Green Jobs and Healthcare Implementation Study

Final Report

September 20, 2012

Submitted to:

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Submitted by:

10420 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 300
Columbia, MD 21044
Phone: 443.367.0088 / Fax: 443.367.0477
www.impaqint.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISCLAIMER

This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration under Contract Number DOLF091A21588. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

ABSTRACT

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided funding to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for training workers in specific high growth and emerging industries, including healthcare, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. In early 2010, the Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) awarded 152 grants to a range of organizations through four specific Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGAs) to provide training, placement, and other services in these industries.

In October 2010, IMPAQ International, LLC and its partner, FHI-360, received a contract from DOL/ETA to conduct a study of the 152 grantees. The primary objectives of this Green Jobs and Healthcare Implementation Study were to 1) understand in-depth the implementation of the 152 grants and 2) explore the extent to which grantees used promising practices that could be replicated and scaled in future programs. Sources of data for the study included interviews with key stakeholders during site visits to 36 selected grantees, focus groups with program participants, observations of program activities, and a web-based survey of grant administrators. This final report presents implementation findings by each of the four SGA types. Conclusions, promising practices, and lessons learned for future grant programs are provided across all four SGA types.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Page

1.   Introduction

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided funding to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for training workers in specific high growth and emerging industries, including healthcare, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. DOL awarded grants to a range of organizations through four specific Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGAs) to provide training, placement, and other services in these industries. The four SGAs are:

- Pathways Out of Poverty (POP)
- Energy Training Partnerships (ETP)
- State Energy Sector Partnerships and Training (SESP)
- Healthcare and Other High Growth and Emerging Industries (HHG).

In early 2010, the Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) awarded 152 grants to private non-profit organizations (47 grantees), state or local government agencies (45 grantees), community college systems (43 grantees), labor unions (14 grantees), and private for-profit firms or foundations (3 grantees).

The 38 POP and 25 ETP grants were for a two-year period ending in January 2012 (though many received extensions of up to six months). The 34 SESP and 55 HHG grants were for a three-year period. The SESP grants end in January 2013, the HHG grants in February 2013. Average award amounts in the four SGAs ranged from $3.9 million to $5.5 million. Overall, the average grant award was over $4 million.

In the 152 grantee programs, the intended pathway for an individual participant typically involved determination of eligibility for participation, enrollment in the program, participation in education or job training activities or receipt of other program services, receipt of a credential or certificate, placement in a job, and retention in the job. Over 127,000 participants received program services through these grant programs and 104,302 participants earned credentials upon completing of training.[1]

In October 2010, IMPAQ International, LLC and its partner, FHI-360,[2] received a contract from DOL/ETA to conduct a study of the 152 grantees. The primary objectives of this Green Jobs and Healthcare Implementation Study were to:

---

[1] Figures provided by the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.

[2] In June 2011, the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) assets and business were acquired by FHI-360. AED's operations continue under the banner of FHI-360.
   http://www.fhi.org/en/AboutFHI/Media/Releases/AED_asset_purchase060811.htm

- Understand in-depth the implementation of the 152 grants

- Explore the extent to which grantees used promising practices that could be replicated and scaled in future programs

To address these objectives, a set of research areas was defined, covering: 1) the economic and community context in which each program operated (program context, target service area, target population); 2) the service delivery strategy and components of the program (recruitment and enrollment, training, case management and support services, certifications); 3) partnerships with employers and other organizations; and 4) program management and sustainability. Sources of data for the study included interviews with key stakeholders during site visits to selected grantees, focus groups with program participants, observations of program activities, and a web-based survey of grantees.

2.   Methodology

Based on these research areas, we developed a site visit protocol and a focus group guide, obtained approval for data collection from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and conducted in-person site visits at 36 of the 152 grant programs. Each site visit included interviews with multiple stakeholders, as well as a focus group of participants in the training program offered by the grantee. In addition, we implemented a web-based survey to gather data from grant administrators in all four SGAs. IMPAQ sent invitations to complete the grantee survey to the grant administrators of each of the 152 grant programs. Of these, 106 grant administrators completed the survey, for a 70 percent response rate.[3]

The information collected during the site visits and through the web-based survey provides a solid understanding of grant implementation across the identified research areas as well as identifies promising practices, challenges, and lessons learned during that process. Grant program outcomes data were not analyzed as a part of this study and therefore conclusions cannot be made about which grantee practices better facilitated success. The findings presented in this report were obtained solely from the grantee and/or program participant perspective. In addition, project staff did not interview DOL/ETA staff for this study. Thus, their opinions, perspectives, and experiences related to the implementation of the four grant programs under study are not represented in this report. Below, we provide conclusions and lessons learned organized by the research objectives. Promising practices with respect to grant implementation are highlighted throughout this section.

---

[3] In an effort to increase the survey response rate, IMPAQ sent multiple reminder emails, conducted several rounds of follow-up calls, and requested that DOL/ETA contact each administrator and ask them to complete the survey. While this follow-up did result in increases to the response rate, the response rate was lower overall than expected.

3.   Program Context

The primary external factor affecting the ARRA grantees was the local economy. The HHG programs, which focused on healthcare occupations such as nursing, generally enjoyed strong local demand for the skilled workers who graduated from the grantees' training programs. In contrast, graduates of the energy-related ETP and SESP programs encountered mixed demand, with the demand strongest where state or local policy initiatives offered incentives in the industries related to the programs. The POP grantees generally experienced unexpected reductions in demand for their program graduates, since many of the green jobs in their programs were in the field of construction.

Grantee projections of strong demand for skilled labor in green occupations (as identified in the goals set in their grant applications) proved to be unduly optimistic in many cases, due to weaknesses experienced throughout the economy. ***A number of grantees reported conducting extensive market research to assess community and industry needs prior to preparing their grant application.*** Grantee representatives indicated that they found it of considerable value to consult with employers and other industry partners to obtain their input on program design, specifically on the occupations for which participants were being trained, the skills needed, and the expected demand for those occupations and skill sets prior to preparing their grants. Grantees also noted that, after grant award, obtaining a Letter of Commitment from employer partners to hire program graduates was useful in helping to facilitate job placement for participants. However, one grantee reported that the weak economy forced the termination of such an agreement.

As discussed throughout this report, grantee projections of strong demand for skilled labor in green occupations (as identified in the goals set in their grant applications) proved to be unduly optimistic in many cases, due to weaknesses experienced throughout the economy. Overall, 56 percent of the grantee administrators surveyed experienced reduced demand for trained workers in the areas in which they provided training and 53 percent strongly agreed with the statement that 'local economic conditions created challenges in achieving program goals.'

Grantees that were in alignment with state or local initiatives on growing specific industries had advantages over those that were not, because aligned programs had a commitment from the state or local government to promote growth in these industries. This policy context enabled these grantees to operate in areas that had already begun initiatives to develop green or other emerging industries. Workforce development and other government agencies were already familiar with the industry concepts, as well as the occupations, skills, and employers involved. This familiarity alone was beneficial, as grantees reported challenges in conveying the concept of green jobs to partners and employers. Grantees reported that working in alignment with existing initiatives allowed them to design their programs to complement other activities (instead of duplicating them), thus avoiding saturating the market with too many skilled workers in one sector.

A key lesson learned by grantees was the importance of having requirements and regulations in place that provided training programs with the flexibility to make mid-course adjustments in the program plan and approach. While it was important to conduct market research, analyze LMI, and consult employers when designing training programs, unexpected changes in the economic climate could still occur. Programs structured with a grantee disbursing grant funds to sub-grantees might also benefit from an iterative Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Respondents from one grant program reported issuing one round of RFPs every year during the grant period. Lessons learned during earlier rounds of the RFP process were then applied to the later rounds and adjustments made to adapt to the current economic context.

Grantees made mid-course adjustments based on feedback received from employers and participants in the programs. Industry employers offered feedback throughout the implementation period based on the current economic climate or the skill sets of the participants who had already graduated from the program. Most of the grantees (72 percent) made changes to their service delivery models to address the economic challenges they confronted.

4. Target Population

Across the grantee programs, the survey results found that 93 percent of programs surveyed targeted unemployed individuals, 81 percent targeted dislocated workers, 81 percent targeted incumbent workers, 69 percent targeted high-school dropouts, 64 percent targeted persons with disabilities, 60 percent targeted women, 41 percent targeted ex-offenders, 40 percent targeted auto workers, 36 percent targeted low-income individuals, and 28 percent targeted minorities.

With respect to specific SGAs, it was reported that many of the POP participants were facing difficulty in participating in the labor force due to a variety of barriers: low levels of education; limited skill or work experience; unemployment; unfulfilled needs for childcare services or transportation; homelessness, mental health, or substance abuse issues; and lack of soft skills needed to function well in a work environment. Some of the ETP and SESP grantees targeted similar populations; others targeted incumbent workers, union workers, individuals in the apprenticeship system, veterans, individuals with disabilities, or specific demographic groups (such as women, older workers, military spouses, or students). HHG programs also targeted a variety of populations, including unemployed individuals, incumbent workers, dislocated workers, women, high-school dropouts, and persons with disabilities.

While 60 percent of grantees reported serving women, 67 percent reported that their grant program proactively targeted participants that had not previously worked in the occupations for which they were being trained (i.e., training women for occupations not traditionally associated with their gender). Of the 71 grantees that indicated such targeting, 10 were ETP grantees (63 percent of the total ETP group), 23 were HHG grantees (54 of the total HHG group), 21 were POP grantees (88 percent of the total POP group), and 17 were SESP grantees (81 of the total SESP group).

5.   Target Service Area

The target service delivery areas were a function of the specific requirements of the each SGA and therefore varied widely across grantees. Some were national in scope, while others focused on a particular region, state, or local community. The SESP programs were all at the state level, with sub-grantees selected across the state. SESP grantees provided a variety of reasons for selecting particular sites. Two major reasons were a perceived strong need for a more skilled workforce in that area or high levels of unemployment or limited training resources in the area. Grantees also selected sites through a competitive process.

6.   Recruitment and Enrollment

Grantees exhibited substantial creativity and resourcefulness in developing recruitment campaigns, using a wide range of methods to reach potential program participants. ***Many respondents reported the value in reaching the target populations where they typically spend time. This included focusing recruitment efforts in neighborhoods, businesses, and community-based organizations (CBOs) where the target populations live, work, and use services.***

Recruitment methods used by POP grantees included: targeting certain neighborhoods deemed likely to contain large numbers of the target population based on market analysis; hiring a dedicated recruiter in each target community; distributing flyers or postcards at many neighborhood businesses and institutions; e-mail blasts; making presentations at organizations and events in the community; advertising in the media; building a program website; and using word of mouth to spread awareness of the program.

ETP and SESP grantees reported using similar methods, with additional methods based on the target population of incumbent or union workers. Employers enrolled incumbent workers in the programs, eliminating the need for recruitment. Traditional methods for recruiting union members were used to bring apprentices or journeymen into the training programs. One SESP program specifically reported challenges in recruiting women. As the program emphasis was on traditionally male occupations, the grantee devoted significant efforts to increase the number of female participants. Recruitment in the HHG program used methods similar to those described above, with some grantees also holding local information sessions once a week. One grantee had a mobile lab that traveled to CBOs and schools to recruit participants.

A number of partner types were very involved in the recruitment process, including education and training providers (noted by 65 percent of grantees), workforce investment boards (noted by 46 percent), and CBOs (noted by 41 percent). In addition, 39 percent of grantees reported that the local or state government was not involved in recruitment.

Individuals interested in participating in the programs generally went through a process of orientation, during which they were able to learn more about the program and decide whether

to pursue it further. The application process followed in which interested individuals provided information and had their identity verified. Following the application, participants were commonly required to complete an assessment process in which the grantee typically used a variety of formal and informal screening tools (standardized tests as well as individual interviews) to determine the participant's skill level in math, reading, and other basic skills, as well as the participant's motivation for completing the training. Seventy-three percent of grantees used some type of written or formal assessment as part of the participant selection process. Grantees often had minimum skill levels requirements for admission. The enrollment process often involved creation of an individual action plan describing the participant's goals, training schedule, barriers to employment, and steps to address those barriers.

A number of grantees found it necessary to provide extensive information on the training programs and to assess program applicants thoroughly in order to identify participants who would be motivated to complete the training and to encourage others to self-select out of the program. Grantees reported that not all potential participants were suitable for immediate training and job placement, making it important to identify those participants with sufficient academic preparation for a specific training program.

7.   Training

Grant programs provided training in a wide range of industries. Across all grantees, the industries for which the most grantees reported providing training were: energy efficient building (53 percent), energy efficient assessment (47 percent), and renewable electric power (37 percent).

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents reported that their grant program created new training programs, 10 percent expanded existed curricula, and 40 percent used a combination of new and existing curricula. *Respondents from grants that built on existing training programs or modified existing curricula reported that this practice saved start-up time and expense.*

Seeking input on training curricula from employers and other industry representatives was noted by many as a valuable practice to ensure the needs of employers were being met. It was also noted that trainers with a strong background and many years of experience in the industry were vital in providing participants with the skills most valued by employers.

Across the four grant types, grantees indicated that they used a variety of training delivery methods. Survey data show that the greatest number of grantees offered classroom training (95 percent), followed by hands-on training (76 percent), basic skills training (68 percent), on the job training (OJT) (47 percent), adult basic education (43 percent), internships (36 percent), apprenticeships (32 percent). [4] Far fewer grantees provided transitional jobs (13 percent) or

---

[4]   Basic Skills Training includes "soft skills" such as communications, interviewing, work habits, while Adult Basic Education includes remedial academic and language skills, such as ESL.

mentorships (8 percent). Many of these programs offered training through a variety of modalities. ***Many grantees reported the value of mirroring actual work conditions in the training program, including hands-on and internship components where participants could practice performing tasks actually required in the job.***

Grantee respondents felt that the inclusion of "soft skills" as part of the training program increased the likelihood of job retention. ***Grantees noted the value of incorporating soft skills training into the technical training to allow participants to understand the application of those skills to their job. Including remedial basic skills training on an as needed basis was also reported being a promising practice.*** While remedial training was adequate for many participants, respondents reported that some potential participants needed more extensive background education to begin their programs. It also was noted that many participants could not afford to be out of the labor force for the period of time required to gain the prerequisites needed to begin the actual training program.

Grantee respondents felt that offering flexible training programs that accommodated the needs of participants helped to retain program participants. For example, in rural areas, the geographic dispersion of participants presented a logistical problem. Multiple grantees created mobile training units that could be readily transported to rural areas to address this issue. Training programs that included self-paced schedules, evening or weekend hours, training for incumbent workers at their place of employment, and a variety of training "tracks" for individuals with different skill levels were also reported as being used as examples of offering flexible approaches to training.

Grantees noted that non-semester-based training allowed the grantee to put more participants through the training program in a condensed period. However, grantees that used semester-based training models, such as nursing programs, often reported that the length of time required for participants to complete the program and the lack of flexibility of the training schedule made this design less than ideal for grant-based training.

Successful efforts in helping participants make the transition from training to employment included inviting employers to career fairs at the end of training and subsidizing internship positions to give program graduates actual work experience. Both grantee and focus group respondents also reported value in providing transitional services such as resume preparation assistance and mock interviews. Grantees noted that opportunities to gain real world work experience through internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, and OJT as aiding participants in making a successful transition to employment. A number of focus group respondents reported being hired by the organization that offered their internship.

8.   Case Management and Supportive Services

Comprehensive case management and support services were reported to be critical to the functioning of the various grant programs. Every program type provided some supportive services to their participants, though ETP grantees were the least likely to provide these

services (in part because a number dealt primarily with incumbent workers who were less in need of these services). While some grantees provided support services in-house (especially a number of POP grantees, which were often non-profits well-suited to provide these services), many grantees worked with several partners to link participants with supportive services. For example, many SESP programs used WIBs to provide support services by co-enrolling participants in the WIA program.

The most prevalent support services provided by grantees were transportation support (supplied by 69 percent of programs), clothing (45 percent), and childcare (43 percent), although there was wide variation in the provision of these services by grantee type. For many grantees, participants often lacked automobiles, making bus passes and other transportation supports vital in enabling these participants to travel to training services and therefore succeed in the program. Other types of support services provided by grantees included tuition reimbursement to pay for course materials, medical and dental assistance, and emergency financial assistance. Support services were often only for participants while in the training program. When the program ended, often so did the support services. However, some programs (most often POP programs), continued to provide some support services after graduation, including transportation, rental assistance, and career fairs.

Many site visit and focus group respondents felt that case management was a critical service provided by many grantees, especially among HHG and POP grantees. Case management services differed by grantee, but often involved a case manager (sometimes a job specialist) who would work with a participant early in their program tenure and identify services and pathways for them as they moved through the training curriculum. ***Promising practices related to case management included having case managers act as allies for participants as they dealt with some of the more difficult aspects of the training.***

Job placement services were another service provided by most grantees, though in varying degrees. While few programs provided apprenticeships (32 percent), transitional jobs (13 percent) or mentorships (8 percent) during the training, most grantees worked with participants to link them to open jobs once they graduated. ***To prepare them for these jobs, many programs with the aid of case managers or job developers held mock interviews, provided resume development, and linked participants with career fairs. A number focused on bolstering participants' "soft skills" as a means of increasing the likelihood of job retention once they found employment.*** Both participants and program administrators saw these as promising practices that helped enable participants with little previous work experience become more acclimated to the working world.

Grantee administrators often reported that offering support services greatly contributed to the success of the programs. Support services were important in enabling participants to complete the training, as many did not have other sources of income to allow them to support themselves. ***Very few challenges were reported in the provision of these support services, though some grantees had to allocate more funding to them as a result of the needs of their participants and the weak economy.*** As one grantee noted, support services helped its

program identify some of the underlying problems that many of these participants faced and helped case managers effectively deal with them early in the program. ***In fact, this was often quoted as a lesson learned by grantees – the need to identify barriers facing participants early in the program and tailor services to mitigate their effects.*** It might be that the relatively low attrition rates identified by most of the grantees, plausibly one of the more notable successes of these programs, were a result of the support services provided.

8.   Certificates

One of the key achievements of these grant programs was the award of certificates to participants who completed training. The provision of credentials was a requirement of all four SGAs. Because of the relatively short timeframes for the grant programs, grantees often targeted training toward providing participants with employer-recognized certificates to help them gain employment. More than three-quarters (77 percent) of program administrators noted that the allocation of training certifications and credentials to program participants had been the most effective part of their training program, second only to training completion (94 percent) and far greater than job placement (noted by 29 percent), job retention (23 percent), and participant earnings (21 percent). Provision of these credentials and certificates may help explain why 95 percent of program administrators noted that their training helped participants enter a career pathway that allowed for future advancement.

The certificates and credentials awarded by the various programs were often determined in concert between the grantee and industry employers. Training programs frequently worked with employers prior to the start of the program to determine what types of certificates or credentials participants should strive to receive as a result of going through the training. This is why more than 92 percent of survey respondents reported that their training program resulted in industry-recognized certificates or credentials.

The credentials and certificates awarded were typically focused on the industries for which participants were trained. For example, many of the POP and ETP trainees received OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and First Aid certificates, because this was a requirement for many construction and retrofit jobs. Many SESP and ETP grantee participants received LED certifications as a result of their program's focus on the green economy. Many HHG participants received LON, MET, and health IT certificates as a result of their focus on the healthcare industry. ***The ability to link participants with the right types of certificates or credentials as a result of the communication and partnerships between the programs and the employers was seen by many as a promising practice.***

Often participants earned multiple credentials and certificates that allowed them to work in a variety of settings. The survey data supported this observation, showing that 77 percent of programs had training that resulted in stackable certifications and credentials. In addition, nearly 89 percent of the training programs resulted in certifications and credentials that were portable.

Grantees felt that providing portable and stackable certifications and credentials was a promising practice and a highlight of the foresight and planning undertaken between administrators and employers to ensure program success. Similarly, grantees often noted that the award of so many certifications and credentials as being a promising practice and a demonstrated success of the partnerships established.

Several challenges and lessons learned were also seen within this aspect of the grantee programs. Due to the weakening economy, several grantees had to modify their training programs and the certificates and credentials they awarded during the program itself. No matter how much planning was done or projections developed, the harshness of the economic realities necessitated changes in the provision of certificates and credentials. Other challenges with the provision of these certifications and credentials were aligning them with the grant program itself. While a number of the certificates and credentials could be awarded in a relatively quick time period with flexible start-up and end-dates, others required an alignment with an academic calendar. The delays in start-up times for many of these programs often made it difficult for programs to coordinate their training schedules. For example, many HHG grantees included nursing components, which needed to be aligned with the school year – a problem for many programs. In addition, many nursing programs require pre-requisite courses, which could lengthen the training program to three or more years, timing that the grant programs could not accommodate. As a result, providing LPN or RN certifications was quite difficult.

9.   Partnerships

Critical to the functioning of almost every grantee were the partnerships they established before and during the programs. They worked with a partner, often several, who helped deliver the training, support services, management, and/or curriculum for the respective programs. Grantees worked with the following types of partners: WIBs, employers, labor unions, local and state governments, universities, CBOs, industry associations, support service providers, non-profits, trade associations, and several others who were critical to the performance of these grantees. Partnerships were required by all four of the SGAs.

Such partnerships were rarely developed specifically for these grants, however. ***Grantees noted that utilizing preexisting relationships was a promising practice and that doing so helped to facilitate lines of communication among program partners***. Many grantees noted longstanding preexisting relationships with several of their grant partners, especially education and training providers, employers, and CBOs that enabled them to smoothly transition into the grant programs. The majority of grantees developed Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with WIBs, education and training providers, and employers to help solidify their relationships with them.

The longstanding relationships with partners proved critical in several facets of the grant programs. The survey data in the preceding chapters show that many partners (especially employers, education and training providers, and WIBs) were critical in developing the

curriculum, carrying out the training, recruiting participants, and engaging in several other key program activities. The size of the roles played by each of these partners differed by grantee type. ETP programs were far more likely to rely on labor unions than other grant programs, for example, whereas SESP programs were more likely than other grantee types to rely on state or local governments owing to the fact that they were state energy sector programs.

Employers and education and training providers were commonly very involved partners helping, as noted, to develop curricula, conduct training, and manage programs. For example, employers were often critical in helping to select the occupations for which to train participants and identify the certifications and credentials program participants needed to succeed. ***Many programs actually brought employers into the curriculum planning phase, which was often noted as being as a promising practice.*** In addition, grantees involved employers in screening potential participants for acceptance to the grant programs, helping to gauge the ability of such individuals to succeed. One lesson learned from these employer partnerships was that ***establishing commitments from employers to hire participants as part of the grant planning and start-up phase was quite helpful for many programs***.

Grantees also viewed education and training providers as critical partners. Grantees often tasked these partners with providing the actual training for many of the programs, as the grant administrators were rarely capable of this. In addition, since many programs relied on existing curricula to carry out their training, these providers were important sources of the requisite information. Finally, many of these providers were seen as critical in recruiting participants for the program.

Several challenges emanated from these partnerships. One challenge was getting partners to agree to sublimate some of their goals to that of the team as a whole and understand their exact role within the grant program. This often required finesse on the part of the grant administrator. Also, some partners did not end up as essential to a given grant as initially anticipated. For example, a number of grantees noted that the WIBs in their area did not play as strong a role in recruiting participants or linking them to support services as had been initially anticipated.

10. Program Management

Grantees used several different management techniques to enhance the success of their programs, often making significant changes during the grant period. Among the four grantee programs, several different management techniques were used to ensure success.   For example, most grantees held regular meetings and communication with their various partners to help ensure the programs ran smoothly. In addition, a majority of grantees (83 percent) conducted surveys or focus groups with employers to use as input in making programmatic changes.

Some grantees had specific individuals assigned to manage the grant and facilitate the administration of several facets of the program, something seen by many as a promising

practice. These individuals would collect data from partners, ensure that trainings ran smoothly and that wraparound services were provided to participants. Indeed, grantees believed that the division of labor within these grant programs was critical to their success. ***Many programs divided activities among key members within the grantee organization and various partners to ensure that the programs ran as smoothly as possible.*** This required close coordination between various partners, which grantees viewed as a promising practice. ***Another promising practice developed by many grantees was the establishment of feedback loops that promoted accountability among program participants, grant staff, and partners, and allowed the programs to make updates.***

As a result of the close coordination with partners, a critical management technique was leveraging resources from these organizations. Due to constraints in space, budget, and knowledge, a majority of grantees relied on partners to provide critical services, including training facilities and space (82 percent), training equipment and materials (78 percent), instructors and trainers (68 percent), the training curriculum (68 percent), and supportive services (55 percent). Other types of leveraged resources included case management services and food banks. Grantees indicated that leveraging these various services was a promising practice, as grantees were able to not only strengthen their partnerships, but also provide additional services to participants without expending extra grant funds.

Though many grantees had very strong management techniques, many faced a number of challenges in managing their programs, especially around program start-up. ***A majority of grantees (75 percent) reported that the original period of performance for the grant was not enough to implement their program.*** For many grantees, the training start date did not align with the program start date, especially if the program worked on the academic calendar. Grantees noted that delays in hiring the staff needed to ensure their programs ran smoothly. Others mentioned difficulties recruiting the right type of partners and then developing the training curriculum along with them. These challenges contributed to delaying many programs and to a number of grantees requesting extensions to their original timeframes.

Many grantees overcame some of these challenges by developing close lines of communications with their partners and making mid-stream adjustments to facilitate better outcomes, usually after communicating with partners and program participants. Many grantees noted economic challenges facing job placement and retention for their graduating participants and often shifted their trainings toward occupations for which employers were hiring – often in consultation with these employers. Indeed, many grantees began to build stronger partnerships with employers as a result of the weakening economy. Others responded to the weaker economy by changing their training programs to be more hands-on. Still others changed the timing of their programs to accommodate as many participants as possible, especially incumbent workers. Another change was to alter recruitment efforts to present more realistic outcomes. In addition, some grantees increased the amount of supportive services offered to participants to reduce attrition. These adjustments demonstrate that grantees were willing and able to make changes to their programs during the grant period as they adapted to economic, social, and administrative realities.

11. Sustainability

Though many grant programs have ended and more are ending shortly, many grantees have developed sustainability plans or are in the process of doing so. According to the survey results, 22 percent had developed a sustainability plan at the time the survey was taken (Spring 2012), while another 54 percent were in the process of doing so. It should also be noted that many of the grant programs are still active, thus will still have an opportunity to develop a plan (which was required by both the ETP and SESP SGAs). As a result, more than three-quarters of programs said they would seek to sustain their programs after DOL funding ends. ETP grantees were the most likely to have developed a sustainability plan, possibly because of the relatively heavy union involvement, which allowed for the easy transfer of their partnerships and curricula to existing worksites and partnerships.

Grantees that did plan to sustain their training programs noted that they would likely keep their job training (83 percent), job placement services (64 percent), and participant recruitment (52 percent). *Many said they would be able to continue these services because of the partnerships they had established and the training programs they had developed. Indeed, many grantees saw these partnerships and the relationships that had been developed as critical for the future management of their organizations as a whole*. The survey data confirm that many partners were critical to sustaining the program, with WIBs, education and training providers, and employers the most involved in developing the sustainability plan.

For those grantees that looked to sustain their grant program activities, the most likely sources of future funding were state or local governments (44 percent), employers (28 percent), and the Federal government (26 percent). Fewer looked to unions (12 percent) or foundations (9 percent) to sustain their programs or mentioned other sources of support.

The fact that most grantees have either developed a sustainability plan or have plans to develop one is likely due not only to the SGA requirement to develop one, but may also be a testament to the efficacy of their programs. While many grantees have not secured future funding, it does appear that some aspects of many of these grant programs will continue. The partnerships and training developed for the grant programs will also likely be critical in sustaining these programs.

12. Lessons Learned

Based on discussions with the grantees, as well as extensive review of survey, interview, and focus group information, a number of lessons learned emerged for DOL when considering future grant programs similar to the grants examined as part of this study. Many of these lessons learned were developed through examining how grantees addressed the challenges encountered during grant implementation and the methods grantees used in overcoming them. These lessons learned provide guidance in grant implementation and oversight for future programs.

Extend the Grant Period of Performance. The four grant programs examined in the study were funded through the ARRA, which required expenditures of grant funds in a specified period. However, due to this restriction, many grantees, faced challenges associated with the relatively short grant period of performance (24 or 36 months), as it frequently took considerable time to get the grant program up and running and to establish the necessary relationships with partner organizations.

Align Grant Training Goals with State/Local Initiatives. Many grantees reported advantages to aligning their programs with state/local initiatives. This alignment helped to improve efficiency and reduce duplication across a range of implementation aspects including program design and communicating program concepts to stakeholders. Encouraging grant programs to work in alignment with state/local initiatives whenever possible may help to increase the reach of similar grant programs in the future.

Address Multiple Factors in the Applicant Screening Processes. In addition to screening participants for academic preparation, respondents noted the value of screening participants for motivation to complete the training. Respondents reported that the provision of very detailed information about the demands of the program helped to identify participants that were motivated to complete the program. Encouraging grant programs to implement screening processes that account for motivation to complete, as well as capability to complete, may help to improve retention rates in future grant programs.

Use/Build on Pre-existing Training Programs. Respondents from grants that used existing training programs or modified versions of the existing training programs reported that they saved both start-up time and money. Many respondents whose programs developed new training curricula reported creating training curriculum from scratch resulted in delays to the start-up and delivery of the training. For grants with a relatively short period of performance, requiring future training grant programs to start with an existing training program might allow programs to start training earlier in the implementation period and therefore provide training for a longer period.

Seek Industry Input on Designing the Training Programs to Be Provided by the Grant Program. Many respondents reported the value of involving employers and other industry representatives in the design training curricula. Requiring future grantees to seek industry input will help to increase the likelihood that employer needs will be met by participants that complete the training program.

Design Training Programs to Mirror Real World Work Experiences. Both grantees and focus group respondents reported that training programs that incorporate actual work experiences were valuable because they better prepared participants to complete tasks as required by an employer. Requiring grant programs to include opportunities for trainees to receive real world work experiences would likely better prepare them for future jobs and may make them more desirable to employers.

Combine Soft-Skills Training with Technical Training. Grantees reported that incorporating soft-skills training into the technical training program was beneficial to program participants because it allowed participants to see how soft-skills can be applied on the job. While soft-skills training may be a common promising practice among many training programs, DOL may want to require future grant programs to integrate soft-skills training with the technical training being provided.

Offer Training Programs Which Are Flexible in Meeting Participant Needs. Flexible training programs that accommodate the unique needs of participants were reported by grantees to be beneficial to participants. Respondents reported that designing training programs that were flexible in terms of schedule, pace, location and skill levels were beneficial for participant skill attainment and for reducing attrition. Requiring future grantees to create flexible training programs that are customized to address the challenges faced by the populations being served may increase retention and graduation rates.

Utilize Pre-existing Partner Relationships. Similar to the suggestion presented above regarding training, many respondents reported that working with partners with whom they have a had previous working relationship contributed to the efficiency of grant implementation. Pre-existing partner relationships appear to cut down on the need for grant administrators to establish communication plans and provide technical assistance. Requiring future grant administrators to identify partners with whom they have had positive pre-existing relationships would likely limit the amount of up-front administrative time spent working with partners – especially for grants with shorter periods of performance.

Allow Grantees the Opportunity to Make Mid-Stream Program Adjustments. Another lesson learned emerged from challenges grantees faced in making program adjustments. As mentioned, many grantees had to adjust their programs due to economic challenges, problems with partners, and other instances in which unexpected events occurred in order to improve the delivery of training and/or the likelihood of participants being placed in jobs. While these adjustments were typically made early on in grant implementation, adjustments were reported to have been made throughout the life of the program and were seen by grantees as helping to improve the outcomes achieved by the grant.

1. INTRODUCTION

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided funding to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for training workers in specific high growth and emerging industries, including healthcare, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. DOL awarded grants to a range of organizations through four Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGAs) to provide training, placement, and other services in these industries. The four SGAs are:

- Pathways Out of Poverty (POP)
- Energy Training Partnerships (ETP)
- State Energy Sector Partnerships and Training (SESP)
- Healthcare and Other High Growth and Emerging Industries (HHG)

In early 2010, ETA awarded 152 grants to private non-profit organizations (47 grantees), state or local government agencies (45 grantees), community college systems (43 grantees), labor unions (14 grantees), and private for-profit firms or foundations (3 grantees). The average grant award was over $4 million. The ETP, SESP, and HHG SGAs each reserved $25 million for projects serving communities impacted by automotive related restructuring.

In the 152 grantee programs, the intended pathway for an individual participant typically involved determination of eligibility for participation; enrollment in the program; participation in education, job training activities or receipt of other program services; receipt of a credential or certificate; placement in a job; and retention in the job. Over 127,000 participants received program services through these grant programs and 104,302 participants earned credentials upon completion of training.[5]

The POP and ETP grants were for a two-year period ending in January 2012 (though many received extensions of up to six months). The SESP and HHG grants were for a three-year period. The SESP grants end in January 2013, the HHG grants in February 2013. Exhibit 1 presents summary statistics for these grant programs.

