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Evaluation of the Aging Worker Initiative

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States is in the midst of a demographic transformation. Decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy have resulted in steady increases in the mean and median ages of the American population, with far-reaching consequences for the composition of the labor force. It is estimated that, by 2020, workers 55 and over will make up 25 percent of the U.S. civilian labor force, up from only 13 percent in 2000.¹ While simple demographic factors alone have caused a “graying” of the workforce, individual workers are also tending to remain in the workforce longer and to retire later.^{2,3} The number of workers in the oldest age category—65 and over—is increasing dramatically, changing our societal expectations about the typical age of retirement. By 2020, it is projected that workers 65 and over will make up more than 7 percent of the total labor force.⁴

Though the reasons for the trend toward an increasing age of retirement are not completely understood, older workers today are, on average, healthier and more educated than those in previous generations, and both factors lead to higher labor force participation by those over the traditional retirement age of 65. The recent recession only compounded this trend toward remaining in the workforce for additional years as layoffs of spouses, declines in the value of retirement accounts, and reduced pension benefits have forced many older workers to postpone retirement in order to provide for themselves and their families.^{5,6} In a survey of American

¹ Toossi, Mitra, “Employment Outlook: 2010–2020,” in *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2012.

² Gendell, Murray, “Older workers: Increasing their labor force participation and hours of work.” *Monthly Labor Review*, 131(1):41–54, January 2008.

³ National Institute on Aging, *Growing Older in America: The Health and Retirement Study*. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Aging, 2007.

⁴ Toossi, Mitra, “Employment Outlook: 2010–2020,” in *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2012.

⁵ Employee Benefit Research Institute, “The Impact of the Recent Financial Crisis on 401(k) Account Balances,” Washington, DC: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Issue Brief No. 326, February 2009.

⁶ Garr, Emily, “Older Americans in the Recession: More are staying in the workforce, more are losing their jobs.” Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, Issue Brief No. 251, February 4, 2009.

workers, researchers at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University found that three-quarters of the respondents expect that they will be involved in full- or part-time work in their 60s and 70s, either out of financial necessity or out of a desire to continue working.⁷

These statistics and projections make it clear that older workers are becoming a larger share of the U.S. workforce. At the same time, however, individual older workers may face difficult challenges when they lose their jobs. Older workers are becoming a growing share of the long-term and very long-term unemployed, a trend that started before the recent recession and has steadily advanced. In 2011, 54 percent of older jobless workers were out of work for six months or more. Moreover, older jobless workers were more likely than jobless workers in other age groups to be unemployed for one year or longer.^{8,9}

In recognition of the growing role of older workers in the nation's labor force and to improve the workforce system's ability to respond to their needs, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) funded the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI). The Initiative, part of ETA's ongoing efforts to prepare workers for job opportunities in high-growth, high-demand sectors of the American economy, was directed specifically at workers 55 years of age and older. Under AWI, ten grantees (see Exhibit ES-1) were awarded approximately \$1 million each in the summer of 2009 to address the workforce challenges facing older individuals by (1) developing model skill development and employment services for older workers and (2) building the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older individuals. Grantees had the option to focus on one or more areas identified in ETA's Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), including (1) innovative training techniques and service delivery strategies, (2) self-employment, (3) updating or adapting older workers' skills to a new industry or related occupation, (4) career awareness and outreach, (5) building training provider capacity to serve older workers, and (6) targeting one or more needy older worker subgroups.¹⁰ Also, according to the SGA, the AWI grants were to include employment and training strategies to retain and/or connect older workers to jobs in "high growth, high demand

⁷ Reynolds, Scott, Neil Ridley, and Carl Van Horn, "A Work-Filled Retirement: Workers' Changing Views on Employment and Leisure," John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University, 2005.

⁸ McKenna, Claire, "Economy in Focus: Long Road Ahead for Older Unemployed Workers," *National Employment Law Project*, March 9, 2012.

⁹ Heidkamp, Maria, William Mabe, and Barbara DeGraaf, "The Public Workforce System: Serving Older Job Seekers and the Disability Implications of an Aging Workforce," The NTAR Leadership Center, New Brunswick, New Jersey, May 2012, downloaded from http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/NTAR_Public_Workforce_System_Report_Final.pdf on September 20, 2012.

¹⁰ 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

industries critical to the regional economy.” To meet these goals, projects needed to engage employers in multiple ways, and such strategies are also discussed in this report. Additionally, projects were required to involve employers, the public workforce investment system, and education or training providers as partners and to collect and provide data for reporting purposes and for the evaluation.

**Exhibit ES-1:
The Aging Worker Initiative Grantees**

Grantee Name	City, State
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.	Lafayette, IN
Quad Area Community Action Agency	Hammond, LA
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.	Brunswick, ME
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development ¹¹	Towson, MD
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.	Clinton Township, MI
South Central Workforce Investment Board	Harrisburg, PA
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.	Houston, TX
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.	St. Albans, VT
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County	Seattle, WA
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Neenah, WI

Evaluation Design

ETA awarded a competitive contract to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and Mathematica Policy Research in June 2009 to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the design and implementation of AWI.

The overarching research questions addressed by the AWI evaluation include the following:

¹¹ At grant award, the Maryland grantee was the Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development. This office was consolidated into the Department of Economic Development in January 2011. Division of Workforce Development was created at this time, which took over administration of the grant.

1. How successful were the AWI grantees in developing services to meet the needs of aging workers?
2. What factors were influential in supporting or hindering project success?
3. What can we learn from AWI about how to improve the ability of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers?

This study used the following key sources of data:

- **Telephone reconnaissance calls.** Researchers conducted telephone calls during fall 2009 to gather basic background information about the projects.
- **Grantee quarterly reports.** Researchers reviewed required quarterly reports that grantees were required to submit to ETA. These reports included information on implementation issues, enrollments, outcomes, and other aspects of project development.
- **Two rounds of site visits.** The first round of site visits, conducted about fifteen months after the award of the demonstration grants, concentrated on issues related to project design and implementation progress. The second round of site visits, conducted about 32 months into the demonstration period, focused on the experiences of the projects in serving aging workers and employers and the evolution of project services over time.
- **Telephone focus groups.** In June 2012, researchers facilitated focus groups for the AWI project managers.¹² These focus groups gave project managers the opportunity to review and comment on their project experiences and lessons learned in conversation with their peers.
- **Participant data from grantees and ETA.** Grantees collected information on participants, service use, and project outcomes using the Aging Worker Data System (AWD) or an alternative MIS. These outcome data were supplemented by data from the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS).

This final report presents findings and conclusions based on analyses of both qualitative data from telephone calls and site visits and quantitative data on participant characteristics and outcomes, primarily as provided by grantees.

Overview of Grantees

Grantee Type. Seven of the grantees were entities involved in the administration or operation of the public workforce investment system in their regions. (Six of these were incorporated workforce investment boards (WIBS) or public entities responsible for administering WIBS; one was a non-profit organization that served as a regional operator for a WIB.) The remaining three

¹² The research team scheduled three different focus groups to accommodate the schedules of different participants and to ensure that each group was small enough to allow all members to participate fully.

grantees were non-profit organizations that did not play a major role in the workforce investment system.

Six of the AWI grantees reported having experience planning and promoting policies and practices responsive to the needs of older workers in their local communities before receiving the AWI grant. The previous activities created valuable partnerships on which the grantees could draw in building their AWI grant-funded activities.

Service Areas. The areas served by the AWI grantees ranged from largely rural areas with total populations of less than a million people to areas that contained large metropolitan cities (e.g., in the projects in Texas, Maryland, Michigan, and Washington, which included the cities of Houston, Baltimore, Detroit, and Seattle, respectively). Five of the grantees served single local workforce investment areas; the other five served between two and six workforce investment areas each. Two projects—in Maine and Vermont—designated the entire state as their project service area.

Economic Conditions. Unemployment rates changed dramatically over the demonstration period for all grantees. Grantees designed their projects to take into account local and economic conditions that were very different by the time the grants were awarded in August 2009. The severe economic downturn dramatically affected local economies, particularly the ability of employers in the designated high-growth industries to offer jobs to AWI project participants. In addition, the economic recession created a sharp increase in the demand for workforce development services from other customers of the American Job Center network.

Targeted Industries and Occupations. ETA's SGA required AWI grantees to develop strategies to serve aging workers that would help them retain or connect to jobs in "high-growth, high-demand industries" critical to the grantees' regional economies. To meet this requirement, grantees identified a wide variety of such industries in their grant proposals. Healthcare and information technology were the two industry sectors most frequently targeted by the AWI grantees. Other industries selected included advanced manufacturing, construction, financial and administrative services, and transportation. The majority of grantees did not target specific occupations within their identified industry sectors; rather, projects allowed mature workers to select from a wide range of occupations within the targeted industry sectors.

**Exhibit ES-2:
AWI Grant Award Amounts and Service Areas by Grantee**

Grantee	Total Grant	Number of Counties	Average Amount per County	Average Amount per County per Year
Indiana	\$1,000,000	12	\$83,333	\$27,778
Louisiana	\$1,000,000	7	\$142,857	\$47,619
Maine	\$1,000,000	16 (entire state)	\$62,500	\$20,833
Maryland	\$967,005	2 jurisdictions	\$483,503	\$161,168
Michigan	\$979,400	7 (including Detroit metro area)	\$139,914	\$46,638
Pennsylvania	\$971,000	8	\$121,375	\$40,458
Texas	\$999,949	13 (including Houston metro area)	\$76,919	\$25,640
Vermont	\$1,000,000	14 (entire state)	\$71,429	\$23,810
Washington	\$1,000,000	1	\$1,000,000	\$333,333
Wisconsin	\$1,000,000	13	\$76,923	\$25,641

Project Organization and Partnerships

Project Oversight and Organization. To guide and oversee the AWI projects, grantees used agency governing boards, interagency steering committees and project advisory committees. Advisory committees were particularly active during the initial start-up phase of most projects, but they also played an important role throughout many projects in keeping the focus on making system-wide improvements as well as serving enrolled participants.

To provide services to participants, grantees used a mix of full- and/or part-time case managers, contracted service providers, and staff whose salaries were shared with partner agencies. Although there were some clear advantages to creating grant-funded full-time positions for dedicated “older worker specialists,” the expertise of these staff members could be lost after the end of the grant if these employees were not retained by the public workforce investment system. Projects hoped that by sharing project staff members with other programs, the individuals trained to work with older workers would be more likely to be retained after the end of the grant. However, staff members assigned only part-time to the projects often had competing job responsibilities that reduced their ability to focus on serving older workers.

Partnerships. Grantees developed multiple partnerships, with a wide variety of agencies, including workforce investment partners (which were important in referring potential participants and providing training resources) and organizations with expertise on aging offered guidance (which tended to play less active roles after projects were launched). Education and training providers were active partners for most grantees, providing occupational, computer skills, or job readiness training. Grantees found relationships with employers the most difficult to cultivate, since, as a result of the economic recession, most businesses were not interested in training or hiring any new workers.

Leveraged Funds. Grantees were encouraged to leverage resources from other organization as way to supplement grant funds. Leveraged funds were used to help support administrative and direct service staff, expand the funds available for training, and, in some cases, provide enhanced services to project participants. However, projects found it difficult to account accurately for the value of in-kind contributions from partner agencies.

Participant Outreach, Enrollment, and Characteristics

AWI grantees used a variety of strategies to recruit and enroll participants. AWI projects anticipated that they would need to develop new outreach strategies to recruit older workers; however, projects reported that the economic recession and slow recovery made recruitment of AWI participants easier than anticipated. More than half of the grantees used broadly defined eligibility criteria, did not have difficulty recruiting mature workers, and were able to make enrollment targets. The remaining grantees, with narrowly defined criteria, had to expand these criteria in order to meet their enrollment targets.

Participant Outreach

To recruit participants, project staff depended primarily on referral linkages with American Job Center staff. They also received referrals from organizations that serve older individuals or individuals with disabilities, from adult basic education providers, and from other community service networks. Three projects also conducted broader outreach efforts. Two projects organized community forums for the general public around issues affecting aging workers. One project conducted outreach by arranging for project flyers to be included in mailings sent to Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients over 55 years of age.

Participant Characteristics

The AWI projects enrolled a diverse group of approximately 4,000 older workers¹³, the preponderance of whom (85 percent) were unemployed or anticipated being so. A large proportion of total participants, 30 percent, were also the long-term unemployed and only two percent said they were retired. There was broad range of prior occupations among participants: some had worked in relatively high-skilled, high-paying jobs in management and financial occupations, while others had held lower-skill and lower-paid jobs in office and administrative support, production, and transportation and material moving occupations.

Slightly more than half (56 percent) of participants were women and the average age for AWI participants was just over 60 years. A slight majority (55 percent) were relatively young, between 55 and 59 years of age upon enrollment, while 29 percent were between 60 and 64 years of age. Individuals over traditional retirement age (65 years of age or older) made up a relatively small percentage of all project participants (except for one project in which nearly 30 percent of participants were aged 65 or older).

In terms of education level, the AWI projects overall served a majority of participants with some post-secondary educational experience; 43 percent had attained a high school level of education, 11 percent had some college, 17 percent had a two-year academic or technical degree, and 18 percent had a bachelor's degree. Only three percent had never completed high school while seven percent had post-graduate degrees. Among all participants, about 14 percent were reported as being deficient in basic skills and about nine percent were reported as having a disability.

Across all projects, African-Americans constituted 31 percent of participants, whites 61 percent, and Latinos 3 percent. The ethnographic patterns varied considerably among the projects though these patterns generally reflected those of the communities served by each project.

Services and Strategies

As noted above, the AWI grants were intended to be used for addressing the workforce challenges of older workers through: (1) development of model training and employment services and strategies and (2) building the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve these workers. All ten grantees embraced requirements to focus on high-growth industries and to form partnerships with employers. However, some projects focused more narrowly on offering occupational skills training to prepare older workers for employment and advancement in high-growth occupations, while other projects provided a broader range of

¹³ At the time the evaluators collected outcome data from the projects, only about half of these enrollees had exited from the projects.

services that included case management, assessment, career awareness and pre-employment activities such as job readiness training. Grantees' efforts included the following:

Case Management, Career Exploration, and Job Readiness Services

Case managers—variously referred to as coaches, case managers, navigators, or older worker specialists—were responsible for coordinating the delivery of the services available to enrolled project participants. Case managers were viewed by program planners and managers as critical to participant success because they were the individuals who most often developed supportive, personal relationships with participants and who provided encouragement to them during all phases of project participation.

Many of the projects tailored case management and some pre-vocational services specifically to older workers, rather than helping these workers access existing services (for example, those available to participants in WIA). Examples of the new approaches developed by projects to meet the specific needs of older workers include:

- *“Older worker specialists” or “navigators.”* A distinctive feature of some projects was the use of case managers who became specialists in serving older workers within American Job Centers or other service sites. Six of the ten projects had at least one full-time case manager dedicated to serving older workers and a number of projects had part-time staff member in this role. A number of project managers believed that the projects that offered broad and intensive case management to AWI participants were more likely to help enrollees achieve successful employment outcomes, whether or not the enrollees participated in occupational skills training.
- *Specialized workshops designed to support a “change process,” build confidence, and provide peer support.* For example, the “Yes You Can” curriculum developed by the project in Texas was an 18-hour workshop that focused on the unique social and emotional needs of mature workers. The curriculum helped participants understand and prepare for work-life transitions by building self-confidence and clarifying job readiness values, interests, and motivating factors unique to each individual.
- *Job search skills training workshops and job clubs designed for older workers.* Four projects developed job search workshops designed specifically for older workers. These specially designed workshops allowed participants to gain confidence and build connections with other older workers through the peer-to-peer interactions. For example, the grantee in Pennsylvania contracted with its local SCSEP provider to develop a three-day 18-hour long comprehensive job club for mature workers, in which mature workers could discuss issues specific to their reemployment needs and the challenges they faced in their job searches. In order to provide peer support but not limit an individual’s participation and ability to get assistance, the program established a class-size maximum of ten individuals and a minimum of six.

Occupational Training

Four of the grantees primarily offered occupational skills training and screened prospective participants to see whether they were interested in training before enrolling them. With one exception, these grantees allowed participants to enroll in any occupation in the targeted high-growth industry sectors.

Training duration varied considerably among grantees, ranging from one month to six months or more, with a median duration of about three months. Although the initial plan in many projects was to provide 6 to 12 months of classroom-based occupational skills training, most grantees found that participants were reluctant to enroll in occupational skills training lasting more than two or three months and were interested in getting jobs as quickly as possible to meet their financial needs. Additionally, project staff members reported that some participants were intimidated by attending training in a community-college classroom with primarily younger students. Thus, the AWI projects faced the challenge of helping older workers realize that they could be successful as students in a classroom setting, and that training could help them gain access to more interesting and higher-paying jobs. As the AWI programs progressed through the grant period, several grantees altered or adjusted the occupational skills training services they offered to address better the needs and goals of participants. One strategy to make training easier for, or more attractive to, project participants, was creating a cohort of older students who could attend training classes together and provide each other with support and encouragement.

Examples of training offerings developed specifically for older workers participating in the AWI projects included:

- *Introductory computer skills training tailored for older workers.* Nine of the ten AWI grantees either offered participants a computer skills training course developed specially for their needs or helped participants identify existing courses available within American Job Centers or from local educational institutions. The workshops specifically designed for AWI participants ranged in duration from a four-hour workshop to a 120-hour course. As evidenced by the wide variation in the intensity of these courses, while there was consensus that older workers needed training in computer skills, there was not agreement on how much training should be provided in an introductory course. Several projects found it useful to assess participants' computer skills and offer several different levels of computer skills training.
- *Career foundation skills courses for older workers with limited English language skills.* The project in Washington worked with local community colleges to develop two new courses that introduced older workers to the terminology and basic principles of new occupations. Courses developed and tested during the AWI project included one for "green" occupations and another in health care occupations. The green occupations course was not a success, due to a lack of employer involvement and difficulties in identifying the target jobs for trainees.

However, the curriculum for the healthcare, developed, for students with limited English language skills, provided a stepping-stone for participants to move into additional healthcare credential/certification courses.

- *Internships for older workers.* The AWI project in Indiana developed a hands-on experiential learning component for mature workers using a subsidized internship that could last from one to six months. The internship opportunity was something that mature workers could market directly to employers during an interview to help set them apart from other candidates.

Linkages with Other Programs

Grantees used a variety of models for coordinating or linking project services with services available from other programs. Some of these models showed promise for building capacity in the public workforce system as well. The approaches included:

- *Co-location within American Job Centers.* Colocation of older worker services within American Job Centers, used for the delivery of at least some services by eight of the ten AWI grantees,¹⁴ offered several advantages. By using this strategy, grantees received referrals of older workers from other programs, such as WIA or SCSEP, and encouraged AWI participants to take advantage of the existing core services available within the Centers. Co-location also made the existing Centers more welcoming to older workers, by offering services and staff sensitive to their needs, and this fact encouraged older workers to continue using American Job Center services after the grants ended. Furthermore, by encouraging AWI participants to take advantage of the variety of job-search workshops and providing them with support in using the self-service resources available in Job Center resource rooms, projects were able to leverage additional resources on behalf of enrolled AWI project participants.
- *Co-enrollment of AWI participants in other publicly funded workforce programs.* Five projects used co-enrollment in WIA or SCSEP as a strategy to leverage funds for additional services from other publicly funded programs. Through co-enrollment, additional funds were available to support occupational skills training, provide supportive services, leverage case management from WIA or other programs, and/or to supplement training with work experience under SCSEP for participants eligible for both programs.
- *Distinct centers for older workers co-located in other multi-service sites.* Three grantees developed distinct resource centers in new service locations. Some of these resource centers were located within multi-service centers used by older individuals and were, thus, effective in recruiting individuals and making them aware of the resources available to older workers within American Job Centers. Other resource centers linked participants to a broad range of community education and training resources that were available on a free or low-cost basis. One disadvantage of freestanding AWI service sites was that they

¹⁴ The two exceptions were two of the three sites where the grantee was not a workforce investment board, WIB administrative entity, or American Job Center operator.

did not offer as great an opportunity to make the staff within American Job Centers more sensitive to the needs of older workers.

Employer Engagement

Each of the AWI grantees tried to engage local businesses and educate them about the employment needs of older workers and the benefits of hiring them. However, most project managers stated that their efforts to engage local businesses were not as successful as they had hoped. The depressed economic outlook during the course of the AWI was one underlying reason that kept many employers from engaging with issues related to hiring new workers. In addition, most of the grantees found that working with local employers took a tremendous amount of time and effort and that employer relationships developed slowly over time. Furthermore, the AWI staff hired to provide case management services to older workers did not always have the skills and experience needed to conduct effective outreach to employers. Most of the AWI grantees stated that, with hindsight, they would have designated separate staff members to be specialists in engaging local employers. The AWI grantees used two different strategies, described below, to involve employers in the demonstration projects.

- *Employer outreach and education activities.* Seven out of ten grantees developed outreach and education activities for employers that focused on the value and benefits of hiring and maintaining a mature workforce. They used three types of activities to accomplish this objective: conducting employer workshops and information sessions, giving public recognition to businesses with older-worker-friendly hiring practices and policies, and providing a web-based application through which employers could connect to relevant information about hiring and retaining aging workers. Although project managers told us that employer education efforts were essential to improving employment outcomes for older workers, the outreach activities targeted to employers were not well integrated with the rest of the grant-funded activities.
- *Encouraging employers to provide training for current employees.* Six out of ten grantees tried to encourage employers to support training for older incumbent workers. These efforts to engage employers were difficult because of the economic recession and because the AWI projects did not have staff members dedicated to engaging the private sector. But there were some successes. Two projects succeeded in working with employers to arrange for project-funded training for older incumbent workers. One project was able to draw on existing industry partnerships to provide the infrastructure for training incumbent workers in three industry sectors (information technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing).

Outcomes

The ten AWI grantees launched their projects in 2009 with ambitious enrollment and employment goals, articulated in their proposals and subsequent grant agreements. To shed light on the outcomes achieved by individual grantees and the Initiative overall, evaluators analyzed

participant-level data gathered by the individual grantees. The reported outcomes should be viewed with caution, because these outcome data were gathered before the end of the grant periods.¹⁵ In addition, the evaluators examined summary outcomes generated through the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS).¹⁶

Data Sources: The detailed analysis of participant characteristics and outcomes is based on participant-level data extracts provided to the evaluation team by the ten grantees during the spring of 2012. The data were collected and maintained by grantees in order to comply with ETA reporting requirements for the High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI), which determined the data elements and their definitions.¹⁷ Using these data, the outcome analyses in this report focus on all individuals who had exited the program at the time of data collection, (including both participants who received training and those who did not). This differs from the key performance measures defined by ETA for the HGJTI grantees, which focus primarily on individuals who have completed training.¹⁸

Enrollment. At the time participant data were acquired in spring 2012, most of the grantees had already achieved or were on track to meet their enrollment targets. One of the four grantees that had not yet met its enrollment targets was granted a no-cost extension from ETA that enabled it to continue enrolling participants into early 2013. At the time data were collected, the other three grantees seemed unlikely to meet their enrollment targets by the end of their grant periods.

Overall Employment Results. Overall, about half of exited participants obtained unsubsidized employment at the time data were collected (prior to projects' end dates). Four projects had better-than-average success in placing participants into jobs. While the participant-level data showed that most participants (65 percent) who secured employment were working in full-time positions, about one-third of all employed exiters reported being employed in part-time jobs. Although some grantees provided entrepreneurship training, the number of participants reported as becoming self-employed was very small.

¹⁵ The researchers had originally hoped to use multivariate analysis to identify factors associated with successful outcomes. However, because the projects were still ongoing at the time of the analysis and only a portion of all enrollees had exited the projects, the outcome data were not complete enough to allow the researchers to generate meaningful results using multivariate techniques.

¹⁶ Because of the time lag in obtaining the post-program outcome data, the CRIS reports, available for six of the ten projects, covered only early exit cohorts from each project, and, thus, may not be reliable indicators of the outcomes ultimately achieved by all project participants.

¹⁷ ETA created a data system with optional reporting measures specifically for use by AWI grantees—the Aging Worker Data (AWD) system—which was available to grantees but not required to be used.

¹⁸ The decision to report outcome measures based on all program exiters, rather than only training completers, was influenced by the fact that only 42 percent of the AWI enrollees had entered training.

Participants under 60 years of age were more likely to be employed than their older counterparts (63 percent employment for those aged 55 to 59 compared to 47 percent of those 60 to 64 and 37 percent of those 65 to 69 years of age). Male participants secured employment at a higher rate than female participants did (56 compared to 49 percent).

Results for Training Participants. Participants who enrolled in training programs had a slightly lower rate of employment than those that did not obtain training (46 compared to 52 percent). This may indicate that while training can be beneficial to older workers, pre-employment and re-employment services, such as job readiness workshops, case management, career counseling, and job placement services can also be effective routes to securing a new job. However, participants in training that lasted between one and six months found employment at a slightly higher rate than participants enrolled in very short-term or longer-term training. Disappointingly, less than one-third (29 percent) of all training participants secured jobs in training-related fields.

Plans to Sustain and Replicate Improved Services to Older Workers

One of the important objectives of the Initiative was to build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Relevant to this objective are three outcomes: whether the grantees made system-wide improvements in services for older workers, whether they had plans to sustain their system improvements beyond the grant period, and whether they developed resources for disseminating lessons from their projects.

System-wide Improvements

Although many projects developed distinct services for older workers, two grantees identified opportunities to improve the effectiveness of services available to all customer groups, including older workers. As a result of an internal audit, one grantee expanded the availability of staffed core services for all customers; another trained all workshop facilitators within American Job Centers on the adult learning process and appropriate training/facilitation techniques for the aging worker population. A third local site made substantial progress during the grant period in expanding the services for mature workers at all American Job Center customers and in the community as a whole, by contracting with a local community college and the public library system to provide mature worker workshops at all public libraries in the county.

Plans to Sustain Grant-Funded Services for Older Workers

Five of the ten grantees took steps to ensure that the improvements in older worker services they had implemented under the AWI grant would be sustained beyond the grant period. One of the key strategies was the training of American Job Center staff members to understand the needs of

older workers and how best to serve them. In addition, four grantees worked to sustain the progress they had made in serving aging workers in one or more of the following ways:

- Encouraging the retention of the specialized older worker case managers as direct service staff working in some capacity within the American Job Centers
- Continuing the delivery of specialized training programs or workshops developed during the demonstration, and
- Maintaining websites with information about resources for older workers.

However, as of the spring of 2012, only one grantee had actually secured additional funding to continue to provide AWI services.

Resources to Support Replication of Grant Innovations

Under the terms of the AWI grant, each grantee was required to submit products developed with grant funding to ETA as part of a national dissemination strategy for the products developed under the High Growth Job Training Initiative. Products that the AWI grantees were planning to submit to ETA included:

- Descriptions of their overall AWI project design
- Materials developed to support employer outreach efforts
- An assessment developed to determine whether participants should be encouraged to attend the basic level computer skills workshop or a more advanced level workshop
- Curricula developed or adapted for use with older workers, including career readiness training curricula, a basic computer skills training curriculum, and several industry foundation skills training curricula developed for older workers with limited English language skills.

Recommended Features of Services for Older Workers

In addition to providing specific products to disseminate their approaches to serving aging workers, the AWI project managers had advice for other sites about what they learned from their experiences designing and operating older worker services. While the descriptive methods used in this evaluation did not involve rigorously testing the efficacy of these service features, they nonetheless warrant further exploration in future studies. During final focus groups with the evaluators, the AWI project managers recommended nine features for the design and delivery of service for older workers.

- **Ensure that the targeted occupations are of interest to older workers and appropriate to their skills.** Grantees that targeted too narrow a set of occupations had difficulty finding eligible participants who were interested in the available industries or occupations. One project made the mistake of targeting occupations that required physical abilities not possessed by many older workers

or more training than most participants were willing to undergo. During our final conference calls with project managers, several respondents emphasized the importance of keeping employment options as broad as possible.

- **Offer career counseling and labor market information.** Projects found that older workers were particularly uninformed about different occupations and how their previous experiences and training might prepare them for a new career path. They learned that providing a participant with good information about labor markets and career paths was essential to help the customer make a good choice about whether to enter training and what kind of training to pursue. This information includes the level of academic skills needed to succeed in a particular training program, the types of job tasks and working conditions individuals would be likely to encounter if they pursued that occupation, the wages they could expect to earn at the entry level, and the opportunities for career advancement.
- **Screen participants to ensure that they are motivated, have appropriate and attainable job goals, and have identified transferable skills.** A number of grantees found that some participants were not appropriate for the project because they did not really want to work or had unrealistic job goals. Others needed services to address employment barriers before beginning training. Using pre-enrollment orientations, assessment tests, and comprehensive interviews of applicants, projects learned how to determine which participants were suited for the mix of services available in the project.
- **Attend to participants' needs for supportive services and income supports during training.** Participation in training, especially in a long-term traditional occupational skills program, can be difficult for an individual without a stable income and/or unmet supportive service needs. Project managers recommended that projects serving older workers arrange for supportive services directly or through referral, particularly for individuals who want to participate in training. On-the-job training positions and paid internships were used by some AWI grantees to provide participants with some income during training; attention to transportation and other supportive services needs was also beneficial for many low-income participants.
- **Ensure that training programs provide skills that make participants employable.** Project managers emphasized that training does not have to be long-term, but must provide participants with new skills that can be used on the job. In the case of older workers, the “effective ingredient” can be as simple as a basic computer skills training program that provides an employer-recognized certificate of completion. In order to ensure that individuals who completed training would be employable, projects needed staff members who were knowledgeable about the recruitment, screening, and hiring practices of employers in the occupations for which participants were being trained. Also, merely identifying an occupation as “high growth” and steering participants into it was not sufficient to ensure that those participants would be able to find jobs after completing training.
- **Provide “wrap-around” case management.** A majority of project managers agreed that it was important to provide individuals with ongoing case

management. They said that many older workers need and value personalized assistance and guidance. The additional individualized assistance necessary with mature workers increased the amount of time spent per customer, necessitating smaller than normal caseloads.

- **Hire knowledgeable and dedicated staff.** Project managers said that they had benefited from hiring case managers who had experience working with older workers or who had been trained in this population's needs prior to the start of the program. In either case it was important that case managers understand the challenges facing mature workers and how best to address their employment barriers.
- **Provide support during the job search/job placement phase of participation.** AWI grantees did not always have comprehensive job placement components in place by the time participants completed training. Some projects simply referred participants to the core services available at the local American Job Center. Project managers emphasized the importance of job search supports and indicated that they wished they had assigned specific staff persons the responsibility for reaching out to employers to hire project participants and supporting participants during their job search process
- **Involve employers and other industry representatives in designing entry-level training and skill-upgrade training tailored to meet the needs of older workers.** Despite DOL's emphasis on building partnerships with employers and/or industry representatives, most grantees struggled to develop close relationships with these partner groups. The negative results of limited employer/industry involvement in the AWI projects included: mismatches between training programs and employer needs; targeting of industries/occupations that had no job openings or were not good fits for participant abilities and interests; and general difficulty in placing participants into jobs. Project managers agreed that they would have benefited from stronger employer involvement.

Concluding Thoughts

The AWI projects began with certain assumptions about how to prepare older workers for jobs in expanding occupations, based on the job opportunities that existed at the time they submitted their proposals to ETA. The recession had substantially changed economic conditions by the time the projects were launched in 2009. Under these new conditions, many of the grantees found it necessary to adjust their services to better meet the needs of the older workers who were applying for project services. This caused a number of projects to shift from a design focused narrowly on occupational skills training for specific growing occupations to a service design that addressed a broader range of older worker needs.

The recommended features and innovative practices described in this report were developed by practitioners, based on their informed assessment of how to meet the needs of older workers

within the public workforce development system and how to coordinate resources to accomplish that goal. It is clear from the diversity of approaches tried that there was no single “cookie-cutter” best practice.

Although the descriptive methods used in this evaluation did not involve rigorous testing of the efficacy of any practices or service features, the experiences of the AWI projects suggest several program features that warrant further exploration and testing. Among the service features that appeared to be particularly well-suited for older workers were assistance with career planning and the provision of personalized support continuing throughout the service period. To provide these supports, the AWI projects used a combination of one-on-one counseling and group workshops. They found that serving older workers in small groups made it possible to combine staff support with peer support and appeared to improve worker confidence. Another practice that may warrant further study is the creation of short-term training opportunities for older workers, lasting three to six months.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the growing role of older workers in the nation's labor force and to improve the workforce system's ability to assist these workers, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration funded the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI). The Initiative, part of ETA's ongoing efforts to prepare workers for job opportunities in high-growth, high-demand sectors of the American economy, was directed specifically at workers 55 years of age and older. Key objectives of AWI, as stated in the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)¹⁹ were to address the workforce challenges facing older individuals by 1) developing model skill development and employment services for older workers and 2) building the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older individuals. Also, according to the SGA, the AWI grants were to 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.

In the summer of 2009, ten grantees were awarded approximately \$1 million each to fund the development of projects designed to achieve the primary objectives of AWI in their respective regions. ETA required each grantee to coordinate the design and implementation of its project through regional partnerships, so that services provided to aging workers were connected to ongoing efforts to develop a skilled workforce for high-growth occupations. In order to promote innovative training strategies and identify new employment opportunities, ETA required grantees to collaborate with state and local workforce development agencies, organizations with experience serving individuals 55 years of age and older (such as the Senior Community Services Employment Program [SCSEP]), employers and industry associations, educational institutions and training providers, and faith-based and community-based organizations. Grantees also had the option to focus on one or more specific target groups (such as dislocated or disadvantaged older workers) or specific activities, such as innovative training techniques, self-employment, career awareness, or building the capacity of training or education providers. Each project was subject to a number of other requirements, including focusing on employment in

¹⁹ SGA/DFA PY-08-06, *Federal Register*, Vol. 73, No. 245, December 19, 2008, pp. 77844–77862.

high-growth, high-demand industry sectors and participation in data collection and reporting.

ETA contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and its subcontractor Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of AWI strategies among the ten grantees and to examine outcomes in the sites. This *Final Report*, which complements the evaluation's *Interim Report*²⁰, presents findings and conclusions from the study's completed data-collection and analysis activities.

The Context for AWI

The United States is in the midst of a demographic transformation. Birth rates have decreased and life expectancy has reached an all-time high of 78.5 years.²¹ Together these trends have led to a steady increase in the mean and median ages of the American population, with far-reaching consequences for the composition of the labor force. In 2000, workers 55 and over made up only 13.1 percent of the U.S. civilian labor force. By 2010, that percentage had increased to 19.5%. The aging of the workforce is expected to continue. By 2020, it is estimated that workers 55 and over will make up 25 percent of the U.S. civilian labor force.²²

While simple demographic factors alone cause a “graying” of the workforce, another factor accentuates the trend: individuals are tending to remain in the workforce longer and to retire later.^{23,24} The number of workers in the oldest age category—65 and over—is expected to increase by more than 80 percent between 2006 and 2016.²⁵ By 2020, it is projected that workers 65 and over will make up more than 7 percent of the total labor force.²⁶

²⁰ Kogan, Deborah, Deanna Khemani, Tyler Moazed, and Michelle Derr, *Evaluation of the Aging Worker Initiative: Interim Report*, Social Policy Research Associates and Mathematica Policy Research, August 2012.

²¹ National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009, downloaded from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/lifexpec.htm> on August 20, 2012.

²² Toossi, Mitra, “Employment Outlook: 2010–2020,” in *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2012.

²³ Gendell, Murray, “Older workers: Increasing their labor force participation and hours of work.” *Monthly Labor Review*, 131(1):41–54, January 2008.

²⁴ National Institute on Aging, *Growing Older in America: The Health and Retirement Study*. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Aging, 2007.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Older Workers,” July 2008.

²⁶ Toossi, Mitra, “Employment Outlook: 2010–2020,” in *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2012.

Though the reasons for the increasing tendency to delay retirement are not completely understood, older workers today are on average healthier and more educated than those in previous generations, and both factors lead to higher labor force participation by those over the traditional retirement age of 65. The recent recession only compounded this trend to remain in the workforce for additional years. Layoffs of spouses, declines in the value of retirement accounts, and reduced pension benefits have forced many older workers to postpone retirement in order to provide for themselves and their families.^{27,28} In a survey of American workers, researchers at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University found that three-quarters of the respondents expect that they will be involved in full- or part-time work in their 60s and 70s, either out of financial necessity or out of a desire to continue working.²⁹

These statistics and projections make it clear that older workers are becoming a larger share of the U.S. workforce. At the same time, however, individual older workers are also facing increasingly difficult challenges when they lose their jobs. Historically, older workers as a group have had lower rates of unemployment than younger workers, and have been perceived as needing less assistance with reemployment than other groups. However, because the manufacturing workforce, in particular, is graying faster than the workforce as a whole,³⁰ many older workers have been particularly vulnerable to job dislocations over the last decade, as rapid economic globalization has eliminated millions of jobs in manufacturing and other traditional fields of employment.³¹ Older workers are also becoming a growing share of the long-term and very long-term unemployed, a trend that started before the recent recession and has steadily advanced. In 2007, about 24 percent of older jobless workers (those age 50 and up) had been out of work for six months or more, and no other age group had as high a rate of long-term unemployment. In 2011, the proportion of older jobless workers out of work for six months or

²⁷ Employee Benefit Research Institute, “The Impact of the Recent Financial Crisis on 401(k) Account Balances,” Washington, DC: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Issue Brief No. 326, February 2009.

²⁸ Garr, Emily, “Older Americans in the Recession: More are staying in the workforce, more are losing their jobs.” Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, Issue Brief No. 251, February 4, 2009.

²⁹ Reynolds, Scott, Neil Ridley, and Carl Van Horn, “A Work-Filled Retirement: Workers’ Changing Views on Employment and Leisure,” John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University, 2005.

³⁰ The average age of the U.S. manufacturing work is 50 years, according to Scott Doron, Director of the Southern Technology Council in “Manufacturing: The Misunderstood Industry,” Southern Growth Policies Board, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, August 2010, downloaded from <http://www.southerngrowth.com/communityresources/downloads/manufacturing.pdf> on 9/1/2012.

³¹ Van Horn, Carl E., Kathy Krepcio, and Neil Ridley, “Public and Private Strategies for Assisting Older Workers,” In *Older and Out of Work: Jobs and Social Insurance for a Changing Economy*, pp. 205–224, Randall W. Eberts and Richard A. Hobbie, eds., Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2008.

more had jumped to about 54 percent.³² Moreover, in 2011, older jobless workers were more likely than jobless workers in other age groups to be unemployed for one year or longer.³³

One reason for this phenomenon is that older workers often face discrimination in the workplace due to negative stereotypes.^{34, 35} Although older workers, by any objective measure, are a vital component of the American workforce, many employers (and others who make hiring decisions) perceive aging workers as having impaired physical and cognitive abilities and lacking in technological acumen. Furthermore, observing that older workers often expect higher wages than younger workers because of their seniority and expertise, some employers believe that hiring older workers will negatively affect their profit margins.

The public workforce investment system has a mixed record of accomplishment to date in serving older workers. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult and dislocated worker programs have been increasing their enrollment of workers 55 or older, measured as a percentage of all WIA enrollees over time. However, the entered-employment rates for older workers, according to one recent study, have been declining over time.³⁶ Furthermore, an earlier study suggested that older workers are less likely than other WIA enrollees to receive training services.³⁷ During the site visits for this study, the respondents interviewed for this study also shared their impression that older workers were less comfortable than other customers using the online tools available for self-service delivery of labor market information and job search assistance in many American Job Centers.

³² McKenna, Claire, “Economy in Focus: Long Road Ahead for Older Unemployed Workers,” *National Employment Law Project*, March 9, 2012.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Bendick, Marc Jr., Charles W. Jackson, and J. Horatio Romero, “Employment Discrimination Against Older Workers” *Journal of Aging and Social Policy* Vol. 8, No. 4, 1997, pp 25–46.

³⁵ Gregory, Raymond F, *Age Discrimination in the American Workplace: Old at a Young Age*” Rutgers University Press, 2001.

³⁶ Zhang, Ting, “Workforce Investment Act Training for Older Workers: Towards a Better Understanding of Older Worker Needs during the Economic Recovery,” 2009, pp. 4, 5.
http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2011-10.pdf

³⁷ David W. Stevens, “Older Worker Flows Through Core, Intensive, and Training Services, and Employment Status and Earnings, First Quarter After Exit,” University of Baltimore Jacob France Institute, April 2004.

