

Workforce Development Research Project - Quarterly Update

April 2025

Learning Community

- The Learning Community (LC) continues to meet monthly. In addition to ongoing updates from the programs we now include short presentations from project Advisory Committee (AC) members. David Crippens presented in February on his experiences with the City of Los Angeles workforce development efforts and the impact of the LA fires. AC member, Robert Sainz, presented to the group on March 31st and highlighted the ongoing efforts for reauthorization of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These presentations are an opportunity to more widely share the expertise and experiences of our AC.
- The research team updated the LC about current and future conference presentation opportunities, including at the AmeriCorps Seniors Convening later this summer.
- LC members discussed concerns about the future of research and programmatic opportunities as a result of federal funding and staffing cuts. Program leads depend on federal funding for their work and while they will move ahead as usual, there is clearly expressed uncertainty.

Advisory Committee

- The AC met on March 18, 2025, initially discussing updates from the AC members and then reviewing preliminary data analysis from the participant survey.
- We reviewed survey and qualitative findings on participant motivation and training experiences, both of which confirmed participants' desire for more learning, social opportunities, and contributing to one's community.
- The group discussed the interesting finding of the differences between the quantitative and qualitative data on the issue of participant motivations to join the program. Participants may be more willing to acknowledge financial needs in an anonymous survey than in a face-to-face focus group or interview setting.
- The group also briefly discussed expected impact from the federal government's shifted focus away from DEI related activities, programs, and funding.

Research Activities

- The research team is currently integrating the participant survey data and the coded qualitative data relative to the project's research questions and overarching PRISM model. We expect to have an interim report on the Year One data completed by May. Thus far, we have engaged with 236 people via survey or direct contact.
- We are starting analysis of the 35 partner organization surveys we have received to date.
- The research team and the HAP Foundation will present at this month's American Society on Aging conference in Orlando, FL and focus on early findings from the research and program perspectives.
- The team has also submitted two proposal abstracts for the AmeriCorps Seniors Summer Convening in late August, one for the research sessions and one for the general sessions. The general session proposal will include a panel of program leads from workforce development and RSVP programs supporting employment. Any WFD program leads are welcome to join the panel! We also submitted a session and a poster abstract for the Gerontological Society of America conference in November in Boston.

Site Visits

- The site visits conducted in Year One provided an important immersive perspective on the program design, implementation, and impact on program participants. They also offered an opportunity to build professional relationships with the program staff.
- The team is preparing for two site visits this spring: SilverCorps in New York City and Lifespan in upstate New York. NYC's SilverCorps program is large and spread out among the city's five boroughs. The team hopes to connect with at least 50 program participants and 8-10 community partners.
- We will conduct a third site visit in September at a program site TBD.

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