Exhibit 1: Grant Program Summary Statistics[6]

Grant	Total Number of Grants	Total Funded Amount	Average Award Amount	Smallest Award Amount	Largest Award Amount
Healthcare and High Growth	55	$226,929,446	$4,125,990	$2,000,000	$5,000,000
Pathways Out of Poverty	38	$147,757,701	$3,888,361	$2,109,088	$8,000,000
State Energy Sector Partnerships	34	$187,908,818	$5,526,730	$2,500,000	$6,000,000
Energy Training Partnership Grants	25	$99,760,688	$3,990,428	$1,400,000	$5,000,000

---

[5] Figures provided by the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.
[6] DOL/ETA Grant Fact Sheets, http://www.doleta.gov/business/ARRA_Grants.cfm

In October 2010, IMPAQ International, LLC and its partner, FHI-360[7] received a contract from the Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) to conduct a study of the 152 grantees. The primary objectives of this Green Jobs and Healthcare Implementation Study are to:

- Understand in-depth the implementation of the 152 grants

- Explore the extent to which grantees employed promising practices that could be replicated and scaled in future programs.

To address these objectives, IMPAQ developed a set of research areas which covered: 1) the economic and community context in which each program operated; 2) the service delivery strategy and components of the program; 3) partnerships with employers and other organizations; and 4) program management, funding, and sustainability. Sources of data for the study include interviews with key stakeholders during site visits to selected grantees, focus groups with program participants, observations of program activities, and a web-based survey of grantees.

Based on these research objectives, IMPAQ developed a site visit protocol and focus group guide, obtained approval for data collection from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and conducted in-person site visits at 36 of the 152 grant programs. Each site visit included interviews with multiple stakeholders, as well as a focus group of participants in the training program offered by the grantee. In addition, IMPAQ implemented a web-based survey to gather data from grant administrators in all four SGAs.

This report provides a summary of the findings obtained as a result of these data collection efforts. The data are based on a compendium of our efforts over the past two years, including our various site visits, data analyses, and web surveys. It should be noted that although our analysis was conducted during the bulk of these grantees' activities, some grantees are continuing their programs as of the date of this report, and some final changes may be made to their programs. Nevertheless, this analysis reports on the majority of these programs' activities and experiences during the grant period. Grant program outcomes data were not analyzed as a part of this study and therefore conclusions cannot be made about which grantee practices better facilitated success. The findings presented in this report were obtained solely from the grantee and/or program participant perspective. In addition, project staff did not interview DOL/ETA staff for this study. Thus, their opinions, perspectives, and experiences related to the implementation of the four grant programs under study are not represented in this report.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, we present a summary of the methodology we used to fully analyze the grantees and their operations. Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the program context in which the grant programs operated. Chapters 4 through 7 present findings for the four SGA groups (POP, ETP, SESP, and HHG, respectively). The study

---

[7] In June 2011, the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) assets and business were acquired by FHI-360. AED's operations continue under the banner of FHI-360.
http://www.fhi.org/en/AboutFHI/Media/Releases/AED_asset_purchase060811.htm

findings are organized into four research areas: 1) the economic and community context in which each program operated (program context, target service area, target population); 2) the service delivery strategy and components of the program (recruitment and enrollment, training, case management and support services, certifications); 3) partnerships with employers and other organizations; and 4) program management and sustainability. Chapter 8 provides conclusions, promising practices and lessons learned.

Additionally, Appendix A presents a list of all the grantees, along with several key attributes: grant type, grant amount, grant length, industry focus, and location. Site-specific summaries of the detailed findings obtained from each of the 36 site visits are presented in Appendix B. Appendix C presents the grant administrator survey findings.

2. METHODOLOGY

IMPAQ collected the data for this implementation study from two primary sources. First, during 2011 and 2012, 36 site visits to a range of grantees were conducted. Second, a web-based survey of grant administrators was implemented. This section describes these data collection activities.

2.1 Site Visits

Site visits were the primary method of data collection used to review grantee operations and assess participant satisfaction with the training programs. Following selection of the sites to visit, site visit protocols were created, site visits were conducted, and the data was analyzed, as described below.

2.1.1 Site Visit Selection

Thirty-six of the 152 grantees (24%) were selected for in-person site visits. To determine which sites to visit, IMPAQ reviewed information on the grantees from materials provided by DOL/ETA to develop a matrix of grantee characteristics relative to five different categories (listed below in descending order of importance per guidance from DOL/ETA):

- *Industry* – Nursing/Allied Health, Other Healthcare/Emerging Industry, Renewable Electric Power, Energy Efficiency and Green Construction, and Other Green Industry

- *Grantee Organization Type* – Community-Based Organization, Union, Education, Workforce Investment Board, and state Workforce Agency

- *SGA Type* – SESP, HHG, POP, or ETP

- *Grantee Level* – Local, Regional, state, or National

- *Geographic Diversity* – the six DOL regions.

We then sorted the grantees into groups based on these characteristics and tried to identify those sites that would provide us with the broadest set of representation across these characteristics. We also sought to select sites in proportion to the total number of grantees in that SGA. This process resulted in 9 ETP, 11 HHG, 8 POP, and 8 SESP grantees to be selected for site visits. After the initial selection of grantee sites based on these criteria, we submitted a draft list of candidate sites to DOL/ETA for review. Based on the feedback received, we made some minor adjustments to the site list, primarily to avoid overlap in sites that were included in other research studies. The final list of sites visited is presented in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Grantees Selected for In-Person Site Visits

SGA	Grantee Name	Grantee Level
POP	Jobs for the Future, Inc.	National
POP	Southwest Housing Solutions Corporation	Local
POP	West Hills Community College District	Local
POP	East Harlem Employment Services, Inc. (STRIVE)	Regional
POP	Goodwill Industries International	National
POP	Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc.	Local
POP	Moultrie Technical College	Local
POP	National Association of Regional Councils	Regional
ETP	Central Vermont Community Action Council, Inc.	State
ETP	Memphis Bioworks Foundation	Regional
ETP	SER Metro Detroit, Jobs for Progress, Inc.	Local
ETP	Austin Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC)	National
ETP	H-CAP, Inc.	National
ETP	Transportation Learning Center	National
ETP	Montana Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Council (MEJATC)	State
ETP	UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation	Local
ETP	Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), AFL-CIO	National
SESP	State of California Employment Development Department	State
SESP	Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)	State
SESP	Arkansas Workforce Investment Board/Department of Workforce Services	State
SESP	Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	State
SESP	State of Oklahoma	State
SESP	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	State
SESP	Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board	State
SESP	Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	State
HHG	BioOhio	Local
HHG	Centerstone of Tennessee, Inc.	Local
HHG	Full Employment Council	Local
HHG	Indianapolis Private Industry Council, Inc.	Local
HHG	Louisiana Technical College, Greater Acadiana Region 4	Local
HHG	Macomb Community College	Local
HHG	Otero Junior College	Local
HHG	Providence Health Foundation of Providence Hospital	Local
HHG	San Jose State University Research Foundation	Local
HHG	Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (SVWIB)	Local
HHG	Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board	Local

2.1.2 Development of Site Visit Protocol and Focus Group Guide

Each site visit involved a series of interviews with key stakeholders and the conducting of a focus group with current and former training program participants. Prior to conducting the site visits, IMPAQ developed a site visit protocol, which listed the specific questions to be asked of each interviewee. These questions were designed to elicit information pertaining to the research questions in the overall study. They focused on the economic and community context in which the grantees operated; partnerships with other organizations; program components such as recruitment, training, and support services; program and grant management; sustainability; promising practices, challenges faced, and lessons learned; and other topics critical to understanding the full scope of their programs.

The focus group guide contained the specific topic areas to be explored during the focus group sessions. IMPAQ selected these topic areas to better understand better the participants' experience with the training program, their level of satisfaction with the program, and their suggestions for program improvements.

The IMPAQ team conducted the first nine site visits in July – September 2011. The results of eight of these site visits were presented in the Interim Report.[8] The remaining 27 sites visits were conducted in February – April 2012.

2.1.3 Site Visit Process and Analysis of Site Visit Data

Most of the site visits lasted for two days on-site, and were conducted by two researchers. Prior to each site visit, the researchers hosted at least one conference call with the grant administrator to arrange the visit and to gather general information about the grantee – such as high-level program outcomes, an organizational chart, and a list of partners.

The stakeholders interviewed during the site visit included grant administrators, program staff, training program managers, education partners, employer partners, WIB partners, recruitment staff, case managers, and job developers. In addition, the team would conduct a focus group, often in the evening after the first day of interviews to maximize attendance. For a limited number of site visits (3), focus groups were not conducted due to scheduling issues.

To augment notes taken by the site visit team, the interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded, with the permission of the participants. These notes were then cleaned, with reference to the audio recordings as needed, and analyzed to produce the results provided in this report.

---

[8] http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2012_07.pdf. The ninth site visited, Jobs for the Future, was not visited in time for inclusion in the Interim Report, but the findings from this site visit are included in this Final Report.

2.2 Web Surveys

To complement the data collected from the site visits, a web-based survey of the grantees was developed. The web survey instrument included questions about: project funding, design, and objectives; partnerships with employers, workforce agencies, and other organizations; recruitment and program activities to date; and program sustainability and leveraging of resources. There were two survey versions: one survey was developed for grant administrators to complete; a related survey was developed for partner organizations to complete. [9]

Following DOL/ETA review, the IMPAQ team revised the instruments and incorporated all feedback. The instruments were then formatted for self-administration on the web, as well as interviewer administration over the telephone.

IMPAQ pretested the survey instruments with a convenience sample of respondents. The pretests were administered by telephone, with the interviewee using the pretest version of the web survey. The pretest applied cognitive interviewing techniques to test the survey content, ensure the survey instructions and wording of the questions were clear and understandable, and ensure response options were adequate. Questions that were misunderstood by respondents or difficult to answer were improved to increase the overall quality of the survey data.

Once OMB approved the survey instruments, IMPAQ finalized the programmed version for electronic administration via the web. The surveys were programmed using the online survey software, Snap Surveys. During programming, special attention was paid to ensure the online questionnaires were flexible, user-friendly, and could be used with ease by all target audiences. IMPAQ programmers and project staff thoroughly tested the computerized questionnaires to ensure that question wording and response choices were accurate, instructions were clear, and skip patterns were functioning properly.

IMPAQ extended invitations to complete the grantee survey to the grant administrators of the 152 grant programs. Of these, 106 grant administrators completed the survey, for a 70 percent response rate. [10] Descriptive statistics of their responses are analyzed in this report. Completion rates by grant program were as follows: HHG (76 percent), ETP (64 percent), POP (63 percent), and SESP (62 percent). Throughout this report, survey findings are presented for all respondents (overall), as well as for respondents from each grant type.

---

[9] In addition to grantee administrators, IMPAQ administered web surveys to other grantee staff and grantee partners. The data from these two surveys were not analyzed due to the low response rates obtained.

[10] In an effort to increase the survey response rate, IMPAQ sent multiple reminder emails, conducted several rounds of follow-up calls, and requested that DOL/ETA contact each administrator ask them to complete the survey. While this follow-up did result in small increases to the response rate, the response rate was lower overall than expected.

3. PROGRAM CONTEXT

The primary external factor affecting the grantees was the state of local economies. The HHG programs, which focused on healthcare occupations such as nursing, generally enjoyed strong local demand for the skilled workers who graduated from the grantees' training programs. In contrast, graduates of the energy-related ETP and SESP programs encountered mixed demand, with demand strongest where state or local policy initiatives offered incentives in the industries related to the programs. The POP grantees generally experienced unexpected reductions in demand for their program graduates, since many of the green jobs in their programs were in the field of construction, which were particularly depressed in the recent recession.

A more detailed look at the economic environment faced by the grantees can be gauged by three factors: annual state unemployment rates between 2009 and 2011; state employment levels in construction, healthcare, and the energy utility industries, the three main industries targeted by the 152 grantees; and the number of green jobs in each state.

Exhibit 3 presents these statistics and shows that the median state unemployment rate for 2011 was 8.0 percent, much higher than in previous years.[11] There was considerable variation across states, ranging from 3.5 percent in North Dakota to 13.5 percent in Nevada. Other states with high unemployment rates – in some cases above 10 percent – included California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, and South Carolina. States with relatively low unemployment rates included Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

The training programs provided as part of the four grant programs mostly focused on a handful of industries: construction-related occupations such as weatherization and deconstruction, energy-related occupations such as solar panel installation, and healthcare occupations such as nursing. The changes in state employment levels in construction, healthcare, and utility occupations are also shown in Exhibit 3. If a grantee operated a training program in one of these industries, and if there was a substantial decline in employment in that industry in the state during the grantee's period of performance, graduates of the training program were likely to have found it more difficult than expected to find a job in their field.

---

[11] We were unable to obtain any industry data for South Dakota so it was excluded from this analysis.

Exhibit 3: Labor Market Conditions During the Grant Period

State	2011 Unemployment Rate		2011 Employment by Industry						2011 Green Jobs
			Construction		Healthcare		Utilities		
	Percent	Percentage Point Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Percent of Total Employment
Alabama	9.0%	-0.9	78.9	-14.0	170.0	2.0	14.3	5.1	2.4
Alaska	7.6%	-0.1	15.2	-5.6	N/A	N/A	2.1	5	3.6
Arizona	9.9%	-0.4	111.7	-13.2	135.4	11.3	12.1	-2.5	2.1
Arkansas	8.0%	0.5	46.9	-9.1	46.1	0.9	N/A	N/A	2.9
California	11.7%	0.4	553.7	-11.1	1281.7	3.6	58.4	-1.5	2.3
Colorado	8.3%	0.2	112.6	-14.2	197.2	5.3	8.1	-3.6	3.3
Connecticut	8.8%	0.6	51.2	-6.2	205.7	2.9	7.8	-8.2	2.5
Delaware	7.3%	-0.6	N/A	N/A	48.6	3.6	N/A	N/A	2.0
Washington D.C.	10.2%	0.5	N/A	N/A	50.7	7.9	N/A	N/A	3.9
Florida	10.5%	0.1	330.1	-16.8	838.9	4.0	22.4	-4.3	1.3
Georgia	9.8%	No change	145.5	-12.2	343.6	3.0	20.2	-1.0	2.2
Hawaii	6.7%	-0.2	N/A	N/A	45.9	2.5	3.4	6.3	2.7
Idaho	8.7%	1.3	30.1	-12.2	63.4	6.4	2.8	0	3.7
Illinois	9.8%	-0.2	195.3	-10.1	595.1	2.7	23.4	-1.3	2.5
Indiana	9.0%	-1.4	120.5	-0.1	190.4	2.1	14.8	-3.3	2.5
Iowa	5.9%	-0.3	62.3	-4.2	N/A	N/A	6.6	-5.7	2.7
Kansas	6.7%	-0.5	53	-7.8	46.0	3.1	8.1	5.2	2.1
Kentucky	9.5%	-0.8	67.6	-8.5	193.2	2.7	6.5	0	1.9
Louisiana	7.3%	0.7	121.9	-6.2	196	4.2	N/A	N/A	1.9
Maine	7.5%	-0.6	24.7	-2.0	81.9	0.9	1.6	-15.8	2.4
Maryland	7.0%	-0.4	N/A	N/A	287.4	4.1	10.1	2.0	3.6
Massachusetts	7.4%	-0.8	107.9	-3.1	436	3.1	10.5	1.9	2.5
Michigan	10.3%	-3.1	124.7	-2.3	479.6	2.0	19.2	-2.5	2.1
Minnesota	6.4%	-1.6	90.9	-2.7	328.9	1.9	12.8	0.8	2.7

State	2011 Unemployment Rate		2011 Employment by Industry						2011 Green Jobs
			Construction		Healthcare		Utilities		
	Percent	Percentage Point Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Percent of Total Employment
Mississippi	10.7%	1.3	48.8	-4.5	54.3	1.1	7.7	0	1.6
Missouri	8.6%	-0.8	102.3	-5.8	191.9	2.6	12.2	-3.2	2.5
Montana	6.8%	0.7	23	-4.2	37.9	2.2	3.1	3.3	3.5
Nebraska	4.4%	-0.3	N/A	N/A	104.6	1.9	N/A	N/A	2.0
Nevada	13.5%	1.9	52.7	-35.1	66.9	3.9	4.2	-8.7	1.6
New Hampshire	5.4%	-0.8	21.9	-3.1	57	0.7	2.5	0	1.9
New Jersey	9.3%	0.3	129.7	-6.4	442.4	3.0	13.7	0.7	2.0
New Mexico	7.4%	0.6	42.7	-10.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.7
New York	8.2%	-0.1	306.8	-5.5	1014.3	3.7	37.5	-4.6	3.0
North Carolina	10.5%	No change	175.6	-8.7	389.6	0.5	12.1	-3.2	2.0
North Dakota	3.5%	-0.6	24	11.4	45.9	6.0	3.4	0	2.3
Ohio	8.6%	-1.5	173.9	-4.0	405.3	1.8	19.2	-9.4	2.6
Oklahoma	6.2%	-0.5	68.3	-0.9	158.8	2.1	11.2	-0.9	1.5
Oregon	9.5%	-1.6	68.8	-7.0	169.8	4.0	4.5	-4.3	3.4
Pennsylvania	7.9%	-0.1	221.8	-1.2	751.6	2.1	22.3	2.8	3.3
Rhode Island	11.3%	0.4	15.7	-8.7	66.8	1.2	N/A	N/A	2.7
South Carolina	10.3%	-1.2	76.3	-12.8	154.1	4.5	11.9	-4.8	2.0
Tennessee	9.2%	-1.3	N/A	N/A	291.1	4.1	3.3	-5.7	2.4
Texas	7.9%	0.4	559.5	-6.4	1071	6.8	49.2	2.6	2.3
Utah	6.7%	-0.9	65.3	-7.4	106.1	4.6	4.0	-2.4	2.4
Vermont	5.6%	-1.3	13.7	-0.7	35.1	0.0	1.8	0	4.4
Virginia	6.2%	-0.7	178.6	-6.1	319.1	3.0	10.9	-3.5	2.6
Washington	9.2%	-0.2	137.5	-13.8	270.6	3.3	4.9	-2.0	3.3
West Virginia	8.0%	0.3	33	-3.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.1
Wisconsin	7.5%	-1.2	90.5	-11.0	298.4	1.8	10.9	-2.7	2.3
Wyoming	6.0%	-0.3	20.8	-13.0	16.8	3.1	2.5	0	3.0

State	2011 Unemployment Rate		2011 Employment by Industry						2011 Green Jobs
			Construction		Healthcare		Utilities		
	Percent	Percentage Point Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Thousands	% Change from 2009	Percent of Total Employment
Minimum	3.5% (North Dakota)	1.9 (Nevada)	13.7 (Vermont)	-35.1 (Nevada)	16.8 (Wyoming)	0 (Vermont)	1.6 (Maine)	-15.8 (Maine)	1.3 (Florida)
Maximum	13.5% (Nevada)	-3.1 (Michigan)	559.5 (Texas)	11.4 (North Dakota)	1281.7 (California)	11.3 (Arizona)	58.4 (California)	6.3 (Hawaii)	4.4 (Vermont)
Median	8.0%	-0.3	72.4	-6.4	191.2	3	9.1	-1.8%	2.4

Notes: Unemployment rates are 2011 annual averages, taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Series. Employment estimates are 2011 annual averages, taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics survey. Employment estimates for the green jobs industry are taken from the 4th quarter of 2010, from the Green Goods and Services Summary.

Focusing on specific industries shows that the decline in residential and commercial construction (a decline of nearly one-third over the past five years)[12] led to a reduction in construction employment in every state except North Dakota.[13] The median decline in construction employment was 6.4 percent, but several states adversely affected by the housing downturn (including California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, and South Carolina) saw double-digit declines in construction employment. In Nevada, for example, construction employment fell by 35 percent between 2009 and 2011. The general decline in the availability of construction jobs was a challenge for many of the grantees, especially in the POP program group. The utility industry, critical to many ETP programs, experienced little change (1.8 percent decrease) in overall employment, although there was considerable variation across states (with 11 experiencing an increase in utility employment, and 23, a decline).[14]

The healthcare industry experienced gains in employment. The number of available jobs in the ambulatory healthcare services, hospitals, and nursing and residential care facilities increased over the 2009-2011 period in every state except Vermont.[15] The median increase in healthcare employment was 3 percent (about 6,000 jobs per state), with several states seeing increases of 5 percent or greater. The relatively wide distribution of healthcare jobs throughout the country and nearly uniform increases in employment were critical in enabling several grantees, particularly HHG grantees, to succeed in finding employment for their participants.

The final column of Exhibit 3 provides the percentage of green jobs by state. This statistic is based on data from the Green Goods and Services Summary (GGS) for the fourth quarter of 2010. The GGS survey includes "approximately 120,000 business and government establishments within 333 industries that are identified as potentially producing green goods or providing green services." The number of individuals associated with green employment within a firm is derived by multiplying the percentage of revenue derived from green goods and services by the number of employees in the establishment. The U.S. median state-level percentage of individuals employed in green industries among the entire employed labor force was 2.4 percent. Vermont had the highest level at 4.4 percent; Florida had the lowest at 1.3 percent. These figures demonstrate that the number of occupations qualifying as "green" is relatively modest countrywide.

---

[12] http://www.census.gov/construction/c30/c30index.html
[13] We were unable to obtain data for Delaware, Washington D.C., Hawaii, Maryland, Nebraska, and Tennessee.
[14] We were unable to obtain data for Arkansas, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.
[15] We were unable to obtain data for Alaska, Iowa, New Mexico, and West Virginia.

4. FINDINGS: PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY GRANTS

This chapter summarizes the results found for the Pathways Out of Poverty (POP) SGA by research area. Exhibit 4 provides a summary of the POP SGA and the grantees visited.

Exhibit 4: POP Summary Table

Pathways Out of Poverty SGA Summary	
Total Number of Grantees: 38	**Total Number of Grantees Visited:** 8
Target Population: Unemployed individuals, high school dropouts, individuals with a criminal record, disadvantaged individuals within areas of high poverty, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, Veterans, Indian and Native Americans, older workers	**Target Area:** The Department of Labor encouraged applicants to focus project efforts in communities located within one or more contiguous Public Use Micro Data Areas (PUMAs) where poverty rates were 15% or higher. PUMAs are geographic areas designated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Grantees Visited:
- Jobs for the Future, Inc.
- Southwest Housing Solutions Corporation
- West Hills Community College District
- East Harlem Employment Services, Inc. (STRIVE)
- Goodwill Industries International Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
- Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
- Moultrie Technical College
- National Association of Regional Councils

Funding Range: $2 million to $8 million

Length of Grant: 2 years

SGA Goals:

Pathways out of Poverty grantees aim to integrate training and supportive services into cohesive programs that will help targeted populations find pathways out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency through employment in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. These investments will prepare participants for employment within energy efficiency and renewable energy industries and are designed to:

- Include sound recruitment and referral strategies for targeted populations

- Integrate basic skills and work-readiness training with occupational skills training, as necessary

- Combine supportive services with training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment, as necessary

- Provide training services at times and locations that are easily accessible to targeted populations.

POP Grants Coverage Area
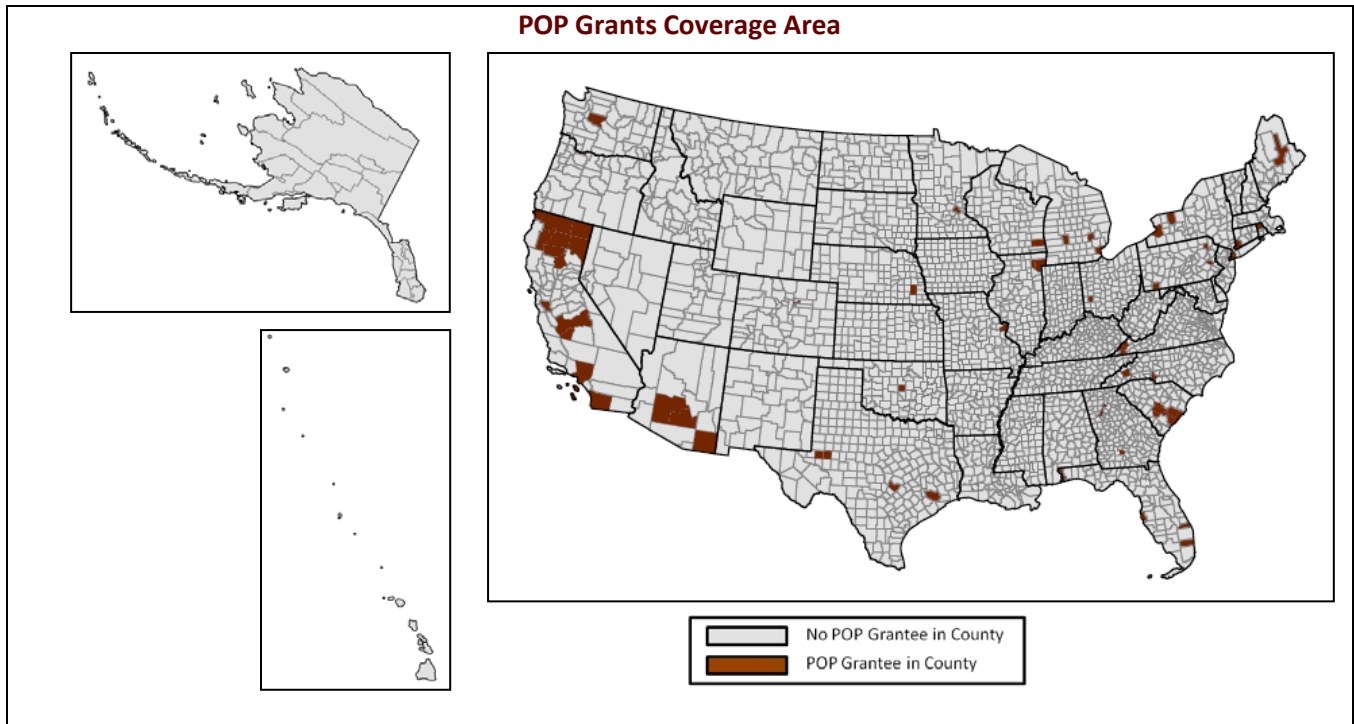
4.1 Program Context

The communities in which POP grantees operated faced a variety of challenges. Site visit respondents reported high unemployment rates in the areas being served by the grantees – in some cases 30 percent or above. They also reported that certain communities were experiencing population decline and, as part of the housing downturn, an abundance of abandoned houses. In addition, multiple communities offered few support services or educational opportunities such as vocational schools or community colleges.

A range of challenges noted by the POP grantees was associated with insufficient labor demand. For example, one grantee reported that a large portion of the jobs in the local economy were seasonal. In another, the community had been auto-impacted, facing large job losses from auto plant closings. In many of the rural communities, jobs were few in number and geographically dispersed. One grantee reported a strong labor union presence in the community, making it difficult for non-union member program graduates to find construction jobs.

The survey results bolstered these findings. Of the POP grant administrators, 71 percent noted that their region had seen a decline in the demand for skilled workers in the areas for which they trained. Further, 71 percent of POP survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that local economic conditions created challenges in achieving program goals.

In contrast to the prevailing economic context for POP grantees, regulations in one community required contractors that received public funding to hire a certain percentage of workers

locally, and the skills training program could provide those workers. Even so, by targeting training to green jobs, healthcare jobs, or jobs in other high growth or emerging industries, the grantees sought to target their efforts in industries where program graduates would be most likely to readily find employment.

On the labor supply side, in many of the target communities the proportion of households in poverty was high. Many low-income individuals who did not own cars or lacked driver's licenses found it difficult to attend training programs or go to work each day, particularly if the community lacked adequate public transportation or if the jobs were geographically dispersed. The target populations often included a high proportion of ex-offenders, who typically have difficulty finding a job because many employers do not want to hire them. Many program participants spoke a native language other than English, which also limited their employability. One grantee described its target population as lacking in work ethic, motivation to achieve, and the soft skills needed to obtain and retain employment.

Several of the grantees mentioned that their programs were designed to be compatible with the initiatives of the local WIB or economic development board. For example, grantees designed their programs to complement other workforce development activities instead of duplicating them, to avoid saturating the market with too many skilled workers in one sector. One survey respondent noted that they coordinated their program with local mayors and WIBs.

Many POP programs were also developed to supplement the burgeoning green energy sector of the economy. Several survey respondents highlighted their goal of supplementing their program with local "green" economy initiatives as a means of improving their programs. Others noted a focus on meeting energy efficiency targets for their region.

4.2 Target Population

The POP grantees targeted individuals who were the most disconnected from the workplace. These individuals were characterized by one or more of the following: low-income; unemployed or underemployed; being an ex-offender; limited work history; limited education (many participants did not test at the 6th grade reading level on the Test of Adult Basic Education); in need of childcare for dependent children; no telephone or email address; lacking access to automobile transportation and not having a driver's license; homeless, with mental health or substance abuse issues; and lacking financial literacy. According to survey results as displayed in Exhibit 6, the following groups were heavily targeted by POP programs.

Exhibit 5: Groups Targeted by POP Grantees

Group Targeted for Training	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Unemployed Individuals	100	93
Incumbent Workers	100	81
Auto Workers	83	40
Ex-Offenders	79	41
Dislocated Workers	75	81
Persons With Disabilities	71	64
Women	71	60
High School Dropouts	67	69

As reported by survey respondents, unemployed individuals, incumbent workers, auto workers, ex-offenders, and several other groups were most heavily targeted by POP programs. While these results were similar to those of the other grant programs, POP programs far more frequently targeted auto workers (83 percent compared to 40 percent overall) and ex-offenders (79 percent compared to 41 percent overall) than the three other SGAs, consistent with the POP grant program goals and SGA requirements.

In addition, in the area of soft skills, grantees reported that many participants lacked an understanding of common business etiquette and how to conduct a business conversation, were intimidated or scared in a business environment, and lacked self-confidence. Grantees described some participants as somewhat anti-social and isolated, and without skills or a support system to cope with minor setbacks (such as a family member becoming sick). Often the target populations of POP grantees included at-risk youth, veterans, and dislocated workers.

4.3 Target Service Area

The target service area varied across POP grantees. Some grantees operated over several geographic areas around the country; these were either medium-to-large cities, or small rural towns. Others focused their programs on a single rural county, a rural agricultural area, or a single distressed area of a large city.

4.4 Recruitment and Enrollment

Grantees conducted outreach to raise awareness of their training programs among the target populations. Interested individuals typically learned more about the program through an orientation session, completed an application form including any required documents, were assessed for eligibility and appropriate placement in the program, and finally were enrolled. These stages are described below.

Recruitment.   POP grantees used a wide range of techniques to recruit participants into the program. In many cases, the techniques were comprehensive, creative, and customized to the grantee's particular environment. Approaches to recruitment included:

- Focusing recruitment efforts in neighborhoods with the highest numbers of the target population.

- Hiring a dedicated recruiter in each target community.

- Distributing flyers in stores (such as laundromats and food trucks) in the target communities, to passersby on the street in target neighborhoods, in door-to-door canvassing, at career fairs organized by other organizations, in weekly e-mail blasts (for example, to residents of local housing authority units), and as enclosures in water utility bills. When appropriate, grantees created flyers in Spanish as well as English. Grantees also reported displaying posters at many locations throughout the respective communities.

- Creating and distributing postcards that interested individuals could fill out and mail in for more information.

- Making in-person presentations at neighborhood events such as job fairs or at community-based organizations (CBOs) or faith-based organizations (such as skills training programs, food kitchens, halfway houses for ex-offenders, job centers, foster agencies, medical centers, daycare centers, domestic violence service providers, and legal services organizations). Recruiters also made presentations at local institutions such as high schools, churches, libraries, community colleges, and public housing facilities. In addition, recruiters made presentations to 1) government officials (such as the local mayor, and government agencies such as the local housing authority, 2) workforce agencies, 3) American Job Centers, 4) veterans agencies, 5) corrections agencies, 6) businesses in the private sector (such as construction companies), and 7) corner stores where unemployed individuals might gather. By networking with individuals at all of these types of organizations, grantees increased the number of sources that could provide referrals to their program. One grantee found that the local Chamber of Commerce was particularly effective, because it could distribute descriptions about the grantee's program to its members, all of whom were potential employer partners.

- Getting the local city council to promote the training program in their newsletters and websites.

- Describing the program in advertisements in the local newspaper, on radio or TV, in audio advertisements on buses, and on billboards.

- Posting a description of the program on the program website and the websites of partner organizations.

- Using social media such as Twitter to raise awareness about the program.

- Word of mouth – which, after the first cohort of training program participants graduated, proved effective in recruiting new participants.

