County followed by six to eighteen months of coursework that lead to a certificate in one of the following fields: medical coding, medical billing, surgical technician, central sterile processing, nurse support technician, or certified nurse assistant/geriatric nurse assistant. When participants complete training, the career coach was to help them locate a new position within the hospital consortium.

Industry Partnerships Administer Training Opportunities in High Growth Industries

South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA) used AWI funds to expand an existing incumbent worker training program that already had well-developed industry partnerships. Using this model, individual employers invited workers to participate in training. The referring employer intended to retain the worker after training is completed and employers had to pay 25 percent of the training cost. The rest of the training cost was paid using AWI funds.

The AWI project worked with three Industry Partnerships, in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and healthcare. The AWI grant paid for 10 percent f the time of a training coordinator position within each Partnership. Each Industry Partnership approved and arranged for training from a preselected menu of offerings that addressed skills sets that were in demand in that industry as a whole. Building on this existing state-funded program and its procedures, the AWI grant paid for training for up to 180 older workers. The project was not advertised as a separate "older worker training program;" instead, applicants flowed through the existing referral process. If they are 55 or older, they are identified as being eligible for AWI funding by the training coordinator. As an additional incentive for employers to participate in the AWI project, additional grant funds were available for 40 older workers to receive short-term training customized to the needs of the individual firm. The average duration of training for incumbent workers participating in the AWI project was 12 weeks.

Maryland and Pennsylvania had both worked with employer intermediaries to design and promote training to address the labor needs of an entire industry sector, rather than just the needs of an individual firm. Both projects had created direct financial incentives for employers to participate, by offering to pay for some or all of the training received by older workers. The

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project in Vermont had decided to promote training for incumbent workers during the final year of its AWI grant by working with an existing training program for incumbent workers operated by the Vermont Agency for Commerce and Community Development.

Placements for AWI Participants

The economic recession and the lack of strong working relationships with employers during the design of the projects made it difficult for the AWI projects to reach out to employers to hire AWI project participants. Realizing that older workers may face a more difficult time marketing their skills in the job market than younger workers due to negative stereotypes, four projects tried to recruit employers for "placement partnerships." However, with the exception of the businesses that were participating in training incumbent workers under the grant, as described above, employers generally were not willing to make commitments to hire AWI project participants after they completed program services.

It may be that older workers have such varied education, skills, and abilities that the "placement model" that had been used for other targeted groups (e.g., getting a relatively small number of employers to commit to hiring from the project's pool of program graduates) was not appropriate for this group of workers. It is also likely that employers—seeing large numbers of displaced workers with substantial education, skills, and experience looking for work—preferred to recruit and screen their own new hires during the slow economic recovery.

Whatever the reasons, the AWI projects were attempting to broker placements for their participants without notable successes. Project managers at *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) said they are trying to find eight or ten employers who would notify the project when they had job openings, but they had not succeeded in building these placement relationships. At the time of the site visit, this project had also identified the goal of building close relationships with the human resources staffs of local hospitals, but had not yet achieved that goal. Respondents at *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc*. (IN) reported that their project had not yet found any employers who were willing to make commitments to hire AWI participants. Case managers from the *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) project attempted to follow up with employers who had hired one older worker to see if they were interested in hiring additional project participants. *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) was trying to develop a "placement relationship" with L.L. Bean for the hiring of project participants.

Rather than reaching out to employers on a one-on-one basis, several projects had found that "reverse job fairs" were an effective way for project participants to present themselves to employers who may be interested in hiring them. In a traditional job fair, employers maintain booths that are visited by interested job applicants. In a reverse job fair, job applicants sit at a table and are available to talk informally with employers who may be interested in hiring them.

This provides an opportunity for firms to talk informally with a number of job seekers, and gives older workers the chance to practice marketing themselves to several firms that are looking for new employees.

Changing Employer Attitudes and Hiring Practices Regarding Aging Workers

As shown in Exhibit V-1, five of nine projects wanted to involve employers in project activities in order to change employer attitudes about older workers and the practices they use in hiring and retaining them. These projects had designed three specific outreach activities to accomplish this objective: conducting employer workshops and seminars, making awards to businesses that had policies and practices that are "friendly" to older workers, and trying to find businesses that would champion the cause of making accommodations to retain older workers.

Employer Workshops and Seminars

Five projects had developed workshops, seminars, or other public-relations activities to educate employers about the benefits of older workers and to provide management tools to help employers make accommodations that will help them retain older workers. Projects often involved business service specialists from the LWIB or American Job Center in the design and delivery of these employer outreach efforts. Several of these grantees found that it worked well to coordinate the location and timing of these employer presentations with other events at which employers were gathering (e.g., HR conferences, other meetings).

Three projects—those in Indiana, Maryland, and Washington—had developed presentations and curricula that built on materials they or others developed prior to the beginning of the AWI grant. Under a previous WIRED grant, *Tecumseh Area Partnership* (IN) developed a curriculum called "Maturity Matters" that informed employers about the value of an older workforce and provided strategies they could use to manage their aging workforces.[9] Based on this curriculum, the Indiana project was planning to develop and roll out a series of interactive workshops for employers during the spring of 2011 called "Managing your Mature Workforce." *Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD) was drawing on online management resources for employers developed by the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) and available on the AARP "Employer's Resource Center" website.[10] As part of the AWI grant activities, this grantee was using its existing relationships with networks of employers to offer seminars for employers about working with older workers. *The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-*

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[9] See http://www.maturitymatters.org/.

[10] See http://www.aarp.org/work/employee-benefits/employer_resource_center/.

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King County (WA) used a previous grant to develop information for employers and the public promoting the advantages of mature workers. The AWI project was working to disseminate this information.[11]

The projects in Maine and Vermont were using AWI grant funds to develop new educational curricula for employers. As described previously, *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc*. (ME) had arranged for the Muskie School of Public Policy at the University of Southern Maine to hold employer education seminars called "employer dialogues" at business association conferences. Dialogues were designed to help employers assess how "friendly" their businesses are to older workers. Participants were to receive toolkits to help them create more friendly work environments. During its third grant year, *Vermont Associates for Training and Development Inc.* will work with the local WIB and the AARP to design and implement a multi-pronged employer outreach effort. Activities will include employer roundtables, older-worker workshops at HR conferences, and a series of presentations for business groups on the advantages and needs of older workers.

Make Awards to Employers that are Friendly to Older Workers

Three projects had developed awards to recognize employers that had implemented policies and practices that are friendly to older workers. This practice followed a model established by AARP, which selects and publicizes the "best employers for workers over 50" on its website and in its publicity materials. *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) has developed a "Maturity Matters" employer award. *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) presents "Silver Collar" awards annually to twelve employers in the state who are "older-worker friendly." The members of the State Older Worker Council determined the awards and presented them at a community ceremony honoring the winning firms. *Vermont Associates for Training and Development* (VT) posts information about employers who are "older-worker friendly" on its website.

Find Firms That Will Be Role Models

Only one grantee, *Vermont Associates for Training and Development*, was pursuing the strategy of identifying one or more employers that would agree to champion the cause of making accommodations for older workers as part of a policy of hiring and retaining them. If they were able to identify "older-worker-friendly" firms, the project planned to use them as a role model for other employers in the state. Project staff members planned to talk to IBM about accommodating the needs of older workers by changing some 12-hour shifts to 8-hour shifts.

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[11]   See http://www.employexperience.com/.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The AWI grantees had difficulty recruiting individual firms as committed partners in their projects. With so many laid-off workers with substantial skills and experience looking for work, employers were not been motivated to target particular groups, such as aging workers, for new hires.

- AWI project managers and staff had been so busy recruiting older workers and putting customer services in place that they had not had much time to devote to building relationships with employers.

- Projects had been slow to undertake major efforts to conduct outreach to employers during the first two years of their grants. Early attempts to do so indicated that employers also were too focused on the survival of their businesses to be able to participate in the projects.

- Two projects had succeeded in developing partnerships with industry associations that were focused on updating the skills of older incumbent workers.

- As the economy improved, a number of projects were beginning to roll out employer outreach activities designed to teach employers about the benefits of hiring older workers, and they were providing employers with specific advice about managing an aging workforce.

- Projects found that developing relationships with employer associations and business intermediaries was an effective way to reach out to employers. These organizations were able to see the long-term benefits of developing a pipeline for skilled workers and to think in terms of strategies that would benefit their industry as a whole.

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VI. BUILDING SYSTEM CAPACITY TO SERVE AGING WORKERS

One objective of the Aging Worker Initiative was to build the capacity of the public workforce development system to serve older workers using strategies that allow the increased capacity to be sustained after the end of the grant period. Building system capacity is a multi-layered process that begins with the grantees and their project operators and then expands to draw on the resources of the rest of the American Job Center system. In this chapter, we describe the two basic layers of the capacity-building process: (1) how the grantees were building the organizational capacity of the project operators and securing needed technical assistance during project design and implementation, and (2) how they were spearheading efforts to build the capacity of American Job Centers to serve aging workers.

Capacity-building for Project Operators

The nine AWI grantees and their designated project managers had widely differing levels of experience managing grants and designing and implementing new workforce development programs at the outset of the grant period. At one extreme was a workforce investment board that had never received a federal grant from ETA before. At the other extreme were several workforce investment boards that described themselves as having "vast experience" in developing and managing grant-based programs. Many of the less-experienced grantees requested assistance with reporting and grant management procedures. Nearly all projects asked for help with recruiting and involving employers in project activities, which had been particularly difficult because of the economic downturn.

Sources of Technical Assistance

During the site visit interviews, project managers described four sources of technical assistance on grant design and implementation issues:

- internal staff members (WIB or project managers, members of project advisory boards, and managers at strategic partners);
- other AWI grantees;

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- technical assistance advisors provided by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Council on Competitiveness (CoC) under a grant from the Atlantic Philanthropies; and

- Federal project officers located within the ETA's Regional Offices.

Below, we describe how the projects had used capacity-building support from each of these sources.

Internal Personnel

Managers from four projects said they had received very useful technical assistance and advice from personnel within their projects, including WIB staff, project staff, advisory board members, and strategic partners involved in the grant. Members of project advisory boards helped project staff deal with issues concerning the relationships between different partners, and they have provided programmatic support on issues related to their specific areas of expertise (e.g., possible training providers or industry perspectives on needed skills sets).

Project personnel also provided technical assistance, as occurred when the *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc*. (MI) hired 30 older-worker "navigators" -- many of whom had previous American Job Center case management experience – and who formed the first line of support for each other, sharing information and advice with other navigators. In many sites, project managers were also a key source of direction and support for staff who were working directly with aging workers.

Other AWI Grantees

Representatives from six projects said that they have benefitted from exchanges with other grantees, including both one-to-one interchanges and group conferences arranged by CAEL as part of the technical assistance activities offered to the AWI grantees. Managers from many projects praised the usefulness of information shared among grantees who attended the learning institutes and topic forums arranged by the technical assistance contractors.

Technical Assistance Advisors Provided by CAEL

CAEL and its contractors provided technical assistance to the grantees using two different formats. The first format was grantee conferences paid for with funds from CAEL's grant from Atlantic Philanthropies while the second format for technical assistance under the grant from Atlantic Philanthropies was one-on-one support from an individual advisor matched to each project.

AWI project managers received assistance from their TA advisors on a number of different design and implementation challenges, including the following:

- how to reach out to employers (for participation in incumbent worker training, for involvement in training and hiring unemployed older workers);

- how to adapt generic service components to the specific needs of older workers; and

- how to deal with difficult project staffing issues.

Reaching Out to Employers. For many projects, the most pressing technical assistance need was how to recruit employers to participate in the project. When these projects applied for the AWI grant, their regional economies were generally healthy and employers were in a hiring mode and willing to work with public agencies to recruit new workers. However, with the onset of the economic recession at the end of 2007 and uncertainty about the long-term economic outlook, employers became far less receptive to participating in a program designed to prepare unemployed workers for new positions. Even the projects that wanted to encourage employers to train incumbent workers found that employers were nervous about whether they would be able to retain current employees or invest in developing workers' skills. Thus, the biggest challenge for the projects to date had been obtaining employer involvement.

Instead of trying to develop a generic approach to involve employers in the AWI projects, the CAEL technical assistance advisors recognized that each project was reaching out to employers in a different regional context. As a result, the TA providers were working with projects individually to develop responsive strategies. Below we provide three examples.

For the *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc*. (IN) project, which was serving highly educated unemployed older workers who had experience in professional fields, the technical assistance advisor first helped project managers think through how to conduct employer outreach in their particular regional context and helped the project create a public relations brochure that it could use with employers. The advisor also offered to come along to meet with employers when the project was ready to begin employer outreach.

The *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) was recruiting employers from three different industry sectors to promote training for incumbent workers. Initially, the project was having a difficult time engaging employers in the health care industry. Health care employers, for whom skills upgrading and certification is a regular part of doing business, had a hard time understanding how the AWI project was doing anything that was different from the usual practices. The TA advisor helped the staff of this project develop marketing materials to explain that the project was offering a training subsidy to serve as an incentive for employers to upgrade the skills of existing workers.[12] The advisor met separately with the staff members of each of the Industry Partnerships to hear their differing perspectives. She also helped the project identify a

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[12] In this project, the HR department staff from participating firms often preferred to downplay the fact that the training funds focused on older workers, because they did not want to be perceived as favoring any particular age group.

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feature of AWI funding that would make it particularly attractive to employers—AWI funding, unlike other funding streams, permits a business to design training that is customized to its particular needs rather than designed to meet broad industry skill sets.

Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX) was experiencing difficulty engaging employers and getting them to consider hiring project "graduates." In particular, the project was having difficulty establishing linkages with personnel in the HR departments of local hospitals. This project's TA advisor helped in demonstrating how to reach the HR staff, and helped the project identify other strategies to build relationships with employers, such as having the project coordinator join associations of local HR managers and attend their meetings.

CAEL technical assistance advisors also helped projects address other design and implementation issues, as described below.

Increasing Buy-in from American Job Center Managers. One project received help from its CAEL TA advisor, who provided a workshop for front-line One-Stop managers that described the grant and explained the needs of the project. The TA advisor also designed and conducted an initial orientation and training session for the aging worker navigators, and suggested ways to encourage the navigators at each American Job Center to collaborate with each other by sharing problems and best practices.

Project Staff Hiring and Management Issues. Another project that had experienced turnover in the project coordinator position received assistance to help a new coordinator manage interventions with other project staff members who were not responsive to team input about how to design and deliver a curriculum for aging workers.

Service Design. A project that wanted to tailor an existing "WorkReady" pre-employment curriculum to address the special needs of older workers received assistance from CAEL to adapt the curriculum to meet older workers' needs more effectively.

Federal Project Officers within ETA

Federal project officers within ETA were the fourth source of technical assistance for AWI grantees. A federal project officer from the ETA Regional Office was the direct contact for each project and served as the liaison between the grantee and National Office ETA officials who were also involved with the implementation of the Aging Worker Initiative projects.

