City of Seattle

Office of City Auditor

September 30, 2013

The Honorable Mike McGinn
Seattle City Councilmembers
City of Seattle
Seattle, Washington 98104

In the fall of 2012, the City Council adopted a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requesting that our office produce a series of reports on the Career Bridge program, and that we coordinate this effort with the two City departments that jointly manage the program – the Office of Economic Development (OED) and the Human Services Department (HSD). Career Bridge provides extremely disadvantaged individuals facing multiple barriers to employment with access to mentoring support, education and job readiness training, and the wrap-around social services they need (e.g., housing, childcare, transportation) to succeed as students and in the work force. We contracted with MEF Associates to produce the reports requested by the SLI. The first report was published on July 31, 2013. It evaluated the program's early implementation and assessed its fixed and scalable costs.

Attached is MEF Associates' second report on Career Bridge, containing the evaluation plan requested by the SLI. This plan can be used to evaluate the outcomes for Career Bridge's initial groups of participants. This plan includes a proposal to compare Career Bridge's outcomes with other programs that have similar program components.

We have also attached OED's and HSD's response to the second MEF Associates report.

Please contact Mary Denzel, the project manager of this evaluation (684-8158), or me (233-1095) if you have any questions about the report.

Sincerely,

David G. Jones

David G. Jones
City Auditor

Attachment

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Evaluation of Career Bridge

Evaluation Plan

Prepared for:

The City of Seattle – Office of City Auditor

Prepared by:

MEF Associates

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MEF Associates is conducting an evaluation of Career Bridge under a contract with the Office of City Auditor, City of Seattle (Contract Number: OCA 2013-03). The findings and conclusions in this report do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Office of City Auditor.

For more information about MEF Associates and our work, see our website: http://mefassociates.com/

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Overview

In MEF Associates' Preliminary Report analyzing the implementation of Career Bridge, we focused much of our efforts on describing an employment-focused theory of change along with an in-depth discussion of the additional goals of Career Bridge.[1] The Preliminary Report describes the basic components of the intervention as well as the program goals. We undertook this initial analysis with the understanding that we were evaluating a program in its early stages.

In this Evaluation Plan, we propose a study focused on capturing participant characteristics and outcomes and the degree to which they align with the logic model we presented in our Preliminary Report. We identify a relatively condensed list of program outputs and outcomes that could support a more robust understanding of program operations and that has the potential to support ongoing program improvement as Career Bridge moves toward a steadier operational status. We also discuss those areas where we found the existing data collection infrastructure to be lacking.

The evaluation will focus on questions in the following key areas:

- ***Participant characteristics***. What are the characteristics of the individuals being served by Career Bridge? Is the program serving the intended target population?
- ***Service delivery***. What services are Career Bridge participants receiving and at what level and intensity? To what extent do these services align with the program design? What challenges, if any, did the program encounter in service delivery and program management?
- ***Participant outcomes***. What are participant outcomes for key measures identified in the logic model? In particular, what successes have participants experienced in moving into career path jobs, including employment and education and training outcomes? To what degree is variation in these outcomes associated with different participant characteristics, level of services received, or extent of program participation? How do these outcomes compare to those of other interventions with similar program components?

We deliver this report at a time when there are still substantial unknowns regarding what the implementation of Career Bridge will look like in the coming year, making it difficult to fully specify an evaluation approach. Given our findings in the Preliminary Report, it is clear that continuing the status quo of program operations is unsustainable, even assuming no increase in service delivery targets. The Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) and the Human Services Department (HSD) have acknowledged as much and have already taken steps intended to expand program capacity and alter the service delivery model so it is better aligned with stated program goals and participant needs. However, the exact nature of these changes is still unclear. Additionally, differences remain between the employment-focused logic model we present in the preliminary report and the response to the Statement of Legislative Intent delivered by OED and HSD, which lays out a more expansive vision of the impact – at both the individual and community level – that Career Bridge can have.[2] We expect to clarify the approach we outline here following decisions by City Council regarding the funding of Career Bridge.