AWI Grant Awards

On July 30, 2009, ETA announced the award of grants of approximately \$1 million each to ten entities selected from a larger applicant pool. Exhibit I-1 lists the selected grantees. The ten grantees are described in detail in Chapter II of this report. As shown in Exhibit I-2, the AWI grantees were located in ten different states and represented five of the six ETA geographic regions.

**Exhibit I-1:
The Aging Worker Initiative Grantees**

Grantee Name	City, State
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.	Lafayette, IN
Quad Area Community Action Agency	Hammond, LA
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.	Brunswick, ME
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development ³⁸	Towson, MD
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.	Clinton Township, MI
South Central Workforce Investment Board	Harrisburg, PA
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.	Houston, TX
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.	St. Albans, VT
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County	Seattle, WA
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Neenah, WI

³⁸ At grant award, the Maryland grantee was the Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development. This office was consolidated into the Department of Economic Development in January 2011. Division of Workforce Development was created at this time, which took over administration of the grant.

Exhibit I-2 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 AWI Evaluation

To evaluate the design and implementation of the AWI, ETA awarded a competitive contract to SPR (with Mathematica as a subcontractor) in June 2009. Evaluation activities included (1) early telephone reconnaissance calls with all grantees during the fall of 2009, (2) two rounds of site visits to each of the grantees, conducted in November 2010 and March/April 2012, and (3) a final series of telephone focus groups with project directors conducted during June 2012.

The evaluation was funded for a 42-month period, which was anticipated to be long enough to allow the evaluation to document the complete period of grantee operations and to collect and analyze final project outcomes. However, because the evaluators had to collect the final

individual-level data from the grantees during the second quarter of 2012 in order to prepare the Final Report by the required submission date, all of the projects were still in operation when the outcome data were submitted. Thus, the Final Report covers the first 33 months of operation of all projects. Seven projects were scheduled to complete operations in mid-August 2012, and three had received approval for no-cost extensions through the end of 2012 or the first quarter of 2013.

Evaluation Framework and Key Research Questions

The overarching research questions addressed by the AWI evaluation include the following:

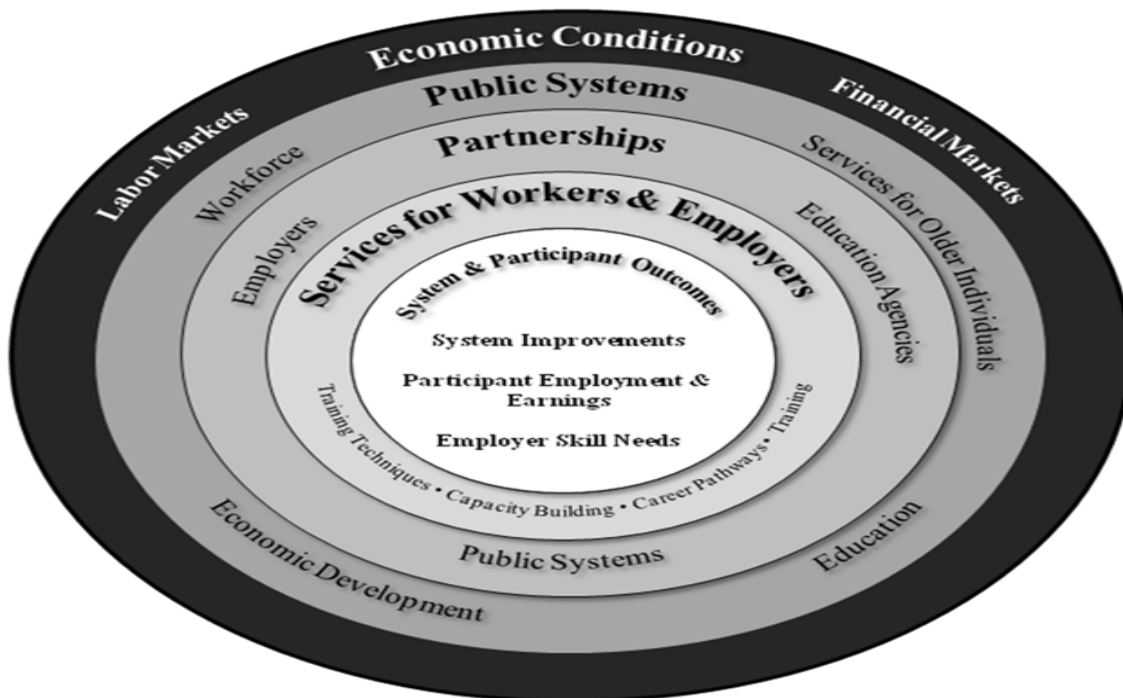
- 1) How successful were the AWI grantees in developing effective services to meet the needs of aging workers?
- 2) What factors were influential in supporting or hindering project success?
- 3) What can we learn from AWI about improving the ability of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers?

To guide the evaluation, SPR developed a conceptual model that describes how external factors (e.g., economic conditions and public workforce investment systems) and factors internal to AWI project design (e.g., project partnerships, services, and recruitment strategies) were expected to influence the implementation and results of the AWI projects. Exhibit I-3 displays the factors that interacted in bringing about project outcomes as a series of concentric rings. In preparing the Final Report, the evaluators focused on research questions that addressed the implementation of the different strategies tested by the AWI grantees and how the lessons learned from the experiences of the AWI grantees could inform future efforts to improve services to older workers. Below we list some of the key research questions, but not the full list.

External Context and Public Systems

- How were the projects influenced by the types of occupations and industries identified as high-growth sectors of their regional economies?
- How were the projects influenced by the characteristics of older workers in their regions, and by the networks of existing services available to older individuals?
- How were the projects influenced by their regional priorities, service delivery arrangements, and funding available within the existing public workforce investment systems?
- How did the recession affect the design and implementation of the AWI projects?

**Exhibit I-3
Conceptual Model for the AWI Evaluation**



Grant Administration and Partnerships

- How did the grantees vary in the particular goals they identified for their demonstration projects?
- How did the organizational characteristics and previous experiences of the grantees influence the designs of their projects and the partnerships they formed?
- What individuals or organizations were particularly influential in providing project leadership?
- What were the key variations among the grantees in project management and staffing arrangements and how did these variations influence project implementation experiences?
- What roles did different partners play in project planning and operations? What aligned resources did they provide to support the goals of the AWI?
- What organizational challenges did the grantees encounter and how did they respond to those challenges?
- What lessons did the grantees learn about how to involve their organizational partners successfully?

Service Design and Implementation Experiences

- What were the key variations in the service strategies developed by the AWI grantees?
- How did the grantees differ in the emphasis they placed on the delivery of training versus other staffed services?
- What lessons did the grantees learn about the essential service components for projects serving older workers? To what extent do these service components need to be tailored to address the specialized needs of aging workers?
- How were partners involved in delivering services to program participants? How were project services integrated into the delivery of other services through American Job Centers?
- How did the projects engage employers in the projects? What did grantees identify as the greatest challenges in employer engagement, and what effective strategies for employer engagement did they develop?
- What types of activities did the projects undertake in addition to direct services to enrolled participants, and to what extent were these reported as “capacity building” activities?
- What types of technical assistance and support did the projects receive during the demonstration period? Who provided this support and how useful was it?

Participants, Services, and Outcomes

- What particular types of older workers did the grantees target for project participation? How well did grantees succeed in enrolling the types of participants they had targeted?
- How did the projects vary in the types of occupational skills training provided (occupational fields, duration of training)? Is there any association between the types of training and the rate of training completion or employment outcomes?
- How successful were the projects in achieving their goals?
- What factors (e.g. participant characteristics, types of grantees, variations in services) appear to be associated with successful outcomes?

System Improvements

- How did the AWI projects change the service environment for older workers?
- How did each project increase the capacity of the local workforce development system to serve aging workers and employers?
- What were the key problems or challenges encountered in designing improved services for older workers?
- How did the grantees plan to expand, sustain, and/or replicate the AWI projects after the end of the grant period?

- What can we learn from the experiences of the AWI grantees in designing future efforts to serve older workers?

Research Methods

The evaluation drew on the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. For the qualitative component of the study, we collected information from telephone discussions with key project staff members and from detailed site visits; the latter included observations of project operations, discussions with project managers and service delivery staff members, discussions with representatives of key organizational partners, focus groups with participants, and conversations with employers involved in the projects. These data sources were supplemented by reviews of written materials, including grantee applications and quarterly narrative reports submitted to ETA.

The first round of site visits was conducted about fifteen months after the award of the demonstration grants, just after most projects had begun enrolling participants. This round of site visits concentrated on issues relating to project design and implementation progress, with attention focused on how each AWI grantee had carried out its initial proposed design plans and how these plans addressed the key issues affecting aging workers. The findings from these site visits were included in the evaluation's *Interim Report*. The second round of site visits, conducted in April and May of 2012 (about 32 months into the demonstration period), focused on the experiences of the projects in serving aging workers and employers involved in the AWI; the data gathered during this round served as the basis for our distillation of the accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned by the grantees. Appendix B to this report presents the data-collection protocol used to guide the evaluation's second round of site visits to the projects.

A final activity for collection of qualitative data occurred in June 2012, when evaluation staff members facilitated three focus groups, each made up of between two and four AWI project directors. These focus groups provided valuable opportunities for reviewing project experiences and discussing lessons learned with project representatives. Appendix C presents the guide used to facilitate these focus groups.

For the quantitative component of the study, the evaluators obtained and analyzed data from the projects' own client-level records. These data covered participants enrolled, services provided, and outcomes achieved by project enrollees. These data were submitted to us by the projects during the second quarter of 2012.³⁹ In addition, we obtained data from the Common Reporting

³⁹ The evaluators provided each project with a list of variables for which we wanted to obtain data and expressed our preference for data extracted from the AWD. However, the research team accepted client-level data extracts

Information Services (CRIS) system for the High Growth Job Training Initiative. The reports generated by the CRIS system are based on data on the Common Measures outcomes from state unemployment insurance (UI) wage records. These data were limited to those projects that provided ETA with information identifying project participants. As described in more detail in Chapter V, we believe that the client-level data provide the most accurate available view of project accomplishments and outcomes at the time of data collection.

Organization of the Report

Chapter II of this Final Report introduces the reader to the AWI grantees and the key elements of their projects, including the communities they served, the types of participants and industry sectors they targeted, the strategies they used to address the goals of the AWI, and proposed funding for projects. Chapter III reviews how the grantees varied in terms of project organization, partnerships, oversight bodies, and leveraged resources to operate the AWI projects. Chapter IV presents grantees recruitment strategies, enrollment, and the characteristics of the participants served. Chapter V describes the variations in the services developed by the AWI grantees to meet the needs of unemployed older workers as well as the activities used to provide services to incumbent workers. Chapter VI discusses the data collection and reporting practices used by the grantees and some of the issues associated with the aggregate reports generated by the AWD reporting system. This chapter also reports on the outcomes achieved by the projects. Finally, Chapter VII summarizes the accomplishments of the AWI grantees, their plans for sustaining promising practices, and the lessons learned from the AWI that can help inform future efforts to serve older workers. Brief profiles of each of the ten AWI projects are provided in Appendix A. As noted previously, Appendix B to this report presents the data-collection protocol used to guide the evaluation's second round of site visits to the projects. Appendix C presents the guide used to facilitate the focus groups with project managers near the end of the study period.

from the MIS system that each project recommended as the most comprehensive source of data on AWI project participants, services, and outcomes in that site. Because these participant-level records were used by each site to generate the aggregate quarterly data reported on ETA Form 9134, they were based on standardized reporting elements. The data were current as of the date each project submitted its data extract. Projects submitted their data extracts during April or May 2012. Data were current as of the day they were provided to SPR, rather than reflecting a completed quarter of activity.

II. OVERVIEW OF GRANTEES AND THEIR APPROACHES TO SERVING AGING WORKERS

In designing their projects, the organizations that were funded to operate AWI grants made key decisions about what types of aging workers to recruit, what types of services to offer to mature workers in their local communities, what high-growth industry sectors to target, and how to spend project resources. This chapter summarizes these decisions and plans; to put them in context by describing the AWI grantee organizations themselves and the relevant circumstances of the communities in which they operated.

Grantee Characteristics

The grantees varied in type of organization, size of service area, and previous experience in serving aging workers, as summarized below.

Organizational Types

Since one of the goals of the Initiative was to build the capacity of the public workforce system to serve aging workers, the SGA encouraged applications from entities that represented the workforce investment system or had strong relationships with it.⁴⁰ Although eligible grantees also included community-based organizations, non-profits, and other government organizations, the majority of grants were awarded to local workforce investment boards (WIBs), their administrative entity or contracted American Job Center service providers (see Exhibit II-1).⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Federal Register*, Vol. 73, No. 245, dated December 19, 2008

⁴¹ A number of the local workforce investment boards (WIBs) are incorporated non-profit organizations. For the purposes of this report, we have distinguished them from other non-profits and categorized them as local WIBs.

**Exhibit II-1
Organizational Characteristics of AWI Grantees**

State Location	Grantee	Type of Organization	Experience Working with Older Workers Prior to AWI	
			Provided Direct Services to Older Workers	Informational Initiatives/Steering Committee
Indiana	Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.	Regional program operator for WIB	No	Yes
Louisiana	Quad Area Community Action Agency	Non-profit Organization	No	No
Maine	Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.	Local WIB	No	Yes
Maryland	Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development	Administrative entity for local WIB	No	Yes
Michigan	Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.	Local WIB	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	South Central Workforce Development Board	Local WIB	No	No
Texas	Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.	Non-profit Organization	No	No
Vermont	Vermont Associates Training and Development, Inc.	Non-profit Organization	Yes	Yes
Washington	Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council	Local WIB	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Local WIB	Yes	Yes

A grantee’s organizational type had an important bearing on the grantee’s implementation of the AWI because it helped determine the grantee’s ability to influence local workforce development policy and American Job Center operations and to develop partnerships with other public and private workforce development agencies.⁴² We expected that local WIBs and organizations with experience operating American Job Centers would have the advantage of being able to leverage

⁴² American Job Centers (formerly referred to by ETA as One-Stop Career Centers) are designed to provide a full range of assistance to employers and job seekers, drawing on resources from multiple programs. Established under the Workforce Investment Act, the Centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, training assistance and other employment supports, including both core services available to the general public and intensive and training services available to targeted groups through specially funded programs. Customers can visit a Center in person or connect to online core services via the Internet.

additional WIA funds and coordinate AWI services with existing services provided at American Job Centers. On the other hand, we were interested in discovering whether non-profit agencies would bring expertise providing direct services and working with hard-to-serve populations and/or could make effective use of linkages to community-based organizations with expertise serving older Americans.

As shown in Exhibit II-1, five grantees—in Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin—were local WIBs, the governing and policy-developing bodies for workforce development programs in their local service areas.⁴³ The grantee in Baltimore County was a public agency that served as the administrative entity for an unincorporated WIB. In Indiana, the grantee was a non-profit organization that was the regional program operator for the local WIB. The remaining three grantees in Texas, Vermont, and Louisiana were non-profit organizations that were not organizationally linked to the public workforce investment system.

Past Experience Serving Aging Workers

Six of the AWI grantees reported having experience planning and promoting policies and practices responsive to the needs of older workers in their local communities before receiving the AWI grant. Several grantees had participated in interagency steering committees and resource-mapping projects to assess the needs and employment patterns of aging workers. For example, in Maryland, the grantee had participated on a “Silver Tsunami Commission,” which projected regional workforce shortages due to the retiring of older workers and identified the employment challenges facing aging workers. Similarly, the AWI grantee in Washington had been an active participant in forming a Mature Workers’ Alliance that involved multiple stakeholders. Several projects had previously educated employers about the benefits of hiring and maintaining an older workforce. For example, the *Tecumseh Area Partnership* in Indiana had developed curriculum materials for a workshop for employers that addressed the value and benefits of mature workers. Similarly, the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* in Washington had previously developed a website (employexperience.com) to educate employers about the benefits of hiring mature workers. These prior activities had made grantees aware of the need to dedicate resources to support the reemployment efforts of older workers. The previous activities also

⁴³ At the time the AWI grant was awarded, Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. was a non-profit organization contracted to operate the American Job Center network in Region 4 of Indiana’s balance-of-state workforce investment area. As a result of organizational reconfiguration, it is now the official workforce investment board as well as the American Job Center operator in this local area. Indiana project staff reported that this change did not produce any major service shifts to the AWI project, but did allow them to have more autonomy in setting local policy and determining how workforce development services were delivered within the local area.

created valuable partnerships on which the grantees could draw in building their AWI grant-funded activities.

Only four of the grantees reported having experience providing services tailored to the needs of older workers prior to receiving the AWI grant. Three of these grantees—in Michigan, Vermont, and Wisconsin—had experience providing or overseeing services under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).⁴⁴ The *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* in Washington had already been providing services tailored to older workers within its American Job Center system for several years prior to the AWI project. These services included a regularly scheduled all-day workshop called “Myths of the Mature Worker” that focused on preparing mature job seekers to construct resumes and counteract negative stereotypes in employer interviews and a four-week-long Mature Workers’ Job Club. In addition, *Tecumseh Area Partnership* in Indiana had previously developed a curriculum for a workshop for older job seekers called “Where Do I Go From Here?” that focused on skills building and recognizing transferrable skills.

Service Areas of AWI Projects

As shown in Exhibit II-2, the areas served by the AWI grantees ranged from largely rural areas with total populations of less than a million people (those in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Louisiana) to areas that contained large metropolitan cities (those in Texas, Maryland, Michigan, and Washington which included the cities of Houston, Baltimore, Detroit, and Seattle respectively). Five of the grantees served single local workforce investment areas; the other five served between two and six workforce investment areas each. In all but one project (Washington), the grantees’ service areas included multiple counties or jurisdictions, ranging two in the Maryland project to a high of sixteen in the Maine project. Two of these projects—in Maine and Vermont—attempted to provide services across their entire states.

⁴⁴ As the only federally funded employment and training program that is dedicated to serving older workers, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) was a potential AWI partner in all sites. SCSEP provides training to low-income unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older with poor employment prospects by matching them with public or private non-profit host agencies for time-limited community-service training assignments. Participants receive minimum wage stipends from the SCSEP program for participating in part-time training, and, when job-ready, are assisted in transitioning to unsubsidized employment.

Exhibit II-2
Service Area: Number of Jurisdictions and Total Population, by Grantee

Grantee	Number of Local Workforce Investment Areas	Number of Counties	Population of Counties (2010)
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	1	12	498,085
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	1	7	450,601
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	4 (statewide)	16 (entire state)	1,328,361
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)	2 (city and county)	2 jurisdictions	1,425,990
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	6	7 (includes Detroit metro area)	4,704,743
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	1	8	1,393,676
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	1	13 (includes Houston metro area)	6,087,133
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	5 (statewide)	14 (entire state)	625,741
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (Washington)	1	1	2,644,584
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	2	13	897,175

U.S. Census Bureau 2010 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>), accessed on September 7, 2012 was used to compile the Population (2010) data. The information in Exhibit II-2 shows state-level data for Maine and Vermont. For the remaining grantees, we totaled the population levels across all of the counties included in the grantee's service area.

AWI grantees that served multiple local workforce investment areas found that coordinating services across large areas with multiple American Job Center contractors created challenges for AWI staff coordination and coordination with American Job Center staff members and dispersed limited resources across a wide geographical area. During the implementation phase, several projects found it difficult to serve the whole of the geographic service areas they had originally

targeted.⁴⁵ In response to the high demand for services and constrained training funds, several grantees ultimately limited the geographic scope of the areas they served. For example, *Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.* had planned to serve the entire state of Vermont, but found that it was very difficult to reach aging workers in the rural areas. This project decided to concentrate its services in four counties with larger urban and suburban populations. Similarly, *Quad Area Community Action Agency* in Louisiana originally planned to serve a seven-parish area, but decided to concentrate its services in five parishes.⁴⁶

Community Contexts of the AWI Projects

Each of the ten AWI projects operated within a unique context determined, in large part, by the characteristics of the people residing in its service area and the economy of the region.

Demographic Features

As required by the SGA, projects were limited to serving individuals who were at least 55 years of age. Below we provide data on the proportion of the population 65 years of age and over, which is a useful indicator of the concentration of older individuals in the general population.⁴⁷ As shown in Exhibit II-3, the proportion of the population that was 65 years of age or older ranged from 10.7 percent in the area served by the Louisiana project to 16.3 percent in the area served by the Maine project. For five projects—those in Indiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin—the proportion of older individuals in the project service area was higher than it is in the nation as a whole.

Five projects served local communities in which the percentage of non-white residents was above the average for the U.S. as a whole (22.8 percent). The projects in Louisiana, Maryland and Texas served the communities with the highest percentages of non-white residents (over 38 percent). The area served by the project in Texas served the area with the largest proportion of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin (35.3 percent).

⁴⁵ The recession affected all of the AWI grantees by increasing the demand for public workforce investment services; the level of training funds available from public workforce development programs was often insufficient to meet the increased number of customers seeking services from American Job Centers.

⁴⁶ In addition to concentrating its services in a smaller geographic area, this project also shifted its service area to include several parishes within the New Orleans metropolitan area (e.g., Orleans and St. Tamany Parishes).

⁴⁷ These data for 65 and older were readily available from the 2010 Census. The proportion of those 55 and older required additional analysis beyond the scope of work for this project.

**Exhibit II-3
Racial and Demographic Composition of
Demonstration Communities (Percentages)**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MD</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>PA</u>	<u>TX</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
65 years of Age or Older	13.4%	10.7%	16.3%	12.6%	13.2%	14.5%	8.6%	15.0%	10.8%	15.0%	13.3%
Race											
White Only	87.9%	59.8%	95.4%	62.1%	70.1%	82.6%	60.2%	95.5%	71.9%	94.1%	78.1%
Black or African-American Only	4.7%	35.6%	1.3%	28.7%	22.8%	10.2%	17.2%	1.1%	5.6%	1.3%	13.1%
Other Race (Only One Race)*	5.3%	3.4%	1.8%	6.6%	4.8%	4.9%	19.5%	1.8%	17.1%	3.3%	7.7%
(Two or More Races)	2.1%	1.2%	1.5%	2.5%	2.2%	2.4%	3.0%	1.7%	5.3%	1.3%	2.3%
Ethnicity											
Hispanic or Latino (of any Race)	4.8%	3.4%	1.4%	4.6%	3.9%	4.7%	35.3%	1.6%	9.0%	4.3%	16.7%
Individuals Under the Federal Poverty Level**	15.9%	18.0%	12.6%	9.9%	14.3%	8.9%	13.7%	11.1%	10.6%	10.7%	13.8%

U.S. Census Bureau 2010 (<http://factfinder2.census.gov> accessed on September 7, 2012). For the projects in Maine and Vermont, we have provided state-level data. The following MSAs were used to compile the information in Exhibit II-4: Kokomo and Lafayette, IN MSAs; Baton Rouge, LA MSA; Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA; Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA; Harrisburg Carlisle, PA MSA; Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA; Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA and Fond du Lac, WI MSA. Race categories add to more than 100% because race categories are not mutually exclusive (individuals can identify with more than one race category).

* “Other Race” includes individuals who identified themselves as American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asian, Native Hawaiians, or Other Pacific Islanders.

** “Individuals under the Federal Poverty Level” includes individuals who are 18 years of age or older who income in the last twelve months is below the federal poverty level. This information is based on the 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

In all but two projects, more than 10 percent of individuals 18 years of age or older had incomes below the federal poverty level. The average poverty rate was equal to or higher than the U.S. rate of 13.8% in three project areas—Indiana, Louisiana, and Michigan.

Economic Conditions

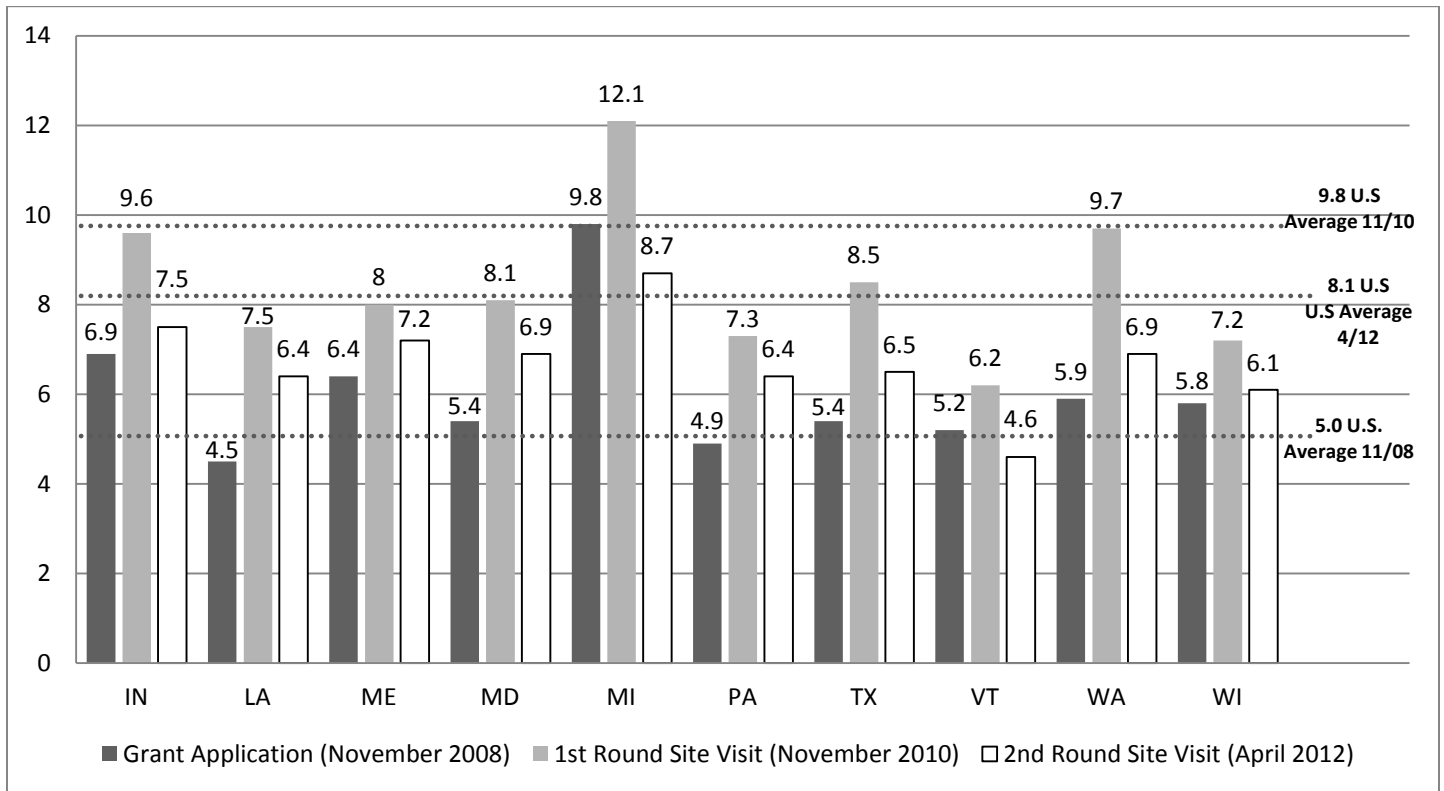
As Exhibit II-4 shows, unemployment rates changed dramatically over the demonstration period for all grantees. While grantees designed their projects to take into account local and economic conditions in November of 2008, they were facing very different economic conditions by the time the grants were awarded in the summer of 2009. The severe economic downturn dramatically affected local economic conditions, particularly the ability of employers in the designated high-growth industries to offer jobs to AWI project participants.

Exhibit II-4 depicts the economic conditions at three points in time, in approximately two-year intervals: when the applications were submitted to ETA, at the end of the first year of the grant operations, and at the time of the final evaluation site visit. At the time the AWI grant applications were written, unemployment ranged from a low of 4.5 percent in the Louisiana project service area to a high of 9.8 percent in the Michigan project service area (the regional economy in Michigan was already beginning to decline in late 2008 due to the collapse of the automotive industry and the secondary and tertiary effects of that decline on the economy of the region).

By the time the AWI grants were awarded and projects were being implemented, unemployment had increased across all ten projects by an average of 2.4 percentage points. During the first site visits, unemployment rates across all ten project sites ranged from 6.2 percent in Vermont to 12.1 percent in Michigan. All ten projects faced challenges resulting from the recession, including, most significantly, the evaporation of employer demand for new workers, even in the occupations and industries designated as high-growth sectors in the regional economies. In addition, the economic recession created a sharp increase in the demand for workforce development services by customers of the American Job Center network. AWI grantees reported that serving the large numbers of dislocated workers became the central priority for many American Job Centers, relegating the AWI projects to secondary status.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Furthermore, grantees found that local WIBs often placed a higher priority on spending American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds than on spending AWI project funds. (This was because the ARRA funds were more substantial and had to be spent quickly over a shorter duration of time.)

**Exhibit II-4
Unemployment Rates by Grantee During the AWI Project Period**



U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Metropolitan Service Area At-A-Glance Tables (<http://data.bls.gov>, accessed on July 31, 2012). The information in Exhibit II-4 was compiled using the metropolitan service area(s) (MSAs) most closely aligned to the project service areas of the individual AWI grantees. State-level data were used for the projects with statewide service areas (Maine and Vermont). The following MSAs were used to compile the information in Exhibit II-4: Kokomo and Lafayette, IN MSA; Baton Rouge, LA MSA; Baltimore-Towson, MD MSA; Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MSA; Harrisburg Carlisle, PA MSA; Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX MSA; Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA and Fond du Lac, WI MSA.

By the time of the second evaluation site visits in the spring of 2012, all ten AWI projects saw modest improvements in their regional unemployment rates. Unemployment decreased an average of 1.7 percentage points between the first and second evaluation site visits. The AWI project in Maine showed the smallest improvement (the state’s unemployment rate dropped 0.8 percentage points to 7.2 percent), and the project in Michigan showed the largest improvement (unemployment dropped 3.4 percentage points to 8.7 percent). Interestingly, by the time of the second evaluation site visit, unemployment rates were below the national average of 8.1 percent in the service areas of nine of the ten projects (the lone exception being Michigan). Even with

these improvements in local unemployment rates, many projects still reported that employers were reluctant to hire new employees because there they were uncertain about the pace of economic recovery.

Industry Sectors Targeted By AWI Projects

ETA’s SGA called for AWI grantees to develop strategies to serve aging workers that would help them retain or connect to jobs in “high-growth, high-demand industries” critical to the grantees’ regional economies.⁴⁹ Grantees targeted a wide variety of industries in their grant proposals.

As shown in Exhibit II-5, healthcare and information technology were the two most frequently targeted industry sectors, with nine projects specifically targeting healthcare and five projects targeting information technology. Other industries that were targeted by AWI projects in their grant applications included advanced manufacturing, construction, financial and administrative services, and transportation. The Pennsylvania project targeted three industry sectors for training incumbent workers—advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology—but used a broader list of demand occupations to guide the training that could be approved for unemployed older workers enrolled in the project.

From the start, the majority of grantees did not target specific occupations within their identified industry sectors. Rather, projects encouraged mature workers to seek training and reemployment in one of the targeted industry sectors, but did not mandate the types of occupations mature workers were required to pursue. A few projects, however, did target specific occupations. For example, within the healthcare industry, the Maryland project initially targeted six specific healthcare occupations: medical billing, medical coding, surgical technician, central sterile processing technician, certified nurse assistant, and geriatric nurse assistant.⁵⁰ The Maine project also targeted occupations within the healthcare sector: certified nursing assistant, certified

⁴⁹ As defined by ETA in its High Growth Job Training Initiative, high-growth high-demand sectors are “projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy or affect the growth of other industries” or are “being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers.” A total of 14 sectors were identified by ETA as meeting these criteria. Each AWI grantee was asked to select sectors that met the criteria for its own region.

⁵⁰ Over time, the managers of the Maryland project found that several of its initial target occupations required technical training that was too long and too difficult for most project enrollees. They requested a grant modification from DOL to broaden the range of healthcare occupations in which individuals could seek training and employment. By the time of the second evaluation site visit, the Maryland project managers had removed four targeted occupations and added two new ones—unit clerk and physical therapy assistant. Project staff stated that these occupations kept their original focus on healthcare but fit the skills and abilities of aging workers better and also required training that was shorter in duration.

**Exhibit II-5
Industry Sectors Targeted, By Grantee**

	<u>Advanced Manufacturing</u>	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Financial/ Administrative</u>	<u>Healthcare</u>	<u>Information Technology</u>	<u>Other</u>
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	X			X	X	Transportation
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)		X	X	X		Energy Engineering Transportation
Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. (Maine)		X (Green)		X	X	Energy
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)				X		
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development (Michigan)						Multiple occupations in any high-demand industry
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania) ⁵¹	X			X	X	
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)		X	X	X	X	
Vermont Associates for Training and Development Inc. (Vermont)			X	X	X	
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (Washington)		X (Green)		X	X	
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	X			X		Telecommunications

⁵¹ In Pennsylvania, the industry sectors targeted for training applied only to incumbent workers. Unemployed workers could participate in training in any demand occupation.

residential medication aide, administrative medical assistant for medical coding and billing, and emergency medical services. Within the green construction and energy industry sectors, the project in Maine targeted six specific occupations: solar thermal technician, weatherization technician, energy auditor, welding, building construction, and wind power system controller.

Not long after the AWI projects started operations, they discovered some flaws in their decisions about the industry sectors and occupations to target for older workers. Initially projects targeted industry sectors based on expectations for job growth, not necessarily because the industries were particularly suited to the interests and skill sets of aging workers. As a result, most grantees found that many mature workers were not interested in pursuing training, either because they had yet to make the connection between retraining and reemployment opportunities or because they were not interested in pursuing training in the targeted industry sectors. The recession also wreaked havoc with the job opportunities in the targeted sectors; some targeted industry sectors had stagnant growth or overall declines in the number of jobs.

In response to these challenges, a number of grantees found that they had to alter their approaches to offering industry-based occupational skills training. Most grantees expanded the allowable types of occupational skills training and altered their service designs to incorporate a customer-choice model whereby training decisions were influenced by the skills and abilities of individual applicants and, to a lesser degree, the expected long-term demand by local employers for workers with specific skills. Thus, most grantees ended up working closely with aging workers to help them identify their transferrable skills and the areas where retraining would benefit their individual reemployment efforts.

Types of Older Workers Targeted

As specified by ETA's SGA, grantees were allowed to enroll only workers age 55 years of age or older for participation in the AWI. Beyond this eligibility criterion, grantees had substantial flexibility as to whom to target for services. While there was some variation in the groups of aging workers recruited for project participation, the majority of AWI grantees kept their eligibility requirements for AWI enrollment and participation broad enough to allow them to recruit and serve many types of aging workers. It is notable that none of the grantees targeted low-income older workers exclusively. Several grantees, especially ones who operated the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which has stringent income eligibility requirements, said they saw AWI as an opportunity to serve individuals who could not normally take advantage of other programs because they did not meet the income eligibility requirements. Project managers generally expressed the belief that all older workers who were out of work, regardless of previous income, faced substantial barriers in the labor market and deserved to benefit from services under the AWI grants.

As shown in Exhibit II-6, most projects targeted unemployed older workers as the primary group they wanted to recruit for participation in the AWI project. Three projects—those in Louisiana, Maine, and Pennsylvania—were particularly interested in serving older workers who had been unemployed for an extended period. Four projects identified other specific groups of older workers as being worthy of particular attention in their recruitment and enrollment. The project in Maine indicated interest in recruiting retired veterans and/or military spouses, while grantees in Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington planned to focus on recruiting older workers who wanted to start their own businesses.⁵² Texas and Washington were the only two projects that specified that they would target older workers with additional barriers that made them particularly hard to serve, such as non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities. The project in Washington took this prioritization particularly seriously, initially limiting enrollment to older workers who were non-English speakers, individuals with disabilities, or ex-offenders.⁵³

⁵² As noted in Chapter IV, the AWI project in Washington was the most successful in recruiting older workers seeking to start their own businesses.

⁵³ After having difficulty recruiting older workers within these target groups who were interested in the three industry sectors they had targeted, the Washington project modified its grant to include a fourth target group: low-income older workers.

**Exhibit II-6
Groups Targeted for Participation, by Grantee**

Grantee	Specified Target Groups			Other Information on Target Groups
	Unemployed	Employed	Interested in training in targeted industry	
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	X	X	X	
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	X	X		Long-term unemployed individuals
Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. (Maine)	X	X		Retired veterans and/or military spouses; 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 (Maryland)	X	X		Individuals interested in pursuing training in specific healthcare occupations
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development (Michigan)	X			Individuals willing to pursue employment in any high-demand occupation
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	X	X	X (Incumbent workers)	Unemployed workers interested in any demand occupation on the H-1B list; incumbent workers willing to pursue training in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or information technology; unemployed individuals interested in starting their own businesses
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	X	X		Individuals with employment barriers, including low income, low English proficiency, and disabilities; unemployed individuals interested in starting their own businesses
Vermont Associates for Training and Development Inc. (Vermont)	X	X	X	SCSEP participants (<i>Grantee subsequently expanded participant recruitment to individuals interested in any H1-B occupation</i>)

Grantee	Specified Target Groups				Other Information on Target Groups
	Unemployed	Employed	Interested in training in targeted industry	Interested in training in specific occupations	
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (Washington)	X		X		Targeted participants with special barriers to employment, including ex-offenders, individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities (<i>The grantee modified its grant to include low-income individuals as a target group</i>)
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	X		X		Individuals interested in pursuing full-time employment in advanced manufacturing, health care, or telecommunications (<i>Grantee modified grant to include employment and training in any H1-B demand occupation</i>)

Proposed Project Budgets

ETA awarded each AWI grantee about \$1,000,000 to fund activities and services for aging workers. This amount was spread across three years, and in some cases, multiple counties and LWIAs, making overall funding levels limited for many grantees (see Exhibit II-7). Grantees proposed funding activities at different levels, with some focused primarily on direct service staffing and others on tuition or other training costs.

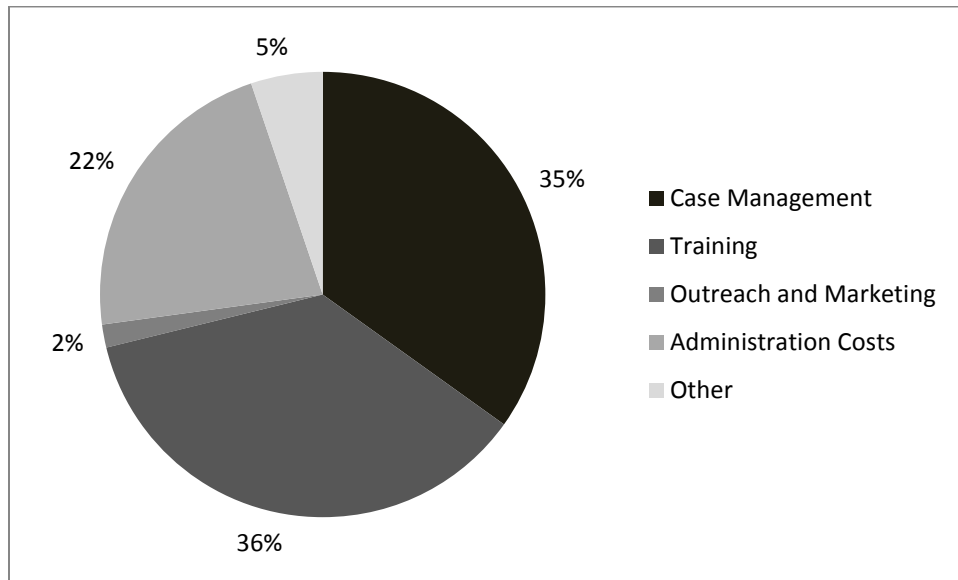
**Exhibit II-7:
AWI Grant Award Amounts and Service Areas by Grantee**

Grantee	Total Grant	Number of Counties	Average Amount per County	Average Amt. per County per Year
Indiana	\$1,000,000	12	\$83,333	\$27,778
Louisiana	\$1,000,000	7	\$142,857	\$47,619
Maine	\$1,000,000	16 (entire state)	\$62,500	\$20,833
Maryland	\$967,005	2 jurisdictions	\$483,503	\$161,168
Michigan	\$979,400	7 (including Detroit metro area)	\$139,914	\$46,638
Pennsylvania	\$971,000	8	\$121,375	\$40,458
Texas	\$999,949	13 (including Houston metro area)	\$76,919	\$25,640
Vermont	\$1,000,000	14 (entire state)	\$71,429	\$23,810
Washington	\$1,000,000	1	\$1,000,000	\$333,333
Wisconsin	\$1,000,000	13	\$76,923	\$25,641

In developing proposed budgets, grantees considered a variety of factors including: the availability of existing resources to support project administration, the availability of case management/career counseling/other staffed services, the expected costs of providing occupational skills training, the geographic project service area, and the size of other budget items. Grantees also considered available resources for case management and participant training tuition, deciding whether to fund these activities using grant funds or in-kind (leveraged) resources from other programs such as WIA or SCSEP.