Unfortunately, most of the project managers seemed to have the impression that their federal project officers were more interested in monitoring grant compliance than in offering assistance on such issues as adapting their projects to meet dramatically changed economic conditions or developing innovative strategies to improve program outcomes. Project managers said that they tried to avoid approaching their federal project officers with questions or concerns or asking their opinions about how to respond to difficulties they are encountering, because they perceived their

federal project officers to be inflexible. They approached them only when necessary about issues related to requests for deviations from the grant proposal.

Unmet Needs and Suggestions for Improving Technical Assistance

Projects staff members said that they would have liked to receive technical assistance and support from ETA on at least two topics: how to use the AWD reporting system, and how to measure and report leveraged resources on the required quarterly project reports.

Measuring and Reporting Leveraged Resources

Several projects said that the requirement that reported amounts of leveraged resources be "auditable" created a strong incentive to under-report leveraged resources. As the chief financial officer of one grantee said such reporting "costs too much [in the time required to establish procedures to document leveraged funds], and for so little gain." Although its federal project officer provided assistance, this project was informed that the reporting instructions for the Financial Status Report (FSR 9130) could not be adjusted to resolve this issue. Managers from another project said that they provided a written explanation of the leveraged funds, but did not account for these funds on the FSR 9130. The leveraged funds that were the easiest to document included the value of time contributed by advisory committee members. The leveraged funds that were most difficult to account for were those expended to increase the services available to project participants: the value of the time spent by American Job Center case managers, and the value of training funds provided by other programs.

Using the AWD Reporting System

Although project representatives said that they had received training on the use of the AWD reporting system early in the grant period, they noted that this training had been provided before the grantees had ever seen the reporting system, and before some of them had hired the staff members who would be doing data entry. Project representatives did not know who to approach for detailed technical assistance on how to use the AWD reporting system after the initial training.[13] A number of projects have found that it was difficult to use this system to generate ad hoc reports for their own use. Staff members from several projects believed that the summary reports (Form 9134) produced by the system did not accurately reflect the data that they had entered into the system. Project managers said they were eager to receive more technical assistance on how the AWD system summarizes data for the quarterly reports.

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[13] After the initial training, the contractor who had worked with ETA on developing the AWD was no longer available to provide technical assistance because the contract had expired.

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Staff from several projects believed that it was important to document part-time employment outcomes as well as full-time employment for older workers. One project added a field to capture this data its in-house data collection spreadsheet.

Capacity-building for American Job Centers

As discussed elsewhere in this report, most of the AWI-funded project services were provided within American Job Centers. Many projects designated American Job Center staff members as part-time AWI case managers. (These staff members often served customers from other federal workforce development programs as well.) By using AWI funds to serve aging workers during the grant period, the projects increased the number of aging workers who were receiving intensive and training services from the American Job Center system. Similarly, by involving American Job Center staff in the delivery of AWI-funded services, the projects had at least marginally increased the capacity of staff members to meet the needs of this population group. It was too soon to tell, however, whether the increased attention to the needs of older workers will last after the AWI projects end.

In this section, we describe the extent to which the AWI grantees have undertaken six different types of actions to increase the capacity of American Job Centers to serve aging workers:

- Increasing outreach to older workers to draw them into American Job Centers;
- Designating and training of aging-worker specialists within American Job Centers;
- Training all One-Stop staff members about older worker characteristics and the need to overcome stereotypes about older workers;
- Dedicating resources (e.g. training funds, case management funds) to serve older workers;
- Developing new services tailored to needs of older workers; and
- Designing employer education activities to promote the value of older workers and adding these activities to the menu of American Job Center business services.

Increased Outreach to Older Workers

Although some of the AWI projects had depended on the existing flow of older workers into American Job Centers to generate participants for their projects, other projects had worked hard to recruit new older worker participants for the AWI, using a variety of strategies. These outreach strategies have included building referral relationships with a wide variety of other community service organizations, out-stationing grant-funded aging-worker "navigators" in a variety of community agencies, and installing kiosks with information about American Job Center services in locations that older workers are likely to frequent. The *Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.* (ME) project had implemented the most far-reaching outreach efforts. This

project intended to reach more than 3,000 older workers with its "Seasoned Worker Forums," which were being held in a number of different locations throughout the state.

Grantees reported that outreach activities are generating new groups of customers for American Job Centers, including older individuals who are highly educated and have professional work experience. It will be interesting to see whether American Job Centers will be able to retain these new groups of customers after the end of the AWI grants by continuing to provide services that are relevant to their needs.

Designation and Training of Aging Worker Specialists

Most of the AWI grantees had designed service delivery systems that provided individualized services to project participants, with an emphasis on hands-on support from staff who have received training on how to meet the needs of older workers. These staff were variously referred to as older worker navigators, older worker specialists, or AWI project case managers, among other job titles. The percentage of time staff members spend on their duties as aging worker specialists varied among the projects, and sometimes even from local site to another. Project grantees hope that some of trained staff members will be retained as American Job Center personnel after the grant ends. If so, they anticipate that the American Job Centers will benefit from these individuals' well-developed skills and experience working with aging workers.

Training All One-Stop Staff Members to Serve Older Workers

To date, two projects had undertaken systematic efforts to prepare One-stop staff, who usually worked with general WIA customers, to respond to the particular needs of older workers. *The Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) has conducted a training session, attended by 60 staff members from American Job Centers throughout the region, on ways to improve service delivery to aging workers. Based on feedback from attendees at the first session, project managers were in the process of developing a second round of training on the needs of mature workers in the workforce development system. The *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) project had conducted "customer service training" for 75 One-Stop staff members on the special needs of older workers. In response to comments from One-Stop staff members, a consultant was preparing a revised "customer service toolkit" with two components: "What instructors need to know about older workers" and "What One-Stop support staff need to know about older workers."

Dedicated Resources for Intensive and Training Services to Older Workers

All AWI projects were using grant funding to support the delivery of case management and associated services (e.g. career awareness activities, assessment, employment planning) to older

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workers and/or to pay for training opportunities for older workers. Although it was unlikely that funds dedicated for services to older workers will continue after the end of the official grant period, a number of projects were becoming very good at referring older workers to other services for which they may qualify. These services include other programs (e.g., WIA, TAA, or SCSEP), scholarships, supportive services, and free core services available at American Job Centers.

Several grantees were working to promote the continued delivery of services targeted to the older workers after the end of the AWI grant. The *Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.* was particularly interested in developing service delivery sites and partnerships that would continue to exist after the end of the AWI grants. An important part of its vision for the future included creating a statewide network of Mature Worker Resource Centers, some of which were to be co-located with American Job Centers and some of which were to be freestanding. The first Mature Worker Resource Center was opened in 2010 with support from AWI grant funding. In addition to promoting a distinct locus for the delivery of services to aging workers, Vermont Associates was testing an innovative low-cost strategy for staffing case management services for aging workers by using individuals who were participating in subsidized work experience through the SCSEP program. It remained to be seen how the cost advantages of this staffing strategy would compare to the possible disadvantages resulting from using less experienced service delivery personnel.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WA) hoped to maintain staff members who have been trained as older worker specialists within the American Job Center system after the end of the AWI grant. As a result of previous initiatives targeted to older workers, this region already served a high percentage of older workers, estimated at 12 to 15 percent of all One-Stop customers. The project hoped to be able to continue to dedicate some of the staff members currently working as aging worker specialists under the AWI grant to job assignments working with older workers after the grant ends.

Develop New Services Tailored to Older Workers' Needs

Projects varied in the extent to which they had developed or adapted services specifically for older workers. As described in Chapter IV, examples of services tailored to the needs of older workers include pre-employment or job search workshops, computer literacy courses, and occupational training courses specifically developed for or offered to older workers as a separate section of students taking the course. After the end of the grant, these tailored curricula were to continue to be available for use by American Job Center partners. At least five grantees hoped to continue to offer services designed for older workers within the American Job Centers:

- *The Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc*. (IN) used the AWI grant to help support the development of a series of workshops and handouts offered to mature workers through Career Transition Hubs.

- *The Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc*. (ME) worked with CAEL to adapt an existing 60-hour intensive Work Ready curriculum covering job readiness, job search skills, resume/cover letter writing, interviewing, and basic computer skills for mature workers. This curriculum, geared toward a highly educated subgroup of mature workers, is being offered throughout the state as an AWI grant activity. It will be available for use after the grant ends.

- *The Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) implemented an online "Worksearch" tool developed for older workers by AARP as part of its regular American Job Center menu of services.

- *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) is using AWI grant funds to develop a special "Technology Skills for Seniors" course that will cover computer literacy and a basic understanding of technology. The course will be offered within American Job Centers' computer labs.

- The *Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County* (WA) used its AWI grant funds to develop training programs for mature workers with limited English speaking skills in "green occupations" and entry-level health care positions. This project also created new one-day-long courses on information technology and social networking for mature workers. Although delivery of these courses was restricted to AWI participants during the grant period, the grantee was planning to continue offering these courses to all older workers after the grant ends.

Institutionalize Activities Promoting the Value of Older Workers to the Employer Community

Many of the projects had identified changing employer attitudes about older workers as one of the most important aspects of needed system change. As described in Chapter V, five projects had used AWI funds to carry out employer-focused activities that promoted the value of hiring older workers and provided useful practices for managing an aging workforce. To increase the sustainability of these efforts, several AWI projects helped the American Job Center system to develop a menu of employer services that were offered jointly by AWI staff members and business service representatives within the American Job Center system. These employer services were to continue after the end of the grant period.

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Summary of Findings

- Capacity-building advice and support from internal project partners, grantee peers, and technical assistance advisors helped projects address design and implementation challenges.

- Using AWI funds, grantees improved the responsiveness of American Job Centers to the needs of aging workers in at least three ways: (1) they implemented new and innovative outreach activities targeted to aging workers; (2) they trained designated One-Stop staff members as "aging worker specialists;" and (3) they developed menus of services sensitive to the needs of older workers. Given the time remaining in the grants, it was not yet clear whether these accomplishments could be sustained after the grant period.

- Projects said they would like help during the final year of the grant in developing the capacity to provide effective job search and placement services and in documenting their effective practices for dissemination to other programs.

- A final capacity-building issue for most projects was how to sustain the delivery of effective services to aging workers after the official end of the AWI grant.

VII. DATA COLLECTION, REPORTING, AND OUTCOMES

Collecting accurate and reliable data is essential for gauging the success of the AWI initiative. In this chapter, we describe how the AWI projects documented project activities and expenditures, and we summarize the outcomes reported to ETA on the required quarterly report forms (Form 9134) and accompanying narratives as of the end of the 4th quarter of 2010.

Data Collection and Reporting on Participant Characteristics and Services

As part of the AWI initiative, ETA created a small project-specific data collection system, called the Aging Worker Data System (AWD). Use of the data system was voluntary but provision of data for reporting and evaluation purposes was required. The AWD was thus intended to support required data collection, reporting, and data provision for the evaluation by project grantees.

To support evaluation efforts, the data collection system for the AWI participants had a few more data elements than the optional client-level reporting system designed for other High Growth Jobs Training Initiative (HGJTI) grantees. In addition to the data fields in the reporting system for HGJTI grantees (gender, race, ethnicity, veteran status, and disability status), AWD included data elements such as: employment status at program entry, major previous occupations, individual goals for participation, identified barriers to employment, co-enrollment in other ETA-funded programs, activities and services received, documentation of gaps in service, reason for exit, and information about jobs obtained. The extensive array of data elements were those that grantees would be required to provide to evaluators, as per the grant agreements, so that the evaluation would be able to track the characteristics of project participants and assess how their characteristics influenced their outcomes.

Also, in an effort to make reporting to ETA easier for project grantees, the AWD automatically calculated the items required for the quarterly reports on the Form 9134, based on the client-level data that have been entered by the projects. Thus, if the system was working properly, it automatically generated most of the data required for each project's quarterly report. (Summaries of leveraged funding and capacity building outcomes and the quarterly report narrative are not generated by the AWD.) The AWD system was also supposed to make it easy

for each grantee to generate a spreadsheet with client-level data that could be shared with the AWI evaluator for further analysis at the conclusion of the grant period.[14]

Data Collection Practices

As shown in Exhibit VII-1, six of the nine grantees were using the AWD for recording data on AWI participants. Of the remaining three grantees, one entered AWI participant data into the state's integrated workforce development MIS, one recorded AWI project data in a spreadsheet of its own design, and one used both strategies.   However, most of the projects developed duplicate data entry systems. The reasons for duplicate data entry vary from project to project, but often include one or more of the following reasons:

- The project wanted to collect data on items that were not included in the AWD,
- The project needed to enter data on AWI participants who were co-enrolled in other programs into another system,
- Multiple MISs were needed to collect data across more than one local workforce investment area participating in the AWI project, and
- Due to problems in using the AWD, the project had initiated use of a second system.

Coastal Counties Workforce Inc., (ME), which had created an additional spreadsheet to capture information not collected in the AWD system, such as part-time work and employment outcomes that did not occur in the same quarter as completion of training. In the Michigan project, individual case managers across six local workforce investment areas recorded data for AWI customers in their own local workforce development area's MIS. However, since the grantee LWIB could not access system data for the other five LWIBs, individual case managers had to print out the participant data and send it to a data-entry staff person at the lead grantee, who re-entered the data from all six participating LWIAs into the AWD. This data-entry staff person created her own project spreadsheet as a duplicate data entry system, because she did not believe that the summaries generated by the AWD are accurate. Finally, *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) entered all AWI participant data into the state's integrated workforce development MIS as well as into AWD, because all AWI participants were co-enrolled in WIA.

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[14] Identifying information for individual customers will be removed from the file before it is shared with the evaluator.

Exhibit VII-1:
Information Systems Used by AWI Grantees

Grantee	Does Grantee Use AWD?	Other Systems Used	Reasons for Using Other or Additional System(s)
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Yes	State integrated workforce development MIS	All AWI enrollees are co-enrolled in WIA
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Yes	Supplemental Excel spreadsheet	To record part-time employment and employment that occurs after the quarter in which training is completed
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	No	State integrated workforce development MIS Separate spreadsheet designed for AWI project	State MIS is not well suited to recording outcomes for incumbent workers; all participants are included in project spreadsheet
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Yes	State Wagner-Peyser MIS (has a code denoting participation in AWI project) Local MISs (to record services across 6 participating LWIBs)* Separate spreadsheet designed for AWI project	Data-entry staff member doesn't trust the AWD summary data
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	No	State integrated workforce development MIS	Pilot-tested the AWD, but did not find out when the AWD was ready to use
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	No	Excel spreadsheet designed for project	Grant administrator found AWD too cumbersome and unreliable. Crashed regularly; were not aware of availability of technical support.
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Yes		
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	Yes		
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Yes	Additional MIS (used for co-enrolled participants)	Uses other systems for participants who are co-enrolled in SCSEP or WIA

Note: Macomb-St. Clair WIB wanted to use the state's workforce development MIS system to get a summary report that covers all participating LWIAs, but each LWIB only has access to its own local area data.