Orientation. Grantees provided an orientation session during which program staff described the program content, expectations of participant effort, attendance policy, and program rules. In some programs, grantees provided applicants with a participant handbook and a consent form to sign, indicating a willingness to release their data. Individuals who decided the program was not suitable could self-select out of the program at the orientation session.

Application Process. The application process typically involved the applicant completing an application form and providing documentation regarding identification (Social Security card or birth certificate), residence (utility bill), income (pay stubs), receipt of benefits (such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Medicaid), and registration for the Selective Service.

Assessment. POP grantees used standardized tests such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (www.ctb.com), WorkKeys, COMPASS (www.act.org), or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems test (www.casas.org) to help assess applicants' skill levels in reading, writing, math, or other basic skills. Applicants would need to score above a certain minimum grade level to be admitted to the training program. The minimum level varied across training programs and curricula, but was typically grades 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9. Grantees often referred applicants who scored below the minimum required grade level to remedial education classes and admitted them to the training program only after achieving the minimum required skill level. One program also had applicants take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test.

The assessment also usually included one-on-one interviews to review the applicant's readiness for the training program more broadly. The assessment staff discussed the applicant's career interests, barriers to employment, education and work background, level of family support, and willingness to work. Some programs also required the applicant to pass a drug test or background check of criminal activity. In addition, some programs had specific eligibility requirements related to the training program (such as age requirements, physical lifting requirements, or a tree-climbing test for a program that trained participants in trimming trees).

National Association of Regional Councils (Dayton) used what was called the "funnel" process to help ensure that individuals who had the motivation, dedication, and ability to succeed in the program were recruited. Use of orientation sessions, academic skills tests, and one-on-one interviews to gauge the capabilities of potential participants proved to be quite successful, as 93 percent of the individuals who actually went through this program completed it.

The survey results show that 88 percent of POP programs conducted a formal or written assessment of the participants as part of the selection process, the highest of any of the grant program types. This may have been attributable in part to the need to recruit the highest quality participants, which was required to succeed in the program given that POP programs often dealt with transient populations and individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

Some programs assessed the applicant's soft skills, for example noting whether the applicant arrived at the assessment interview on time, made eye contact with the interviewer, and completed the paperwork as requested.

Enrollment. After an applicant was accepted into the program, a common next step was to create an individual action plan describing the participant's training and employment goals and barriers to employment, including concrete steps the participant would take to overcome those barriers, such as accessing childcare or other support services. Program staff would help participants fill out the application forms for support services. In some cases, the application, assessment, and enrollment process would take one to three months from the participant's initial contact with the program to the start of actual training.

4.5 Training Program

Selection of Occupations for which to Train. Several grantees mentioned that they selected the occupations for which to train based on their analysis of labor market information (LMI), in particular examining the locations of existing green jobs, the industries projected to grow, and the labor force characteristics of the target locations. The survey results supported this finding, showing that 88 percent of POP administrators used LMI in developing their programs.

Curriculum Design. According to the survey results, two-thirds of POP grant programs developed new curricula, designed with input from local employers, advisory committee members, the local WIB, or local education institutions offering related courses. Exhibit 6 presents the percent of POP programs that are new versus an expansion of an existing program. The other one-third melded an existing curriculum with new curriculum material developed specifically for the grant. The survey did not inquire about the extent to which partners were involved when a new curriculum was used in combination with an existing curriculum.

Exhibit 6: New Versus Expansion Program Offered by POP Grantees

Type of Training Program	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
New program	67	49
Expansion of an existing program only	0	10
Both a new program and an expansion of an existing program	33	40

Local employers were particularly valuable because they provided input regarding industry certifications needed and the topics to be covered by those certifications. For example, in one program, employers provided a list of 100 keywords from industry jargon that they wanted program graduates to know. The importance of partners in developing program curricula is discussed in further detail in the partnership section of this chapter.

Skills required in these green occupations often were more "traditional" skills, such as welding, electrical (residential and commercial), truck driving, forklift operating, working with electric motor and controls, or heavy equipment operation. For deconstruction, relevant instruction included compliance with OSHA regulations, lead safety, and asbestos safety.

Selection of Training Providers. Some of the grantees used a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select the training providers, in which providers such as technical schools submitted proposals describing their training programs and associated costs.

Training Program. The POP grantees generally offered training in green occupations or industries such as weatherization, commercial solar installation, green construction, energy efficiency and renewable energy (EE/RE), smart metering (real-time electricity meters with two-way communication with the utility company), and green certification. Some grantees also offered training programs such as energy auditing or HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) that were reserved for participants who demonstrated more advanced skills than the typical program participant. According to survey results, the most common industries for which POP program participants trained were: energy-efficient building, construction and retrofit industries (96 percent of programs); energy efficiency assessment industry serving residential, commercial or industrial sectors (71 percent); and renewable electric power industry (54 percent). Health Information Technology (HIT) and other high growth and emerging industries were rarely part of the POP training curriculum, with only 4 percent and 17 percent of programs, respectively, offering training in these industries. Exhibit 7 presents the industries in which survey respondents reported offering training programs.

Exhibit 7: Industries for which Training Skills are Provided by POP Partners

Industries for Which Training Skills are Provided	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Energy Efficient Building	96	53
Energy Efficiency Assessment	71	47
Renewable Electric Power	54	37
Deconstruction	42	22
Manufacturers that Produce Sustainable Products	42	25
Other High Growth	17	25
Energy Efficient and Advanced	17	14
Biofuels	17	15
HIT	4	11

The training programs typically lasted 8 to 12 weeks, but program length varied. For example, one grantee offered a program that was as short as two to three weeks, while another grantee offered a seven-month program. Programs often included segments on soft skills, basic skills in English and math, or additional topics such as financial literacy. Training was usually 35 to 40 hours per week. In some cases, training started at 8:00 am or 8:30 am; but other programs, particularly in construction work, started at 6:30 am to mirror the typical start time on construction jobs.

Programs generally consisted of a mixture of classroom and hands-on training, as noted in Exhibit 8. The majority of programs also offered basic work skills training, adult basic education, and on-the-job training. One program included two-day tours of schools, community colleges, solar companies, and other firms where participants could learn about different types of green jobs. Another held green jobs overview workshops each month at community colleges with a similar purpose.

Exhibit 8: Training Services Offered by POP Grantees

Training Services	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Classroom Training	100	95
Hands-On Training	92	76
Basic Work Skills Training	88	68
Adult Basic Education/ESL	75	43
On-the-Job Training	54	47
Internships	46	36

Survey results show that approximately one-third of POP programs offered apprenticeship training, in-line with other programs, while 13 percent offered mentorships and 25 percent offered transitional jobs. The relatively low number of programs offering these services may highlight the fragility of the economy in the areas in which these programs operated, and the resulting inability to place participants in employment while they were in the program or as they transitioned out of it.

Flexibility to Accommodate Participant Needs. Several of the POP programs made a special effort to accommodate the scheduling needs of participants by offering training on weekends or evenings, or with an online component. One program offered a Saturday training class for students who might have missed a class during the week. Most programs were accessible by public transportation. In one case in which many of the participants lived in remote rural locations, the program used a mobile training unit to bring the training to participants in remote towns. In some cases, the training program included multiple entry/exit points so that participants could complete some training, find employment, and return to take additional training at a later date when doing so meshed with their career progress.

Auxiliary Components of the Training Program. In addition to the main training curriculum pertaining to green or healthcare jobs, some of the POP grantees implemented additional training in soft skills, covering such topics as job readiness, attitude, teamwork, punctuality, tolerance, patience, humility, and how to work with a supervisor. Job readiness training also included guidance on preparing resumes, participating in mock interviews, and in one case public speaking. One grantee implemented this as a four-week program, 8am-5pm, five days/week; another implemented it as a three-week course. One comment from focus group participants was that these soft skills training programs "weed out those who won't help themselves."

Another type of training commonly provided was remedial English as a Second Language (ESL) courses (which was provided by 75 percent of programs, as seen in Exhibit 6) or General Educational Development (GED) classes for participants needing to improve their basic skills. One survey respondent noted that they included more basic education into their existing construction curriculum to assist program participants. One grantee provided coaching in financial management (budgeting, improving credit, saving money, buying a car or home) four times during training and one additional time a couple of weeks after graduation.

Transition from Training to Employment. To assist program graduates in finding a job, one grantee conducted a Career Fair after each cohort of participants completed their training, where employers would interview program graduates for entry-level jobs. Another grantee arranged for a paid internship for each participant; this required state agency modifications of restrictions on hiring people with criminal backgrounds.

Most Beneficial Aspects of Training. A number of focus group participants mentioned that paid internships after completion of training were very valuable, because they were provided with an opportunity to obtain hands-on experience in a job environment. Some ex-offenders mentioned that the most beneficial aspect of training for them was learning how to talk about their offenses when interviewing with the employer. Other participants appreciated receiving basic support such as food and money to pay for gasoline, which enabled them to continue their training. Survey results show that, of all its goals, the POP program had been most effective in meeting its goal of getting participants to complete the training and the certifications they earned while in the training. This highlights the relatively high levels of completion and certifications achieved by the program.

4.6 Case Management and Supportive Services

Comprehensive Support Services. In general, the POP grantees provided comprehensive support services to help participants complete the training and find employment. These included services such as:

- **Referrals to other service providers** for childcare (63 percent of programs provided this), food pantry, dental or healthcare, transitional housing (for ex-offenders who do not qualify for public housing), income support programs, legal services, fatherhood education, adult literacy, ESL, GED, certified addiction counselors, and mental health counselors. One grantee referred participants, when appropriate, to classes in cognitive behavior, motivation for change, or anger management.

- **In-kind or financial assistance** such as bus passes, gasoline cards, or reimbursements for the actual cost of transportation (survey results show that 92 percent of programs provided transportation assistance) to and from the training program; tuition and books at programs providing education; work tools, safety shoes, prescription safety glasses, and gloves; direct payments to help participants pay their child support or other bills; and food at lunch time each day during the training. Indeed, 38 percent of POP programs provided emergency financial assistance, with one mentioning it had a

program to help pay participants' utility bills. One grantee operated a van that picked up participants at their homes and brought them to the training program location because of inadequate public transportation in the community. Because the van could accommodate 17 people, grantees scheduled the training classes to be compatible with groups of 17 participants arriving at a time. One grantee provided vouchers for two items of clothing at the local Goodwill retail store, mock interviews, and a career fair after graduation from the program.

Exhibit 9 presents the support services survey POP survey respondents reported that their programs provided.

Exhibit 9: Support Services Offered by POP Grantees

Support Services Offered by Grantee	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	92	69
Clothing	71	45
Childcare	63	43
Financial Counseling	58	32
Emergency Assistance	38	26
Housing	21	21
No Support Services Offered	0	15

Southwest Housing Solutions Corporation (Detroit) worked on its participants' financial literacy, using a financial coach who met with the training participant within the first two weeks of the program to put together a "combined financial analysis." This included an assessment of the participant's financial literacy, a balance sheet that captured details on income and expenses, and a daily spending log. In a follow-up session the coach worked with the participant to develop a "client action plan" that established short- and long-term financial goals, such as improving credit, saving money, and purchasing a car or a home. Improving financial literacy and management skills helped ensure that participants attained and maintained financial stability after securing employment.

Case Management. Grantees reported that case managers played a key role in providing supportive services to program participants. The caseload for case managers varied across grantees, with some reporting that case managers were responsible for up to 50 to 100 participants at a time. Grantees mentioned that because the case manager needed to understand each participant's barriers to employment, the case managers must be both "nosy" and "good listeners." Case managers also had to overcome participants' initial mistrust in order to learn of and address any barriers to employment before the participant met with potential employers.

Grantees mentioned some insights they gained about their target populations from working closely with them. For example, participants with no high school diploma were often

intimidated even by just walking around the campus of the community college. Agricultural workers who had always worked outdoors sometimes felt very uncomfortable in an indoor, office environment. Participants who had experienced very few successful outcomes in their lives could find great satisfaction from passing an industry certification test. Participants such as ex-offenders who had been rejected by most of society in the past could feel enormous gratification if the case manager truly worked in their best interest.

Grantees mentioned that good case managers had regular interaction with the participants by calling, writing letters, or visiting the participants in person. Case managers provided emotional support to the participants, acting as cheerleaders, telling students not to give up, cheering them up when they are sad, being kind and understanding, and showing them a way out of their problems. While developing a personal relationship with the participant, case managers also used a range of counseling techniques – for example, "reality counseling," which focuses on current actions and behavior, not the past; or "choice therapy," in which participants learn they must make choices and accept the consequences.

Job Placement Services. All POP grantees provided job placement services to help program graduates find employment. Job developers led this effort. They helped with preparing resumes by making sure the participant used correct language, documented all their certificates, did not "fluff" the resume, and used references that would hold up. Program graduates also received assistance with preparing cover letters, participating in mock interviews, and performing various job search techniques. One grantee provided graduates with a $100 gift card to help them pay for job search expenses. Another provided $200 to help pay for clothing, safety gear, and tools. Another provided $15/day to help defray childcare expenses, which helped enable graduates to attend job interviews.

Job developers fostered partnerships with industry associations to obtain notifications as new jobs become available at member employers. Grantee staff, in turn, then notified program participants. Many of the programs held career fairs and hiring events at the training program site or at the work sites of potential employers. One grantee held a breakfast for employers where program staff and participants could meet with local employers.

Grantees also looked for ways to help with the transition to employment. One grantee paid the wages of a newly hired graduate for a one-day trial period, so the employer could see whether it was a good match.

Support Services after Completion of Training. Several POP grantees continued to offer support services after completion of training. One continued follow-up with the graduates for one year; another paid for public transportation costs for the first month of employment, and offered incentive payments to the graduate to encourage good attendance at the job and other milestones related to job retention. Some grantees visited graduates at their new worksites, coaching them through situations that could potentially affect job retention. One helped graduates develop a new household budget based on their new wages.

Most Useful Support Service. Grantees and focus group participants were asked what they considered to be the most useful support service offered to participants. Many reported that the provision of encouragement by grantee staff helped to keep participants in the program. Another grantee cited the generally supportive approach of the program. Some participants mentioned that it was depressing to have to look for a job every day, and that the camaraderie offered by the program helped.

Attrition from the Training Program. Site visit respondents reported that some program participants left the training program before completing it. Reported reasons for attrition included the participants' finding a job, being unable to obtain support services such as childcare which were needed to continue attending the training program, and failing a drug test administered during the training period. Multiple grantee respondents reported that a significant number of participants left the program before completion for reasons such as these.

4.7 Certificates

All the grantees provided credentials or certificates upon successful completion of the training program; and, as previously mentioned, this proved to be one area in which the training programs met their program goals. During the program design phase, employer partners or local Business Advisory Councils consisting of employers usually had input into the types of certificates the programs would offer. Typically, these certificates would be the industry credentials the employers desired from their employees. Exhibit 10 presents the certificates that were reported by the grantee staff as being provided as part of the POP grant programs.

Exhibit 10: POP Certifications

POP Certifications	
▪ OSHA 30	▪ Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
▪ American Welding Society Credentials	▪ Microsoft Credentials
▪ National Electrical Code Credentials	▪ National Career Readiness Credential (WorkKeys)
▪ American Society of Mechanics Credentials	▪ American Petroleum Institute Credentials

Some certificates were recognized nationally – for example, certificates from the American Welding Society, National Electrical Code, American Society of Mechanics, American Petroleum Institute, CDL, Microsoft, or OSHA. One credential designating a certain level of basic skills was the National Career Readiness Credential from WorkKeys. Survey results show that most of the programs offered industry-recognized certification that gave participants the ability to advance in their respective industry. According to the survey, 96 percent of POP grant programs offered industry-recognized certifications to their participants and 92 percent of POP survey administrators noted that the training resulted in portable certifications/credentials. In addition, 75 percent of grantees reported that their program's training resulted in stackable certifications/credentials. Exhibits 11 and 12 present the percent of respondents that reported

providing stackable and portable certifications. These results may also explain why 92 percent of POP survey respondents believed that their training program helped participants access a career pathway that allowed for future advancement.

Exhibit 11: Stackable Certifications/Credentials for the POP Program

Does the Training Result in Stackable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	75	77
No	21	20

Exhibit 12: Portable Certifications/Credentials for the POP Program

Does the Training Result in Portable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	92	89
No	4	7

Other certificates were only locally recognized, which prevented them from being portable should the participant decide to move. For example, one grantee provided solar and wind technology certificates that were valued by the state, but not by the city. One grantee commented that "relationships are more useful than resumes in construction," downplaying the importance of credentials in finding a job, at least in that industry.

4.8 Partnerships

One clear finding of this study is grantees reported that the partnerships they had with other organizations were extremely important to program success. All of the POP grantees visited had multiple partners, and all of the grantee respondents attributed key elements of the success of their programs to their partners.

Partner organizations included:

- Training or education partners with expertise in providing training to participants. One grantee included three levels of higher education as partners: technical colleges, two-year state colleges/community colleges, and the state's four-year university.

- WIBs that provided valuable insight into grant strategies and implementation.

- Service organizations that provided a wide array of support services to program participants, such as providing HIV/AIDS or sexually-transmitted disease (STD) education and prevention services, legal rights seminars, financial seminars, childcare services, affordable housing services, and food pantry services.

- Employer partners such as construction companies that 1) could provide valuable input into designing the program and curriculum, 2) could identify the skills needed and the skills gaps they were finding in the local workforce, and 3) were willing to commit to hiring graduates of the program, as either paid interns or employees.

- Industry associations. Associations such as the Associated Builders and Contractors, www.abcmetrowashington.org, or the local Chamber of Commerce, that could efficiently broadcast information about the training program to all their member firms, sometimes numbering in the hundreds or even thousands.

- State or local government. For example, one grantee made use of a research and statistics department within the state government that analyzes LMI and produces a "Job and Labor Market Outlook" report every one to two months. This report identifies the employers that are hiring, the wage rates they offer, the firms that are dislocating workers, the skills needed in the industry, and so on. The grantee distributed this report to 83 area CBOs at monthly meetings, to raise awareness of the needs of local employers and to help their target populations find jobs. Another grantee named the state's department of corrections as its most critical partner, recruiting half the program's participants. For one grantee, the local government negotiated contracts with new employers to make sure a certain percentage of their jobs would be offered to local residents. Other grantees mentioned that coordinating with economic development agencies at the local or state level enabled them to ensure that their program design was integrated into the overall economic development strategy, thus filling a gap for specific kinds of training while not duplicating training efforts already provided by other organizations.

Partners often acted as champions to achieve key goals in the implementation of the program. For example, one grantee reported that the Commissioner of the technical college system in its state was instrumental in removing restrictions on hiring ex-offenders at state agencies. Some partners provided leveraged resources such as background research during the grant application process, training equipment, instructors for the training programs, classroom facilities (such as schools or libraries) in which the training sessions are conducted, donations of materials from local businesses (so participants in the construction training program could build a house), in-kind marketing services, data management services, and city or county garages that provided electricity to run mobile training units.

Grantees frequently established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to delineate the roles of the partners, their Statements of Work, costs, requirements for data collection and reporting, and specific procedures to follow in implementing the program. According to the survey data, POP grant administrators were most likely to develop MOUs with local workforce agencies (63 percent), education/training provider partners (75 percent), and CBO partners (67 percent). This corresponds with the grant programs' relative reliance on these respective partners to carry out much of the functions for their programs, as shown by the survey results below.

Grantees often built on existing relationships with their partners; some had worked with their key partners for more than 10 years and had established strong personal relationships with key stakeholders at the partner organizations. In these cases, MOUs might not have been necessary. For example, one grantee mentioned that an effective management strategy for working with partner organizations was to visit all partners on a regular basis to monitor their deliverables, thus holding the partners accountable. In other cases, the grantees created new relationships with partner organizations with whom they had not worked before. To create buy-in from partners, one grantee mentioned that it invited the partners to its events, shared strategic thinking, showed respect for the work performed by the partners, fostered a sense of inclusivity, and presented together with partners at national conferences. Another grantee mentioned that it obtained partner buy-in by explaining the benefits of partnership. For example, the city would receive more tax revenues if program graduates succeeded in finding a job, and employers would gain access to a larger pool of work-ready employees. While most partners were at the local or state level, grantees also reported having relationships with partner organizations at the regional or national level.

Partner Survey and Interview Results. Exhibit 13 presents the survey results regarding the involvement of partnerships in developing, managing, and sustaining the various POP programs. The questions heading each panel of the table highlight the different types of help by the different partner types.

Exhibit 13: Involvement of Partners in the Functioning of the POP Grantees (Percent)

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Program Design?						
Very Involved	29	71	33	21	50	4
Somewhat Involved	63	21	54	46	25	33
Not involved at all	4	4	4	17	17	38
Non-Response	4	4	8	17	8	25
How Involved in Curriculum Development?						
Very Involved	5	86	36	2	14	2
Somewhat Involved	14	2	48	7	10	2
Not involved at all	76	2	10	57	55	67
Non-Response	21	0	4	17	21	29

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community- Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Recruiting Participants?						
Very Involved	46	63	4	13	67	4
Somewhat Involved	46	29	67	33	29	42
Not involved at all	4	4	25	50	4	38
Very Involved	46	63	4	13	67	4
How Involved in Training Delivery?						
Very Involved	8	96	8	13	33	0
Somewhat Involved	21	4	58	21	29	17
Not involved at all	58	0	29	63	29	63
Non-Response	13	0	4	4	8	21
How Involved in Job Placement?						
Very Involved	25	42	58	21	38	8
Somewhat Involved	50	38	33	21	42	29
Not involved at all	21	17	8	46	17	46
Non-Response	4	4	0	13	4	17
How Involved in Managing the Program?						
Very Involved	12	47	10	0	14	7
Somewhat Involved	17	14	19	2	10	7
Not involved at all	67	21	60	64	55	55
Non-Response	13	13	21	21	13	25

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because several grant administrators did not answer the question or did not know enough to provide a response. Non-response rate includes response of 'Don't Know' and 'Not Applicable'.

These survey results show the involvement of education/training providers in assisting the POP programs with several facets of the program. Perhaps most interesting is the level of involvement education providers had in the development of the training program, especially regarding curriculum development and overall program design. In addition, nearly every POP grant administrator (96 percent) noted that education/training providers were very involved with training delivery. While it is not completely clear as to why education/training providers were so heavily involved in comparison to other partners, these findings are not surprising, as many of the programs required on-the-job (OJT) or classroom training, which the program itself could not provide.

> **Moultrie Technical College** built a program that benefited from strong community partnerships and invested champions. The president of Moultrie Technical College worked closely with the appropriate leadership at the state technical college system to fast track approval of new classes. A partner and champion at the University of Georgia worked within the higher education system to grant waivers for individuals with criminal backgrounds to work for the university under appropriate supervision.

Employer partners also merit special mention. The survey data highlight the important role employer partners played in designing the program and the curriculum. Often, employer partners provided input on the skills they needed, equipment on which to train workers, and experienced industry professionals to teach many of the classes. As expected, employer partners were the most involved of any partner with regard to job placement, with 58 percent of POP administrators noting that employers were very involved in this activity. In some industries, employers received financial incentives from government to hire workers in certain occupations, such as weatherization. Employer partners could also make known to grant applicants the need for these kinds of workers.

One of the grantees reported that a local university hired many entry-level workers – such as maintenance staff, porters, heavy cleaners, locksmiths, groundskeepers, and administrative staff – from the training program. This university rated the grantee's program as the best out of five community-based organizations with which they partner in both the quality and the professionalism of the workers graduating from the program.

One grantee arranged for frequent contact between the employer partners and the participants. The employer partner visited the training program to let participants know what was expected of employees; encouraged participants to be in contact with them; attended career fairs arranged by the grantee; and conducted mock interviews with participants, providing feedback on their interviewing techniques. Another of the employer partners mentioned that it liked the extensive pre-screening and background checks performed by the grantee, since it minimized the amount of screening the employer had to conduct. Also, this employer partner adopted a ranking system the grantee implemented to select the highest-scoring graduates for available jobs.

Less important to the functioning of the POP programs was the work conducted by labor unions and local/state governments. Though many POP programs often trained individuals in union-heavy industries (i.e., construction), the fact that many of the jobs POP participants were trained for were relatively unskilled may have contributed to the lack of input by the labor unions in several of these categories. This stands in contrast to the other grant program types, which were more reliant on labor unions to manage their respective grant programs. In addition, while many local and state governments provided LMI to several of these grantees, they did not provide many additional services, as shown in the survey results.

4.9 Program Management

Management Practices. Management techniques used by the grantees to help meet program goals included holding weekly staff meetings and conducting an annual evaluation of program staff that involved an outside facilitator to guide improvements. One grantee organized its staff by function, with three separate directors for training, job preparation, and job placement, respectively, each of which had his/her own staff (training program instructors, case managers, and job developers). One grantee hired a full-time position focused solely on grant management and compliance issues.

Management techniques pertaining to partner organizations included regular meetings with partners to review progress. These might be monthly or quarterly and were either in-person meetings or telephone conference calls. Grantees reported asking their partners to submit regular progress reports. Grantees also held annual meetings with partners; these were more comprehensive events involving site visits, fiscal auditing, observing training sessions, and so on. One grantee that implemented its program at multiple sites held annual conference calls among the sites to share promising practices and discuss implementation challenges. In addition, survey results show that 46 percent of POP grantees conducted surveys and 38 percent conducted focus groups with employers to solicit feedback on the program, with the goal of incorporating such information into the program to improve its efficacy.

One grantee mentioned an approach that emphasized accountability at all levels: 1) students advanced in the training program based on skills assessment, not classroom attendance; 2) students completed surveys at intake and exit, providing their opinions on ways to improve the program, and the student responses were shared with the WIB for consideration or to potential participants during recruitment; 3) training and education partners had to report graduate employment rates in order to receive funding; 4) the WIB followed up with employers 90 days after job placement to assess the employer's satisfaction with the worker; and 5) the grantee met with employers every 18 months and asked them to complete a survey so the grantee could verify that their training program was meeting employers' needs.

Data Collection. Grantees mentioned entering data into the RAD system as frequently as every day and producing daily, monthly, or quarterly monitoring reports from the RAD. One grantee mentioned that the RAD-generated reports were useful to DOL, but that other reports were more useful in monitoring their program on a day-to-day basis. In some cases, these reports were based on supplementary data collection systems. For example, one grantee maintained a database system to monitor job retention and follow-up with graduates after program completion.

Several grantees described using a commercially available database system to track participant data and produce project management and monitoring reports at the participant and training cohort level. One grantee used this system to create reports on employment retention, wages, and credit scores of program graduates. Grantees made many program changes based on these project monitoring reports.

Division of Labor. Several major functions were required to implement the grant, including grant administration, data tracking, skills training, and case management. Grantees with multiple partners sometimes distributed such functions among its various partners. The national partners might focus on grant administration, reporting, and communications with DOL, for example, while local partners might handle details of program operations.

Technical Assistance to Grantees or Sub-grantees. In cases where a national grantee engaged local sub-grantees to implement the grant program, the local grantee often needed technical assistance in areas such as green industry policies, regulations, and terminology; case management techniques in preparing case notes and managing participant files; and compliance with DOL requirements. Several of the sub-grantees had no prior experience implementing Federal grants and appreciated the technical assistance offered by the grantee. Some national grantees convened multi-city conferences at program start-up and throughout the grant to provide technical assistance, which was appreciated by the local grantee staff.

Program Start-up. Grantees mentioned that program start-up took time, since a number of tasks needed to be completed: legal review of contracts with partners, negotiating and signing those contracts, hiring staff, reviewing program curriculum, and recruiting participants. Some grantees took as little as six weeks for program start-up, while others said they were continually learning throughout the grant period and were just hitting their stride as the program was ending. The length of the start-up time for these programs may have contributed to several of the grantees' requesting program extensions. For example, the survey results indicate that 79 percent of POP survey administrators reported that the original timeframe for the grant was not sufficient for implementing their respective programs – higher than the overall average of 75 percent for all four grant types. This is likely because the POP programs were only two years in length, compared to 3 years for the SESP and HHG grant programs.

Leveraged Resources. Grantees succeeded in securing a wide variety of leveraged resources for their programs. Examples include:

- Automotive vehicles for program use.

- Office space for the grantee, provided at very minimal rent by a local Housing Authority and strategically located in a housing project.

- Space to be used for training at local schools, libraries, and the American Job Center. A landscaping training program was able to obtain a 125-acre plot of land in a local park, unmanaged for 30 years, which was donated by the local city to the program so students could practice pruning trees and doing irrigation and landscaping.

- Training equipment such as solar panels owned by local companies in the solar energy business.

- Waivers of utility bills by the local gas and electric utility company and tuition waivers that could be used for taking classes at a local college.

- Funding for developing a training facility, providing training and support services, and developing a curriculum.

- Building maintenance training services.

- Case management services.

- Support services such as financial skills training, health screening, and use of the computer labs at the local American Job Center.

According to survey results, as displayed in Exhibit 14, the most common leveraged resources were:

Exhibit 14: Most Common Leveraged Resources Provided by POP Partners

Leveraged Resources Provided by Partners	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Training Equipment/ Materials	92	92
Training Facilities/Space	88	88
Supportive Services	75	75
Training Curriculum	63	63
Instructors/Trainers	54	68

Exhibit 14 notes the variety of leveraged resources provided by POP partners, with the most common leveraged resources being the provision of training equipment/materials and facilities/space. This is borne out by the examples provided above. It should be noted, however, that although a majority of POP programs (54 percent) received instructors/trainers offered by partners, this was the lowest of all four program types and below the overall average of 68 percent.

Mid-Stream Adjustment Process. A few of the grantees mentioned making mid-stream adjustments to their programs, based on their experiences in the early months of program implementation, trends they observed in the data they collected, and/or unexpected events in the local economy. For example, one grantee experienced an attendance problem among its participants, so it instituted a requirement that every participant sign a statement saying 100 percent attendance was expected. This grantee also found that spending was initially slower than expected, so it conducted an expo and invited training providers and others to raise awareness of the program, which boosted enrollment. Another grantee observed a shift away from biofuels and towards green construction and renewable energy after grant award, and applied to DOL for a budget modification to shift its training program accordingly. According to the survey data, changes included developing a systemic approach to provide greater access and opportunities for community partners, and co-enrolling participants in WIA programs.

4.10 Sustainability

The POP grantees in the site-visit group were interested in sustaining their programs after funding ended, but in general had not completed their planning or identified sufficient sources of additional funds. The survey results concur with these findings, showing that, at the time of the survey, only 29 percent of POP grantees had already developed a sustainability plan, while 46 were in the process of developing one. Of those who had developed a sustainability plan, three-quarters developed their plan during the second year of the grant; the other quarter had developed their plan during the first grant year. None of the POP programs developed a sustainability plan during the planning period immediately following grant award.

For those programs that did develop a sustainability plan, the most frequent partners in this process were the WIB/Local workforce agency, education/training providers, and the employers. Nearly four-fifths of WIB/local workforce agency partners were either very or somewhat involved in this process, while five-sixths of education/training providers and two-thirds of employers were as well. The role of these partners in the process is not surprising considering their large roles in other aspects of the program.

Several of the grantees talked about selecting portions of their programs to continue after funding expired or holding planning meetings in the months to come to discuss sustainability. According to survey results, 79 percent planned to keep the job training portion of their programs after the grant ended, while 75 percent planned to keep the job placement services. POP programs were less likely to keep the supportive service and participant recruitment sections of their program in the future. Further, should the programs still exist after the funding ended, they would be most likely to rely on Federal funding, with 50 percent giving this as the funding source to maintain the program. Far fewer mentioned state or local government, union, employer, or foundation funding. Those that did mention the potential receipt of foundation funding mentioned receiving funds from the Kellogg Foundation, the Knight Foundation, United Way, and a few others.

4.11 Promising Practices

POP grantees mentioned a number of promising practices covering many aspects of program implementation, from early planning through long-term follow-up of program graduates.

For the period prior to grant application, promising practices included:

- Conducting extensive market research to assess community and industry needs and to identify employer partners. One grantee analyzed Federal investments in the region, local economic development activities, the needs of potential workers, the needs of employers (based on existing annual surveys of businesses), and other labor market information (LMI).

- Cultivating state and local champions (such as a congressperson or commissioner of the local technical college system) who could open doors for participants.

- Establishing strong and productive partnerships, especially employer partnerships.

- Hiring a staff person whose sole function was grant management, since managing grant finances, collecting data, and preparing reports for compliance with grant requirements was seen as "a huge task."

Grantees frequently mentioned the importance of partnerships. Grantees emphasized the importance of identifying motivated partners who would work for the success of the program, provide leveraged resources (such as training equipment and supplies, skilled individuals to conduct the training, classroom space for the training), and commit to hiring graduates as interns or employees; and then taking the time and effort to build strong partnerships, with MOUs to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of partners. It was reported that many partners were motivated because they had a vested interest in serving the same populations.

