Best Practices and Participant Outcomes from the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Initiative

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PRE-CON: Improving Employment Outcomes: Exploring Research, Funding and Approaches that Work
National Alliance to End Homelessness Annual Conference 2015
Background: Family Homelessness in Massachusetts

On April 30, 2015, the total EA caseload was 4,524 families. 1,317 (29%) of these families were in hotels/motels.
Background: HomeBASE

- Rapid Re-housing Program launched August 2011
- Financial support + stabilization services
- 2 types of support:
  - Rental Assistance (24 months) – discontinued Spring 2012
  - Household Assistance ($4,000, increased to $6,000 9/2013 and $8,000 for FY 16)
- Possibility to switch to Household Assistance after 2 years of Rental Assistance (instituted in Sept. 2013)
- About 6,000 families participated in the rental assistance program
The Massachusetts Secure Jobs Initiative

Began in January 2013 as a demonstration project to build and pilot a coordinated service system to link homeless families with the resources required to enter the workforce.

**Goal:**
- To help 500 HomeBASE families connect to training and/or employment and achieve housing stability

**Vision:** System Change

**Drivers:** Philanthropy/State Agencies/Housing and Employment Service Providers

**Expectations:**
- Outcome-driven: 80% placed in jobs in first year, 80% retention after one year
- Identify those most “ready, willing and able”
- Identify and address barriers
- Create individualized employment plan
- Employer and child care partners in place
- Advisory board
- Support participants for 1 year after first placement
- Collect participant data

**Evaluation**
- Multi-method: process and outcome
- Collaborative, inclusive of all voices
Secure Jobs Timeline

- **HomeBASE launched** 8/11
- **Fireman issues planning grant** 7/11
- **Fireman issues RFP to fund three Secure Jobs sites** 9/12
- **Western Mass launch** 2/13
- **IASP releases Process Evaluation Report** 10/13
- **Framingham launch** 7/14
- **Worcester launch** 1/15
- **Seven sites deliver reports** 3/12
- **Secure Jobs launches in Lowell, Boston and Brockton** 1/13
- **Secure Jobs launches in Fall River** 4/13
- **IASP releases Phase One Outcomes Report** 11/14
- **DHCD takes over administration of Secure Jobs** 5/14
- **IASP releases Phase Two Implementation Report** 5/15

Secure Jobs Phase 1 (1/1/2013-4/30/2014)
Secure Jobs Phase I: Five sites across Massachusetts
Partnership Model

Key elements for effective functioning

• Regular communications between partners at every level

• Active facilitator who
  – Ensures partner’s alignment to goals
  – Maintains communication/brokers relationships among all partners
Three Tracks

• **Job readiness**
  – Practical skills:
    • Writing resume and cover letter/Interviewing skills/mock interviewing
  – Soft skills:
    • Communication skills (interact with customers; ability to work in a team, get along with coworkers);
    • Motivation and enthusiasm; punctuality;
    • Ability to follow directions and take orders from supervisors without taking offense
  – Career assessment (not all)
  – Local labor market research (few)

• **Skills Training (short-term)**
  – Through training partners (e.g. community college, vocational high schools, Red Cross, childcare trainings, Commercial Driver's License training vendors)

• **Job search**
  – In-house job development
  – One-Stop Career Center
## Training Programs

### Training Programs Completed by Secure Jobs Participants by Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Training</th>
<th>Technical Training</th>
<th>Services Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Seniors/Home Health Aide</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Clerical Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Borne Pathogens</td>
<td>Control Machinist</td>
<td>Cosmetology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Nurse’s Assistant (CNA)/CPR and First Aid</td>
<td>Electronic Assembly, Soldering and Inspection</td>
<td>CVS Customer Service Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Administration</td>
<td>Precision Machinist</td>
<td>Safe Food Preparation (ServSafe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)</td>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>Early Childhood Teacher Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy Tech</td>
<td>Automotive (mechanic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlebotomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Over 25% of Secure Jobs Participants completed a training program
- Two-thirds of them from 2 sites that partnered with training providers to create classes specifically for SJ participants
Lessons Learned: Best Practice

• Working partnerships
  – Effective leadership by funder
    ▪ Regular convening institutionalized practice
  – Committed partners
    ▪ Invested training/employer partners

• Shared case management
  – Regular case management meetings between housing and workforce staff

We learned on the monthly phone call that [another site] switched from individual to group assessments and we decided to make the same change. This move has been very successful: It has helped us to target work-ready families more effectively.
  (Site Coordinator)

It’s a partnership by design. Not just a program we’ve heard about and are referring people to. It’s easier to refer people if you know you can follow up in the next meeting. In other programs, we feel like we send a referral into the abyss and just hope for the best. (Housing Staff).
Lessons Learned: Best Practice cont.