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Grantees used several different approaches to allocating data entry responsibilities. Seven of the grantees relied primarily on AWI case managers or navigators to enter the data. Even though multiple people entered the data, most grantees had created training curricula for case managers on standardized procedures for data entry. In most of these sites, project managers also regularly monitored the quality of the data. One grantee that served both incumbent and unemployed older workers used a state web-based system into which AWI staff members, project partners, and employer intermediaries could all enter information. Although this method saved project resources, the grantee had only limited ability to control the timeliness and consistency of the entered data. In other words, relying on multiple individuals for data entry may have saved project resources but could have jeopardized the quality of the data. A third approach, described above, was for one staff person to handle all the data entry for the AWI project. While this may have improved the consistency of the reporting, it was time-consuming and cumbersome.

A majority of the grantees—both those that used the AWD and those that did not—reported that data collection and reporting for the AWI project required more time than they had anticipated. Project managers reported spending up to 30 hours preparing the quarterly reports.

Issues Using the Aging Worker Data System (AWD)

As implied above, the implementation of the AWD system had not gone as smoothly as had been hoped. It is not clear exactly what factors were responsible for the difficulties experienced by the AWI grantees using the AWD. However, most project staff, including the administrative staff, were confused about how the underlying client-level records were maintained in the AWD system, what formal rules were used by the AWD system to generate summary data for the quarterly reports, and what was the difference between the client-level records and the reported summary data. If a quarterly report did not report employment outcomes for which the project would like to take credit, project staff feared that the system had lost the data they have been inputting.[15] Thus, a sensible response to the current confusion would be to try to educate project staff about the system, how it works, and how they can generate ad hoc reports to monitor their own progress.

Some of the difficulties in using the AWD arose from the limited training and technical support that had been available to grantees using this data system. One project manager described the training that was provided on the AWD as "fast and furious," which didn't allow grantee staff

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[15] Project staff thought that the outcome measures generated by the AWD systematically understated their accomplishments, excluding individuals who entered employment later than the end of the quarter in which they completed training and individuals who find part-time jobs.

members to gain a clear understanding of how the system worked. The timing of the training—before the grantees actually had received their own copies of the software—was also problematic. The possibility that better training on the use of the AWD would make a difference is supported by the fact that three grantees with more experience using the AWD (or a system very much like it) did not report difficulties using the AWD. The grantees in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania had pilot-tested the AWD system for ETA, and the AWI project in Vermont had pre-tested the similar MIS system developed for the High Growth Jobs Training Initiative. These "beta sites" received substantial training and technical support and had more experience than other sites using the system. This offered some hope that, with more experience, grantees would learn to use the AWD.

Across all grantees, project managers used the AWD primarily for federal reporting, rather than for internal use to oversee progress or identify opportunities for project improvement. One of the difficulties projects reported was that they did not know how to generate their own ad hoc management reports from the system. By creating a system that generated its own reports in a way that was mysterious to the grantees, ETA unintentionally made it hard for projects to use their own data for internal project management.

Project Accomplishments to Date

In this section, we review the accomplishments of the AWI projects as of December 31, 2010 (as reported in the quarterly progress report narratives and Form 9134), by comparing them with the goals described in the project proposals.[16] The section first looks at enrollment data and then at progress toward meeting goals for overall enrollment, enrollment in training, and employment of participants after training.

Participants Enrolled

Enrollment outcomes to date are summarized in Exhibit VII-2. Planned enrollment numbers are derived from the enrollment goals identified in grant proposals. Actual enrollment levels through December 31, 2010 are based on "Total Participants Served" from the Quarterly Progress Reports (ETA Form 9134). For each grantee, Exhibit VII-2 compares the total planned enrollment and the actual number of participants served to date by the grantee. Most AWI projects projected that they would serve between 165 and 450 participants. *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) was an outlier, with 1,300 projected participants. This

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[16] For one project that has "corrected" the information on Form 9134 in its narrative report, we have used the corrected data provided by the project.

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grantee found that its enrollment projections were unrealistic and managers planned to apply for a grant modification to reduce the number of participants to be served.

As indicated by the data in Exhibit VII-2, projects were still actively recruiting and enrolling older workers. As of the end of December 2010, grantees had about 19 months to go on their initial 36-month grant period. Five of nine grantees (those in Indiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington) had reached at least 40% of their enrollment goals, suggesting that they would be able to reach their goals by the end of the project period. One project, *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX) had already reached over 70 percent of its enrollment goal, with 323 out of 450 older workers enrolled in project activities and services. The remaining four projects (those in Maryland, Michigan, Vermont, and Wisconsin) had made less progress; they had reached less than 35% of their target enrollment levels.[17] Two projects in particular—those operated by *Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.* (VT) and *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI)—appeared to be experiencing difficulty enrolling older workers in their projects, having reached only 10 percent and 24 percent of their enrollment projections, respectively. Managers of the *Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.* (VT) project cited delays in implementing their project design as one reason for the low enrollment levels to date. Managers stated that they planned to request a no-cost extension from ETA in order to gain the time needed to meet their enrollment goals and achieve other desired project outcomes.

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[17] The number of participants enrolled at the midpoint of the grant period may not be a good predictor of final enrollment, because some projects may have planned for the rate of enrollment to increase substantially after the first year of the grant.

Exhibit VII-2:
Enrollment in AWI Projects as of 12/31/2010

Grantee	Participant Enrollment Goals (from Grant Proposal)	Actual Participants Enrolled through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Percent of Enrollment Goal Attained as of 12/31/2010	Total Number of Exiters through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Number of Customers Exited as a Percent of Actual Participant Enrollment
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	300	134	45%	59	44%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	200	118	59%	34	29%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	312	106	34%	0	0%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	1397	454	32%	31	7%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	318	187	59%	43	23%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	450	323	72%	155	48%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	500	48	10%	1	2%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	165	70	42%	1	1%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	450	110	24%	4	4%

Many projects had found that the enrollment projections provided in their proposals were overly optimistic and were interested in revising them. Reasons cited by grantees for enrollment goals that proved to be unrealistic included lower project funding levels than originally anticipated and reluctance by older workers to pursue training. Lower-than-anticipated funding is the main reason the managers for the project at the *Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.* (MI) revised its design and enrollment projections. This project's initial estimate of 1,397 enrolled participants was based on leveraging approximately $1 million in funds from the state's "No Worker Left Behind" training initiative, but these funds had already been exhausted by the time the project began implementation.

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Participants Who Have Exited the Projects

A participant is considered to have exited a project when a 90-day period has passed without the participant having received services from the project, or if a participant has to drop out of the project for a specific reason. The exit cohort during a given quarter is significant because it is the group for which Common Measures outcomes are reported in the quarterly reports.

The total numbers of participants who had exited from the projects were still relatively low at the time of the initial site visits. As shown in Exhibit VII-2, in only two projects—those operated by *Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.* (IN) and *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* (TX)—was there a significant percentage of all enrolled individuals who had exited. In the remaining seven projects, less than 30 percent of all enrolled participants had exited as of December 31, 2010. One reason for the low exit rates was that many participants were still participating in occupational skills training. Another reason was that projects were providing job search assistance and intensive case management services to many customers until they were able to secure employment and show a positive employment outcome. Since the economy was just beginning to rebound at the time of the first site visit, significant numbers of older-worker participants were still looking for employment, and therefore still receiving services.

Characteristics of Project Enrollees

Exhibit VII-3 summarizes the characteristics of the enrollees served to date. Interestingly, five projects (those in Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Vermont, and Wisconsin) were serving a higher proportion of females than males. This pattern may have resulted from three of these projects' targeting occupations in the healthcare industry which women often pursue. Two projects (those in Indiana and Texas) were serving equal numbers of male and female participants. A majority of participants in the remaining two projects—those run by *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA) and *Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County* (WA)—were males (65 percent and 59 percent, respectively). This was not surprising given that the Pennsylvania project targeted advanced manufacturing as a high-growth industry while the Washington State project targeted the construction industry, and both of these industries typically had high proportions of male workers.

The populations in the areas served by the AWI projects varied widely in their ethnic/racial mixes, ranging from that of the relatively homogenous state of Vermont, where only 4% of the residents were ethnic and racial minorities, to that of the very diverse Houston metropolitan area, which was less than 35 percent white/non-Hispanic and included sizeable numbers of individuals of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian heritage. Four of the AWI projects (in Maryland, Michigan, Texas, and Washington) were notable in serving racially and ethnically diverse older

Exhibit VII-3:
Characteristics of Participants Enrolled as of 12/31/2011

Grantee	Gender		Ethnicity/Race					
	Male	Female	Hispanic/ Latino	Asian	Black or African American	White	Other	Ethnicity Data Missing
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	51%	49%	0%	0%	8%	91%	1%	0%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	41%	59%	0%	2%	1%	94%	2%	1%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	21%	79%	0%	0%	61%	37%	1%	1%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	44%	56%	1%	1%	28%	68%	2%	0&
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	65%	35%	0%	0%	2%	78%	1%	19%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	51%	49%	13%	0%	58%	29%	0%	0%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	96%	0%	4%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	59%	41%	4%	34%	17%	44%	0%	1%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	44%	56%	0%	0%	5%	95%	0%	0%

Note: Data in this table are from the Quarterly Reports, ETA Form 9134 for the end of the 4th quarter, 2010.

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workers. Only the project in Texas was serving significant numbers of Hispanic participants while the Washington project was the only one serving significant numbers of Asian participants.

Participation in Education and Training

Exhibit VII-4 provides a summary of how enrolled customers flowed through project services and what services they had received as of December 31, 2010. Six projects (those in Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin) stated in their grant proposals that they planned to provide occupational skills training to 100 percent of the individuals enrolled in their projects.[18] Two projects—those in Vermont and Washington—planned to train a somewhat smaller percentage of all enrollees (60 percent and 90 percent respectively). The AWI project in Indiana planned to train only 30 percent of all project enrollees. For the participants who did not choose to participate in training, these projects planned to provide a combination of career counseling, pre-employment skills training, and job placement assistance.

As shown in the Exhibit VII-4, the AWI projects had all begun to provide education and training activities to enrolled participants. Three projects—those in Maine, Maryland and Pennsylvania—had reached at least 35 percent of their total education and training enrollment goals. The remaining projects were lagging behind on their education and training goals, with attainment rates between 2 percent and 13 percent of the levels originally projected.[19]

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[18] Initially, most projects anticipated that they would enroll primarily participants who were interested in receiving training in the targeted occupations; however, the emphasis on training as the core service declined in many projects over time. Many projects enrolled participants who were receiving career counseling, pre-employment skills training, and job search assistance, but had not entered occupational skills training.

[19] As described previously, a project that had not enrolled a large number of participants in education and training by the midpoint of the project period might still reach its goal by increasing the rate of enrollment during the remaining months of the project.

**Exhibit VII-4:
Education and Training Participation Levels as of 12/31/2010**

Grantee	Goal for Enrollment in Education and Training (From Grant Proposal)	Began Education or Training Activities through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Percent of Education and Training Goal Attained	Completed Education or Training Activities through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Participants Completing Training who Received Degree/ Certificate through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9234)	Percent of Customers Completing Education/ Training Goal who Received Degree/ Certificate
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	270	28	10%	25	24	96%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	200	90	45%	41	40	96%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	312	106	35%	0	0	--
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	1,397	22	2%	6	5	83%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	318	185	58%	99	10	10%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	450	81	20%	67	20	30%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	300	19	6%	0	0	--
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	148	32	23%	36	2	8%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	450	58	13%	14	14	100%

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Exhibit VII-5:
Enrollment in Training Relative to Total Enrollment as of 12/31/2010

Grantee	Number of Participants Enrolled	Number of Participants Entered Training	Percent of Enrollees Entered Training
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	134	28	21%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	118	90	76%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	106	106	100%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	454	22	5%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	187	185	99%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	323	81	25%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	48	19	40%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	70	32	46%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	110	58	53%

As shown in Exhibit VII-5, the proportion of all project enrollees who had entered education and training to date ranges from 5 percent to 100 percent Overall, this proportion was substantially lower than had been anticipated in most projects. In only four projects—those in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Wisconsin—were more than 50 percent of project participants enrolled in training. The percentage of participants who receive training was likely to increase somewhat over time, as recent project enrollees entered training programs, but the general pattern was unlikely to change.

There are a number of different reasons why the proportion of participants actually enrolled in training had not reached the original expectations in many projects. Although many projects initially planned to provide all or almost all of their enrollees with occupational skills training, a number of projects found that many aging workers were reluctant to pursue classroom-based

training and/or were not interested in the occupations that the projects had targeted for training. Because their older-worker customers were not eager to enroll in training, case managers from many projects have found they had to let enrollees go through an initial job search, often unsuccessfully, before they would seriously consider training as an option. In other sites, leveraged training funds expected from other sources have not materialized.

Because of the lower-than-expected enrollment in occupational skills training, the service emphasis of many projects evolved away from primarily providing occupational skills training. A number of projects were serving AWI participants with employment counseling, pre-employment skills training, and job search assistance without providing them with occupational skills training. This helps explain why there were wide variations in the percentage of all enrollees who have begun education and training activities. As several projects began to offer training courses specifically designed for older workers, the reported training enrollments (and outcomes) for these projects may increased.

In most sites, only a small number of enrollees had completed training. Within the limited group of training completers, four projects reported that a high percentage had attained a degree or certificate upon training completion. For example, of the fourteen individuals who completed education and training in the *Fox Valley Workforce Development Board* (WI) project, 100 percent had received a degree or certificate upon completing their training courses. In three other projects—those in Indiana, Maine and Michigan—between 83 and 96 percent of customers who completed education and training activities attained a degree or certificate. Projects expected that these certificates will help make older workers more attractive to employers.

Employment Outcomes

It was still too early in the grant period to assess project performance in terms of participants who entered employment or the proportion of participants who found training-related employment. Exhibit VII-6 provides a brief overview of the employment outcomes that had been reported as of December 31, 2010. Exhibit VII-6 shows that six AWI projects reported numbers of aging workers who entered employment in the quarter that training was completed that are very low compared to their total goals. This is mainly because many individuals were still actively receiving AWI services and had not completed their individual service plans.