Employer partners were noted as being critical because they were in a position to identify jobs available at the time, occupations expected to grow in the future, and skills and certificates needed for these occupations. POP grantees recommended involving employer partners in designing and implementing the training programs, and cancelling training if no employer partners had committed to hiring program graduates. One grantee had a standing invitation to employer partners to come to the program at any time and made sure to be very flexible in accommodating employer needs and requests (for example, by conducting thorough pre-screening of graduates before employers began their screening process).

For recruiting and screening program participants, promising practices included:
- Going to where the target population spends time to recruit program participants.

- Conducting a thorough screening to identify individuals most likely to benefit from the training program, instead of trying to serve everyone. Part of the screening was articulating expectations early and clearly so that unmotivated individuals self-selected out of the program. Employers mentioned that they liked the quality of the graduates due in part to thorough screening.

- Conducting training in "soft skills" prior to skills training. This training addressed attitude and job readiness, with the goal of instilling a sense of self, ownership, responsibility, punctuality, accountability, and a work ethic to work eight hours/day. Employers valued soft skills in addition to strictly technical skills, and employees without soft skills might be at greater risk of job termination.

For the training program and curriculum, promising practices included:
- Having the same expectations as the job, so participants get used to the work environment. For example, in the construction industry, workers often start at 6:30 am, so a training program in construction should also start at 6:30 am each day. Also, the training program should allow no more than three unexcused absences, since absenteeism on the job leads to firing; require the participant to pass drug tests; and involve hands-on training to mimic the tasks required on the job.

- Teaching occupation-specific terminology, known as "contextualized literacy," which grantees considered more effective than general literacy training.

- Offering flexibility in the training schedule (during and after regular work hours) and location (mobile training units for rural areas)

- Providing sequenced training to allow for multiple entry points so workers could re-enter training modules as appropriate as they advanced in their careers.

- Including bilingual instructors, as needed, to accommodate Spanish-speaking and other participants.

Several grantees mentioned the importance of hiring good program staff. One grantee said that "There are like five to six [staff] people that make or break your program." Effective staff members were described as those who:

- Communicated effectively with participants.

- Were "nosy" and had good listening skills to learn about all the barriers to training and employment that participants face.

- Could overcome initial mistrust and develop personal relationships with participants.

- Respected the participants, cared about them when the rest of society had rejected them, and offered emotional support and picked up the participants when they faltered.

- Provided comprehensive wraparound support services, such as referrals to other agencies or programs; or additional training, tutors, or other special attention on a case-by-case basis.

- Recognized that participants were excited and proud to pass a pencil-and-paper test or receive a certificate.

One grantee mentioned the importance of having the same case manager for each participant throughout the training program, since such an arrangement fosters a personal relationship between the participant and the staff person.

For job placement and retention, the following promising practices were mentioned:

- Holding a career fair at the end of the training program, exclusively for program graduates, with employers screening job applicants and making job offers.

- Implementing a transitional jobs program, run by the grantee, for program graduates, to provide them with work experience prior to entry into the private sector job market.

- Sending staff to spend most of the day on the jobsite with new hires for the first two weeks, to teach them behaviors needed for job retention.

- Conducting two years of follow-up after training, regardless of DOL funding.

- Making use of the research and statistics department within the state government that analyzes LMI and producing a "Job and Labor Market Outlook" report that identifies the

employers that are hiring, the wage rates they offer, the firms that are dislocating workers, and the skills needed in the industry.

4.12 Lessons Learned

The most important external factor affecting POP grantees was unexpected weakness in demand for the types of jobs for which many of the grantees trained. Many of the grantees analyzed LMI prior to applying for the POP grant, but faced a decline in employment in weatherization and other green occupations, which were the focus of their training programs. One survey participant mentioned that the curriculum was changed to a more hands-on approach which included more adult education courses. Several grantees noted that only demand for a Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) remained consistently high during the recession. A CDL allows hauling of hazardous materials, for example.

The weakness in demand for green jobs prompted grantees to examine the industry further and try to understand its dynamics at a deeper level. One grantee came to the conclusion that weatherization was not actually a viable long-term career; ARRA funds increased the local demand for this skill by a factor of eight, but this increase in labor demand was expected to disappear when ARRA funding ended. "We've trained a bunch of people and given them this false hope that they can have a career in weatherization, when in reality they've been trained for jobs in a market that doesn't really exist." The grantee felt that to create stable demand for weatherization skills, energy costs would need to rise, or long-term Federal incentives to weatherize would need to be implemented. This grantee also mentioned the need for a national standard in weatherization, saying, "There are so many weatherization trainers, and everybody came up with their own standard. There was so much [ARRA] money out there that people developed their own curriculum. There are probably 100 groups in America that think their standard is the right one."

Survey data also show that grantees made changes as a result of the weakness in employment demand. Many of the changes were initiated to bring more employers on board. For example, one grantee created an employment advisory board, while another lengthened the time of training to include more work readiness and basic skill training. Another reported that job development changes were implemented to enhance placement, including broadening the scope of acceptable employment based on a local green jobs report. One reported that training had been intensified, and they had re-engaged trainees and explored new occupations to get their participants employed.

Other lessons learned relate to operational aspects of the grant programs. For example:

- Several grantees struggled and needed considerable customized, grantee-specific technical assistance from DOL or other organizations. One grantee mentioned that grantee leadership needed one kind of technical assistance and that front line staff needed a different kind. Another grantee mentioned that the technical assistance needed to be face-to-face in order to be most effective; using phone and e-mail did not

work as well in developing relationships and trust, and that programs needed to budget for substantial travel time for this in-person technical assistance.

▪ Grant management was a huge task: managing grant finances, collecting data, and preparing reports to verify compliance with grant requirements was often seen as burdensome. It was very helpful to have one person in the program certified in grants management to serve in this function.

▪ Several grantees mentioned the need for adequate start-up time, even up to one year, to hire staff, design the curriculum, purchase training equipment, and begin enrolling students. Some education institutions, for example, require that new curriculum be submitted one semester in advance. This added several months to the time required to start up the program even after the curriculum was finalized.

▪ Some of the grantees were restricted to offering the program in certain parts of the city, based on Public Use Micro Data Areas (PUMAs). This caused frustration as people in need were denied service based solely on their location of residence.

▪ Grantees reported that participants with criminal backgrounds performed just as well as those without, although participants with a higher risk of re-offending (rearrest, reconviction, or return to prison) required additional resources, such as weekly meetings among program partners to coordinate activities. One grantee offered a $5,000 bond to employers as security when hiring an ex-offender.

▪ One grantee recommended that MOUs be developed among partners describing roles and responsibilities, to ensure follow-through by partners. Grantees found that building new partnerships takes time – each partner needed to learn the other's language since the partners operated in different domains (government, foundations, employers, labor unions, CBOs).

▪ Developing a cohesive team among all the partners required changing the mindset in certain cases. For example, one grantee that had a thorough assessment process to select only those participants deemed most likely to succeed mentioned that it needed to change the mindset of community-based organizations – from trying to serve everyone to serving only those who would benefit from the program. Also, that grantee needed to change the mindset of training providers, so they thought of employers as partners in the design and implementation of training programs, not just as job placement sites.

4.13 Challenges

POP grantees mentioned numerous challenges encountered during program implementation, which they were able to address in only a few cases. When faced with dramatically declining labor demand for the industry for which the grantee originally planned to train participants (biofuels), one of the grantees was able to change the program design to train participants in a different industry (alternative energy and green construction). Another grantee realized that in a two-year grant program it would not be feasible to implement a 12-month training course; so

it selected a training curriculum that took only six to eight weeks to complete. Another grantee felt that, due to delays in program implementation, it would not be able to completely spend the grant funds during the two-year program period; so it applied for a no-cost extension.

Most of the challenges mentioned by the grantees involved situations beyond the capability of the grantee to remedy. These had to do with the local economy, local organizations/initiatives, and the perceptions of participants. For example:

- Many grantees mentioned that the weak economy and changes in plans for Federal, state, or local industry incentives or programs reduced the number of jobs available in the target industries and made it difficult for employer partners to honor their commitments to hire program graduates. One noted that participant wages were adversely affected by the economy once they obtained employment. Some of the employer partners actually went out of business during the grant period.

- Grantees noted that the least effective aspects of their respective programs had been job placement and retention.

- In one city, plans for an extensive smart metering installation program, which would have had job openings suitable for program graduates, were put on hold when a new mayor was elected.

- The requirement for Selective Service registration created mistrust among some participants, who thought they were going to be deployed to Iraq.

5. FINDINGS: ENERGY TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection efforts related to the Energy Training Partnerships (ETP) SGA. Exhibit 15 provides a summary of the ETP SGA and lists the grantees visited.

Exhibit 15: ETP Summary Table

Energy Training Partnership SGA Summary	
Total Number of Grantees: 25	**Total Number of Grantees Visited:** 9
Target Population: Workers impacted by national energy and environmental policy, individuals in need of updated training related to the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, unemployed workers, Veterans or past and present members of reserve components of the Armed Forces	**Target Area:** The Department of Labor encouraged applicants to focus project efforts in connecting target populations to career pathways in green industries.

Grantees Visited:
- Central Vermont Community Action Council, Inc.
- Memphis Bioworks Foundation
- SER Metro Detroit, Jobs for Progress, Inc.
- Austin Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC)
- H-CAP, Inc.
- International Transportation Learning Center
- Montana Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Council (MEJATC)
- UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation
- Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), AFL-CIO

Funding Range: $1.4 million to $5 million

Grant Length: 2 years

SGA Goals:

Energy Training Partnership grantees aim to contribute to our understanding of green industries and jobs that clean and enhance our environment. These investments will provide training for workers and prepare them to enter the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, as well as green occupations within other industries.

These investments are designed to achieve the following goals:

- Provide training and placement services in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries for workers impacted by national energy and environmental policy, individuals in need of updated training related to the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, and unemployed workers.

- All training and placement activities funded through this grant program will be conducted at the local level.

- A portion of the total funds—approximately $28 million—are reserved for projects that will serve communities impacted by automotive industry-related restructuring.

ETP Grants Coverage Area:

Legend:
- No ETP Grantee in County
- ETP Grantee in County
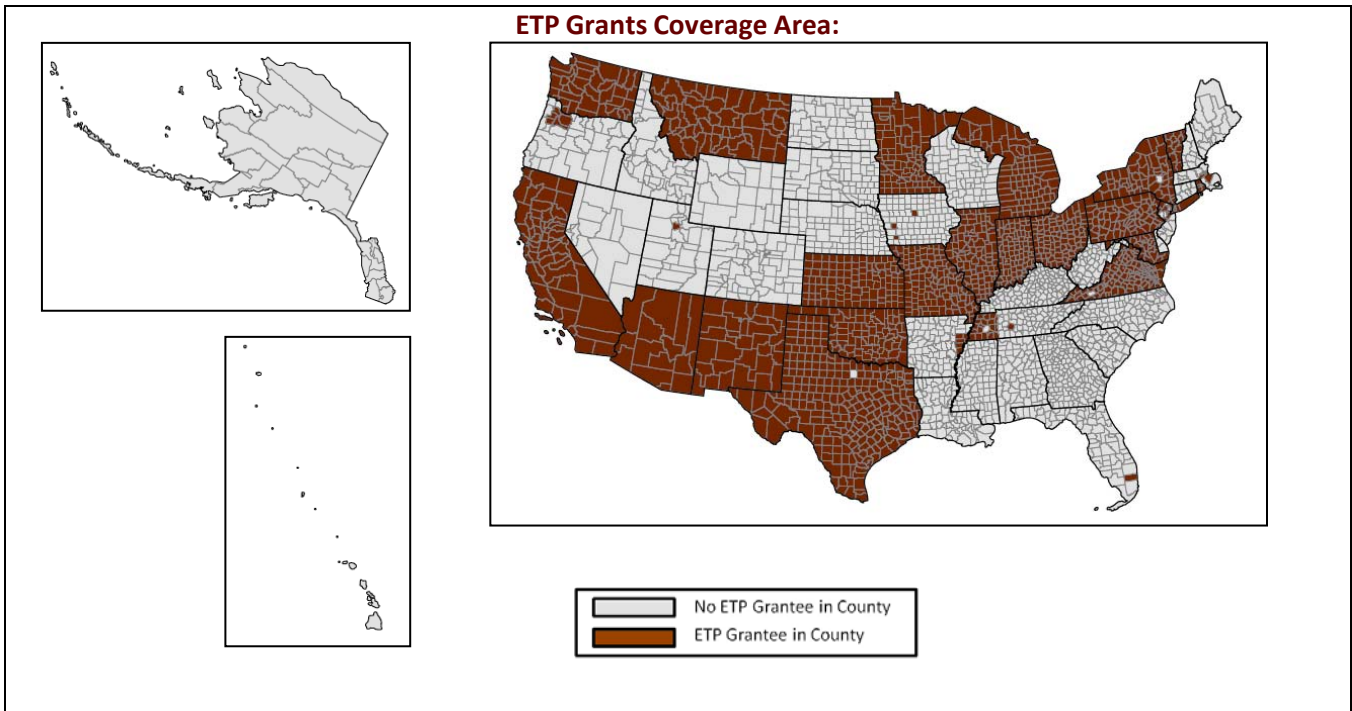
5.1 Program Context

Most ETP respondents reported that the grant programs were implemented in areas that had been negatively affected by the recent recession and economic downturn. In many cases, the grant programs were implemented in areas where major employers had recently shut down operations, including automotive companies. One grantee reported that three major plants had shut down in the years preceding the grant program.

ETP respondents also noted that due to the downturn in the economy employers were not spending significant amounts of money on training employees. One grantee reported that employers were not hiring new staff and that the low levels of staff limited the amount of time staff could spend on on-the-job training (OJT). Grantees that served transit agency employees noted that all their sites were facing an increase in technological demand, decreasing budgets, and an aging workforce. They indicated that skills needed to be upgraded for both current and future transit workers. Additionally, as the survey data show, nearly 88 percent of ETP program administrators agreed or strongly agreed that local economic challenges created difficulties in achieving program goals.

Many of the areas served suffered from higher than average unemployment and were considered auto-impacted regions.[16] However, a few grant areas were actually doing better than average in terms of the local economy. For example, despite poor economic conditions, grantees noted growth or anticipated growth in specific local industries, many of which were

---

[16] Communities impacted by automotive industry-related restructuring. See: http://www.doleta.gov/pdf/ETP_SGA_Award_Summaries_FINAL_02032010.pdf

considered "green." Grantees often credited state and/or local policies for this growth. For example, one grantee noted that the states served by the grant had recently funded the development of solar facilities, which helped spur demand for skills in this industry. Another reported that progressive state policies in the areas served by the grant program helped create a greater need for the skills gained through the program.

Grant requirements and local/regional characteristics also influenced the grant design. The grant requirements around the specific types of organizations that were eligible to be the grantee influenced the program structure. One grantee noted that the grant partners would have preferred to equally share the responsibility for the grant program. However, due to the fact that only one of the partners was eligible to be the grantee, the desired grant structure was not possible. Multiple grantees reported the need to design a training program that allowed training to be delivered across a mostly rural state. This included the use of mobile training units that could be easily transported to different sites and management strategies that allowed for meetings via telephone or video conferencing.

Several grantees noted that the grant program was in alignment with state/local efforts to promote the green industry. One reported that "there is political will, business buy-in, and community commitment to growing a green economy" and that this policy attitude helped shape the vision that ties environmental protection to economic development and promoting growth of a green economy. In this particular case, the state's commitment to a green economy had permeated the business community and fostered the establishment of several industry partnerships and associations. Other grantees noted that progressive energy policy in their states had created a greater need for the skills gained through the program. For example, some noted that regional industry cluster work-sector initiatives, state energy efficient goals, postsecondary policies and programs, energy conservation efforts, and infrastructure development policies had all helped improve the grant programs.

Poor economic conditions also affected grant start-up, implementation, and outcomes. For example, some of the planned solar farms in an area served by one grantee did not come to fruition. However, this was not universal, as another area reported greater than anticipated growth in solar construction. As a result, there was greater demand for training in that area and the grantee had to make adjustments to meet that level of demand. Another grantee reported that employer demand for green jobs was initially low but in the past two years had increased, which positively impacted grant outcomes. This is borne out by the fact that only 44 percent of ETP grant administrators believed that demand for trained workers in the areas for which they were trained had decreased since the program began, the lowest of any of the four program types.

5.2 Target Populations

Target populations varied across ETP grantees. Many targeted dislocated and unemployed workers as noted in Exhibit 16. Other targeted groups included incumbent workers, union workers, underemployed workers, sub-apprentices, apprentices, journeyman, women, older

youth, at risk youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and students. According to the survey results, the following groups were most heavily targeted by ETP programs:

Exhibit 16: Groups Targeted by ETP Grantees

Group Targeted for Training	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Unemployed Individuals	88	93
Dislocated Workers	81	81
Women	63	60
High School Dropouts	63	69
Persons with Disabilities	56	64
Incumbent workers	50	81

ETP programs were less likely than other program types to target incumbent workers (50 percent compared to 81 percent overall). This may be due to the relative novelty of the ETP training programs themselves and the fact that many individuals were trained in burgeoning industries that did not have established workforces.

5.3   Target Service Area

As with the target population, there was significant variation in the target areas served by the ETP grantees. ETP grantees that operated at the national level served a number of regional areas across the nation. Other grantees served the entire state in which it operated. Still others served only one regional area within the state where it operated.

5.4   Recruitment and Enrollment

Recruitment. Recruitment procedures used by the ETP grantees varied greatly across programs and were often customized to target specific populations. Grantees noted that, in many cases, the regional sites were tasked with recruitment and therefore there was variation within grant programs as well. One grant relied heavily on the expertise of its partners in recruiting the target populations it served. Survey results below show that WIBs, employers, education/training providers, and labor unions were all heavily used in recruiting participants.

Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVAC) recognized that potential members for the partnership were already using their own recruitment strategies to reach out to their service populations. Additionally, CVAC chose to target at-risk youth, veterans, the disabled, and women in trades typically dominated by men. To actively recruit these populations, CVAC focused on obtaining recruiting partners with experience in serving these populations. CVAC did not develop and print extensive recruitment literature about the program, focusing instead on meeting with other organizations and groups who would refer participants to service providers in the partnership.

Grantees targeting apprentices and journeymen used traditional union methods for recruitment. Grantees that were training incumbent workers did not need to recruit participants as they were enrolled by their employers. In cases where the grantee was reaching out to other target populations, including unemployed and dislocated workers, commonly reported recruitment methods included the use of flyers, presentations, information sessions, e-mail blasts, phone calls, advertisements, and billboards. Respondents also reported recruitment through American Job Centers, career centers, trade schools, high schools, and local non-profits.

A few grantees reported using social media and online sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Craigslist for recruitment. One grantee noted that these social media tools were more useful in providing information to participants already enrolled than as a recruitment tool. Focus group participants did not report finding out about the program through social media tools.

Enrollment. Reported enrollment procedures generally included an application, orientation, interview, and a variety of different assessments/screening tools. One grantee described its orientation as providing a "roadmap" of the training. The assessments helped grantees to evaluate the skill and motivation levels of potential participants. Many grantees conducted math and reading competency assessments, and then followed these up by providing remedial courses in these subjects when needed. One grantee specifically mentioned using the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment tool to assess participant skill levels. One reported administering physical tests to ensure students could undergo the arduous training. Other reported screening tools included criminal background checks and drug tests. Survey data show 56 percent of ETP grantees used some type of written or formal assessment as part of the participant selection process, below the overall average of 73 percent across all four grantee types.

Many grantees reported establishing prerequisites for program participation. A number required a high school diploma/GED to participate. In some cases, to begin the training program with the advanced courses, the participant was required to be an apprentice or journeyman.

5.5 Training

Selection of Occupations for which to Train. Respondents reported that they selected occupations for which to train based on expectations of or observed growth in specific industries. Three-quarters of ETP grantees also reported analyzing LMI to determine whether the skill level of the workforce would meet the identified industry needs.

Curriculum Design. Thirty-seven percent of ETP survey grantees used an entirely new curriculum, and several reported that the program developed new curricula for some or all of their training programs. Fewer than 20 percent noted that their program was entirely an expansion of an existing program. A large proportion (44 percent) combined existing training curricula with new curricula using modifications/enhancements designed for a "green"

component. Exhibit 17 presents the percent of ETP programs that are new versus an expansion of an existing program. Many used input from employers, labor unions, and education/training providers to develop new curricula and make modifications to pre-existing curricula. Respondents reported that developing and getting approval for new training curricula was a time consuming process.

Exhibit 17: New Versus Expansion Program Offered by ETP Grantees

Type of Training Program	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
New Program	38	49
Expansion of an existing program only	19	10
Both a new program and an expansion of an existing program	44	40

Selection of Training Providers. Grantee respondents reported selecting training providers through a number of different methods. Some grantees used a competitive RFP process following the grant award; other grantees selected training providers prior to the grant award and included the providers in the grant proposal as partners. One grantee engaged all trade unions in the state as training partners.

Training Program. The types and structure of training programs administered across ETP grantees and their corresponding sub-grantees/sites varied significantly. In general, ETP grantees provided training in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. These industries included occupations in energy efficiency, renewable electric power, building construction, HVAC, retro-fitting, and deconstruction, convergent technology, transportation, environmental services, recycling, waste reduction, and sustainable agriculture. Exhibit 18 presents the industries for which ETP survey respondents reported providing training.

Exhibit 18: Industries for which Training Skills are Provided by ETP Grantees

Industry for which Training Skills are Provided	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Energy Efficiency Assessment	69	47
Energy Efficient Building	63	53
Renewable Electric Power	44	37
Deconstruction	31	22
Manufacturers that Produce Sustainable Products	31	25
Other High Growth	25	25
Energy Efficient and Advanced	19	14
Biofuels	19	15
HIT	0	11

Respondents reported using a wide variety of training modalities including: classroom-based, hands-on, apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship, OJT, and online training programs. The survey results corroborate this variation as displayed in Exhibit 19, which describes the type of training delivery approaches used by the ETP grantees.

Exhibit 19: Training Services Offered by ETP Grantees

Training Services	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Classroom Training	100	95
Hands-On Training	88	76
On-The-Job Training	56	47
Basic Work Skills Training	50	68
Apprenticeship	44	32

The most common types of training programs were classroom training and hands-on training. ETP programs were more likely to provide apprenticeship training than other program types (44 percent compared to 32 percent overall), but less likely to provide basic work skills training (50 percent compared to 68 percent overall).

The ETP grantees used a variety of training providers, including community colleges and unions. In cases where trainees were incumbent workers, employers often provided the training. Many of the ETP grantees reported having existing relationships with the selected training providers, while others noted that grantees initiated partnerships with training providers during the grant application process. Trainers were reported as experienced and qualified to teach specific courses. When applicable, the trainers were members of the union involved with the grant. One grant program employed committee of workers, managers, and union representatives to select the trainers in order to ensure that participants who went through this program were representative of the workers on the ground. Focus group respondents reported that some trainers/instructors were more experienced than other instructors, but that in general they were knowledgeable. Some focus group respondents noted that the instructors could have used more assistance with administrative tasks such as grading papers, to allow them to spend more time with the students.

A number of grantees used a train-the-trainer approach in order to replicate the training. However, one grantee eventually dropped this approach, when it was determined that the training was of a higher quality and more efficient when the original trainers provided training directly.

Flexibility to Accommodate Participant Needs. While some types of training allowed for more flexibility than others, many of the training programs were offered in ways to accommodate the different needs of participants. Such accommodations included mobile training facilities that could be transported to rural areas, training courses offered at different times of the day and/or on the weekends, and training courses offered onsite at the place of employment. One grantee's training program consisted of six different training "tracks" to provide participants with different training options. In general, ETP focus group respondents reported that grantees offered trainings at convenient times and locations. Respondents from one focus group noted that the training program offered courses in the mornings, which allowed them to work part-time jobs in the afternoon.

Auxiliary Components of the Training Program. While flexible training programs likely helped retain participants, other program aspects contributed to participant retention. One grantee noted that the case management services provided to participants helped encourage participants and keep them motivated to stay in the program. For example, one program was self-paced and flexible for participants, and the training facility remained open five days a week for eight to nine hours a day.

Many grantees reported offering remedial education to help participants pass the required assessments. This included basic math, algebra, and computer skills training. One grantee specifically mentioned using the Plato Online Learning Management System software for self-directed remedial education.

Transition from Training to Employment. As shown in the survey data above, many of the training programs provided opportunities for OJT, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship training to bridge the gap between training and employment. Grant programs that provided training to incumbent workers eliminated the need for this transition.

Most Beneficial Aspects of Training. Focus group participants reported that the hands-on component of the training was its most valuable aspect and desired more opportunities for hands-on learning. One grantee reported that one of their training programs, developed to cross-train employees to work in a different trade for the same employer, was beneficial for both the employees and the employer. Employees were able to retain jobs that would have been lost had they stayed in their old trade and employers benefited from greater efficiency and productivity.

Survey data show that ETP programs had been most effective in getting participants to complete their training (100 percent noted their success in this area) and awarding them training certifications (88 percent were successful here). More than 60 percent noted that the program had been successful in meeting the goal of getting participants reemployed, the highest of any grant program type and more than twice as high as the overall average of the four program types (29 percent). This confirms the earlier survey results showing that ETP administrators were less likely to see a decrease in employment in their areas than administrators of the other three program types, perhaps denoting the success of these programs in getting their participants reemployed.

5.6 Case Management and Support Services

Comprehensive Support Services. ETP respondents reported that, in general, the ETP grant programs provided few support services to participants using grant funding. Survey results complement the site visit findings, with ETP administrators less often than other program administrators indicating that their programs were providing childcare (31 percent compared to 43 percent overall), transportation (50 percent compared to 69 percent overall), clothing (31

percent compared to 45 percent overall), and financial counseling (25 percent compared to 32 percent overall). Exhibit 20 provides the support services offered by POP grantees.

Exhibit 20: Support Services Offered by ETP Grantees

Support Services Offered by Program	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	50	69
Childcare	31	43
Clothing	31	45
Financial Counseling	25	32
Emergency Assistance	25	26
Housing	18	21
No Support Services Offered	25	15

A number of the ETP grantees did not provide support services at all because the participants were already employed prior to entering the training program. While one grantee offered training to incumbent workers, tutoring and services to help address personal issues during training were also provided. Other grantees reported that most support services provided were the standard services offered through the training provider (tutoring and learning labs) or other partners, with the exception of some larger grantees that had the ability to provide case management and job development services.

A few grantees reported that support services were provided by grant partners, including such support as the provision of training materials and tools, funds for transportation and car repairs, lodging, counseling, medical and dental assistance, basic skills training, motivational speakers, and gifts for the children of participants. One grantee noted that the idea was to engage participants at the community as well as the training level.

A number of ETP focus group respondents reported that travel and housing expenses were hard to pay while in training. Focus group respondents mentioned additional financial support, especially for transportation, as a possible area for improvement.

Case Management. A few of the grantees provided case management services to participants. One held team review meetings beginning in the 12th week of training, to allow participants to begin working with employment specialists on developing their resumes and ensuring job readiness. Another reported that some case management partners were focused on counseling and support services for the clients and not particularly adept at providing job placement services.

Job Placement Services. Job placement services provided to ETP participants were limited, which aligns with the survey results showing that only 25 percent of ETP programs provided internships and only 12 percent provided mentorships or transitional jobs. A few grantees developed relationships with employers to make them aware of the program and the skills the graduates received through the training. A number provided assistance in preparing resumes

and improving interview skills, as well as hosted job fairs for program graduates. A few respondents reported case managers/job developers working with participants on job placement.

Most Useful Support Services. Since the majority of respondents did not report providing specific support services, few were reported as essential to participants. One grantee reported that funds for transportation, lodging, clothing, basic entry level tools, and client follow-up services were very valuable to its participants.

Attrition from the Training Program. In general, the ETP grantees experienced high participant retention rates. One grantee reported that, while overall the program had high retention rates, higher drop-out rates occurred in regions with less strenuous screening procedures.

5.7 Certificates

As with other aspects of the ETP grant programs, the certifications earned by participants in the different training programs varied both across and within grantee programs. Different regions/sites under one grant, for example, might offer different types of training that would result in different certifications. Many of the training programs resulted in certifications, all of which were industry recognized and portable. In addition, three-quarters of respondents stated that the training resulted in stackable certifications/credentials, while four out of five reported that these credentials/certifications were portable. Exhibits 21 and 22 present the percent of ETP respondents that reported providing stackable and portable certifications respectively.

Exhibit 21: Stackable Certifications/Credentials for the ETP Program

Does the Training Result in Stackable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	75	77
No	25	20

Exhibit 22: Portable Certifications/Credentials for the ETP Program

Does the Training Result in Portable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	81	89
No	13	7

Focus group respondents reported that they preferred training from outside training providers as opposed to their employer, because they were more likely to be offered credentials. These certifications included those provided in Exhibit 23.

Exhibit 23: Certifications Offered

ETP Certifications	
▪ OSHA 10	▪ Lead Worker License and Lead Supervisor License
▪ OSHA 30	
▪ First Aid	▪ Electrical linesman certificates
▪ CPR	▪ Commercial driving license certificates
▪ CDL	▪ Building Performance certificates
▪ Convergent Technology and Energy Efficiency Certificate	▪ HVAC
	▪ LEED Certification
▪ Green Advantage	▪ Craft Certification
▪ AED	▪ Automotive Systems Certification

The need for these types of certificates stemmed largely from the industries targeted by the ETP grants. The most common industries included energy-efficient building, construction, and retrofitting (63 percent of ETP programs); the renewable electric power industry (44 percent); and the energy efficiency assessment industry serving residential, commercial, or industrial sectors (69 percent). Other industries that were the target of a number of ETP program trainings included deconstruction and materials use industries (31 percent of ETP programs) and manufacturing industries that produce sustainable products using environmentally sustainable process and materials (31 percent). On the other hand, relatively few ETP programs (19 percent) focused on energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicle industries or the biofuels industry. Respondents viewed certifications/credentials as integral within these industries, with every ETP grantee believing that the certifications/credentials earned by program participants enabled them to get into a career pathway that allowed for future advancement.

5.8 Partnerships

The grant structure for the ETP grantees was quite diverse, operating at the national, regional, and local levels, which influenced the number and types of partners. A national structure typically involved the grant administrator and sub-grantees at the local level that operated individual programs with a unique set of partners. A regional structure involved a grant administrator that operated different training programs throughout a region with a combination of regional and local level partners. A local structure involved a single training program that served one local area. The types of partners involved with the ETP grant programs included local WIBs, American Job Centers, community colleges, employers, CBOs, non-profits, and trade unions. Grantees also reported that original equipment manufacturers, vendors and suppliers provided training specific to the equipment that they manufacture/supply.

Across the different ETP grant structures, respondents reported a combination of new partnerships and those that existed prior to the grant award. One grantee reported that the community college partners had pre-existing relationships with employers in the area due to another grant program for training incumbent workers. Another worked with a group of partners that were part of a preexisting workforce strategies network. Several noted that pre-

existing relationships were beneficial in program start-up, management, and implementation. New partnerships required the grantee administrator to provide technical assistance, especially with regard to DOL reporting requirements. Existing partners were often already familiar with such requirements.

In developing the grant strategy and design, grantees included a wide range of partners in the grant application and program design process. One national grantee noted that the Labor Management Initiative was an extremely helpful partner in navigating the relationship between the unions and the grant administrators. Employer partners were involved in a number of capacities in the ETP grants, as the survey results in Exhibit 24 show. They served as advisors in the development of the curriculum and the OJT, delivered training, and hired program participants.

Partner Survey and Interview Results. Exhibit 24 presents the survey results on the involvement of partnerships in developing, managing, and sustaining the various ETP programs. The questions heading each panel of the table highlight varying levels of involvement by partner types that are important to program success.

Exhibit 24: Involvement of Partners in the Functioning of the ETP Grantees

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Program design?						
Very Involved	19	81	56	69	31	6
Somewhat Involved	38	13	38	25	19	31
Not involved at all	31	0	0	0	38	44
Non Response	13	6	6	6	13	19
How Involved in Curriculum Development?						
Very Involved	6	63	44	63	25	6
Somewhat Involved	13	19	38	25	25	13
Not involved at all	56	6	6	0	25	56
Non Response	25	19	19	13	25	25
How Involved in Recruiting Participants?						
Very Involved	50	50	56	81	31	6
Somewhat Involved	25	31	13	13	31	13

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
Not involved at all	6	6	19	0	25	56
Non Response	19	19	13	6	19	19
How Involved in Training Delivery?						
Very Involved	6	81	44	81	31	6
Somewhat Involved	25	13	19	13	31	13
Not involved at all	50	0	19	0	25	69
Non Response	19	13	19	6	19	25
How Involved in Job Placement?						
Very Involved	31	25	63	69	44	13
Somewhat Involved	31	44	13	13	19	19
Not involved at all	19	6	13	0	19	38
Non Response	19	25	25	19	25	31
How Involved in Managing the Program?						
Very Involved	19	25	19	44	19	6
Somewhat Involved	19	31	19	13	25	75
Not involved at all	31	25	50	38	38	6
Non Response	25	19	13	6	19	19

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because several grant administrators did not answer the question or did not know enough to provide a response. The non-response rates include responses of 'Don't Know' and 'Not Applicable'.