[1] Glosser, A. and Obara, E. *Evaluation of Career Bridge: Preliminary Report*. MEF Associates: prepared for the City of Seattle – Office of City Auditor. July 2013.

[2] Johnson, S., Lester, C., Hilliard, T., Kurose, M. and Yamamoto, N. *Response to Council SLI 120-1-A-1 – Career Bridge*. OED and HSD: prepared for the City of Seattle Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations Committee. July 2013.

I. Introduction

In MEF Associates' Preliminary Report analyzing the implementation of Career Bridge, we focused much of our efforts on describing an employment-focused theory of change along with an in-depth discussion of the additional goals of Career Bridge.[3] The Preliminary Report describes the basic components of the intervention as well as the program goals. We undertook this initial analysis with the understanding that we were evaluating a program in its early stages. While we used the report to lay the groundwork for an evaluation of Career Bridge that focuses on program operations as Career Bridge comes to scale, we placed a heavy emphasis on describing the current operational context. We also addressed the potential implications of our early findings for program expansion. The next step in the project is developing a plan for a more expansive evaluation that can speak more conclusively about the implementation of Career Bridge and key program outcomes. In this report, we describe our evaluation plan and the key outcomes we hope to use as the basis for such an evaluation. Our proposed approach places an increased emphasis on using quantitative data to assess program implementation and participant outcomes. Moreover, with a defined logic model, we are in a position to measure program success based on fidelity to the stated model.

Simultaneous to the release of the Preliminary Report, the Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) and the Human Services Department (HSD) delivered a response to a Statement of Legislative Intent that outlined plans for expansion of Career Bridge and a transition to service delivery by a Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO).[4] This report presented HSD and OED's understanding of the Career Bridge logic model and identified key program outcomes to be included in an annual reporting plan. While our primary focus in this report is clarifying an evaluation plan that allows us to measure program success based on the employment-focused theory of change we developed in the Preliminary Report, we have included a discussion of proposed OED and HSD measures as appropriate.

In this report, we propose a study focused on capturing participant characteristics and outcomes and the degree to which they align with the logic model we presented in our Preliminary Report. As we discuss in the Preliminary Report, the ideal would be an analysis that allowed us to present program outcomes in the context of a counterfactual. However, as we elaborate in this report, the current circumstances are such that this approach – an impact study – is not feasible. In lieu of an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation, we will focus on fidelity to the program model and the degree to which the model aligns with the existing evidence base.

While the Preliminary Report and the response to the Statement of Legislative Intent provide useful frameworks for thinking through an evaluation approach, there is still substantial uncertainty associated with the implementation of Career Bridge. The city's decision regarding selection of a CBDO to run the program may have substantial implications for the service delivery model and structure, the target population, the capacity to systematically collect relevant data, and the expansion of sponsorship capacity, which in turn impacts program enrollment. Our focus in this report is outlining a strategy that can support a thorough analysis of Career Bridge while supporting ongoing program management. However, the exact execution of the evaluation

[3] Glosser, A. and Obara, E. *Evaluation of Career Bridge: Preliminary Report*. MEF Associates: prepared for the City of Seattle – Office of City Auditor. July 2013.

[4] Johnson, S., Lester, C., Hilliard, T., Kurose, M. and Yamamoto, N. *Response to Council SLI 120-1-A-1 – Career Bridge*. OED and HSD: prepared for the City of Seattle Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations Committee. July 2013.

is contingent on the finalized program model and staffing and management decisions that the city makes.

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We begin this report by describing, generally, the value that an outcomes-focused study would provide to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and outlining key research questions. We then discuss the specific approach we anticipate taking in conducting this study and our proposed methods. That is followed by an in-depth discussion of the key measures that will provide the necessary data for our analysis. We conclude with a brief discussion of next steps. Additionally, we include an Appendix that addresses several of the outcome measures raised by OED and HSD that we do not include in our evaluation plan.

II. Study Design and Key Research Questions

Our goal is for the proposed evaluation approach to result in a deliverable that provides both policymakers and program management with insight as to the relative success of the implementation of Career Bridge. Ideally, we would be in a position to conduct an evaluation that conclusively assesses the impact of Career Bridge on key outcomes for the target population. However, as we note in the Preliminary Report, we do not believe that a rigorous impact study is either feasible or advisable.