Exhibit VII-6:
Employment and Training-Related Employment Outcomes by Project as of 12/31/2010

Grantee	Projected Number of Participants Entering Employment (in the same quarter) After Completing Training (in Grant Proposal)	Actual Number of Participants Entering Employment (in the same quarter) After Completing Training through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Percent of Goal Reached	Projected Number of Training Completers in a Training-Related Job (in the same quarter	Actual Number of Training Completers in a Training-Related Job (in the same quarter through 12/31/2010 (ETA 9134)	Percent of Goal Reached
Tecumseh Area Partnership. (IN)	40	6	15%	30	4	13%
Coastal Counties Workforce (ME)	118	2	2%	118	2	2%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	249	89	36%	249	89	36%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	894	2	.2%	760	2	.3%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	256	92	36%	243	89	37%
Goodwill Industries of Houston (TX)	300	85	28%	157	14	9%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development,(VT)	200	0	0%	180	0	0%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	89	1	1%	80	1	1%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	338	10	3%	338	10	3%

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Maryland and Pennsylvania both reported, however, that most of those who had obtained employment to date found training-related jobs.[20] Some of the projects using the AWD were concerned because this reporting system was designed to comply with OMB-approved performance reporting requirements, which allowed employment outcomes to be reported only for participants who completed training activities and obtained a new employment in the same quarter. This reporting limitation was not well-aligned with the increased emphasis that some projects were placing on serving participants who never participate in training. Furthermore, several projects said that the reporting requirement that a participant must find employment within the same quarter he/she completes training was too restrictive.[21]

Project Expenditures

According to Exhibit VII-7, on average, the projects had obligated only 30 percent of their grant funds by the end of December 31, 2010. Although there may have been a lag before data on obligated funds were entered into the reporting system, this rate of obligating funds seemed slightly low if projects were to spend out their funds by mid-August 2012 (when the grants were

Exhibit VII-7:
Funds Obligated as of end of 4th Quarter 2010

Grantee	Project Budget	Funds Obligated as of 12/31/10	Percent of Budget Expended to Date
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	$1,000,000	$275,937	28%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Report not Available		
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	$967,005	$173,192	18%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	$979,400	$229,575	23%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	$971,000	$228,496	24%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. TX	$999,949	$382,406	38%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	$1,000,000	$98,635	10%
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	$1,000,000	$653,506	65%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	$1,000,000	$586,531	59%
TOTAL	$7,917,354	$2,352,341	30%

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[20] This may be because of the incumbent workers served by these two projects.

[21] During the site visits, projects did not indicate that they were aware of their ability to report outcomes that do not align with reporting definitions and AWD in their quarterly narrative report, in order to meet outcome goals.

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to end). Two projects had obligated over half of their project budgets. Four projects had obligated less than 25% of their budget totals.

Summary of Key Findings

- Data collection and reporting were more time-consuming than project managers anticipated. One reason was that many projects found they needed to enter data into multiple tracking systems for AWI participants in order to meet their own internal reporting needs and generate the project summaries they had to provide to ETA.

- Although the Aging Worker Data (AWD) System was intended to make reporting easier for the grantees, projects have not received enough training in how to use the system to make them comfortable with it. A number of grantees using the AWD system were concerned that the system was not aggregating the data correctly in the summary tables that calculate outcomes.

- Participation in occupational skills training has been less frequent than many projects originally anticipated.

- Outcomes reported to date were typical for the early-to-middle phases of project operations. Many participants were still receiving services. Few participants had completed training or exited the system.

VIII. THE AGING WORKER INITIATIVE AT THE MIDPOINT: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

When visited at roughly the midpoint of the 36-month grant period, the AWI grantees had achieved noteworthy successes in implementing their AWI projects. They also had encountered some unexpected hurdles. This chapter summarizes the most notable of these initial successes and challenges. For convenience they are divided into four categories: (1) project design and initial implementation, (2) AWI project infrastructure and collaborative partnerships, (3) services and training options available to AWI participants, and (4) project reporting and performance outcomes. The main points discussed are not designated separately as "successes" and "challenges" because in some cases the positive and negative aspects of a finding are too intertwined to pull apart.

Project Design and Initial Implementation

- **Most of the AWI projects had succeeded in recruiting and serving a broad range of older workers.**

Rather than establishing narrow eligibility criteria for project participation—such as individuals having incomes below a certain level or specific barriers to employment—most AWI projects had recruited and served any unemployed or underemployed individual 55 years of age or older. Project operators believed that older workers who found themselves unemployed and looking for work during a period of high unemployment were nearly always at a disadvantage in the labor market, even if they were highly educated and had professional careers in the past.

- **The few projects that recruited more narrowly or more broadly encountered challenges.**

Projects encountered challenges at both ends of the spectrum—if they tried to target a very narrow group of older workers or if they tried to serve participants whose needs varied too widely. Narrowly defining eligibility allowed more resources to be dedicated to particular disadvantaged groups, but the one project that attempted to focus narrowly on older workers with barriers to employment found that it was difficult to recruit older workers who fit its particular target groups, and particularly difficult to find customers in these groups who were also interested in the high-growth industry sectors the project is targeting. At the other end of the

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spectrum, targeting too broad a group of older workers could also create challenges if those workers' employment needs and skills were too varied. This was the experience of another project that recruited older workers with a broad range of interests and abilities and as a result had to refer AWI participants to two different pre-employment workshops, one designed for individuals with a relatively high level of education and skills and one designed for less-skilled workers.

- **The AWI grantees were ambitious in establishing projects that will increase the services available to older workers across large geographic service areas.**

Grantees had substantial flexibility in defining the service areas for their proposed projects, although the number of counties in the grantee's local workforce investment area was also influential in determining the scope of the project. Five grantees elected to expand services to multiple local workforce investment areas. Targeting a larger geographic area helped bring services to older workers who may have needed them but were not eligible for the services offered by other programs such as SCSEP or WIA. This strategy also exposed American Job Center staffs in more local areas to the delivery of services that were sensitive to the needs of aging workers, and may have encouraged long-term change in practices and attitudes in staff in these local areas.

However, given the amount of project funding available, allocating AWI funds across multiple LWIAs also created the danger that the funds would be too diffused to have much influence. Projects that crossed multiple jurisdictions and involved multiple LWIBs as partners found that they faced more difficult challenges establishing a shared service philosophy and approach, developing standardized procedures, training and supporting direct service delivery staff members, and collecting data on project accomplishments.

Projects that included several counties within the same local workforce service area or several LWIAs with strong coordination linkages and similar training delivery systems tended to be most successful in serving large geographic areas.

- **Projects have capitalized on the investments they made prior to the AWI grants in developing relationships and identifying resources relevant to improving services to older workers.**

Grantees typically built on aging worker initiatives implemented prior to the AWI grants. These initiatives created several advantages for the design and delivery of AWI activities. First, experience with prior initiatives helped the partners develop expertise, which helped inform the goals and services grantees made available through AWI. Second, three of the grantees had developed curriculum materials through other initiatives that they could use or modify for the AWI project. Having resources already in place saved time and financial resources and provided aging-worker-targeted training materials for job seekers and employers. Third, projects could

build on existing partnerships that had been cultivated over time. These partnerships were valuable in marketing and recruiting the project to participants and employers, identifying additional resources that could be leveraged to support project goals, and creating oversight teams to guide the AWI projects.

Project Infrastructure and Collaborative Partnerships

- **In most sites, AWI project managers and the individuals providing direct services were considered key assets.**

In many of the sites, grantee administrators praised the leadership of the AWI project manager and the work of the direct service staff members employed by the project. They attributed the success of programs to managers and staff members who brought needed expertise in working with aging adults to the projects and worked long hours to serve participants effectively. Key respondents in many sites praised AWI managers and staff members in terms similar to those used by one respondent, who said that these individuals were "an asset to the project" and often "go beyond the grant requirements to make the projects successful." Some professional staff members were themselves older workers who bring a wealth of resources and experience to their projects.

- **Project budgets were generally inadequate for covering the time project managers spend on day-to-day administration of their AWI projects.**

Although project managers are consistently given high marks for their contributions to the projects, the project budgets do not tend to fully cover the managerial time spent on AWI activities. Only three grantees hired full-time AWI project managers to handle day-to-day administrative responsibilities such as organizing training on project policies and procedures, creating and sustaining partnerships, coordinating recruitment efforts, troubleshooting with front-line staff, overseeing administrative data collection, and compiling federal quarterly reports. The majority of grantees allocated 0.50 FTE or less to handle these responsibilities, and have found that this level of grant-funded support was inadequate for covering the completion of these tasks.

- **Projects are generally well connected to the workforce investment system, which increases the potential for long-term systems change in serving aging workers.**

One of the explicit goals of the AWI initiative was to build the capacity of the workforce investment system to serve aging workers more effectively. Though it was still relatively early in the project period, most AWI grantees were well positioned to generate lasting change. There are three reasons for making this optimistic assessment. First, grantees are either part of or closely linked to the workforce investment system. Five of the grantees are LWIBs, two operate local American Job Centers, and the other two had established close connections with American

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Job Center services either by co-locating project staff at American Job Centers or arranging for WIA case managers to provide direct services to older workers served under the AWI grant.

Second, many of the projects funded case managers and/or older worker navigators who were employees of or co-located within the local American Job Centers. This structure helped cross-train staff members on the work-related resources and supports available to aging jobseekers through nonprofit agencies and specialized service providers in the community. It also helped train staff on the needs and assets of aging workers so that they can "sell" employers and workforce development entities on the benefits of hiring aging workers.

Third, programs implemented a multifaceted approach aimed at encouraging systems change. Many of the projects attempted to engage and educate not only job seekers, but also employers, industry associations, other workforce intermediaries. Eight of the nine projects implemented one or more of the following activities targeted toward employers: inviting employers to participate in the design and delivery of AWI services, recruiting employers interested in investing in training for older workers already working for their firms, and providing employer education and services on how to manage an aging workforce.

- **Grantees successfully recruited agency and organizational partners to help define project goals and activities, recruit participants, provide leveraged resources, and offer guidance and support for achieving outcomes.**

Public workforce investment partners, educational institutions, training providers, and aging organizations were actively involved with AWI grants in most projects. On average, a grantee identified ten partners with whom it worked on the AWI project. Typically, though, projects relied on a core group of three to five active partners and made use of other organizations as needed.

- **With the exception of two sites, employers and employer associations were less involved with the planning and design of the project than originally hoped.**

Employers and employer associations are key to creating job opportunities for AWI participants. Though named as partners in five of the nine projects, the level of employer involvement in all but two of the sites was less than originally hoped. Project managers attributed low employer participation to a struggling economy with limited job openings and misperceptions about hiring aging workers but they also said that they had not had sufficient time and resources to recruit business partners to the project.

However, two grantees—*Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development* (MD) and *South Central Workforce Investment Board* (PA)— reached out to employers in efforts to update and upgrade the skills of already employed older workers by involving business intermediaries in activities to train incumbent workers.

Services and Training Opportunities Available to AWI Participants

- **In responding to the identified needs of older workers, the AWI projects had developed broad ranges of services that usually included assessment, employment planning and career counseling, case management, job readiness training, computer literacy training, occupational skills training, and job placement.**

Rather than developing standardized packages of services, projects had generally developed individualized service plans to meet the skills and interests of individual participants. Based on an initial assessment of customer needs and interests, AWI case managers helped schedule customers for appropriate services. Allowing a participant to conduct an initial job search (prior to training) was often an effective way to help a participant realize that he or she needed to participate in training to update his/her skills.

- **The AWI projects had developed a wide range of occupational training offerings to prepare older workers for reemployment in high-growth occupations. However, in the current economic environment, with so many unemployed workers with both skills and experience seeking employment, it was not clear that the training available from the AWI projects was enough to make participants attractive to employers in the targeted occupations.**

Some projects initially anticipated that they would develop new training curricula or tailor existing curricula to prepare cohorts of aging workers for a limited number of specific in-demand occupations. Instead the AWI grantees tended to refer program participants to existing training programs, and these programs typically focused on a wider range of occupations. Projects found that the high-growth occupations they have targeted were not always well matched to the interests and abilities of the enrolled participants.

Although most sites encouraged AWI participants to pursue occupational training, funding constraints prevented them from offering substantial amounts of training funds to participants. In most sites, the "scholarship" amounts were significantly below the maximum training cost that could be approved for an individual participating in the WIA program. As a result, most AWI participants were enrolled in short-term training (e.g. training lasting three months) that was generally insufficient to prepare them for brand-new careers. Given these limitations, some projects tried to enroll participants in short-term training to upgrade their existing skills and thereby benefit.

- **Several sites developed methods of classroom teaching that worked well for AWI participants.**

In addition to grouping participants together in the same classroom to increase opportunities for peer support, several projects adapted courses for older workers by establishing a slower pace for

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the curriculum, stretching the courses over longer periods and providing increased opportunities for students' questions to be answered. One grantee found that it worked well to pair older workers with younger students who could help them learn how to use computer programs (for example, Microsoft Word, Excel, e-mail clients) and web-based educational tools (for example, web browsers, classroom management software used to turn in assignments or communicate with the instructor).

- **Projects sometimes used co-enrollment of AWI participants in WIA and/or SCSEP to expand the resources available to disadvantaged aging workers.**

Although only two projects co-enrolled all or most AWI participants in the WIA program, many projects considered co-enrollment in WIA as a possible strategy for increasing the amount of training they could provide to older workers and for providing supportive services not available using the AWI funding. In addition, three projects encouraged co-enrollment of SCSEP participants in the AWI project. For individuals who met the SCSEP income eligibility requirements, participation in both programs enabled them to combine paid work experience and classroom training in occupational skills.

Project Reporting

- **Most project managers described the AWD as problematic in completing federal reporting.**

Accurate reporting of data and outcomes is central to accountability and to monitoring the success of AWI. Of those projects that used the AWD federal reporting system made available by ETA, several had ongoing difficulties using the system. Two factors appear to have contributed to this difficulty. First, ETA provided limited training for using the database. Second, ETA had been able to provide only limited support to address ongoing problems with the database. Those that struggled with the database said that they spent too much time trying to document participant information and outcomes, which took away from the time available to meet with participants.

- **It was too soon to assess project outcomes, since only a small number of participants have completed training.**

Of those who had completed training, only a small number of participants had completed project services. Most projects indicated that they were continuing to work closely with participants as they complete training in order to assure they can find jobs.

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APPENDIX A
MASTER PROTOCOL: ROUND 1 SITE VISITS

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1. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM INITIATIVE

1.1 Impetus for/ Purpose of the Project

- How did this project come about? What individual(s) or organization(s) were the **chief instigators or initiators** of the project proposal?

  - Who were the key individuals and entities involved in writing the initial grant application to USDOL?

  - How did you select the grant recipient (grantee organization)?

- What is the **purpose** of your project?

  - What are the key challenges facing aging workers who would like to work for pay in your region? Which of these challenges is the project particularly focused on addressing?

  - What are the key challenges facing employers who need workers with the skill set to match current and anticipated jobs in high growth sectors?

  - Which of these challenges is the project particularly focused on addressing?

- Why was the AWI grant announcement **attractive** to you?

  - What were the perceived opportunities of the grant?

  - Were there any aspects of the grant requirements that were not such a good fit with your needs and interests?

1.2 Goals of the Project

- How would you describe your **project philosophy** or approach?

- What **program goals** do you hope to achieve? To what extent are these goals quantifiable?

  - How could these goals be assessed? (How will you know if you are successful?)

  - Have the goals of the project evolved or changed since the grant began?

- What **outcomes do you hope to achieve** for individual participants?

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- How are these outcomes **measured** (common measures, other ways)?

1.3 Planning Process

- What were the **key steps in planning** for this initiative? How much of the design was developed in the grant application? What was the planning process like after the grant was awarded?

- Who were the **key players involved in the design** of the project and what organizations/ entities did they represent?

  − How engaged were different project partners (including LWIB board and staff, employers and employer associations, organizations specializing in aging worker services, and education and training providers in the planning process? How often did you meet?