The survey results demonstrate the importance of employers, education/training providers, and labor unions in helping develop, maintain, and sustain the various ETP programs. Eighty-one percent of ETP survey respondents reported that Education/training providers were very involved in the design of the program. Respondents also reported that education/training providers were also very involved in curriculum development (63%), as well as delivering training services (81%). These partners were also involved in the recruitment of participants for the various ETP programs, although less so than in the other SGAs.

Employers were also a mainstay of the various ETP programs, as previously mentioned. As seen above, employers were heavily involved in curriculum development, a finding bolstered by the

survey results that 85 percent of ETP grantees solicited employer feedback with the intent of updating their program through focus groups and surveys.

The relative involvement of unions in ETP programs differed from the pattern for the other grantee types. This is not surprising considering that a number of these grants (UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation, Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), AFL-CIO, etc.) were run by unions that were heavily integrated within their structures. Indeed, 44 percent of ETP grantees noted that unions were very involved in managing the program, higher than any other ETP partner type and higher than the other grantee types.

Similar to other grantee types, WIBs and local/state government were not heavily involved in the ETP grant programs (though the WIBs had fairly large involvement in recruiting participants). CBOs played a considerable role in structuring and managing these grants, though far less than employers, unions, and education/training providers.

5.9 Management

Management Practices. A number of management strategies helped grantees meet the program goals. Many also noted the value of having constant and consistent communication with sub-grantees and partners. One grantee reported that it was beneficial to have one managing organization to oversee the sub-grantees. Grantees mentioned using conference calls, in-person meetings, and audits as methods they used for maintaining a high level of communication. Other strategies included:

- Training providers working in the same physical space allowed for making quick decisions about training.

- A flat grant structure and limited partners made program design, implementation, and making adjustments to the program efficient.

- Using a committee of workers, managers, and union representatives to select the program trainers ensured the trainers were representative of the workers on the ground.

- Using a phased-in timeline allowed all major purchases to be made later in the timeline.

- Communicating grant outcomes through a common web-based case management system allowed all partners to easily access participant information.

Utility Workers Union of America (Boston) reported that while the program was administered in three disparate areas around the country, the national UWUA provided strong national support for each program through its project director. The national organization helped to foster the curriculum development, partnership links, and other critical aspects for the program. Despite differences in how the local programs performed, each mentioned that the strength of the national UWUA was critical.

Data Collection. Many grantees used the RAD system for data collection/reporting. Sub-grantees were commonly required to submit monthly and/or quarterly narratives and quantitative data directly into the RAD system. Standardizing the way local program administrators maintained and submitted records was noted as a challenge. Many reported that the sub-grantees/partners often needed technical assistance in using the RAD system.

Division of Labor. The reported division of labor within each ETP grant program varied. Major functions included proposal development, program design, advising, fiscal and administrative management, data tracking, and skills training. One grantee used a steering committee to help develop the grant and inform the program design. Many reported that the grant administrators were responsible for administering both the programmatic and financial elements of the grant program. One grantee noted that the state's Department of Labor was brought in to act as the fiscal agent and advisor. This helped the grantee obtain buy-in from the state and expedited some of the learning curve, given that the grantee was a first-time DOL grantee.

A number of grantees reported using subcontracts or MOUs with sub-grantees/partners to clarify roles and responsibilities and define deliverables. One used a common web-based case management system to communicate program outcomes with all sub-grantees and partners. Survey results show that the most common partners for which MOUs were developed were labor unions (88 percent), education/training providers (69 percent), and employers (69 percent). In fact, ETP programs were the most likely of all grantee types to develop MOUs with labor unions, corresponding to the heavy integration of these partners within their programs highlighted above.

Technical Assistance to Grantees or Sub-grantees. A number of grantees reported working with partners and sub-grantees to ensure that the program was meeting its outcome goals. Weekly calls and meetings were often helpful in ensuring that implementers at the local level were meeting the requirements of the grant. During these meetings feedback received from employers was also shared. Others mentioned that even though they were working with partners with which they already had experience, they did have technical assistance needs around using the RAD system and complying with other administrative requirements.

Memphis Bioworks acted as the grant administrator with multiple community colleges and a union delivering training. Memphis Bioworks created a handbook for all training providers that included all DOL regulations, instructions on how to apply those regulations to the grant, and information about how to report information. Memphis Bioworks made the handbook a living document by updating it when additional information came out, posting it on the company website, referencing it during every monthly meeting with training providers, and citing it in response to phone calls or e-mails with questions about grant management.

Program Start-up. In regard to project start-up, grantees reported that certain sites had faster start-up periods than others. Grantees reported that many factors influenced start-up activities, including the relationship between the grant administrator and any individuals involved in budgetary/policy changes at the local level. Other factors included the time required to develop

a new curriculum and get it accredited. Some ETP focus group respondents reported waiting a number of months for training to begin. These findings are supplemented by the survey results, which show that 75 percent of ETP survey administrators reported that the original timeframe for the grant was not sufficient for implementing their respective programs. This may have been due to the fact that the ETP programs were only two years in length.

Leveraged Resources. Many respondents reported the use of leveraged resources. For grant programs that included OJT, respondents indicated that employee wages and time they took off work to attend the training were a significant leveraged resource. One grantee reported that one partner provided financial and career coaching as well as income support for participants. Another reported that the local government reallocated WIA dollars for paid internships and provided opportunities for program participants to retrofit government buildings. Other leveraged resources included time, effort, space, resources from other grant programs, and equipment from the range of partners. According to survey results displayed in Exhibit 25, the most common leveraged resources were:

Exhibit 25: Most Common Leveraged Resources Provided by ETP Partners

Leveraged Resources Provided by Partners	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Instructors/Trainers	88	68
Training Facilities/space	88	88
Training Equipment/Materials	88	92
Training Curriculum	69	63
Supportive Services	56	75

These results demonstrate the variety of support services provided by ETP partners, with the most common support services being the provision of instructors/trainers, training equipment/materials, and facilities/space. This may be related to the integration of several partners in the management and development of the programs, and the fact that many were run by unions.

Mid-Stream Adjustment Process. Respondents noted a number of ways that grantees made mid-stream adjustments to improve program implementation. Grantees reported making changes based on feedback from participants and employers, as well as changes in the demand for skills and participant employment outcomes. Changes included adjustments to the allocation of trainers across the different regions, recruitment methods, the dates and times training courses were scheduled, the modalities of the training courses, and the locations of the training course. One grant program began offering more courses on nights and weekends to accommodate working participants. This training provider also began to use "Triple O" training platforms, consisting of onsite, online, and online/live training components. Another program had to adjust the recruitment materials to convey to potential participants that the training did not guarantee an immediate job placement. Several grantees made changes to increase

employer participation. One increased in the number of certifications offered to make participants more attractive to employers.

5.10 Sustainability

Most grantees had not developed formal sustainability plans, but had discussions and plans around sustainability in process. Survey results augment this, showing that 38 percent had developed a sustainability plan by the time of the survey, with another 19 percent stating they would do so in the future. Only 19 percent of the ETP survey respondents said that the grantee had not developed a sustainability plan. ETP respondents were the most likely of any of the grantee types to have developed a sustainability plan by the time of the survey, perhaps highlighting the fact that their programs lasted only two years, as compared to three years for HHG and SESP grantees. For those that had developed sustainability plans, two-thirds developed their plan during the second year of the grant, while one developed the plan during the first year of the grant and another during the planning period immediately following the grant award.

Many grantees reported confidence that at least some components of their grant program would continue after grant funding ended. Grantees noted that the job training, job placement, and participant recruitment portions of the grant were most likely to be sustained after the program ended. As many of the ETP grants consisted of multiple sub-grantees, plans for sustainability were being made at the regional/local site level. Grantees reported that many sites and/or partners were considering different funding options for continuing parts of the training programs. Some union partners were considering a cost-sharing mechanism with individuals and contractors. Grantees noted the key role these partners played in the development of a sustainability plan, with 81 percent noting that unions were either very or somewhat involved in this process, the highest of any grantee type and consistent with the considerable role unions played in this grant type. In addition, for 69 percent of the grants, employers and education/training providers were reported as either very or somewhat involved in developing a sustainability plan.

One grantee reported that its partners had already applied together for funding from other sources. This is corroborated by the survey data, which show that grantees intended to seek funding from a wide variety of other sources to sustain the various programs, with 44 percent noting they would look for employer, union, and state and local funding to sustain their programs, higher than the other three grantee types. Only one grantee said it would seek foundation support for its program after DOL funding ended.

Another grantee noted that employers' approaches to sustainability were to ensure they were also training their incumbent employees as trainers for future employees. It was also reported that some training providers might open up the training developed for this grant program to students outside of the grant program for a fee, in order to supplement training slots for trainees from the state programs.

5.11 Promising Practices and Lessons Learned

The promising practices and lessons learned reported by the ETP grantee respondents fall into three categories: 1) partnerships, 2) administration, and 3) program components.

Partnerships. Promising practices and lessons learned under partnerships relate to the development of strong relationships with partners, as well as providing partners with a clear understanding of their expected contributions. In general, strong relationships and good communication with partners, along with clearly defined roles and responsibilities generated excitement and buy-in around the program. Many noted that pre-existing partnerships were more efficient than newly formed ones in terms of program start-up and implementation. In many cases, partners had already established proven communication, planning, and operational strategies. This approach enabled the grantee to take advantage of synergies already cultivated within the partner networks. One grantee reported that working with a small group of partners was beneficial because it allowed for quick decision making.

Grantees also reported strong employer engagement as a promising practice. Grantees reported fostering this engagement by consistently demonstrating and reminding employers of the benefits of the training program. Grantees also reported value in using LMI to identify target employers and engaging them through one-on-one job development meetings. Grantees and their partners reported making a number of changes to recruit employers into the various programs. For example, one grantee offered OJT funding to employers to bolster job placement. Another updated its recruitment plan and provided additional training to meet employer needs.

Administration. Promising practices and lessons learned under grant administration relate to the administrative structure and approach to grant management, administrative tasks and tools, and the leveraging of resources to support the program and its participants.

Grantees that used an independent organization to manage the sub-grantees and partners noted that this practice was successful in helping to run their grants. When the convening organization served as an intermediary, not as a competitor for funds, partners were able to come together in a neutral fashion. This central organization was able to capitalize on its expertise to ensure grant objectives were met and the project was implemented appropriately. Grantees also reported that a functional labor-management relationship made it easier to coordinate with employer partners and led to smoother implementation. In places where this was lacking, grantees recommended more labor-management training prior to program implementation. Some also recommended having staff dedicated to working solely on the grant program initiatives.

In terms of administrative tasks, grantees found it beneficial to set aside additional time for both program start-up and record keeping/reporting. Many noted that both of these program elements were more time consuming than expected. One grantee invested in developing a data monitoring tool based on DOL/ETA guidelines to assist in tracking progress. While some

partners said that providing the data presented additional burdens, they were still able to provide it on a regular basis. This data monitoring enhanced program management.

Many noted the value of leveraging additional resources to support the program and its participants. One grantee was able to leverage the LMI resources developed through a separate state grant to identify green jobs as areas of need within the state. Another reported that the consortium/regional grant model where training and support service providers worked across state lines to address the needs of the regional economy allowed small, rural communities to access resources they would not have been able to access otherwise. One found WIBs that were cooperative and willing to support the grant program for their community as a means of improving their own programs.

Program Components. Grantees reported promising practices and lessons learned related to program design, training, and support services. Grantees indicated that strong support for the program at the grant administration level was important. Respondents at the site level reported that the national grant manager played a critical role in helping to facilitate curriculum development and establish partnerships, as well as other critical program elements. Grantees noted that local implementers needed to be able to provide input into the development of the curriculum, and that stakeholders should be involved in the trainer selection process to ensure buy-in and qualified trainers. Training programs and curriculum should be customized for each local site to work within the existing labor management relationships and maximize usefulness to employers. In addition, grantees should consider feedback from both employers and participants when revising training curricula.

Grantees reported that the program design should incorporate strong employer partnerships established through business services team members working together to make personal one-on-one visits with employers. These meetings had a greater impact than conducting job development through e-mails and phone calls. Some changed their program as a result of these meetings. For example, one grantee customized its program and shortened some of the training hours to meet employer needs, while another modified the training from the original proposal to be more in line with industry needs and job availability.

Grantees also identified a number of promising practices and lessons learned specific to the training programs. Many reported that trainings should involve a mix of classroom and hands-on training. Hands-on training components helped to combine both practical and contextual knowledge, so that participants gained a broader understanding of what they learned. Career training partners identified green jobs training and certification as meaningful credentials for job placement. Grantees indicated that there was added value in ensuring that trainees were exposed to real-work conditions by engaging in apprenticeships or hands-on training. Training for positions that existed before the grant program began allowed participants to receive practical real-world training that enabled them, in turn, to integrate green concepts into pre-existing job descriptions. When participants were trained on a variety of technologies, they were able to understand the applicability of different technologies to different areas.

Other promising practices and lessons learned under training included scheduling training courses to accommodate participants' schedules. For incumbent worker training, grantees noted that training that was offered in shorter segments of time, such as one-hour blocks, ensured that employers could give their employees the necessary time off. Also, using pre-existing curricula helped shorten grant start-up time and limit expenditures on curriculum development. Using an online portal that provides extensive information on training programs helped program participants make informed decisions. Additionally, motivating participants with incentives such as rewards for perfect attendance and high grades was important. It was noted that rewards did not have to be monetary, but could be an award given in front of a group, or something else that boosted participants' self-confidence.

Promising practices and lessons learned that fall under support services were related to case management and job development services. Case management partners thought that comprehensive screening and follow-up services were critical to ensuring successful training and placement of participants. They noted that not all potential participants were suitable for immediate training and job placement, but rather needed assessment of underlying social problems in order to determine a suitable course of action. In addition, they cited anecdotal evidence that candidates who were committed to green jobs training were more likely to be successful than participants who either sought training and certification because they had heard that green jobs were lucrative or were merely seeking any form of employment. In addition to strong case management, respondents reported that job coach mentors who were able to link participants to OJT and apprenticeship opportunities in addition to providing resume development and interview skills services were essential in ensuring participant success.

5.12   Challenges

Challenges are reported across the ETP grants in the same categories: partnerships, administration, and program components.

Partnerships. Reported challenges related to partnerships focused on WIBs and American Job Centers. One grantee said that a specific American Job Center did not do an acceptable job of recruiting, placing, and training individuals for the program. It was also noted that "the grant requires them as partners, and they should be partners, but not necessarily players on the financial side."

Administration. External factors requiring program changes and flexibility presented a challenge. For example, market and employer requirements changed over time, which required innovation in training delivery methods. Local economic conditions, as well as government and utility incentives, drove demand for solar installation work unexpectedly in some of the training markets. One grantee noted that uncertainty in the renewable and energy efficiency sectors due to the boom-and-bust cycle of Federal and state policies had hindered the program.

Grantees also noted that administering the grant was challenging at times, as well as standardizing the way local program administrators kept and submitted records. The overly-long period between the formation of the proposal team and the preparation of the grant application and the actual disbursement of the grant funds was problematic.

In many cases, the original grant projections were overly ambitious given the economic downturn. This was confirmed by grantees who noted that the least effective aspects of their respective programs had been job placement and retention.

Start-up took longer than originally expected. These challenges revolved around getting a curriculum developed, approved, and accredited. Staffing the program was also seen as a challenge by grantees.

Program Components. The primary barrier in training individuals in the trades cited by one grantee was the substantial distances between towns and cities. As a result, the grantee designed a program focused on building curriculum and creating mobile training labs that could be transported anywhere in the state. These approaches would outlive the lifecycle of the grant.

Identifying participants who had sufficient academic preparation for training and certification was difficult. Grantees reported the importance of conducting adequate screening. Many grantees reported that they refined their original screening tools to better identify qualified participants.

Misperceptions about green jobs training and certification among potential employers were noted by some partners and administrators. Potential employers expressed reluctance to hire green jobs applicants as they believed that they would require higher salaries than non-certified workers. In addition, some employers were reluctant to train their incumbent employees in green jobs as they thought the training would be expensive. One grantee addressed this by actively recruiting employer partners and providing training for their employees. It also trained employees to become "master trainers" so employers would have in-built institutional knowledge for future training needs. A second approach was to involve the job placement counselors with a training partner for educating employers about what it meant to be "a green job certified employee" and that such workers would not result in additional employer costs.

6. FINDINGS: STATE ENERGY SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

This chapter presents the findings from data collection efforts related to the State Energy Sector Partnerships (SESP) SGA. Exhibit 26 provides a summary of the SESP SGA and lists the grantees visited.

Exhibit 26: SESP Summary Table

State Energy Sector Partnership SGA Summary	
Total Number of Grantees: 34	**Total Number of Grantees Visited:** 8
Target Population: Workers impacted by national energy and environmental policy, individuals in need of updated training related to the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, Veterans or past and present members of reserve components of the Armed Forces, unemployed individuals, at-risk youth, individuals seeking employment pathways out of poverty and into self-sufficiency, individuals with a criminal record	**Target Area:** The Department of Labor encouraged applicants to focus project efforts on emerging industries including energy efficiency and renewable energy.
Grantees Visited: - State of California Employment Development Department - Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) - Arkansas Workforce Investment Board/Department of Workforce Services - Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development - State of Oklahoma - Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board - Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	
Funding Range: $2 million to $6 million	
Grant Length: 3 years	

6.1 Program Context

Many SESP grantees reported that the recent economic recession had an adverse effect on the target grant areas. High levels of unemployment, specifically in the construction industry, were reported. Some of the areas served by these grants were considered to be auto-impacted due to the recent closure of or major lay-offs by automotive plants. Grantees reported that it was challenging to find employment that resulted in a living wage in many of the areas served. For one grantee, declines in employment levels in the construction industry led to an increase in

interest in training incumbent workers in green building. Survey data echoed this sentiment showing that 62 percent of SESP administrators noted a decline in the demand for individuals in the fields for which the grantees trained over the three-year grant period. In addition, 95 percent of SESP grantees agreed or strongly agreed that local economic conditions created a challenge in achieving their program's goals. Other grantees reported that their state was not prepared for the growing green sectors in their economy. Workers lacked the skills and knowledge to meet the demand for labor and, in the case of one grant program, were aging out of the workforce. Some grantees also noted that projections in their states showed a growing demand for higher skilled workers.

Grantees reported that the local economy had a major influence on implementation and outcomes for a number of the SESP grants. In one state, the somewhat delayed effect of the recession resulted in slower than expected job placements because employers were still reluctant to hire new employees. Also, some of the regions in the state did not encompass employers capable of employing the large number of the workers trained. In another state, the entity that regulates utilities mandated that utilities develop energy efficiency programs during the grant implementation period. This mandate greatly increased the demand for green jobs in that state.

Alignment with state level policies related to green sectors was a commonality across many of the SESP grantees. Prior to the grant period a number of states that received SESP grants had already developed statewide plans/strategies for growing the green economy, promoting energy efficiency, and training the workforce to meet the demand for skills in this area. For example, one state established a Green Collar Council, which created a Green Workforce Master Plan; another state began a green jobs strategy in 2008. Survey respondents highlighted the linkage with state policies, with 81 percent of survey respondents – the highest proportion of any of the four program types - noting the association between their program and the policies of the state in which they operated. Many noted that their state had developed a clean energy or green economy program that mirrored, in part, the work being done at the Federal level, providing an impetus for their grant program. The fact that these programs were administered largely at the state level likely helps explain why such a strong connection was established between the SESP grant program and state policies.

In Alabama, the welding and piping industry was currently experiencing unprecedented growth and facing a shortage of qualified workers due to recent legislative changes encouraging new standards. Thus, the **Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)** and its local business partners had no problems finding welding trainees or placing them in high paying positions upon earning a certificate.

6.2 Target Populations

Target populations varied across SESP grantees, as well as sub-grantees/sites within the grant programs. Many of these grantees targeted dislocated, incumbent, unemployed workers and high school dropouts as shown in Exhibit 27 as the general goal of the SESP grant programs was

to increase the skills of the workforce, either by providing green skills needed for an existing industry or by retraining individuals to work in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. Other targeted groups reported by site visit respondents included union workers, under-employed workers, low-income individuals, low-skilled individuals, veterans, apprentices, journeyman, individuals with disabilities, military spouses, youth, felons, and students. Many focus group respondents reported that they chose to participate because they were unemployed and/or looking to learn new skills. According to survey results, the following groups were most heavily targeted by SESP programs:

Exhibit 27: Groups Targeted by SESP Grantees

Group Targeted for Training	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Dislocated Workers	95	81
Unemployed Individuals	95	93
Incumbent Workers	95	81
High School Dropouts	90	69
Low-Income Individuals	81	36
Persons with Disabilities	81	64
Auto Workers	81	40
Women	71	60
Ex-Offenders	62	41

In addition to the primary groups (dislocated, unemployed, and incumbent workers), low-income individuals, high school dropouts, individuals with disabilities, and auto workers were also targeted by the SESP programs. In fact, SESP grantees were the most likely of all grantee types to target low-income individuals and high school dropouts.

6.3 Target Service Area

As with the target populations, there was significant variation in the type and reason for the target areas selected by the SESP grantees, though all followed a similar grant structure. The grant structure included a location that housed the grant administrator with a number of sites or regions located throughout the state. Grantees provided a variety of reasons for selecting sites, such as a strong need for a more skilled workforce in that area or high levels of unemployment and/or poor training resources in the area. Grantees also reported selecting sites through a competitive process.

6.4 Recruitment and Enrollment

Recruitment. SESP grantees reported traditional recruitment methods similar to those used by One Stop/Career Centers and community colleges, noting that the grant program did not alter these methods. Others recruitment strategies included e-mails, flyers, billboards, online advertisements, websites, and faculty and staff recommendations. Responsibility for recruitment was often at the local or training partner level. Grantees reported making

adjustments to adapt the recruitment strategy for the location or target populations. Union communications through e-mails were also used to reach potential participants. One grantee contacted apprentices and journeymen that were either enrolled in or had completed a training program that had been "greened," with a letter informing them that they might be eligible. Grantees also worked with employers and other partners such as CBOs to recruit participants. Recruitment via radio ads and social media (Facebook), and on military bases was also used. Focus group participants reported learning of the program through career centers, newspaper and radio ads, word-of-mouth, potential employers, e-mail, and conferences.

Some grantees reported challenges with recruitment. One grantee reported that its original approach was to recruit participants through non-profit organizations. This model did not work well because the individuals the non-profits served were not ready to enter training, having barriers to employment (such as homelessness or drug addiction) that required addressing before training. The revised approach was to recruit participants through community colleges and apprenticeship training providers. Another challenge was that sub-grantees did not always focus their recruitment efforts directly enough on the target populations. For example, one sub-grantee worked to recruit participants and only then attempted to determine if the recruit met a certain demographic requirement.

Enrollment. As with recruitment strategies, grantees used enrollment strategies similar to those used by America's Job Centers and community colleges. These strategies included information sessions, assessments, and interviews with variation in enrollment strategies across sub-grantees and target populations. Grantees reported that to have incorporated SGA requirements such as ensuring registration with the selective service to the enrollment process.

A number of grantees reported using assessments in the enrollment process. These assessments included KeyTrain, Accuplacer, and WorkKeys, which grantees used to ensure that participants met the basic academic requirements of the program. Grantees also assessed applicants' basic reading, math, and computer skills. According to survey respondents, however, only 52 percent of SESP programs used a formal or written assessment as part of the participant selection process, lower than the overall grantee average of 73 percent. This could be due to the high number of SESP grant programs that targeted incumbent workers. Ninety-five percent of SESP survey respondents reported targeting incumbent workers, the highest percentage among the four grant types.

6.5   Training

Selection of Occupations for which to Train. At the time of the grant award, a number of the SESP states had developed, or were in the process of developing, a state energy plan. Many respondents reported that selecting the occupations for which to train based on their state's energy plan. These plans identify green industries and thus occupations for which demand is expected to grow. Respondents reported that the decision about what occupations to train for was also based on state workforce policies, labor market information (90 percent of survey respondents reported using LMI data), and data on local employers and their needs.

Curriculum Design. With regard to the training curricula, most survey respondents noted that their curricula were new programs (76 percent) – the highest of any grantee type. This may be attributable to the "green" component of these programs and the fact that many of the occupations and certifications were relatively new. A small number of programs (10 percent) reported developing curricula with slight modifications to allow for a green component or to meet the needs of the participants. Exhibit 28 presents the percent of POP programs that are new versus an expansion of an existing program.

Exhibit 28: New Versus Expansion Program Offered by SESP Grantees

Type of Training Program	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
New Program	76	49
Expansion of an existing program only	10	10
Both a new program and an expansion of an existing program	14	40

Though the majority of the programs used new curricula, many of the grantees were able to use existing curricula. Grantees reported that labor unions, apprenticeship programs, state departments of energy, community colleges, and technical schools as being sources used to identify existing curricula. One grantee reported convening industry focus groups consisting of skilled workers, employers, and customers to identify the key skills needed to perform the identified occupations and to develop the specific components of a new training program, including which components would be delivered through classroom training versus OJT. The groups met on a regular basis to review and develop the program components.

Selection of Training Providers. The SESP grantees and their sub-grantees often reported having existing relationships with the selected training providers. In some cases, grantees selected the training providers based on these past relationships. In others, grantees selected training providers based on the location and needs of the areas being served. One grantee invited all the two-year colleges in the state to participate in the program as training providers. A sub-grantee of another grant selected one training provider based on the wrap-around services they were able to offer the participants. Multiple respondents reported using a competitive process to select training providers.

Training Program. There was significant variation in the types and structure of training programs administered across SESP grantees and their corresponding sub-grantees and sites. In general, the grant programs provided training in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, with survey results showing that 76 percent and 71 percent of SESP grantees provided training in these industries, respectively – the highest of any grantee type. These occupations in these industries included HVAC installation and maintenance, facilities maintenance, carpentry, sales and marketing, office and administrative support, weatherization installation, construction-related activities, engineering, renewable installation, plumbing, industrial painting, energy auditing, geothermal installation, and electrical utility activities,

among others. Exhibit 29 presents the industries in which SESP survey respondents reported providing training.

Exhibit 29: Industries for which Training Skills are Provided by SESP Grantees

Industry for which Training Skills are Provided	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Energy Efficient Building	81	53
Energy Efficiency Assessment	76	47
Renewable Electric Power	71	37
Manufacturers that Produce Sustainable Products	48	25
Energy Efficient and Advanced	38	14
Biofuels	38	15
Deconstruction	33	22
Other High Growth	24	25
HIT	10	11

A wide variety of training modalities was reported, including classroom-based, hands-on, apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship, OJT, and online. Several focus group respondents reported that they would have preferred that the training program be expanded to allow the instructor to delve further into the subject matter. One focus group participant noted that the training felt like a "boot camp" because of the short time frame. Exhibit 30 describes the type of training services offered by the SESP programs according to survey respondents.

Exhibit 30: Training Services Offered by SESP Grantees

Training Services	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Classroom Training	93	95
Basic Work Skills Training	76	68
Hands-on Training	67	76
On-the-Job Training	40	47
Adult Basic Education	38	43
Internships	38	36

Exhibit 30 demonstrates that the most common types of training programs were classroom, basic works skills, and hands-on. Across the types of training services provided, the percentages were quite similar to grantees overall.

Grantees described trainers as experienced and in many cases certified to teach specific courses. One grantee worked with some employers that were also certified trainers. Many focus group respondents reported that the instructors were very helpful as well as experienced and knowledgeable in their field. Respondents from one focus group reported that their instructor had all three of the credentials for which they were being trained. Some focus group respondents reported that the program needed additional instructors.

Flexibility to Accommodate Participants Needs. While some types of training allowed for more flexibility than others, many of the training programs were offered in ways to accommodate the different needs of the participants. Accommodations include training facilities easily accessible by public transportation, training courses offered at different times of the day and/or on weekends, and training courses offered in an online format.

While flexible training programs likely helped retain participants in the program, other program aspects also contributed to high retention rates. Participants in one program, for example, received industry wages during the OJT 60-day period. In another, improved assessment processes contributed to an increase in retention rates because grantees removed barriers that might have prevented completion. One grantee noted that good instructors and the provision of support services contributed to high retention rates.

Auxiliary Components of the Training Program. Many grantees reported offering remedial training courses on a case-by-case basis to prepare participants for a specific assessment or training course. One grantee reported that in some cases, Adult Basic Education to provide remedial training was a pre-requisite to the core training program. Another reported that some of its community and technical college training providers used the I-BEST model to help students with math and English acceleration. Doing so enabled them to offer remedial, contextualized assistance that addressed the needs of English language learners and those lacking basic concepts, while applying the knowledge of course curriculum to help students learn concepts. About one-third of SESP grant programs offered remedial education or ESL training to participants.

Transition from Training to Employment. To aid program participants in making the transition from training to employment, 71 percent of programs (according to survey results) facilitated OJT opportunities with local employers. In some cases, participants were paid the prevailing industry wages while completing the OJT. As mentioned earlier, focus group respondents felt that the hands-on components of the training programs were very valuable and would have liked to have more opportunities to work in real world situations. According to the survey data, 14 percent of SESP programs provided their participants with transitional jobs and 5 percent provided them with mentorships.

Most Beneficial Aspects of Training. Focus group respondents spoke highly of the hands-on components of the training programs as it allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom. In many cases, focus group respondents felt that more hands-on training and internship opportunities would have been beneficial. Indeed, survey results found that 95 percent of SESP grantees felt that the training program was the most successful component of the program in meeting its goal. Similarly, 76 percent felt that earning certifications was the most successful component of the program in meeting its goal.

6.6   Case Management and Support Services

Comprehensive Support Services. Grantees reported that, in general, the SESP programs provided few grant-funded support services to participants. Survey results tend to support this finding, with 20 percent providing no supportive services to participants. This figure was slightly higher than the overall grantee average of 15 percent, but 76 percent of grantees providing transportation funding. Exhibit 31 presents the support services SESP survey respondents reported providing.

Exhibit 31: Support Services Offered by SESP Grantees

Support Services Offered by Grantee	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	76	69
Childcare	48	43
Clothing	43	45
Housing	33	21
Emergency Assistance	33	26
Financial Counseling	24	32
No Support Services Provided	19	15

As with assessments, SESP grantees may have been less likely to provide support services because many of them were targeting incumbent workers. Some focus group respondents reported receiving limited support services. These included parking, bus passes, gas reimbursement, training materials, academic support, resume assistance, interview training and minor job search services. Some focus group respondents noted that additional services would have been helpful.

Sub-grantees were often encouraged to offer support services or wrap-around services to participants by co-enrolling participants in the WIA program, or through other leveraged resources. What was offered, however, varied greatly across grantees and sub-grantees. A few SESP grant programs were exceptions, allocating funds for participant materials and support services such as childcare and transportation. These grantees reported using a statewide Sharepoint system or an excel spreadsheet to track the use of these funds. One grant program reported that while it did not provide support services with grant funding, strategies for partnering with support service providers were often crucial for participant success, especially for the long-term unemployed.

Case Management. Grantees reported varying degrees of case management. Case management services included working with participants to ensure they were entered into the RAD system, enrolled in training, provided with funds for support services, and prepared to pass tests required to graduate from the program. Reported case management services also included referrals to other services or programs that would aid the participant in completing the training program, provide information regarding unemployment compensation, and provide workshops designed to improve basic work skills or competencies.

Job Placement Services. Many grantees reported that participants were provided with services that helped them prepare resumes, improve interview skills, and search for jobs that fit their skill set. Some noted that these services were integrated into the training itself. One grantee reported that some of the sub-grantees provided monetary assistance for expenses during the job search period.

Most Useful Support Services. Since the majority of grantees did not report providing specific support services, there were few reported as essential to participants. One grantee reported that mileage, rental payments, and childcare reimbursements were essential for keeping participants in the program. One reported that the employment specialists who helped prepare participants for job search and communicate with instructors on student progress were very important in participant retention. This grantee also reported holding employment workshops for program graduates and developing strong relationships with employers. Grantees noted that instructors who were engaging and had real world experience contributed to higher retention rates.

Attrition from the Training Program. While high retention rates were generally reported by all SESP grantees, one grantee noted that certain populations, specifically Native Americans, had higher drop-out rates than others, even when support services were provided. Reasons for dropping out of the training programs across all participant groups included going back to school and the lack of support services. Grantees reported that having strict assessment and attendance policies improved retention.