Conducting an impact study – either through a randomized control trial or quasi-experimental study – requires a critical mass of program participants in order for the models to statistically detect anything but very large differences in the outcomes of the two groups. The current enrollment numbers do not indicate that an impact study would be a viable evaluation method.

In addition to concerns around sample size, Career Bridge remains an evolving endeavor. We raised substantial concerns with current program operations in our Preliminary Report – issues that both limit current program operations and suggest the need for substantial changes to meet increased enrollment targets. The Executive Branch's response to the Preliminary Report suggests that OED and HSD are considering options to stabilize and improve program operations. However, these efforts at improvement would be occurring concurrent with data collection for the proposed evaluation. Attempting a rigorous evaluation of what still amounts to a pilot program with an only somewhat defined service delivery structure does not represent a good use of project resources.

Although an impact study is not feasible for the final report due in July 2014, it may become possible in the future if enrollment were to increase enough to support an adequate sample size. In this case, several concerns need to be addressed. To conduct an impact study, we would need to compare the outcomes of Career Bridge to what would have happened in the absence of the intervention. The most rigorous method for making this comparison is through a randomized control trial. A program can randomly assign eligible individuals into one of two groups – a treatment group that receives the services and a control group that is not able to receive program services – comparing the outcomes of the two groups to estimate the impact of the intervention on two otherwise equal (at the aggregate level) groups. While this method allows evaluators to confidently attribute the differences in outcomes to the intervention (as opposed to observable or unobservable participant characteristics), random assignment evaluations necessitate a demand for services that exceeds program capacity, a program capacity level that allows sufficient sample enrollment to detect statistically significant effects, a willingness to randomly deny services to eligible applicants in service of research goals, and a data collection infrastructure that allows tracking of both program and non-program study participants. The current context of Career Bridge makes this approach difficult to implement, and we anticipate substantial resistance among stakeholders to any research effort that involves deprivation of services in order to create a control group.

The alternative method of conducting an impact study would be to attempt to find a similar comparison group and employ advanced statistical models to estimate the impact of the program by comparing outcomes between the groups. While these quasi-experimental models provide potentially compelling correlational data, they cannot speak directly to causality in the way that experimental approaches do. Specifically, they struggle to account for participant motivation and similarly intangible factors that may bias results. Statistical issues aside, we have not been able to identify a viable comparison group for which data are available. This is also complicated by uncertainty as to the ultimate groups that Career Bridge will target for services.

Instead, we propose a less rigorous but more adaptable approach that allows consistent data collection on core measures and also has greater potential to support ongoing program improvement as Career Bridge moves toward a steadier operational status.

The proposed approach will focus on program implementation and participant outcomes. The corresponding data collection strategy will facilitate quality data that characterize the experience of Career Bridge participants, the degree to which program participants experience outcomes that align with the stated theory of change, and the degree of the program's fidelity to the logic model.

The evaluation will focus on questions in the following key areas:

- ***Participant characteristics***. What are the characteristics of the individuals being served by Career Bridge? Is the program serving the intended target population?
- ***Service delivery***. What services are Career Bridge participants receiving and at what level and intensity? To what extent do these services align with the program design? What challenges, if any, did the program encounter in service delivery and program management?
- ***Participant outcomes***. What are participant outcomes for key measures identified in the logic model? In particular, what successes have participants experienced in moving into career path jobs, including employment and education and training outcomes? To what degree is variation in these outcomes associated with different participant characteristics, level of services received, or extent of program participation? How do these outcomes compare to those of other interventions with similar program components?

As we discuss in more detail in the subsequent section, this will be a primarily quantitative endeavor. However, we do anticipate using more qualitative approaches to further document program implementation, much as we did in the Preliminary Report. The combined approach will allow for a more detailed analysis of implementation that can support ongoing program improvement and subsequent decisions about program funding.