  − Are there organizations that you wish had been at the table, in hindsight, and why?

- How would you characterize the **overall planning process**? Did it go smoothly?

  − What were the main issues of focus and/or concern during the planning process?

  − Were there any particular challenges during the planning of the project?

- What was the **effect of the economic recession** on the project?

  − How did the onset of the economic recession influence project planning and design?

  − How did the onset of the economic recession influence contribution of leveraged resources by project partners?

  − If partners have received additional funds from the Recovery Act, what effect have they had on contribution of leveraged resources?

1.4 Target Population

- What **specific groups of aging workers** does your **project target** (age, employment status, previous work history, other characteristics)?

  − Why were these particular groups targeted for this program in your area?

  − Among the target participants, what are the most common challenges to getting and keeping a job?

- What are the **characteristics of participants** enrolled to date? What are their education and skill levels, and level of work experience?

  − Are these participants consistent with the targeted groups?

- Have you been surprised by any of the characteristics of the enrolled participants?

Target Sectors/ Industries

- What **sectors/industries are targeted** by the initiative?

  - How were these sectors/industries chosen? How do they relate to the 14 sectors targeted by the High Growth Job Training Initiative (the sectors eligible for H-1B visas)?

  - How do these sectors/industries meet the criteria for high-growth, high-demand industries and sectors (add substantial numbers of new jobs, significant impact on economy overall, impacts the growth of other industries, transformed by technology/requiring new worker skill sets, new and emerging business that is expected to grow)?

- Why were **specific occupations** chosen? Were they selected because they were **particularly suitable to the needs of older workers**)?

- How do the targeted industries and occupations reflect **regional economic development strategies?**

. Program Eligibility Requirements

- What are the **eligibility requirements** for participation in the program?

  - Are there any additional restrictions or goals beyond the grant requirement (age 55+)? Do participants need to be currently unemployed or employed in a particular industry?

  - Have eligibility requirements posed any challenges to program success?

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT SERVICE AREA

2.1. Description of Local Service Area(s) Targeted for the Project

- Please describe the **project service area**.

  - What is the size of the service area targeted for the initiative? What is the population of the service area? How is the area defined (e.g., county, zip codes, jurisdiction of LWIB(s))?

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- What are the essential characteristics of the area (e.g., urban/suburban/rural/mixed)?

- How and why was this service area selected?

- **Are there multiple service sites** within the project's service area? Are different project partners active in different parts of the service area? Are different entities managing the project in different parts of the service area?

- Will the initiative be **implemented uniformly** throughout the service area?

2.2 Description of Local Labor Market in the Designated Service Area

- Please describe the **local labor market**.

  - What is the local unemployment rate? What are the major industries/employers?

  - What types of jobs are older workers most likely to have?

  - What are the sectors of growth and/or decline in the regional economy? For example, are health care jobs, green jobs, etc. considered high growth sectors?

- **How** has the **recession affected** grant planning and implementation?

  - Has the recession had any effect on employer interest in hiring aging workers; in terms of participant interest in enrolling?

  - Has the recession had any effect on the types of occupations for which participants are trained, or the number of job openings?

  - What other challenges were created by the economic recession? How were these challenges addressed?

- How is the project design and implementation experience influenced by the **regional labor market and economic trends**?

2.3 Description of Other Services Available to Older Workers in the Service Area

- Before this grant, what **employment and training services** existed **for older workers?**

  - What services for older workers were available from public workforce development funds, e.g., from WIA adult or dislocated worker funding stream; SCSEP; WIA or other incumbent worker training?

  - Did other agencies or funding streams also support employment and training services for older workers? If so, provide details.

  - Were there any public training funds targeted to currently employed or retired workers?

- Did existing training services make any **special arrangements to make their services appropriate for older workers**? (e.g. accommodations for people with disabilities; changes in working hours or conditions?)

- What factors, if any, **limited the services available to older workers** from the general workforce development system?

2.4 Competing Initiatives or Programs for Older Workers

- Are there other programs that **offer similar services to older workers** in the project service area?

  - Are there programs that target some of the same populations as the AWI project or compete with it for enrollees?

  - Are services offered by other programs similar to or complementary to the services provided by the AWI project?

  - Could an individual participate in both programs simultaneously?

- How does the **demand for older worker services compare to the capacity** of all local programs offering relevant services. (Are all available programs operating at full capacity or are they competing for customers? Are there waiting lists at the grantee and other similar programs?)

- If they can only participate in one program, **why would/do individuals select the AWI program** over others? Or why would/do they choose another program instead?

3. DESCRIPTION OF GRANTEE

3.1 Grantee Agency Background

- Please describe the **grantee organization**.

  - What type of organization is the grantee (LWIB; 501(c)3 organization; other)? How long has the grantee organization been in existence?

  - Who is the grantee's fiscal agent (if different from the grantee)?

  - What is the mission of the grantee organization? What other services does it provide/ activities does it carry out?

- Please describe how the **project fits within the grantee organization**.

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- Where does project administration reside within the grantee's organizational structure?

- How does the scope and funding of the AWI grant compare in size to the rest of the grantee budget and activities?

3.2   Grantee Administrative and Staffing Structure

- What is the **overall staffing structure** for administering the AWI grant?

    - Describe the administrative positions for the grant? What percentage time do key administrative staff working on the grant allocate to the AWI project?

    - Describe the staff positions for direct customer services (to workers and employers)? How many different organizations employ individuals who provide direct services to project participants and employers?

    - Were new staff members hired for the grant or did they come from One-Stop Career Center or partner staff?

    - If direct service staff work on other programs or projects as well, what proportion of their time or caseload is devoted to AWI participants?

    - Describe the qualifications and relevant experience of key staff.

- Is the **staffing plan consistent across all entities** (e.g. multiple LWIAs) participating in the grant? If not, describe the variations.

3.3   Grantee Previous Experience Serving Older Workers

- Please describe the grantee's **previous experience serving older workers**.

    - What experience does the grantee have serving older workers through WIA or other programs?

    - How long has the grantee been serving the older worker population?

    - What are the characteristics of the older workers the grantee has served in the past? How do their characteristics compare to the AWI participants?

    - If relevant, how successful does the grantee believe that it has been in its past work with this population?

4. DEVELOPING PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 Outreach/ Identification of Potential Partners

- What is the **range of organizations and individuals** who were **invited to participate** in the project (e.g. employers, industry associations, educational institutions, training providers, aging organizations, SCSEP grantees, economic development entities, apprenticeship programs, tribal organizations, philanthropic community, community or faith-based organizations)?

- How were **potential partners recruited** for this initiative? How difficult was it to secure the participation of the targeted partners?

- **At what stage** were partners **recruited**? (e.g. before grant application or after) How much say did each partner have in developing overall project scope and design? Who determined what partners to invite?

- **What strengths did you look for** in each invited partner?

4.2 Formal Relationships Among Project Partners

- What types of **contractual relationships**, if any, were put in place between grantee and partner agencies?

  - What did those arrangements encompass?

  - Were any MOUs (Memoranda of Understanding) needed to use client assessment tools or other resources?

  - Were any roadblocks encountered in getting the necessary contracts or MOUs in place? What affect did that have on the project?

- What **other agreements or procedures** govern the relationships between grantee and partners?

4.3 Project Leadership and Oversight

- Describe the **project leadership**.

  - Does the project have its own advisory board or oversight board? How is this board composed?

  - Is there a formal leadership team for the project with representation from project partners?

  - To whom does the project manager/ coordinator report?

  - Who decides the roles of the different partners and allocates project funds among the participating partners?

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- How does the project communicate with outside entities?

- Who is the formal liaison for the project with the USDOL?

- Who is the formal liaison for the project with the technical assistance providers?

- Who is the formal liaison for the project with the evaluation?

- Who has the **authority to identify and resolve problems** in project implementation or operations?

4.4 Communication Between Grantee and Partners

- How does **internal project communication** work?

  - How does the grantee's project manager communicate with project partners? How frequently and about what types of issues? How do partners communicate with each other?

  - How do partners communicate with each other?

- Does the grantee hold **regular meetings** with partners? If so, what is the purpose of these meetings? Are these meetings held individually or as a group? How long do they last?

  - What types of information are discussed during these meetings?

  - How helpful are the meetings in assessing project status and guiding the project?

4.5 Assessment of Partner Involvement

- How would you characterize **the overall success involving partners** to participate in the initiative?

  - How pleased are you with the final composition of partners in the initiative?

  - Were there some agencies you initially wanted to partner with but were unable to do so? If so, what were the barriers in establishing that arrangement? Was another agency involved to fill that gap, and if not, is the initiative lacking in some way without that partner?

  - Are there any other partners that in hindsight you wish were involved in the initiative that are not involved?

- Please describe any **challenges** you have experienced in developing effective relationships between the project partners.

  - What challenges did you experience in recruiting partners or in arranging for their specific role in the project?

- What challenges did you experience in the quality of the contributions made by individual partners?

- What are the **most successful aspects of** your **partnership**?

- What **advice** do you have for other projects serving older workers in terms of **partnership formation and partner roles?**

4.6 Informal Relationships with Other Entities Serving Project Participants

- Please describe any informal relationships that the project has developed with other entities to expand the services available to project participants.

  - To what extent do the workers recruited for this program receive services from other community agencies or programs?

  - What other agencies and/or programs are involved—SCSEP, One-Stop Centers (VT, CA and TX), Area Agencies on Aging?

  - To what extent are participants referred to these agencies? What proportion of participants access these services?

  - To what extent are participants referred from other agencies?

- What are the **experiences of participants referred to these providers**?

- Would the project have benefited from **more formal relationships** with these agencies?

5. INFORMATION ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS
(ALSO COMPLETE INFORMATION ON CHARTS 6 AND 7.)

5.1 Involvement of the Public Workforce Investment System (e.g. One-Stop Centers and Constituent Programs)

(If grantee is a local WIB, describe the involvement of One-Stop staff and programs that are not directly part of the funded AWI project.

- What role did/do public workforce investment partners play in **designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

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- What roles do public workforce investment partners play in **providing services to employer or worker customers**?

- How much **involvement** does the AWI project have **with other services provided at the One-Stop Career Center**?

  - Do AWI project participants utilize WIA core and intensive services? If so, for what types of services? Are workers served under AWI co-enrolled in the One-Stop system (or SCSEP) under WIA?

  - Are other workforce investment partners involved in providing services to AWI project participants? What is the nature of that involvement?

- How does the **AWI project fit in with other workforce initiatives**, such as, **SCSEP** or **Medicaid Infrastructure Grants** (MIG)?

  - Are the services offered across these initiatives substitutes or complements?

  - Do AWI participants need services available through SCSEP? Can AWI participants be co-enrolled in SCSEP or participate in any of its services?

  - Describe the level of coordination and communication across the agencies administering these initiatives (AWI, SCSEP and Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MCI)?

- How have public workforce investment partners **contributed to the success** of the project?

  Note: MCI grants from the US Department of Health and Human Services are intended to develop a comprehensive system of employment supports for people with disabilities.

5.2 Involvement of Organizations with Expertise on Aging

- What role did/do "aging organizations" play **in designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

- What other roles do "aging organizations" play **in providing services to employer or worker customers**?

- How have "aging organizations" **contributed to the success** of the project?

5.3 Involvement of Educational Institutions and Training Providers

- What role did/do educational institutions or training providers play **in designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

- **What other roles do educational** institutions or training providers play **in providing services to employer or worker customers**?

- How have education and training institutions or training partners **contributed to the success** of the project?

5.4   Involvement of Economic Development Entities

- What role did/do economic development entities play in **designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

- What other roles do economic development entities play **in providing services to employer or worker customers**?

- How have economic development entities **contributed to the success** of the project?

5.5   Involvement of Local Employers, Employer Associations, or Business Intermediaries

- What role did/do employers or business intermediaries play in **designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

- How did you **recruit business partners**? What were your **selection criteria**, if any?

- What other roles do employers or business intermediaries play **in providing services to employer or worker customers**? Are they involved in services to their own incumbent workers; in directly recruiting and hiring project participants, or in some more general way?)

- How have employers or business intermediaries **contributed to the success** of the project?

- How has employer involvement been affected by the **economic recession**?

5.6   Involvement of Other Partners (e.g., faith-based organizations, community organizations, philanthropic institutions, apprenticeship programs, tribal organizations, SCSEP grantees)

- What role did/do other partners play **in designing, managing, or overseeing** the grant, if any?

- What other roles do other partners play **in providing services to employer or worker customers**?

- How have other partners **contributed to the success** of the project?

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6. SERVICE DESIGN AND SEQUENCING OF SERVICES

Note: Training services are covered in section 7. You might want to cover the training services first and then come back to the topics in this section.

Some services may still be in the planning or pilot stage. Distinguish between active and planned services.

— 6.1 Participant Recruitment and Referral

- How are **participants recruited** to the program?

  — What proportion of participants are recruited through grant-specific outreach? (How do you advertise the project (e.g. brochures, public service announcements, speakers, requests for referrals)?

  — What proportion of participants are referred by:

    ~ One-Stop Career Center?

    ~ Local education providers?

    ~ Other partners in the grant?

    ~ Other means?

- What type of special emphasis is there on **recruiting disadvantaged populations** (veterans, people with disabilities, military spouses, ex-offenders, minorities, new Americans)?

- Did you face any **challenges** in recruiting participants?

    ~ Were there any delays in the start of participant enrollment?

    ~ If yes, what caused them?

    ~ What strategies did you use to overcome those challenges?

- To what extent and how is recruitment of older workers linked to **employer requirements**?

6.2 Components of the Project's "Service Bundle" for Aging Workers, including Orientation or Pre-Employment Services

- What are **the different elements of the "service bundle"** developed by the project to meet the needs of aging workers served by the project? (E.g., orientation, assessment, service planning/career counseling, pre-employment training, skills training, academic counseling, internships or temporary work experience, job search/job placement, post-placement services)

  — What is the duration and content of each service?

  — Who provides each service?

  — Is each service provided using grant funding or through leveraged funds by the providing agency?

- Which of these service elements have been **designed specifically to meet the needs of older workers**?

- What **recommendations** does the project have **about the design of individual services** in a service bundle for aging workers?

  — What recommendations does the project have about specific designs that work well for aging workers?

  — What recommendations does the project have about specific curricula or guides for workshop content that might be available to other projects serving aging workers?

- What **changes have occurred in the "service bundle" over time**? (new services added, services redesigned, services discontinued) Why and how?

6.3 Sequencing of Participant Services

- At what point in the receipt of services is an individual **officially "enrolled"** in the project (reportable to USDOL as a participant)?

  — Does receipt of a specific service or participation in a specific activity automatically activate "enrollment?"

  — Is enrollment reserved for individuals who decide to participate in occupational skills training?

  — If not, what is the ratio of enrollees who participate in training to enrollees who do not participate in training?

  — Do all training options include occupational skills training? (Or do some participants receive only pre-employment training or only job search training or only basic skills training without occupational skills training?)