In aggregate, grantees proposed to spend the majority of AWI funds on case management and training (see Exhibit II-8). On average, training and case management accounted for 36 percent and 35 percent, respectively. Administration costs averaged 22 percent, while outreach and marketing averaged a combined total of 7 percent of grant funds.

**Exhibit II-8:
Proposed Average Budgeted Costs by Activity**



Note: Because Vermont does not separate administrator salaries from case manager salaries, this chart excludes Vermont from these averages.

Due to the limited available funding across three years and large geographic areas, grantees made trade-offs in proposing to fund different activities. In particular, they had to decide how much of their grant they would use to fund case management/staffed services and how much they would use for participant training. Six grantees proposed to use the majority of their grant funding to pay for case management/staffed services (see Exhibit II.9). These sites planned to leverage resources to pay for training through WIA or other programs available at American Job Centers. The other four grantees proposed to use the majority of their grant funding to pay for participant tuition or other training costs. These sites generally planned to leverage existing resources for the case management/staffed services available through education and training institutions or American Job Centers. In their proposed budgets, grantees allocated funds among case management, participant training, outreach and marketing, administrative costs, and other costs such as travel and computer equipment. These allocations are presented in Exhibit II-8 and discussed in detail below.

**Exhibit II-9:
Proposed Percent of Budget by Activity by Project**

	Case Management	Training	Outreach and Marketing	Administration Costs	Other
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	37%	32%	0%	29%	2%
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)	61%	7%	0%	15%	17%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	37%	27%	8%	24%	4%
Baltimore County Division of Workforce Development (MD)	40%	26%	1%	26%	6%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	70%	22%	0%	8%	0%
South Central Workforce Development Board (PA)	2%	64%	6%	27%	2%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	19%	32%	1%	36%	12%
Vermont Associates Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	5% ¹	29%	1%	61% ¹	4%
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	33%	44%	0%	19%	4%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	12%	74%	0%	13%	1%

¹The Vermont proposal budget did not separate salary and fringe benefits for case managers from administrative staff, thus this amount was included in administrative costs. These costs would otherwise be categorized as case management costs.

Case Management

Grantees proposed to fund case managers and services at varying levels, ranging from about 2 percent of AWI grant funds to 70 percent, with an average of about 35 percent. Five grantees (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, and Michigan) budgeted roughly 40 percent or more of their AWI funds for case management. Michigan’s proposed budget allocated almost 70 percent of its grant to case management services, assuming that it could fund participant training with WIA dollars. Pennsylvania, conversely, budgeted 2 percent on case management, expecting that it would use case management services available at the American Job Centers at no cost to the project.

Training

The budgeting of funds for participant training varied among grantees nearly as much as did the budgeting of funds for case management. This budget category included tuition, curriculum development, and training supplies (such as textbooks). Three grantees (those in Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin) allocated over 40 percent of their funding to training in their proposed budgets. The project in Wisconsin budgeted almost 75 percent of its AWI funds for participant training.

Outreach and Marketing

Five grantees (those in Maine, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Vermont) earmarked funds for outreach and marketing. On average, grantees budgeted 2 percent of their funds for this category. Maine budgeted almost 8 percent of its AWI funds for employer outreach to use these funds to educate employers about the benefits of hiring aging workers and the strategies for retaining them. These grantees and others planned to use partner and other agency funds for additional marketing and outreach materials at no cost to the grant.

Administration Costs

Grantees proposed to fund AWI project managers, administrators, and data specialists at varying FTE levels. In addition to carrying out their administrative duties, some project managers also provided direct services to participants. In Texas, the grantee proposed to fund a full-time AWI project manager and portions of the salaries of a vice president of workforce development, a director of program services, a grant administrator, and an accountant. Including other indirect costs, administration costs in Texas were budgeted for 36 percent of AWI grant funds. On average, grantees budgeted 22 percent of AWI grants for these types of expenditures. While Vermont appears to have spent the greatest proportion of their grant funds on administration cost (61 percent), however, some of the expenditures reported in administration costs should be included under case management. In their proposed budget, they did not separate salary and fringe benefits for case managers from administrative staff. As a result, their administration costs are inflated.

Other

Office supplies, travel, and independent evaluator fees were included in budgeted costs for the “other” category. In Louisiana, “other” costs were budgeted for rent, utilities, telephones, insurance, copiers, and van usage. On average, grantees funded “other” activities at 5 percent.

Summary of Findings

- Most of the AWI project grantees were local workforce investment boards or had strong linkages with American Job Center operators. These grantees built strong referral linkages with other public workforce development programs, and co-enrolled a significant proportion of all project participants in other programs.
- Six of the grantees had prior experience with aging worker initiatives and were able to build on their previous efforts. These prior efforts had helped build strong partnerships with other agencies interested in improving services for older workers. However, only four of the grantees reported providing services tailored to the needs of older workers prior to receiving the AWI grant.
- In designing their projects, AWI grantees took into account regional demand occupations and the unique circumstances of the local areas targeted. However, most grantees did not consider whether the targeted industries and occupations were particularly suited to the interests and skills of older workers.
- All ten projects faced challenges resulting from the recession. Most significantly, employer demand for new workers evaporated, even in the occupations and industries designated as high-growth sectors in the regional economies.
- Serving multiple workforce service areas expanded the reach of AWI services, but diluted the level of funding available in any single area. Several projects had to limit the size of the areas they served before the end of the demonstration period because of funding constraints.
- Limited grant funds required grantees to make trade-offs in their proposed budgets between the types of activities they could fund. Grantees allocated funds among case management, participant training, outreach and marketing, administrative costs, and other costs such as travel and computer equipment in their proposed budgets.

III. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

AWI grantees aimed to develop models for talent development that addressed the particular needs and interests of aging workers and increased the capacity of their regional workforce investment systems to serve those workers. To provide services for aging workers with limited grant funds, grantees developed a variety of administrative structures, established multiple levels of oversight to guide projects, created staffing arrangements for the provision of direct services, and created partnerships to add expertise. This chapter examines these related topics.

Project Management

Each of the grantees had responsibility for determining the number and types of staff who would administer and provide AWI services. Based on the overall project goals, existing staffing infrastructure, and ability to leverage resources from their community partners, grantees allocated project funds to support positions for program management, MIS and fiscal staff, and direct service providers. This section describes how grantees defined the staffing infrastructure and the roles and responsibilities for each position.

Program Management and Administrative Staff

Managing and administering the grant was a labor intensive task. Responsibilities included defining and hiring of the direct service positions, defining policies and procedures, engaging and coordinating with grant partners, and monitoring and regularly reporting of expenditures and outcomes to DOL, among other tasks. While primary responsibility fell to the AWI project manager, grantee administrators and MIS/fiscal staff spent a portion of their time involved with these responsibilities. In most cases, the grantee absorbed the cost of MIS/fiscal staff involvement, but used AWI funds to cover a small percentage of the grantee administrator's time to help with management functions.

Grantee Administrator

The level of administrative staff involvement in oversight and guidance varied by project, with some administrators actively participating in AWI project designs and others delegating the role to project managers (see Exhibit III-1). Six grantees (those in Indiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Washington) explicitly funded a small portion of administrator time to

oversee grant operations. In sites that did not allocate funds to time on grant-related activities, administrators still provided some oversight, but did so using agency rather than AWI grant funds.

Three of the grantees that funded a portion of an administrator's time (those in Indiana, Maryland, and Vermont) and Michigan, a site that leveraged administrative time, established formal internal AWI project teams that met regularly to monitor program outcomes. Typically, these teams were led by AWI project managers and included, as necessary, higher-level agency administrators. Teams met consistently throughout the grant period and were instrumental from early implementation to the projects' conclusion. These internal AWI project teams guided grant activities and, when necessary, adjusted staffing or program options.

In five projects (those in Indiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington), the grantee administrative staff played strong leadership roles in project design, oversight, and in some cases, staffing decisions. For example, in Pennsylvania, the grantee's executive director and AWI project manager both provided administrative and policy leadership to the AWI project.

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

Grantee	Grantee Administrator(s)	AWI Project Manager	AWI Case Manager/ Navigator	Other	Total
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	0.35	0.50	2.00	--	2.85
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)	--	1.00	4.00 ^a	2.00 ^b	7.00
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	--	0.50	2.00 ^c	--	2.50
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (MD)	0.30	1.00	2.00 ^d	--	3.30
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	--	0.25	5.80 ^e	0.75 ^f	6.80
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	--	4.95
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	0.20 ^g	1.00	3.00 ^h	--	4.20
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	0.10	0.50	2.00 ⁱ	--	3.50
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	--	0.50	1.00	--	1.50

^a Three full-time, two part-time case managers

^b Full-time job developer and data specialist

^c Five case managers (three at .5 FTE and two at .25 FTE)

^d One full-time case manager, two part-time case managers

^e Assumes each navigator's time is 0.20 FTE

^f MIS data entry

^g FTE allocations equally split between two service areas

^h Three full-time case managers, previously two full-time and two part-time case managers

ⁱ One full-time case manager, and two case managers increased from 0.25 FTE to 0.50 FTE each.

AWI Project Manager

All grantees hired grant project managers, with four grantees (those in Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, and Vermont) funding full-time positions and the remaining six funding part-time positions (ranging from 0.25 to 0.6 FTE). AWI project managers played key roles in the

projects' implementation and operations. Project managers had dual tasks: (1) they took care of administrative concerns such as making sure record keeping and expenditures were on track and (2) they oversaw service designs by providing opportunities for service delivery teams to discuss project procedures and effective practices. Six grantees (those in Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin) hired existing staff members to serve as AWI project managers. These managers typically carried AWI responsibilities along with other assigned tasks. Four grantees (those in Indiana, Maryland, Texas, and Vermont) elected to create new positions explicitly for AWI. Most of these individuals worked on the AWI project full-time.

Many of the part-time project managers said that they did not have enough budgeted time to carry out all their functions and responsibilities. Several said they were being paid only part-time from the grant (the majority of sites funded project managers between .25 and .6 FTE) but were working full-time on the project. For example, the Michigan site said the position required full time work even though the project funded only 25 percent of the project manager's time.

Seven sites (those in Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin) experienced staff turnover in the project manager position during the grant period (see Exhibit III-2). For some sites, this occurred early in the grant period, and while it may have initially delayed the start of activities, it did not cause disruption in services. In the Maryland project, for example, turnover in the project manager position at the start of the grant delayed implementation of project activities by several months. Some grantees used turnover in the project manager position as an opportunity to select a new project manager with specific skill sets. For example, in Vermont, the AWI project initially used an internal staff person as the AWI project manager. When that person moved to a different position within the organization, the grantee sought a project manager candidate who had a human resources background. The grantee hired a new external project manager who had experience working with local businesses and was able to connect with employers.

**Exhibit III-2:
AWI Administrative and Direct Service Staff Turnover**

Grantee	Turnover in Administrative Positions	Turnover in Direct Services Positions
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Chief Financial Officer	--
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)	Project manager	Originally had three full-time and two part-time case managers. Project eliminated one full-time and two part-time positions. Only one case manager remained consistent. Project eliminated job developer position.
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Project manager and finance manager	Two of five navigators
Baltimore County Division of Workforce Development (MD)	Director of Department of Economic Development, Supervisor of project manager, and project manager	Two of three career coaches
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	--	Half of 29 navigator positions (some positions turned over multiple times). Originally had 30 but lost one position permanently due to retirement.
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	American Job Center manager	Direct services staff-time donated by American Job Centers
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Project manager	Curriculum developer/trainer Two of two employment specialists
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Project manager	All three Training and Employment Coordinator (formerly navigators) positions
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	Project manager	--
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Project manager	--

MIS Data Entry and Fiscal Staff

MIS data entry and fiscal staff members kept track of participant progress, completed federal reporting forms, and monitored fiscal obligations. Three grantees (those in Louisiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania) designated grant funds for paying staff members to complete data entry and/or invoicing. In Michigan, for example, the grant funded 0.75 FTE for an MIS data entry specialist. This staff person gathered reports from all AWI project staff members on participant activities and outcomes for federal reporting and communicated with staff on what data were needed for

these reports. In the other projects, these tasks were completed by project managers or other grantee or contractor staff who did not charge their time to the AWI grant.

Project Guidance and Oversight

At the outset, grantees developed formal or informal mechanisms to plan, implement, and review project activities through periodic reporting and oversight bodies. Projects created multiple levels of guidance and oversight to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. Agency governing boards guided overall agency goals and, in some cases, actively participated in AWI project decisions. Interagency steering committees typically provided guidance during the planning and implementation phases of AWI projects, bringing together AWI project staff and partner expertise to guide initial project activities. A smaller group of AWI internal project teams had direct oversight responsibility for activities and monitored participant outcomes; these teams were led by AWI project managers or agency administrators and in some cases included MIS data entry or fiscal staff. Through these multiple levels, grantees were better equipped to identify potential challenges and understand program outcomes. Each of these levels of guidance and oversight is described in more detail below.

Agency Governing Boards

All grantee organizations had agency governing boards that oversaw agency goals and overall operations. These boards typically included top grantee administrators and individuals within the community. Agency governing boards were responsible for directing the overall mission of the grantee organizations and assuring that broad goals were being met. While these boards were apprised of AWI grant activities, most did not play key roles in grant implementation and operations.

Interagency Steering Committees

During the project-planning phase, six grantees (those in Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin) organized interagency AWI steering committees or project advisory teams that included grantee and partner staff members and provided guidance on AWI project design. These committees brought the perspectives of a broad range of project partners to the planning process. Initially these committees met regularly, often monthly or quarterly, to review project progress. Most of the steering committees predated the AWI project. Interagency steering committees helped shape AWI policies and procedures, and in some cases assisted in project staffing decisions. In Washington, for example, the advisory committee included an expert on hiring aging workers and representatives from the departments of labor and post-secondary education, partner organizations such as Microsoft and AARP, and

subcontractors. The grantee administrator consulted the advisory group for all key project decisions.

Including partners in planning and ongoing oversight increased buy-in and encouraged information exchange among different agencies. It created an opportunity for agencies to cross-train each other about the resources available to aging workers. Through these exchanges, grantees were able to identify resources and involve partners in AWI activities. For example, in Vermont, the grantee organized the Mature Worker Senior Employment and Economic Security Summit, which brought together DOL, SCSEP, employers, and other agencies serving older workers as well as aging workers themselves. Indiana held regular Career Transition Hub workgroup meetings where the AWI grantee and its partners shared information about AWI and strategies for serving aging workers. One important benefit of these information exchanges is that aging organizations learned more about the resources available through American Job Centers. In turn, American Job Center staff members learned more about the strengths and needs of aging workers.

As implementation proceeded and the projects become more concerned with recruiting, enrolling, and serving participants, the role played by the interagency steering committees lessened. In all but two projects (those in Maryland and Maine), interagency steering committees met less frequently or were less involved in project activities after projects launched. In Indiana, for example, the advisory committee planned to meet monthly but found that quarterly meetings were sufficient as the project progressed. Without frequent policy guidance, the project managers tended to focus on serving enrolled participants rather than on system change and sustainability.

Interagency steering committees that remained active through the grant were invaluable resources to their projects. The steering committees worked with project staff members to identify and address issues and alter project activities and policies, sometimes making midcourse corrections to improve project outcomes. For example, in Maryland, the Implementation Team's ability to gather resources and strategically review project progress proved critical for program outcomes. More than a year into the project, the Maryland grantee found that the current project design and training programs were not meeting the needs of older workers. The Implementation Team developed a plan to understand the problem and identify solutions. Team members formed smaller groups to address specific issues and concerns and developed recommendations for review by the full group. The site implemented the Implementation Team's recommendations and revised its project design, including eligibility criteria, training options, and placement resources. These adjustments enabled the site to make better progress on meeting project performance outcomes.

Technical Assistance

Grantees had access to free technical assistance (funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies at \$3.6 million) and provided by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and its partner, the Council on Competitiveness. Grantees reported that CAEL offered a range of activities and types of technical assistance, including an annual conference to bring all of the grantees together to discuss their activities and share information, facilitated conference calls among grantees, training for staff on serving aging workers, assistance in developing outreach materials targeted to employers, assistance with developing work readiness curricula (e.g., such as the Texas grantee's *Yes, You Can* psycho-social training curriculum and the Maine grantee's adapted WorkReady curriculum) and assistance on the design and implementation of reverse job fairs. CAEL tailored activities to the individual grantees and worked with staff to understand what would best suit project staff and participants. For example, CAEL adapted staff trainings based on the needs of the grantee, but typically focused on training staff members on serving aging workers. CAEL also assisted the grantee in Pennsylvania with developing materials to target employers in their industry partnerships.

Staffing for Direct Services

AWI projects used a variety of staffing arrangements for the delivery of services to AWI participants. Some AWI grantees hired new service delivery staff who worked exclusively on the grant. Other projects contracted with American Job Center operators or other employment service providers where an existing worker within the agency would spend a portion of their time on AWI. This section describes the types of direct service staff used for AWI, their roles and responsibilities, and some of the staffing decisions and challenges project managers experienced during the grant period.

Direct Service Staff Positions, Experience, and Roles and Responsibilities

Grantees used different staffing arrangements and titles for direct service staff (see Exhibit III-3). All but one grantee (Pennsylvania) funded case manager positions—referred to variously as coaches, case managers, navigators, or aging worker specialists. The roles and responsibilities varied by project, with some projects providing intensive case management to participants and others using case managers to connect participants to training. Projects staffed case manager positions in a variety of ways: five grantees (those in Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Texas, and Vermont) hired new staff (e.g. WIB or non-profit organization employees), three grantees (those in Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin) contracted with existing American Job Center

**Exhibit III-3:
AWI Direct Service Staffing Arrangements and Roles and Responsibilities**

Grantee	Type of Direct Service Staff	Roles and Responsibilities
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Aging Worker Specialist	Coordinate assessments, training, education, career awareness/exploration, and provide job search assistance
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)	Case manager	Recruit participants, place participants in training, and assist with job search
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	Navigator	Verify candidate eligibility, ensure participants' employment goals are within designated H-1B fields, and assist client find training
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (MD)	Career coach	Career coach for incumbent workers: provide information on the program and counsel participants academically. Jobseeker career coach: conduct assessments, review training grades, meet individually, and identify support services
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	Navigator	Conduct assessments, develop employment plans, host job clubs, connect to support services, and assist with job search
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	American Job Center case managers (donated staff time)	Conduct assessments and contact weekly
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	Employment Specialist Trainer	Employment specialists: develop employment plans, connect to training, and assist with job search Trainer: conduct in-house workshops, such as <i>Yes You Can</i>
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	Training and Employment Coordinator (TEC)	Conduct assessments, develop employment plan, and provide participants with personal and job search support
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (WA)	Case manager	Conduct assessments, career plan, contact frequently, arrange support services, and assist with job search
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	Case manager	Career plan and contact frequently during training

operators for designated “older worker navigators”/case managers, one grantee (in Louisiana) used a mix of new and existing staff members, and one grantee (in Pennsylvania) received case management services from the American Job Centers at no cost. In addition to case managers, one project (in Louisiana) hired a separate job developer (a position which was later eliminated) and another hired a curriculum developer/workshop instructor (in Texas) who provided direct services to clients.

In order to achieve expected program outcomes, AWI staff members had to understand the needs of older workers and know how to help them get jobs. Those who had experience with job placement, such as workforce development agency staff, were aware of high growth job opportunities and understood the needs of employers. They were better able to find a good job match between the worker and employer. Direct service workers who had more case management experience, particularly with older workers, were better equipped to provide more individualized support and link older workers to services that might increase their employability. Ideally, direct service providers would bring both connections to the labor market/employers and experience with providing case management to older workers. However, few grantees had direct service staff who brought both. Grantees sometimes addressed this challenge by collaborating with outside agencies, such as Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) operators, that could add the missing expertise. Other sites hired new case managers from outside of the American Job Centers who brought experience working with aging workers.

Direct services staff managed a variety of roles and responsibilities including basic case management, career counseling, employment plan development, job readiness training, progress monitoring, and job search support. Sites varied in the amount and types of each of these services they provided. Some grantees hired staff to work intensively with the older workers providing a range of different activities and frequent follow up, while other grantees narrowly focused the role of direct service staff to focus on primarily information and referral. For example, navigators in Michigan provided intensive case management services to AWI participants. These navigators often had weekly or more frequent contact with participants, hosting job clubs and one-on-one meetings. In addition, some of the navigators would send weekly job openings to their participants. Navigators in the Maine project served a different roll, providing very “light-touch” case management to participants; rather focusing on connecting participants to training.

Use of Full- versus Part-Time Staff

As discussed earlier, grantees made strategic decisions based on geographic service area, available funds for training, and other project goals when determining how to staff AWI projects.

Some projects hired full-time case managers, while others arranged for part-time case managers (see Exhibit III-2). The decision of whether to hire full- or part-time staff members was based on a variety of factors, such as the size of the geographic service area a case manager would need to cover, use of existing versus new staff members, and desired intensity of case management services. As shown in Exhibit III-2, although the grants generally funded between one and four FTE case manager positions, the number of designated AWI case managers was sometimes substantially larger, because the grant often covered less than a full-time salary for any single case manager. The largest numbers of staff members were designated as AWI case managers in Michigan (29 different individuals).

Sites experienced challenges completing project activities only using part-time case managers, because there were usually other programs competing for their time. In Maine, the AWI project funded five “navigators” (three at .5 FTE and two at .25 FTE) across the state to connect participants with available services. Because these navigators worked on project activities part-time and had other responsibilities, their involvement with project activities varied. Navigators said that project activities demanded full-time staffing. To ensure that navigators remained invested in the project, the Maine AWI project manager scheduled monthly conference calls with set agendas and takeaways. Recognizing that it needed more concentrated case manager time, the Vermont project changed two part-time case manager positions into a full-time position.

On the other hand, although using part-time AWI case managers meant that the grantee had less control over how much time staff actually devoted to serving older workers, the part-time case manager model may be more effective in building the long-term capacity of American Job Centers to work with the aging population after the grant concludes. Because they will presumably continue to be employed as WIA case managers, the staff members who participated in the AWI project will likely bring added knowledge and expertise to serving all older worker customers within American Job Centers.

Staff Turnover and Adjustments

The majority of grantees experienced turnover in direct services staff positions during the project (see Exhibit III-2). Staff turnover required additional resources and caused disruption in participant services. Six sites (those in Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Texas, and Vermont) experienced turnover at the case manager level, ranging from complete turnover in two sites (those in Texas and Vermont) to about half of the case managers in the other three. The project in Michigan had to replace about half of its 29 navigators during the course of the project; this turnover required the site to expend resources training new staff members. In addition, it took time for newly hired staff people to build trust with AWI participants who were already enrolled in the project.

Although disruptive, staff turnover gave sites the opportunity to hire case managers who were better matched to the needs of AWI participants. In Texas, for example, the site hired new case managers who had experience and connections with AWI-targeted industries. The project was able to select candidates who possessed the skills required to connect participants with employers and understand the relevance and marketability of training programs.

The project in Vermont experienced a different kind of staff turnover. The project initially used SCSEP participants to serve as case managers, but since their SCSEP community service assignments were time-limited, they were forced to step down partway through the project. The grantee decided to discontinue this model and used the opportunity to reassess the necessary skills the case manager position demanded.⁵⁴ It hired new case managers who had a mix of case management and employer-relations skills.

Two projects adjusted their case management staffing levels partway through the demonstration period. One site was able to increase the funding it devoted to case management services to allow the case managers to spend more time counseling AWI participants. This change was particularly useful, because it made it possible for case managers to spend more time with participants during the job search and placement phase of the program. Another site had to reduce its case management staff to a single full-time case manager serving a large geographic area because of funding constraints. This hindered the program's geographic reach and its ability to provide comprehensive case management services to participants.

Partnerships

The SGA required strategic partnerships as a central element of the AWI grant, requiring grantees to demonstrate that they could engage a variety of different partners: the public workforce investment system; organizations with expertise on aging; education institutions and training providers; economic development entities; and local employers, employer associations, and business intermediaries.⁵⁵ Grantees relied primarily on existing relationships to form partnerships. The limited time available to complete the grant application and the quick start-up required after the grant award left little time for grantees to recruit new partners. While grantees did not appear to expand the network of agencies involved with serving aging workers, AWI created an opportunity in many sites to strengthen existing relationships and raise awareness of the employment needs of aging workers.

⁵⁴ The project manager reported that although the SCSEP participants acting as case managers were able to establish excellent rapport with AWI project participants, they lacked a comprehensive understanding of the available services and were not effective in developing relationships with employers to support job placement goals.

⁵⁵ Federal Register Vol.73, No. 245

Partnerships were intended to build the capacity of workforce investment partners to serve aging workers better, bring needed expertise in serving aging workers, provide resources and expand access to services, and educate and motivate business entities and employers to hire and work more effectively with aging workers. Grantees developed partnerships within the public workforce investment system, organizations with expertise in aging, education and training providers, employers and economic development agencies, and other organizations in their communities (see Exhibit III-4).

Relationships between grantees and partners ranged from informal arrangements involving no monetary exchange to formal partnerships governed by contractual arrangements. In most cases, relationships were informal and drawn upon as needed. Informal partners recruited older workers, participated in oversight committees (where they offered guidance and needed expertise), and provided resources such as meeting space and access to computer-based job search resources. One grantee stated that although it was important to involve informal community partners in periodic meetings to share information and insight, they were generally not willing to take on additional responsibilities without financial compensation. In five sites (those in Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Washington) partners were recruited as subcontractors to develop curriculum, provide specialized training workshops (e.g., computer training), or educate employers about the benefits of hiring aging workers. Other grantees discussed the importance of using partners strategically and as needed, an approach they believed would increase the likelihood that the partners would stay involved with the initiative. Grantees that created formal subcontracts highlighted the need to clearly define expectations and monitor activities in order to generate high-performance outcomes.

**Exhibit III-4:
AWI Project Partners**

	Public Workforce Investment System	Organizations with Expertise in Aging	Education and Training Providers	Economic Development Agencies and Employers	Other Community Partners ^a
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	X	X	
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)		X	X	X	
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X	X	X	X
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (MD)	X	X	X	X	
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	X	X			
South Central Workforce Development Board (PA)	X	X	X	X^b	X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (TX)	X	X	X	X	
Vermont Associates Training and Development, Inc. (VT)	X	X	X	X	X
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	X	X	X	X	
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (WI)	X	X	X		

Note: Bolded 'X' indicates presence of strong relationship

^a Other community partners included nonprofits, faith-based organizations, faith-based providers, and local libraries that mostly provided referrals and resources such as meeting space and/or computer access.

^b Industry Partnerships were key to incumbent worker component

Workforce Investment Partners

Workforce investment partners, such as SCSEP, WIA, and other American Job Center network programs, were strongly involved in eight of the ten AWI projects (all except those in Louisiana and Texas). Managers of these AWI projects used their relationships with other workforce

development programs and providers to reach potential project participants and to increase the level and quality of services available to AWI project participants. In some sites, the AWI projects were seen as distinct, freestanding, and independent programs within the American Job Center in other sites, they were viewed as a highly integrated parts of the rest of the system. The project in Washington was a good example of the latter. The manager of the American Job Center in which the grantee was housed held monthly “career connection” meetings that involved both AWI and WIA staff. AWI staff members provided updates during these meetings and the monthly WIA staff meetings. Because of these activities, WIA staff members became a primary referral source for AWI and the program was integrated into American Job Center services. In Michigan, the American Job Center case managers were partially funded by the AWI project and provided intensive case management to many aging workers who entered the Centers. Three projects (those in Maine, Vermont, and Wisconsin) housed grant-funded case managers at American Job Centers.

Workforce investment partners were a main source of referrals, and they also offered donated resources (i.e. space, training funds), career readiness training, and job placement services. In the eight sites with strong workforce system connections, AWI staff members received referrals and offered referrals to WIA and (in some sites) SCSEP. In three sites (those in Michigan, Vermont, and Wisconsin), the AWI grantee also operated the SCSEP program and was able to leverage resources from this program. For example, in Michigan, the SCSEP case managers hosted a peer-mentoring group exclusively for AWI participants that it had originally established for its SCSEP participants.

The two grantees outside of the workforce investment system (those in Louisiana and Texas) reportedly had more difficulty engaging workforce investment partners than those with stronger public workforce system ties. They were not co-located at the American Job Centers and did not have close relationships with the workforce development system and its partners prior to the AWI grant.

Organizations with Expertise on Aging

Organizations with expertise in aging, such as Area Agencies on Aging and SCSEP providers, were often involved in project planning and referred participants to AWI, but usually played less active roles after the projects were launched. These relationships brought needed substantive expertise and connections to aging workers. State and local commissions, national aging advocacy organizations, and local SCSEP providers offered support for AWI program initiatives. Aging organizations participated in AWI-hosted employment events, referred aging workers to AWI services, and connected grantees to employers willing to hire aging workers.

Realizing relationships with SCSEP initially established during the grant proposal writing stage, most grantees forged strong relationships with SCSEP program staff members and benefited from their expertise and resources. Strong relationships with SCSEP program staff members offered AWI projects the opportunity to share resources specifically targeted to the aging worker population. In Pennsylvania, for example, the grantee contracted with the local SCSEP provider to offer job club workshops and pre-employment services for AWI participants. The grantee described the members of the local SCSEP provider staff as effectively relating to older workers and offering needed support. In some locations, SCSEP operating agencies were part of the AWI planning committee and/or advisory body. In Michigan, staff members co-enrolled several participants in both AWI and SCSEP, and shared resources between the two. In Pennsylvania, an initially rocky partnership between the grantee and SCSEP provider ultimately proved valuable. The project coordinator stated that AWI encouraged a closer working relationship and allowed the two organizations to gain a better understanding of each other's value.

Agencies on Aging and other aging organizations provided reduced-cost training programs, curricula development assistance, and guidance on understanding aging workers' needs. In Maryland, the Department of Aging was actively involved with AWI planning and service provision. Department of Aging staff persons were members of the Implementation Team and assisted with redesigning the eligibility criteria and application process. In addition, these staff members helped facilitate and develop content of the job placement workshops for participants who had completed training. The Louisiana project described its success collaborating with three aging organizations for help with recruiting, raising awareness, and referring participants to training. These partnerships were easy to set up because the partner organizations were already involved in similar activities and there was no need to "reinvent the wheel."

Education Institutions and Training Providers

Education and training provider partners—including community colleges, adult basic education agencies, and proprietary schools— offered job skills and certificate training to AWI participants. Training included both courses developed specifically for AWI enrollees and courses open to the general population. The SGA had called for educational institutions and training partners to be involved in several different ways: as developers of new curricula tailored to meet the needs of older workers; as providers of training to project participants under individual training referral arrangements; and as providers of introductory computer skills training courses. In practice, the latter two roles were realized more frequently than the former.

Education and training providers were particularly active as providers of computer skills training programs developed for AWI participants. Six grantees (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Texas, Vermont, and Washington) created computer skills training programs in response to participants' lack of basic computer skills. For example, in Vermont, the grantee collaborated

with a technical center to provide free, custom-designed computer courses for AWI participants. The course was designed by the technical center, grantee, and other partner organizations to address the specific needs of the AWI participants.

Employers, Employer Associations, and Economic Development Agencies

Employers, employer associations, and economic development agencies were anticipated to be important partners to ensure that the skills in which older workers were trained under the grant would be responsive to regional business needs and support employers and industries that had been identified as likely to expand and provide additional jobs within the region.

Grantees reported that strategic collaboration with employers was often more difficult than anticipated, especially with employers in an economic recession. Six sites stated that they wished they had more employer involvement in the AWI grant. One AWI program manager said that she has not had enough time to focus on developing employer partnerships. Another grantee was cognizant of not overextending their employer partners by requiring too much. In Indiana and Maine, existing committees aimed at improving policies and practices for aging individuals have created special awards to recognize aging friendly employers. The Mature Matters Award (in Indiana) and the Silver Collar Award (in Maine) recognize employers who hire and support aging workers.

Employer partners helped develop and implement grant initiatives and, in some cases, hired AWI enrollees. Two grantees actively involved employers to promote incumbent worker training. Pennsylvania used industry partnerships to have employers identify older workers in need of training and training providers with industry-recognized certificates. The Pennsylvania project, which expanded existing partnerships to focus specifically on aging workers, was more effective than new partnerships developed by the Maryland grantee. In Maryland, the grantee developed a partnership with a regional hospital association to identify local health systems that could recruit incumbent workers for training. Of the four major hospital systems, only one agreed to participate in the AWI project. In addition, very few incumbent workers within that hospital system completed training and transitioned into jobs for which they were trained.

Economic development entities acted in an advisory role, providing grantees with information on the local labor market; however, beyond this capacity, they were not actively involved in most projects.

Partnerships to Provide Entrepreneurial Training

Other partnerships were developed as needed. These included relationships with non-profit organizations that offered entrepreneurial training. At the outset, seven sites (those in Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin) planned to offer

participants entrepreneurship training as part of their project design. As the grant continued, these partnerships for most of these grantees were not fruitful, with low enrollment in these programs. In Washington, the grantee developed a partnership with a local nonprofit organization to expand entrepreneurial training to aging workers (see Chapter V for more information on this and other entrepreneurial efforts).

Leveraged Resources—In-house and From Project Partners

Donated resources and staff time—leveraged resources—enabled grantees to serve more participants or serve them better than they would have been able to do otherwise. The SGA encouraged grantees to identify and use resources outside of grant funds as part of their project designs, stating that they should “seek out, utilize, and sustain these resources when creating effective solutions to the workforce challenges faced by older workers.”⁵⁶ Several projects attempted to support staff services with in-kind, leveraged resources from WIA, SCSEP, and other partners, without any out-of-pocket expenditures from the grant. Grantees reported that leveraged resources enabled AWI projects to provide customers with greater breadth and depth of services than would have been available if they were funded exclusively by the grant. Grantee administrators and AWI project managers indicated that they leveraged resources to cover staff costs, direct services/training, operating expenses/overhead, and technical assistance (see Exhibit III-5).

Staff salary/time

AWI projects benefited from donated staff time within the grantee organization and from partners. All grantees reported that staff members within their organizations provided more time to AWI projects than budgeted. For example, the AWI project in Louisiana was able to leverage staff time paid through the Community Services Block Grant funds. This time was spent overseeing project operations, providing guidance on project design, inputting data into reporting systems, and offering direct services to participants. Partners provided staff time to participate in project meeting, trainings, and oversight committees, and to serve participants. In Pennsylvania, all case management services were provided to AWI participants through WIA case managers, without any expenditure from the grant budget. The Michigan grantee funded only part of case managers’ salaries at American Job Centers and partner organizations; funds contributed by the American Job Center programs made up the difference. In some Centers, the designated AWI case managers devoted nearly all their time to serving older workers.

⁵⁶ Federal Register Vol.73, No. 245

**Exhibit III-5:
AWI Leveraged Resources In-House and From Project Partners**

Grantee	Staff Salary/Time	Direct Services/ Training	Operating Expenses/ Overhead	Technical Assistance
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	X	X	X	X
Quad Area Community Action Agency (LA)	X	X	X	X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (ME)	X	X	X	X
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (MD)	X	X		X
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (MI)	X	X	X	X
South Central Workforce Investment Board (PA)	X	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	X		

Direct services/training

Nine grantees (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Washington) reported they received resources to provide participants direct services and training. At least two projects (those in Michigan and Indiana) planned to co-enroll all AWI participants automatically in the WIA program so they could benefit from training and supportive-service resources available from that program. Other projects referred individual participants for co-enrollment in WIA to access supplementary WIA training funds. Additional services available to project participants at no cost to the AWI grant included workshops, computer training courses, and job clubs. For example, in Michigan, a nonprofit agency focused on the aging population offered AWI participants computer training at a reduced cost. The organization was able to leverage other grant funds to support AWI participants' training. Other projects, such as the one in Vermont, emphasized using local training courses available without cost or arranging for student financial aid programs or scholarships to cover participants' training costs.

Operating Expenses/Overhead

Seven grantees (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Vermont) leveraged internal or partner resources to cover operating expenses and overhead. These resources ranged from meeting space to computers and training equipment. In Indiana, the grantee received office space for AWI project activities at two American Job Centers.

Overall, grantees experienced varied success in leveraging funds. In their grant proposals, all grantees identified projected leveraged resources from partners, community organizations, and within their own organizations. These amounts were on average six times greater than the amounts of leveraged resources indicated on federal reports toward the end of the project (March 2012). For example, Michigan estimated it would leverage \$10,840,900 for training, primarily from WIA, but due to WIA budget constraints it was unable to connect participants with these funds.

Project administrators noted that it was difficult to report the amount of leveraged resources that they had secured, partly because reporting requirements were confusing, and partly because they did not have access to documentation on the value of in-kind resources contributed by project partners. The most common complaint was being unsure of which funds were allowable and how funds recorded would meet ETA audit and review requirements.⁵⁷ Several grantees noted that because it was difficult to substantiate exact amounts of leveraged resources they did not include some resources in their reports at all. In addition, because they did not have financial reporting systems that would permit them to easily collect this information, the extra burden of collecting and reporting required more staff time than was available. In Pennsylvania, for example, the grantee required employers to provide a 25 percent cash match for incumbent worker training, but because these funds could be used for non-AWI participants it was unable to parse out the exact amount of leveraged resources for AWI. Other grantees reported confusion on which types of funds would be considered as leveraged resources and chose not to include them in federal reports.

Summary of Findings

- Grantees developed a variety of different organizational arrangements to guide projects and deliver services to aging workers..

⁵⁷ To help projects document the in-kind consulting and technical assistance services it provided, CAEL, the technical assistance provider, gave each project a quarterly accounting of the value of donated services (supported by a foundation grant).

- Projects provided management and administrative support using dedicated project staff members as well as support from the larger grantee organization.
- To provide direct services to participants, grantees used a mix of full- and/or part-time case managers, contracted service providers, and donated partner staff.
- Grantees found that there were some advantages to hiring dedicated staff members to serve older workers. However, the expertise of these staff members might be lost after the end of the grant if these employees were not retained by the public workforce investment system.
- Oversight and guidance were provided by agency governing boards, interagency steering committees, internal AWI project teams, and technical assistance service providers..
- Partnerships with other organizations were important to project success.
 - Partnerships with workforce investment partners were important in referring potential participants and providing additional resources. Grantees that were not part of the workforce investment system found it more difficult to develop these partnerships.
 - Organizations with expertise on aging offered guidance on project planning and were sources of participant referrals, but played less active roles after projects were launched.
 - Education and training providers were active partners for eight of 10 grantees, providing participants with occupational, computer skills, or job readiness training.
 - Grantees found relationships with employers the most difficult to cultivate.
- Grantees used leveraged resources from partners to supplement grant funds. Although difficult to account for accurately, because expenditures reports documenting these resources were not easy to obtain, such funds added significant value to case management, training, and other activities.

IV. PARTICIPANT OUTREACH, ENROLLMENT, AND CHARACTERISTICS

AWI grantees used a variety of strategies to recruit and enroll participants, with some including a diverse cross section of the older worker population. This chapter first describes project recruitment and outreach efforts, followed by grantee screening practices and enrollment. It then describes characteristics of the participants served in the AWI projects.

Connecting Older Workers to AWI

Recruitment Strategies

As stated in the Interim Report, AWI projects anticipated that they would need to develop new outreach strategies to recruit older workers who were not already American Job Center customers. Initially, project managers believed that older workers would have less familiarity with the public workforce investment system than other workers had and would be reticent to ask for reemployment assistance. Respondents at all of the projects, however, reported that the economic recession and the slow recovery made recruitment of AWI participants easier than originally expected.