III. Methodology

The final report will be an assessment and evaluation of program implementation and outcomes; it will rely on more quantitative data sources than in the Preliminary Report, though it will also make use of qualitative data collection such as interviews with program staff, stakeholders, and participants. We propose tracking key outputs and outcomes that allow us to examine how closely Career Bridge services align with the program design and the corresponding theory of change.

A. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis will be a largely descriptive endeavor that will align with the three key areas we outline in the previous section. While the use of descriptive statistics does not allow us to assert causality, there are several benefits. Chiefly, they are easily understood by a wide audience; simple presentation of descriptive statistics will provide readers with a picture of who the program serves, what services participants receive, and how the program performed on key outcomes. Our proposed approach also has the benefit of serving as a diagnostic tool that program management and policymakers can use to assess Career Bridge performance on an ongoing basis. To the extent allowed by the Management Information System (MIS) that OED and HSD identify to track Career Bridge data, descriptive statistics can provide real time insight as to whether or not the program is providing services as intended. This is particularly valuable for nearer-term output measures that document steps the program can take that should logically lead to positive outcomes. Additionally, we will discuss Career Bridge outcomes in the context of findings from research of other programs with similar goals and service delivery structures.

The data analysis will describe the characteristics of the participants being served as in the Preliminary Report in order to determine if the program is serving the intended target population. In addition, participant characteristics may be used as an analytical tool to allow us to see how these characteristics are associated with key outcomes. The participation data will document services Career Bridge is delivering to program participants, focusing on employment services, education and training, sponsorship and mentoring services, and supportive services. We will explore participant outcomes related to key program goals identified in the logic model, focusing on job placement, employment retention and advancement, wages, and education and training.

We will explore ways to talk about differential outcomes for various subgroups. Along with OED and HSD's stated desire to expand services beyond the current target population, there may be reason to believe that program outcomes will differ based on participant characteristics. For example, several studies of employment programs for ex-offenders have found positive employment and recidivism effects only for participants aged 27 and up.[5] In addition, research suggests that length of incarceration is positively associated with recidivism due to increased socialization to prison norms and the strain on family and community ties. Furthermore, 67

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[5] Hurry, J., Brazier, B., Parker, M. & Wilson, A. (2006). *Rapid Evidence Assessment of Interventions that Promote Employment for Offenders*. National Research and Development Center for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC): Department for Education and Skills.

percent of ex-offenders in the U.S. recidivate within three years of release, with most recidivating within the first six months of their release.[6]

Studies comparing ex-offenders to samples of individuals with comparable education, work experience and other demographic characteristics have found that periods of incarceration further reduce employment and earnings.[7] In addition to whether an individual has been incarcerated, research using employer surveys has found that employers vary in their stated willingness to hire ex-offenders according to the offense committed by the offender and whether any meaningful work experience has been obtained since release.[8]

This research suggests that participant engagement outcomes may differ based on participant characteristics such as age and length of incarceration and date of release, and employment outcomes may also differ based on characteristics such as age, criminal background, and work experience.

B. Qualitative Analysis

Like the Preliminary Report, qualitative data collection for the final report will include interviews with key program staff and sponsors and observation of service delivery. In addition, we will seek to capture additional participant perspectives on the program.

For the Preliminary Report, we conducted a participant focus group. While focus groups can provide useful information regarding participant perspectives, they are especially prone to selection bias. Participants with a stronger attachment to the program are more likely to agree to participate. As an alternative, we propose a series of structured individual-level interviews with program participants. Either through review of program data or conversations with program staff, we can identify a smaller group of individuals who may have a more diverse set of experiences with Career Bridge. While these interviews might not be fully generalizable to the broader group of participants, a purposive selection process increases the likelihood of hearing an array of opinions regarding the relative strengths and weaknesses of the program. Additionally, a longitudinal approach, with multiple interviews of a given respondent, would provide added insight as to how participant experiences and expectations evolve over the duration of the participation.

C. Data Collection

We expect the quantitative data to largely continue to come from the Seattle Jobs Initiative's (SJI) JobStat database. HSD and OED have indicated that they hope to continue using JobStat with some modifications. This database contains the information all participants include on the enrollment form, data on completion of the job readiness training, and job placement details.