- What is the **typical sequence** of project services (variations depending on customer needs?)

  — What services have participants received from other sources before enrolling in AWI? Describe the depth and quality.

  — How long, on average, do participants remain active in the project?

  — To what extent do participants drop out of service delivery? At what point in service delivery do clients typically drop out? For what reasons? What type of follow-up is made with drop outs to encourage continuing participation or obtain outcome information?

  — For participants who stay with the project, what is the point (points) at which an individual is considered to have "completed" the project?

  — At what point in the service process are individuals considered to have exited the project?

  — What follow-up services are provided after project exit? When does follow-up end?

- What is the **frequency** of different services?

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— What project services, if any, are received by all participants? Do all participants receive occupational skills training? Pre-employment training? Other services?

— What services are received by only a portion of all participants? What determines whether a customer will receive a given service?

— What other types of services, including WIA-funded services are provided to AWI participants? How many individuals received these services (by type)?

- What **individuals and entities are responsible for the delivery of different services**?

— In the course of participation, what project staff will participants come into contact with? Who does each of these service providers work for?

— Do participants have to travel to different locations for different services?

— If participants are referred to an education and training, or other project partner, what are the roles and responsibilities of the grantee? Who maintains the case—the grantee, the partner, or both?

6.4 Co-enrollment of AWI Project Participants in Other Workforce Development Programs

- How frequently are AWI project participants provided with an orientation to the core One-Stop services (e.g. resource room and online labor market information and assessment tools) as part of their participation in the AWI project?

- How frequently are AWI project participants co-enrolled in other programs operated out of One-Stop centers (e.g. WIA, TAA. SCSEP, Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser), or other programs?

- How is the delivery of other workforce development services coordinated with the delivery of services funded under the AWI grant? What program pays for what services?

- How is case management of AWI participants handled if they are also enrolled in another program?

6.5 Career Awareness Information

The US Department of Labor has identified **promoting career awareness** among aging workers as one potentially important component of a strategy to help aging workers enter jobs in high growth sectors.

- Is providing **information on careers** in the targeted industries an **important** aspect of your project?

- Please describe any specific **techniques or activities you have created to provide career awareness.**

— How is career awareness integrated into the training and non-training services?

- — What types of resources (web sites, videos, etc.) are used to develop this awareness?

- — Are job shadowing or informational session opportunities available to promote career awareness?

- How does the project rate the **quality of career awareness** services? How does career information influence participant decisions about training, entry occupations, or career paths?

  - — Does the project think that its career information service design is effective? Is it worthy of replication by other projects?

  - — How could career information services for older workers be improved?

6.6 Assessment Practices

Get copies of assessment tools. If on-line assessment, then ask for screenshots and/or a list of information collected.

- What is the **goal** of project assessment practices?

- What **types of assessments** are conducted?

  - — Assessment based on case manager or counselor's interview with participant?

  - — Commercial assessment instruments (what products)?

  - — Products designed by state or LWIA

  - — Was any tool or process developed or modified specifically for this program?

- How was the **decision made** regarding which tool to use?

- Please describe the **assessment process**:

  - — Who conducts the assessment?

  - — How long does it take?

  - — When is it conducted?

  - — What information is gathered?

  - — How does the assessment compare to its counterpart under WIA and SCSEP?

- **How is this information used** to determine whether participants receive readiness training, education/formal training, job placement services, or other services?

- Are these services **funded through the grant, or through leveraged resources**?

- How does the project rate the **quality of its assessment services**?

  - — Does the project think that its assessment practices are effective? Are they worthy of replication by other projects?

  - — How could assessment practices be improved?

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6.7 Other "Front-End" Services

- Please describe other **"front-end" services, such as pre-employment or pre-training workshops** for all participants.

    — What do front-end services consist of?

    — What is the goal of these services?

    — How were they developed?

    — How do they respond to the special needs of older workers?

- How does the project rate the **quality of its front-end services**?

    — How could front-end services be improved?

    — Does the project think that its front-end workshops or services are effective? Are they worthy of replication by other projects?

6.8 Planning for Employment and Career Pathways

The key issue underlying this section is how the project develops service plans for individual participants and **whether it emphasizes planning for longer-term career pathways (including advancement and lateral moves** that build on a worker's transferrable skills) in addition to finding an immediate job.

- Please describe how **service plans and employment goals** are established for an individual.

    — Are these reflected in a written plan? Do all participants develop a service plan/employment *plan?

    — Are service plans/employment plans developed for participants who do not participate in training (if any)?

    — What information is used to develop the employment plan?

    — Does the plan for services describe both a short term and a long term career goal?

    — What occupational training and placement goals are available? Are all project participants prepared for the same occupation/industry or is there customer choice involved?

- What are some **examples of service plans/occupational goals** for typical customers? (Ask a case manager to talk to you about the planning process and/or show you the file of a recent participant. Is there a plan for career advancement beyond initial employment?)

- How is **planning for career pathways and career development** built into the planning process?

    — Are participants concerned about career advancement?

- — Are participants encouraged to move vertically up the career ladder, or laterally across occupations/industries? How does that vary by participant characteristics?

- — Do participants feel that they are being supported in developing skills for advancement in the targeted occupation?

- — How has the USDOL emphasis on developing career pathways influenced the project's approach to service planning and employment goals?

- To what extent can AWI **career planning practices provide a model** for other programs and services?

  - — For grantees that also serve WIA or SCSEP participants, how does service planning for AWI differ from other practices?

  - — How could service planning for older workers be improved? What could other programs learn from the AWI service planning model?

  - — Are any of the project's career planning designs and practices more generally applicable to other groups receiving workforce development services?

6.9 Case Management Practices and Participant Support

- Please describe **case management practices** for the AWI project.

  - — What are the goals of case management for this project?

  - — Are there designated individuals (s) who provide case management services?

  - — When does case management begin and when does it end?

  - — How often and why does the case manager interact with the participant?

  - — What are common topics discussed at case management meetings

  - — What is the most common form of communication between case managers and program participants—in person, telephone?

  - — Are case management and participant support funded through the grant, or through leveraged resources?

- How does case management **differ for participants who enroll in training and participants who do not participate in training**? (Are there any active participants who forgo training?)

- What **other types of support** (e.g. academic counseling, peer support) are provided to project participants

  - — What other types of support do older workers need?

  - — How are other types of support provided, by whom, and with what funding?

  - — What types of support seem to work best for engaging participants and keeping them involved in the program?

- How does the project **rate the quality** of its case management services?

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— How could case management practices for older workers be improved?

— Does the project think that its case management design is effective? Is it worthy of replication by other projects?

6.10 Job Search Support, Job Placement Services and Post-Placement Services

- Please describe the **job search support and job placement services** available to AWI participants.

    — What entity (entities) provide job search support and job placement services to AWI grantees (role of grantee, training provider, other partners)?

    — How do job search/job placement services vary by occupation and/or participant characteristics?

- How do job search support and placement services for AWI participants **draw on resources available through One-Stop service systems**?

    — To what extent do AWI participants use placement services available through the local One-Stop system?

    — To what extent are grant funds used to support job search and job placement services versus leveraged funds from another source?

- What are participants' **service needs after they begin working**? How does the project respond to these needs?
    — What post-placement services are available to participants? How long are these services available?

    — Are post-placement services available both to training participants and participants who did not participate in training?

6.11 Supportive Services and Service Referrals

- Please describe how the project responds to the **supportive service needs** of AWI participants?
    — What supportive service needs do participants have when they enroll in the project? (e.g. assistance with health or health insurance issues, financial issues, nutrition, housing, disability, or other social service issues)

    — How does the project respond to these needs? (formal or informal referral linkages; effectiveness of linkages)

    — What proportion of participants receive supportive services from the project?

- To what extent are supportive services **paid for from project funds versus funds leveraged from other funding streams**?

7. DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES

7.1 Training Options Available to AWI Participants

— (Get menu of training options, and information to fill in Training Options Matrix included as Section C).

— What types of education or training opportunities are available to older workers participating in the AWI grant?

— What is the range of short-term versus longer term training options?

— How were these training opportunities developed or selected for se by the project? Did industry representatives or partners participate in selecting the targeted training opportunities?

— How do these training choices relate to high-demand occupations, as required by WIA; H1-B industries and occupations, as required for this grant; state or local high growth/high wage criteria?

— How are participants notified of the available education and training programs? If there are multiple training options, how do participants select among them?

— Do project participants have to pass entry screening tests for specific training programs?

— Characteristics of training providers most frequently used:

— What is the nature of the MOU between the training provider(s) and the project administrator?

— What is the capacity of the training provider to serve aging workers enrolled in the AWI project?

— Do any of the training providers offer separate classes or class sections exclusively for AWI participants? If so, how is the curriculum and- training delivery in these classes modified or designed to meet the needs of aging workers? (e.g. part-time training, technology-based training, independent self-passed study, hands-on learning)

— Do training providers participate in recruiting students for these classes?

— Do the training programs lead to completion of a certificate or credential? Describe the credential(s) and how it is(they are) perceived by local employers.

— What payments, if any, can the project make for additional training costs?

— Does the project pay for additional costs associated with training or first job (e.g. equipment, post-training services such as qualifying exams, externships, etc.)

— Does the project offer any living stipend or financial payment during training?

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7.2 Entrepreneurship Training and Services to Support Self-Employment Outcomes

- Does the project provide services to help participants **start up a small business**?

    — How many participants are interested in this outcome?

    — Is the grantee partnered or have any type of relationship with Small Business Administration programs? If so, which specific programs and how are they utilized?

    — What types of entrepreneurial training are available to older workers through the grant?

    — Is this training available to all participants, or only those thinking of businesses in certain industries/sectors?

    — Is entrepreneurship training linked to occupational content training or is it a stand-alone training option?

- **How many participants** are participating in entrepreneurial training? (Examples?)

- How does the project **rate the quality** of its entrepreneurial training services?

    — How could the entrepreneurial training be improved?

    — Does the project think that its entrepreneurial training design is effective? Is it worthy of replication by other projects?

7.3   Individual Decisions about Training

- How does an individual **select a training plan and get approval** for it?

    — Can a participant decide not to participate in training and still remain an active enrollee in the project (or are all participants expected to enroll in some kind of occupational training)?

    — How does the project limit or guide the training choices available to a participant?

    — What types of screening does the project do to assess whether a participant could succeed in a given training program (e.g. reading or math skills, mobility, strength)?

    — What are limits on the duration or cost of training? Can exceptions be made?

- What are the key **factors that participants usually consider** in deciding **whether to enter training** and **what type of training** to participate in?

- Does the project **encourage participants to choose training from a specific provider or in a specific industry**? (specific programs created or modified for this grant; providers on the eligible training provider list; other)

7.4 Work Experience or Internships for Hands-On Experience During or After Training

- Are **internships or temporary work-experience** a part of the AWI program design?

  — If yes, describe the types of internship or work-experience placements (e.g. for-profit or non-profit employer, duration, skills gained or practiced during internships, stipend or training pay during work experience)

  — Who arranges the internships?

  — How are employers for internship placements recruited and matched to participants?

- What is the **goal** of work-based training? (contact with a potential employer, additional opportunities to practice new skills.)

- **What proportion of all AWI participants** are involved in work-based learning?

- How does the project **rate the quality** of its work-based training?

  — How could work experience or internships for older workers be improved?

  — Does the project think that its work-based training model is effective? Is it worthy of replication by other projects?

7.5 Assessment of Training Options and Providers

- What are the **strengths and weaknesses of the training options and providers** used by your project?

  — What are the most popular training occupations? Why are these occupations most attractive to the older workers served by the project?

  — Who are the most frequently used training providers (partners, eligible training provider list vendors, others?) Why are these training providers most attractive to the project participants?

  — To what extent have particular training providers and courses adapted their usual course content and training approach to make their courses more attractive to or appropriate for older workers?

  — What are the most innovative or most effective features of training adapted or designed for older workers? (Provide examples)

  — What are the most problematic or ineffective features of the training for older workers that you have experienced? Why are they problematic? How could they be improved?

7.6 Curriculum Designs, Pedagogical Approaches, and Training Tools

- What **types of training approaches** are used as part of the training offered to project participants

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— (Possible examples: contextualized learning, particular methods for upgrading specific occupational skills, comprehensive models with wraparound services such as assessment and follow-up)?

— What types of technology-based learning (TBL) do you use in training (i.e. chat rooms, webcasts, internet, and computer-based learning, etc.)? How do older workers react to the uses of technology in instructional methods?

— How are these training approaches modified to meet the needs of older learners?

8. PARTCIPATION BY EMPLOYERS AND INCUMBENT WORKERS

Besides participating in the formal project partnerships, employers may be involved in designing participant services and making them responsive to particular industrial or employer needs. Firms may also benefit directly from project services, including advice about strategies to increase their retention of older workers who are approaching retirement age.

8.1 Outreach to/ Recruitment of Employers

- How did/does the project **reach out to employers**?

  — Did the project undertake a public media campaign to make employers aware of the project or change employer attitudes about older workers? How would you assess the effectiveness of that strategy?

  — What types of employers did you reach out to as part of the initiative? Did you target employers in certain industries or with a certain number of employees?

- What are your **goals** for employer involvement?

  — Were you trying to change employer attitudes, identify employers willing to hire older workers, help them adapt jobs to make them attractive to older workers, help them retain workers as they approached retirement age, or something else?

- What **services** do/did you offer to employers?

  — Possible examples: technical assistance on how to deal with older workers; services to their aging employees; assessment of older workers' skills and skills gaps; recruitment and screening of older workers for available jobs; job coaching/ transitional employment for newly hired older workers)

- How have employers **responded to your outreach**?

  — What did employers identify as their most pressing concerns related to hiring aging workers?

- — Were you successful in reaching as many employers as you wanted and the types of employers you wanted?

- — What were some of the reasons that employers were receptive to the project? "What is in it for them" as an individual employer?

- — Were the participating employers interested in retaining their incumbent workers who are approaching retirement age? Hiring older workers as new employees?

- — Were the participating employers interested in promoting training for aging workers or influencing the content of planned training?

- What would you **do differently** in the future **to reach employers?**

8.2 Project Assistance to Employers

- Please provide some **examples of how specific employers have been involved** with the project.

  - — How many employers did you work with? Describe size, industry, and extent of previous contact with public workforce development system.

  - — How were employers involved in the different stages of the project?

- How did the project **assist employers**?

  - — How did you work with employers to improve their attitudes about older workers as employees, if at all?

  - — How did you work with employers to adapt jobs to make them more attractive to older workers, if at all?

  - — How did you work with employers to support their recruitment and hiring process, if at all (e.g. refer screened or trained older workers to them)?

  - — How did you work with employers to help them retain their employees as they approached retirement age, if at all?

8.3 Assessment of Employer Outcomes

- How do/might you **measure** the project's **employer outcomes**?

- How did your involvement **influence employer attitudes and practices**?

  - — How did you influence employer attitudes about older workers as employees?

  - — How did you influence employer recruitment and hiring practices with respect to aging workers in general?