As shown in Exhibit IV-1, the most commonly used and most successful recruitment strategy across all projects was arranging for American Job Center staff members to refer older workers to the project. The seven grantees that were local WIBs or had close affiliations with the public workforce investment system used their relationships with the WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the American Job Centers to market AWI project services and recruit aging workers for their AWI projects. To recruit older workers, AWI project staff members gave presentations to WIA case managers and other American Job Center staff members about the existence of the AWI program, the types of customers projects were seeking, and the services and benefits provided by the AWI projects. Four projects (those in Indiana, Maryland, Michigan and Pennsylvania) also developed AWI project flyers and outreach materials to display at American Job Centers.

**Exhibit IV-1
Outreach and Referral Strategies, by Grantee**

Grantee	Outreach to American Job Centers	Outreach to Organizations Serving Older Workers and Other Agencies	Broader or Specialized Community Outreach
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	X	SCSEP, Adult Basic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to community agencies • Letters mailed to UI recipients over 55 years of age • Information posted on local website
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)		SCSEP, Council on Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information posted on website • Presentations to community organizations (Catholic Charities)
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	X	SCSEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Seasoned Worker” Forums • American Job Center kiosks in agencies serving older individuals
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)	X (for unemployed workers)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local “town hall” meetings • Presentations and flyers at local hospitals for incumbent worker component • Information posted on state website
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	X	Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Services	
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	X (for unemployed workers)	SCSEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Partnership Coordinators recruited incumbent workers
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations and flyers to community agencies
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	X	SCSEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements in AARP newsletter • Project staff contacted older workers who have used state job bank (list provided by State Department of Labor)
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	X	SCSEP	
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	X	SCSEP	

Bold print in Exhibit IV-1 identifies the outreach and recruitment activities that generated the largest number of participants for each AWI project. (The two projects that recruited both unemployed and incumbent workers found that different recruitment activities were effective in reaching each group).

Seven projects developed referral relationships with additional partner organizations to help recruit project participants. These referral sources were particularly important for several of the non-profit agency grantees that had less well-developed relationships with American Job Center programs. Local SCSEP providers were the most common additional source of customer referrals.⁵⁸ Some projects also recruited participants using referral linkages with local adult basic education programs, local councils on aging, other organizations serving older individuals, providers of veterans' services, and agencies serving disabled individuals. For example, *Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.* made presentations about the AWI project to a wide variety of non-profit organizations in the community and recruited a number of older workers who visited Goodwill seeking assistance for clothing, food, and shelter. *Quad Area Community Action Agency* in Louisiana conducted a number of presentations for aging organizations—including the local council on aging, the local SCSEP provider, and Catholic Charities—to recruit older workers for its AWI project.

In addition to receiving referrals from American Job Centers and partner organizations, three grantees developed recruitment activities that were targeted to the community at large. For example, the project in Indiana obtained contact information for older UI applicants from the state UI agency and conducted targeted mailings to these individuals informing them about the AWI project. Staff members estimated that they recruited approximately 15 percent of their project participants through the targeted mailings. Two projects held face-to-face community meetings that served the dual purpose of educating older workers about strategies for reemployment and spreading information about the AWI project and its services. The project in Maine developed a series of “Seasoned Worker Forums,” and the project in Maryland held “town hall meetings.” Both projects stated that these focused information sessions helped them recruit customers.

Exhibit IV-2 shows the additional programs from which older workers were receiving services at the time of enrollment into the AWI project and during their AWI project participation.⁵⁹ These co-enrollments illustrate that all the projects except the project in Texas had strong coordination linkages with other programs and agencies. The seven grantees that were local WIBs or had close ties to WIBs had high percentages of AWI participants who were also receiving services or benefits from another program housed at American Job Centers. These programs ranged from resources often tapped by unemployed workers relatively early in their spell of unemployment,

⁵⁸ Two of the AWI grantees (in Wisconsin and Vermont) operated SCSEP programs themselves.

⁵⁹ The AWD records participants' co-enrollment at AWI enrollment and gives grantees the ability to update this field whenever participants enroll in a training program.

such as assistance with job search from Job Service representatives and UI benefits, to more intensive training benefits available from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The AWI project in Indiana, which used information from its UI agency to recruit participants, reported the highest percentage of enrollees receiving UI benefits (57 percent).⁶⁰

Two grantees reported particularly high percentages of AWI participants enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). These grantees—in Louisiana (59 percent of AWI participants enrolled in SCSEP) and Vermont (29 percent)—both had close ties to SCSEP programs in their local area. *Quad Area Community Action Agency* in Louisiana used the local SCSEP provider as one of its primary recruitment sources and *Vermont Associates* was itself a local SCSEP program operator. Few participants were reported as receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), although nearly 20 percent of participants in the projects in Washington and Wisconsin were identified as receiving some other kind of public assistance. In Washington, this is reflective of the grantee’s efforts to serve low-income individuals.

**Exhibit IV-2:
Selected Co-Enrollments, by Grantee^a**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>TX</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>Total</u>
Job Service	100% ^b	1%	33%	35%	n/a	62%	71%	9%	36%
UI	57%	1%	43%	42%	n/a	32%	47%	33%	35%
WIA	100% ^b	4%	29%	11%	n/a	1%	9%	56%	21%
TAA	14%	0	1%	5%	n/a	1%	1%	1%	4%
SCSEP	2%	59%	9%	5%	n/a	29%	15%	11%	17%
TANF	1%	0	0	<1%	1%	1%	1%	0	<1%
Other Public Assistance	6%	0	4%	5%	n/a	10%	18%	19%	6%
Number	323	677	256	1696	675	214	174	211	4,226

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data from the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects were not available for these variables.

^a “Co-enrollment” response categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages may total an excess of 100 percent.

^b In the project in Indiana, all AWI participants are co-enrolled in both WIA and Job Services, to ensure that they will have access to all available sources of funding.

⁶⁰ The grantees that did not operate projects within American Job Centers may have not had as much access to information about whether or not participants were receiving UI benefits.

Screening

Before enrolling interested applicants, project staff members had to determine whether individuals were appropriate for project services. As previously described, some projects wanted to enroll a relatively narrow group of older workers who were interested in particular targeted occupations or training programs. These projects often incorporated customer screening and assessment into their application processes to ensure that there was a good fit between the targeted industries and occupations and the skills and interests of the project participants. As part of the screening process, project staff members provided orientations to ensure that prospective participants understood the goals of the program.

At four projects (Maine, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin), staff members tried to determine if applicants were interested in participating in long-term training before enrolling them. One project also screened participants to ensure that they were interested in full-time employment as a goal. The Maryland grantee required each potential customer to participate in a pre-enrollment interview with a panel of representatives from the service provider, who would gauge the individual's motivation, interest, and aptitude for completing the healthcare training and pursuing employment in one of the project's targeted high-growth occupations. Projects that were recruiting participants for intensive occupational skills training also used formal assessment procedures to ensure that interested participants had the minimum basic skills levels needed to be successful in the planned training.

The six remaining projects viewed the AWI as an opportunity to serve a broader range of older workers, from those with less formal education and less stable work histories to highly-skilled older workers who were in need of only short-term skills upgrading or intensive coaching to prepare for reemployment. These grantees commented that the flexibility of the AWI allowed them to serve individuals with serious employment barriers, as well as aging workers who would normally not be eligible for intensive and/or training services because they did not meet income eligibility requirements or were not considered to be the "most in need" in their local communities under WIA or SCSEP eligibility criteria.

Enrollment

Seven of the ten projects indicated in their applications for the AWI grants that they would enroll employed individuals in addition to unemployed persons. In practice, however, only a few projects focused on providing services to incumbent workers. The projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania targeted separate groups of incumbent workers recruited through industry partnerships or employer associations. In addition, the AWI project in Louisiana enrolled incumbent workers who wanted computer skills training to help upgrade their computer literacy and maintain their current employment or move up the career ladder. Ultimately, *South Central*

Workforce Investment Board in Pennsylvania was the most successful in enrolling incumbent workers; one-third of the participants served in this project were employed older workers who had been nominated by their employers for occupational skills training. Interestingly, AWI grantees that targeted incumbent workers stated that they would do so again, because they saw value in providing retraining to already-employed individuals to help them maintain employment or improve career advancement opportunities.

Six of these projects indicated that they wanted to recruit only older workers who were interested in receiving training for employment in the targeted industries or occupations. However, it was often difficult to match the interests of the recruited older workers to the designated target industries. After trying without great success to recruit participants interested in the targeted sectors, the projects in Vermont and Wisconsin asked for grant modifications to expand the areas in which participants could request training, which allowed them to recruit a broader population of older workers. The grantee in Pennsylvania retained its targeted industries only for the incumbent worker component of its project. Maryland's grantee added several health care occupations to its list of targeted occupations and removed other healthcare occupations to create a better fit between the skills of the older workers they were recruiting and the available training courses. In summary, in order to recruit enough participants, projects found that they had to expand the list of occupations and industries in which they were offering training.

Six of the ten grantees—those with broadly defined eligibility criteria that did not focus solely on providing occupational skills training to older workers—did not have difficulty recruiting mature workers and were able to meet their enrollment targets. Four grantees, however—those with more narrowly defined eligibility criteria—had to expand these criteria in order to meet their enrollment targets. As an example, the Washington project received a grant modification to include low-income individuals among its hard-to-serve target groups. This project also expanded allowable training to include any H1-B occupation. The Maryland and Wisconsin projects also received grant modifications to expand training and employment to any H1-B demand occupation. The project in Maine received a grant modification to expand the number of certificate programs within which training could be provided and to add a new industry sector (information technology). Modifying their grants to remove restrictions on who was eligible for the AWI allowed these grantees to increase the pools of eligible applicants.

Exhibit IV-3 displays the reasons participants gave for enrolling in AWI. Most of the participants indicated that they enrolled in order to secure employment. Most preferred full-time employment, although a sizable proportion of all participants (36 percent overall) indicated that

they would be willing to take a part-time job.⁶¹ Smaller proportions of all participants indicated that they enrolled in the AWI to obtain training—learning skills for a new job, upgrading skills for a current/previous occupation, or obtaining a certificate or degree were indicated by fewer than half of all respondents as reasons they enrolled in the AWI. Individuals in the 55 to 64 year old age were more interested in training than individuals 65 or older.

**Exhibit IV-3:
Participant Reasons for Enrollment, by Grantee^a**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>Total</u>
Reason for Enrolling								
Get a Full-time Job	90%	96%	73%	90%	70%	82%	63%	87%
Get a Part-time Job	48%	3%	38%	44%	45%	64%	28%	36%
Learn Skills for New Occupation	70%	14%	59%	37%	72%	48%	55%	41%
Obtain Certificate/Degree	43%	69%	68%	13%	41%	39%	82%	37%
Upgrade Skills in Current/Previous Occupation	54%	6%	38%	29%	53%	32%	41%	30%
Personal	31%	<1%	30%	21%	42%	29%	4%	19%
Start Own Business/Consulting	19%	<1%	13%	12%	12%	16%	18%	11%
Improve Reading or Numeracy Skills	6%	0	4%	8%	2%	5%	4%	5%
Family/Spouse Encourage Participation	3%	0	7%	3%	11%	4%	1%	3%
Employer Encourage Participation	0	9%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Improve English	1%	0	1%	3%	1%	28%	0	3%
Retain Current Job	1%	<1%	7%	1%	1%	8%	2%	2%
Other	8%	6%	2%	3%	13%	18%	0	5%
<i>Number</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>674</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>1,696</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>3,547</i>

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data from the Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Texas projects were not available for these variables.

^a "Reason for Enrolling" response categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages may total an excess of 100 percent.

A small percentage of participants in each project (about 11 percent overall) indicated that they were interested in starting their own business or working as a consultant. This percentage was slightly higher in a few projects (e.g., in Washington and Wisconsin). The Washington project focused recruitment efforts on older workers seeking to start their own businesses, and arranged

⁶¹ Grantees reported that some of the AWI participants preferred part-time employment because their life circumstances prevented them from being capable of full-time work or they simply preferred fewer work hours.

for some participants to attend a highly regarded entrepreneurship training program. Because this project also targeted non-English speakers, the project in Washington also had the highest proportion of enrollees who wanted to improve their English-language skills.

Characteristics of Participants Served

The AWI projects enrolled a diverse group of approximately 4,000 older workers as shown in the exhibits in this section.⁶² The preponderance (85 percent) of enrollees were unemployed or anticipated being so. A large proportion of total participants, 30 percent, were also the long-term unemployed and only two percent said they were retired. There was a broad range of prior occupations among participants: some had worked in relatively high-skilled, high-paying jobs in management and financial occupations, while others had held lower-skill and lower-paid jobs in office and administrative support, production, and transportation and material moving occupations.

Slightly more than half (56 percent) of participants were women and the average age for AWI participants was just over 60 years. A slight majority (55 percent) were relatively young, between 55 and 59 years of age upon enrollment, while 29 percent were between 60 and 64 years of age. Individuals over traditional retirement age (65 years of age or older) made up a relatively small percentage of all project participants (except for one project in which nearly 30 percent of participants were aged 65 or older).

In terms of education level, the AWI projects overall served a majority of participants with some post-secondary educational experience; 43 percent had attained a high school level of education, 11 percent had some college, 17 percent had a two-year academic or technical degree, and 18 percent had a bachelor's degree. Only three percent had never completed high school while seven percent had post-graduate degrees. Among all participants, about 14 percent were considered basic-skills deficient and about nine percent had a disability.

Across all projects, African-Americans constituted 31 percent of participants, whites 61 percent, and Latinos 3 percent. The ethnographic patterns varied considerably among the projects though these patterns generally reflected those of the communities served by each project.

The characteristics of participants enrolled in each AWI program are displayed in Exhibit II-7. Most of the projects served roughly equal proportions of men and women. The project in Maryland, which served predominantly women (78 percent), was a notable exception.

⁶² At the time the evaluators collected outcome data from the projects, approximately half of these enrollees had exited the projects.

The projects tended to serve participants whose race/ethnicity reflected the racial/ethnic mix in the overall population (shown previously in Exhibit IV-4). Five of the six projects whose service area had the highest proportions of white residents (those in Indiana, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Wisconsin) served a majority of participants who identified themselves as such. In contrast, the Washington project, although it served a geographic area in which white residents predominated, enrolled a majority of participants from a wide variety of racial/ethnic minority groups. The characteristics of the AWI participants in Washington reflected the project's targeting of non-English speakers and individuals who were considered low-income.

Projects that served areas with high proportions of African-American residents—those in Louisiana and Maryland—drew a majority of their participants from individuals who identified themselves as belonging to this group. The project in Michigan recruited and enrolled a higher proportion of African American participants than the project's service area as a whole, as did the Texas project. The project in Texas enrolled a larger percentage of individuals who identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino than any of the other projects, although the share of project participants in that ethnic group was lower than in the population at large.

With the exception of the Vermont and Washington projects, most grantees served small numbers of persons with disabilities. By contrast, over half of all participants in the Washington project were identified as having a disability, a likely result of the project including such individuals one of its three target groups. Individuals with disabilities also made up 30 percent of all AWI participants in Vermont. Although the Texas project had identified persons with disabilities as a desired target group, the project only ended up enrolling a small proportion of disabled persons (5 percent).

Veterans or their eligible spouses made up between 5 percent (Pennsylvania) and 21 percent (Louisiana) of participants in the AWI projects. In the Maine project, which had indicated a specific interest in recruiting veterans and covered spouses, 17 percent of all participants were veterans (slightly above the average for all veterans as a percentage of all AWI project participants).

**Exhibit IV-4:
Participant Characteristics, by Grantee**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>MD</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>PA</u>	<u>TX</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gender											
Male	46%	44%	22%	36%	40%	63%	48%	41%	56%	44%	44%
Female	55%	56%	78%	64%	60%	37%	52%	59%	44%	56%	56%
Number	323	677	120	256	1,696	348	675	214	174	211	4,694
Race/Ethnicity^a											
Hispanic/ Latino	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0	14%	1%	5%	0%	3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%	1%	0%	1%	< 1%	<1%	0	0	0	1%	<1%
Asian	<1%	0	0	1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	27%	0	2%
Black/African American	7%	59%	67%	1%	31%	1%	52%	2%	20%	5%	31%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0	0	3%	<1%	0	<1%	4%	1%	1%	1%
White	93%	30%	33%	92%	64%	87%	32%	86%	47%	91%	61%
More than One Race	0	1%	0	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	5%	1%	1%	1%
Not Provided	0	8%	0	2%	1%	11%	14%	2%	4%	2%	5%
Number	323	677	120	256	1,696	350	675	214	174	211	4,696
Person with a Disability											
Yes	10%	5%	n/a	15%	8%	0	5%	30%	51%	13%	9%
No	90%	95%	n/a	85%	92%	100%	95%	70%	49%	87%	91%
Number	322	677	n/a	246	1,656	350	675	209	148	167	4,450
Veteran											
Yes	18%	21%	n/a	17%	9%	5%	13%	16%	12%	14%	13%
No	82%	80%	n/a	83%	91%	95%	87%	84%	88%	87%	87%
Number	323	677	n/a	240	1,674	350	675	211	155	163	4,468

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects, except for the Pennsylvania project, for which we used data from the 12/31/11 Quarterly Progress Report (Form ETA-9134). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

^a Race/Ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive, except "Hispanic/Latino," which can be selected in addition to any of the other categories.

Exhibit IV-5 displays the age and education level of AWI participants. The average age for AWI participants was just over 60 years. Overall, 55 percent of the participants served by the AWI

**Exhibit IV-5:
Age and Education of Participants, by Grantee**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>TX</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>Total</u>
Age at Enrollment									
55-59	61%	42%	54%	59%	56%	53%	43%	59%	55%
60-64	27%	28%	33%	28%	28%	29%	34%	37%	29%
65-69	8%	14%	7%	10%	10%	12%	17%	2%	10%
70 and older	4%	15%	6%	4%	7%	6%	6%	1%	6%
(mean)	60.08	62.83	60.54	60.25	60.27	60.82	61.48	58.96	60.68
<i>Number</i>	323	672	250	1,696	675	214	173	209	4,212
Highest Education Level									
No HS Diploma/GED	1%	3%	7%	3%	n/a	1%	9%	6%	3%
HS Diploma/GED	44%	79%	41%	33%	n/a	31%	20%	43%	43%
Some College	5%	<1%	10%	17%	n/a	19%	7%	6%	11%
AA/AS/Voc or Tech Degree	17%	9%	15%	21%	n/a	11%	17%	21%	17%
BA/BS	22%	7%	20%	19%	n/a	26%	35%	19%	18%
Post-Graduate Degree	10%	2%	6%	8%	n/a	12%	13%	5%	7%
<i>Number</i>	322	668	235	1,693	n/a	214	173	132	3,437

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data from the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects were not available for these variables. Percentage may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

As shown in Exhibit IV-6, the vast majority of project participants were unemployed or anticipating unemployment at the time of enrollment. The “employed” participants in the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects are all incumbent workers who were recruited for the project with active employer involvement. Due to this focus on incumbent workers, the Pennsylvania project enrolled the most participants who held jobs.⁶³ The Louisiana project served a large percentage of employed participants (38 percent) as they targeted individual incumbent workers who were interested in improving their computer literacy (as mentioned above). A more detailed analysis of the employment status of project enrollees revealed that

⁶³ Because incumbent workers data from Pennsylvania did not include uniquely identified individual-level records, the percentage of “employed” participants may double-count some of these participants. The project estimated that at least one-third of participants were incumbent workers.

most of the participants who reported being employed had only a part-time or temporary/intermittent job at the time of enrollment (14 percent in part-time or temporary/intermittent jobs compared to 2 percent in full-time jobs, overall). Only a small portion of all participants indicated that they had previously retired from the workforce (2 percent total).

**Exhibit IV-6:
Participant Employment Status, by Grantee**

	<u>IN</u>	<u>LA</u>	<u>MD</u>	<u>ME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>PA</u> ¹	<u>TX</u>	<u>VT</u>	<u>WA</u>	<u>WI</u>	<u>Total</u>
Employment Status at Enrollment											
Employed	16%	38%	19%	20%	1%	50%	5%	17%	8%	18%	15%
Unemployed	85%	62%	81%	80%	99%	50%	95%	83%	93%	82%	85%
<i>Number</i>	323	677	120	256	1,696	340	674	214	174	211	4,690
Employment Status (detailed)²											
Unemployed/ Unemployment Anticipated	82%	60%	n/a	79%	99%	n/a	n/a	81%	91%	84%	86%
Employed Full- time	2%	4%	n/a	7%	<1%	n/a	n/a	5%	1%	5%	2%
Employed Part- time	11%	36%	n/a	13%	<1%	n/a	n/a	9%	6%	11%	10%
Temporary/ Intermittent Job	6%	<1%	n/a	4%	5%	n/a	n/a	4%	2%	0	4%
Retired	4%	<1%	n/a	3%	1%	n/a	n/a	6%	3%	4%	2%
<i>Number</i>	323	674	n/a	255	1,696	n/a	n/a	214	174	211	3,547

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Percentage may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

¹ Data from the Pennsylvania project may count incumbent worker participants more than once as uniquely identified individual-level records were available for the evaluation. Therefore, the percentage of “Employed” participants may include duplicate participants.

² “Employment Status (detailed)” response categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages may total an excess of 100 percent. Because these variables were only included in the AWD, only projects which used that system captured this information.

Exhibit IV-7 shows the most frequent occupations participants had worked in prior to enrolling in the project. Overall, the most frequently indicated prior occupation was “Office and Administrative Support” (32 percent). The next most common occupational categories were “Management” (13 percent) and “Production” (11 percent). This mix illustrates the wide range of the participants enrolled in the AWI projects, including individuals with experience in relatively high-skilled and high-paying jobs in management and business and financial occupations, as well as individuals with experience in lower-skill and lower-paid jobs in office and administrative support, production, and transportation and material moving occupations.

**Exhibit IV-7:
Participant Previous Occupations, by Grantee**

Previous Occupations (top selected)	IN	LA	ME	MI	VT	WA	WI	Total
Office and Administrative Support	22%	40%	19%	37%	33%	13%	21%	32%
• Management	10%	3%	7%	17%	23%	20%	10%	13%
• Production	25%	2%	8%	12%	9%	7%	13%	11%
• Sales and Related	7%	4%	7%	9%	8%	6%	7%	8%
• Business and Financial	5%	1%	6%	9%	10%	3%	5%	7%
• Healthcare Support	3%	6%	15%	5%	15%	13%	5%	7%
• Transportation and Material Moving	2%	10%	5%	9%	5%	4%	4%	7%
<i>Number</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>673</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>1,696</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>3,545</i>

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data on previous occupations were not available from the projects in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

A number of projects expressed interest in targeting participants with significant barriers to employment. Exhibit IV-9 displays the barriers participants identified at the time of enrollment. Overall, the most frequently identified barrier to finding work was long-term unemployment (indicated by 30 percent of all participants). The Louisiana project reported the highest percentage of participants who were basic skills deficient (50 percent of all participants). Across grantees, the project in Washington reported serving the most participants with some type of barrier, including the most individuals with limited English skills (34 percent), long-term unemployment (30 percent), no work history (16 percent), and who were ex-offenders (16 percent). This reflects the grantee's efforts to target hard-to-serve older workers who had substantial barriers to employment.

Exhibit IV-8
Participant Barriers to Employment, by Grantee¹

Barriers	IN	LA	ME	MI	TX	VT	WA	WI	Total
Long Unemployment	9%	n/a	26%	46%	n/a	29%	30%	36%	30%
Basic Skills Deficient	12%	50%	14%	3%	n/a	2%	10%	11%	14%
• No Work History	5%	n/a	6%	3%	n/a	9%	16%	5%	4%
Ex-Offender	2%	n/a	2%	1%	6%	2%	16%	4%	3%
• Has Dependent	3%	n/a	4%	4%	n/a	2%	4%	0	3%
Limited English	<1%	n/a	0	<1%	2%	1%	34%	0	2%
• No HS Diploma/GED	<1%	n/a	0	1%	n/a	1%	4%	1%	1%
Homeless	<1%	n/a	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	0	1%
<i>Number</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>677</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>1696</i>	<i>675</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>4,226</i>

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data from the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects were not available for these variables.

¹ "Barriers" response categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages may total an excess of 100 percent. Because these variables were only included in the AWD, only projects which used that system captured this information.

Summary of Findings

- The majority of AWI grantees met their enrollment targets, but a few encountered difficulties recruiting aging workers for their projects because they narrowly defined the types of mature workers who could participate in their programs and/or because the mature workers they recruited were not necessarily interested in the industry sectors they had targeted for training. Generally, AWI participants expressed more interest in obtaining employment than in receiving training.
- To ensure that enrollees were appropriate for their projects, most grantees incorporated an orientation and screening process so that participants could make informed decisions about whether to participate and project staff members could assess a customer's motivation in seeking services.
- The majority of AWI grantees kept their eligibility requirements for AWI enrollment and participation broad enough to allow flexibility in the types of aging workers they could recruit and serve. Thus, projects recruited a variety of participants, including both high- and low-skilled older workers.
- Most of the projects focused on serving unemployed older workers, including those recently dislocated and those unemployed for long periods. Only three projects served employed older workers as well.

- The majority of AWI participants were between the ages of 55 and 64 years of age. More than half were women (56 percent), nearly two-thirds (61 percent) were White, and most (53 percent) had some post-secondary education.

V. SERVICES AND STRATEGIES

AWI grantees engaged in multiple categories of services: case management, including assessment, career guidance, service planning and support; job readiness training; occupational skills training; job search support, community outreach, and employer services. As described in Chapter II, the AWI projects varied considerably in the strategies they used to serve older workers, because they subscribed to two distinct service models. One service model emphasized recruiting and enrolling older workers who already knew that they were interested in participating in occupational skills training. A contrasting service model emphasized recruiting a broader population of older workers and providing a wider range of services including assessment, career guidance, and job-readiness training to help individuals develop employment plans that might or might not require long-term occupational skills training. Grantees that subscribed to the first model tended to screen interested applicants for interest in and readiness for training before enrolling them in the AWI project. Grantees following the second model considered a broad range of older workers to be appropriate for project services under AWI.

Nonetheless, grantees' service designs appeared to exemplify several broad themes, which were generated in response to the needs and preferences of the participants. These themes are discussed below, and followed later in the chapter with detailed information on the types of approaches undertaken in different service categories.

Common Needs and Themes

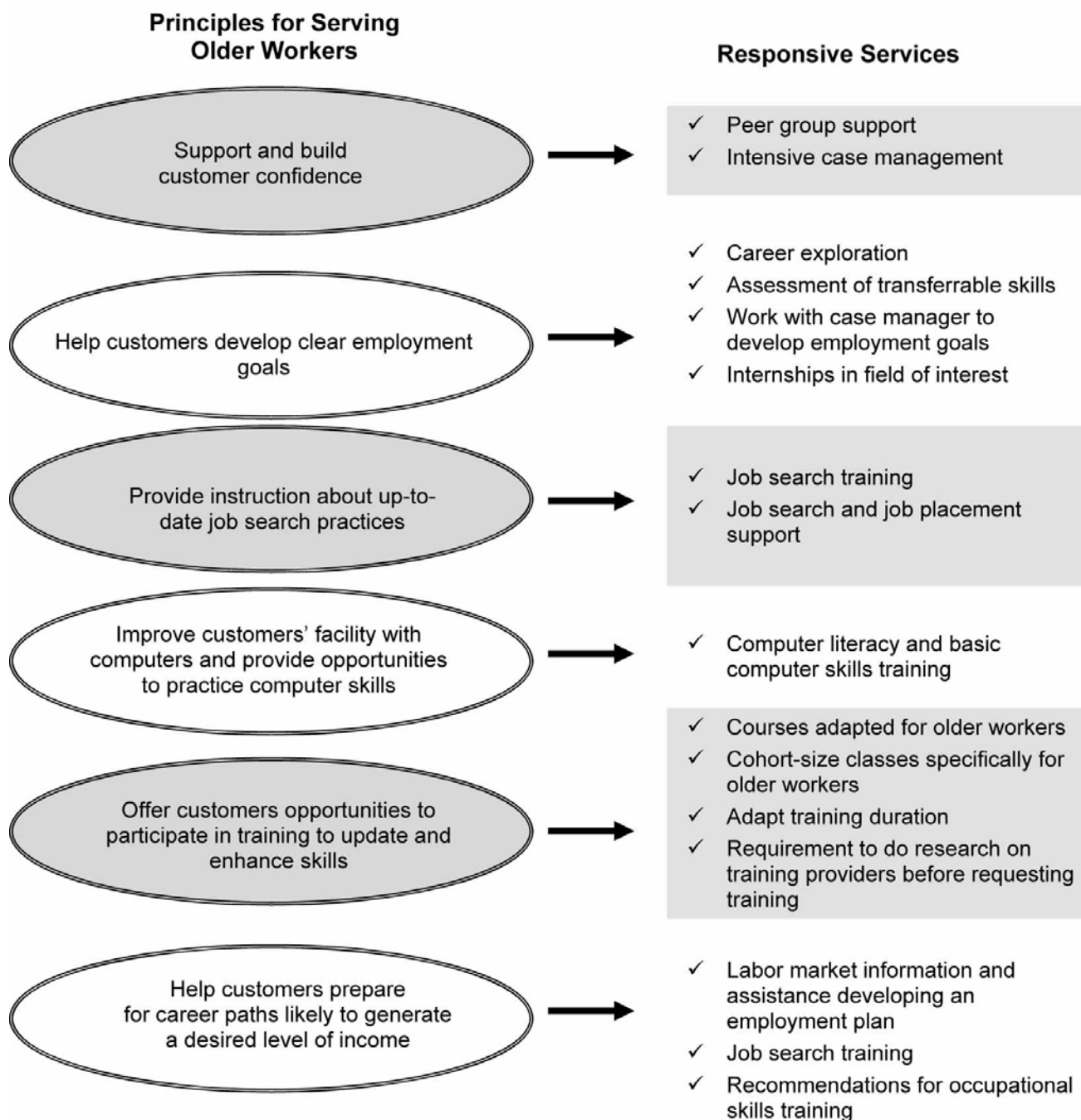
The services designed by the AWI grantees grew out of their understanding of the desires and needs of the older workers participating in the projects. As project staff noted, these workers often had low self-confidence, limited awareness of current local labor market realities, and, in some cases, very weak computer skills. Thus, as shown graphically in Exhibit V-1, there were a number of common themes and approaches, as well as typical services used to implement them. These approaches (and the rationale for each one) are as follows:

- **Support and build customer confidence.** Project staff emphasized that older workers often lacked self-confidence and were fearful about looking for work. To address this need, many of the AWI projects provided intensive case management or other opportunities for individualized supportive contacts between customers

and project staff members. In addition, several projects identified peer support groups or other workshops serving older workers as being particularly effective in reducing the social isolation of older workers and building their confidence.

- **Help customers develop clear employment goals.** Project staff members reported that many older workers seeking help with reemployment did not have a good understanding of different occupations and lacked information about their local job markets. Among the services that projects developed to respond to this need were tools to assess vocational interests and values and instruments to identify transferrable skills. Projects also helped participants access information about different careers and the required training for different jobs and provided them with access to case managers who could help them develop immediate employment goals.
- **Provide instruction on up-to-date job search techniques.** Many older workers lacked recent job search experience and were not aware of current online job search tools. Most projects either developed employment preparation and job search workshops specifically for older workers or helped participants access these services from the existing American Job Center system.
- **Improve customers' computer literacy and computer skills.** For many older workers, lack of familiarity with computers was one of the most important barriers to job readiness. Many projects developed computer literacy workshops as well as skills training in basic office software to give participants the technology skills that many employers expect most jobseekers to have.
- **Offer training to update and enhance customers' occupational skills.** Projects had different strategies for offering occupational skills training. Some projects encouraged older workers to participate in training for a specific set of high-growth occupations. Other projects used a "customer-centered" approach to help each participant develop an individualized training plan. Still others arranged for internships or short-term training that introduced older workers to new occupations and allowed them to see if they would be interested in obtaining more training in those fields.
- **Support those customers who want to set long-term career goals and build career paths.** Although project counselors could help older workers to develop long-term plans for career development, project managers indicated that the majority of older workers were focused on getting jobs as soon as possible because of pressing financial needs.

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



Case Management

Case managers—variously referred to as coaches, case managers, navigators, or older worker specialists—were responsible for coordinating the delivery of the services available to enrolled project participants. Case managers were viewed by the projects as critical to participant success because they were the individuals who most often developed supportive, personal relationships with participants and who provided encouragement to them during all phases of project participation.

As described in Chapter III and displayed in Exhibit V-2, AWI grantees varied in terms of the degree to which case management was emphasized and how case management services were provided. In five projects, the grantees directly recruited and hired case managers specifically for the AWI project.⁶⁴ Other projects contracted with American Job Center operators to arrange for selected WIA case managers to work with AWI participants.⁶⁵ Only four projects (those in Indiana, Texas, Vermont, and Louisiana) were able to give all AWI case managers full-time positions dedicated to serving AWI participants.

⁶⁴ In Wisconsin, the grantee expanded the responsibilities of the existing staff members who were SCSEP program counselors to include providing case management services to AWI participants.

⁶⁵ In Maine, the American Job Center operator hired some new staff and assigned other existing WIA staff to the AWI case manager positions.

**Exhibit V-2:
Case Management Services**

	Areas of Case Management Focus				
	Provide Career Counseling	Develop Employment Goals and Service Plan	Provide Job Readiness Training	Monitor Training Progress	Provide Job Search Support
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	X	X	X	X	X
The Quad Area, Community Action Agency (Louisiana)		X			X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)		X		X	X
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)		X		X	
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	X	X	X	X	X
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	X	X	X	X	X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	X	X	X	X	X
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)		X		X	
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	X	X	X	X	X
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)		X		X	X

In projects that housed AWI case managers within American Job Centers, the designated AWI project case managers sometimes shared case management duties with other WIA case managers. Sometimes, other Job Center staff members would refer older workers interested in training to the AWI project as soon as they were identified as potential AWI project participants. In other projects, other Job Center staff members provided initial assessment and ongoing case management; these participants were referred to the AWI case managers for specific services funded by the grant, such as providing career counseling or working with the participants to develop employment goals or training plans.

Many grantees saw case management services as critical to participants' success. Some AWI staff members emphasized the importance of developing supportive personal relationships with project participants. During focus groups, participants frequently mentioned that they had received additional emotional support from AWI case managers and identified this support as an important component of their AWI project experience. However, where AWI case managers were spread across large geographic areas or had large caseloads, case management contacts were generally less frequent or took place by phone rather than in person.

Not all staff support to participants was provided in a one-on-one setting. A number of projects developed group activities that not only enabled project staff members to guide participants through the different phases of program participation, but also enabled aging workers to receive peer support from other project participants. During focus groups, participants confirmed the value of peer groups. Almost every participant in the focus groups mentioned that being able to interact with other older workers who were in similar situations to their own was important in increasing the likelihood that they would have a successful outcome.

Project staff members reported that case management was important during several different stages in the service process during the following:

- **Initial assessment and guidance.** Early case management, respondents reported, was important in guiding older workers through the initial stage of career exploration and providing information about current labor market conditions. Many projects recommended making one-on-one support available during this early stage to help individualize the services and address the unique nature of each older worker.
- **Ongoing Support.** Case managers' role in providing support while an older worker was receiving services was also very important, according to project staff. Attrition is a problem with most programs, but for older workers, who are typically apprehensive about training in the first place, case management was as important for encouraging participants to stick with the service delivery process. In addition to providing emotional support and encouragement, case managers during this period helped address emerging supportive service needs (e.g., for housing, food, transportation, and medical care) that would otherwise be a barrier to successful program completion.
- **Final Job Search and Placement.** Staff reported that case management was also critical at the end of the program, after the completion of training. An older worker's lack of familiarity with the latest job search tools and strategies can hinder job placement if he or she is left alone to look for a job without a case manager to guide the process. Therefore project managers and case managers learned (sometimes through the failure to attend to case management services at this stage) the importance of guiding older workers through the job search process, including helping them develop resumes, practice interviewing

skills, and arrange for job interviews. Hands-on case management is extremely valuable during this final stage.

Below we describe the content of the services provided during the different stages of program participation.

Career Counseling and Service Planning

As described in Exhibit V-3, five projects (those in Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington) provided career counseling using one-on-one sessions between participants and case managers, or group career exploration workshops, or both. In the remaining projects, case managers worked with participants to develop training plans, but did not provide basic career counseling *per se*. Some of the projects that did not emphasize career exploration or career counseling assumed that participants had already identified their employment goals by the time they met with the AWI case manager. This was more common for projects that recruited older workers for training in a specific occupational field, because they had often done extensive screening prior to enrollment to ensure that there was a good match between the training provided and the individuals' interests and skills prior to project enrollment.

The first stage in the service planning process was often formal or informal assessment. Six of the ten AWI grantees used formal assessment tools to evaluate a variety of issues including computer literacy, math and reading ability, career interests, and barriers. In other projects, the initial assessment was interview-based and focused on building the relationship between the case management and the participant and helping to identify the participant's employment goals.

Career counseling was important for supporting the development of an employment plan for an older worker, mainly because the typical participant lacked knowledge about the local labor market and career/job opportunities. Project managers and case managers explained that a lack of recent experience in the job market would cause many participants to miss potential job opportunities or not know how their skills might be transferrable into other occupations or industries. An important aspect of career counseling was making sure that participants understood the level of earnings that would be available to them in a new occupation and, often, the reality that they might need to accept a lower wage than they had previously earned.

For those enrolling in training, case managers also walked participants through the proposed training program to make sure they understand the time commitment involved and to ensure that they would be able to support themselves during training. Case managers commented that individuals would often forget to consider that they would need some income from another source to support them during the training period.

**Exhibit V-3:
Career Counseling and Employment Planning Services***

	Delivery Method	Services
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	One-on-One	Case manager assistance with career planning and developing employment plan
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	Self-Service	Use of career awareness tools (O*Net) and American Job Center labor market exploration tools
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	Group Workshop	Career Transition Workshops targeted to older workers. Project offers workshops on many topics, including identifying transferrable skills and abilities.
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	One-on-One	Limited case manager assistance around creation of a Job Development Plan
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	Group Presentation	Individuals who attend <i>Seasoned Worker Forums</i> hear employers talking about work opportunities for older workers
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	One-on-One	Limited employment planning sessions with AWI Navigator
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	One-on-One	Limited assistance from career coaches in developing participant training plan
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	One-on-One	Individualized assisted career counseling
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Group Workshop	Specially designed intensive career awareness and exploration workshop
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	One-on-One	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	One-on-One	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Group Workshop	A portion of the <i>Yes You Can Workshop</i> explores career transitions and developing employment goals
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	One-on-One	Limited employment planning through IEP development
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	One-on-One	Individualized, case manager-assisted career counseling and IEP development
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	One-on-One	Limited case manager-assisted service planning

* A **bold** entry means that this site emphasizes career counseling as a component of service and employment planning.

All five projects that emphasized career exploration in their menus of services for older workers provided this service in a one-on-one meeting between the participant and a case manager/career counselor. Three of these grantees (those in Texas, Pennsylvania, and Indiana) also offered career exploration in a group setting, through activities that were designed specifically for AWI participants in order to bolster self-esteem and provide peer support.. Through its Career Transition Hubs, the project in Indiana developed a series of specialized workshops specifically designed for AWI participants. One of the Career Transition Hub workshops specifically focused on exploring potential career options for mature workers. The project in Texas integrated some non-traditional career exploration activities into its “Yes You Can” workshop. This workshop helped participants examine their lives and work histories to develop employment goals and think about potential new careers in a supportive group setting. The Pennsylvania project subsequently added a variant of the “Yes You Can” workshop to the service offerings for its AWI participants.

A number of project staff members pointed out that although older workers benefited from up-to-date information about available jobs and their skill requirements, they were often reluctant to commit to new employment goals if doing so would involve more than a month or two of training, as described in more detail in the section below on Occupational Skills Training.

Job Readiness Training

Job readiness training, sometimes called pre-employment training, refers to training that covers job search and interviewing skills, as well as communication skills and expected behavior in the workplace. For older workers, the topics covered in job readiness training often include an introduction to the technology-based labor market tools that older workers often have little experience with (e.g. how to upload a resume or send a cover letter by e-mail), as well as guidance on how to market themselves effectively to employers. The AWI grantees that offered these services typically designed them specifically for the AWI project or adapted those previously developed for mature workers.

