L.A. RISE
Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise

Transcript of Webinar

YouthBuild Webinar Series

Meet the Workforce Innovation Fund Round Two Grantees:
Grant Project Presentations

Wednesday, February 17, 2016
DONNY BROOKS: Hi. Good morning. Thank you, Rachel. So my name is Donny Brooks. I'm representing the City of Los Angeles, the Economic and Workforce Development Department, and my title is project coordinator.

ASHLEY CORDERO: Hi, everyone. My name is Ashley Cordero, and I work for REDF. I'm the initiatives manager there, and I work with Donny on coordinating the project here in Los Angeles.

MR. BROOKS: So the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board is the grantee. Through the arrangement with the City of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department provides administrative and fiscal support to the workforce development board. So we applied for the WIF round two on behalf of the board and partnered with REDF. And I want Ashley to tell you a little bit about REDF.

MS. CORDERO: So the City brought REDF on board because, as an organization, we work as an intermediary non-profit to fund and provide technical assistance to social enterprises. And we define social enterprise as a non-profit organization with a revenue driving arm that provides workforce opportunities to those who've been typically hard to employ, people who have been homeless or incarcerated, opportunity youth. And so because we had expertise in this area, the City brought us on to help coordinate the project and really provide the perspective of social enterprise when integrating with the workforce system.

MR. BROOKS: So we applied for the WIF round two at the $6 million level, and it was a randomized control trial evaluation type. Our third-party contractor for evaluation is Social Policy Research Associates, and they're also our round one evaluator. So it was good to have a partner who's had experience doing this type of evaluation.

MS. CORDERO: So L.A. RISE is the title of our project, and it stands for the Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise. And the core of our project is to look at how to integrate social enterprises into the workforce system. So typically Los Angeles has focused on employing individuals who are typically hard to serve, but they're still very hard to place. So we wanted to look at how we could increase the outcomes for that population. So we're looking at integrating the transitional job program at social enterprises with the services that workforce centers or America's job centers, wherever you're located, offer to those individuals.

We also developed a strong retention services program so that once an individual leaves their transitional job and is placed into second stage employment, they're strongly supported with a case manager at a non-profit partner, financial incentives to reward their employment milestones, and really assessing them on a soft skills job readiness to ensure that they're ready for that second stage employment.

We're also working on building an employment pipeline identifying employers that we're calling bridge employers, employers that maybe have a little bit more understanding for this type of population. Their management style might be a little bit more lax. They have more open communication and more lenient fire and review processes to really support these types of individuals.
To engage these employers we're tapping into the on-the-job training funds and increasing that integration with the workforce system. We're hoping that all three of these main innovation points are going to increase sustained employment for these job seekers while reducing turnover costs for these types of employers.

**MR. BROOKS:** So here we have a customer flow chart. So we take a person through who's unemployed into a transitional social enterprise experience, move them to bridge employment or mainstream employment.

So I wanted to give you just a quick example of how that would work. John, who had been previously incarcerated, starts his transitional work experience at Chrysalis Social Enterprise. He is co-enrolled with Goodwill WorkSource Center. Through a co-case management he receives personal supports like counseling and job readiness supports like uniform and bus passes. He is on the street maintenance crew developing the soft skills necessary to transition to next stage employment.

Goodwill WorkSource Center identifies the job opportunity at bridge employer Isidore Recycling and offers him OJT support. John is hired and connected with personal support provider friends outside who continues to provide retention services like financial incentives as he starts the next stage of his life.

So a lot of our key components that we have co-enrollment into WIOA or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, paid work experience with the social enterprises. We have a job readiness assessment that we developed with the input of the employers, common case management through our JobsLA.org system, and that's managed online.

We have retention services program, and we have a customer relations management system that's in development that will allow our employers to post job orders and allow all of our One-Stop partners to access these job leads and match them up with participants.

**MS. CORDERO:** So as you can see from that flow chart and the example that Donny just gave us, there's a lot of partners involved in L.A. RISE, and we have defined them here for you just to kind of give some illustration of what we mean. So we start with our social enterprise partners, and this is the point of intake for our participants. This is the first organization that they come into contact with.

So like the example that Donny gave, an individual would come to a social enterprise looking for work. They're declaring themselves job ready. They want to get back into the workforce, but they have a lot of barriers prohibiting them from just going and accessing any other job. So the social enterprise, they receive a lot of supports both in their personal life but also giving them real life work experience.

Our social enterprises range from small businesses like Downtown Women's Center retail store to larger organizations like Goodwill SoCal where they provide janitorial and retail training and
job placement. Some other industries that our social enterprises run are maintenance crews, conservation work here in L.A., construction, and painting.

Our workforce partners are integral to L.A. RISE. They serve as the backbone for participants, and they have the most consistent touch point with them. So an individual is co-enrolled into WIOA about a week into their time into their work at the social enterprise, and they are there to really provide job readiness and placement support for the individual.

Once someone leaves the social enterprise they're connected with a personal support provider. This is our retention support organization. So they work with someone once they leave the social enterprise to make sure that they are continuously supported in that second stage of employment.

And bridge employers are these organizations that we've identified who are a little bit more understanding and are open to hiring from our target population. You'll see some names that maybe you recognize like Whole Foods to some smaller businesses here in Los Angeles like Isidore Recycling.

MR. BROOKS: For our outcomes for the project we have transitional job training and we set that at a minimum of 300 hours and that's subsidized employment. We have enrollment into WIOA and increased placement into bridge or competitive employment, increased retention into bridge – sorry. Increased participants life stability. So our outcome we want – we're recruiting 1,000 where 500 are going into the program group, 500 into the control group. And we are excited to provide these opportunities to these participants.

MS. CORDERO: So we're really excited to see the integration of social enterprise and WorkSource centers because they're actually sharing a lot of their resources both in terms of staff time but also their budget, splitting things like supportive services like bus passes and uniforms. We are really working to creating a client choice system. So for the first time ever in Los Angeles we're allowing participants to transfer from one WorkSource center to another so that they can participate in the L.A. RISE program.

We also recently implemented a more efficient monitoring process that is specific to each type of organization to limit the burden both on the participant and the organization itself. And we're really excited about our job readiness assessment tool which is consistent across all six social enterprises to provide quality and consistent referrals to our employment partners.

MR. BROOKS: So our challenges, this is about system integration, which is our innovation and also our challenge. So we're utilizing the state's WIOA tracking system right now, which gives us access to all the data. We are finding some limitations with the system tracking the L.A. RISE data, but we've created a separate L.A. RISE generic module within the Jobs L.A. system. So we're pioneering that effort, and hopefully it will pave the way for future grants that the city receives and allow us to track them through an integrated means. So we're excited about that.

Also ensuring that our partners adhere to the programmatic design is key. REDF is the ones who are responsible for helping to facilitate all the technical assistance. And we'd also like to hear
about business engagement software or business customer service from the other grantees. Thank you.

MS. CORDERO: Thank you, guys.