• **Link with One-Stop Career Centers**
  - Benefit from resources
  - Support needed for SJ participants to navigate
    * SJ office at career center
    * Shared SJ/career center staff
    * Job readiness training

• **Flexible funds**

  The partnership that has been most successful has been the with the Career Center. The staff works one-on-one with the SJ participants on how to job search, complete resumes and cover letters. They build relationships with the participants and connect them to their employer partners for an appropriate job placements (Site Coordinator).

Now I have money, which is great, because I did this job for years with no funding, and you get to a certain point where if someone needed training, I couldn’t assist, I could try to find them funding, try to ask internally or outside organizations that may help with certain things, but it was it was a road block. So now here’s the road’s empty, its open and I can go wherever I want to go. I am really excited about that (Site coordinator).
## Flexible Funds

### Flexible Funds Uses and Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Purpose</th>
<th>$ Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNA, CMA, LPM, EMT etc. Licensure Exam</td>
<td>$93-$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HiSet (formerly GED) exam</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks for Home Health Aide training course</td>
<td>$117-$197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB test to enroll in CNA course</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrubs, shoes and watch for health care job</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel-toed boots for warehouse job</td>
<td>$47.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair styling for interview</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMV fee to reinstate driver’s license</td>
<td>$50-$95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas card to get to work for first 2 weeks</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Enrollment Phase I and Participant Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anticipated</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Mass</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrimack Valley</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shore</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>536</strong></td>
<td><strong>554</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Household</th>
<th>Secure Jobs</th>
<th>MA EA Families at Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (mean)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &lt;30</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Family Size</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &lt;6</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School or more</strong></td>
<td><strong>83% ~ 70%</strong></td>
<td>(HomeBASE only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income at EA entry</td>
<td>$807</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed at EA entry</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORI</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Does not include partnered with category.
Housing Background

Housing before HomeBASE
- One-third (34%) from shelter/motel
- One-third (35%) doubled up
- 20% rental with subsidy
- 9% rental no subsidy

HomeBASE subsidy
- 79% rental
- Over 90% among 3 sites
Phase I: Preliminary Employment Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Results</th>
<th>As of April 30, 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newly Employed</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Wage in New Job</td>
<td>$11.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average # Hours Worked</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Employment (35 hours +)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Work Related Benefits</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Wage Increase</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Increase in Hours</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wage increases over previously held jobs were small, but statistically significant
- New jobs offered more hours of work
- About one third of new jobs provided benefits (32% vacation, 25% health insurance, 11% retirement)
- Workers with early access to employment after enrollment were more likely to be employed one year after placement

Key Employer Sectors

- Healthcare & Educational Services 33%
- Accommodation & Food Services 15%
- Professional/ Business Services 13%
- Other Svcs 6%
- Other Non-Svc 17%
- Retail Trade 16%
Phase I: Preliminary Housing Outcomes (as of April 2015)

- The majority (~75%) of HomeBASE rental participants transitioned to household assistance
- Housing Vouchers 14%
- Market Rate 17%
- Shelter post HomeBASE exit:
  - 8% of Phase 1 participants as of May 1, 2015
  - Compares favorably to entire HomeBASE cohort of which over 20% returned to shelter
Different from Previous Programs
I think they help you more realistically than those [other employment] programs do. ... [Secure Jobs] will actually fund something that you want to do. Like they funded my [certification] test... And they’ll help you with transportation, like giving you bus passes and stuff like that. I feel like it’s a more realistic approach.

Consistent Support
Every day when you call [SJ staff] and you’re down and out, all you can hear yourself say is ‘I can’t. I can’t. I can’t find a babysitter. I can’t get a car. I can’t get to a computer.’ They said ‘Yes, you can do this’ and ‘Yes, you can do that’.

Addressing Barriers
I had an issue, ... it’s something from seven years ago, and it came up on the ... I’ve been a CNA for a long time, ... it was a wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time thing, still, it was like a red flag with people. So I was going on interviews and interviews and interviews, and they’re doing my CORIs and I was not getting the jobs... I mean I was at the career center every day for like the maximum time on the computers... I was utilizing everything I could. The employment specialists were absolutely fabulous [coached me to be honest]. ... I interviewed [with employer partner]. At the end of the interview I’d kind of build my rapport with the people, I told them: “Listen, there’s something on my record, it’s from a long time ago”. I was honest about it, and then I ended up getting the job.

Impatient with the Process
But I was there [in SJ] for a long time and it felt like nothing was happening. I’m not going to lie, I was mad. I stopped going a couple times too.... But I got a job out of it. So it was worth it.

Alignment between Housing and Employment
They should have started earlier. Because that would have given people a chance to finish the program, find a job that had adequate money to be able to be out on your own and maybe pay market rent, or maybe with a roommate or something, try to figure something out. But people are not even finishing their – not even being able to finish this course, and now they’re losing their HomeBASE, so now they’re, like she said, they’re like “what do I do now?"
Questions?

- For more information, please go to http://iasp.brandeis.edu/research/Housing.html
- Contact Information
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