Workshops were the most common service delivery method for job readiness training. As shown in Exhibit V-4, six grantees offered job readiness workshops tailored specifically for older workers. Three grantees referred participants to the local American Job Center for pre-employment or job readiness workshops. (The project in Maryland did not provide job readiness activities.) Because these workshops were typically developed for the AWI grant, the pace and content of the training was adapted for mature workers. The group setting helped promote interaction and provided opportunities for participants to learn from each other, something many

**Exhibit V-4:
Job Readiness Activities**

	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 vary. Participants must attend at least one meeting per month.	Group Workshops
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	AWI staff members developed a job readiness-training packet. Case managers distribute the packet to participants during the initial meeting, with case managers reviewing the packet materials with the participant.	One-on-One
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (IN)	Grantee collaborated with a proprietary provider to design a customized Professional Development class for AWI participants. The class includes skills assessment and discussions on values and skills that seniors bring to the workplace.	Group Workshops
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	“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 Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	None	N/A
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	Staff members work with customers to make sure they are properly prepared for job search and employment.	One-on-One
	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 (Pennsylvania)	Contractor staff members provide specialized workshops for aging worker participants on resume writing and interviewing skills.	Group Workshop
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Project refers participants to American Job Center workshops, if needed, for comprehensive job readiness training.	Group Workshops
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	“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

	Services	Delivery Method
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	<p>“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.</p> <p>The community and technical college system also offers a credential in work readiness.</p>	Group Workshop
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	<p>AWI case managers provide pre-employment skills training covering resume writing and interviewing.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>One-on-One</p> <p>Group Workshop</p>
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	Refers participants to American Job Center workshops that are not tailored to the needs of older workers.	Group Workshops

AWI participants appreciated. Within the peer workshop setting, participants also forged relationships with other older workers, which helped with confidence and sometimes led to job leads.

Training

AWI training programs included basic computer training, occupational skills training, adult basic education, on-the-job training (OJT), and entrepreneurship training. Data on participants’ involvement in training programs were collected from grantees and are displayed in Exhibit V-5.

Overall, less than half of AWI participants entered training programs, while the remaining participants received other grant-funded services, such as career counseling, basic skills training, and/or assistance with job search. This is illustrative of the theory posited by grantee staff members that older workers preferred obtaining re-employment directly to engaging in training programs to prepare for new jobs. However, a few of the grantees with training-focused programs—those in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Maine—had the vast majority of their participants engage in some type of training (100,⁶⁶ 97, 94, and 88 percent, respectively). The remaining programs were less training-centric and thus enrolled much lower percentages of their participants in training programs. The Michigan project enrolled the smallest proportion of participants in training, largely due to a lack of funding available for training. Although the

⁶⁶ Because the Pennsylvania project only submitted data on trainees for the evaluation, this percentage is likely inflated. However, grantee staff indicated that the percent was indeed very high, likely in excess of 90 percent.

Louisiana project enrolled over one-third of its participants in training, the majority of these trainings were short-term basic computing classes.

For all grantees, the most common type of training in which participants enrolled was “basic computer/occupational skills training.” Basic computer training and occupational skills training are presented as one category in Exhibit V-5 because grantees generally lumped together these two types training in their recording of participant activities. Although this lumping prevents us from displaying rates of participation in each of these two often very different types of training, we discuss each type separately below. The Washington project was the only project that enrolled sizeable portions of participants in types of training other than “basic computer/occupational skills training.” Because this project targeted low-income individuals and non-English speakers, these participants had a greater need for training in Adult Basic Education. In addition, as discussed below, Washington enrolled a relatively large number of participants in entrepreneurial training (13 percent of all trainees).

“Training Duration” was calculated for those participants who engaged in training.⁶⁷ Generally, the duration of training ranged from one or two days (in all projects but Maryland’s) to three years (in Wisconsin). Overall, the median amount of time spent in training was 59 days. Participants from Louisiana and Texas had the lowest median duration of training, likely due to these grantees providing mostly short-term computer training sessions to participants, most of which lasted only one day. In contrast, the majority of participants in Maryland and Wisconsin were enrolled in longer-term training programs (with median durations of 220 days and 515 days, respectively). For the remaining projects, the median durations of training fell between 50 and 100 days, with most participants engaged in training lasting between one and six months.

Data on the attainment of training-related certifications are also presented in Exhibit V-5 for participants whose training had concluded when data were first submitted for the evaluation (March 2012).⁶⁸ Overall, about three-fourths of participants obtained some kind of certification.⁶⁹ The Louisiana project reported the highest percentage of participants obtaining certifications;

⁶⁷ For grantees using the Aging Worker Data (AWD) system, data on “Training Duration” includes estimates of the length of training programs in progress at the time data were submitted for the evaluation. Therefore, this measure includes completed programs as well as ongoing ones.

⁶⁸ Training is considered concluded when a participant completes it successfully or drops out. Program dropouts are included as not having received certifications.

⁶⁹ Projects did not clearly define what they counted as a certification. According to ETA specifications, certifications are designed to be industry-recognized credentials, but it is unclear that projects interpreted this as such.

**Exhibit V-5:
Participation in Training Programs, by Grantee**

	IN	LA	MD	ME	MI	PA1	TX	VT	WA	WI	Total
Entered Training (% of participants)											
Yes	38%	41%	97%	88%	20%	100%	31%	55%	66%	94%	42%
No	62%	59%	3%	12%	81%	n/a	69%	45%	35%	6%	58%
Number of participants	323	677	97	256	1,696	169	677	214	174	211	4,494
Type of Training (% of trainees)²											
Computer/occupational skills training	100%	98%	100%	100%	97%	93%	99%	98%	74%	100%	97%
Adult basic education	0	<1%	0	0	2%	0	n/a	0	32%	1%	2%
Entrepreneurial training	0	0	0	0	1%	7%	n/a	1%	13%	1%	1%
On-the-job training (OJT)	0	1%	0	0	2%	0	<1%	3%	1%	0	1%
Number of trainees	123	280	94	225	330	169	207	118	114	198	1,858
Training Duration (% of all trainings)³											
One week or less	1%	44%	0	16%	7%	4%	28%	14%	5%	3%	15%
One week to one month	7%	49%	0	11%	6%	8%	31%	7%	21%	1%	16%
One month to three months	58%	5%	0	28%	31%	55%	24%	29%	35%	5%	27%
Three to six months	11%	1%	16%	26%	32%	22%	11%	16%	14%	4%	16%
More than six months	24%	1%	84%	20%	24%	12%	7%	35%	25%	88%	25%
Median training duration (days)	54.0	10.0	220.0	73.0	99.5	59.0	13.5	93.5	78.5	515.0	59.0
Number of trainings	123	280	19	225	330	167	178	118	114	198	1752
Obtained Certification (% of those completing a program)											
Yes	59%	98%	50%	74%	54%	n/a	70%	84%	81%	45%	76%
No	41%	2%	50%	26%	46%	n/a	31%	16%	19%	55%	24%
Number of Training Completers	70	280	8	175	138	n/a	177	86	110	60	1104

most of these were likely certificates of completion from the basic computer classes offered by the grantee. Participants in Vermont and Washington also achieved certifications at a higher rate than those participating in other projects (74 and 81 percent, respectively). Wisconsin had the smallest percentage of participants obtaining certificates (55 percent).⁷⁰

Basic Computer Training

The most commonly identified barrier to employment for AWI participants was a lack of basic computer skills. While some individuals who enrolled in AWI had extensive computer skills/experience, a majority of participants lacked the basic level of computer literacy necessary to work in a modern office environment. Additionally, the lack of computer skills limited the ability of older workers to access online job tools at American Job Centers.

Nine of the ten AWI grantees either offered participants computer skills training courses developed specially for their needs or helped participants identify existing courses available within American Job Centers or from local educational institutions. The workshops specifically designed for AWI participants ranged in duration from a four-hour workshop to a 120-hour course. Several projects assessed participants' computer skills and offered several different levels of computer skills training.

As shown in Exhibit V-6, six of the AWI grantees (those in Indiana, Maine, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Louisiana) responded to this widespread need by developing and/or offering special computer training programs for AWI participants. Staff members from these grantees reported that the pace, style, length, and environment of these training programs were modified to better suit older workers. The most common modifications across the six grantees were spreading the curriculum over a longer period (slowing the pacing), increasing instructor accessibility (for answering questions), and offering separate course options exclusively for older workers. Among the six grantees that offered specialized computer training for participants, four (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Vermont, and Washington) offered computer training that went beyond computer basics and provided more advanced training in specific software programs, in addition to basic computer training.

The four grantees that elected not to develop AWI-specific computer training addressed the need for improved computer literacy among participants by referring participants to computer workshops available at American Job Centers or local educational institutions. Project managers

⁷⁰ The initial definition of “received credential” used for the ETA Form 9134 required a credential to be received in the same quarter as the quarter in which training was completed. In the analysis reported in this chapter—based on individual-level data for all exiters—the evaluators imposed no time requirement for receipt of a credential.

**Exhibit V-6:
Basic Computer Training**

	Services	Deployment
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	After initial experience with a proprietary training vendor, the grantee entered into a partnership with the state technical and community college system to provide two key computing courses: Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) and IC3 Key Applications. After the initial class struggled with the fast pace of the course, it was spread over a longer period (with less classroom time each day).	Not required. Approximately 40% of AWI participants receive some type of computer training.
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	The project provided two levels of computer training—one for beginners and one for more advanced participants. The beginner class involves work on computer basics and the Internet, while the advanced class focuses on specific programs like Excel and PowerPoint.	Not required, but highly encouraged.
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	“Work Ready 55+” workshop included 20 hours of basic computer skills training.	Not required
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	N/A (The Maryland project screened participants for computer skills before enrollment.)	N/A
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	Project referred participants to local American Job Center workshops, and arranged with a local training provider to offer its computer skills workshop to AWI participants at a discount.	Not required
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Project referred participants to local American Job Center workshops, where participants could access training funds for computer training.	Not required
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Project developed a three-day workshop called “Technology Doesn’t Byte” that provided basic computer skills training and an introduction to Word 2007.	Required for participants who did not show a certain level of computer skills
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	Project provided a one-time, 10-week computer training course (120 hours plus homework) to a group of 12 AWI participants at a cost of \$2,000 per person. Subsequently referred participants to courses available at local American Job Center workshops or a local technical college.	Not required
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	Project purchased a computer-training curriculum from AARP. The class met Monday through Friday for two weeks; participants received a total of 60 hours of training time. The curriculum was modified to include computer basics, basic training on Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc., and professional networking skills (Linked-In).	Not required, but highly encouraged
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	Project referred participants to American Job Center workshops. Participants could also use training funds for additional computer training.	Not required

at several of these projects said they regretted not placing a greater emphasis on computer training and not developing special computer training courses for participants. Participants who attempted to attend classes that were not designed for older workers often complained that the courses moved too fast and did not provide enough opportunity for hands-on practice.

The AWI project coordinator in the Pennsylvania project added that most of the core services at the local American Job Centers required older workers to navigate programs using a computer (e.g., available assessments and labor market information are both available as online self-service tools). She stated that many older workers became frustrated with the Job Centers' self-service components and failed to seek out more intensive services from American Job Center partners because they were discouraged by their lack of computer literacy.

Occupational Skills Training

As shown in Exhibit V-7, a large number of participants enrolled in occupational skills training through the AWI projects. Occupational skills training was expected to be a major service component for each of the AWI projects. Although a number of grantees emphasized encouraging participants to enroll in occupational skills training, and four projects focused almost exclusively on providing training (as described below), a number of other AWI grantees developed broader menus of services to benefit older workers and viewed occupational skills training as only one of the possible services from which participants could benefit.

Eight of the ten grantees expected most AWI participants to enroll in occupational skills training courses with financial support from the AWI grant; several of these expected to supplement the AWI training funds with additional funds leveraged from other training programs.⁷¹ Among these sites, three grantees (those in Maine, Maryland, and Wisconsin) required or expected all project participants to enroll in training. A fourth project (the one in Pennsylvania) placed over 90 percent of all project enrollees in training. In the remaining projects, smaller proportions of project enrollees ultimately enrolled in occupational skills training.⁷²

⁷¹ The remaining two projects—in Louisiana and Michigan—found that they did not have enough funds in their project budgets to support occupational skills training, and were not able to leverage training funds from other sources. As a result, the project in Louisiana provided only very short-term training in basic computer skills, and the project in Michigan emphasized the delivery of other services and worked with participants to qualify for Pell grants or made referrals to WIA to see if they could obtain support for occupational skills training from the WIA program.

⁷² Several projects reported pre-employment/job readiness workshops or very brief (half-day or 1-day) skills instruction as occupational skills training in their quarterly progress reports to ETA. This inflated the percentage of all participants who received occupational skills training. In our quantitative analysis of training services provided, we have distinguished training lasting less than one week from other categories of occupational skills training.

**Exhibit V-7:
Grant-supported Occupational Skills Training for Individuals**

	<u>Training Providers</u>	<u>Allowable Training Programs</u>	<u>Cap on AWI Training Costs</u>
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	Primarily community college system	Project allowed the customer “to drive the process” (pick an occupational training program) as long as it was within the four targeted industry groupings	\$2,400
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	Local hospital (medical billing training)	During the first program year, some participants received training in medical billing from a local hospital (\$1,000 per participant). Thereafter, the only training paid by the grant was a 10-hour introduction to computer skills course. ^a	After the first year, instead of capping the costs of individual training plans, this grantee offered only one-day computer workshops, which it purchased directly from several training providers.
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	Primarily community colleges and adult education providers	18 allowable certificate programs in three targeted industries; generally two-month training programs; under a grant modification, the allowable programs of study were expanded to include any short-term certificate program in the targeted industries, and information technology was added to the targeted industries.	Roughly \$1,000 allocated per individual
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	Community college	Four selected healthcare certificate programs and prerequisite courses (additional programs added after start of grant).	Project did not review the cost of individual training plans. All courses included in the program were pre-approved, including both pre-requisite and certificate courses.
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)		Project did not budget any of the grant funds for occupational skills training (had expected to use WIA training funds, which were not readily available).	The cost cap was not relevant, since project did not provide grant funds for training.

	Training Providers	Allowable Training Programs	Cap on AWI Training Costs
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Community college	For incumbent workers, three Industry Partnerships selected courses that supported “in-demand” industry skills sets. For unemployed workers, if only using AWI funds, training allowed in any occupation. If co-enrolled in WIA, training had to be in a high-demand industry/occupation.	\$1,500 ^b
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Public or proprietary educational institutions	Training courses in 60 occupations in four targeted industries	No cap; training costs were generally under \$1,000, but were as high as \$4,000 in some cases.
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	Community college or proprietary vendor	Any high-demand H1-B occupation	\$2,000
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	Any provider on eligible training provider list	Any high-demand H1-B occupation (modified after start of grant)	Instead of capping the costs of individual training plans, this project would pay for any training program on an approved training list
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	Technical/ community college	Any high-demand H1-B occupation (expanded after start of grant)	\$2,500

^a Due to a misunderstanding about the total grant amount after the first year, the project eliminated all occupational skills training, other than the computer skills introductory course, from its service design.

^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).

Exhibit IV-7 describes the types of training supported by the different projects. Projects that provided occupational skills training with AWI funds usually arranged for training for participants by referring individuals to training courses available from community colleges or proprietary training providers, following regulations established under the WIA program for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).⁷³ In addition, several projects arranged with public or private training providers for the development and delivery of cohort-size occupational skills training classes reserved for AWI participants.

However, because the projects were not as active in developing new curricula for older workers as they had expected, the role of curriculum developer was limited to only a few sites. In Texas, during an early stage of the program, the Houston Community College developed some computer courses for participants and taught them on site at the project. In Washington, the grantee developed a formal relationship with Seattle Central Community College to provide training courses in green jobs and health care industries for AWI participants with Limited English Proficiency. The project in Washington worked with local community colleges to develop two new courses that introduced older workers to the terminology and basic principles of new occupations. Courses developed and tested during the AWI project included one for “green” occupations and another in health care occupations. The green occupations course was not a success, due to a lack of employer involvement and difficulties in identifying the target jobs for trainees. However, the curriculum for the healthcare, developed for students with limited English language skills, provided a stepping-stone for participants to move into additional healthcare credential/certification courses.

Although the initial plan in many projects was to provide 6 to 12 months of classroom-based occupational skills training, most grantees reported that project participants were reluctant to enroll in occupational skills training lasting more than two or three months. Projects found that many unemployed older workers were interested in getting jobs as quickly as possible so that they could meet their financial needs. Additionally, both participants and project staff members reported that project participants were intimidated by attending training in a community-college classroom with primarily younger students. Thus, the AWI projects faced the challenge of helping older workers realize that they could be successful as students in a classroom setting, and that training could help them gain access to more interesting and higher-paying jobs. Projects used several strategies to make training easier for, or more attractive to, project participants. The following are among the most notable:

⁷³ Among the requirements for ITAs are the need for prior WIB or state approval of training providers as “approved training providers” and the need for courses to be on a list of “occupations in demand” in the local labor market.

- The project in Maryland grouped participants into a cohort so that they could attend training classes together and provide each other with support and encouragement.
- The project in Vermont leveraged a variety of funding sources to pay for training for its participants, thus freeing up more funding for supportive case management.
- The project in Washington developed courses that introduced participants to the terminology and basic principles of new occupations and fields that could be pursued in subsequent courses.

As the AWI programs progressed through the grant period, several grantees altered or adjusted their occupational skills training services to better address the needs and goals of participants. For example, the Texas project initially had a problem with participants dropping out of training. In response, the program began requiring participants requesting training to do additional research on the desired training and to supply their case managers with information about the training, including the total cost of the courses and all the necessary materials. Both the Maryland and Washington projects increased the number and types of training programs available to AWI participants.

Entrepreneurship Training

As mentioned in the interim report, ETA encouraged AWI grantees to offer entrepreneurship training to older workers as an alternative to traditional training and employment models. Seven projects (those in 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 three grantees ultimately enrolled more than a few participants in small-business development training. The project in Texas enrolled six participants as a separate older-worker cohort in the entrepreneurship training offered by a non-profit community partner; only three participants completed the training. The Pennsylvania project enrolled 12 participants in training through a contract with the local community college's Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies; 10 participants completed the training. The most successful entrepreneurship training component was in Washington, where more than 14 individuals completed an entrepreneurship course offered by a local nonprofit organization. (More details about this program are provided in the box below.)

The Vermont and Wisconsin projects both offered small business/entrepreneurship training by referring individual participants to existing entrepreneurship training programs. In both cases the grantees said enrollment was low, because participants were wary of starting their own businesses and because case managers were hesitant to approve training to support the start-up of a new business. Project managers said that one of the barriers to providing more entrepreneurship training was that AWI case managers were not very familiar with these courses.

**Case Example: Strong Referral Linkage to
Existing Entrepreneurship Training Program**

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (Washington)

To provide small business training to AWI participants, the *Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council* (Washington) collaborated with the local non-profit organization Washington Community Alliance for Self Help (CASH). Washington CASH 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 18 AWI participants had completed the entrepreneurship course at the time of the second site visit.

This ongoing program had previously specialized in providing small business development support to low-income individuals; all AWI participants were allowed to enroll irrespective of household income. The eight-week-long class accommodated up to 60 people. Each week participants attended one 2.5-hour class and one 2.5-hour supplemental lab/hands-on session. At the end of the course, all individuals completed a three-page business plan.

After completing the initial class, each participant then sat down with a Washington CASH employee to look closely at the business plan and decide if he or she wanted to move into a “business group.” Business groups were 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 approved, they awarded that person a \$1,000 loan supplied by Washington CASH. It was stipulated that if any individual in the group stopped paying back his or her loan then no else in that group could receive another loan until the money was paid back. This forced group members to make sure that every individual business plan was sound.

One AWI participant who went through the Washington CASH entrepreneurship training started his own mobile pizza cart. At the time of the second site visit, the business had done so well that he was planning on expanding to a second cart; he had recently secured a deal to cater events for Google.

Job Search and Placement Services

Job search and job placement services were needed by participants who participated in training to secure employment after training, as well as by participants who did not participate in training. Most grantees emphasized the importance of job placement assistance, although not all grantees tailored that assistance to meet the special needs of older workers. Exhibit V-8 provides an overview of job placement services across the ten grantees. The most common source of job placement assistance was the one-on-one assistance provided by AWI case managers. Four grantees (those in Indiana, Texas, Louisiana, and Washington) provided intensive, individualized, one-on-one job placement assistance directly to AWI participants. In these projects the case managers assisted participants with job search, resume development,

interviewing skills, and job development. As previously mentioned all of these grantees had at least one dedicated AWI case manager and of these most had previous experience with older workers.

Another group of AWI projects (those in Maine, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Maryland) offered less intensive job search assistance and most often referred AWI participants to the local American Job Center for job placement assistance. Some of these grantees mentioned they did not believe that job placement assistance was a focus of their project. In the Pennsylvania and Michigan projects, the intensity of the job search support available to project participants varied, depending on the availability and commitment level of the designated AWI case managers in

**Exhibit V-8:
Job Placement Assistance Services**

	<u>Delivery Method</u>	<u>Services</u>
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	One-on-One	The Aging Worker Specialists work with mature workers to help them navigate the state’s job bank (IN Career Connect) and refine their job searches.
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	Career Transitional Hubs	The Aging Worker Specialists provided information on job openings to mature workers during the Career Transition Hub workshops and sent weekly email updates to active AWI participants.
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	One-on-One	Case managers provided individualized job placement assistance and had participants post their resumes on the Silver Force website, which connected aging workers to employers who were hiring.
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	One-on-One	Case managers provided “light touch” help with job leads and referred older workers to other programs or agencies for more specialized job placement assistance.
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	One-on-One	Case managers helped participants with job leads and provided individualized job search assistance.
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	Job Seeker Seminars	The program developed two seminars/workshops to help participants with job search techniques and provided peer support during job search activities.

	Delivery Method	Services
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	One-on-One	Services varied extensively by Navigator. Some staff members provided tailored one-on-one job placement services, while others referred participants to job search tools available within American Job Centers.
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Work Certified/ Job Ready Workshop	The older-worker-specific workshop was a comprehensive job club where mature workers discussed issues specific to their reemployment needs.
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	One-on-One	Case managers sent clients job leads, strategized with them about how to make their transferable skills applicable to more types of jobs, and helped them network with employers.
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	One-on-One, Self Service, or Group Workshops	Case managers provided job search skills, job leads, and job match help. Case managers also referred participants to job search tools available within American Job Centers. Some participants accessed workshops available at the American Job Centers, which were tailored to the needs of older workers.
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	Mature Workers Job Club	One-month-long job club for older workers was in place prior to AWI grant.
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	One-on-One	Case managers provided very individualized placement assistance, with lots of one-on-one counseling. They also referred participants to job search services available within American Job Centers.
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	One-on-One	Case managers provided job leads and letters of support; in addition, staff members referred participants to job search tools available within American Job Centers.

each of the American Job Centers participating in the project. In order to supplement the limited level of one-on-one job search support available, the Michigan project had case managers use AARP’s online “WorkSearch” program to help support participants with their job searches.

Understanding the need for peer support among older job seekers, four projects (those in Indiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington) developed job search workshops designed specifically for older workers. These workshops covered a wide range of job-search skills topics. These specially designed workshops allowed participants to gain confidence and build connections with other older workers through the peer-to-peer interactions. (See the box below for more information on Pennsylvania’s AWI job placement workshop, which was one of the more intensive workshops.)

Case Example: Comprehensive Job Search and Placement Workshop
South Central Workforce Investment Board, Pennsylvania

Understanding the unique service needs and barriers for mature workers in relation to other adults and dislocated workers, the grantee in Pennsylvania contracted with Experience Works to provide mature workers with Work Certified/Job Ready program training. This training took the form of a comprehensive job club where mature workers could discuss issues specific to their reemployment needs and the challenges they faced in their job searches. The training/workshop consisted of three six-hour days from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. In order to provide peer support but not limit an individual's participation and ability to get assistance, the program established a class-size maximum of ten individuals and a minimum of six.

During the 18-hour workshop, participants received an extensive array of job search tips and skills, broken into eight subject modules:

- On-line and Kiosk Applications: Workshop staff members provided tips for completing on-line applications and using job application kiosks.
- First Impressions: Workshop staff members presented information on pre-interview preparation, reception room behavior, and Talked about how to conduct an effective interview.
- Frequently Asked Interview Questions: Participants identified their interviewing strengths and weaknesses and participated in a mock-interview group exercise.
- Difficult Internet Questions: Participants identified questions with hidden objectives and those that might require answers that would reveal their age. Participants also received tips for addressing these types of questions and ideas about how to dispel myths about older workers.
- How to Communicate a Skill and Its Value to an Employer: Workshop staff members helped older workers identify, describe, and quantify their skills and abilities and to understand what skills are most valuable to employers.
- How to Close an Interview: Workshop staff members reviewed questions that older workers can ask potential employers. Human resource staff members from local employers conducted trial interviews with participants.
- Negotiation Skills: Participants learned about how to prepare for negotiations regarding salary, how to make concessions and provide alternatives, and how to avoid mistakes commonly made during the negotiation process.
- How to Keep a Job: Participants learned about keeping their jobs and received training on how to communicate and get along with their co-workers.

Community Outreach Activities

Community outreach activities, undertaken by five grantees (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Vermont, and Washington) had multiple purposes, including educating older workers about the issues facing older workers, providing job search assistance and labor market information to those attending the events, and recruiting participants for the AWI projects. In addition, many grantees saw these community events as a way to educate both employers and the community-at-large about mature workers.

Among the five grantees that conducted community outreach, those in Vermont and Maine developed the most extensive activities. The Vermont grantee held two large community forums including a job resource fair called “Redefining Yourself,” which was free and open to the public, and attended by interested individuals and about 30 organizations (including a student assistance center, higher education institutions, technical centers, and training organizations). Participating organizations provided career-related workshops (such as, “guerilla tactics in the job market”); the Vermont Department of Labor reviewed resumes; and representatives from growing industries shared tips for how to enter related careers. Close to the end of the grant period, the grantee and the local workforce investment board (WIB) co-sponsored a “Boomer Job and Resource Expo” open to the public, which provided information and services aimed at workers 55 or older. Organizers estimated that between 100 and 150 people attended.

The Maine project had the most comprehensive community outreach activities. During the early stages of the grant, the project developed Seasoned Worker Forums, which were large-scale workshops aimed at older workers to encourage them to re-enter the workforce, and inform them about AWI services. Total attendance for all workshops totaled 1,774 people (55% of the planned 3,200). Later on, the grantee collaborated with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to develop “Project You” workshops geared towards individuals 55 and older, which included motivational and job-readiness components. Presentations covered topics such as “the stages of change and losing one’s job,” “the reputation of an older worker,” “branding and networking,” and “resume building and interview tools.” In addition to these large-scale events, the Maine project developed two workshops open to all members of the public.

Outreach to Employers and Services for Incumbent Workers

Each of the AWI grantees tried to engage local businesses in the AWI and educate them about older workers. Exhibit V-9 shows the various strategies AWI grantees used with employers, including educational activities designed to increase employer understanding of the benefits of hiring and training mature workers, engaging employers to project design teams or on advisory

committees, promoting hiring of AWI participants, and providing training to current employees (incumbent workers).

Most project managers stated that their efforts to engage local businesses were not as successful as they had hoped. The dismal economic outlook during the course of the AWI was one underlying reason. One grantee stated that many employers were focused on keeping their businesses “afloat” during the economic downturn and did not want to focus on human-capital issues and growing their workforce using mature workers. Most grantees also realized that

**Exhibit V-9:
Strategies for Serving Employers**

	Participate in Education about the Value of Aging Workers	Participate in Project Design and Services	Hire AWI Participants	Train Incumbent Workers
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	X	X	X	
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	X		X	X
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	X	X	X	X
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	X		X	X
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)			X	
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	X	X		X
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)		X	X	X
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	X	X		X
Workforce Development Council Seattle-King County (Washington)	X	X		
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)				X

working with local employers takes a tremendous amount of time and effort and that, with hindsight, there should have been designated staff responsible for engaging local employers.

Educating Employers About the Value of Aging Workers

As shown in Exhibit V-9, six out of the ten projects provided informational sessions and other opportunities to improve employers' attitudes about and perceptions of aging workers. They designed three types of activities to accomplish this objective: conducting employer workshops and information sessions, giving public recognition to businesses with older-worker-friendly hiring practices and policies, and providing a web-based application through which employers could connect to relevant content on aging workers.

Providing Information Sessions and Workshops for Employers. Five grantees (those in Indiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington) hosted informational sessions to communicate the benefits of hiring mature workers to employers and the general public.

- The AWI project in Vermont coordinated a public service media event through the Vermont Public Television channel's series "Making Sense New England." During the television presentation, a representative of Vermont Training and Development Corporation and the Commissioner for the Vermont Department of Labor were featured discussing the benefits of mature workers and the impact they have on the local economy.
- In Maine, the grantee contracted with the Muskie School of Public Service at University of Southern Maine to host employer dialogues across the state. The contractor was able to engage over 225 employers by taking the event to employer "hotspots" like association meetings, trade shows, and career fairs. Employers completed an "Older Worker Friendly Employer Assessment Tool" that gauged their sensitivity toward older workers and received an employer toolkit designed to help them create a more "senior friendly" work environment.
- Using a previously developed curriculum called "Maturity Matters," the project in Indiana worked closely with local chambers of commerce to host employer dialogues, which informed employers about the needs of older workers and the value they add to the local labor market.
- The Maryland project drew upon online management tools developed for employers by AARP to improve employers' perceptions of older workers.
- In Washington, the AWI project used a previously funded grant to develop information for employers and the public promoting the advantages of hiring mature workers; it worked to disseminate this information as part of its AWI grant activities.

Giving Public Recognition to Older-worker-friendly Employers. To recognize businesses that value mature workers, two projects sponsored employer awards. The "Silver Collar Award" sponsored by the AWI project in Maine and the "Maturity Matters" award sponsored by the

project in Indiana helped these grantees highlight the efforts of local businesses that offer mature-worker friendly business environments. Both grantees stated that the publicity surrounding their award events helped to give increased attention to mature worker issues.

Using a Website to Link Employers and Older Jobseekers. The project in Louisiana created an interactive website (<http://silverforce.org>) that connects older jobseekers with local employers who post job openings. The website also hosts information for employers about the value of a mature workforce. The benefit of the website for employers is that they are able to post information about their companies and recruit qualified applicants without any service fee. Project staff members assisted participants to use the website to identify potential jobs.

Involving Employers in the Design and Delivery of AWI Services

Six of the ten grantees invited employer representatives to participate in the design of the project and/or help shape project services by serving in an advisory capacity. These projects used input from employers to design training and other services for participants that would give them the skills needed by the local business community. Some projects found it useful to engage representatives of individual businesses to help identify effective service strategies. As noted in the Interim Report, employer intermediaries were important partners for several projects. For example, the project in Maryland contracted with an employer intermediary—the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health Care—to help the project recruit and serve local hospitals. Several grantees found that involving employer intermediaries or employer associations was more effective than involving representatives of individual businesses. One respondent reported that industry associations often have close working relationships with multiple employers and have a “longer view” of the human capital and training needs within their specific industries. Industry associations are also able to reach out to their business constituents to encourage participation in demonstration projects like AWI.

Overall, as noted in Chapter III, the employer partnerships developed by the AWI grantees were disappointing to them. Efforts to engage employers in project planning were hampered by the economic recession and the short timeframe available for project planning.

Creating Employment Opportunities for AWI Participants

A third reason projects wanted to conduct outreach to employers was to encourage them to hire AWI project participants once they completed training. The economic recession and the failure to form strong relationships with employers during the design phase of the projects, however, limited the realization of this goal. AWI grantees, nevertheless, used internships and job fairs as two innovative approaches for placing AWI participants with local employers.

Internships

Two projects (those in Indiana and Vermont) used internships to increase the likelihood of AWI participants being hired by the participating employers. The projects in Indiana and Vermont succeeded in launching subsidized internship programs as part of their project services. AWI staff members in Indiana and Vermont used the internships to help mature workers obtain work experience and to market their skills and abilities to local employers. Project staff members in Indiana stated that the internship component was very successful and that a number of aging workers were able to secure employment at the end of their internships. One local employer who hired four aging worker interns stated that they were “highly skilled and dependable.” This employer added that she is open to hiring more aging workers because they are “a good fit” for her business. Project staff members hoped that all of the employers hosting aging worker interns had similar experiences and that the internship experience increased their desire to hire older workers in the future. Internships proved to be a useful way to expose employers to the skills and abilities of aging workers in their communities.

Job Fairs

Six projects (those in Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Texas, and Washington) hosted job fairs or other similar employment events to help aging workers connect with employers. An innovative approach utilized by AWI projects in Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, and Texas was the reverse job fair. Typically, American Job Centers and job placement agencies hold job fairs where employers station themselves at tables and interested individuals meet with them to discuss available job openings. These four AWI grantees inverted this model by having mature workers sit at the tables, marketing themselves directly to local employers moving around the event space.

Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. was the first AWI grantee to use the reverse job fair method successfully, stationing individuals who had recently completed occupational skills training and pre-employment workshops at the fair tables, and having employers stroll from table to table to talk with jobseekers. Project staff members stated that employers commented on how “easy” it was to attend because there was no prep work required and said that the candidates they met were “qualified and professional.”

A number of grantees found that inviting employers to meet with them during their lunch hours and providing them with refreshments helped to provide the needed incentive for them to attend the reverse job fairs. Grantees found that reverse job fairs helped to increase employers’ awareness of the value of a mature workforce and dispelled the notion that mature workers’ skills are outdated.

Involving Employers in Training Incumbent Workers

Several AWI grantees worked with employers to identify incumbent workers in need of skills upgrading and support their training. The objectives of supporting training for employed older workers included (1) helping workers retain employment and advance in their careers; (2) building relationships with businesses that might encourage them to hire older workers after the economy rebounded; and (3) helping small and medium-sized businesses within the region stay competitive.

The projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania were the most successful in providing training and other program supports to older incumbent workers. The project in Pennsylvania devoted over fifty percent of its AWI funding to serving employed aging workers in the advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology sectors. Both projects worked with employer intermediaries to design and promote training that would address the labor needs of entire industries, rather than just those of individual firms. These two projects created financial incentives for employers to participate by offering to pay for some or all of the training received by incumbent older workers. The boxed example below describes how the projects in Pennsylvania and Maryland served incumbent workers. The AWI grantees that targeted incumbent workers for AWI services stated that they would do so again because they saw value in providing already employed individuals with retraining that helped them maintain employment or improved their career advancement opportunities.

Most projects were unable to provide the evaluation team with separate information about their services to incumbent workers, since the required reporting measures did not distinguish between services to unemployed versus incumbent workers. However, the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects were able to supply limited information about the individuals served in their incumbent worker training components, as shown in Exhibit V-10. Pennsylvania served around 170 incumbent workers, though this number may double count participants who enrolled in more than one course, as uniquely identified participant records were not available. Maryland served a smaller number of incumbent workers (23 participants). In Maryland, all incumbent workers were recruited from the healthcare sector. Most of the training they received was in medical billing and coding and sterile processing of surgical instruments. In Pennsylvania, most of the incumbent workers were employed in the advanced manufacturing sector, with a few in communications and healthcare. Most incumbent worker training provided in Pennsylvania was short-term, lasting a week or less. The types of courses incumbent workers in Pennsylvania took included basic and intermediate computer classes, safety training, project management, and industry-related technical courses.

**Exhibit V-10:
Incumbent Worker Training, by Grantee**

	MD	PA^a
Number of Incumbent Workers Enrolled in Training	23	171
Percentage by Training Sector		
Healthcare	100%	9%
Advanced Manufacturing	0	80%
Communications	0	12%
<i>N = Number of incumbent workers</i>	<i>n/a</i>	171
Percentage by Training Duration (total of all trainings)		
One week or less	<i>n/a</i>	90%
One week to one month	<i>n/a</i>	5%
One month to three months	<i>n/a</i>	1%
Three to six months	<i>n/a</i>	4%
More than six months	<i>n/a</i>	1%
<i>N = Number of incumbent workers</i>	<i>n/a</i>	171

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects.

^a *Incumbent worker data in Pennsylvania may count individual participants more than once, as unique individual-level records were not supplied for the evaluation.*

"n/a" denotes data not available.

**Case Examples: Training Incumbent Workers with AWI Grant Funds
South Central Workforce Investment Board, Pennsylvania**

South Central Workforce Investment Board in Pennsylvania used existing industry partnerships to help train older workers in three industry sectors—advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. Through a state-sponsored initiative started in 2005, the grantee has developed partnerships with hundreds of employers in the South Central region of Pennsylvania. Through the industry partnerships, groups of employers identify a specific set of skills needed for employment in their industry and agree to invest their own funds alongside federal and state resources to pay for workforce training. Initially employers agreed to fund 25 percent of the cost of the training, but by end of the grant period, the employer share had increased to 30 percent. The AWI project built on the existing industry partnerships and encouraged employers to plan retraining for aging workers.

Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)

The AWI project operated by the Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development in Maryland promoted career awareness and training for older incumbent workers in the healthcare industry by developing a partnership with local area hospitals to recruit older workers for AWI services. At the time of the first round of site visits, grantee staff members were hoping to involve four hospitals to develop incumbent worker training for healthcare professionals and had successfully trained 14 older workers. One unique feature of the Maryland project's incumbent worker services was that one hundred percent of the cost of the training was paid for by the AWI project. Unfortunately, three of the four targeted hospitals were not able to participate in the project, due to budget constraints.

Summary of Findings

- Projects found that case management was a critical service component for AWI participants. Across the grantees, most AWI program managers and staff found that many older workers required more support and encouragement than the typical adult and dislocated workers served within American Job Centers.
- Fewer than half of AWI participants entered training programs. The remaining participants received other grant-funded services, such as career counseling, basic skills training, and/or assistance with job search.
- Not all older workers participating in the AWI projects were interested in thinking about career long-term goals. Some participants had a specific employment goal in mind by the time they arrived at the project and/or were more interested in immediate employment than planning a long-term career path. However, even these participants did not always have realistic employment goals, and most benefited from the personalized employability training and job search support offered by the projects.
- In some sites, there was mismatch between participants and training options. A number of sites struggled to find industries/occupations/training programs that were a good fit for the skills/abilities/interests of older workers. Several programs that offered long-term training had difficulty finding participants who were interested in or had the academic preparation to complete demanding academic programs successfully. Those who did enroll in training preferred short-term training. Overall, the median amount of time spent in training was 59 days (less than a semester).
- The most common training type across the ten grantees was basic computer skills training, as lack of basic computer skills was the most commonly identified barrier to employment for AWI participants. Additionally, the lack of computer skills limited the ability of older workers to access online job tools at American Job Centers.

- The lack of employer involvement interfered with the development of training that would make participants more employable. Without employer involvement, some programs did not know what skills and experience employers required in hiring workers for specific jobs.
- Only a few enrollees participated in entrepreneurship training.

VI. DATA COLLECTION, REPORTING, AND OUTCOMES

The ten AWI grantees launched their projects in 2009 with ambitious enrollment and employment goals (articulated in their proposals and subsequent grant agreements) to enhance the employability of individual aging workers and increase the workforce development system's capacity for serving them. To help measure the success of their efforts, grantees collected data on program participants, their activities, and outcomes and reported this information to ETA and to the evaluation team. The means by which they collected and reported these data are discussed in detail in this chapter. To shed light on the outcomes achieved by individual grantees and the Initiative overall, evaluators analyzed participant data provided by grantees and examined summary outcomes generated through the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS). These data and the outcomes are discussed below.

Data Collection and Reporting

Throughout the course of the AWI projects, grantees recorded data on enrollees in AWI programs, the services they received, and participant outcomes. Grantees used these data both for case management and for reporting on grant progress.

For performance reporting to ETA, grantees were required to collect and maintain participant information and employment outcomes using the OMB-approved data elements and definitions developed for ETA's High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI), under which the AWI grants were awarded.⁷⁴ The HGJTI performance reporting system created a hierarchy of outcomes focused around entry into and completion of education and training services. In this system, most outcome measures applied only to the subset of participants who completed education and training activities.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ As described below, ETA also developed some optional reporting measures for the AWI grantees that it incorporated into the AWD automated reporting system.