The most glaring weakness of the current Career Bridge data we have received is the absence of systematic information on program participation and service delivery. While there is relatively

[6] Ekunwe, I. and Jones, R. (2011). "Doing Re-entry: Accounts of Post-prison release in Finland and the United States." In *Global Perspectives on Re*-entry, edited by I. Ekunwe and R. Jones. Tampere University Press.

[7] Kling, J., Weiman, D. and Western, B. (2000). "The Effects of Mass Incarceration on the Labor Market." Paper presented at the Urban Institute Roundtable on Prisoner Reentry, October.

[8] Holzer, H., Raphael, S. and Stoll, M. (2002). "Will Employers Hire Ex-Offenders? Employer Preferences, Background Checks and Their Determinants." In *The Impact of Incarceration on Families and Communities*, edited by M. Pattillo, D. Weiman and B. Western. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

strong data on participant characteristics, and the job developer has made strong efforts to collect employment data, little information is available regarding the nature of ongoing service delivery. Obtaining quality information about what services are being delivered and at what frequency will be imperative if we are to make a strong assessment of the fidelity to the program model. We anticipate that OED and HSD will work with the CBDO they select to implement a data collection infrastructure that will capture service delivery by case managers and job developers. In the following section, we outline key measures that will support a more complete understanding of program participation.

The exact data collection mechanism will depend on the outcome of the city's procurement process for a CBDO and whether this entity has existing systems that can support more robust data collection. Any additions and changes to the data sources that currently exist will require collaboration with HSD and OED to establish a data collection protocol to determine who will be responsible for what data, how they will be collected, and when. For example, any changes to the data collected by JobStat will require additional programming. The CBDO that is selected to take over from SJI will also need to be prepared to collect data, which may require additional programming or data tracking systems.

Additionally, following finalization of a revised structure for the sponsorship model, we will work with HSD and OED to devise the most appropriate data collection approach to capture the nature and frequency of community sponsorship.

Other data sources that may support a more complete characterization of Career Bridge include administrative records capturing use of the Career Investment Fund,[9] and, potentially, case management notes. The former will provide a picture of the direct financial support Career Bridge provides to participants. The review of a limited number of case files would allow a more detailed description of service delivery that can supplement quantitative data on service delivery.

IV. Key Program Measures

Tracking Career Bridge's key output and outcome measures serves the dual goals of research and ongoing monitoring. For a program in its infancy, data collection can provide useful information to staff to identify operational issues and craft appropriate solutions. The following measures we propose are based on the desired outcomes of Career Bridge as defined by the logic model and the theory of change we presented in the Preliminary Report as well as what we believe to be realistic measures from a data collection standpoint. In addition, we identify key participant characteristics to be collected.

Table 1 summarizes proposed output and outcome measures along with likely sources of the data.

[9] The HSD dollars allocated to directly fund participant support services.

Table 1: Proposed Output and Outcome Measures

Category	Measure	Expected Data Source
Participation	Number of referrals to Career Bridge	CBDO records, Community sponsor survey
	Number of formal enrollments	JobStat
	Number who start job readiness training	JobStat
	Number who complete job readiness training	JobStat
	Weekly meeting attendance	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Frequency of case manager-participant contact	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Number of community sponsors	City contracting data[10]
	Caseload size of community sponsors/case managers	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Frequency of sponsor-participant contact	TBD, Community sponsor survey[11]
	Frequency of job developer-participant contact	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Number of participants exited	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Reason for exit	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
Employment	Number of job placements	JobStat
	Frequency of job placements	JobStat
	Duration of job placements	JobStat
	Type of job placement (e.g. full time, part time, temporary)	JobStat
	Job type (Interim or career job)	JobStat
	Wage	JobStat
	Hours per week	JobStat
	Reasons for job end	JobStat
	Number of referrals to external employment services	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Number of job leads developed by job developer	JobStat
	Range and type of industries of job leads	JobStat, interviews
	Extent of participant interest/skill-job matching	Interviews
Education and Training	Number who enroll in education/training and nature of program	JobStat
	Number who complete education/training	JobStat
	Number employed in field related to education/training	JobStat
Supportive Services	Number of participants accessing Career Investment Fund	Career Investment Fund records
	Number of participants accessing Career Bridge provided supportive services	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Number of referrals to external supportive and barrier reduction services	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS

The measures in ***Table 1*** generally align with the logic model we developed for the Preliminary Report. However, OED and HSD's response to the Statement of Legislative Intent identified several other categories of measures that they propose collecting. These measures, largely focused on community-level outcomes and other social outcomes, may be more difficult to

[10] This assumes that Career Bridge enters into an arrangement where the city compensates sponsors for their role in Career Bridge. Absent such an arrangement, this would require alternative documentation by Career Bridge management.

[11] The exact approach for capturing community sponsorship activity is dependent on any revisions by HSD and OED to the current model. If the city enters into contracts with sponsors it is more likely that systematic, real-time data collection will be feasible.

capture through the types of data systems the program currently uses or that we propose. In many cases they either require substantially more robust data systems, access to external records (e.g., individual level criminal justice data), or can only be measured through qualitative methods. We discuss these measures and potential data collection options in ***Appendix A***.

A. Participation

Measuring program participation serves an ongoing monitoring function and captures the degree to which service delivery and outcomes align with the logic model. We propose a series of measures that will capture participant engagement throughout the service delivery process, from referral to Career Bridge through exit. This includes the number of participants who are referred to Career Bridge, the number that formally enroll in Career Bridge, the number who begin the job readiness training and the number who complete it.

During the interviews we conducted for the Preliminary Report, staff indicated that no participants had been exited from the program. This is partly due to the fact that the early cohort of participants had only been enrolled for roughly six to seven months and partly because members see enrollment into Career Bridge as akin to entering into a community. However, community sponsor and case management capacity may dictate that eventually participants will be exited from the program or otherwise change their status as the program evolves. The number of and reasons for participant exits could be captured through additions to the JobStat program or an alternative MIS.

In addition to data on participants' entry and exit, we hope to see improvements in Career Bridge data on program participation and participant interactions with key program staff.

Career Bridge's stated theory of change and program design include case management as a key component of service delivery. Reentry demonstration programs have indicated that intensive case management provides a source of positive support and system navigation that produces positive outcomes for ex-offenders.[12] A study of the Opportunity to Succeed program found that, compared to probation and parole clients under routine supervision, felony drug offender clients who received comprehensive case-managed reentry services had significantly higher levels of full-time employment during the first year after prison release.[13] Research has also indicated that case management may be more effective when responsibilities are clearly defined and caseloads are manageable enough to permit ongoing one-on-one contact.[14]

As Career Bridge leadership moves toward a more professionalized case management model, it will be important to document service delivery. The level of support provided by the professional case manager(s) can be captured by the frequency of participant contact with case managers, through the number of referrals case managers provide, and the nature of these referrals.

The role of the community sponsor as mentor was cited by many Career Bridge staff and participants as a vital piece of the program and theory of change. Though not experimental, evaluations of programs such as the Ready4Work Reentry Initiative found correlational evidence that ex-offender participants who met with a mentor were twice as likely to obtain a job and were

[12] Allen, L., Emery, K., and Gerren, J. (2007). *Ex-Offender Reentry Employment Final Report*. Family and Children First Council: Dayton, OH.
[13] Rossman, S. B. and Roman, C. G. (2003). "Case-Managed Reentry and Employment: Lessons from the Opportunity to Succeed Program" *Justice Research and Policy* 5(2): 75–100.
[14] Jucovy, L. (2006). *Early Lessons from the Ready4Work Prisoner Reentry Initiative*. P/PV: Philadelphia, PA.

more likely to stay employed than participants who did not meet with a mentor (all participants received case management and employment services).[15]