6.7 Certificates

As with other aspects of the SESP grant programs, the certifications earned by participants in the different training programs varied across and within each grant program. For example, sub-grantees for one grantee would offer different types of training that would result in different certifications. Most of the training programs did result in certifications, 100 percent of which, according to the survey data, were industry recognized and portable. Many programs also resulted in a certificate of completion. These certifications included those provided in Exhibit 32.

Exhibit 32: Certifications Offered

SESP Certifications	
▪ OSHA 10 Hour Certification	▪ EPA's lead paint Renovation, Repair, and Repainting (RRP) Certification
▪ PBI Building Analyst	
▪ RESNET HERS Certification	▪ LEED-GA and LEED-AP certificates from the U.S. Green Building Council
▪ NCCER Instructor Certification and Green Building Certification	
▪ Wind Tech Levels 1 and 2	▪ Certificates from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), the Building Performance institute (BPI), the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)
▪ EPA's lead paint Renovation, Repair, and Repainting (RRP) Certification	
▪ CPR	
▪ AAS Degree	▪ First Aid

Grantees noted that additional green training components did not necessarily result in new certifications or credentials, but would increase the employment prospects of the participants by providing them with new skills and competencies. The survey data complement this point, as the survey results indicated that 48 percent of programs offered work readiness certificates in addition to the industry-recognized credentials. Some focus group respondents noted they would have liked to have been able to earn a credential from their training program.

Survey results also show the viability and usefulness of these certifications. All SESP program administrators noted that the training resulted in portable certifications or credentials – the highest of any of the four grant types. In addition, 86 percent reported that their program's training resulted in stackable certifications/credentials – also the highest of any of the four grant types. Exhibits 33 and 34 present the percent of respondents that reported providing stackable and portable certifications by grant program respectively. These results may also explain why 95 percent believed that their training program helped participants access a career pathway that allowed for future advancement. Perhaps the nature of the grant training programs and their focus on innovative green energy programs was the reason for these high responses.

Exhibit 33: Stackable Certifications/Credentials for the SESP Program

Does the Training Result in Stackable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	86	77
No	14	20

Exhibit 34: Portable Certifications/Credentials for the SESP Program

Does the Training Result in Portable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	100	89
No	0	7

6.8   Partnerships

As noted earlier, most of the SESP grants consisted of a grantee administrator and a set of sub-grantees. Each sub-grantee had a set of partners. The types of partners included local Workforce Investment Boards, American Job Centers, community colleges, employers, CBOs, non-profits, associations, and unions.

Sub-grantees selected partners based on criteria provided by the SESP grant administrator and by the criteria outlined in the SGA. In many cases, the grant administrator reported requiring

each sub-grantee to partner with specific types of partners (training providers, employers, etc.). In addition, one grantee specifically required that each sub-grantee partner with the same, specific training provider.

Grantees reported having a combination of new partnerships and those that existed prior to the grant award. Grantees that reported having pre-existing partnerships noted that these relationships expanded through their collaboration on the DOL grant. Grantees also reported that new partnerships often required technical assistance by the grantee administrator on DOL reporting requirements. Alternatively, existing partners were often already familiar with such requirements. In developing the grant strategy and design, grant administrators reported including a wide range of partners in the grant application and program design process. These partners included utility companies, energy firms, state and local government agencies, labor organizations, universities, and workforce development organizations.

Exhibit 35 presents survey results on the involvement of partnerships in developing, managing, and sustaining the various SESP programs. The questions heading each panel of the table highlight the different types of help provided by the different partner types.

Exhibit 35: Involvement of Partners in the Functioning of the SESP Grants

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Program Design?						
Very Involved	67	90	52	48	24	81
Somewhat Involved	29	5	33	24	57	10
Not Involved at All	5	5	10	19	19	5
Non Response	0	0	5	10	24	5
How Involved in Curriculum Development?						
Very Involved	10	76	24	33	19	19
Somewhat Involved	19	19	48	19	19	29
Not Involved at All	67	5	24	38	57	43
Non Response	5	5	5	10	5	10
How Involved in Recruiting Participants?						
Very Involved	62	71	33	33	29	38
Somewhat Involved	24	14	52	29	33	24

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
Not Involved at All	5	5	5	10	24	19
Non Response	10	10	10	29	14	19
How Involved in Training Delivery?						
Very Involved	38	100	33	43	19	24
Somewhat Involved	29	0	29	14	19	24
Not Involved at All	29	0	29	24	48	38
Non Response	5	0	10	19	14	14
How Involved in Job Placement?						
Very Involved	57	52	71	52	19	29
Somewhat Involved	29	29	19	14	48	38
Not Involved at All	10	14	0	14	29	24
Non Response	5	5	10	19	5	10
How Involved in Managing the Program?						
Very Involved	48	33	10	19	5	71
Somewhat Involved	38	38	29	29	29	10
Not Involved at All	14	24	52	38	48	14
Non Response	0	5	10	14	19	5

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because several grant administrators did not answer the question or did not know enough to provide a response. Non-response rate includes response of 'Don't Know' and 'Not Applicable'.

Exhibit 35 demonstrates the critical role played by several partner types in the various SESP grants. Differing from other grant program types was the integration of state and local governments in the grant programs. State and local governments were heavily involved in both program design and management, which stands largely in contrast to the other three grant types. For example, one grantee noted that the state's Department of Employment and Economic Development was an especially instrumental partner in preparing the grant application. The level of involvement for local and state governments is not surprising considering that these programs were administered largely at the state government level.

SESP grant programs also used local WIBs much more extensively than the other grantee types. WIBs were more likely to be very involved in designing the program, delivering training, and managing the grant program. This can be explained in part by the work of the grant administrators. In most cases, the role of the sub-grantee partners was predetermined by the requirements of the grant administrator. For example, one state program's sub-grantees, which were three local workforce development councils, were required to partner with both a community college and a second organization to provide the training. The sub-grantees also had the option of partnering with a third organization to provide supportive services. In addition to partnering with training partners, another state's sub-grantees were required to partner with an employer and strongly encouraged to partner with the local WIB.

The work accomplished by the WIBs may have also been due to their coordination with other key grant partners. For example, one state's grant administrator required their sub-grantees and respective partners to work together and learn from one another. The grant administrator organized monthly calls and quarterly site meetings with the sub-grantees and their partners for this purpose. The grantee also allowed training providers to strengthen their relationships with employers and WIBs. Some grantees suggested that having WIBs as partners did not work out to the degree intended. WIBs did not assist with recruiting for these programs, while these grantees described this as the hardest relationship to develop.

Employers also were heavily involved in assisting the training programs, especially in job placement and program design. This may have stemmed from the fact that a number of SESP grantees solicited input and feedback from industry advisory groups and were formed at either the grant administrator level or the sub-grantee level. They helped in identifying skill gaps in the workforce and industry needs, as well as developing training curricula. Grantees also reported that some community college partners used their pre-existing industry advisory councils to help inform training programs.

Education and training providers played a critical role in helping the grant programs function. These programs were heavily dependent on education and training providers to actually deliver the training, with 100 percent of SESP administrators noting the heavy involvement of these partners in the activity. This is not surprising considering that the SESP programs were largely administered by state and local governments, which lacked the actual capacity to deliver much of the programs' training. Labor unions were also an integral partner for many of the SESP programs. Though they did not play as critical a role as some partners, unions were more likely to design and manage the programs, develop the curriculum, recruit participants, and be involved in job placement than in any other program type except the ETPs.

6.9 Management

Management Practices. SESP grantees reported a number of management strategies that helped grant staff meet program goals. One grantee in particular noted the importance of working at the state level to align all green jobs training initiatives to avoid duplicating efforts. Other grantees noted that having a point person who was active at both the grant

administrator and the sub-grantee levels and responsible for meeting the grant goals and objectives was an important management strategy. Many respondents also noted the value of having constant and consistent communication with sub-grantees and partners. More than half (57 percent) of the SESP programs surveyed employers about changes needed (more than any other program type) and 38 percent conducted focus groups. Grantees reported conference calls, in-person meetings and site visits, and audits as different means for maintaining a high level of communication. Grantees also reported that facilitating the sharing of ideas between sub-grantees and partners is useful management practice. In one state, the WIB hosted "Action Clinics" that brought together the sub-grantees to share effective practices and challenges. The ideas shared at the clinics were submitted directly into the RAD and the state data tracking system, which were then compiled at the state level.

Data Collection. Many reported using the RAD system for data collection and reporting. Sub-grantees were commonly required to submit monthly or quarterly narrative and quantitative reports to the grant administrator, who then entered the data into the RAD system. In other cases, the sub-grantees or partners were required to enter data directly into the RAD system.

One grantee reported using the RAD system to share promising practices and lessons learned with all its grant program partners. Respondents also reported using SharePoint and Excel files to track participants' eligibility, funds spent, services used, and progress.

Division of Labor. The reported division of labor within each SESP grant program varied. Major functions included proposal development, grant administration, data tracking, skills training, and case management. Grantees reported that state level administrators were responsible for administering both programmatic and financial elements of the grant program. Some reported using a "planning template" developed through a negotiation process with each sub-grantee that outlined the agreed upon timeline of activities.

Many grantees used MOUs to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner involved. According to the survey data, SESP grant administrators were more likely than those of other grantee types to develop MOUs with partners. For example, 91 percent of SESP programs developed MOUs with local workforce agencies, and 71 percent with state and local government partners – the highest of the four grantee types. As seen in the survey data, the development of MOUs with local and state government partners reflected the reliance on these partners to conduct other program activities.

Technical Assistance to Grantees or Sub-grantees. Grant administrators reported conducting desk and in-person audits with their sub-grantees and partners. Administrators also reported providing their sub-grantees and partners with technical assistance and support for data collection and cleaning, a formal monitoring guide based on DOL's monitoring guidelines, and program resources including required forms via a website.

Program Start-up. Most grantees noted major delays in fully implementing the grant program and provided numerous reasons for these delays. For example, delays occurred because the

grant award date did not line up with date when training was to start. They also occurred due to the need to hire staff and recruit participants. Grantees reported that training sub-grantees and partners in DOL reporting requirements also slowed program start-up. Working with state governments caused delays that stemmed from state budget issues and state government shut downs. Finally, certain sub-grantees had existing funding that had to be completed before the SESP program and funding could begin.

Grantees noted variation in start-up times across training providers within grant programs. Some providers were able to start training as soon as they received approval, while others took more time to get up and running. Survey results also indicate difficulties with start-up times for these programs, with 81 percent of SESP program administrators reporting that the original timeframe for the grant was not sufficient for implementing their respective programs – the highest of any of the grantee types. Similar to the ETP programs, this high percentage may be attributable to the SESP programs being only two years in length.

Leveraging Resources. Grantees reported that leveraging resources was essential to the success of their grant programs. Leveraged resources were provided fairly extensively, as shown in Exhibit 36 below. Some grant administrators noted that because the process for purchasing equipment using grant funds was very time consuming, it was more beneficial to find equipment through other means such as industry donations. One grantee reported that other grant programs helped them identify leveraged resources. Some of the grantees that did provide support services reported providing such services through leveraged funds. Others reported leveraged resources that included time, effort, space, and equipment from the range of partners. According to survey results, the most common leveraged resources were:

Exhibit 36: Most Common Leveraged Resources Offered by SESP Partners

Leveraged Resources Provided by Partners	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Training Equipment/ Materials	86	92
Training Facilities/Space	81	88
Instructors/Trainers	71	68
Training Curriculum	71	63
Supportive Services	38	55

Similar to the other grant program types, the most common SESP leveraged support services were the provision of instructors and trainers, curriculum, training equipment and materials, and facilities and space. On the other hand, fewer SESP programs reported having partners provide supportive services than any other grantee type (38 percent compared to 55 percent overall). This may be related to the structure of the SESP programs and the fact that these programs were often statewide with strong governmental resources, which did not require partners to provide these services.

Mid-Stream Adjustment Process. Grantees noted making a number of programmatic adjustments mid-stream to improve program implementation. These included adjustments to meet the demands and needs of employers, reallocating funds among partners, adding occupational clusters to the training program, creating RAD guidance for partners, and adjustments based on feedback from instructors. For example, one grantee noted that it included a curriculum designed to meet nationally recognized standards during the training. Another highlighted an increase in public outreach and awareness training, entrepreneurial training, and the development of an on-line career educational tool.

Instead of distributing the entire $6 million grant right away, the **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development** implemented a series of four separate RFPs spread out over the three-year grant period. This allowed the grant program to adapt to changing economic conditions, for example by requiring WIB involvement instead of simply encouraging it, due to the difficulty in finding jobs experienced by the early cohorts of program graduates. The iterative RFP process also allowed the grantee to learn from the experience of earlier RFP rounds when writing the later RFPs.

6.10   Sustainability

As most of the SESP grants consisted of multiple sub-grantees, plans for sustainability were not made at the grant administrator level. Most grantees reported that formal sustainability plans had not been developed. Survey results concur, showing that only 10 percent of SESP grantees (two respondents) had developed a sustainability plan at the time of the survey. Many noted that continuation of the training programs was dependent on employer demand. In general, the grantees predicted that some of the programs would continue at full-scale, components of other programs would continue, and some programs would end when DOL funding ended. This perception is bolstered by the survey finding that 76 percent of SESP grantees said they would develop a sustainability plan in the future.

Of those who noted that they would develop a sustainability plan, the most likely components of their program to continue were the job training placement portions. One grantee noted that it would develop an entrepreneurial development and assessment piece for the program. To continue their programs, one-third of grantees stated they would rely on Federal funding, 43 percent on state or local government funding and 29 percent on employer funding; few said they would look to union or foundation funding.

6.11   Promising Practices and Lesson Learned

The promising practices and lessons learned reported by the SESP grantees fall into five categories: 1) partnerships, 2) administration, 3) program components, 4) policy, and 5) documentation.

Partnerships. Promising practices and lessons learned that fall under partnerships relate to developing strong relationships with and among partners, providing partners the opportunity to contribute to the development of the program, and clarifying expectations for partner contributions. Many grantees reported that building their grant program on strong, pre-existing partner relationships contributed to the success of their program and made program implementation more efficient. In addition to having strong relationships with partners, grant administrators also reported value in partners having strong relationships with each other. One grantee reported that bringing regional WIBs into collaboration through the grant allowed them to learn from one another, share promising practices, and take a comprehensive approach to regional needs, with the result that WIB staffers now "see their peers as resources."

Promising practices also focused on relationships with employers. One grantee reported that the job developers continually built relationships with employers and brought on new employer partners. Job developers explored many routes for making connections with employers, including serving on advisory committees. One training provider worked with an employer to create a unique curriculum to fit the employer's needs, with the idea that the employer would hire graduating participants that had the skill set articulated by the employer. One grantee noted that its program refocused funding after discussing with employers the occupations for which they would be hiring.

Grantees noted that providing partners with the opportunity to contribute to both proposal development and program design was valuable. When partners contributed to the proposal development process they were able to build in clear timelines and support mechanisms and establish clear expectations for accountability. In terms of developing the program design, grantees reported that involving industry directly in focus groups and committees charged with greening trades and developing new apprenticeship programs was highly effective. For example, one program responded to employer needs after developing a facilitated process for employers to discuss training needs directly with the program. Industry partners knew the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities employers were looking for and could assist with occupational analysis, curriculum development, and instructor training.

Grantees also reported clarifying roles with partners as a promising practice. Role clarification included requiring a Letter of Commitment from employer partners to hire program graduates. One grantee requested that employer partners provide a Letter of Intent stating their support of the training program. Later RFPs strengthened this requirement to a Letter of Commitment stating that the employer partner was committed to hiring graduates of the training program. One grantee noted that employers seeking training funds for incumbent workers were required to commit in writing to providing participants a promotional opportunity subsequent to successful training completion. Grantees also reported that sub-grantee contract agreements that were performance based were effective in encouraging sub-grantees to achieve their programmatic goals.

Administration. Just as grantees noted the value of strong relationships with partners, they also stressed the importance of having a grant manager or administrator skilled in establishing

partnerships. Due to the importance of partnerships to the success of grant program implementation, it was vital to have a grant manager able to reach out and establish relationships with partner organizations. It was also reported that state level grant staff should not interfere with the work happening at the regional and local level. This allowed for all partners to concentrate on their area of expertise. It also helped to prevent disruptions in the relationships between partners at the regional and local levels.

Grantees also noted that the provision of technical assistance to partners and sub-grantees to assist them in designing and implementing appropriate programs was essential. One grantee reported that under a previous grant program regionally based administrators provided potential grant applicants with technical assistance related to program design. Grantees also mentioned that they provided technical assistance with reporting requirements to their partners. A number of grantees reported that providing on-site RAD technical assistance to partners and sub-grantees greatly improved compliance. It was also noted that if staffing changed at the local and regional level, state level administrators should conduct site-visits to orient new staff. One program held regular meetings with sub-grantees to discuss the program and shifted budget line items to support job placement.

Program Components. Respondents reported promising practices and lessons learned related to program design, enrollment, training, and support services. One grantee used its receipt of a scope of work modification to contract directly with public post-secondary institutions to help expend remaining grant training funds as a means of improving their program. Another reported that an iterative RFP process for sub-grantees allowed grantees to make adjustments to the program design based on current economic conditions. Instead of distributing the entire grant funding right away, the grantee implemented a series of four separate RFPs spread out over the grant period. This allowed the grantee to adapt to changing economic conditions, for example, by requiring WIB involvement instead of simply encouraging it, due to the difficulty experienced by graduates of the early cohorts of training related to finding jobs. The iterative RFP process also allowed the grantee to learn from the experience of the earlier RFP rounds when writing the later RFPs.

In regard to enrollment, one grantee reported that, initially, its program did not have a formal application process. This led to individuals entering the program without any real intent to complete it. A more rigorous process of recruitment and assessment was then implemented that included requiring participants to write an essay about their goals, as well as pop quizzes and assignments to gauge participant interest and ability to learn from the program. Another grantee reported that the income eligibility requirement was originally too low for many individuals to meet. As a result, they submitted a request to have it increased. One grantee noted that it began to include training providers in the admissions interview process to improve the program itself.

Overall, a number of promising practices and lessons learned were reported specific to the training programs. For example, providing remedial education throughout training that allowed participants to stay current with technical training was thought to be important. Another

promising practice was the use of virtual equipment for certain trades as a lower cost option that also had less impact on the environment. Subsidized OJT is an important strategy for getting workers trained in the skills employers need. Subsidizing trainees' salaries helped mitigate the risk that employers might feel in bringing on new employees. Grantees stressed the need to remove bureaucratic barriers that can stand in the way of this strategy. Training that resulted in industry-recognized credentials was important. One grant program reported that the sub-grantees were required to implement training programs that resulted in industry-recognized credentials that were portable. This had a spillover effect on non-SESP training programs, which also began shifting their focus to industry-recognized credentials.

Grantees also reported promising practices and lessons learned around the provision of support services. The facilitation of networking between participants was reported to have been helpful to participants. One grantee reported that some of its community college partners created a network of participants to support one another through job searching. Through job development services, participants met, shared job postings, and recommended one another to potential employers. One grant program reported that during grant implementation it was determined that the original amount of $500 per participant for support services was not adequate. The amount was subsequently raised to $1,800 to cover needed services.

Grantees noted that it was helpful to use tools that allowed for easy tracking of participants' program eligibility, funds spent, services used, and progress. One grantee used a statewide SharePoint site that was accessible to all case managers.

Key lessons that grantees reported included having a longer timeframe to fully implement all program components. One viewpoint expressed was that the three-year timeframe for grant activities seemed too restrictive. Respondents also reported state policies that could drive employer demand for workers were valuable. Documenting and sharing promising practices was considered valuable as well.

6.12 Challenges

Similar challenges were reported across the SESP grants. They fall under some of the same categories as the promising practices and lessons learned. The three categories reported below are partnerships, administration, and program components.

Regarding partnerships, grantees reported that some partners, especially those without previous DOL experience, required significant technical assistance to be able to comply with DOL reporting and budgeting requirements. Respondents from one grantee stated that they faced challenges in getting the community college partner knowledgeable about employer needs even after providing statistics from employer surveys.

In terms of administrative challenges, some state-level grant administrators faced challenges in working with diverse groups of sub-grantees. Grantees noted that these administrators should adapt their plan and approach to meet regional needs and capacity. At times, grantees found it

particularly challenging to collect demographic information and Social Security numbers for potential program participants.

Grantees also faced challenges with their program components. For example, one grantee reported that the grant award date did not coincide with the dates when training could begin. This caused delays in implementation and achievement of grant outcomes. More than three-quarters of grantees noted that the least effective component of their programs had been job placement – the highest of any of the four grant types – highlighting the weakness of the general economy in placing trainees in gainful employment. One grantee was originally going to provide incumbent training for automotive suppliers but had trouble engaging employers.

One grantee, whose program emphasis had been on traditionally male occupations, reported challenges in recruiting women. The grantee expended substantial effort trying to increase the number of female participants, including putting out brochures with messages such as "Being a nurse isn't only for women, being a welder isn't only for men."

7. FINDINGS: HEALTHCARE AND HIGH GROWTH

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection efforts related to the Healthcare and High Growth (HHG) SGA. Exhibit 37 provides a summary of the SESP SGA and lists the grantees visited.

Exhibit 37: HHG Summary Table

Health and Other High Growth Emerging Industries SGA Summary	
Total Number of Grantees: 55	**Total Number of Grantees Visited:** 11
Target Population: Unemployed individuals, dislocated workers, incumbent workers	**Target Area:** The Department of Labor (DOL) encouraged applicants to focus project efforts on one or more health care sub-sectors or occupational categories.
Grantees Visited: • BioOhio • Centerstone of Tennessee, Inc. • Full Employment Council • Indianapolis Private Industry Council, Inc. • Louisiana Technical College, Greater Acadiana Region 4 • Macomb Community College • Otero Junior College • Providence Health Foundation of Providence Hospital • San Jose State University Research Foundation • Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (SVWIB) • Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board	
Funding Range: $2 million to $5 million	
Grant Length: 3 years	
SGA Goals: Health and Other High Growth Emerging Industries grantees aim to address current and forecasted workforce shortages, and provide workers with paths to career enhancing opportunities in high growth or emerging industries as defined within the context of state or regional economies. These investments will prepare participants for employment in industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation requiring new skill sets, or are projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy. ETA's goals related to these grants are to: • Develop the pipeline of credentialed healthcare workers • Support local partnerships in executing integrated job placement and training strategies • Support training and articulation agreements with accredited institutions that lead to industry-recognized, portable credentials.	

HHG Grants Coverage Area:

No HHG Grantee in County
HHG Grantee in County
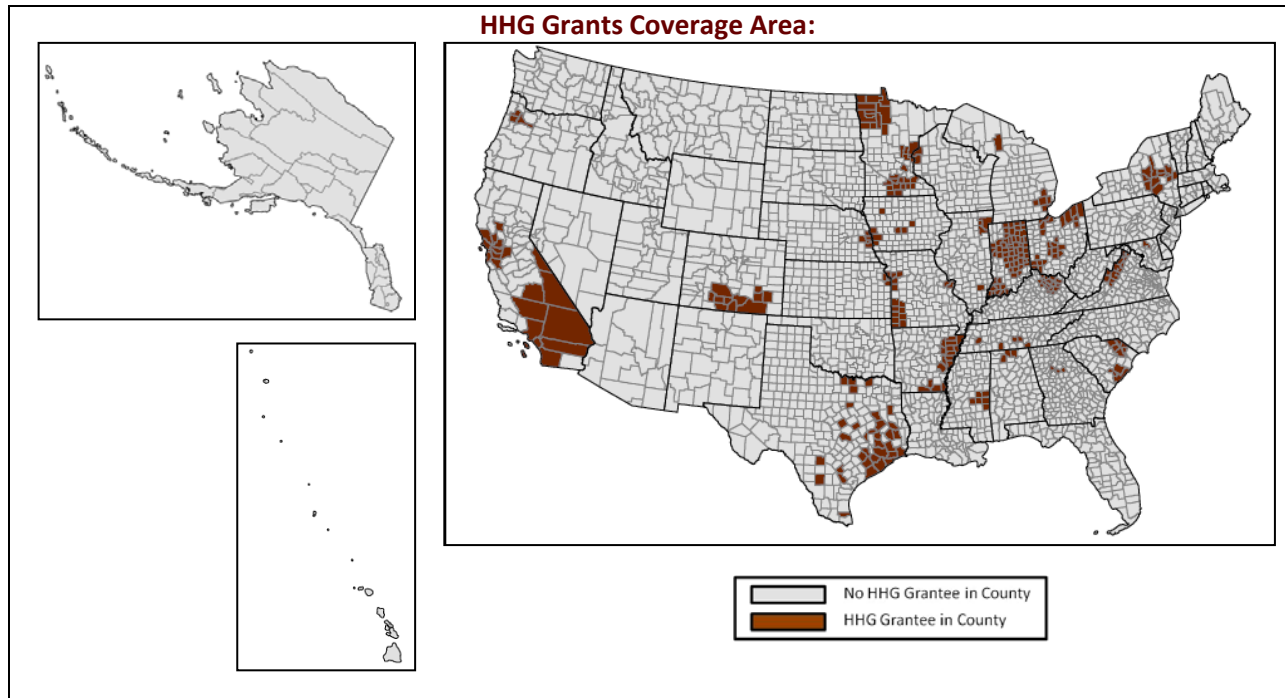
7.1 Program Context

The areas in which the Healthcare and High Growth (HHG) grant programs were implemented faced a variety of economic, industry, and demographic challenges. Most of these areas were negatively affected by the recession and were experiencing high unemployment. Many were considered auto-impacted regions due to the closing of or major layoffs by automotive manufacturing plants and suppliers. Many grantees reported that large portions of the workforce in the areas they served were aging or low-skilled workers.

Independent of the recession, many grantees reported growth in the healthcare industry and other emerging industries such as bioscience within the areas served. Site visit respondents indicated that many of the regions were not able to meet the increase in demand for workers trained in these fields due to the lack of skilled workers and a limited capacity to train them. Two grantees reported that nursing is an in-demand, high-growth occupation both locally and nationally, and that there continued to be a significant nursing shortage in the counties served by the grant program. Training individuals in the nursing field addressed this need. While the general economy in another state slowed during the recession, medical labs had an increased need for lab technicians and scientists, but did not have the capacity to host interns in the training programs. This finding is somewhat supported by the survey result that only 50 percent of HHG administrators noted that the demand for workers in the fields for which they provided training had declined since the start of their respective programs, below the overall grantee average of 56 percent. In addition, less than two-thirds of HHG survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that local economic challenges created challenges in achieving program goals, below the overall grantee average of over three-quarters.

Many HHG grantees reported that the skill sets that were the focus of their training programs were in high demand in the local community. For example, one grantee reported that during the recession construction of new homes slowed while the need to update older homes with weatherization, retrofitting, and energy efficiency grew. The HHG grant provided an opportunity to respond to this need by retraining construction workers in green occupations.

In a number of instances, the local and regional economy influenced grant implementation. One grantee reported that prior to the grant implementation period the defense sector was the dominant industry in the community and was expected to grow. As a result, a major defense employer had pledged to hire a significant number of program graduates. However, by the time the grant was awarded the economic situation had changed dramatically and the employer was no longer able to hire. At the same time, the auto industry, which had been struggling for a number of years, was recovering to some degree. In fact, respondents noted that these two industries tended to have opposite business cycles, so that workers would often move from one to the other and back again. These conditions prompted a rapid shift in focus for the grant program away from a specific focus on the defense and auto industries and toward an emphasis on transferable skills.

Another grantee reported that three major factors affected the implementation of its grant program. First, the state budget was decreasing during the early grant period and future funding for programs and growth areas was uncertain. Second, the state legislature had recently changed the regulations and training requirements for some of the targeted careers such as home care aides. Funding and implementation of new regulations remained uncertain. Third, Medicaid lowered the payment rates for some of the targeted occupations, making past estimates of growth inaccurate and uncertain.

7.2 Target Population

The HHG grants primarily reported serving incumbent, unemployed, and dislocated workers, as Exhibit 38 demonstrates. Some grantees sought to train incumbent healthcare workers that were relatively lower skilled with additional training to promote their career advancement. Others targeted dislocated auto workers focusing on skills that were transferable to other occupations, though this was relatively rare.

Exhibit 38: Groups Targeted by HHG Grantees

Group Targeted for Training	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Unemployed Individuals	93	93
Dislocated Workers	81	81
Incumbent Workers	79	81
High School Dropouts	79	69
Persons with Disabilities	55	64
Women	48	60

In addition to targeting unemployed, incumbent workers, and dislocated workers, HHG grantees also targeted high school dropouts and women. Differing from the other grant program types, there were relatively fewer groups targeted by HHG programs. HHG grantees were far less likely to target auto workers (5 percent compared to 40 percent overall) and ex-offenders (19 percent compared to 41 percent overall). This is not surprising considering that many of the HHG programs were not located in auto-impacted counties. In addition, many medical professions precluded ex-offenders from working in these fields, reducing the likelihood of these individuals receiving healthcare-related training. It is also important to note that the HHG SGA did limit program eligibility to specific types of participants.

7.3 Target Service Area

The HHG grantees targeted a wide range of areas, including multiple counties within a region, a state, and across more than one state. While many targeted rural counties, others targeted a specific metro area. Some grant programs served areas with large aging populations. One grantee reported that large portions of the population in their target area were living in poverty and had low educational attainment.

7.4 Recruitment and Enrollment

Recruitment. Grantees used multiple techniques to recruit participants, such as word of mouth, college flyers, free television and radio advertisements, information sessions, and job fairs. Recruitment was reportedly done by and through a number of different types of organizations including American Job Centers, WIBs, community colleges, high schools, CBOs, and religious organizations. The survey responses highlighted in Exhibit 46 show the reliance on employers, WIBs, and education and training providers to recruit potential participants. Grantees reported that they also worked with employers to recruit incumbent workers to their programs.

One grantee reported holding 30-minute information sessions at each local office once a week, designed to give individuals a feel for a job in the healthcare profession. This same grantee had a mobile lab that traveled throughout the state to CBOs, colleges, and schools to recruit participants. Another reported that it frequently attended high school career fairs, local parades, and state fairs to hand out promotional materials. This grantee met with high school counselors twice a year to advise them about the program and inform interested students. It also hosted an annual "Girls in the Middle Conference" to encourage girls in 6th, 7th and 8th grades to continue studying math, science, and technology and to consider careers such as nursing. Participants in that program were also able to work with clinical simulation lab mannequins. Another grantee hosted a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Camp to introduce students to various career pathways such as nursing by providing hands-on experiences that included working with clinical simulation lab equipment.

One grantee reported doing little to recruit students because there was already high demand for training and only limited class slots. That program could only accept as many students into it as there were internship slots. Another grantee reported that outreach was generally

conducted by the education or training provider with grantee support, using methods such as 1) a participant referral process with partner and stakeholder organizations including American Job Center training coordinators; 2) letters to Unemployment Insurance(UI) benefit recipients and unemployed individuals who exhausted UI benefits; 3) posting information on the program website; 4) sending messages to partner employers, regional and state associations, job fairs, and community awareness events; and 5) developing brochures, e-marketing, updating Facebook entries, and providing presentations. One grantee noted that over time, as the local economic situation improved, it became more difficult to recruit quality participants. Participants who remained jobless were generally harder to place and had been out of work longer than those placed earlier.

Enrollment. Enrollment procedures generally included an application, orientation, an interview, and administration of a variety of different assessments and screening tools. Orientation sometimes varied across different training providers. For some, intake and orientation was conducted as if a student were entering a regular college program, with the organization informing students about different training opportunities, supportive services available to them, and any financial aid options. For one program, the orientation and intake processes were limited because the training program itself was very short (16-20 hours).

For a number of grantees, potential participants had to take an assessment of some kind to determine their ability to be successful in the program. Assessment tools included the Accuplacer Assessment, Work Keys, TABE, Prove It!, CASAS, and the Compass test. Grantees often referred individuals deemed not to have the right qualifications or who had inadequate assessment scores to remedial services. For example, participants needed prerequisite courses in order to enroll in one nursing program. Many programs also required participants to pass background and drug tests. Survey results show that 83 percent of HHG grantees conducted a formal or written assessment of participants as part of the selection process, higher than the overall grantee average of 73 percent. This may have been attributable in part to the need to recruit more highly educated participants due to the nature of healthcare work and the reliance on classroom learning. Due to waiting lists, one grantee changed its open door policy for training to one that gave priority to students who had met the prerequisites and had higher assessment scores.

Another common theme among the enrollment processes of HHG grantees was the inclusion of interest assessments. In some cases, participants discussed their interests with a career advisor. One grantee reported that participants went through Promoveo, which is a healthcare-specific career exploration, interest inventory, and planning tool that helps individuals understand all of the healthcare careers that are available. Participants worked with the healthcare career advisor to develop a training plan based on their Promoveo results.