⁷⁵ The outcome measures required for the HGJTI grantees differ substantially from the measures in the performance management system used for WIA formula funds, which are based on all program exiters, rather

Each AWI grantee was required to submit a quarterly report with aggregate data on project outcomes to date, using the ETA Form 9134. The ETA Form 9134 also required grantees to report information on customers served, participant demographics, training activities, training outcomes, employment, capacity-building activities, and leveraged resources.

Data Systems

To aid grantees in the collection of the data required for reporting purposes, ETA created a data system specifically for use by AWI grantees. ETA modified the existing Performance-at-Work (PAW) system (an optional Access-based data system developed for HGJTI grantees), to create the Aging Worker Data (AWD) system. AWD contained all the elements required for the ETA Form 9134 that were in the PAW system. In addition, AWD included optional fields to collect additional information on participants, such as employment background, barriers to employment, motivations for enrollment, and co-enrollment in other programs. ETA added these items to AWD so that projects could better document the varied histories and needs of older workers and in anticipation of potential data requests to be made for the evaluation.⁷⁶ Like the PAW system, the AWD software was designed to make it easier for grantees to prepare the quarterly ETA Form 9134. As with PAW, if a grantee entered participant-level data into the system, the AWD would “auto-fill” all the fields on ETA Form 9134, using formulas built into the system software. AWD also included a feature intended to make it easy for grantees to export the individual records into an Excel spreadsheet, so that they could share participant records with the evaluator.⁷⁷

Although AWD was available for all grantees to use, the use of this system was voluntary. Because grantees were not required to use it to calculate outcomes, some grantees chose to use other means of collecting participant data. Exhibit VI-1 describes the systems grantees used to collect data on AWI participants. Seven of the AWI grantees opted to use AWD; five of these grantees also used an additional system—their own Excel spreadsheets, Access databases, or their state’s unified management information system (MIS)—to capture data on AWI participants. The grantees that used other systems in addition to AWD did so because of difficulties they encountered using reporting features in AWD. Some grantees used their state MIS to record data on AWI participants in addition to using AWD or their own customized

than program completers. Thus, each measure in the WIA system (e.g., entered employment, employment retention) uses as its denominator all individuals who exited the program during a given reporting period.

⁷⁶ The findings from the data collected on these additional data elements are reported in Chapter IV, under “Characteristics of Participants Served.”

⁷⁷ All personally identifiable information was stripped from these records before they were shared with the evaluator.

spreadsheets, because of requirements to submit data to the state. This was particularly important for projects that co-enrolled participants in other programs. A disadvantage of using a state MIS to record project data was that grantees were rarely able to extract data from these systems to develop project reports.

The three grantees that did not use AWD decided that it would be simpler to develop their own spreadsheets. One of these grantees decided not to use AWD after it experienced problems with the system crashing. Still another grantee developed its own web-based spreadsheet in order to make it easy for case managers and staff in multiple locations to access for data entry or reporting.

**Exhibit VI-1:
Exhibit VI-1: AWI Grantee Data Systems**

Grantee	Data System(s) Used
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	AWD, Excel Spreadsheet and State MIS
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	AWD
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	AWD, Excel Spreadsheet
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)	Excel Spreadsheets and State MIS
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	AWD and Access Database
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	Excel Spreadsheets and State MIS
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Excel Spreadsheet
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	AWD and Excel Spreadsheets
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	AWD
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	AWD and Excel Spreadsheet

Issues in the Calculation and Reporting of Project Data

The AWI grantees encountered several challenges in reporting quarterly outcomes. The first challenge arose from confusion among the grantees about how to compute the entered-employment outcome to be reported to ETA on Form 9134. ETA instructions initially indicated

that only participants *who entered employment in the same quarter in which they completed training* could be counted as having entered employment.⁷⁸ Most grantees followed this definition (particularly if they used the AWD to generate the ETA Form 9134 project-level quarterly progress report), but some projects used a definition of entered employment that did not restrict the timing of employment outcomes to the quarter in which training was completed. Moreover, in September 2011, as part of its renewal of the OMB-approved performance reporting requirements for AWI grantees, ETA officially modified the definition of Entered Employment so that HGJTI grantees could include participants employed beyond the quarter in which they completed training. It was not clear to the evaluation team when, or if, all AWI grantees modified their reporting practices in accordance with the new definition. Thus, not only were there possible inconsistencies in how entered employment was defined and computed across grantees, but also how it was defined within individual projects over time.

The second challenge concerned the use of AWD to generate summary data for the ETA Form 9134. While grantees that used the AWD system reported that the user interface was an effective tool for managing the cases of individual participants, they reported problems with the system's automated reporting features. When they reviewed the summary forms generated by AWD, many of the grantees believed that the system was providing erroneous summary information. It is not clear whether these problems stemmed from user error (e.g., improper coding of data or misunderstanding of reporting definitions) or technical errors in the aggregation function within the software program.⁷⁹ In any case, a number of grantees became frustrated when AWD did not produce the summary outcomes they had anticipated and expressed the need for more technical assistance to help correct errors. One of the more technologically savvy grantees used the AWD feature that had been designed to generate raw data extracts for the evaluator to download the raw data for its own use. Using these data, staff from this grantee recalculated the summary outcomes for the ETA Form 9134 by hand. Other grantees, who were either not aware of this feature or declined to use it, developed alternative "shadow" data collection systems, usually Excel spreadsheets, that they used to produce the statistics required for the quarterly report. Projects that maintained auxiliary or shadow reporting systems had to enter project data in two or even three systems.

⁷⁸ In providing guidance to grantees, ETA encouraged project managers to use the narrative report that accompanied the ETA Form 9134 to report outcomes that did not correspond to the official reporting instructions (such as employment received prior to the first quarter after exit or during a subsequent quarter).

⁷⁹ Although the evaluation team was not able to verify independently the source of the difficulties that grantees reported, a few of the grantees reported that the cumulative totals produced by AWD did not correspond to the data they had entered during individual reporting periods. In particular, there appeared to be a problem with the accuracy of the cumulative total generated for the number of individuals who had entered training, which was sometimes larger than the number of individuals enrolled in the program.

Outcomes

Because of the possibility of inconsistencies in the definitions used and questions about the accuracy of the aggregate outcomes reported on the ETA Form 9134, the evaluation team decided to use participant-level data provided by the grantees for the analysis of project outcomes for the evaluation. These data are the same raw data that were used by the projects to generate the aggregate numbers in the quarterly performance reports. However, by making the calculations from the raw participant-level data, the evaluators were able to ensure that the outcome definitions were applied consistently across projects and over time. The evaluators also made the decision to use project exit, rather than completion of training, as the basis for computing entered employment outcomes. Thus, rather than reporting only employment outcomes for AWI participants who had completed training, this chapter reports employment outcomes for all individuals who had exited the AWI projects.⁸⁰

The outcomes described in this chapter should be viewed with caution, due to the data collection and reporting challenges described elsewhere in this chapter. Further, the evaluation was not designed to determine the effectiveness of the services provided under the AWI grants by comparing participant outcomes with those of individuals not participating in the program. This would have been premature for the AWI projects, which were experimenting with a wide variety of different interventions, rather than testing well-developed service models. Although the researchers had originally hoped to use multivariate analysis techniques to identify factors associated with successful outcomes, the fact that projects were still ongoing at the time of the analysis meant that the outcome data were not complete enough to generate meaningful results.

Readers interested in how projects performed on the outcome measures included in the ETA Form 9134 may refer to the project profiles in Appendix A of this report. These profiles include aggregate outcomes reported on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. Thus, the outcomes presented in the profiles are from a more recent time period, but use different data definitions than those used in the body of the report. (As noted previously the employment outcomes in the quarterly reports are based on training completers rather than all exiters.)

The major indicators of project success for AWI grantees were whether they enrolled the targeted number of participants and the extent to which participants entered employment following their exit from the program. The sources of data used and their limitations are detailed below, followed by a discussion of project outcomes.

⁸⁰ This decision was influenced by the fact that across all projects, only 42 percent of the AWI enrollees had entered training.

Data Sources and their Limitations

The participant-level data provided by grantees included outcome information as reported to the project staff by participants, or sometimes employers, at the end of services or during follow-up. As noted above, the analysis of this data focuses on results for program “exiters”⁸¹ and thus covers both participants who received training and those who did not.

The timing of the data acquisition was not ideal for capturing final project outcomes. Extracts were provided to the evaluation team during the spring of 2012 in order to maintain the evaluation project timeline.⁸² Unfortunately, at that time, none of the projects had completed operations. Seven of the projects still had another three months of operation to go, and three projects received no-cost extensions to continue operating past the original completion date of August 16, 2012 (see Exhibit VI-2 for project completion dates). Because the data were collected before project completion, the enrollment and employment outcomes presented in this chapter should be considered preliminary, especially for the three grantees whose projects were scheduled to end at the end of 2012 or in 2013.

To supplement participant data provided by the grantees, this chapter also summarizes outcome reports from CRIS on exit cohorts for several early quarters in the life of the projects.⁸³ Because of the time lag associated with the availability of wage records, there is a nine-month delay from the time a participant exits the program until Common Measure data become available. Like the other outcomes reported in this chapter, the CRIS results are based on outcomes for individuals who had exited the projects by the end of the reporting period.

Enrollment Outcomes

In writing their grant proposals, AWI projects established targets for the number of participants they planned to enroll. One measure of a project’s success in implementation and execution is its ability to serve the number of participants that it originally planned to serve.⁸⁴ As described in Chapter IV under “Characteristics of Participants Served,” the projects had enrolled more than 4,000 participants overall by spring 2012, according to the participant-level data extracts. This

⁸¹ Individuals exited from the AWI program after they entered employment or after 90 days without receiving any services, or at the end of the grant period. Since the grant period had not yet ended at any project at the time we collected outcome data, only a portion of all enrollees had exited each project.

⁸² Because the projects provided participant-level data in the middle of the second quarter of 2012, the numbers of enrollees do not correspond exactly to the numbers in either the first or second quarter progress reports for 2012.

⁸³ Projects submitted participant identifiers to ETA, and through CRIS, ETA generated summary employment and earnings outcome reports on exiters using access to wage records through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and the Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES).

⁸⁴ The individual project profiles included in Appendix A compare outcomes to each project’s targets.

total is equal to 80 percent of the aggregate target number (see Exhibit VI-3). It is likely that several projects enrolled additional participants by the time they reached their completion dates (shown in Exhibit VI-2), which would have boosted both their individual enrollment percentages and that of the AWI as a whole.

**Exhibit VI-2:
AWI Grantee Project Completion Dates**

Grantee	Project Completion Date
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	December 31, 2012
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	August 16, 2012
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	March 31, 2013
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)	August 16, 2012
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	August 16, 2012
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	August 16, 2012
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	August 16, 2012
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	February 16, 2013
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	August 16, 2012
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	August 16, 2012

The project in Michigan served the most participants by far; indeed, more than one-third of all AWI participants were enrolled in that project. The projects in Louisiana and Texas each served more than 600 participants, and the other projects served between 120 and 340 participants each. The three projects that served large numbers of participants were able to do so by concentrating on shorter-term training for larger numbers of participants (Louisiana and Texas), or providing most participants with intensive case management and services other than training (Michigan).

Of the seven projects that ended in August 2012—those in Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin—only the projects in Maryland, Michigan and Wisconsin had failed to meet their enrollment targets as of spring 2012. These three projects had enrolled only a portion of their original targets (38, 60, and 47 percent, respectively) and seemed unlikely to achieve their targets by August 2012.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Updated enrollment numbers gathered from grantee’s quarterly progress reports from September 30, 2012 can be found in the Appendix A. Project Profiles

**Exhibit VI-3:
Enrollment Outcomes, by Grantee (Spring 2012)**

Grantee	Total	Target	Percent of Target
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	323	300	108%
The Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	677	500	135%
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	256	200	128%
Baltimore County Office of Workforce Development (Maryland)	120	312	38%
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	1,696	2,823	60%
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	340	318	107%
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	677	500	135%
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	214	300	71%
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	174	165	105%
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	211	450	47%
Total across all projects	4,688	5,868	80%

Of the three projects that received no-cost extensions from ETA to continue serving participants throughout 2012 or into early 2013, two projects (*Tecumseh Area Partnership*, IN and *Coastal Counties*, ME) had already exceeded their enrollment targets while the third (*Vermont Associates*) was relatively close to enrolling the targeted number of participants.

The percentage of participants that had exited each program as of the spring of 2012 and the duration of participants' enrollment in the program are presented in Exhibit VI-4. Overall, half of all participants enrolled in AWI had exited their respective programs by spring 2012. Exit percentages varied considerably among individual projects, however. Of the seven projects set to end in August 2012, only two—those in Louisiana and Texas—had exited most of their participants. In the other five, over half of the participants were still receiving services from the grantees. While the three projects continuing past August 2012 were still enrolling participants, these projects had exited participants at rates that were comparable to or higher than that of most other grantees.

**Exhibit VI-4:
Program Participation Parameters, by Grantee^a**

	IN	LA	MD	ME	MI	PA	TX	VT	WA	WI	Total
Exited the Program											
Yes	61%	93%	28%	71%	27%	n/a	68%	44%	48%	27%	50%
No	39%	7%	72%	29%	73%	n/a	32%	57%	52%	73%	50%
<i>Number of enrollees with available data</i>	323	677	120	256	1,696	n/a	677	214	174	211	4,348
Duration of Enrollment											
Mean (in days)	123.4	283.7	n/a	115.3	186.3	n/a	234.2	220.7	237.9	371.8	221.6
<i>Number of exiters with available data</i>	196	630	n/a	182	452	n/a	459	92	84	56	2,151

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

"n/a" denotes data not available.

^a Please note that while other projects were set to end in August 2012, the projects in Indiana, Maine, and Vermont received extensions of their grant end dates (December 2012, March 2013, and February 2013, respectively).

On average, participants in AWI spent about 220 days actively enrolled in the program. Participants in the project in Wisconsin were enrolled for the longest average time (372 days), likely due to the project's focus on enrolling participants in longer-term training. While participants in the projects in Louisiana and Texas also had relatively longer enrollment durations, the participants in these programs received the shortest amount of training, indicating that these projects tended to retain participants in the program long after they completed training. Some grantee managers indicated that they preferred to keep participants in an active service status while they received further assistance and until they secured employment. By contrast, participants of the projects in Indiana and Maine were enrolled for the shortest average duration (123 and 115 days, respectively) and were in shorter-term training (usually lasting less than 3 months). However, unlike other grantees that offered short-duration training, these sites tended to record participants as being out of the program quite soon after training was completed.

Employment Outcomes

The AWI projects aimed to help participants secure employment by providing them with training and other related services. The employment outcomes obtained by participants are therefore key indicators of the projects' success. This section first presents basic employment outcomes data obtained on participants from the data submitted by grantees to the evaluators in spring 2012,

covering program operations through the middle of the third quarter of 2012. Then data from CRIS are shown on the employment and earnings outcomes achieved by early-exiting participants.

Outcomes Using the Data Extract from Grantees

Employment outcomes for AWI participants are presented in Exhibit VI-5. These measures include the percentage of participants who entered unsubsidized employment, the proportion of participants entering full- vs. part-time employment, participants' average hourly earnings, and the percentage of participants whose jobs were in training-related industries. These measures were calculated for participants who had exited the program and who were unemployed (or had received notice of termination or layoff) at the time of their enrollment in the program. It is worth noting that these summary outcomes could have changed substantially after the remaining active participants exited the projects over the last months of the grants.

Across all AWI grantees, half of exited participants obtained unsubsidized employment. The projects in Michigan, Washington, Indiana, and Texas had better-than-average success in placing participants in jobs (they placed 83, 63, 60, and 54 percent of participants in employment, respectively). The projects with the lowest rates of employment were those in Maryland,⁸⁶ Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Maine (which placed 5, 22, 24, and 29 percent of participants, respectively). The reported employment outcomes for participants in the projects in Wisconsin and Vermont were only slightly below the average for all projects. Although some grantees provided entrepreneurship training to a small number of participants, the number of participants reported as becoming self-employed was very small.

⁸⁶ As reported in other chapters, the project in Maryland made two serious miscalculations in project design. First, the healthcare occupations originally offered were not well matched to the academic skills of enrolled participants. Second, the training provided for one of the occupations—medical billing—was not sufficient to meet the employer expectation that new hires have two years' prior experience in this occupation.

**Exhibit VI-5:
Employment Outcomes, by Grantee**

	IN	LA	MD	ME	MI	PA	TX	VT	WA	WI	Total
Entered Unsubsidized Employment (% of exiters)											
Yes	60%	22%	5%	29%	83%	24%	54%	43%	63%	43%	50%
No	40%	78%	96%	71%	17%	76%	46%	57%	37%	57%	50%
<i>N = number of exiters^a</i>	167	388	22	136	451	148	443	77	81	44	1,957
Training-Related Employment (% of employed participants who received training)											
Yes	9%	97%	n/a	58%	7%	n/a	33%	79%	89%	48%	29%
No	91%	3%	n/a	42%	93%	n/a	67%	21%	12%	52%	71%
<i>N = number of exiters who participated in training</i>	123	69	n/a	36	424	n/a	238	33	52	23	998
Employment Type (% of employed participants)^b											
Full-time	68%	40%	n/a	52%	68%	n/a	72%	45%	63%	67%	65%
Part-time	32%	60%	n/a	48%	32%	n/a	28%	55%	37%	33%	35%
<i>Number of exiters who entered unsubsidized employment</i>	91	67	n/a	23	373	n/a	238	29	51	18	890
Hourly Earnings (for employed participants)											
(mean)	\$14.41	\$9.55	n/a	\$11.68	\$14.68	n/a	\$15.90	\$13.41	\$16.10	\$12.86	\$14.58
<i>Number of exiters who entered unsubsidized employment with available data on earnings</i>	90	67	n/a	24	373	n/a	238	30	51	16	889

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

^a In assessing employment outcomes, exiters are limited to participants who had exited the program and who were unemployed or had received notice of termination or layoff at the time of their enrollment in the program.

^b "Full-time" employment is considered to be working more than 35 hours per week, while "Part-time" employment is working 35 or fewer hours in a week. "n/a" denotes data not available

A key indicator of the efficacy of training is whether a participant found employment in the field in which he or she was trained. Exhibit VI-5 shows that fewer than a third of the exiters who had participated in training secured jobs in training-related fields (29 percent overall). Louisiana reported the highest rate of training-related employment; however, because the project offered training in basic computer classes only, it is likely that the project construed this training as related to nearly all types of employment. The projects in Washington and Vermont also reported higher-than-average rates of participants in training-related employment while very few participants in the projects in Indiana and Michigan were reported as having training-related jobs. However, it is not clear if the wide variation in results on this measure was a result of inconsistent definitions as to what constitutes training-related employment or genuine differences in results among the grantees.

Overall, most participants who got jobs obtained full-time, rather than part-time, employment (65 versus 35 percent). However, the majority of participants in the projects in Louisiana and Vermont (60 and 55 percent) got part-time jobs.

The grantees that used AWD were able to ask participants at enrollment what goals they wished to achieve as a result of their participation. Across all projects, the percentage of participants who named obtaining part-time employment as their goal was very similar to the percentage of participants who actually secured part-time jobs (36 percent versus 35 percent). As a number of grantee staff members noted, this may indicate that many older workers desire part-time employment rather than full-time. However, the grantee with the highest percentage of participants in part-time employment (Louisiana) had a very small percentage of participants who reported that they wanted part-time employment. Thus, this grantee does not appear to have been as successful as other projects in finding its participants employment situations that matched their employment goals.

The average hourly wage for participants who found employment was about \$14.50, compared to the U.S. median wage of \$16.57 as of May 2011.⁸⁷ Participants of the projects in Washington and Texas earned the most per hour on average (\$16.10 and \$15.90, respectively). It is worth noting that despite focusing on serving low-income individuals and non-English speakers, the project in Washington succeeded in placing its participants in jobs that garnered the highest

⁸⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wage Estimates, May 2011. Across all project sites, the mean wage for project exiters was lower than the state median wage. (Data on mean wage by state is available at Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics at http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#19-0000).

average hourly wages.⁸⁸ The projects with the lowest average hourly earnings were those in Louisiana and Maine. These two projects also had relatively low rates of employment.

Variations in Employment Outcomes by Characteristics of Participants and Services

Exhibit VI-6 presents participants' employment outcomes analyzed by variable of interest—the gender of job seekers, their age at enrollment, whether they received training or not, and, if so, how long that training lasted. According to the data, male participants had a higher rate of employment than female participants did (56 percent compared to 49 percent). Younger participants were also employed at a higher rate than their older counterparts, with 63 percent of individuals aged 55 to 59 years of age having found jobs, compared to 47 percent of job seekers age 60 to 64 and 31 percent of those aged 65 or older. This finding is consistent with the reports from grantee staff members that it was more challenging to find suitable employment for individuals who are beyond traditional retirement age.

Participants who enrolled in training programs had a slightly lower rate of employment than those that did not obtain training (46 percent as compared to 52 percent). The reasons for this are not clear from the data available but it may be that while training can be beneficial to older workers, pre-employment and re-employment services such as job readiness workshops, case management and career counseling, and job placement services can also be an effective route to securing a new job.

Of the participants that did engage in training program, individuals who engaged in training for between three to six months had a slightly higher rate of employment (53 percent) than individuals who engaged in either shorter or longer training. Many of the grantees offered very short-term training focused on improving participants' basic computer skills. These findings suggest that participants may have benefited from the higher level of skills obtained from more intensive training programs. However, since participants who engaged in training that lasted over six months also had lower rates of employment, there may be a maximum optimal duration of training for older workers. Alternatively, perhaps employment outcomes are merely delayed for participants who entered longer-term training.

⁸⁸ Because fewer than half of the enrolled participants had exited this project at the time we collected the outcome data, average outcomes could change as more participants exit the project.

**Exhibit VI-6:
Employment by Participant and Training Characteristics**

	Entered Employment	Did Not Enter Employment	Number
Participant Gender (% of participants in employment)			
Male	56%	44%	892
Female	49%	51%	917
Participant Age (% of participants in employment)			
55-59	63%	37%	959
60-64	47%	53%	515
65-69	31%	69%	310
Receipt of Training (% of participants in employment)			
Entered Training	46%	54%	796
Did Not Enter Training	52%	48%	1161
Training Duration (% of participants in employment)			
One Month or less	42%	58%	323
One to Three Months	47%	53%	229
Three to Six Months	53%	47%	115
More than Six Months	44%	56%	109

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data on participant ages were not available from the projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Due to an inability to track incumbent workers in AWD separately, data from all projects included may include some incumbent workers. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Employment by Occupation and Industry

A basic assumption of the Aging Worker Initiative is that training older workers for jobs in high-growth industries benefits both workers and the businesses who hire them: Workers with in-demand skills find jobs more easily, and employers able to find workers with the skills they need have a stronger foundation for continued growth. Data on the occupations and industries in which participants found employment are therefore of great interest because they indicate which industries in different regions had current labor demands and, possibly, where future aging worker initiatives might most fruitfully concentrate their training efforts.

To provide a greater understanding of the types of jobs that all AWI participants obtained, Exhibit VI-7 displays the occupations in which participants most commonly found employment using Standard Occupational Codes (SOC)⁸⁹ gathered in the AWD system.⁹⁰ These data can be

⁸⁹ SOC codes capture the occupation of participants regardless of the industry in which they were employed, while North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes capture the industry of participants' employment, but not the occupational variations within that industry. For example, a participant may be working in administrative support (SOC code) for a health care company (NAICS code).

compared to those provided by participants about their previous occupations (see Chapter IV, Exhibit IV-7 for detailed data on participants' past occupations). These comparisons can generate important inferences about participants' employment goals.

Overall, the occupations listed in Exhibit VI-7 were also the most common previous occupations of participants. The prevalence of different types of previous occupations is also very similar to the ranking of new occupations; office and administrative support, for example, is the top occupation on both lists. One notable change is that management occupations dropped from the second most popular previous occupation to the sixth most common current occupation. Some grantee staff members noted that many older workers were either interested in or willing to take jobs with less responsibility or demands. Other grantee staff indicated that many high-skilled older workers were unable to find employment in their previous fields and settled for jobs in lower-skilled occupations. The fact that management occupations were much less common as current occupations than they were as previous occupations may reflect both of these phenomena.

**Exhibit VI-7:
Standard Occupational Codes of Employed Participants, by Grantee**

Occupations (top selected)	IN	LA	ME	MI	VT	WA	WI	Total
Office and Administrative Support	21%	46%	30%	23%	13%	8%	13%	24%
Production	19%	3%	7%	14%	3%	14%	0	13%
Transportation and Material Moving	8%	12%	7%	9%	0	6%	25%	9%
Healthcare Support	3%	2%	17%	5%	19%	22%	31%	8%
Sales and Related	8%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%	13%	8%
Management	6%	3%	3%	7%	10%	10%	6%	7%
Business and Financial Operations	4%	0	7%	7%	7%	10%	0	6%
<i>Number</i>	99	68	30	368	31	51	16	663

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data on occupations were not available from the projects in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Due to an inability to track incumbent workers in AWD separately, data from all projects above may include some incumbent workers. Because some participants entered multiple jobs, the total percentage for each grantee and the total of all grantees may exceed 100%.

Exhibit VI-8 shows the industries in which 287 participants found training-related employment using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. The exhibit details the percentage of each projects' participants who were employed in each of the eight industries that were the most common sources of training-related jobs. Participants who did not obtain training-related employment were excluded from this analysis because in this context we are

⁹⁰ Information on occupations includes all employed participants regardless of whether they received training or if their placement was training-related.

interested specifically in employment that occurred as a probable consequence of a particular type of training.

For most grantees, the most common industry in which participants found employment was health care and social assistance, followed by administrative and support services. In the projects in Indiana and Michigan, manufacturing was the most common industry of training-related employment. This is not surprising given that these two states are traditional manufacturing hubs.

**Exhibit VI-8:
Industry Codes for Training-Related Employment Obtained by Participants, by Grantee**

NAICS Code	Industry	IN	LA	ME	MI	TX	VT	WA	WI	Total
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	--	3%	67%	25%	19%	46%	26%	46%	23%
56	Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services	--	60%	10%	18%	1%	8%	2%	18%	18%
31-33	Manufacturing	50%	3%	5%	25%	8%	4%	7%	9%	9%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	--	3%	--	4%	23%	4%	11%	--	9%
44-45	Retail Trade	20%	8%	5%	--	8%	8%	7%	--	7%
23	Construction	--	13%	10%	--	6%	4%	4%	--	7%
48-49	Transportation & Warehousing	10%	5%	--	7%	3%	8%	9%	27%	6%
54	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	--	2%	--	7%	12%	4%	11%	--	6%
	Other	20%	10%	20%	22%	30%	24%	47%	--	23%
	Number of exiters who obtained training-related employment	10	67	21	28	78	26	46	11	287

Source: Individual-level data provided to SPR by the projects. Data on industries were not available from the projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Due to an inability to track incumbent workers in AWD separately, data from all projects above may include some incumbent workers. Because some participants entered multiple jobs, the total percentage for each grantee and the total of all grantees may exceed 100%.

Outcomes from CRIS

Data from ETA's CRIS provides alternative measures of several of the basic employment outcomes presented above. CRIS data are valuable because they are obtained from reports on individual quarterly earnings that employers are required to submit to their state's UI system. Thus these data are likely to be more complete than the outcome information collected and reported by the projects themselves. Furthermore, two of the three CRIS outcome measures provide information about longer-term outcomes that are not included in the data collected by the projects themselves. 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.⁹¹

The evaluation obtained CRIS data on the Common Measures outcomes for six of the ten grantees—the projects in Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington (presented below in Exhibit VI-9). Because of the time lag for obtaining wage records data in CRIS, information on Entered Employment was only available for participants who exited their project before June 30, 2011, and information on Employment Retention and Average Earnings was only available for participants who exited their project before December 31, 2010. Because of this time lag, the outcomes presented here from CRIS are not a reliable indicator of the outcomes ultimately achieved by all project participants.

Exhibit VI-9 displays the Entered Employment rate for all participants who exited the six projects during the 18-month period from January 2010 through June 2011. The CRIS data show that the projects in Vermont and Michigan achieved the highest Entered Employment rates—over 70 percent of those projects' participants obtained employment in the first quarter after their exit from the program.⁹² CRIS data show that just over half of the participants from the projects in Indiana and Washington (58 percent each) were working during the first quarter following their exit from their respective programs. Coastal Counties Workforce (ME) had an Entered Employment rate of 46 percent. With the exception of Vermont, which had only a small number of participants included in the Common Measures, grantees' Entered Employment rates are similar to the rates of employment displayed in Exhibit VI-5 above, which suggests that the

⁹¹ The Entered Employment rate is defined as the percentage of participants who were 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 of participants who entered employment in the first quarter after program exit that were employed in both the second and third quarters following exit. Average Earnings is the average of total second and third quarter earnings of participants counted in the Employment Retention measure.

⁹² Please note that while Vermont had an Entered Employment Rate of 70 percent, the project had outcomes available for only 16 of its participants.

outcomes based on data reported by the projects were quite accurate, even though they were based on participants' self-reports.

The Employment Retention rate and Average Earnings are shown for the individuals who exited the project during the yearlong period between January 2010 and the end of December 2010. At first glance, Pennsylvania appears to outperform the other projects, with a very high rate of Employment Retention (97 percent) and average earnings over the second and third quarter after exit that are substantially higher than the other projects (\$43,912). However, a closer examination reveals that these individuals were incumbent workers (nominated by their employers in this project for skills upgrading), rather than older workers who were unemployed at program entry.

**Exhibit VI-9:
Common Measures Outcomes, by Grantee**

	Entered Employment (EE)			Employment Retention (ER)			Average Earnings over 6 months (AE)	
	# EE	# in Cohort	% EE	# ER	# EE	% ER	# ER	AE
	Exit Cohort: ⁹³ 1/01/10-6/30/11			Exit Cohort: 1/01/10-12/31/10				
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	64	111	57.7%	35	42	83.3%	35	\$16,300
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (Maine)	48	110	46.3%	27	29	93.1%	27	\$8,392
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Michigan)	153	214	71.5%	46	81	56.8%	46	\$15,887
South Central Workforce Investment Board (Pennsylvania)	0	0	n/a	37	38	97.4%	37	\$43,912
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (Washington)	21	36	58.3%	4	5	80.0%	4	\$10,482
Vermont Associates (Vermont)	12	16	75.0%	5	5	100.0%	5	\$18,183

Source: Common Measures outcomes were obtained from the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS) reports provided by ETA. The two cohorts presented are the ones with the latest eight quarters of data available at the time of reporting. The projects in Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, and Wisconsin did not utilize CRIS reporting.

⁹³ Although projects began operation during 2009, individuals did not exit the projects until the first quarter of 2010.

Among the five projects for which CRIS data refer mostly to workers who were unemployed at project enrollment, the majority of participants employed during the first quarter after project exit were still employed during the second and third quarters after exit. However, there appears to be a weak inverse relationship between the Entered Employment rate and the Employment Retention rate. For example, the project in Michigan, which had one of the higher Entered Employment rates had the lowest Employment Retention rate of the five grantees. At the other end of the spectrum, Maine, which had the lowest Entered Employment rate among the projects had one of the highest Employment Retention rates. The five projects appear to fall into two groups in terms of the average earnings achieved by exiters who entered and retained employment. In three projects—Indiana, Michigan, and Vermont—participants achieved Average Earnings over the second and third quarters after exit in the range of \$15,000 to \$18,000. In the two remaining projects—in Washington and Maine—Average Earnings were substantially lower.⁹⁴

Summary of Findings

To aid grantees in the collection of the data required for reporting purposes, ETA created a data system, AWD, specifically for use by AWI grantees. Many of the grantees used this system alone or in conjunction with another form of record-keeping. The evaluation team obtained participant-level data extracts from the grantees to use in the analysis of participant outcomes, either from AWD (for those who used it) or from project spreadsheets. Because many of the participants did not enter training, the evaluation team analyzed and reported project outcomes for all exiters, rather than just for individuals who had completed training.

Participant outcomes reported in this chapter should be viewed cautiously and must be considered suggestive rather than conclusive for a couple of reasons. First, due to the evaluation timeline, the evaluators had to collect these data from projects before the end of their grant periods, so outcomes on current exiters represent only a portion of project participants. In addition, the grantees encountered several challenges with accurate data collection that may have affected the accuracy of the data.

- At the time final data were collected in spring 2012, most of the grantees had already achieved or were on track to meet their enrollment targets. A few projects struggled with enrollment and may have had difficulty meeting their enrollment targets.

⁹⁴ The project in Washington State specifically targeted older workers with serious barriers to employment, which may explain why their participants achieved lower average earnings than most of the other projects.

- Overall, only half of job-seeking participants obtained employment after exit, though some individual projects were very successful in placing participants in employment. While most participants who secured employment were working in full-time positions, about one-third of participants got part-time jobs at program exit. Across projects, the average hourly wage was about \$14.50.
- Jobs in managerial occupations were less frequently held by participants after they left the projects than they had been prior to project enrollment. This may indicate that some dislocated workers were unable to find new jobs at the same level of seniority as their previous occupation. Alternatively, some older workers may have preferred jobs with less responsibility.
- Disappointingly, less than one-third of all exiters who had completed training secured jobs in training-related fields.
- There were small differences in the rate of post-program employment for participants who participated in training and those who did not, with a slight employment advantage for participants who did not enter training.
- The available data suggest that the trainees whose training lasted more than one month but less than six months were more successful in obtaining employment than those who had shorter or longer duration training.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we review what the AWI projects accomplished and the challenges they faced in developing and implementing new ways of serving older workers. We also provide a description of grantee plans for continuing to serve older workers within their regions and an overview of the products they developed to support dissemination of their strategies. The chapter ends with a summary of key project features that project managers said were essential elements of effective services for older workers.

Services and Strategies

The AWI grants were intended to be used for addressing the workforce challenges of older workers through: (1) development of model training and employment services and strategies and (2) building the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve these workers. Grantees were also required to focus on high-growth industries and to form partnerships with employers.

Occupational skills training in high-growth industries had been expected to be a major service component in all projects, but only four projects focused almost exclusively on such training. Other projects provided a broader range of services that included case management, assessment, career awareness and pre-employment activities such as job readiness training. Grantees' efforts included the following:

Case Management, Career Exploration, and Job Readiness Services

Case managers—variously referred to as coaches, case managers, navigators, or older worker specialists—were responsible for coordinating the delivery of the services available to enrolled project participants. Case managers were viewed by projects as critical to participant success because they were the individuals who most often developed supportive, personal relationships with participants and who provided encouragement to them during all phases of project participation.

Many of the projects tailored case management and some pre-vocational services specifically to older workers, rather than helping these workers access existing services (for example, those

available to participants in WIA). Examples of the new approaches developed by projects to meet the specific needs of older workers include:

- **“Older worker specialists” or “navigators.”** A distinctive feature of some projects was the use of case managers who became specialists in serving older workers within American Job Centers or other service sites.
- **Specialized workshops designed to support a “change process,” build confidence, and provide peer support.** Several sites offered special workshops to address the unique social and emotional needs of mature workers and help them build self-confidence, understand their interests and motivating factors, and learn about the skills are needed for a successful job search and eventual employment.
- **Job search skills training workshops and job clubs designed for older workers.** Four projects developed job search workshops designed specifically for older workers that allowed participants to gain confidence and build connections with other older workers through the peer-to-peer interactions.

Occupational Training

Although many projects planned to provide 6 to 12 months of classroom-based occupational skills training, only four of the grantees primarily offered occupational skills training and screened prospective participants to see whether they were interested in training before enrolling them. With one exception, these grantees allowed participants to enroll in any occupation in the targeted high-growth industry.

Most grantees, however, found that participants were reluctant to enroll in occupational skills training lasting more than two or three months and were interested in getting jobs as quickly as possible to meet their financial needs. Additionally, project staff reported that some participants were intimidated by attending training in a community-college classroom with primarily younger students. .

As the AWI programs progressed through the grant period, several grantees altered or adjusted the occupational skills training services they offered to address better the needs and goals of participants. One strategy to make training easier for, or more attractive to, project participants, was creating a cohort of older students who could attend training classes together and provide each other with support and encouragement.

Examples of training offerings developed specifically for older workers participating in the AWI projects included:

- **Introductory computer skills training tailored for older workers.** Nine of the ten AWI grantees either offered participants a computer skills training courses developed specially for their needs or helped participants identify existing courses available within American Job Centers or from local educational institutions.

There was wide variation in the intensity of these courses. Several projects found it useful to assess participants' computer skills and offer several different levels of computer skills training.

- **Career foundation skills courses for older workers with limited English language skills.** The project in Washington worked with local community colleges to develop two new courses that introduced older workers to the terminology and basic principles of new occupations. Courses developed and tested during the AWI project included one for “green” occupations and another in health care occupations. The green occupations course was not a success, due to a lack of employer involvement and difficulties in identifying the target jobs for trainees. However, the curriculum for the healthcare, developed, for students with limited English language skills, provided a stepping-stone for participants to move into additional healthcare credential/certification courses.
- **Internships for older workers.** The AWI project in Indiana developed a hands-on experiential learning component for mature workers using a subsidized internship that could last from one to six months. The internship opportunity was something that mature workers could market directly to employers during an interview to help set them apart from other candidates.

Linkages with Other Programs

Grantees used three models for coordinating or linking project services with services available from other programs. Some of these models showed promise for building capacity in the public workforce system as well. The approaches included:

- **Co-location within American Job Centers.** Colocation of older worker services within American Job Centers, used for the delivery of at least some services by eight of the ten AWI grantees,⁹⁵ offered several advantages. By using this strategy, grantees received referrals of older workers from other programs, such as WIA or SCSEP, and encouraged AWI participants to take advantage of the existing core services available within the Centers. Co-location also made the existing Centers more welcoming to older workers, by offering services and staff sensitive to their needs, and this fact encouraged older workers to continue using American Job Center services after the grants ended. Furthermore, by encouraging AWI participants to take advantage of the variety of job-search workshops and providing them with support in using the self-service resources available in Job Center resource rooms, projects were able to leverage additional resources on behalf of enrolled AWI project participants.
- **Co-enrollment of AWI participants in other publicly funded workforce programs.** Five projects used co-enrollment in WIA or SCSEP as a strategy to leverage funds for additional services from other publicly funded programs. Through co-enrollment, additional funds were available to support occupational skills training, provide supportive

⁹⁵ The two exceptions were two of the three sites where the grantee was not a workforce investment board, WIB fiscal agent, or American Job Center operator.

services, leverage case management from WIA or other programs, and/or to supplement training with work experience under SCSEP for participants eligible for both programs.

- **Distinct centers for older workers co-located in other multi-service sites.** Three grantees developed distinct resource centers in new service locations. Some of these resource centers were located within multi-service centers used by older individuals and were, thus, effective in recruiting individuals and making them aware of the resources available to older workers within American Job Centers. Other resource centers linked participants to a broad range of community education and training resources that were available on a free or low-cost basis. One disadvantage of freestanding AWI service sites was that they did not offer as great an opportunity to make the staff within American Job Centers more sensitive to the needs of older workers.

Employer Engagement

Each of the AWI grantees tried to engage local businesses and educate them about the employment needs of older workers and the benefits of hiring them. However, most project managers stated that their efforts to engage local businesses were not as successful as they had hoped. The depressed economic outlook during the course of the AWI was one underlying reason that kept many employers from engaging with issues related to hiring new workers. In addition, most of the grantees found that working with local employers took a tremendous amount of time and effort and that employer relationships developed slowly over time.

Furthermore, the AWI staff hired to provide case management services to older workers did not always have the skills and experience needed to conduct effective outreach to employers. Most of the AWI grantees stated that, with hindsight, they would have designated separate staff members to be specialists in engaging local employers. The AWI grantees used two different strategies, described below, to involve employers in the demonstration projects:

- **Employer outreach and education activities.** Seven out of ten grantees developed outreach and education activities for employers that focused on the value and benefits of hiring and maintaining a mature workforce. They used three types of activities to accomplish this objective: conducting employer workshops and information sessions, giving public recognition to businesses with older-worker-friendly hiring practices and policies, and providing a web-based application through which employers could connect to relevant information about hiring and retaining aging workers. Although project managers told us that employer education efforts were essential to improving employment outcomes for older workers, the outreach activities targeted to employers were not well integrated with the rest of the grant-funded activities.
- **Encouraging employers to provide training for current employees.** Six out of ten grantees tried to encourage employers to support training for older incumbent workers. These efforts to engage employers were difficult because of the economic recession and because the AWI projects did not have staff members dedicated to engaging the private sector. But there were some successes. Two projects succeeded in working with

employers to arrange for project-funded training for older incumbent workers. One project was able to draw on existing industry partnerships to provide the infrastructure for training incumbent workers in three industry sectors (information technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing).

