

Workforce Development Research Project - Quarterly Update

January 2025

Learning Community

- The Learning Community has continued to meet monthly with presentations from each program and a range of program-related conversation.
- Most recently the LC has experimented with dedicating the last 20 minutes of the meeting for program staff to meet alone with each other as a way to speak candidly and build rapport without the presence of the research team. If program staff wish to continue to meet alone, we will set aside time at every other LC meeting. Program staff are encouraged to share with the UMaine research team any suggestions or takeaways from their 20 minute sessions.
- At the upcoming LC January 2025 meeting, AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager, Ariel Brown, will address the group to discuss resources and options for messaging workforce development opportunities to older adults.
- Due to program staff responsibilities and preference for email communication, use of the online LC platform continues to be a challenge for program staff. The platform will remain open for [monthly poll questions](#) and access to resources.

Advisory Committee

- The AC met on December 17, 2024. After a brief review of updates from the HAP Foundation site visit and the status of the partner survey that had recently launched, there was extended discussion the participant survey preliminary findings including program participant profile data.
- The project team updated the AC on its upcoming American Society on Aging conference presentation in April 2025, for which the project team will partner with the HAP Foundation. The team elicited ideas from the AC for other national and state conferences for WFD research presentations. The AC is encouraged to keep sending ideas for research dissemination activities at national and regional venues.
- As always, we are interested in the professional WFD-related scholarship of the AC members. They are asked to share with us your papers, reports, interviews, and other material of interest to the project.

Research Activities

- The participant survey is complete and the remaining paper surveys have trickled in. At current count, we have 128 survey responses. Survey responses and rates vary across the seven programs.
- The project team is first compiling the descriptives and will then compile a list of cross-tabulations for analysis. Notable demographics include the following: 70% of respondents were women; 63% self-described their health as excellent or very good; respondents were almost equally either married, divorced, or never married, versus only 11% were widowed; respondent education varied: 30% had some college, 25% had a bachelor's degree, 19% had a master's degree, and 15% had a high school diploma or GED.
- The team is also coding the qualitative data including the site visit interviews and focus groups, the program staff annual interviews, and the open-ended responses in the participant survey.
- The partner organization survey is currently underway and will remain open until the end of January. This is the survey of each WFD program's trainers, volunteers sites, and employment sites.

Site Visits

- The project team is starting to plan for the three site visits it will conduct in 2025. It will visit the two New York programs that were part of the first round of AmeriCorps WFD funding and will therefore be in their 3rd project year in 2025.
- The final site visit is yet undetermined. The project team will work with the remaining four programs to determine which feels ready for a site visit based on their program implementation progress.
- The project team has learned that more pre-site visit preparation is helpful to minimizing the burdens on the program staff. For 2025 site visits, the project team will schedule a series of pre-site visit planning meetings.

Contact Project Director, Mary Lou Ciolfi, with any questions, comments, or requests
marylou.ciolfi@maine.edu