We hope to be able to collect more systematic data that characterizes mentorship and social supports provided by community sponsors. It will be important to capture the number of community sponsors, because the low number of sponsors currently serves as one of the primary constraints on Career Bridge enrollment. In addition to documenting service delivery capacity, we also want to measure the ongoing level of engagement between participants and sponsors. The exact nature of this data collection is dependent on the degree to which OED and HSD formalize the sponsorship role. The ideal is a real-time tool to capture the nature and frequency of participant interaction with sponsors. Alternatively, we could conduct a short web-based survey of the sponsors with questions about the number of participants they have referred to Career Bridge, the number of participants they work with, how often they communicate with participants, and what forms of communication they use. This could inform us on the consistency and dosage of sponsor support. We will work with program management to determine the most realistic data collection strategy that supports the needs of the evaluation. We may also consider a short, paper-based survey of participants that allows us to cross-check the sponsor responses.

Data on participant interaction with the job developer can allow us to measure the consistency and intensity of employment services and continued participant engagement with job search and job retention services. The job developer has also been a source of other services for participants, notably, case management. This interaction could be captured qualitatively.

More generally, we can use an array of qualitative data collections methods to document the division of labor among all staff who provide case management, which may show the degree to which the responsibilities are defined and effectively coordinated.

It will also be important to continue collecting quality data on the job readiness training component of the intervention. The job readiness training workshop seeks to prepare participants with social and problem-solving skills and addresses workplace behavior expectations, which research suggests are important factors for ex-offender job retention.[16] The workshop enrollment and completion rates of Career Bridge participants will be a key participation measure.

Finally, we suggest that program management start systematically tracking attendance at the weekly meetings and other recurring Career Bridge events.

B. Employment

We anticipate capturing employment outcomes in much the same way as in the Preliminary Report – using data from JobStat or an alternative MIS. However, we propose additional measures to capture more details and longer-term employment outcomes. We anticipate continued data on the number, frequency, and duration of job placements as well as job details such as type (e.g. full time), hourly wage, and hours worked per week. The data we received also provided some indication of reasons for job placements ending; we would like more systematic data collection regarding placements ending due to inappropriate workplace behavior, finding a new job, and not having enough skills as these reasons are substantially different.

[15] McClanahan, W. S. (2007). *P/PV Preview: Mentoring Ex-Prisoners in the Ready4Work Reentry Initiative*. P/PV: Philadelphia, PA. http://www.issuelab.org/resource/ppv_preview_mentoring_ex_prisoners_in_the_ready4work_reentry_initiative

[16] Houston, M. (2001). *Offender Job Retention*. National Institute of Corrections: Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement. http://static.nicic.gov/Library/016971.pdf

In addition to these measures, we are interested in measuring participants' advancement in their career pathways the farther out they are from the job readiness training. In the Preliminary Report, we characterized the difference between job placements in "survival jobs" versus jobs that present opportunities for advancement. This designation was not formally documented in SJI data and was based on conversations with the job developer. We expect to differentiate the nature of these jobs using a combination of hourly wage, hours worked per week, whether it is a permanent or temporary job, and if it is in a participant's field of interest. Additionally, JobStat is already programmed to capture Job Type (select "Interim employment" or "Career Job – post short or long term training") and, although Career Bridge does not currently utilize this data element, it would be beneficial if program staff began using this field. A data-driven approach to characterizing the nature of participant employment experiences can provide better insight as to the relative program success in moving participants toward family-supporting wages and career path jobs.

The Career Bridge job developer was frequently cited by participants and stakeholders as a key support for participants seeking employment. Research has identified promising practices in job development, including using a business-to-business approach (i.e. showing employers the financial benefits of hiring through the program), recruiting a wide range of employers, and following up with employers and participants.[17] The literature also indicates that effective job development and placement for this population focuses on industries and employers willing to hire people with criminal records, while one of the most important retention factors is matching jobs with a client's skills and interests.[18] We propose documenting job development activity through quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the range and type of industries in which the jobs are developed, the number of job leads the job developer develops, the contact the job developer has with participants and employers after placement, and the extent to which the job developer works to match participant interest and skills to job placements.