Plans to Sustain and Replicate Improved Services to Older Workers

One of the important objectives of the Initiative was to build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Relevant to this objective are three outcomes: whether the grantees made system-wide improvements in services for older workers, whether they had plans to sustain their system improvements beyond the grant period, and whether they developed resources for disseminating lessons from their projects.

System-wide Improvements

Although many projects developed distinct services for older workers, two grantees identified opportunities to improve the effectiveness of services available to all customer groups, including older workers. During the course of the demonstration, several grantees used outside organizations to assess the adequacy of their system's attention to older worker customers and suggest system-wide improvements. For example, in Pennsylvania—with the help of a “secret shopper”—the local area discovered a number of service gaps for mature workers, which they addressed by improving staffed core services for all customers. Similarly, the grantee in Indiana conducted an audit of its American Job Center services and programs in these centers that serve mature workers to identify areas for improvement and to improve the user-friendliness of these services. As a result, workshop facilitator staff in the local workforce investment area's American Job Centers received training on the adult learning process and appropriate training/facilitation techniques for the aging worker population.

The grantee in Washington made system-wide improvements by expanding services for mature workers to a number of different locations within the community. At the beginning of the project, a special job club for mature workers and a special workshop on the “myths of the mature worker” were available only at a single American Job Center in the local workforce investment area. By the end of the grant period, all seven full-service Job Centers offered a regular older worker job club. In addition, the WIB had contracted with a local community college and the public library system to provide mature worker workshops at all public libraries in the county.

Plans to Sustain Grant-Funded Services for Older Workers

Five of the ten grantees took steps to ensure that the system improvements they had implemented under the AWI grant would be sustained beyond the grant period by training American Job

Center staff members to understand the needs of older workers and how best to serve them. The projects in Indiana, Maryland and Pennsylvania developed formal training for all American Job Center case managers on the needs of mature workers, while the projects in Michigan and Washington planned to have individual AWI case managers disseminate the knowledge/experience they had gained from the program to co-workers in their local American Job Center.

At the time of the second site visit, only four grantees (those in Texas, Maine, Washington, and Vermont) had clear plans to sustain the specific activities funded by the AWI grant beyond the end of the grant period. For these grantees, sustainability meant a variety of things including the retention of the specialized older worker case managers as direct service staff working in some capacity within the American Job Centers, continuation of specialized training programs or workshops, and continued operation and maintenance of websites with content relating to older worker resources.

As of the spring of 2012, the only grantee that had actually secured additional funding to continue to operate AWI services was the Texas grantee. In Texas, Goodwill Industries of Houston, the AWI grantee, agreed to fund the program for an additional year. The project had also received an additional \$25,000 from a private foundation to continue to provide services to older workers. This will ensure that the “Yes You Can” workshop will continue to be available to older workers who seek workforce services at the project site.

While no other grantee had a commitment of continued funding in place at the time of the second site visit, three other grantees were exploring the feasibility of sustaining portions of their AWI project services. The project in Maine was exploring alternative funding streams to support AWI service components, and was planning to have the state’s Older Worker Council take over responsibility for the Mature Workforce Summit, as an ongoing event. The grantee in Washington was exploring options to continue offering a computer basics workshop for mature workers and a health care foundations course for older students with limited English proficiency that had been developed under the AWI grant. Finally, both Washington and Vermont were planning to continue to operate their aging worker websites after the end of the grant. Both grantees see these websites as low-cost ways to help mature workers learn about the local resources and services available in the community.

Resources to Support Replication of Grant Innovations

Under the terms of the AWI grant, each grantee was to submit products developed with grant funds to ETA as part of a national dissemination strategy for the products developed under the High Growth Job Training Initiative. Each product was also to be reviewed by a subject-matter

expert before submission to ETA. In Exhibit VII-1, we describe the products that the AWI grantees were planning to submit to ETA.⁹⁶

- Three grantees (those in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Vermont) planned to submit descriptions of their overall AWI project design. Our preliminary review of these materials suggests that they focus mostly on operational procedures, rather than the actual content of the project services.
- Three projects (those in Indiana, Maryland, and Pennsylvania) planned to submit materials that they developed as part of their employer outreach efforts.
- One project (in Louisiana) planned to submit an assessment it developed to determine whether participants should be encouraged to attend the basic level computer skills workshop or a more advanced level workshop.
- Three projects planned to submit curricula that they developed or adapted for use with older workers, including
 - career readiness training curricula (the projects in Maine and Texas)
 - a basic computer skills training curriculum (the project in Texas)
 - two industry foundation skills training curricula developed for older workers with limited English language skills (the project in Washington).

⁹⁶ Because the products were not required to be submitted to ETA until the end of the grant period (which was after the final data collected for the AWI evaluation), the evaluators had only limited information on the planned review process for these products.

**Exhibit VII-1:
List of Planned Project Deliverables by Grantee**

	Type of Product	Description
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. (Indiana)	Employer Awareness Training	The "Maturity Matters" curriculum was developed for use with employers, to help employers assess whether they have a friendly work environment for aging workers and to learn about the value of maintaining a mature workforce.
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	Description of Aging Worker Service Design	This grantee is developing a short piece for dissemination about the design of the project, its successes and its findings related to serving mature workers.
Quad Area Community Action Agency (Louisiana)	Technology Assessment Form	The grantee developed a technology assessment form that helps staff identify the current skill level of customers, so they can be placed in the correct level of computer skills training.
Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. (Maine)	Career Readiness Training for individuals 55 years of age or older	"Work Ready 55+" is a career readiness-training curriculum. The grantee worked closely with the state adult basic education program to tailor its WorkReady career readiness training curriculum to address the needs of individuals 55 years of age or older.
Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (Maryland)	Employer Outreach Materials	The grantee developed an employer outreach brochure.
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board (Michigan)	Prior Learning Assessment	This grantee planned to offer a prior learning assessment process to support a Prior Credits for Learning program. ^a

	Type of Product	Description
South Central Workforce Development Board (Pennsylvania)	Aging Worker Service Design	The grantee will develop an "Aging Worker Toolkit," which outlines its strategies and processes for serving aging workers. The toolkit will contain all of the materials used to train American Job Center staff about the needs of aging workers. The grantee will also submit "A Guide for Serving Older Workers Using Industry Partnerships." This guide will provide valuable information about how to engage employer-based organizations about incumbent worker training programs serving older workers.
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont)	Aging Worker Service Design	The grantee developed a Standard Operating Procedures manual that contained formalized protocols that were used to guide participant enrollment and service delivery.
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Curriculum for Career Readiness	The "Yes You Can" training curriculum, which includes train-the-trainer materials, addresses the emotional and psycho-social needs of older workers, including the anxiety related to job loss, stress and work-life transition issues.
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. (Texas)	Curriculum for Computer Skills Training	Technology Doesn't Byte is a computer skills training curriculum.
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WA)	LEP Career Awareness Training Curriculum	The grantee developed career awareness foundational training for individuals with limited-English proficiency.
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (Wisconsin)	No products planned	

^a The Prior Credits for Learning program was not realized, so this product was not developed. No other products were planned by this grantee.

Recommended Features of Services for Older Workers

In addition to providing specific products to disseminate their approaches to serving aging workers, the AWI project managers had advice for other sites about what they learned from their experiences designing and operating older worker services. During final focus groups with the evaluators, the AWI project managers recommended nine features for the design and delivery of service for older workers. Two basic principles underlie these features: the belief that services must address the special needs of older workers and that they must be flexible enough to take into account the unique characteristics of each project participant. Project managers recommended the following:

- **Ensure that the targeted occupations are of interest to older workers and appropriate to their skills.** Grantees that had targeted too narrow a set of occupations had difficulty finding eligible participants who were interested in the available industries or occupations. One project made the mistake of targeting occupations that required physical abilities not possessed by many older workers or more training than most participants were willing to undergo. During our final conference calls with project managers, several respondents emphasized the importance of keeping programs as broad as possible.
- **Offer career counseling and labor market information.** Projects found that older workers were particularly uninformed about different occupations and how their previous experiences and training might prepare them for a new career path. They learned that providing a participant with good information about labor markets and career paths was essential to help the customer make a good choice about whether to enter training and what kind of training to pursue. This information includes the level of academic skills needed to succeed in a particular training program, the types of job tasks and working conditions individuals would be likely to encounter if they pursued that occupation, the wages they could expect to earn at the entry level, and the opportunities for career advancement.
- **Screen participants to ensure that they are motivated, have appropriate and attainable job goals, and have identified transferrable skills.** A number of grantees found that some participants were not appropriate for the project because they did not really want to work or had unrealistic job goals. Others needed services to address employment barriers before beginning training. Using pre-enrollment orientations, assessment tests, and comprehensive interviews interviewing applicants, projects learned how to determine which participants were ready for training. Projects found that older workers were particularly uninformed about different occupations and how their previous experiences and training might prepare them for a new career path. They learned that providing a participant with good information about labor markets and career paths was essential to help the customer make a good choice about whether to enter training and what kind of training to pursue. This information includes the level of academic skills needed to succeed in a particular training program, the types of job tasks and working

conditions individuals would be likely to encounter if they pursued that occupation, the wages they could expect to earn at the entry level, and the opportunities for career advancement.

- **Attend to participants' needs for supportive services and income supports during training.** Participating in training, especially long-term traditional occupational skills training, can be difficult for an individual without a stable income and/or unmet supportive service needs. Project managers recommended that projects serving older workers arrange for supportive services directly or through referral, particularly for individuals who want to participate in training. On-the-job training positions and paid internships were used by some AWI grantees to provide participants with some income during training; attention to transportation and other supportive services needs was also seen as beneficial.
- **Ensure that training programs provide skills that make participants employable.** Project managers emphasized that training does not have to be long-term, but needs to provide participants with new skills that can be used on the job. In the case of older workers, the “effective ingredient” can be as simple as a basic computer skills training program that provides an employer-recognized certificate of completion. In order to ensure that individuals who completed training would be employable, projects had to have staff members who were knowledgeable about the recruitment, screening, and hiring practices of employers in the occupations for which participants were being trained. Merely identifying an occupation as one that was “high growth” occupation was not sufficient to ensure that participants would be able to find employment after completing training.
- **Provide “wrap-around” case management.** A majority of project managers agreed that it was important to provide individuals with ongoing case management. They agreed that many older workers need and value personalized assistance and guidance. The additional “hand-holding” necessary with mature workers increased the amount of time needed per customer, necessitating smaller than normal caseloads.
- **Hire knowledgeable and dedicated staff.** Project managers said that they had benefited from hiring case managers who had experience working with older workers or who were trained prior to the start of the program. In either case it was important that case managers understand the challenges facing mature workers and know how best to address their employment barriers.
- **Provide support during the job search/job placement phase of participation.** AWI grantees did not always have comprehensive job placement components in place by the time participants started completing training. Some projects simply referred participants to the core services available at the local American Job Center. Project managers emphasized the importance of job search supports and indicated that they wished they had assigned specific staff persons the responsibility for reaching out to employers to hire project participants and supporting participants during their job search process.
- **Involve employers and other industry representatives in designing entry-level training and skills-upgrade training tailored to meet the needs of older workers.** Despite DOL’s emphasis on partnerships with employers and/or industry representatives, most grantees struggled to develop close relationships with these partner groups. The negative results of limited employer/industry involvement in the AWI projects included mismatches between training programs and employer needs, the targeting of

industries/occupations that had no job openings or were not good fits for participant abilities and interests, and general difficulty placing participants into jobs. Project managers agreed that they would have benefited from stronger employer involvement.

Concluding Thoughts

The AWI projects began with certain assumptions about how to prepare older workers for jobs in expanding occupations, based on the job opportunities that existed at the time they submitted their proposals to ETA. The recession had substantially changed economic conditions by the time the projects were launched in 2009. Under these new conditions, many of the grantees found it necessary to adjust their services to better meet the needs of the older workers who were applying for project services. This caused a number of projects to shift from a design focused narrowly on occupational skills training for specific growing occupations to a service design that addressed a broader range of older worker needs.

The recommended features and innovative practices described in this report were developed by practitioners, based on their informed assessment of how to meet the needs of older workers within the public workforce development system and how to coordinate resources to accomplish that goal. It is clear from the diversity of approaches tried is that there was no single “cookie-cutter” best practice.

Although the descriptive methods used in this evaluation did not involve rigorous testing of the efficacy of any practices or service features, the experiences of the AWI projects suggest several program features that warrant further exploration and testing. Among the service features that appeared to be particularly well-suited for older workers were assistance with career planning and the provision of personalized support continuing throughout the service period. To provide these supports, the AWI projects used a combination of one-on-one counseling and group workshops. They found that serving older workers in small groups made it possible to combine staff support with peer support, and appeared to improve worker confidence. Another practice that may warrant further study is the creation of short-term training opportunities for older workers lasting three to six months.

Appendix A: Project Profiles

Aging Worker Initiative Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc. Indiana

Grantee. Tecumseh Area Partnership (TAP), Inc. is the regional operator for the Region 4 Workforce Investment Board in West Central Indiana.

Industry Focus. Advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and transportation

Location(s) of Grant Activities. One local workforce investment area in West Central Indiana consisting of 12 counties (Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Howard, Miami, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Warren and White) with a total population of approximately 415,000; includes the Kokomo and Lafayette metropolitan areas.

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Provide training to help older workers obtain high-paying jobs in high-growth industries
- Increase the ability of American Job Centers to serve aging workers
- Improve employer awareness of the value of older workers as employees

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older

Project Services

- Assessment, career awareness and exploration, development of an individual employment plan, and case management provided by an Aging Worker Specialist
- Up to \$2,400 for occupational skills training in one of the four targeted industry sectors through existing training programs offered by community college or proprietary vendors
- Computer foundation skills courses available from the state community college system. (Early participant cohorts participated in another computer training course offered by a private provider. This training was discontinued because employers did not recognize the certificate participants received at the end of the training.)
- Workshops and group job search assistance sessions provided by dedicated AWI program staff through specialized Career Transition Hubs dedicated to older workers
- Hands-on experiential learning, provided through a paid internship at an employer's worksite. (Twenty-six individuals had participated in paid internships as of 9/30/12.)
- Seminars offered to employers to increase their understanding of mature workers and their unique skills, using a previously developed training curriculum called "Managing Your Multi-generational Workforce"

Project Management and Staffing. TAP, Inc. created three staff positions to coordinate the AWI project in the local service area, including one 50-percent-time project director and two full-time Aging Worker Specialists. In addition, the executive director, chief operations officer, and financial services staff helped provide project oversight.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** An informal strategic partnership group, with representatives from the state department of aging, local adult basic education program, state community college, employers, American Job Center operators and the

state department of workforce development, participated in project planning and oversight.

- ***Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants and the delivery of project services.*** The staff of the local SCSEP provider and American Job Center operators have been active in referring older workers and providing additional program supports.

Project Challenges

- ***Delays in participant and employer recruitment.*** As a result of the economic recession, many aging workers delayed seeking services until their unemployment compensation benefits were exhausted. By the time aging workers enrolled in the project, a number of customers needed immediate employment and were not able to pursue long-term training. It was also difficult for staff to engage employers about hiring new staff because the economic recession made them reluctant to hire new employees and because the project had limited staff to market the grant.
- ***Difficulty finding aging workers interested in targeted industry training.*** The project had a goal of having every participant enroll in and complete a training course that offered a certificate recognized by employers. In some instances this was not feasible because aging workers were either not interested in pursuing training at all or did not want to pursue training in the demand occupations.
- ***Failure of existing computer skills training courses to meet the needs of mature workers.*** Many participants served by the project needed computer skills training. However, most of the available courses that offered a certificate in computer training were too complicated and moved too quickly for mature workers to master.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee’s quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012⁹⁷:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	300	359	120%
Began education/training activities	90	135	150%
Completed education/training services	70	106	151%
Received degree/certificate	60	53	88%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	40	58	145%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	30	17	57%

Other Outcomes

- The grantee improved the employment and training services available to older workers by conducting a service audit and training 60 One-Stop Career Center staff members about the needs of aging workers and how to help aging workers navigate reemployment options.
- Four American Job Center staff members received specialized training on adult learning styles and helping aging workers identify transferrable skills.
- The grantee created a “Maturity Matters Employer Award” that recognized the value local employers place on mature workers through business-led employment and retention efforts.

⁹⁷ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

“The Silver Force Project” Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. Louisiana

Grantee. Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. (CAA) is a public, non-profit organization located in Hammond, Louisiana, that provides a variety of services to adults and youth populations in seven parishes in Louisiana

Industry Focus. Architecture/engineering, construction, financial/administrative services, healthcare/science, information technology and transportation

Location(s) of Grant Activities. Seven parish area in Louisiana (Ascension, Livingston, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, St. Helena, Tangipahoa and Washington) with a total population of approximately 443,000; project expanded operations into several parishes in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Create a talent development model that includes employment and training strategies to retain and/or connect older workers to high-growth, high-demand industries
- Develop a public awareness campaign to dispel age discrimination of older adults in the workforce

Targeted Participants

- Long-term and recently unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older
- Incumbent workers 55 years of age or older

Project Services

- Initial assessments, job readiness training, customized job development, case management and job search assistance provided by dedicated Silver Force project staff
- Short-term computer skills training courses at several different skill levels, developed for Silver Force participants and offered through contracts with local community colleges
- A specialized job readiness course that focused on resume preparation, interviewing skills and preparing online applications, offered to Silver Force participants through a contract with a third-party training provider
- A relatively low level of supportive services to help aging workers with personal and work supports
- Job search assistance using a dedicated web-based tool
- Occupational skills training offered through pre-existing training providers and programs; after determining that its project's budget was lower than expected, the grantee deleted occupational skills training from its menu of grant-funded services

Project Management and Staffing. Grantee administered the grant using existing agency staff for administrative support (an executive director, budget manager, administrative assistant). In addition, the grant supported six specialized Silver Force program staff members (program director, job training development coordinator, three 100-percent time and two 50-percent time case managers and a data specialist).

Key Partners and Their Roles.

- This project did not have a formal advisory board.

- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** Quad Area CAA received referrals from the local agency on aging (which referred a number of SCSEP program participants) as well as churches and other non-profit organizations.

Project Challenges

- **Misunderstanding of grant funding levels.** This project encountered an early set-back in designing and implementing the project when the grantee realized that the grant level was \$1 million over three years, instead of \$1 million per year. As a result, the grantee had to delete its proposed long-term training component, reduce the size of the geographic service area, and reduce the size of the project staff. Instead of offering long-term occupational skills training, the grantee relied upon very short-term, certificate-based computer skills training workshops.
- **Inability to coordinate services with existing One-Stop Career Centers.** The grantee encountered difficulty in engaging and coordinating services with existing local One-Stop Career Centers within its service area. The grantee reported that the One-Stop Career Centers were overwhelmed with customers and did not see the value in coordinating with the AWI project.
- **Difficulty managing the flow of participant enrollments.** The grantee reported that it was difficult to manage the initial influx of customers being referred to the program because it did not have enough staff and was unable to provide adequate initial assessments and case management services to these customers. If it were redesigning its service model, the grantee would incorporate more staff to perform front-end assessments and screen participants regarding their motivations and ability to complete training.
- **Difficulty obtaining participant-level data.** Program participants were reluctant to share their private information with program staff, especially Social Security Numbers. This made it difficult for the grantee to track employment outcomes for enrolled participants.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012⁹⁸:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	500	724	145%
Began education/training activities	500	531	106%
Completed education/training services	300	541	180%
Received degree/certificate	300	481	160%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	270	200	74%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	250	200	80%
Enrolled	500	724	145%
Began education/training activities	500	531	106%
Completed education/training services	300	541	180%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	270	200	74%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	250	200	80%

⁹⁸ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

Other Outcomes

- Improved short-term training computer skills training available to program participants by negotiating reduced-fee programs through two universities and one private vendor.
- Increased the awareness and capacity of grantee agency staff to serve mature workers.
- Created a comprehensive website for Silver Force participants and employers. The website allowed employers to advertise their businesses, post employment openings and gather information about the benefits of maintaining a mature workforce. Participants were able to use the website to research employment opportunities, post their resumes and access job readiness tips, including information on how to prepare for an interview.
- The grantee sponsored a summit meeting to educate employers, legislators, and other partners about the benefits and contributions of aging workers and the importance of continued education and training for the workforce. Over 165 individuals attended the summit, with a significant level of participation from the business community.

**“Maturity Works: Tapping Older Workers for
High Growth Healthcare Careers”
Baltimore County, Maryland, Department of Economic Development,
Division of Workforce Development**

Grantee. Baltimore County Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (DWD) in Maryland, a government organization committed to connecting skilled workers to local employers in Baltimore County, Maryland

Industry Focus. Healthcare (specific occupations in which training was provided included medical coding, medical billing, surgical technician, central sterile processing, nurse extender, certified nursing assistance, unit clerk, and physical therapy aide)

Location(s) of Grant Activities. Areas served by two LWIAs covering Baltimore City and Baltimore County, Maryland, with a total population of approximately 5.8 million

Grant Amount. \$967,005

Project Goals

- Help aging workers enter jobs and retain employment in ten targeted healthcare occupations.
- Help older workers already employed in the health care field to advance up career ladders into new positions. Improve training options for older workers in healthcare occupations
- Improve employers’ understanding of aging workers by supporting a regional campaign that encourages employers to hire and retain these workers

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older
- Incumbent workers 55 years of age or older

Project Services

- For unemployed older workers 55 years of age or older:
 - Screening to ensure career interest and motivation and academic preparation
 - Basic computer skills course available (but not often used by participants)
 - Interests and basic skills assessments, development of individual employment and training plan and case management through a career coach
 - Training: up to three months of pre-requisite courses followed by community-college training programs to cohorts of older workers in identified healthcare occupations lasting from two months to two years
 - Funding for certification tests
 - Post-training seminars to provide job search support
- For incumbent workers 55 years of age or older:
 - Basic skills assessments
 - Training in one of the targeted health care occupations

- Academic counseling

Project Management and Staffing. The grantee hired one full-time project manager and funded one full-time career coach and three 50 percent-time career coaches who provided case management services to Maturity Works project participants. In addition to these staff, the grantee supported the project with various administrative and financial services staff on an as needed basis.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** An Implementation Team with representatives from an intermediary organization representing local hospitals, the local agency on aging (which also operated the SCSEP program), the mayor's office, county executive office, and the local community college provided guidance to the project and met periodically to identify needed program improvements
- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** Local SCSEP program operator and the American Job Center staff
- **Partners in the delivery of project services.** All training courses were provided by the local community college. The staff of the local agency on aging designed and operated follow-up seminars to reach out to early training cohort participants to provide employment supports.

Project Challenges.

- **Difficulty recruiting incumbent workers.** Grantee staff assumed that healthcare employers would be interested in providing their employees with retraining, but this was not the case. The grantee was only able to recruit one local hospital to participate in the Maturity Works project.
- **Mismatch between the targeted health care occupations and participants' interests and skills.** A number of the healthcare occupations initially targeted were deleted from the program after the initial training cohort had a poor track record completing the training and failed the certification tests. The program added two additional occupations—unit clerk and physical therapy, which were shorter and less demanding courses.
- **Training not well designed to promote upward career mobility for all incumbent workers.** Some of the incumbent workers discovered that the health occupations to which they transferred after training paid less as a starting wage than they had been making before they went into training.
- **Insufficient screening of the first cohort of trainees.** Grantee staff stated that their first cohort of aging workers had behavioral problems and were combative with grantee and training staff. In response, grantee staff introduced a face-to-face interview before enrolling individual applicants into the program for the second and third training cohorts.
- **Lack of funding for supportive services.** Grantee staff stated that unemployed older workers needed supportive services to help them survive the year-long healthcare training programs and that it was difficult to secure these resources from partner-funded programs.
- **Difficulty placing mature workers into employment.** As a result of the economic recession and national healthcare reform, employers in the healthcare industry were reluctant to hire new employees. The project had difficulty finding training-related work for the students who completed training in medical billing, because they did not realize that employers wanted two years of medical billing experience before they would hire an individual trained in this field.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012⁹⁹:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	312	163	52%
Began education/training activities	312	207	66%
Completed education/training services	260	131	50%
Received degree/certificate	260	5	2%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	249	33	13%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	249	23	9%

Other Outcomes

- The project arranged for its technical assistance provider to provide training to all American Job Center staff on the employment and training needs of aging workers.
- The project improved the effectiveness of employment and training services available to older workers by creating coaches (called "career coaches" in this project) as a primary point of contact dedicated to aging workers

⁹⁹ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

“Seasoned Worker Opportunity Project” Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. Maine

Grantee. Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. located in Maine is a local workforce investment board that coordinates services and programs in Maine’s six coastal counties

Industry Focus. Construction (green), energy, information technology and health care

Location(s) of Grant Activities. Entire State of Maine with a population of approximately 1.3 million; project area included four local workforce investment areas

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Improve employment and retention outcomes for aging workers by providing short-term occupational skills training
- Increase ability/capacity of American Job Centers to serve aging workers by adapting work readiness programs to serve this population
- Improve the value employers place on experienced older workers
- Improve public policies affecting older workers

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older, focus on retired veterans and military spouses
- Incumbent workers 55 years of age or older

Project Services

- AWI Navigators worked closely with aging workers to help them identify and obtain short-term occupational skills training (lasting up to two months); the grant funded up to \$1,000 in training costs per participant.
- An existing career readiness course, called WorkReady, was tailored and provided to aging workers; WorkReady 55+ is a three-week, 80-hour-long workshop that covers 20 hours of computer training and 60 hours of employment preparation and job search skills training.
- Services targeted to employers included “dialogues” to increase employers’ understanding of mature workers and their unique skills
- Project does not emphasize the provision of ongoing case management or job search support services

Project Management and Staffing. Grantee used existing local WIB staff to coordinate the project with the other three participating local WIBs. Project staff included one 50-percent-time program manager and five AWI Navigators (three 50-percent-time and two 25 percent-time). In addition to these staff, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. supported the project with administrative and financial services staff on an as-needed basis.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** An AWI grant management team provided policy guidance to project staff on project implementation. This team included the executive directors of the participating WIBs, the local Senior Community Service

Employment Program (SCSEP) manager and members of the state’s Older Worker Committee. The AWI Program Manager sat on the state’s Older Worker Committee and obtained project implementation guidance from this group as well.

- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants and the delivery of project services.** The staff of the local SCSEP provider, LWIBs, the American Job Center operators, organizations with expertise on aging, employer associations and business intermediaries have been active in referring older workers and providing additional program supports.

Project Challenges

- **Hard to serve broad geographic area.** The grantee stated that trying to implement the project across the entire state was challenging, because grant funding was limited and the types of activities varied across the local workforce investment areas.
- **Difficulty with project reporting system.** The grantee encountered problems with ETA’s optional AWD reporting system and had to devote considerable staff time to review and update information to produce the data extracts. Ultimately, the grantee developed its own Excel spreadsheet to document participant-level data.
- **Hard to interest aging workers in targeted industry training.** In some cases, aging workers were not interested in pursuing training in the demand occupations. To respond to this challenge, the grantee expanded the targeted industries to include any H1-B occupation, which increased the different types of training programs older workers could pursue.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee’s quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰⁰:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	200	268	134%
Began education/training activities	200	229	115%
Completed education/training services	155	208	134%
Received degree/certificate	153	197	129%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	126	100	79%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	118	74	63%

¹⁰⁰ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V..

Other Outcomes

- Reached older workers throughout the state by holding over 90 two- to three-hour-long “Seasoned Worker Forums” designed to increase aging workers’ understanding of demand occupations.
- Improved the effectiveness of employment and training services available to older workers by having primary points of contact dedicated to aging workers called AWI Navigators
- Created four dedicated outreach centers for older works called Workforce Solutions Sites
- Revised an existing work readiness training curriculum, called WorkReady, to meet the needs of older workers, and used this curriculum to serve aging workers throughout the State of Maine
- Created a “Silver Collar” employer award that recognizes the value local employers place on mature workers through business led employment and retention efforts. Eight employers were recognized for their efforts on behalf of mature workers
- Engaged over 230 employers by providing forums used to discuss mature workers’ value and unique skills sets

“Aging Worker Initiative” Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board Inc. Michigan

Grantee. Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc., a local workforce investment board that coordinates services and programs in Southeast Michigan

Industry Focus. Any H1-B high-demand occupation

Location(s) of Grant Activities. A seven-county area in Southeast Michigan served by five different WIBs; project area includes Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washentaw, and Wayne Counties, with a total population of approximately 4.7 million (includes the city of Detroit)

Grant Amount. \$979,400

Project Goals

- Improve employment and training services in the existing American Job Centers for aging workers by creating specialized staff, called Older Worker Navigators
- Increase training opportunities for older workers in high-demand occupations

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older

Project Services

- Assessment, career awareness, and career exploration
- Job preparation assistance, job search assistance and comprehensive case management provided by dedicated Older Worker Navigators (This significantly expanded the services available at the American Job Center, by offering intensive case management to older workers, even if they were not enrolled in training)
- Weekly peer-led networking groups for aging workers called “Peer Solutions”
- During the final year of the project: a four-day specialized “Yes You Can” workshop (borrowed from the AWI project in Houston), which addresses loss of self-esteem and job loss
- Limited amounts of funding from the AWI grant and from WIA to support training in high-demand occupations, with courses offered by pre-existing educational providers
- Services provided by other local partners to AWI participants including access to online workshops developed by AARP, an internship opportunity, and a computer training course offered at a substantial discount to AWI participants.

Project Management and Staffing. The grantee administered the grant through a number of existing staff including a 10-percent time executive director, a 25-percent time program manager and one MIS specialist, whose time is paid with funds leveraged from another program. In addition to these staff, the grantee contracted with local American Job Center operators and several non-profit organizations to provide direct services through 29 Older Worker Navigator positions. The amount of funding provided to support each Navigator was only a tiny percentage of a full-time position. In some One-Stop Career Centers, Older Worker Navigators spent the majority of their time serving older workers; in other Centers, Navigators spent only a tiny portion of the time working with older workers.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** The grantee coordinated with four other local workforce investment areas in implementing the Aging Worker Initiative project. Directors from all four local WIBs worked closely in developing a strategy for serving older workers; their staff met monthly to discuss promising practices.
- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants and the delivery of project services.** The staff of the local agency on aging, American Job Center operators, Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) providers, and the adult basic education agency have all been active in referring older workers and providing additional program supports.

Project Challenges

- **Lack of available WIA training funds to support older worker training.** The grantee anticipated co-enrolling all of its participants in the WIA program and having WIA fund part or all of the training costs for AWI participants. However, in response to the economic recession and the Governor's expansion of WIA eligibility, WIA funds were exhausted by the time the grant was operating. The inability of the grantee to offer aging workers financial support for training proved challenging because many older workers needed skills upgrading, especially computer skills training.
- **Difficulty with ETA's optional AWD reporting system.** The grantee encountered data validation problems with the Department's optional reporting system and invested considerable staff time in ensuring the reports produced by the AWD system were accurate. Because the grantee encountered so many issues with data validity, the project provided outcome information to ETA using its quarterly narrative report, rather than the Quarterly Progress Report (ETA 9134)
- **Difficulty placing mature workers into employment.** As a result of the economic recession, employers in the regional labor market were reluctant to hire new employees, especially mature workers who lacked updated certifications and computer skills training.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰¹:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	2,823	2,024	72%
Began education/training activities	1,397	355	25%
Completed education/training services	1,117	348	31%
Received degree/certificate	1,117	229	21%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	894	117	13%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	760	40	5%

Other Outcomes

- The project helped to dispel common misconceptions about aging workers within the existing workforce development system by providing training on the employment and training needs of aging workers to all American Job Center staff, including Employment Service and Veterans Employment and Training Representatives.
- The project improved the effectiveness of employment and training services available to older workers within the American Job Center network by training over 45 staff members to be the primary points of contact dedicated to aging workers (called Older Worker Navigators). The Older Worker Navigators facilitated the process of career exploration, development of appropriate career ladders, selection of vocational training and/or basic skills remediation, and provided job search and placement assistance to older workers.

¹⁰¹ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee in the narrative accompanying ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

“Older Worker Demonstration Project” South Central Workforce Investment Board, Inc. Pennsylvania

Grantee. South Central Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (SCWIB), in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a local workforce investment board that coordinates services and programs in South Central Pennsylvania

Industry Focus. Advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology

Service Area. One local workforce investment area, with eight counties in South Central Pennsylvania (Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York); area has total population of approximately 1.4 million, and includes the Harrisburg metropolitan area

Grant Amount. \$971,200

Project Goals

- Increase skills of older incumbent workers in three targeted industries
- Test efficacy of specialized reemployment services for older unemployed workers
- Increase ability/capacity of American Job Centers to serve aging workers

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older
- Incumbent workers age 55 years of age or older selected by employers for skills upgrading in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology

Project Services

- For unemployed older workers 55 years of age or older:
 - Assessment, and individualized counseling and case management
 - Specially designed intensive career awareness and exploration workshop
 - Training: Up to \$5,500 for training programs in any demand occupation on the H1-B list (\$1,500 from the AWI grant and up to \$4,000 from WIA)
- For incumbent workers 55 years of age or older:
 - Training through a pre-existing program operated by three “industry partners” with a 30 percent employer cost-matching requirement
 - Creation of a special employer-funded training account to support future training of mature incumbent workers.

Project Management and Staffing. SCWIB designated three staff members to oversee the project, including one ten-percent-time executive director, one 60-percent-time project manager and accounting staff as needed (a five- to ten-percent time commitment). Direct customer services were provided by local American Job Center staff, through a nonfinancial agreement with local WIB.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** An Older Worker Project Advisory Committee with representation from the local Senior Community Service Employment Program operator, the local community college, two local economic development organizations, and representatives from the region’s three industry partnership associations.

- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants and the delivery of project services.** The local community college, a local technology partnership, designated Industry Partners (a local organization designated by the WIB to represent employers in each industry cluster), the local SCSEP program operator, and the six American Job Centers in the project's service area.

Project Challenges

- **Timing of the grant.** The economic recession affected the project's ability to place aging workers in employment. Project staff also found it difficult to engage employers about hiring new staff given limited project staff to serve as intermediaries and the difficult economic conditions.
- **Getting businesses to identify mature workers to receive incumbent worker training supports.** In order to document that individuals were eligible for the AWI-funded training, employers had to be willing to share personally identifiable information about the specific employees proposed for training. This caused some employers to decide not to participate in the AWI project, because they did not want to share this information about their employees.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰²:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	318	689	217%
Began education/training activities	318	687	216%
Completed education/training services	280	488	174%
Received degree/certificate	259	391	151%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	256	432	169%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	243	426	175%

¹⁰² In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

Other Outcomes

- The grantee improved the effectiveness of the core and career guidance services available to older workers by designating older worker coordinators in three of the six American Job Centers to help aging workers navigate the workforce system and make decisions about reemployment and training.
- To help increase awareness of aging workers' transferrable skills and value, the grantee trained the staff of the Industry Partnerships on the benefits of retaining mature workers. These staff members work closely with employers in a wide variety of industries in the region to increase employers' awareness of continued training for older workers.

“Aging Worker Initiative” Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. Texas

Grantee. Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc. is a public non-profit located in Houston, Texas

Industry Focus. Construction, financial services, healthcare, and information technology

Service Area. Thirteen counties in Southeast Texas (Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Metagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Wharton) with total population of approximately 6.1 million; most participants resided in Houston, since that is where the project’s only service site was located.

Grant Amount. \$999,949

Project Goals

- Increase available training funds to serve aging workers
- Test efficacy of specialized workshop that addresses older workers’ social and emotional needs

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older who also face other barriers to employment such as disabilities or low levels of English proficiency
- Incumbent workers 55 years of age or older who make less than \$12/hour or \$400/month

Project Services

- Informal and formal assessments, individual career development planning
- Required 18-hour workshop called “Yes You Can” that addresses the psycho-social needs of participants
- Specialized technology training, through an in-house workshop called “Technology Doesn’t Byte”
- Up to \$3,000 in cost of occupational skills training in any of the targeted industries; the average cost of training for most participants was substantially under the cap; most popular training fields are computer skills training and healthcare occupations
- Job search assistance, job readiness training, and case management

Project Management and Staffing. Goodwill Industries of Houston designated a full-time project manager to oversee the project. Grant-funded staff included two full-time employment specialists (case managers) and one full-time trainer/instructor. In addition, the grant paid for part-time administrative support from other grantee staff for administrative oversight and bookkeeping support.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** There is no formal advisory committee for the Aging Worker Initiative project in Texas. Rather, Goodwill Industries of Houston has its own Business Advisory Council that provides insight and information to the organization as a whole on coordinating grantee programs and engaging the business community.
- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** The local American Job Center and the local SCSEP program operator helped to recruit customers.

- **Partners in the delivery of participant services.** A community agency offered entrepreneurial training to six project participants. The project referred individuals for occupational skills training to community colleges and proprietary educational institutions.

Project Challenges

- **Difficulty maintaining staff.** During the first year of grant operations, most of the project staff, including the project manager, either left the project or were let go. While this proved challenging because it required the grantee to start afresh, the incoming Project Manager stated that the newly acquired staff were well-trained and dedicated to serving aging workers.
- **Difficulty verifying employment outcomes.** Goodwill Industries of Houston required AWI participants to report employment outcomes and have their employer sign an employment verification form, which participants were reluctant to do.
- **Difficulty recruiting employers.** Grantee staff reported having difficulty engaging employers to participate in the project (e.g., to agree to interview project participants) and commented that employer outreach takes a large investment of staff time.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee’s quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰³:

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	500	756	151%
Began education/training activities	450	756	168%
Completed education/training services	375	345	92%
Received degree/certificate	375	127	34%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	300	345	115%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	157	113	72%

¹⁰³ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

Other Outcomes

- The grantee created a special workshop entitled, “Yes You Can,” to address aging workers’ psychological needs such as depression, anger and anxiety, which was adopted by at least one other AWI grantee.

“Vermont Older Worker Demonstration” Vermont Associates Training and Development, Inc. Vermont

Grantee. Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc., a non-profit organization that coordinates and provides services to low-income Vermonters and serves as the state’s Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) provider

Industry Focus. Any high-demand H1-B occupation with particular focus on, financial and administrative services, healthcare, and information

Location(s) of Grant Activities. Service area was the entire state, with a population of approximately 626,000; project focused primarily on Burlington, Rutland and St. Albans

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Expand employment and training services to older workers by coordinating with existing program providers like SCSEP and WIA
- Create a statewide model for coordinating people, institutions, capital, and existing programs to meet the needs of aging workers
- Identify current and develop new employer responses to the aging workforce, focusing on the needs of employers and the opportunities presented by the aging workforce
- Develop sustainable mechanisms to coordinate the various federal, state, and private resources available to Vermont businesses and Vermonters 55+

Types of Participants Served

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older, including disadvantaged workers and those with multiple barriers to employment
- Incumbent workers age 55 years of age or older
- Retirees age 55+ interested in reentering the workforce

Project Services

- Assessment, career planning, case management
- Specialized computer skills training
- Occupational skills training in one of the three targeted industry sectors offered through existing training programs by the community college or proprietary vendors
- On-the-job training and paid internships
- Job placement assistance
- Services targeted to employers, including seminars to increase employers’ understanding of mature workers

Project Management and Staffing. Vermont Associates managed and provided direct services to grant participants through a 100-percent-time project director, and three 100-percent-time AWI training and employment coordinators (TECs).

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** Vermont Associates solicited input from the state department of aging, state workforce development agency, national aging

organization, local workforce investment boards and American Job Center operators to market the AWI project and to provide guidance on serving aging workers.

- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** SCSEP program staff and other organizations played an active role in referring older workers to the AWI project.
- **Partners in the delivery of project services.** Vermont Associates did not contract with any outside providers to support the project. Rather, Vermont Associates used its partnerships with various organizations to actively serve aging workers through existing programs and funding sources.
- **Partners in planning and carrying out community-wide events.** A number of American Job Center partners provided support to the project's Mature Worker Summit and Boomer Expo (described below, under "Other Outcomes." Partners in these events included representatives from the state department on aging, national non-profits, the community college system, and the state department of workforce development, and a regional chamber of commerce.

Project Challenges

- **Difficulty placing mature workers into employment.** As a result of the economic recession, employers were reluctant to hire new employees. While employers in Vermont were fairly receptive to older workers, many were reluctant to employ older workers because they feared aging workers would retire after a few years of employment and the investment in training them would be lost.
- **Lack of interest by aging workers in targeted industry training.** In a number of instances, aging workers were either not interested in pursuing training or did not want to pursue training in the demand occupations identified by the grantee.
- **Difficulty with ETA's optional reporting system and performance requirements.** The emphasis placed on placements and credentials by ETA seemed counterproductive to the purposes of a demonstration grant. Vermont Associates encountered data validation problems with ETA's optional reporting system and invested considerable staff time in ensuring the reports produced by the AWD system were accurate.
- **Difficulty addressing the employment and training needs of aging workers in rural areas.** Even though the grant was meant to serve aging workers from across the state, Vermont Associates had difficulty serving aging workers in rural areas because they did not have enough funds to market services and staff these areas.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰⁴:

¹⁰⁴ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

	Goal	Actual	Percent of Goal Achieved
Enrolled	300	254	85%
Began education/training activities	300	193	64%
Completed education/training services	285	196	69%
Received degree/certificate	214	130	61%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	200	69	35%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	180	62	34%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	180	62	34%
Enrolled	300	254	85%
Began education/training activities	300	193	64%

Other Outcomes

- Improved the effectiveness of employment and training services available to older workers by training its AWI and SCSEP program staff on three separate occasions on how to work with aging workers to address employment and training needs and to find suitable employment.
- Created a “Maturity Matters Employer Award” that recognized the value local employers place on mature workers through business led employment and retention efforts.
- Created two specialized Mature Worker Services Centers within the existing American Job Centers in Burlington and Rutland, one within its own St. Albans office and one freestanding mature worker center in Swanton. The primary purpose of these centers was to enhance mature workers’ understanding of available employment and training resources and to coordinate those services for them.

- Established mature worker “corners” in many of the existing American Job Centers to inform aging workers about available community resources and programs.
- Conducted numerous presentations for local boards and employers to increase employers’ understanding of mature workers and their unique skills. The grantee co-sponsored a “Boomer Expo 2011” with two partners and provided workshops at a Mature Worker Summit.
- Created a statewide Internet-based to provide employers and aging workers with valuable resources for connecting to one another.

“Reinvesting in Older Workers (ROW)” Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Washington

Grantee. Workforce Development Council (WDC) of Seattle-King County, a local workforce investment board that coordinates services and programs in the greater Seattle, Washington metropolitan area.

Industry Focus. Originally construction (green), healthcare, and information technology; the grantee subsequently modified its grant to expand the targeted industries to any high-demand H1-B occupations.

Location(s) of Grant Activities. Two workforce investment areas including Seattle/King County and neighboring Snohomish County with a total population of approximately 2.7 million.

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Expand employment and training services to older workers by developing specialized training curricula for aging workers
- Improve the capacity of the workforce development system to serve aging workers with special barriers to employment

Types of Participants Served

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older with additional employment barriers: (ex-offender, disabled, limited English proficiency and/or low-income)

Project Services

- Orientation, career awareness and planning, developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Case management and delivery of or referral to supportive services
- Specialized job clubs and workshops for older workers (already available prior to the AWI project)
- Specialized computer skills training
- Career awareness courses for individuals with limited English proficiency
- Occupational skills training in H1-B industry sectors offered through referral to existing training programs offered by community colleges or proprietary vendors

Project Management and Staffing. The grantee manages and provides direct services to grant participants through one 100-percent-time grant manager, two 100-percent-time project directors and two 50-percent-time case managers.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** The grantee used an Advisory Board, with input from local businesses, to identify the targeted industries and advice about the design of the ROW project. Organizations involved in the Advisory Board included workforce development agencies, educational institutions, and community-based organizations.
- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** WIA, SCSEP and other program staff in the American Job Centers played an active role in referring older workers to the ROW project.

- **Partners in the delivery of project services.** The grantee contracted with a number of service providers to provide training and case management services to ROW participants. Community colleges and non-profits developed customized training programs for ROW participants. American Job Center operators employed the AWI case managers.

Project Challenges

- **Difficulty recruiting aging workers.** Initially, the grantee had difficulty recruiting aging workers with special barriers to employment who also wanted to pursue training in one of the demand occupations.
- **Difficulty placing mature workers in employment.** ROW case managers reported having difficulty finding employment for aging workers with other employment barriers, such as having limited English proficiency, a background as an offender, and or disabilities.
- **Lack of interest in targeted industry training by aging workers.** In a number of instances, aging workers were either not interested in pursuing training or did not want to pursue training in the demand occupations identified by the grantee, because the targeted occupations sometimes required physical labor difficult for aging workers or disabled individuals. In addition, ex-offenders had difficulty entering jobs in the healthcare industry because they were unable to pass the criminal background checks.
- **Difficulty with DOL's optional reporting system.** The grantee encountered problems using ETA's optional reporting system and, when it switched to its own MIS system, had to invest considerable staff time to produce data extracts to meet project reporting requirements.
- **Not permitted to open up vacancies in AWI-funded training to other groups.** The grantee was frustrated that ETA did not allow it to fill the available slots in its limited-English-proficiency career awareness classes with non-ROW participants. Staff felt that had they been able to do so, they would have expanded the capacity of the workforce system to serve other customer groups in addition to aging workers.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee's quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰⁵:

	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of Goal Achieved</u>
Enrolled	165	176	107%
Began education/training activities	148	154	104%
Completed education/training services	118	144	122%
Received degree/certificate	118	129	109%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	89	115	129%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	80	95	119%

Other Outcomes:

- Developed an “Employing Experience” website that provides all aging workers in the state with valuable information about transferable skills, training and job placement information.
- Developed specialized computer skills and entrepreneurial training components for mature workers
- Offered dedicated aging worker workshops and job clubs (already in existence prior to the grant)
- Developed limited-English-proficiency career awareness courses in collaboration with local community colleges to introduce aging workers to “H1-B” occupations

¹⁰⁵ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

“Paths to Older Worker Employment Readiness (POWER)” Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc. Wisconsin

Grantee. Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc. is a local workforce investment board that coordinates services and programs in Central Wisconsin

Industry Focus. Advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and telecommunications; grantee subsequently modified grant to include any high-demand H1-B occupation

Location(s) of Grant Activities. The grant service area comprised two non-contiguous local workforce investment areas: Fox Valley Workforce Investment Area, with seven counties (Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Waupaca, Waushara, and Winnebago), and Southwest Wisconsin, with six counties (Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Rock, Richland). The entire project area has a total population of approximately 897,000;

Grant Amount. \$1,000,000

Project Goals

- Improve job readiness and employment prospects for older workers by developing clear employment and training objectives and credential-based training

Targeted Participants

- Unemployed individuals 55 years of age or older who want to pursue full-time employment

Project Services.

- Job Fit and WorkKeys assessments
- Completion of individual employment and training plans
- Occupational skills training offered through pre-existing training providers and programs
- Individualized job search assistance and job development provided by dedicated AWI project staff

Project Management and Staffing. The grantee WIB’s project staff included a 25 percent time project manager, responsible for all reporting for the entire grant, and one AWI case manager. Through its agreement with the Fox Valley WIB, the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board provided two project case managers, one of whom also coordinated the project. Essentially, each local workforce investment area operated its own separate project, with coordinated reporting.

Key Partners and Their Roles

- **Partners in project planning and oversight.** Although the State Council on Aging encouraged these two local areas to apply for the AWI grant, there was no overarching advisory council for the project. The project is operated by the local American Job Center Operators, one of whom also operates the SCSEP program in its local area.
- **Partners in the recruitment of AWI participants.** Local workforce development system providers, local agencies on aging, community college and community organizations assisted in referring participants to the AWI project.
- **Partners in service delivery.** The workforce development system partners and the local Senior Community Service Employment Program provider also provided additional program supports to POWER participants by leveraging funds for training programs. The majority of AWI participants were co-enrolled in the WIA program.

Project Challenges

- **Difficulty developing specialized training programs for aging workers.** Originally, the grantee planned to coordinate with a local community college to develop specialized occupational skills training programs for groups of aging workers. However, the cost involved in developing the curriculum and obtaining approval for the new curriculum made this goal unattainable during the grant’s period of performance.
- **Difficulty recruiting aging workers interested in targeted industry training.** The project had a goal of having most POWER participants enroll in and complete a training course that offered a certificate program recognized by employers. In some instances, this was not feasible because aging workers were either not interested in pursuing training at all or did not want to pursue training in the demand occupations.

Participant Outcomes

The following project outcomes are based on the data submitted on the grantee’s quarterly progress report for the period ending on September 30, 2012¹⁰⁶:

	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of Goal Achieved</u>
Enrolled	450	225	50%
Began education/training activities	450	144	32%
Completed education/training services	360	72	20%
Received degree/certificate	360	69	19%
Entered employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	338	53	16%
Entered training-related employment (of those who completed education/training activities)	338	47	14%

Other Outcomes

- Increased available funding for short-term training available to aging workers.
- Increased the awareness of staff in two local workforce investment areas about serving mature workers and provided experience in working with older worker customers.

¹⁰⁶ In this project profile, we compare grantee goals to the aggregate outcomes reported by the grantee on ETA Form 9134 for the quarter ending September 30, 2012. These were the most recent data available at the time we were revising this report. In contrast, in the body of the report, we present findings based on our analysis of individual level data provided to us by the projects in the late spring of 2012. Therefore, the data presented in this table are from a more recent time period and a different data source than the outcomes data presented in Chapter V.

APPENDIX B. ROUND 2 SITE VISIT PROTOCOL

Site Name: _____

Date of Site Visit: _____

Site Visitor(s): _____

1. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM INITIATIVE

1.1 Purpose and Goals of the Project

- How would you describe the purpose and goals of the AWI project?
- How do they compare to how they were originally defined?
 - If changed, what changed? What factors contributed to these changes?
 - How have these changes influenced program outcomes or other elements of the project?
- What changes would you like to make, but haven't? Why not?
- Looking back, how would you define the purpose and project goals now to achieve higher program outcomes?

1.2 Target Population and Program Eligibility

- Who is the target population for the grant?
- What changes, if any, have been made to the target population for this grant? If changes were made, why?

- How satisfied have you been with the decisions about how the target population is defined? How were these decisions made?
- What efforts have been made to target incumbent workers?
- What changes, if any, have been made to program eligibility?
 - Why were these changes made?
 - What do you think about the changes?
 - Who was involved with the decision-making process?
 - How did the changes influence the number of participants enrolled/composition of the caseload?
- How has the eligibility criteria influenced the number of participants served? How has it influenced the composition/characteristics of the group served?
- Are there populations who might benefit from this program that are currently excluded? If so, please describe.
- What are the benefits of defining program eligibility more broadly? What are downsides?
- What are the benefits of narrowly defining eligibility? What are the downsides?
- What would you advise another state that is about to implement a similar grant about how to define the target population?
- Thinking back about how the project defined the target population/eligibility criteria, what would you do differently? Why? What additional resources, supports, or federal guidance would you need to implement these changes?

1.3 Target Sectors/ Industries

- What sectors/industries does the project currently target? Why were these sectors targeted?
- How did the targeted sectors influence the number of enrollments? Program outcomes?
- How do the targeted sectors/industries now compare to those that were first implemented?
 - What changes have been made? Why were these changes made?

- How did any changes to the target sectors/industries influence the number of program participants?
- How did it influence program outcomes?

Last visit, we heard from respondents that the targeted sectors/industries may not always match the skills, needs, or interests of aging workers. What might the U.S. DOL program office do either in defining the grant or providing additional guidance/TA to improve the match between targeted sectors and the needs of the aging workers? How might your recommendations affect the job placement rate and other program outcomes? Why?

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT SERVICE AREA

2.1 Current Local Labor Market in the Designated Service Area

- How would you describe the current economic market in the service area? How is the labor market for aging workers?
- How has the unemployment rate changed since you first implemented the grant (September 2010)? Is the general job outlook better, worse or about the same?
- How have the job opportunities for aging workers changed since when you first implemented the grant (September 2010)? Have there been any changes in the availability of jobs? If so, please describe. Have there been any changes in the types of jobs for aging workers? If so, please describe. If any changes, what contributed to these changes?
- Throughout the grant, how has the economic recession influenced the number of participants served? How has it influenced program outcomes?

2.2 Changes in Services Available to Older Workers in the Service Area

- How would you describe the general service environment for older workers? What employment, education, and training programs available to them? Are these or other services targeted specifically to older workers? If so, please describe. What work supports and accommodations are available? Where might they get these services?
- How accessible are employment-focused services or work supports for older workers? Are there waiting lists for services or are they readily available?
- How does the availability and accessibility of services for older workers changed since the grant began? Have new providers or programs become available since the initial implementation? If so, please describe. Have service providers experienced budget cuts that have reduced or eliminated services for older workers?
- Are there any programs that may compete with the AWI grant services? If so, please describe.

- How have any changes to the service environment influenced program outcomes?

3. GRANTEE UPDATES AND ADMINISTRATIVE/STAFFING STRUCTURE

3.1 *Organizational Updates*

- How has the grantee changed since the initial implementation of the AWI grant?
- Have there been any major reorganizations or downsizing?
- Has the organization been awarded additional grants that have created new programs or resources?
- Have grants ended that supported AWI participants?
- How does the general health of the organization now compare to what it was during the initial implementation?

3.2 *Administrative and Staffing Structure*

- What is the current administrative and staffing structure? Have you experienced any staff turnover since the initial implementation? What were some of the reasons for staff turnover? Were any positions added or eliminated? If so, please describe.
- What factors influenced your initial decisions about the staffing structure?
- To what extent have you leveraged staff from other resources/grants to support AWI? Was this leveraging anticipated or unanticipated?
- Some of the sites allocate full-time staff to the project, while others split staff across multiple projects. What approach did you use? What factors influenced your decision? What do you see at the benefits of this approach? What are the drawbacks? What would you recommend to other states?
- How does the current staffing structure compare to the structure during the initial implementation? What changed? What remained the same?

- Looking back, what would you have done differently? Would you have allocated additional time for management responsibilities? Would you have changed the number of staff or the amount of time staff dedicate to the project?

3.3 AWI Project Leadership and Oversight

- Who has responsibility for project leadership and oversight? Who has primary responsibility for identifying and resolving problems?
 - Is there a formal advisory board, oversight board or some other formal entity? How was this entity formed? Who manages it? How often do they meet?
 - Was this board or oversight committee created specifically for AWI or does it exist for other purposes in addition to AWI?
- How does the project leadership and oversight now compare to what was initially implemented? What changed? Why did it change? How have these changes influenced service delivery and/or program outcomes?
- What guidance would you give to US DOL in structuring grant activities related to project leadership and oversight? What advice would you give to another grantee?

4. PROJECT PARTNERS AND THEIR ROLES

4.1 Contracted Service Providers

- Which agencies did the grantee subcontract with to provide AWI services? How were these subcontractors identified and selected? Was there a competitive procurement process or were they selected using some other approach? Please describe?
- Why did the grantee decide to subcontract some of the AWI services?
- Which partners were involved from the initial implementation of the grant? Which agencies were added after the grant began? Why were they added?

- What types of services did each of the contracted service providers offer? How much did they receive in AWI funds? What additional resources did they bring to the project?
- How were the AWI subcontracts structured? Were they cost reimbursement, performance-based contracts, or did they operate on a fee-for-service basis? Please describe.
- What did you learn in contracting with these agencies? What would you do differently?

4.2 Other Project Partnerships

4.2.a Public Workforce Investment System

- How is the public workforce investment system (e.g., One-Stop Career Centers and Constituent Programs) involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?
- How has the workforce investment system changed over the grant period? Do they have fewer or more funds/resources? Have they introduced new programs or eliminated existing ones that might be used by older workers?
- Overall, what influence has the workforce investment system had on AWI program outcomes? Why?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with the workforce investment system? What would that require?
- What have been the lessons learned in working with the workforce investment system over the grant period? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.2.b. Organizations with Expertise on Aging

- How have the organizations with expertise on aging been involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?

- How have the aging organizations changed over the grant period? Do they have fewer or more funds/resources? Have they introduced new programs or eliminated existing ones that might be used by older workers?
- Overall, what influence have the aging organizations had on program outcomes? Why?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with aging organizations? What would that require?
- What have been the lessons learned in working with aging organizations? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.2.c. Education Institutions and Training Providers

- How have education institutions and training providers been involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?
- How have education institutions and training providers changed over the grant period? Do they have fewer or more funds/resources? Have they introduced new programs or eliminated existing ones that might be used by older workers?
- Overall, what influence have education institutions and training providers had on program outcomes? Why?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with education institutions and training providers? What would that require?
- What have been the lessons learned in working with education institutions and training providers? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.2.d. Economic Development Entities

- How have economic development entities been involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?

- How have economic development entities changed over the grant period? Do they have fewer or more funds/resources? Have they introduced new programs or eliminated existing ones that might be used by older workers?
- Overall, what influence have economic development entities had on program outcomes? Why?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with economic development entities? What would that require?
- What have been the lessons learned in working with economic development entities? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.2.e. Local Employers, Employer Associations, or Business Intermediaries

- How have local employers, employer associations, or business intermediaries been involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?
- What explicit efforts have been made to recruit employers to participate in the AWI project? Which strategies were most successful? Least successful?
- What project assistance has been made available to employers through the AWI grant? To what extent did this influence employers' willingness to participate?
- How has AWI influenced employer attitudes and practices about hiring older workers?
- How have local employers, employer associations, or business intermediary involvement changed over the grant period?
- Overall, what influence have local employers, employer associations, or business intermediaries had on program outcomes? Have they hired any project participants? What attempts have been made to measure this impact?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with local employers, employer associations, or business intermediaries? What would that require?

- What have been the lessons learned in working with local employers, employer associations, or business intermediaries? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.2.f. Other Partners (e.g., Faith-based and community organizations, philanthropic institutions, SCSEP grantees)

- How have other partners been involved with AWI? How does their involvement now compare to their initial involvement in grant activities? Are they more involved, less involved, or do they have about the same level of involvement? If changes, what factors have contributed to those changes?
- How have other partners changed over the grant period? Do they have fewer or more funds/resources? Have they introduced new programs or eliminated existing ones that might be used by older workers?
- Overall, what influence have other partners had on program outcomes? Why?
- What would you like to see different about the involvement with other partners? What would that require?
- What have been the lessons learned in working with other partners? How might your experience with the AWI grant influence your relationship with this agency after the AWI grant ends?

4.3 Communication Between Grantee and Partners

- What formal mechanisms are in place to encourage communication between the grantee and their partners (e.g., regular meetings, email list serve, newsletter)? How does communication happen informally?
- How has the amount and types of communication changed since the initial implementation of the grant? How has the frequency changed? How have the topics changed?
- Which partners does the grantee communicate with most often? For what purposes? Which partners have the least contact with the grantee?
- How would you assess the overall quantity and quality of communication between the grantee and their partners?
- What might improve communication?

5. DESCRIPTION OF AWI SERVICES AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 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.
- What career awareness services are available to AWI participants? How have these services evolved over time?
- What have been the successes of the career awareness services? What have been some of the challenges?
- What additional resources or supports might improve the quality and/or the accessibility of career awareness services?

5.2 Assessment Practices

- Get copies of assessment tools. If on-line assessment, then ask for screenshots and/or a list of information collected.
- How are AWI participants assessed? What formal tools are used? How is this information used?
- How does the assessment process and/or tools used now compare to what was initially implemented? What do you think about these changes? How have they affected service delivery? Program outcomes?
- What changes would you like to make to assessment practices? What would you need to implement these changes?
- Overall, what have you learned about assessment practices as a result of the AWI grant?

5.3 Other “Front-End” Services

- What “front-end” services have been implemented (e.g., pre-employment or pre-training workshops)? When were they implemented?
- How have “front-end” service evolved over time? What factors contributed to the changes?

- What additional changes might be helpful? What resources would be needed to implement these changes?

5.4 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.
- What resources are available for employment planning? What services are available for longer-term career pathways planning?
- What proportion of AWI participants develop an employment plan (rough estimate)?
- How have the process and/or tools for employment planning changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- How has the number of participants using these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- What additional changes might improve program outcomes? What would you need in order to make these changes?

5.5 Case Management Practices

- What case management services are available to AWI participants? What other types of work supports or accommodations are available?
- What proportion of AWI participants use case management services (rough estimate)? What percentage request supportive services or work accommodations?
- How has case management request supportive services or work accommodations changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- Has the number of participants using these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- What additional changes might improve program outcomes? What would you need in order to make these changes?

5.6 Personal and Work Supports

- What types of personal and work supports/accommodations are available to AWI participants?
- Are these supports provided as part of the AWI grant or are they funded under another program?
- If funded under another program, what are the rules for these services (e.g., eligibility, amount of support allowed)?
- Are these services provided by an AWI grantee/subcontractor or by referral to another agency?
- What proportion of AWI participants use these personal or work supports/accommodations (rough estimate)?
- How have personal and work supports/accommodations changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- How has the number of participants using these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- What additional changes might improve program outcomes? What would you need in order to make these changes?

5.7 Job Search Support and Job Placement Services

- What job search and job placement services are available to AWI participants?
- What proportion of AWI participants use these services (rough estimate)?
- How have these services changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- How has the number of participants using these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- What additional changes might improve program outcomes? What would you need in order to make these changes?

5.8 Post-Placement Services

- What post-placement services are available to AWI participants?
- What proportion of AWI participants use post-placement services (rough estimate)?

- How have post-placement services changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- How has the number of participants using these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- What additional changes might improve program outcomes? What would you need in order to make these changes?

5.9 Training Options Available to AWI Participants

- What general training options are available to AWI participants?
- What entrepreneurship training and services to support self-employment outcomes are available to AWI participants?
- What work experience or internships are available for hands-on experience during or after training?
- What proportion of AWI participants use general training services (rough estimate)? Entrepreneurship training? Work experience or internships?
- How have any of these services changed since the initial implementation? What factors contributed to these changes?
- How has the number of participants using any of these services changed over time (e.g., increased, decreased, stayed the same)?
- Which training options have been most successful in helping participants find jobs at the end of training? What have you learned about the most effective training curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and training tools?
- Overall, 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?

5.10 Services Provided to Incumbent Workers

- For projects that provided services to incumbent workers, collect detailed information on how this worked; promising practices, and advice for other sites interested in involving employers in training targeted to older workers.
- Are you and your partners planning to continue your activities training incumbent workers after the end of the AWI grant? With what funding support?

6. OVERVIEW AND SEQUENCING OF SERVICES

6.1 Participant Recruitment and Enrollment

- Has your approach for recruiting program participants evolved since the last site visit? How and why? With what level of success?
- Have the types of older workers you have recruited changed over the course of *the* project? If so, how has this influenced your service design?
- What works best for recruiting participants most likely to benefit from the program? What works best for increasing the number of participants to meet the designated goals?
- Have you reached your enrollment goals? Do you expect to reach your enrollment goals by the end of the grant period?
- When did you/will you stop enrolling new participants into the project?

6.2 Orientation and Pre-Employment Services

- How are participants oriented to the program?
 - Who provides orientation?
 - How long does it last?
 - What is the main message about AWI conveyed during orientation?
 - Have you developed any new service components since the last site visit? What and why?
- What other pre-employment services are provided after orientation?
- Have you redesigned any of the existing service components since the last site visit? How and why?

6.3 Case Flow/Sequencing of Services

- Describe how participants move through the program? What happens after the initial orientation?
- Do all participants follow the same service delivery process?
- How are services adapted to the needs and interests of the participants?
- What factors influence the case flow/sequencing of services?
- Have there been any changes in how customers flow through your available services? If so, please describe?
- What have you learned about the sequencing of services? In hindsight, what would you do differently?

7. BROAD COMMUNITY OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND SERVICES

7.1 Outreach and Community Education or Services to Older Workers

- Please describe any activities this project has targeted to older workers beyond the individuals recruited and enrolled in the project. (Examples might be community forums for older workers or sessions targeted to larger numbers of individuals. These might have been viewed as “pre-enrollment” services or might have been viewed as independent grant-funded outreach and education activities.)
- How many people participated in these community activities?
- How did these activities relate to services provided to the individuals enrolled in the project?
- What were the goals of these activities? How well did these activities work to accomplish these goals?
- Would the project undertake these efforts if it had it to do over again?
- How did the project assess the effectiveness or outcomes of these efforts?
- What suggestions does the project staff have about what role broader community outreach and education should play as part of future strategies to improve services and outcomes for aging workers?

7.2 Outreach and Community Education or Services to Older Workers

- Please describe any broader outreach or educational activities this project has targeted to employers in general in the region? (Examples might be community education forums for employers about the benefits of hiring older workers or sessions designed to educate employers about how to retain older workers. These might have been part of an effort to recruit employers for more intensive involvement in the project or might have been seen as independent grant-funded activities.)
- How did these activities relate to efforts to involve employers in services provided to the individuals enrolled in the project?
- How many employers participated in these activities?

- What were the goals of these activities? How well did these activities work to accomplish these goals?
- Would the project undertake these efforts if it had it to do over again?
- How did the project assess the effectiveness or outcomes of these efforts?
- What opinions does the project staff have about what role broader employer outreach and education should play as part of future strategies to improve services and employment outcomes for aging workers

7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

7.1 Technical Assistance Needs

- Please describe your **technical assistance needs** to date? How have these needs changed over the course of the project? What have been the most important TA needs?
 - 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 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.
 - To what extent did the TA help resolve these issues?
- What are some of the challenges you have faced in dealing with **project design and delivery of program services?**

7.2 Technical Assistance Services Provided

- **Who do you look to** when you have questions about project design or operations?
 - What issues/questions do you refer to USDOL program office?
 - What issues/questions do you refer to funded TA provider?
 - What issues/questions do you refer to project peers?
- How has the technical assistance you have received **influenced your project organization and management approach**? How have these changes influenced your project?
- How has the technical assistance you have received **influenced your project design and service delivery procedures**? How have these changes influenced your project?

7.3 Assessment of Technical Assistance

- **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?

8. PROGRAM FUNDING

8.1 Program Funding

- How have you spent AWI project funds (e.g., case management, training, job placement services)?
- How much have you spent overall? How much have you spent in each area?
- What budgeting issues have been most important over the course of the project?
- Looking back, how might you have budgeted the AWI grant differently for the application? Why?

8.2 Monetary Leveraged Resources Available to the Program

- Looking back, how has leveraged or aligned funding strengthened the AWI project?
- What have you learned about how to effectively coordinate funds from multiple funding streams?
- 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 AWI? (e.g., increased number of participants served or range of services provided)

9. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

9.1 *Grant Reporting Requirements*

- What are you required to provide in grant reporting?
- What has been your experience with grant reporting requirements? What has worked well? What have been some of the challenges? How have you addressed these challenges?
- What advice do you have for ETA in developing reporting requirements and formats for other discretionary grant initiatives?

9.2 *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?

10. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ON PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Review the outcomes in the most recent quarterly report, compared to the grantees plan and to other grantees. Discuss outcomes to date with project respondents, using the probes below.

10.1 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?

10.2 Training Outcomes

- What percentage of participants have been enrolled in education or training programs?
- Of those enrolled, what percentage complete the education or training program?
- What factors increase the completion rates? What factors interfere with program completion?
- Of those who complete the program, what percentage get jobs?

10.3 Participant Employment Outcomes To Date

- What is the overall job placement rate?
- **In what types of jobs** are participants working?
 - 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?
- Of AWI participants who are working, what percentage working full time? What percentage are in part-time positions? Are the part-time positions mostly by choice or because they are the only positions available?
- What are the average wages/salaries of these positions?
- How much variation is there in the types of jobs where AWI participants are working? What factors account for this variation?
- **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?
- What factors/practices appear to influence job placement rates? What factors influence wages?

10.4 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?

11. CAPACITY BUILDING, SUSTAINABILITY, AND REPLICABILITY

11.1 Assess Overall Project Effectiveness in to Expanding 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?
- How successful overall, do you think the project has been in expanding services available to Aging Workers? How could it have been more successful?

11.2 Capacity-Building Activities, Measures, and Outcomes

- How useful did you find the “capacity building” outcomes category in reporting your progress in activities that did not directly benefit enrolled participants? How could the reporting requirements for this aspect of project operations have been improved?
- 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?

11.3 Planned Dissemination of Project Promising Practices

- How will the project’s promising practices be packaged for dissemination? What progress have you made in completing these products?
- Who do you see as the primary audience for these products?
 - 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)?
 - In your local area, will these products be used in the future to enhance the capacity of One-Stop Career Centers to serve aging workers?
 - What are the different “deliverables,” planned by the project?
 - Who is producing these products?
 - What form will the products take?
 - Who is acting as the expert reviewer for these products?

11.4 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?

11.5 Preparing for Grant End

- How are you preparing for the end of the grant?
- How satisfied are you with the progress you have made so far?
- What do you hope to accomplish in the remaining time of the grant?
- What additional support or guidance do you need to accomplish these benchmarks?

11.6 Sustainability of Grant Activities

- What plans are you making for the sustainability of AWI services once the grant ends?
- What additional resources do you need to secure additional funds/leverage existing resources to continue grant activities?
- What is the likelihood that grant activities will continue?
- What are your biggest challenges with sustainability? How do you plan to overcome these challenges?
 - 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)?
 - 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?

11.7 Replicability of Grant Activities

- 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)?

12. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

12.1 Project Successes/Strengths

- In summary, what are the primary strengths 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 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?

12.2 Project Challenges

- 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?

12.3 Unmet Needs

- To what extent are the needs of older workers still unaddressed in the local community?
 - 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?

12.4 Lessons Learned

- 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?

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR AWI PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP

Instructions to Plan and Set Up for Focus Group

- Work closely with the local program operator to invite participants who have participated in AWI program. The goal is to have at least 4 focus group participants. We recommend inviting 8 participants to achieve this goal. Invitees should include both individuals currently in the program and those that have exited. A \$15 stipend to defray transportation expenses will be provided to all attendees.
- Duration: 60 to 90 minutes
- Site visitors will arrange for refreshments, as appropriate.
- **IMPORTANT:** Do not use any words like “incentive payment” or “stipend” when referring to the \$15 compensation. It is important that we refer to the money we will pay to focus group participants as a payment to compensate them for any costs they incurred in travelling to or participating in the focus group.

Informed Consent:

The following information should be conveyed to participants at the time of invitation. It can be in writing or orally (verbatim reading is not required).

Hello. My name is (*insert your name*) and I am with (*insert organization you work for*), which is conducting an evaluation of the Aging Worker Initiative. Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today about your experiences as a participant in the AWI project. This focus group is being conducted as part of a national study of the Aging Worker Initiative funded by the US Department of Labor. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may improve the ability of the program to meet the needs of older workers. The focus group should take about 45 minutes of your time. Your participation in this focus group is completely voluntary. There will be no consequences if you decide that you do not want to participate. The focus group data for this project are being collected anonymously. Neither the researchers nor anyone else will be able to link data to you. Do you have any questions about participating in this focus group before we begin?

Topics for Focus Group Discussion

1. Would you share with us some of your work background and experiences prior to entering the AWI project?

- What was your employment status at the time you began participating in the AWI program?
- What jobs/careers have you worked in? When and why did you leave your last job?
- How would you describe your skills and job strengths?
- What difficulties did you have finding employment on your own before you approached the program for help? What employment barriers do you have to deal with?

2. How did you hear about the AWI project? What were your initial impressions? Why did you enroll?

- Were you referred from another program? Did you hear about the AWI project on your own?
- What expectations did you have about what services or benefits you wanted to receive from the project?
- Did you think you wanted to participate in training when you approached the AWI program for assistance? Was this one of the major reasons you decided to participate in the program?
- Did you think you wanted help finding a new job? Was this one of the major reasons you decided to participate in the program?
- What else did you want from the program?

3. Could you describe the services you have received from the AWI project?

- Did you attend an orientation to the program? What did you learn at the orientation?
- How did you develop a service plan and service goals?
 - Did you meet individually with an AWI staff member for assessment and service planning? What was that like? (formal assessment tests? interview with staff member?)
 - Do you have a formal service plan or “individual employment plan”? How did you work with a program staff member to develop this plan?
 - What is the content of your service plan? (services, goals, timeline)
- How often do (did) you meet with program staff or your case manager?

- What group workshops or group meetings have you attended as part of the program?
- Have you received training in pre-employment or job search skills as part of the program?
- Have you participated in training through the AWI program?
- Has the program staff directly assisted you in finding a job? How and how useful was this?

4. Now we are going to talk a little bit about the AWI training.

a. For all participants who have completed or are currently attending an AWI-funded training program. Tell me about the training you received.

- What training programs have you participated in as part of the AWI program? (basic skills, job-search skills, how to survive in the workplace, computer literacy skills, specific occupational skills, other)
- How did you decide what training program(s) to pursue? Was training your idea or was it suggested by AWI staff?
- Was this training arranged for you as an individual, or was it available to/provided to all AWI project participants? Was it a mandatory part of the program for all participants?
- If arranged for the individual, ask about: occupation, duration of training, and provider
- Did the program provide you with skills that prepare you for a specific job? Skills targeted to a particular category of jobs (e.g. office, manufacturing)? General workplace skills?
- As far as you know, was the training program modified to better suit older workers?

b. For all participants who have completed or are currently attending an AWI-funded training program, how satisfied are you with the training you received?

- How responsive was the training to your particular needs and interests?
- How beneficial was/is the training in meeting your employment goals?
- Would you change anything about the training to make it better fit your needs?

c. For any participants who chose not to participate in training, tell me about your decision not to participate in training.

- Did you consider participating in any training available through the AWI program?
- What were some of the reasons you decided not to participate in training?
- If there had been other types of training, would you have considered training? What types of training would have been attractive to you?

5. Have you used services available at One-Stop Career Centers (either before or after entering the AWI project)?

- How, if at all, has AWI changed your perception and/or use of the One-Stop Career Center?
- Did you use One-Stop Career Center services before AWI?
- Did you use them as part of the AWI program? If so, what services did you use?
- How would you describe your experience with the One-Stop Career Centers?

6. How well has AWI:

- Assessed your career interests?
- Helped create a clear short and long-term employment plan?
- Obtain additional education or training?
- Prepare you for work?
- Helped you get a job?
- Helped you keep a job?

7. If the focus group member found a job after entering the AWI project, Tell me about your current job and how you found it.

- Describe how you found your job.
- How did the AWI project help you find this job? (Direct the questioning to support from AWI project staff and services)
- How could AWI job search/job placement supports be improved?
- Is your job satisfying? (wage, match of work to interests and skills)
- Do you have any ideas about how you might move up the career ladder on this job?

8. As an older worker, do you now feel more confident than you did before participating in the project:

- about your ability to find a job?
- about your ability to meet employers' expectations for workplace performance?

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with your AWI project experience?

- How helpful and supportive were project staff?
- What feature(s) of the AWI program were most helpful for you?
- What feature(s) of the AWI project were least helpful for you?
- What are your specific suggestions for improving the project and its services?

APPENDIX C. PROJECT MANAGER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Hi, my name is _____, and, as you know, SPR and Mathematica are conducting a study of the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor.

As the AWI grants are winding down in most locations, we thought it would be helpful to talk with you as a group to get your collective reflections about the project. This call will focus on some of the successes of your projects, the challenges and how you addressed them, and the lessons learned in serving older workers.

As a brief introduction, will you let me know your name and the program that you represent.

As a reminder, your participation in this call is voluntary. Whether or not you participate will have no effect on future grant opportunities available through DOL. You can decline to participate in this group any time. You also do not have to answer any question you don't feel comfortable answering.

All information will be kept confidential. Your responses will be combined with the responses from the other group. With your permission, we are recording the call. The information will be used for research purposes only and not be shared with DOL or anyone outside of the evaluation team.

In addition, we ask that you not share with people outside of those on the call anything that is said by another program manager. We want to create a safe environment where you feel comfortable being honest about your experience and your opinions. We would also ask that you allow all the group members to provide input. We anticipate that you may agree with each other on some issues and have different opinions on other issues. There are no "correct answers" to any of the questions we will be asking you today.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

A. Project Focus

The AWI demonstration projects were called upon to carry out several distinct objectives: (1) recruit older workers and provide training and related activities to prepare them for good jobs and career pathways in high-growth industries and occupations and (2) build the capacity of the public workforce investment system to serve older workers. Several projects also undertook activities to encourage employers to hire older workers and/or upgrade the skills of aging incumbent workers. Throughout our discussion, we are interested in understanding how you balanced these objectives and how they shaped your projects.

A-1. Could you comment briefly on whether you saw any tensions between the objectives described above, and if so, how you prioritized them?

A-2. If you think you tried to do too many different things with the funding, what would you have eliminated in order to have a more limited focus?

B. Expected Participants and Targeted Industries/Occupations

As you know, DOL allowed individual projects considerable flexibility in defining who would be eligible for these grants. However, they were more proscriptive in requiring that projects focus on employment in high growth industries or occupations. We'd like to hear your comments about how you balanced targeted participants and targeted industries/occupations.

B-1. What issues did you experience in targeting and recruiting participants and how did you resolve these issues?

- *Did you end up recruiting the types of participants you expected? If not, how did they differ from the population you expected to serve?*
- *Were the participants you recruited interested in the services you planned to offer? If not, how did you adjust your services to meet the needs of the participants you ended up enrolling?*

B-2. What issues did you experience in matching participants to the targeted occupations and industries? How did you resolve these issues?

- *What strategies did you implement to find potential program participants that might be a good fit for these industries?*
- *How did limiting training opportunities to high growth industries—as defined by your program—affect the types and numbers of individuals enrolled in the program?*
- *How did your approach to finding participants whose skills and interests matched with these industries change over the course of the grant?*

- *What did you do if you recruited individuals who were not interested in the targeted occupations or industries? (enroll them? not enroll them? encourage them to prepare for a job in a growth industry? stretch the targeted occupations in which you would approve training? provide direct placement support for other occupations?)*
- *In hindsight, what would you have done differently in selecting the target occupations and matching applicants to the targeted occupations from the beginning of the grant?*

C. Project Partnerships

ETA emphasized the importance of building partnerships with a wide range of community partners.

C-1. What lessons did you learn from the grant about working with community partners to improve employment outcomes for older workers?

C-2. What lessons did you learn from your efforts to engage employers?

- *What strategies were most successful?*
- *What additional approaches would you propose to engage employers if you were writing the grant application now?*
- *What additional resources would you need to engage employers?*

D. Project Services

The SGA emphasized the delivery of “training and related services” to project participants. Some projects identified a broader range of services to meet participants’ needs. We’d like to hear how you prioritized training in relation to other services.

D-1. How did the services you provided address the needs of the older workers you enrolled in the project?

- *What needs did your program best address?*
- *What were the service gaps?*

D-2. What services were most effective in helping older workers get and keep jobs?

- *(e.g., assessment, career planning, pre-employment skills training, job search/placement, education and training)?*
- *What services were least effective?*

D-3. If you had the opportunity for a redo of this grant, what changes would you make the types of services provided?

E. Project Funding

Each of the projects made very different decisions about how to use grant funds. Some projects invested most of their resources in staffing, such as “older worker navigator” positions, and allocated very limited funding to support education and training of older workers. Other projects invested more resources in education and training and less in program staff. Other projects spread their resources across a range of activities, including educating employers on the value and needs of older workers. Projects also anticipated being able to leverage funds from other sources to pay for some of the services received by project participants. We want to talk a little bit today about your funding decisions and expectations about funds that you would be able to leverage.

E-1. How did your funding allocation address the most important needs of older workers?

E-2. In retrospect, how would you re-allocate program funds, if at all?

F. Project Successes and Challenges

F-1. What were some of the biggest achievements of your project under the AWI grant?

F-2. What were some of the primary challenges? What types of strategies were most effective in responding to those challenges?

F-3. What advice would you give to another program interested in helping older workers to build their job skills and/or find employment?

F-4. What advice do you have for DOL in designing these types of demonstration grants?