  - — Have employers adapted their hiring procedures or job descriptions to make them more attractive to older workers, and if so how?

  - — Did employers you worked with offer any new opportunities for advancement to their older employees?

- Did employers you worked with **hire any project participants** as a result of this outreach?

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- How many?

- How satisfied were employers with the skills and job performance of project participants they hired?

- What types of accommodations by employers were particularly effective in making the job attractive to older workers (e.g. shorter shifts, less physical exertion, more frequent breaks, etc.)

- Do you think your project will **help satisfy the demand for workers in the targeted industries**? Why or why not?

8.4 Services Provided to Incumbent Workers

- Please describe your **project's strategy or design for serving incumbent workers**, if any?

  - Does your project include any efforts to serve incumbent worker?

  - What is the purpose of these services? (e.g. skills up*date, career advancement)

  - What are the desired outcomes?

- If applicable, describe the **scope and timing of services/training** to incumbent workers.

  - How were workers recruited or selected for services/training?

  - How many participants will be served over what time period?

  - Describe provider and delivery arrangements.

  - How is the employer involved in services to employed workers? Are there any cost-sharing arrangements? If so, describe.

- What are the particular **challenges or issues** involved in providing services/training to older incumbent workers?

- How does the project **rate the quality** of its services to incumbent workers?

  - How successful have you been in serving aging workers who are already working? (examples or outcome statistics)

  - How could the services to incumbent workers be improved?

  - Does the project think that its design for serving incumbent workers is effective? Is it worthy of replication by other projects?

9. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

9.1 Sources of Technical Assistance

- **Who do you look to** when you have questions about project design or operations?

    — What issues/questions to you refer to USDOL program office?

    — What issues/questions to you refer to funded TA provider?

    — What issues/questions do you refer to project peers?

9.2 Technical Assistance Needs to Date

- Please describe your **technical assistance needs** to date?

    — What are some of the key challenges you have faced at each phase of project design, organizational design, implementation and operations?

    — How have your technical assistance needs evolved over time?

    — What challenges are you currently facing or do you expect to face in the next year with the AWI project?

- What are your **most important TA needs at this point** in your project development?

9.3 Technical Assistance on Organizational and Management Issues

- What are some of the challenges you have faced in dealing with **organizational and management issues?** (e.g., budgeting, record keeping, reporting, developing MOUs with project partners and defining their roles)

    — To what extent has technical assistance helped you deal with these challenges or issues.

    — Provide details describing your problems and the assistance you received.

    — Did the TA help resolve these issues?

- How has the technical assistance you have received **influenced your project organization and management approach**? How have these changes have improved your project?

9.4 Technical Assistance on Design and Delivery of Program Services

- What are some of the challenges you have faced in dealing with **project design and delivery of program services**?

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- To what extent has technical assistance helped you with deal with these challenges or issues.

- Provide details describing your problems and the assistance you received.

- Did the TA help resolve these issues?

- How has the technical assistance you have received **influenced your project design and service delivery procedures**? How have these changes have improved your project?

9.5 Assessment of the TA Received to Date

- **How satisfied** are you with the technical assistance you have received to date?

  - Is the TA you have received responsive to your perceived capacity building needs?

  - What are the strengths and limitations of your TA coach?

  - How satisfied are you with the level of involvement of your TA coach? The frequency of contacts?

- How could the TA you have received been **improved in quality or topics covered**?

- What are the **most useful things you have learned** as a result of the TA and training that you have received?

10. PROGRAM FUNDING

10.1 Program Funding

- Tell me about your **project budget and any budget issues** you have experienced to date.

  - What is the total amount of project funding?

  - How are funds allocated among partners?

  - How are grant funds being used by grantees and sub-grantees? (i.e. what service components are they supporting?)

  - Have you revised the budget, and if so, why?

10.2 Monetary Leveraged Resources Available to the Program

- Has the project been **able to expand its scope as a result of funds contributed by its partner agencies**?

  - Specifically, what leveraged resources did each of the grantee or partners bring to the table?

- — Are these resources in the form of cash, or some other type of support? Are these funds actually included in the project budget/ spending plan?

- — What are the actual agreements for spending the leveraged funds? Who controls the expenditure of the leveraged resources?

- — Have these funds been available as promised? If not, how has this affected project operations?

- What are the **effects of the leveraged resources** on the Aging Worker Initiative (e.g., increased number of participants served or range of services provided)?

11. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

11.1 Grant Reporting Requirements

- Please comment on the **grant reporting requirements and reporting burden.** Requirements include submission of Quarterly Financial Report (ETA Form 9130), Quarterly Performance Report (ETA Form 9134) and Quarterly Project Narrative

  - — What are the challenges in meeting these reporting requirements? What appears to be working well?

  - — Does the project receive ongoing informational or technical assistance support in completing the grant reporting requirements?

  - — About how much time does it take each month for staff to monitor participant outcomes and financial activities associated with the grant?

  - — Does the reporting accurately capture characteristics, services, and outcomes for your project?

11.2 Grantees' Use of Optional Participant MIS System (AWD) and Other MIS Systems

- Is the project using the **AWD performance accountability system to record data on participants and outcomes**? If not used, why was this decision made?

  - — What problems or challenges have been encountered in using this system? Have these problems been resolved?

  - — What types of technical assistance and training did the project receive on the capabilities of the AWD project reporting system?

  - — From whom? (USDOL High Growth Training Initiative Program Office, TA Contractor) How useful was this training?

- **What other system(s)** are used to track program data?

  - — Are they used in addition to the AWD system or on a stand-alone basis?

— If used together, how does this coordination work?

- ***Get copies of data items and definitions*** *for systems other than AWD.*

- Is the MIS system used to provide **periodic reports useful to the project** in managing the grant and assessing staff and partner performance? If so, how is this interim data used?

- What additional **challenges have you faced related to data collection and reporting**?

  — What kinds of technical assistance have you received to help with these challenges?

  — What additional kinds of technical assistance would be useful?

11.3 Monitoring and Tracking Services and Outcomes

- How do you monitor and track **participant services and outcomes**?

  — What tasks are involved in this process?

  — How much staff time does it take each week to monitor and document participants' service use? Do participants have to submit attendance records or other documents?

  — Where are participant services and outcomes recorded? (i.e. in the automated data system(s), hard copy case files, or both)

  — How standardized is the outcome information in the MIS system and in participant case files?

- What **participant outcomes** are measured and recorded? (e.g., training completion, degree attainment, employment, wages, job retention, etc.

  — What data sources do you use to document participants' employment outcomes? (e.g., UI wage records, participant self-reporting, employer confirmation, pay stubs, etc.)?

  — What client-level outcome measures are recorded in the MIS system?

  — What challenges have you faced in tracking participants' services and outcomes? How have you addressed those challenges?

- **How adequate are the "common measures"** (entered employment rate, job retention rate, and average earnings) in assessing project success?

  — What additional measures is the project measuring?

  — Have you identified any outcome measures specific to incumbent workers, employers, or participants targeting self-employment? If so, what are they?

12. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ON PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE

Review the outcomes in the most recent report, compared to the grantees plan and to other grantees. Discuss outcomes to date with project respondents.

12.1 Program Exiters To Date

- How many and what types of participants have **exited the program to date**?

  — How many participants have exited to date and for what reasons?

  — What proportion of those exited to date were drop-outs?

- Based on exiters to date, please describe **typical program duration**.

  — What is the average duration of program participation (for trainees, for non-trainees, for all participants excluding drop-outs)?

  — How much variation is there in program duration? What factors affect duration?

12.2 Participant Outcomes To Date

- **What types of jobs and earnings** are participants receiving?

  — Are jobs related to the training received or the career guidance provided?

  — Do these jobs have established career ladders?

  — Are these jobs consistent with the project's targeted occupations and industries?

  — What are the principal factors affecting outcomes for training and non-training participants?

- **How different are these outcomes** from outcomes reported for all WIA participants or outcomes reported for all SCSEP participants in the local area as a whole? How might these differences be explained?

12.3 Outcomes on Any Additional Measures To Date

- Please describe outcomes to date on any additional measures.

  — Have you measured outcomes to date for any additional outcome measures (e.g., for incumbent worker training?)

  — What are the results?

SPR

13. ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE LOCAL SYSTEM CAPACITY TO SERVE OLDER WORKERS

13.1 Strategies to Expand Availability of Services for Aging Workers

- How has the project worked to **expand its own capacity** to provide workforce development and training services for aging workers? (improvements in quality and quality)

  — How has the project worked to increase the number of slots for older workers in existing training opportunities? To increase the types of training occupations? (How many additional aging workers will be served indirectly as a result of project efforts)

  — How has the project worked to make program improvements to better serve older workers?

- How has the project worked to expand **the quality and availability of services for aging workers** within the local community?

  — Has the project focused on training One-Stop front-line staff to better serve aging workers?

  — Has the project focused on disseminating its service designs tailored to the needs of aging workers?

  — What changes, if any, have occurred to date in how local workforce investment systems serve older individuals?

  — What changes, if any, have occurred in the number of aging workers served by the local workforce investment system?

13.2 Capacity-Building Activities, Measures, and Outcomes

- What measures does/will the project use to measure its progress in building the capacity of the local system?

  — Numbers of staff trained?

  — Numbers of aging workers or employers served with expanded capacity?

  — Other?

  — Will these increases in the capacity to serve aging workers last beyond the lifetime of the demonstration grant?

13.3 Development of Capacity-Building Products for Dissemination

- How will the project's promising practices be **packaged for dissemination**?

  — What specific activities (products, models, curricula, teaching methods, training-the-trainer, licensure or certification requirements) for serving older workers will be operationalized by the workforce system (and by the grantee, if the grantee is not a WIB) after the grant ends?

  — How will these products be disseminated for use by other entities after the grant ends?

  — To what user groups are these products directed (e.g., business groups, community colleges, proprietary training providers, labor-management organizations, One-Stop staff)?

- How will the grant **enhance One-Stop Career Center capacity** to serve aging workers?

- What are the different **"deliverables,"** planned by the project?

  — Who will produce the deliverables?

  — Who will act as an expert reviewer?

  — What form will the deliverables take?

13.3 Progress in Completing Planned Deliverables

- Please describe your **progress in developing products** to support dissemination of your aging worker approach?

  — What progress has been made in completing planned products?

  — What challenges have been encountered in producing deliverables?

  — How have plans for deliverables evolved over time?

  — What is the current schedule for producing deliverables.

  — What has been your experience to date in the review of products by independent entities? Has this improved the quality of deliverables?

- What **technical assistance** on producing deliverables would be useful?

14. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNED TO DATE

14.1 Unmet Needs

- To what extent are the **needs of older workers still unaddressed** in the local community?

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— What service needs of older workers sometimes are still unaddressed? Which are the highest priority needs?

— What resources would be necessary to meet these service needs?

— What additional services would be most helpful for aging workers?

14.2 Summary Assessment of Project Strengths and Limitations

- In summary, what are the **primary strengths and the primary limitations** of the AWI project with respect to:

  — Integration with regional economic talent development?

  — Organization and partnerships?

  — Service delivery?

  — Sustainability?

- What have program participants found **most helpful about services** provided by grantees? What services were **least helpful**?

- What would **participants like to see changed** about this program?

14.3 Project Successes and Practices Worthy of Replication

- What are the **practices** of this project **that show most promise**? What aspects of your program would you recommend that other projects emulate?

  — How successful were grantees in recruiting a diverse array of partners?

  — Which partner relationships were the most successful and why?

  — What aspects of the program work particularly well in helping participants find and keep jobs?

- What were the **other main successes** of this program initiative? How have you achieved these successes?

14.4 Challenges and Lessons Learned

- What were **the key problems or challenges in administering** the project?

  — Did you encounter challenges coordinating the input of all partners into account when making key decisions?

  — Did any of the partnerships fail during the course of the project, and what were the possible reasons?

  — Did you encounter challenges in recruiting participants?

- What **challenges did you face in serving** participants?

  — What challenges did you face in placing participants in jobs?

— What challenges did you encounter in helping participants keep and advance in their jobs?

— What challenges did you face in tracking participants and recording their outcomes?

- What are the most important **lessons that you have learned** as a result of operating the AWI project?

— What practical lessons and promising practices for the workforce investment system were identified during this project?

— Do these lessons apply only to older workers, or more broadly?

- In hindsight, **what would you do differently** if you were to start the project again?

4.5 Plans to Expand, Sustain, or Replicate Project Model Within State

Information about sustainability and replicability will be preliminary in the interim report. However, because the grantees have been operating for almost a full year by the time of the site visits, such questions are appropriate for the Round 1 visit. These topics will be very important in Round 2.

- What are the **essential program components** of a successful AWI service model?

- Do you plan to **replicate** your program or service model? If so, where and how?

- What **advice do you have for replication** of your service design for aging workers?

— Would you recommend this model to others?

— What are the key challenges to replicating this model for serving aging workers?

— What changes would you recommend others make before replicating your model?

- For whom **do you think your approach is best suited** (e.g. under what economic conditions and with what types of aging workers do you think your approach will be effective)?

- What are your **strategies to continue the services** provided by the grantee after the program ends?

— To what extent have grantees sought outside funding to continue providing services? How successful have they been? What is the likelihood that services that the grantee provides to older workers will continue after grant funds run out?

— From the project's perspective, what are the highest priority services and service delivery approaches to try to continue after the grant ends?

- **What specific activities, programs**, etc. targeted to older workers do you expect **will be institutionalized** by the public workforce system (or grantee, if grantee is not a WIB or One-Stop)?

SPR

— Do you expect that the workforce system will use WIA resources to provide services to support older workers after the grant ends?

— If so, which agencies or staff are good candidates to provide those services?

APPENDIX B
AWI PROJECT PROFILES

The project profiles provided in Appendix A highlight the distinctive design and programmatic features of each of the demonstration projects. Readers may want to refer to these profiles when we reference individual projects elsewhere in the report.   Throughout the report, projects are referred to by the name and state of the grant recipient.

SPR

Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.
(Indiana)
"The Aging Worker Initiative"

Context

The Aging Worker Initiative administered by the Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (TAP) serves the twelve-county West Central Indiana Economic Growth Region 4 (EGR4). The estimated population of this 12 county area is approximately 488,960 with roughly 25% of this population being age 55 years of age and older. The region has experienced an economic downturn in major manufacturing and transportation companies. The skill sets of older workers vary widely across the service area, with some older workers having post-graduate degrees in mechanical engineering while others do not possess a high school diploma and have much lower skill levels. The targeted industries—information technology, health, and advanced manufacturing— were selected because they are tied to the regional employment trends and demand occupations in Region 4 of West Central Indiana.