7.5   Training

Selection of Occupations for which to Train. One grantee reported selecting the training programs based on market research conducted for the grant application. Information was gathered through the state's department of labor, industry surveys, employer advisory committees, and economic development associations. More than 90 percent of HHG program administrators noted that they had used LMI information in developing and designing their programs, higher than the overall grantee average of 86 percent. Other grantees determined the occupations for which to train based on a growing demand for healthcare and other skilled workers and the inability of employers to adequately staff their organizations. For example, it was reported that many local hospitals had large numbers of open nursing positions. Many grantees selected occupations in order to address those needs. One grantee offered courses based on specific requests and suggestions from employers.

Several grantees noted that their training and the occupations on which they focused were developed to support policies and initiatives at the local, state and Federal level. For example, one reported connecting its training program with local and state initiatives focusing on workforce and economic development in various industry sectors. Another grantee's training was meant to support initiatives resulting from passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Others reported that their training was meant to help reduce the healthcare workforce shortage in their area.

Curriculum Design. According to the survey results discussed below, employers and education and training providers were heavily involved in development of the various HHG curricula. For example, one grantee reported that an advisory council of employers helped develop programs and curricula to be targeted toward specific employer needs in each region. Another reported to have developed its training programs as "just in time" programs, which are much more flexible than the traditional semester schedule. The grantee quickly identified cohorts of individuals and channeled them into training courses that started throughout the year. While the programs were based on curricula that existed, most of the grant programs created non-traditional, accelerated format programs that allowed individuals to complete training much faster than students enrolled in traditional semester-based courses.

Survey results show that 31 percent of HHG programs developed an entirely new program, 14 percent developed a program that expanded an existing program, and 55 percent had both a new program and an expansion of an existing program – the highest of the four grantee types. Exhibit 39 presents the percent of POP programs that are new versus an expansion of an existing program.

Exhibit 39: New Versus Expansion Program Offered by HHG Grantees

Type of Training Program	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
New Program	31	49
Expansion of an existing program only	14	10
Both a new program and an expansion of an existing program	55	40

Such a high percentage of programs melding together new and existing programs may be due to the fact that grantees frequently had programs that were already in existence and were currently being offered by the partner colleges or contracted for with outside vendors. Other grantees said their training providers used a mix of pre-existing, modified, and new curricula for their training providers. In particular, training programs for occupations in a green industry were often modified versions of existing programs.

Selection of Training Providers. Grantees reported selecting training providers through a range of methods. Some grantees used a competitive RFP process following the grant award; other grantees selected training providers prior to the grant award and included them as partners in the grant proposal.

Training Program. As the name of the grant type connotes, the HHG grants were geared towards offering training in the healthcare fields as well as other emerging industries within the context of the state or regional economy. Because the HHG programs differed considerably from the other grantee types in their training programs, they also differed considerably in the industries for which they trained participants. Exhibit 40 presents the industries in which ETP survey respondents reported providing training.

Exhibit 40: Industries for which Training Skills are Provided by HHG Grantees

Industry for Which Training Skills are Provided	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Other High Growth	31	25
HIT	21	11
Energy Efficient Building	12	53
Energy Efficiency Assessment	12	47
Renewable Electric Power	7	37
Biofuels	2	15
Manufacturers that Produce Sustainable Products	2	25
Energy Efficient and Advanced	0	14
Deconstruction	0	22

Note: Survey respondents listed a number of healthcare-related industries in the "Other" category for this question. Refer to question 21a in Appendix C for specific responses.

According to the survey results, the most common industries participants were trained for within the HHG program type were health IT (21 percent of programs) and other high growth and emerging industries (31 percent) – the highest of any of the four grantee types but still by no means a majority of the HHG programs. Unsurprisingly, the majority of these programs did

not serve green economy industries. The renewable electric power industry was the focus of only 7 percent of the programs, the biofuels industry was the focus of only 2 percent, and none of the programs focused on the energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicle industry. Because the HHG programs trained in such different fields than did the other grantee types, HHG grantees reported providing or supporting a wide range of training programs including those in healthcare, warehousing, transportation, computer science, and energy efficiency.

A wide variety of training modalities were used including classroom based, hands-on, apprenticeships and internships, OJT, and online. Exhibit 41 provides information on the training services offered by the HHG programs.

Exhibit 41: Training Services Offered by HHG Programs

Training Services	Percent of HHG Programs	Percent of Grantees Overall
Classroom Training	93	95
Basic Work Skills Training	76	68
Hands-on Training	67	76
On-the-Job Training	40	47
Adult Basic Education	38	43
Internships	38	36

Survey results highlight that HHG programs were less likely than other grantee types to use OJT (40 percent compared to 47 percent overall) and hands-on training (67 percent compared to 76 percent overall). This may be related to the nature of the healthcare training itself, which may rely less on these types of training. Of note is the use of basic work skills training, which at 76 percent of HHG programs is the highest of any of the grantee types.

To increase their nursing program clinical capacity, **Otero Junior College** (OJC) used some grant resources to upgrade its simulation mannequins. These mannequins could mimic most human biological functions, including breathing, heart rate, temperature, and even giving birth. Students in the nursing program could complete a portion of their clinical hours in the simulation lab, which reduced the strain on regional facilities of providing clinical hours and allowed OJC to increase its capacity to move more nurses through the pipeline.

Each grantee had unique program features and components. Some carried out their own training, while others relied on their sub-grantees for training delivery. Depending on the type of program, there were various levels of training, credentials, and degrees offered to students. Some programs offered associate degrees, while others offered green certifications and stackable credentials. Additionally, some created and offered new curriculum, while others added to existing programs.

Even within a grant program there was variability. One grantee was an industry association of bioscience companies, operating solely within a particular state. For another grant funding was distributed to six community colleges with both credit and non-credit programs ranging from a

seven-week certificate program to two-year associate degree programs. Other grantees provided training in high demand fields such as commercial truck driving, diesel mechanics, heavy equipment, industrial agriculture, and warehousing. For one program, students were required to take two general classes: Freshman Seminar and Job Seeking Skills.

The HHG grants used a variety of training providers, including community colleges, technical colleges, universities, employers, and clinical labs. Many of the grantees reported having existing relationships with the training providers they selected, while others initiated partnerships with training providers during the grant application process. Grantees generally reported that their trainers were experienced and qualified to teach specific courses. One grantee reported that the state department of education and secondary education certified all training providers. Focus group participants generally felt that their instructors were knowledgeable and had considerable field experience.

Flexibility to Accommodate Participant Needs. Training delivery varied across grantees, with some programs offering flexible access, including weekend classes for people who worked during the week. One grantee reported that the technical centers offered participants access to work labs via card keys, so participants could complete training requirements on a flexible schedule. Still, the inflexibility of times when grantees offered programs was problematic for some participants, including incumbent workers who could not be away from the jobs for lengthy periods. Some focus group participants noted barriers to being able to be away from work for the length of time that classes were offered and wished that classes had been more segmented so they could take classes for shorter periods of time.

Auxiliary Components of the Training Program. A number of programs offered limited job preparation support. Grantees also reported integrating soft skills, interview skills, and resume preparation into classroom trainings. One grantee organized a job club that helped students with communication skills, resume writing, and dressing for interviews, as well as offering networking opportunities and the chance to share experiences. Program staff also organized employment fairs for certain skilled trades. Another grantee developed a program that provided academic support to participants including remediation, time management, and study skills. As noted in Exhibit 41, 38 percent of HHG programs offered adult basic education/ESL classes for their trainees.

Transition from Training to Employment. Survey results suggest that HHG grantees did not offer significant opportunities for transitioning from training to employment. Only 12 percent provided apprenticeships to their participants, the lowest of any of the grantee types. Only 7 percent offered mentorships, also the lowest, and only 7 percent offered transitional jobs, the second lowest of the grantee types. On the other hand, 38 percent offered internship training to bridge the gap between training and employment, the second highest of the grantee types after POP. Some focus group respondents reported being hired by the organization that offered their internship. Those programs that provided training to incumbent workers eliminated the need for this transition.

Ivy Tech Community College, one of the training partners for the **Indianapolis Private Industry Council**, set up its Patient Access Registrar program to model a real-world work environment. For example, students were required to clock-in and clock-out and referred to their instructor as a supervisor. Setting the classroom up as a workplace enabled students to practice the necessary employability skills for retaining a job.

Most Beneficial Aspects of Training. Survey results show that HHG respondents felt they were most effective in meeting the goals of getting participants to complete the training (95 percent) and the certification that participants earned while in the training (74 percent).

7.6 Case Management and Support Services

Comprehensive Support Services. The range of support services offered by the HHG grant programs was generally in-line with other grantee types. Many grantees reported providing their participants with financial assistance to help pay tuition expenses and pay for the purchase of books, tools, safety gear, and testing fees. Many focus group participants confirmed that they received assistance with training related expenses. Survey results show that many grantees offered financial assistance to pay the fees associated with the respective programs, with one offering reimbursement for physical examinations as required for internships or employment. Exhibit 42 presents the support services that the HHG survey respondents reported.

Exhibit 42: Support Services Offered by HHG Grantees

Support Services Offered by Program	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	60	69
Clothing	41	45
Childcare	36	43
Financial Counseling	26	32
Emergency Assistance	19	26
Housing	14	21
No Support Services Offered	14	15

A number of focus group respondents reported that they received gas cards to help with transportation. Survey results show that 60 percent of grantees provided financial assistance for transportation. One leveraged WIA funds to provide bus passes and gas cards to participants who needed them. Also, 36 percent of grantees referred some participants to community resources that provided additional services, such as childcare. A number of grantees reported that the grant did not provide support services, but many of the training providers offered tutoring, career counseling, and job development services. Survey results show that 4 percent of HHG programs provided clothing assistance and 26 percent provided financial counseling. One grantee originally budgeted approximately $300,000 for support services including transportation expenses, gas vouchers, and clothing needed for training. However, program

staff indicated that there were administrative problems associated with providing support services such that these services were not actually provided as part of the program.

Case Management. A number of grantees provided case management services to participants. Case managers typically developed training plans, monitored participant progress, provided job listings to participants, worked with placement and recruiting staff to identify job opportunities, helped participants prepare resumes, and helped resolve any training issues. In some grant programs, case managers worked with participants to develop a realistic employment plan and career goals.

One grantee offered case management services through employment specialists, whose role was to act as a guide to services and training. The employment specialists also approved requested services and payment of those services. Similarly, another program used grant funds to hire Nursing Retention Specialists (NRS), whose role was to assess and address students' needs so they could be successful in the program. The NRS conducted intake interviews with all nursing students and developed a customized form to assess a variety of needs such as childcare, transportation, financial assistance, remediation, and tutoring. Students were often referred to the NRS directly by instructors; a specific referral form was developed for the instructors to complete if they observed a student having difficulties meeting class requirements. The NRS also had a master's degree in counseling and was able to provide counseling services to help students cope with issues such as stress and test anxiety.

Focus group respondents from one grant program reported that the case managers did not engage in these activities, nor did they provide the adequate wraparound services they were supposed to provide. Many focus group participants were particularly displeased at the lack of career planning and job placement services offered to them through the program and blamed at least part of their lack of employment on this perceived inattention.

Job Placement Services. Although not all sites offered job placement activities, the typical community college activities for job placement did take place. Additionally, instructors and grant staff often had strong relationships with local businesses and often provided recommendations of students to hire. A few of the grantees referred participants to local WIBs and workforce centers that provided assessment, advising, recruiting, workplace skills training, and job placement services.

Some sites provided more in-depth placement services. One grantee had career advisors work with participants on their resumes, job search techniques, interviewing basics, and other job search topics. Career advisors also referred participants to job openings, often scheduled interviews with potential employers, and were available to assist individuals with completing online applications. Many individuals involved in the grant noted that the counselors were very involved with the local business community and healthcare provider HR departments, and that this involvement helped participants find employment. One program engaged in resume development, job placement, job coaching, enrollment, academic counseling, and educational

planning for their participants. Overall, focus group respondents reported a range of job placement services.

Support Services after Completion of Training. The majority of grantees did not report the provision of support services following training completion. An exception was one grantee that contracted with the local WIB to follow-up with participants for nine to twelve months regarding employment retention.

7.7 Certificates

As with other aspects of the HHG grant programs, the certifications and credentials earned by participants varied across and within each grant program. Different regions and sites under the same grant might offer different types of training that resulted in different certifications. Nearly all (95 percent) of the HHG training programs resulted in certifications which were recognized by the industries on which the program focused. These certifications included those provided in Exhibit 43.

Exhibit 43: Certifications Offered

HHG Certifications	
▪ CNA	▪ Wind Turbine Technician
▪ LPN	▪ Advanced Green Manufacturing
▪ EMT	▪ Industrial Energy Auditor Certification
▪ Paramedics	▪ Chloro-Flouro-Carbon Certification
▪ Medical Billing and Coding	▪ Building Performance Institute
▪ Masters of Science in Health Information Technology	Certifications
	▪ Green Advance Certifications
▪ Certificate in Health IT	▪ Career Studies Certificate
▪ Associates Degree in Nursing	▪ AAS in General Engineering Technology
▪ Bachelors of Science in Nursing	▪ Gerontology Certificate
▪ Home Health Aide	▪ NABCEP PV Installer Certification (Solar
▪ Community Health Worker	and Photovoltaic training)

Participants were also able to earn college credits in a number of the programs with 50 percent of the programs resulting in participants obtaining an associate's degree. Survey results also show that most of the programs offered industry-recognized certifications, giving participants the ability to advance in their respective industry. More specifically, 86 percent of grant administrators noted that the training resulted in portable certifications and credentials and 76 percent that their program's training resulted in stackable certifications and credentials. As a result, 98 percent of HHG grantees believed that their training program helped participants access a career pathway that allowed for future advancement, the second highest of the four grantee types. Exhibits 44 and 45 present the percent of respondents that reported providing stackable and portable certifications by grant program respectively.

Exhibit 44: Stackable Certifications/Credentials for All Programs

Does the Training Result in Stackable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	76	77
No	21	20

Exhibit 45: Portable Certifications/Credentials for All Programs

Does the Training Result in Portable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	86	89
No	10	7

7.8 Partnerships

The HHG grant programs followed a variety of partnership structures. The 11 HHG grantees visited include both regional and local grant programs. These different structures influenced the number and types of partners included in the program, as reflected in the survey data below. The regional structure involved a grant administrator that operated different training programs throughout a region with a combination of regional and local level partners. The local structure involved a training program that served one local area. The types of partners involved with the HHG grant programs included local WIBs, American Job Centers, community colleges, technical colleges, universities, government agencies, employers, CBOs and non-profits, clinical labs, trade associations, hospitals, labor management organizations, Chambers of Commerce, economic development corporations, and unions.

Grantees reported a combination of new partnerships and those that existed prior to the grant award. Many grantees reported that through past experience working together with the same partners had become a natural fit and continued their collaboration under the new funding. Grantees noted that pre-existing relationships were beneficial in program start-up, management, and implementation, which the survey results below confirm. One grantee noted that the relationships established for its HHG grant program were a positive outcome of the program and likely to continue once program funding ended.

Partner Survey and Interview Results. Exhibit 46 presents survey results regarding the involvement of partnerships in developing, managing, and sustaining the various HHG programs. The questions heading each panel of the table highlight the different types of help by the different partner types.

Exhibit 46: Involvement of Partners in the Functioning of the HHG Programs

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Program design?						
Very Involved	26	74	55	7	19	14
Somewhat Involved	40	12	40	10	30	29
Not Involved at All	23	2	0	53	38	33
Non Response	10	12	5	31	12	24
How Involved in Curriculum Development?						
Very Involved	2	76	40	5	12	7
Somewhat Involved	24	7	40	7	12	7
Not Involved at All	57	2	10	55	48	60
Non Response	17	14	10	33	29	26
How Involved in Recruiting Participants?						
Very Involved	38	69	50	7	33	7
Somewhat Involved	50	17	38	14	29	21
Not Involved at All	7	5	2	48	24	43
Non Response	5	10	10	31	14	29
How Involved in Training Delivery?						
Very Involved	5	86	36	2	14	2
Somewhat Involved	14	2	48	7	10	2
Not Involved at All	76	2	10	57	55	67
Non Response	5	12	7	33	21	29
How Involved in Job Placement?						
Very Involved	5	45	64	5	21	5
Somewhat Involved	24	31	26	10	21	17
Not Involved at All	48	12	2	50	36	50
Non Response	5	12	7	36	21	29

	WIB/Local Workforce Agency	Education/ Training Provider	Employers	Labor Unions	Community-Based Organizations	Local/State Government
How Involved in Managing the Program?						
Very Involved	12	47	10	0	14	7
Somewhat Involved	17	14	19	2	10	7
Not Involved at All	67	21	60	64	55	55
Non Response	5	17	12	33	21	29

Note: Numbers may not add to 100 percent because several grant administrators did not answer the question or did not know enough to provide a response. The non-response rates include responses of 'Don't Know' and 'Not Applicable'.

Exhibit 46 shows that HHG administrators were less likely than those in other grantee types to highlight the role of partners. For example, while employers and education and training providers were heavily involved in program functions, WIBs, labor unions, and CBOs were used far less frequently, especially in comparison to other grant program types. With regard to job placement, only 29 percent had WIB partners that were either very involved or somewhat involved in this activity (compared to 74 percent for the grantees overall). With regard to management, only 29 percent had WIB partners that were either very involved or somewhat involved in managing the HHG grant programs (compared to 43 percent for the grantees overall).

The situation was similar for labor unions. Only 21 percent of grant managers said labor union partners were either very involved or somewhat involved in recruiting participants (compared to 48 percent for the grantees overall). Labor unions were also less likely than for other grantee types to be involved in managing and sustaining the grant program. This may be related to the fact that labor unions are not heavily involved in the healthcare industry generally, and in the occupations for which HHG grantees specifically trained.

Finally, CBOs were also less likely to be involved in the HHG programs than in the other program types. This general lack of involvement by partner organizations may be related to the structure of the HHG grantees and how they chose to run their programs, and the fact that the healthcare industry differs substantially from green energy industries – rather than an indication of the types of services provided by the partners.

7.9 Management

Management Practices. Grantees used a variety of management strategies to meet program goals. Many reported conducting regular meetings and being in constant communication via phone, email, and Skype. One required monthly, instead of quarterly, reporting within five days of the end of the month. The same program created a fiscal and program tracking system to ensure their grantees reported in a timely fashion. Another grant administrator managed the

grant by hosting weekly Skype meetings between site coordinators located on different campuses. Each campus had a coordinator assigned to help students through the process and to expend funds. The project director worked with financial staff for the overall project management as well. These groups met regularly to track spending and grant outcomes.

> The **Acadiana Technical College** (ATC) developed partnerships and lines of communication that strengthened its programs. ATC recognized the expense of traveling throughout its large service area, yet identified a need for regular communication between program staff at different campuses. ATC's weekly Skype meetings helped to ensure everyone understood program progress and student outcomes.

Other grantees hired program managers to help facilitate grant administration. The program manager in one grant program was responsible for meeting all reporting requirements and ensuring that partners continued to fulfill their designated roles. At the beginning of the grant, the program manager brought all partners together for regular meetings. As the grant progressed and activities became routine, the program manager met with each partner individually. The program manager also played a major role in ensuring that the partners were communicating with each other and satisfied with their program involvement.

Follow-up with partners was not quite as extensive for HHG grantees as other program types. According to the survey data, fewer than half of the HHG grantees (45 percent) surveyed employers about changes that needed to be made to the program and only 29 percent conducted focus groups – both the lowest of any grantee type. With that in mind, several HHG program administrators noted that they had advisory committees comprising employers that solicited feedback, and one conducted work site visitations and interviews to gauge student performance.

Data Collection. Many grantees reported using the RAD system for data collection and reporting. Sub-grantees were commonly required to submit monthly or quarterly narrative and quantitative data directly into the RAD system. One grantee mentioned that a fiscal and program tracking system was created to ensure that sub-grantees were reporting on a timely basis. Another noted that the local WIB tracked job retention data for the participants who found employment.

Division of Labor. The division of labor within each HHG grant program varied. Major functions included proposal development, program design, outreach, fiscal and administrative management, data tracking, placement services, technical assistance, and skills training/internships.

Many grantees had MOUs with all partners to ensure that grant objectives were met, though the percentage of HHG grantees doing this was fewer than for the other grantee types. According to the survey data, 60 percent of HHG grant administrators developed MOUs with local workforce agencies, 64 percent with education and training providers, and 55 percent with employers. The relatively low percentage of MOUs may be indicative of the lack of reliance

on partners, as also seen in the aforementioned survey data. Grantees also reported that grant administrators typically managed all contract modifications and partner reimbursements. Multiple grantees mentioned that they had commitments from employers to hire trainees or to increase the salary for incumbent workers once they completed the training program.

Technical Assistance to Grantees or Sub-grantees. A few grantees reported providing technical assistance to their partners and sub-grantees. This included assigning a single staff person to provide technical assistance and support to sites for data collection and cleaning, a formal monitoring guide based on DOL's monitoring guide, regular review of sub-grantee reports, and a webpage with all grantee resources (including all required forms). One grantee said that the technical assistance provided by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning strengthened its work across six community colleges.

Program Start-up. Some HHG grantees had faster start-up periods than others. Factors that influenced start-up included the relationship between the grant's administrator and its partners, time required to purchase equipment, and pre-determined training schedules. In some instances management and start-up time was minimal because of well-established programs. Respondents noted that solid relationships with partners allowed for seamless management and efficient program operations because the grant administrator and all partners were able to work as a team to address challenges and identify solutions prior to grantee start up.

Leveraging Resources. Grantees mentioned leveraging resources through a variety of sources, such as FAFSA, Pell grants, food banks, state-funded instructors, equipment purchases from other funded areas, classroom space, hanger rental (for an aviation program), partner staff time, use of simulation lab equipment at training sites, and WIA support funds. One grantee leveraged both their own and partner resources to help pay nursing instructors; construct a simulation lab and pay for its space and design; implement curriculum; and help with staff transportation costs. Another contributed infrastructure support and continuous staff time. WIA funds were also reported to have been leveraged, especially at the program administration level. Some training providers matched the grant money to reduce training costs. Exhibit 47 provides information on the most commonly leveraged resources offered by HHG partners.

Exhibit 47: Most Common Leveraged Resources Offered by HHG Grantees

Leveraged Resources Provided by Partners	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Training Facilities/Space	76	88
Training Equipment/materials	71	92
Instructors/Trainers	64	68
Training Curriculum	64	63
Supportive Services	50	75

Similar to other grantee types, the most common leveraged resources were the provision of instructors and trainers, curriculum, training equipment and materials, and facilities and space.

HHG partners were slightly less likely to leverage equipment and materials (71 percent compared to 92 percent overall), facilities and space (76 percent compared to 88 percent overall), and supportive services (50 percent compared to 75 percent). Once again, this may be related to the relatively smaller role played by partners in the HHG programs.

Mid-Stream Adjustment Process. A number of adjustments were made to the program mid-stream to improve program implementation. Several grantees changed their recruitment by improving assessment of entry-level participants and targeting employers outside their original partnerships. Several noted changes to their training program. One added alternative training times and provided more incumbent worker training in order to increase the number of participants served. Another shortened the program's courses to allow better participation and higher completion rates. Yet another made adjustments to the training capacity of the program to account for shifting demand for the occupations for which participants were being trained. One grantee changed its recruitment efforts to focus on different areas in order to recruit more participants, and eased the eligibility requirements to allow more participants to enter the program.

Grantees also made changes to partnerships they had established early in the grant process. One grantee built stronger employer partnerships by expanding the original partner base, visiting more employers, attending more job fairs to meet with employers, and adding an employment web page. Another increased the number of partners, added staffing agencies and job developers, and increased the use of smaller targeted career fairs. One worked with a partner to create a Facebook page for the program.

7.10 Sustainability

Slightly less than one-fifth of HHG grantees (19 percent) had developed a sustainability plan, 29 percent had not, and 50 percent were working on developing a sustainability plan at the time of the survey. The biggest factor inhibiting sustainability was funding. Only 24 percent expected funding from the Federal government after the program ended, the lowest of any grantee type. In contrast, 43 percent anticipated funding from state and local governments and 31 percent from employers. One grantee mentioned the challenge of retaining new nursing staff hired with grant funding; in this case, when grant funds expired, the schools in that partnership were set to absorb these salaries using their general fund. Another grantee was uncertain about how the program would be sustained after the DOL funding ended, though its stated preference was that some form of the program would continue. That grantee was looking to leverage resources from other grants to continue the mission, and the partnerships developed as a result of the program were expected to be sustained.

Others mentioned there would be some sustainability of their programs because of previously established relationships and infrastructure. For example, one grantee reported that many of its partnerships existed prior to the DOL grant and would continue for the future. Additionally, program components would be sustained after the grant cycle because the DOL funding covered only a small portion of expenses and the relationships with labs had now been firmly

established. Another reported that after the grant ended they intended to keep all training programs, which were already in existence prior to the grant with the exception of one. After the grant ended, the remaining program would be supported through other program dollars. Survey results are consistent with this picture: 83 percent of grantees believed their job training components would be sustained, while 60 percent believed their job placement and participant recruitment services would be sustained. One-third of survey respondents thought the supportive services component of the program would be sustained.

Another grantee suggested that future funding and sustainability of the individual community college programs was ultimately based on industry demand. The community colleges that provided the grant training had the infrastructure to continue their programs after the conclusion of the grant, and many of the community colleges were working to institutionalize the programs as credit-bearing classes (which may help explain why education and training providers were said to be the most involved in developing these sustainability plans). Even so, that grantee was clear that industry financial support, and the "value" of the trainings to that sector, would determine sustainability in the end.

7.11   Promising Practices & Lessons Learned

The promising practices and lessons learned reported by HHG grantees fall into the categories of partnerships, administration, and program components.

Partnerships. Reported promising practices and lesson learned under partnerships related to relationships and responsibilities, and the types of partners included in the program. Many HHG grantees believed that solid, non-competitive partnerships were essential to successful grant implementation. It was also noted that each partner should have a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities under the grant, as well as the responsibilities of other partners.

One grantee noted that since many staff members joined their organizations after the grant was written and submitted, they had to start from the beginning to develop understanding among organizations of their responsibilities. When all partners were aware of the grant requirements and each other's roles and responsibilities the grant ran much more smoothly. One grantee reported that during the proposal process and early in implementation, a governance structure with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities provided guidance to all engaged partners. Others noted that the operating structure of the grant needed to be in place before the grant started, so any previous experience partners had in working together could be integral in facilitating a short start-up period.

Grantees mentioned that employer commitment to the grant was essential to success. Learning exactly what employers sought in their job candidates and customizing the program to meet those needs was critical. Grantees also suggested that the role of "worker voice" played by the union partners was important to grant success. For example, basic worker input, such as the best time to schedule classes or other unexpected barriers to participation, was necessary to ensure participant retention.

Administration. Promising practices and lessons learned related to grant administration focused on the administrative structure and approach, program design, and administrative tasks. Grantees noted that the SGA encouraged specificity around the exact type of training, with little flexibility to change strategies once the grant was awarded. In retrospect, they thought a grant application written to focus on strategy, rather than particular training programs, would have provided a more appropriate approach, especially given the uncertainty of the economy at the time of the grant award. One grantee reported that a grant structure that allowed the grant administrator to act as a monitor and "sounding board" for sub-grantees allowed them to make changes and adjustments that helped achieve desired outcomes.

Grantees also said that the grant administrators should ensure that the grant program is directly responsive and valued by employers and industry partners. One noted that its project was a jumping off point for a statewide strategy to create a highly skilled workforce in a growing industry. The regional approach with industry advisors playing an integral role was seen as an effective practice in this regard.

It was also noted that grantees should have a thorough understanding of what they wanted to do *before* they started grant implementation. For example, one grantee wanted to develop a system of screening participants, but the system was not in place prior to beginning the grant and took six months to develop. With regard to administrative tasks, many grantees reported the importance of having a clear understanding and organized approach to complying with DOL regulations and requirements. Specifically, grantees needed to clearly understand the rules, regulations, and procedures that would be required and ensure everyone in the program understood the time and financial commitment necessary to carry out a grant. Grantees made changes because of these rules, with one noting that it focused more of the program on participant follow-up to better track job placement and retention.

Program Components. Grantees reported promising practices and lessons learned for program design, training, and support services. In regard to program design, respondents noted the value of applying strategies that funneled unemployed or soon-to-be unemployed workers to training. For example, one grantee reported that two major employers in its region were planning layoffs. The grantee identified the transferable skills and skills gaps for employees from both employers and related them to the skills needed for the bioscience industry. The AFL-CIO funneled the workers who were to be laid off from the two plants to the appropriate training programs in the bioscience industry.

Administering a battery of upfront assessments and screenings was also reported as a promising practice. One grantee reported that initially, employers did not look to its program when trying to fill open positions because they considered the quality of workers to be low. The grantee eventually developed stricter assessment and screening procedures to ensure that its participants would be high quality employees. Another grantee noted that developing articulation agreements with universities that allowed students to transfer some of their credits toward a four-year degree provided students with an incentive to continue their education.

Regarding the training programs, one grantee eliminated one portion of the grant program and enhanced a different portion to improve training, while another partner brought employers and training providers together to better understand what was in demand and offered training to meet those needs. Grantees reported that if the program could accommodate it, non-semester-based training allowed the grantee to put more people through training programs in a condensed period. Many agreed that more flexibility within the college training model would greatly benefit program participants. The nature of credit courses often required that they fall into the semester-based schedule of higher education, which was not ideal for grant-based training programs. It was also noted as valuable to offer training programs that resulted in stackable credentials. This was considered essential to developing career pathways so participants were not spending time and money to repeat competencies.

Other promising practices and lessons learned under training included integrating contextualized and applied learning into the training programs which helped participants better understand competencies and transfer skills from classroom to workplace. Integrating DOL's competencies models (most notably Tier 1-personal effectiveness and Tier 2-academic competencies) into the training addressed employers concerns that employees often lacked employability skills. Incorporating soft skills training into the technical training helped students understand the application of those skills to their job. When students were taught soft skills without the context of the actual job, those skills were not transferred to the workplace.

Involving employers in the grant program and garnering employer commitment to the grant was essential to success. It was important to learn exactly what employers were looking for in their job candidates and to customize the program to meet those needs. Providing externship and internship opportunities for program participants gave students an opportunity to gain practical experience in their field, while employers got to know students who would be entering the job market shortly. It was also noted that having sector-specific groups act as advisors was beneficial. This allowed the grant manager and case managers to become truly knowledgeable about the unique requirements of the occupations for which participants were being trained.

If applicable, grouping counselors into sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, etc., was recommended. This sector-specific approach meant that counselors would take time to meet employers and instructors and understand the intricacies of the field for which they were counseling. Developing a training and employment plan between the counselor and the participant allowed counselors to discuss topics such as potential barriers to completion, goals, and job requirements. These discussions managed participants' expectations and allowed them to choose the best path for themselves. Having case managers on staff to work with incumbent workers going through training was noted as valuable. Since incumbent workers were non-traditional students they had their own set of needs. Having a case manager devoted to those needs resolved many problems quickly.

The ability to react quickly to employer needs as they were identified was noted as important. For example, although the defense-industry jobs did not materialize as expected, a grantee

identified a firm that needed an influx of workers and a college partner with a readily available trainer allowing quick direction of trainees into the appropriate training.

Offering evening and weekend (non-traditional) courses was valuable in attracting students. It was an appealing option for students who already had full-time jobs and for students who wanted to begin working while continuing to pursue a degree. Similarly, hiring a retention specialist helped increase student retention and understand why students leave the program. One grantee revamped its admissions process based on the analysis of the retention specialist. Following these changes, fewer students dropped out of the program.

Related to support services, especially the provision of support and job development services, grantees noted the importance of being aware of the challenges facing the target populations and strategies to overcome them. Such challenges included criminal and drug issues; lack of transportation; and lack of basic, computer, and soft skills. Some found that, due to the economic deterioration, the participants in their programs were older than the typical college enrollee. This presented a challenge, as potential employers often preferred to hire younger employees whose salary expectations are lower.

Grantees noted that immediately following graduation or program completion, participants should be connected with employers. In some cases there was a lag, which discouraged participants in their job search. Grantees also said that, if possible, the grant should pay for transportation and other supports in the community.

7.12 Challenges

Similar challenges were reported by respondents across the HHG grants. These challenges fall under the same categories as the promising practices and lessons learned: Partnerships, administration, and program components.

Regarding partnerships, grantees noted that many employers, especially employers in the private sector, did not understand what the WIB did or what it could offer. Similarly, program staff commented that employers and the population as a whole were resistant or uneducated generally about the relevance of a green industry and green jobs. This was believed to have had an effect on employment opportunities, and to have been especially true for those trained as residential energy auditors.

Regarding administration, program management required extensive communication between partners. One grantee noted that implementation was impeded by wait times for nursing program approvals by the relevant Board of Nursing.