Goals and Services

The project is designed to expand the services available to older workers in its existing One-Stop Centers—called WorkOne Centers—by hiring dedicated staff to coordinate services for aging workers in the region. As part of the AWI grant, WorkOne centers in the region are being reviewed to identify how services to older workers can be improved. Career Transition Hubs will be created within the existing WorkOne centers to provide aging workers with weekly workshops and job clubs that address their unique reemployment needs as well as dedicated case management services. Training offered by the project includes computer skills training tailored to the needs of older workers; paid internships to provide participants with hands-on work experience, and up to $2,400 in tuition support for existing training programs in the fields of information technology, health, and advanced manufacturing. In addition to serving aging workers, the TAP, Inc. AWI grant plans to provide learning seminars to employers throughout the region using a pre-existing curricula called "Managing Your Mature Worker" that was developed under a prior WIRED grant. These employer sessions are meant to bring awareness to the needs of aging workers and to help employers understand the unique skill sets that older workers bring to their places of employment. TAP also plans to initiate an award to a local employer who exemplifies good employment practices with respect to aging workers. The project goal is to serve 300 participants and train 90 (30%). The project intends to help 70% of all participants find employment.

Coastal Counties Workforce Inc.
(Maine)
"Maine Aging Worker Initiative"

Context

The estimated population of Maine is 1.3 million with roughly 16% being 55 years of age or older. This project will serve the entire state of Maine through its existing American Job Centers and other satellite sites. Based on data from the state's Older Worker Commission, half of the state's labor force is eligible for retirement in the next 10 years, which poses significant problems in meeting the labor market demands of employers. The project has targeted three economic growth areas—information technology, construction and energy.

Goals and Services

The Maine Aging Worker Initiative is administered by Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. (Maine) on behalf of all four LWIAs in the state of Maine. The project is multifaceted, with activities targeted to both older workers and employers. Project outreach to older workers consists of community forums that are expected to reach 3,200 individuals. The project has also arranged for American Job Center kiosks to be placed in other agencies that serve older individuals, to help inform older workers about the services available through the public workforce development system. To improve services available to older workers, the project has provided funds to hire five half-time "navigators for aging workers," who are stationed at American Job Center or other community agencies. Project services include employment preparation workshops designed for older workers and access to existing short-term training programs to help older workers obtain and retain jobs in high growth industries in the construction, information technology and energy sectors and advance in those industries. For employers, the project holds "employer dialogues" and plans to make awards to employers that have policies and practices that are friendly to older workers. The project plans to serve 200 older workers by providing occupational skills training and to involve 192 employers in employer dialogues.

SPR

Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development
(Maryland)
"Maturity Works Project"

Context

The AWI project will provide services to two LWIAs (Baltimore County and the adjacent Baltimore City LWIA) within the Baltimore Metropolitan Service Area (MSA) and the many unemployed individuals who reside there. According to project staff, many unemployed or retired older workers face unique challenges in seeking reemployment, including employment gaps and a lack of computer and technology skills. Given the growing demand for health-related services, this project is targeting specific occupations in the healthcare industry.

Goals and Strategies

The Maturity Works Project administered by the Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (BOWCD) was initially designed to help older workers already employed in the healthcare industry retain their jobs and advance up the career ladder. The economic recession, however, caused some hospitals that had previously indicated interest in participating to drop out of the project. As a result, the project is serving a larger contingent of unemployed older workers and a smaller contingent of incumbent workers than it had initially anticipated. Project services focus on providing training for six specific health-related occupations, including medical coding, medical billing, surgical technician, central sterile processing, nurse support technician, and certified nurse assistant/geriatric nurse assistant. Incumbent workers are recruited using flyers posted in the participating hospitals. A career counselor, funded 50% time by the project and 50% time by the participating hospital consortium, helps incumbent workers select their desired career path and enroll in training. Unemployed older workers interested in health care occupations are referred to the project by American Job Center staff. A project-funded career counselor helps these individuals enroll in training and monitors their progress in training. Unemployed workers may take advantage of core services available from the local American Job Centers. Initially the project intended to train and place at least 300 individuals in hospital positions. However, early exhaustion of training funds has forced the project to re-assess its goals and to seek a grant modification.

Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.
(Michigan)
"The 55+ Project"

Context

The Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. AWI project serves seven counties in southeastern Michigan on behalf of five different local workforce investment areas that operate a total of 27 American Job Center. The project service area includes both largely rural counties and urban counties (including Wayne County that contains Detroit, the state's largest city). The AWI grant project service area in Southeastern Michigan comprises roughly 48% of the population of Michigan and is one of the most severely economically depressed regions in the nation due to the large-scale layoffs in the automotive and construction industries. The project is targeting employment in any H1-B industry sector and has not limited participation to a single industry or set of industries given the large number of unemployed who need to be served in the region.

Goals and Strategies

The **55+ Project** funds have been used to support 30 older worker navigators, who are housed in 27 American Job Centers, two community agencies, and a local community college. The program is designed to help older workers find employment and/or link them with existing education and training programs and to provide dedicated staff to offer case manager services to older workers. The AWI navigators provide case management services by assisting older workers with career planning, individualized case management and job placement services to One-Stop customers referred to the project by other American Job Center staff. Navigators work individually with each seasoned jobseeker to help them identify job opportunities, training programs, and needed work accommodations and supports. Originally, the project anticipated using Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to pay for training. However, the WIA training funds were mostly spent by the time the AWI project was fully operational. As a result, few participants had been referred to training programs by the midpoint of the project. Initial project goals were to train 1397 individuals, and help 1117 (80%) find employment.

South Central Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
(Pennsylvania)
"Older Worker Demonstration Project"

Context

Pennsylvania is one of the "oldest" states in the U.S. Nearly one-third of the workforce in the eight county service area is 55 years of age or older. The skill sets of aging workers vary across the eight-county project service area, with some individuals having limited education levels (i.e. high school diploma or less) and many more having limited computer skills. Prior to the recession, local information technology, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare employers were experiencing a shortage of skilled labor.

Goals and Strategies

Working with regional education and industry partners, as well as American Job Center operators, the South Central Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (SCWIB) Area Older Worker Demonstration Project designers developed a three-pronged strategy to promote skills development for older workers. The first strategy focuses on older incumbent workers in three industries: information technology, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare. By working with three existing Industry Partnerships and adapting an already-existing structure for approving incumbent worker training, the project has arranged for the delivery of training tailored to meet the needs of participating employers in the targeted industries. Training for incumbent workers is supported 75% by the grant and 25% by the individual employers. The second strategy used by the project is to target unemployed older workers seeking services through existing American Job Centers. Unemployed workers enrolled in the project receive a broad set of services including formal assessment, development of an employment plan, access to computer literacy training tailored to the needs of older workers, and support for training in a targeted high-growth occupation. Job placement supports include an 18-hour job club workshop specifically for older workers as well as access to the One-Stop online job listings. The third project strategy to improve services for older workers is to provide training to the case managers, trainers, and worksite mentors within the existing workforce development system to improve the capacity of American Job Center staff to serve aging workers. The project has established detailed goals both for serving individual customers (e.g. enrolling 318 workers, of whom 180 are incumbent workers, 120 are unemployed workers, and 18 are individuals interested in developing their own business) and for increasing capacity of the system to serve older workers (e.g. creating older worker service specialists at each of the six American Job Centers within the region).

Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc
(Texas)
"Career Redevelopment for Experienced Workers (CREW)"

Context

This project targets a 13 county area in Southeast Texas that is home to 5.7 million residents, approximately 18% of whom are 55 years of age or older. According to project staff, Texas has experienced an in-migration of workers from other states, which has created a competitive atmosphere for available jobs. The project is targeting growth in the financial services and accounting, healthcare, computer technology and specialized construction industries.

Goals and Strategies

Goodwill Industries of Greater Houston, Inc. (TX) operates the Career Redevelopment for Experienced Workers (CREW) Project from a building in Houston, Texas that houses several other Goodwill employment and training programs. Although the grantee is not formally affiliated with the local American Job Center system, project staff have cordial relations with the local workforce investment board and have arranged for nearby American Job Center staff to refer unemployed older workers to the CREW project for services. The CREW project helps older workers get back into the workforce by providing social and emotional support, career awareness, occupational skills and vocational training, job search and placement services, and supportive service referrals as needed. The key elements in the project's menu of services include: (1) a workshop that addresses participants' social and emotional needs and helps them think about career interests and transferrable skills; (2) short-term training in general computer skills or other skills needed for jobs in four high-growth industry sectors; and (3) one-on-one assistance from an employment specialist who helps clients develop training plans and look for work. The project views its initial workshop as its most important contribution to the design of older worker services. After refining this workshop, the grant managers would like to disseminate the curriculum to improve employment services for older workers on a larger scale. CREW managers have set goals of enrolling 450 older workers in training and having 297 (66%) find employment.

SPR

Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.
(Vermont)
"The Aging Worker Initiative"

Context

Vermont's population is the second-oldest in New England. While the state is able to attract students to its colleges, it is unable to retain these individuals after they graduate for employment within the state. Thus, employers are looking to the public workforce system to help them retain mature employees and to improve the existing skill sets of older workers so that the firms can be competitive in the global economy. The project will recruit older workers from across the state and will target three industry sectors—information technology, finance and administrative support services, and healthcare.

Goals and Strategies

The Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. is operating its statewide project to build on and expand the services it already offers older workers under the state's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The goal of the grantee is to weave together the resources of both SCSEP and AWI to offer complementary services to individuals who are eligible for both programs, and to use AWI to expand its services to reach older workers who do not meet SCSEP's income eligibility guidelines. The program design calls for the project to hire and train current SCSEP participants to be AWI navigators to serve project participants in the grantee's ten service locations throughout the state. The AWI project enrolls individuals who are interested in participating in one of the training options available through the project. Training opportunities include computer skills training courses developed specifically for older workers, a career readiness certificate program, and occupational skills training to prepare participants for employment in occupations that are expected to be high-growth occupations within Vermont. As the AWI project matures, program operators would like to expand by introducing a hands-on internship opportunity for workers not eligible for SCSEP. Project managers would also like to expand into training services for incumbent workers to support career advancement. In addition to enrolling 300 older workers in training and ultimately having 200 obtain employment (67%), the project managers propose to create a network of mature worker resource centers.

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County
(Washington)
"Reinvesting in Older Workers (ROW)"

Context

While the region is facing challenging financial times due to the recent economic recession, a number of key industries, including healthcare, information technology and green construction, are targeted for older workers because they provide entry-level employment at a sustainable wage with the opportunity for career growth. The primary service area for the grant is King County, including Seattle.

Goals and Strategies

The Reinvesting in Older Workers (ROW) Project administered by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County has taken on the challenge of developing a program model that can effectively serve older workers who are also physically disabled, have limited English language skills, or are ex-offenders. Embedded within the One-Stop system, and building on an existing regional partnership of organizations interested in improving services for older workers, the ROW project expands the tailored services available to older workers to include case management, job placement assistance, and training in one of three targeted industries: green jobs, healthcare and information technology. Three part-time project case managers serve customers at all seven American Job Centers in the local workforce investment area. ROW participants can also take advantage of existing American Job Center activities, which include job clubs and pre-employment workshops tailored to meet the needs of older workers. To develop appropriate training offerings for its target groups, the ROW project has contracted with local community colleges to develop special courses to prepare older workers with limited English skills for entry-level jobs in green industries and healthcare fields. Other customers enroll in the project's computer fundamentals training program or in existing courses in the targeted industries offered by approved education and training institutions. The project intends serve a total of 165 older workers and to provide training to 148 project participants and have 123 participants (75%) find employment.

SPR

Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc.
(Wisconsin)
"Paths to Older Worker Employment Readiness (POWER)"

Context

This project will serve older workers across 13 counties in eastern Wisconsin. While the project is unique in that it is serving a vast geographical area, most of the older workers in the region have prior work histories in manufacturing jobs, but limited educational attainment levels. In order to capitalize on the existing skills sets of older workers, the project is targeting the manufacturing and telecommunications industries and healthcare industry sectors.

Goals and Strategies

Building on their prior experiences operating Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP), two workforce investment boards in Wisconsin are collaborating on the Paths to Older Worker Employment Readiness (POWER) Project. Although the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board is the official grant recipient, the two participating local workforce investment boards are working independently to operate separate but similar older worker training programs across a combined 13 county area. Within each region, POWER pays for a portion of the salary of the SCSEP case manager to provide case management and approve training "add-ons" for existing WIA and SCSEP program customers that enroll in POWER. For current SCSEP participants, the POWER project offers access to occupational skills training that can help individuals prepare for a transition to full-time employment and career advancement. For existing customers of American Job Centers who are over 55 years of age, the POWER project can be used to supplement WIA funds available for occupational skills training. The project was initially intended to develop specialized pre-employment and training programs targeted to older workers. In practice, participants are registered for existing short-term certificate-based training courses at the local community colleges. Short-term certificates can be "stacked" to develop pathways to different careers. Case managers will waive the grant's official industry targets for training (healthcare, manufacturing, and telecommunications) when they think another training plan is appropriate for an individual customer. The project plans to enroll 450 participants in training and have 338 (75%) enter training-related employment.

APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING IN COMPUTER SKILLS PROVIDED BY THE AWI PROJECTS

	Training Format / Duration	Topics Covered	Specialized for Older Workers	Provided by One-Stop Operators, Contractors, or Through Referral
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Build Me Keep Me 96 hours training program over six weeks Provided with AWI funding	Basic computer skills; overview of Microsoft desktop applications; computer support skills (e.g. software installation), customer service training. Participants receive two certificates: Computer Support Specialist and Customer Service Specialist	Yes	Contracted provider
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	One component of 60 hour *Work Ready 55+* work readiness curriculum Provided with AWI funding	Basic computer skills	Yes	Provided by One-Stop operators
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (MD)	Not provided. Career coaches report that some participants have difficulty with level of computer use required for community college health care courses and prerequisites.			
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (MI)	Wide range of pre-existing computer training workshops at American Job Centers and through referral to other providers	Varies: introduction to computers, Microsoft Office skills, keyboarding/typing	No	One-Stop Operators and through referral to a wide range of public and community agencies

	Training Format / Duration	Topics Covered	Specialized for Older Workers	Provided by One-Stop Operators, Contractors, or Through Referral
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	*Technical Skills for Seniors* course is in development. Supported with AWI funding	This training will incorporate courses specifically addressing the needs of older workers	Yes	Community college and One-Stop Operators
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Technology Doesn't Byte 5 day course totaling 20 hours, provided with AWI Funding	Basics, such as the parts of a computer (monitor, mouse, cursor), as well as email etiquette and Internet usage	Yes	Grantee staff
	Computer courses purchased from Houston Community College and provided at project site. Provided with AWI funding. 24 hours: 2 days a week, 2 hours per day	Several different levels of courses have been offered on Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint	Yes	Purchase order contracts with Houston Community College
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Project uses referral to existing training resources; it has also purchased a computer training course from a private firm that is a certified Microsoft Trainer. Duration varies	Computer basics and Microsoft office training	No	Varies
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	Microsoft Technology Training. One day course provided with AWI funding	Microsoft Office "computer fundamentals"	Currently no, but trying to customize	In-house
	Online Professional Networking One day course provided with AWI funding	LinkedIn; other professional networking tools	Yes	Provided within One Stop Career Center using curriculum developed by AARP
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Courses available from technical college system through ITAs Supported with AWI funding.	Microsoft Office Suite	No	Through ITA with technical college system

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