Staffing changes required significant adjustments. Early in the grant period, one grantee struggled from two key staffing changes. First, the original program manager and driving force behind the development of the grant left the organization. Second, the FPO changed early in the grant period. Multiple respondents reported that personnel turnover hindered program

continuity because the agreements reached by and drive, and passion of the personnel originally involved disappeared when they were no longer on the team.

The relatively brief grant period was a challenge. Due to the nature of healthcare programs, short-term training was not always an option. A three-year grant was not enough time for start-up, training, and placement. This issue was exacerbated by the fact that not all programs could be customized to run off-semester. Most credit-based courses had to run on the semester schedule and participants had to wait until a semester began to start a program. Many focus group participants reported having to wait a number of months before training could begin. Ideally, respondents noted that participants should be allowed to start the training program during the grant, but complete it after the grant's end date.

Several grantees reported difficulty in accurately predicting the state of the job market over several years. More generally, the grant administrators said that they would rather have set more conservative goals initially, but believed their estimates were sound based on the information available at the time. This perception is borne out by the survey data, which show that 60 percent of grant administrators believed that the least effective component of their training had been job placement. With that in mind, some grantees changed their training plans to make sure they were training participants in areas for which employers were hiring.

Regarding program components, grantees reported challenges in working with individuals laid off from the auto and manufacturing industries. One grantee attempted to recruit such individuals, but found that the level of education required to work in manufacturing was different from the level required in healthcare. For example, dislocated manufacturing workers beginning a healthcare training program need one to two years of prerequisite courses before a one-to-two-year healthcare training program could begin. Many eligible individuals could not afford to be out of the labor force for that period of time.

Nursing programs did not align well with grant programs for multiple reasons. First, most nursing programs are two-year programs. This meant that, at the earliest, the first cohort of students would only graduate and attempt to enter the job market in the second year of the grant; the second and third cohorts would not graduate before the grant ended. Second, nursing programs require many pre-requisite courses, which often increased the length of the training program to three or more years. Since many participants were from disadvantaged backgrounds and had been out of school for many years, most had to take at least one semester of prerequisite classes. Third, nursing education is different than other training programs. The curriculum is rigid, lock-step, certified by multiple boards, and cannot be altered to fit the needs of the population being served. Fourth, nursing programs are academically very rigorous; not all students who begin pursuing the ASN degree will complete their course requirements. This led to tension in terms of meeting grant performance goals. Finally, nursing programs operate on a semester schedule and do not have the flexibility to begin in the middle of the year. This meant participants had to wait until the fall semester of each school year to start the program, regardless of when they were credentialed to enter.

8. CONCLUSIONS

IMPAQ International, LLC and its partner, FHI-360, received a contract from DOL/ETA to conduct a study of the 152 grantees funded through four SGAs designed to provide training, placement, and other services in high growth and emerging industries, including healthcare, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. The primary objectives of this study are to understand in-depth the implementation of the 152 grants and explore the extent to which grantees used promising practices that could be replicated and scaled in future programs. The four SGAs are Healthcare and Other High Growth and Emerging Industries (HHG), Pathways Out of Poverty (POP), State Energy Sector Partnerships and Training (SESP), and Energy Training Partnerships (ETP). Below, we provide conclusions and lessons learned organized by the research objectives discussed throughout the report. Promising practices with respect to grant implementation are highlighted throughout this section.

8.1 Program Context

A number of grantees reported conducting extensive market research to assess community and industry needs prior to preparing their grant application. Grantee representatives indicated that they found it of considerable value to consult with employers and other industry partners to obtain their input on program design, specifically on the occupations for which participants were being trained, the skills needed, and the expected demand for those occupations and skill sets prior to preparing their grants. Grantees also noted that, after grant award, obtaining a Letter of Commitment from employer partners to hire program graduates was useful in helping to facilitate job placement for participants. However, one grantee reported that the weak economy forced the termination of such an agreement.

As discussed throughout this report, grantee projections of strong demand for skilled labor in green occupations (as identified in the goals set in their grant applications) proved to be unduly optimistic in many cases, due to weaknesses experienced throughout the economy. Overall, 56 percent of the grantee administrators surveyed experienced reduced demand for trained workers in the areas in which they provided training and 53 percent strongly agreed with the statement that 'local economic conditions created challenges in achieving program goals.'

Grantees that were in alignment with state or local initiatives on growing specific industries had advantages over those that were not, because aligned programs had a commitment from the state or local government to promote growth in these industries. This policy context enabled these grantees to operate in areas that had already begun initiatives to develop green or other emerging industries. Workforce development and other government agencies were already familiar with the industry concepts, as well as the occupations, skills, and employers involved. This familiarity alone was beneficial, as grantees reported challenges in conveying the concept of green jobs to partners and employers. Grantees reported that working in alignment with existing initiatives allowed them to design their programs to complement other activities (instead of duplicating them), thus avoiding saturating the market with too many skilled workers in one sector.

A key lesson learned by grantees was the importance of having requirements and regulations in place that provided training programs with the flexibility to make mid-course adjustments in the program plan and approach. While it was important to conduct market research, analyze LMI, and consult employers when designing training programs, unexpected changes in the economic climate could still occur. Programs structured with a grantee disbursing grant funds to sub-grantees might also benefit from an iterative Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Respondents from one grant program reported issuing one round of RFPs every year during the grant period. Lessons learned during earlier rounds of the RFP process were then applied to the later rounds and adjustments made to adapt to the current economic context.

Grantees made mid-course adjustments based on feedback received from employers and participants in the programs. Industry employers offered feedback throughout the implementation period based on the current economic climate or the skill sets of the participants who had already graduated from the program. Most of the grantees (72 percent) made changes to their service delivery models to address the economic challenges they confronted.

8.2   Target Population

Across the grantee programs, the survey results found that 93 percent of programs surveyed targeted unemployed individuals, 81 percent targeted dislocated workers, 81 percent targeted incumbent workers, 69 percent targeted high-school dropouts, 64 percent targeted persons with disabilities, 60 percent targeted women, 41 percent targeted ex-offenders, 40 percent targeted auto workers, 36 percent targeted low-income individuals, and 28 percent targeted minorities.   Exhibit 48 presents the reported target populations across the four grant programs.

Exhibit 48: Target Population by Grantee Type

Group Targeted for Training	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Unemployed Individuals	100	88	95	93	**93**
Incumbent Workers	100	50	95	79	**81**
Dislocated Workers	75	81	95	81	**81**
High School Dropouts	67	63	90	79	**69**
Persons With Disabilities	71	56	81	55	**64**
Women	71	63	71	48	**60**
Ex-Offenders	79	0	62	0	**41**
Auto Workers	83	0	81	0	**40**

With respect to specific SGAs, it was reported that many of the POP participants were facing difficulty in participating in the labor force due to a variety of barriers: low levels of education; limited skill or work experience; unemployment; unfulfilled needs for childcare services or transportation; homelessness, mental health, or substance abuse issues; and lack of soft skills needed to function well in a work environment. Some of the ETP and SESP grantees targeted similar populations; others targeted incumbent workers, union workers, individuals in the

apprenticeship system, veterans, individuals with disabilities, or specific demographic groups (such as women, older workers, military spouses, or students). HHG programs also targeted a variety of populations, including unemployed individuals, incumbent workers, dislocated workers, women, high-school dropouts, and persons with disabilities.

While 60 percent of grantees reported serving women, 67 percent reported that their grant program proactively targeted participants that had not previously worked in the occupations for which they were being trained (i.e., training women for occupations not traditionally associated with their gender). Of the 71 grantees that indicated such targeting, 10 were ETP grantees (63 percent of the total ETP group), 23 were HHG grantees (54 of the total HHG group), 21 were POP grantees (88 percent of the total POP group), and 17 were SESP grantees (81 of the total SESP group).

8.3   Target Service Area

The target service delivery areas were a function of the specific requirements of the each SGA and therefore varied widely across grantees. Some were national in scope, while others focused on a particular region, state, or local community. The SESP programs were all at the state level, with sub-grantees selected across the state. SESP grantees provided a variety of reasons for selecting particular sites. Two major reasons were a perceived strong need for a more skilled workforce in that area or high levels of unemployment or limited training resources in the area. Grantees also selected sites through a competitive process.

8.4   Recruitment and Enrollment

Grantees exhibited substantial creativity and resourcefulness in developing recruitment campaigns, using a wide range of methods to reach potential program participants. ***Many respondents reported the value in reaching the target populations where they typically spend time. This included focusing recruitment efforts in neighborhoods, businesses, and community-based organizations (CBOs) where the target populations live, work, and use services.***

Recruitment methods used by POP grantees included: targeting certain neighborhoods deemed likely to contain large numbers of the target population based on market analysis; hiring a dedicated recruiter in each target community; distributing flyers or postcards at many neighborhood businesses and institutions; e-mail blasts; making presentations at organizations and events in the community; advertising in the media; building a program website; and using word of mouth to spread awareness of the program.

ETP and SESP grantees reported using similar methods, with additional methods based on the target population of incumbent or union workers. Employers enrolled incumbent workers in the programs, eliminating the need for recruitment. Traditional methods for recruiting union members were used to bring apprentices or journeymen into the training programs. One SESP program specifically reported challenges in recruiting women. As the program emphasis was on

traditionally male occupations, the grantee devoted significant efforts to increase the number of female participants. Recruitment in the HHG program used methods similar to those described above, with some grantees also holding local information sessions once a week. One grantee had a mobile lab that traveled to CBOs and schools to recruit participants.

A number of partner types were very involved in the recruitment process, including education and training providers (noted by 65 percent of grantees), workforce investment boards (noted by 46 percent), and CBOs (noted by 41 percent). In addition, 39 percent of grantees reported that the local or state government was not involved in recruitment.

Individuals interested in participating in the programs generally went through a process of orientation, during which they were able to learn more about the program and decide whether to pursue it further. The application process followed in which interested individuals provided information and had their identity verified. Following the application, participants were commonly required to complete an assessment process in which the grantee typically used a variety of formal and informal screening tools (standardized tests as well as individual interviews) to determine the participant's skill level in math, reading, and other basic skills, as well as the participant's motivation for completing the training. Seventy-three percent of grantees used some type of written or formal assessment as part of the participant selection process. Grantees often had minimum skill levels requirements for admission. The enrollment process often involved creation of an individual action plan describing the participant's goals, training schedule, barriers to employment, and steps to address those barriers.

A number of grantees found it necessary to provide extensive information on the training programs and to assess program applicants thoroughly in order to identify participants who would be motivated to complete the training and to encourage others to self-select out of the program. Grantees reported that not all potential participants were suitable for immediate training and job placement, making it important to identify those participants with sufficient academic preparation for a specific training program.

8.5 Training

Grant programs provided training in a wide range of industries. Exhibit 49 presents the survey results for the industries for which training was provided across the four grants. Across all grantees, the industries for which the most grantees reported providing training were: energy efficient building (53 percent), energy efficient assessment (47 percent), and renewable electric power (37 percent).

Exhibit 49: Percent of Programs Providing Training by Industry

Industry for which Training Skills are Provided	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Energy Efficient Building	96	63	81	12	**53**
Energy Efficiency Assessment	71	69	76	12	**47**
Renewable Electric Power	54	44	71	7	**37**
Other High Growth	17	25	24	31	**25**
Manufacturers that Produce Sustainable Products	42	31	48	2	**25**
Deconstruction	42	31	33	0	**22**
Biofuels	17	19	38	2	**15**
Energy Efficient and Advanced	17	19	38	0	**14**
HIT	4	0	10	21	**11**

Note: Survey respondents listed a number of healthcare related industries in the "Other" category for this question. Refer to question 21a in Appendix C for specific responses.

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents reported that their grant program created new training programs, 10 percent expanded existed curricula, and 40 percent used a combination of new and existing curricula. ***Respondents from grants that built on existing training programs or modified existing curricula reported that this practice saved start-up time and expense.*** Exhibit 50 presents the percent of programs that are new versus an expansion of an existing program across the four grants.

Exhibit 50: New Versus Expansion Program

Type of Training Program	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
New Program	67	38	76	31	**49**
Expansion of existing program only	0	19	10	14	**10**
Both a new program and an expansion of an existing program	33	44	14	55	**40**

Seeking input on training curricula from employers and other industry representatives was noted by many as a valuable practice to ensure the needs of employers were being met. It was also noted that trainers with a strong background and many years of experience in the industry were vital in providing participants with the skills most valued by employers.

Across the four grant types, grantees indicated that they used a variety of training delivery methods. Exhibit 51 presents different training modalities reported by survey respondents.

Exhibit 51: Training Services Offered by Programs

Training Services	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Classroom Training	100	100	95	93	**95**
Hands-on Training	92	88	71	67	**76**
Basic Work Skills Training	88	50	48	76	**68**
Adult Basic Education/ESL	75	0	0	38	**43**
On-the-Job Training	54	56	71	40	**47**
Internships	46	0	0	38	**36**
Apprenticeship	0	44	57	0	**32**

Survey data show that the greatest number of grantees offered classroom training (95 percent), followed by hands-on training (76 percent), basic skills training (68 percent), on the job training (OJT) (47 percent), adult basic education (43 percent), internships (36 percent), apprenticeships (32 percent). [17] Far fewer grantees provided transitional jobs (13 percent) or mentorships (8 percent). Many of these programs offered training through a variety of modalities. *Many grantees reported the value of mirroring actual work conditions in the training program, including hands-on and internship components where participants could practice performing tasks actually required in the job.*

Grantee respondents felt that the inclusion of "soft skills" as part of the training program increased the likelihood of job retention. *Grantees noted the value of incorporating soft skills training into the technical training to allow participants to understand the application of those skills to their job. Including remedial basic skills training on an as needed basis was also reported being a promising practice.* While remedial training was adequate for many participants, respondents reported that some potential participants needed more extensive background education to begin their programs. It also was noted that many participants could not afford to be out of the labor force for the period of time required to gain the prerequisites needed to begin the actual training program.

Grantee respondents felt that offering flexible training programs that accommodated the needs of participants helped to retain program participants. For example, in rural areas, the geographic dispersion of participants presented a logistical problem. Multiple grantees created mobile training units that could be readily transported to rural areas to address this issue. Training programs that included self-paced schedules, evening or weekend hours, training for incumbent workers at their place of employment, and a variety of training "tracks" for individuals with different skill levels were also reported as being used as examples of offering flexible approaches to training.

Grantees noted that non-semester-based training allowed the grantee to put more participants through the training program in a condensed period. However, grantees that used semester-

---

[17] Basic Skills Training includes "soft skills" such as communications, interviewing, work habits, while Adult Basic Education includes remedial academic and language skills, such as ESL.

based training models, such as nursing programs, often reported that the length of time required for participants to complete the program and the lack of flexibility of the training schedule made this design less than ideal for grant-based training.

Successful efforts in helping participants make the transition from training to employment included inviting employers to career fairs at the end of training and subsidizing internship positions to give program graduates actual work experience. Both grantee and focus group respondents also reported value in providing transitional services such as resume preparation assistance and mock interviews. Grantees noted that opportunities to gain real world work experience through internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, and OJT as aiding participants in making a successful transition to employment. A number of focus group respondents reported being hired by the organization that offered their internship.

8.6   Case Management and Supportive Services

Comprehensive case management and support services were reported to be critical to the functioning of the various grant programs. Every program type provided some supportive services to their participants, though ETP grantees were the least likely to provide these services (in part because a number dealt primarily with incumbent workers who were less in need of these services). While some grantees provided support services in-house (especially a number of POP grantees, which were often non-profits well-suited to provide these services), many grantees worked with several partners to link participants with supportive services.   For example, many SESP programs used WIBs to provide support services by co-enrolling participants in the WIA program. Exhibit 52 presents the support services reported by survey respondents across the four grants.

Exhibit 52: Support Services Offered by Grantees

Support Services Offered by Grantees	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Transportation	92	50	76	60	**69**
Clothing	71	31	43	41	**45**
Childcare	63	31	48	36	**43**
Financial Counseling	58	25	24	26	**32**
Emergency Assistance	38	25	33	19	**26**
Housing	21	18	33	14	**21**
No Support Services Were Provided	0	25	19	14	**15**

The most prevalent support services provided by grantees were transportation support (supplied by 69 percent of programs), clothing (45 percent), and childcare (43 percent), although there was wide variation in the provision of these services by grantee type. For many grantees, participants often lacked automobiles, making bus passes and other transportation supports vital in enabling these participants to travel to training services and therefore succeed in the program. Other types of support services provided by grantees included tuition

reimbursement to pay for course materials, medical and dental assistance, and emergency financial assistance. Support services were often only for participants while in the training program. When the program ended, often so did the support services. However, some programs (most often POP programs), continued to provide some support services after graduation, including transportation, rental assistance, and career fairs.

Many site visit and focus group respondents felt that case management was a critical service provided by many grantees, especially among HHG and POP grantees. Case management services differed by grantee, but often involved a case manager (sometimes a job specialist) who would work with a participant early in their program tenure and identify services and pathways for them as they moved through the training curriculum. *Promising practices related to case management included having case managers act as allies for participants as they dealt with some of the more difficult aspects of the training.*

Job placement services were another service provided by most grantees, though in varying degrees. While few programs provided apprenticeships (32 percent), transitional jobs (13 percent) or mentorships (8 percent) during the training, most grantees worked with participants to link them to open jobs once they graduated. *To prepare them for these jobs, many programs with the aid of case managers or job developers held mock interviews, provided resume development, and linked participants with career fairs. A number focused on bolstering participants' "soft skills" as a means of increasing the likelihood of job retention once they found employment.* Both participants and program administrators saw these as promising practices that helped enable participants with little previous work experience become more acclimated to the working world.

Grantee administrators often reported that offering support services greatly contributed to the success of the programs. Support services were important in enabling participants to complete the training, as many did not have other sources of income to allow them to support themselves. *Very few challenges were reported in the provision of these support services, though some grantees had to allocate more funding to them as a result of the needs of their participants and the weak economy.* As one grantee noted, support services helped its program identify some of the underlying problems that many of these participants faced and helped case managers effectively deal with them early in the program. *In fact, this was often quoted as a lesson learned by grantees – the need to identify barriers facing participants early in the program and tailor services to mitigate their effects.* It might be that the relatively low attrition rates identified by most of the grantees, plausibly one of the more notable successes of these programs, were a result of the support services provided.

8.7   Certificates

One of the key achievements of these grant programs was the award of certificates to participants who completed training. The provision of credentials was a requirement of all four SGAs. Because of the relatively short timeframes for the grant programs, grantees often targeted training toward providing participants with employer-recognized certificates to help

them gain employment. More than three-quarters (77 percent) of program administrators noted that the allocation of training certifications and credentials to program participants had been the most effective part of their training program, second only to training completion (94 percent) and far greater than job placement (noted by 29 percent), job retention (23 percent), and participant earnings (21 percent). Provision of these credentials and certificates may help explain why 95 percent of program administrators noted that their training helped participants enter a career pathway that allowed for future advancement.

The certificates and credentials awarded by the various programs were often determined in concert between the grantee and industry employers. Training programs frequently worked with employers prior to the start of the program to determine what types of certificates or credentials participants should strive to receive as a result of going through the training. This is why more than 92 percent of survey respondents reported that their training program resulted in industry-recognized certificates or credentials.

The credentials and certificates awarded were typically focused on the industries for which participants were trained. For example, many of the POP and ETP trainees received OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and First Aid certificates, because this was a requirement for many construction and retrofit jobs. Many SESP and ETP grantee participants received LED certifications as a result of their program's focus on the green economy. Many HHG participants received LON, MET, and health IT certificates as a result of their focus on the healthcare industry. ***The ability to link participants with the right types of certificates or credentials as a result of the communication and partnerships between the programs and the employers was seen by many as a promising practice.***

Often participants earned multiple credentials and certificates that allowed them to work in a variety of settings. The survey data supported this observation, showing that 77 percent of programs had training that resulted in stackable certifications and credentials. In addition, nearly 89 percent of the training programs resulted in certifications and credentials that were portable. Exhibits 53 and 54 present the percent of respondents that reported providing stackable and portable certifications by grant program respectively.

Exhibit 53: Stackable Certifications/Credentials for All Programs

Does the Training Result in Stackable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	75	75	86	76	77
No	21	25	14	21	20

Exhibit 54: Portable Certifications/Credentials for All Programs

Does the Training Result in Portable Certifications or Credentials?	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Yes	92	81	100	86	89
No	4	13	0	10	7

Grantees felt that providing portable and stackable certifications and credentials was a promising practice and a highlight of the foresight and planning undertaken between administrators and employers to ensure program success. Similarly, grantees often noted that the award of so many certifications and credentials as being a promising practice and a demonstrated success of the partnerships established.

Several challenges and lessons learned were also seen within this aspect of the grantee programs. Due to the weakening economy, several grantees had to modify their training programs and the certificates and credentials they awarded during the program itself. No matter how much planning was done or projections developed, the harshness of the economic realities necessitated changes in the provision of certificates and credentials. Other challenges with the provision of these certifications and credentials were aligning them with the grant program itself. While a number of the certificates and credentials could be awarded in a relatively quick time period with flexible start-up and end-dates, others required an alignment with an academic calendar. The delays in start-up times for many of these programs often made it difficult for programs to coordinate their training schedules. For example, many HHG grantees included nursing components, which needed to be aligned with the school year – a problem for many programs. In addition, many nursing programs require pre-requisite courses, which could lengthen the training program to three or more years, timing that the grant programs could not accommodate. As a result, providing LPN or RN certifications was quite difficult.

8.8   Partnerships

Critical to the functioning of almost every grantee were the partnerships they established before and during the programs. They worked with a partner, often several, who helped deliver the training, support services, management, and/or curriculum for the respective programs. Grantees worked with the following types of partners: WIBs, employers, labor unions, local and state governments, universities, CBOs, industry associations, support service providers, non-profits, trade associations, and several others who were critical to the performance of these grantees. Partnerships were required by all four of the SGAs.

Such partnerships were rarely developed specifically for these grants, however. ***Grantees noted that utilizing preexisting relationships was a promising practice and that doing so helped to facilitate lines of communication among program partners***. Many grantees noted longstanding preexisting relationships with several of their grant partners, especially education and training providers, employers, and CBOs that enabled them to smoothly transition into the grant

programs. The majority of grantees developed Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with WIBs, education and training providers, and employers to help solidify their relationships with them.

The longstanding relationships with partners proved critical in several facets of the grant programs. The survey data in the preceding chapters show that many partners (especially employers, education and training providers, and WIBs) were critical in developing the curriculum, carrying out the training, recruiting participants, and engaging in several other key program activities. The size of the roles played by each of these partners differed by grantee type. ETP programs were far more likely to rely on labor unions than other grant programs, for example, whereas SESP programs were more likely than other grantee types to rely on state or local governments owing to the fact that they were state energy sector programs.

Employers and education and training providers were commonly very involved partners helping, as noted, to develop curricula, conduct training, and manage programs.   For example, employers were often critical in helping to select the occupations for which to train participants and identify the certifications and credentials program participants needed to succeed. *Many programs actually brought employers into the curriculum planning phase, which was often noted as being as a promising practice.* In addition, grantees involved employers in screening potential participants for acceptance to the grant programs, helping to gauge the ability of such individuals to succeed. One lesson learned from these employer partnerships was that *establishing commitments from employers to hire participants as part of the grant planning and start-up phase was quite helpful for many programs*.

Grantees also viewed education and training providers as critical partners. Grantees often tasked these partners with providing the actual training for many of the programs, as the grant administrators were rarely capable of this. In addition, since many programs relied on existing curricula to carry out their training, these providers were important sources of the requisite information. Finally, many of these providers were seen as critical in recruiting participants for the program.

Several challenges emanated from these partnerships. One challenge was getting partners to agree to sublimate some of their goals to that of the team as a whole and understand their exact role within the grant program. This often required finesse on the part of the grant administrator. Also, some partners did not end up as essential to a given grant as initially anticipated. For example, a number of grantees noted that the WIBs in their area did not play as strong a role in recruiting participants or linking them to support services as had been initially anticipated.

8.9   Program Management

Grantees used several different management techniques to enhance the success of their programs, often making significant changes during the grant period. Among the four grantee programs, several different management techniques were used to ensure success. For example,

most grantees held regular meetings and communication with their various partners to help ensure the programs ran smoothly. In addition, a majority of grantees (83 percent) conducted surveys or focus groups with employers to use as input in making programmatic changes.

Some grantees had specific individuals assigned to manage the grant and facilitate the administration of several facets of the program, something seen by many as a promising practice. These individuals would collect data from partners, ensure that trainings ran smoothly and that wraparound services were provided to participants. Indeed, grantees believed that the division of labor within these grant programs was critical to their success. *Many programs divided activities among key members within the grantee organization and various partners to ensure that the programs ran as smoothly as possible.* This required close coordination between various partners, which grantees viewed as a promising practice. *Another promising practice developed by many grantees was the establishment of feedback loops that promoted accountability among program participants, grant staff, and partners, and allowed the programs to make updates.*

As a result of the close coordination with partners, a critical management technique was leveraging resources from these organizations. Exhibit 55 presents the most common leveraged resources offered by partners. Due to constraints in space, budget, and knowledge, a majority of grantees relied on partners to provide critical services, including training facilities and space (82 percent), training equipment and materials (78 percent), instructors and trainers (68 percent), the training curriculum (68 percent), and supportive services (55 percent). Other types of leveraged resources included case management services and food banks. Grantees indicated that leveraging these various services was a promising practice, as grantees were able to not only strengthen their partnerships, but also provide additional services to participants without expending extra grant funds.

Exhibit 55: Most Common Leveraged Resources Offered by Partners

Leveraged Resources Provided by Partners	Percent of POP Grantees	Percent of ETP Grantees	Percent of SESP Grantees	Percent of HHG Grantees	Percent of Grantees Overall
Training Equipment/Materials	92	88	86	71	**92**
Training Facilities/Space	88	88	81	76	**88**
Supportive Services	75	56	38	50	**75**
Training Curriculum	63	69	71	64	**63**
Instructors/ Trainers	54	88	71	64	**68**

Though many grantees had very strong management techniques, many faced a number of challenges in managing their programs, especially around program start-up. *A majority of grantees (75 percent) reported that the original period of performance for the grant was not enough to implement their program.* For many grantees, the training start date did not align with the program start date, especially if the program worked on the academic calendar. Grantees noted that delays in hiring the staff needed to ensure their programs ran smoothly. Others mentioned difficulties recruiting the right type of partners and then developing the

training curriculum along with them. These challenges contributed to delaying many programs and to a number of grantees requesting extensions to their original timeframes.

Many grantees overcame some of these challenges by developing close lines of communications with their partners and making mid-stream adjustments to facilitate better outcomes, usually after communicating with partners and program participants. Many grantees noted economic challenges facing job placement and retention for their graduating participants and often shifted their trainings toward occupations for which employers were hiring – often in consultation with these employers. Indeed, many grantees began to build stronger partnerships with employers as a result of the weakening economy. Others responded to the weaker economy by changing their training programs to be more hands-on. Still others changed the timing of their programs to accommodate as many participants as possible, especially incumbent workers. Another change was to alter recruitment efforts to present more realistic outcomes. In addition, some grantees increased the amount of supportive services offered to participants to reduce attrition. These adjustments demonstrate that grantees were willing and able to make changes to their programs during the grant period as they adapted to economic, social, and administrative realities.

8.10 Sustainability

Though many grant programs have ended and more are ending shortly, many grantees have developed sustainability plans or are in the process of doing so. According to the survey results, 22 percent had developed a sustainability plan at the time the survey was taken (Spring 2012), while another 54 percent were in the process of doing so. It should also be noted that many of the grant programs are still active, thus will still have an opportunity to develop a plan (which was required by both the ETP and SESP SGAs). As a result, more than three-quarters of programs said they would seek to sustain their programs after DOL funding ends. ETP grantees were the most likely to have developed a sustainability plan, possibly because of the relatively heavy union involvement, which allowed for the easy transfer of their partnerships and curricula to existing worksites and partnerships.

Grantees that did plan to sustain their training programs noted that they would likely keep their job training (83 percent), job placement services (64 percent), and participant recruitment (52 percent). *Many said they would be able to continue these services because of the partnerships they had established and the training programs they had developed. Indeed, many grantees saw these partnerships and the relationships that had been developed as critical for the future management of their organizations as a whole*. The survey data confirm that many partners were critical to sustaining the program, with WIBs, education and training providers, and employers the most involved in developing the sustainability plan.

For those grantees that looked to sustain their grant program activities, the most likely sources of future funding were state or local governments (44 percent), employers (28 percent), and the Federal government (26 percent). Fewer looked to unions (12 percent) or foundations (9 percent) to sustain their programs or mentioned other sources of support.

The fact that most grantees have either developed a sustainability plan or have plans to develop one is likely due not only to the SGA requirement to develop one, but may also be a testament to the efficacy of their programs. While many grantees have not secured future funding, it does appear that some aspects of many of these grant programs will continue. The partnerships and training developed for the grant programs will also likely be critical in sustaining these programs.

8.11   Lessons Learned

Based on discussions with the grantees, as well as extensive review of survey, interview, and focus group information, a number of lessons learned emerged for DOL when considering future grant programs similar to the grants examined as part of this study. Many of these lessons learned were developed through examining how grantees addressed the challenges encountered during grant implementation and the methods grantees used in overcoming them. These lessons learned provide guidance in grant implementation and oversight for future programs.

Extend the Grant Period of Performance. The four grant programs examined in the study were funded through the ARRA, which required expenditures of grant funds in a specified period. However, due to this restriction, many grantees, faced challenges associated with the relatively short grant period of performance (24 or 36 months), as it frequently took considerable time to get the grant program up and running and to establish the necessary relationships with partner organizations.

Align Grant Training Goals with State/Local Initiatives. Many grantees reported advantages to aligning their programs with state/local initiatives. This alignment helped to improve efficiency and reduce duplication across a range of implementation aspects including program design and communicating program concepts to stakeholders. Encouraging grant programs to work in alignment with state/local initiatives whenever possible may help to increase the reach of similar grant programs in the future.

Address Multiple Factors in the Applicant Screening Processes. In addition to screening participants for academic preparation, respondents noted the value of screening participants for motivation to complete the training. Respondents reported that the provision of very detailed information about the demands of the program helped to identify participants that were motivated to complete the program. Encouraging grant programs to implement screening processes that account for motivation to complete, as well as capability to complete, may help to improve retention rates in future grant programs.

Use/Build on Pre-existing Training Programs. Respondents from grants that used existing training programs or modified versions of the existing training programs reported that they saved both start-up time and money. Many respondents whose programs developed new training curricula reported creating training curriculum from scratch resulted in delays to the

start-up and delivery of the training. For grants with a relatively short period of performance, requiring future training grant programs to start with an existing training program might allow programs to start training earlier in the implementation period and therefore provide training for a longer period.

Seek Industry Input on Designing the Training Programs to Be Provided by the Grant Program. Many respondents reported the value of involving employers and other industry representatives in the design training curricula. Requiring future grantees to seek industry input will help to increase the likelihood that employer needs will be met by participants that complete the training program.

Design Training Programs to Mirror Real World Work Experiences. Both grantees and focus group respondents reported that training programs that incorporate actual work experiences were valuable because they better prepared participants to complete tasks as required by an employer. Requiring grant programs to include opportunities for trainees to receive real world work experiences would likely better prepare them for future jobs and may make them more desirable to employers.

Combine Soft-Skills Training with Technical Training. Grantees reported that incorporating soft-skills training into the technical training program was beneficial to program participants because it allowed participants to see how soft-skills can be applied on the job. While soft-skills training may be a common promising practice among many training programs, DOL may want to require future grant programs to integrate soft-skills training with the technical training being provided.

Offer Training Programs Which Are Flexible in Meeting Participant Needs. Flexible training programs that accommodate the unique needs of participants were reported by grantees to be beneficial to participants. Respondents reported that designing training programs that were flexible in terms of schedule, pace, location and skill levels were beneficial for participant skill attainment and for reducing attrition. Requiring future grantees to create flexible training programs that are customized to address the challenges faced by the populations being served may increase retention and graduation rates.

Utilize Pre-existing Partner Relationships. Similar to the suggestion presented above regarding training, many respondents reported that working with partners with whom they have a had previous working relationship contributed to the efficiency of grant implementation. Pre-existing partner relationships appear to cut down on the need for grant administrators to establish communication plans and provide technical assistance. Requiring future grant administrators to identify partners with whom they have had positive pre-existing relationships would likely limit the amount of up-front administrative time spent working with partners – especially for grants with shorter periods of performance.

Allow Grantees the Opportunity to Make Mid-Stream Program Adjustments. Another lesson learned emerged from challenges grantees faced in making program adjustments. As

mentioned, many grantees had to adjust their programs due to economic challenges, problems with partners, and other instances in which unexpected events occurred in order to improve the delivery of training and/or the likelihood of participants being placed in jobs. While these adjustments were typically made early on in grant implementation, adjustments were reported to have been made throughout the life of the program and were seen by grantees as helping to improve the outcomes achieved by the grant.