C. Education and Training

While employment is a key goal of Career Bridge, the city designed the program with the realization that much of the target population requires additional education and training in order to secure higher wage jobs. The intent of the program is, in part, to connect Career Bridge participants to the existing education and training infrastructure in the city (e.g., Career Pathways programs run by SJI, community and technical colleges, ESL and literacy programs, computer education classes at Worksource Centers).

HSD and OED's response to the Preliminary Report indicated that six of the 42 participants discussed in our report were enrolled in a school or training program as of July 24th, 2013. Currently the SJI JobStat program being used for Career Bridge does not capture participant data if they exit into another SJI program, such as SJI's regular job readiness training. With modifications, this database or an alternative MIS should be able to provide training and post-secondary education information. We would want to capture the number of participants who enroll and complete training or educational programs and the nature of these programs.

For those participants who enroll in education and training with a specific career focus, we would expect the program to track the number who are employed in the field in which they

[17] Ibid.

[18] Pettway, C. (2006). *Offender Job Readiness and Job Retention. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction*. http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/iej_files/OffenderJobReadinessAndRetention.pdf

received their education and training. Although Career Bridge has not been using this field, JobStat currently has the capability to capture this data point (select Job Placement "Training related" or "Non-training related").

D. Supportive Services

A major component of Career Bridge is access to supportive services. This includes direct support funded by the Career Bridge Career Investment Fund as well as referrals to other services in the community.

Modifications to JobStat or an alternative MIS can capture the number of participants utilizing Career Investment Fund dollars, how the funds were used, and any additional supportive services provided directly by Career Bridge staff. Additionally, our hope is that the city puts systems in place that can capture the program navigation and referrals to supportive services provided by case managers. In particular, we propose measures that capture the nature and frequency of referrals to supportive and barrier reduction services.

E. Participant Characteristics

In addition to the output and outcome measures we define in the previous sections, we anticipate continued collection of participant characteristics, including the economic and demographic characteristics already included in the enrollment forms. These data allow us to characterize the population being served and to explore potential relationships between participant characteristics and program outcomes. ***Table 2*** summarizes proposed additions to the participant characteristics that Career Bridge currently captures along with expected data sources.

The data file we received when writing the Preliminary Report does not include participant age, although birthdate is captured through the enrollment form. If possible, we would like to see some indicator of participant age or age category, as research has found correlation between age and the success of reentry.

Table 2. Proposed Participant Characteristic Measures

Category	Measure	Expected Data Source
Participant Characteristics	Participant age/age group	JobStat
	Participant ever convicted	JobStat
	Level of offense (i.e., misdemeanor and/or felony)	JobStat
	Participant probation status at time of enrollment	JobStat
	Year of conviction	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Conviction charge	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Participant parole status at time of enrollment	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Length of incarceration	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Release date	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Prior periods of incarceration	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Educational background	JobStat
	Educational activities being pursued at time of enrollment	Addition to JobStat or alternative MIS
	Employment history	JobStat

Given the current population served by Career Bridge, we are especially interested in obtaining more robust data on participant characteristics regarding criminal background. JobStat currently captures several elements regarding criminal background we expect to continue collecting: whether a participant has ever been convicted, whether the conviction was for a misdemeanor and/or a felony, and whether the participant is on probation at the time of enrollment. In addition, there is an open-ended field for a description of the conviction that includes some details on the charge but which is not systematic. As with all information that comes from the enrollment form, these data are self-reported by the participant. We propose modifications to the MIS that would allow us to collect more consistent conviction details (e.g., year of conviction, charge), whether a participant is on parole at the time of enrollment, the length of a participant's incarceration, and their release date. We would also like the most robust information possible on prior periods of incarceration.

We currently have fairly comprehensive data on participant educational background, a factor the research suggests is strongly associated with employment outcomes. Among other data points, the enrollment form collects the highest grade or degree/certificate a participant has completed and whether they have never attended, previously attended, or currently attend college. JobStat also has a field for the sector of the current educational program in which a participant is enrolled. This field was developed to capture in which SJI sector program a participant is enrolled, and does not provide details for Career Bridge participants taking non-SJI programs. If possible, this would be modified to describe any educational activities a participant is pursuing at the time of enrollment.

The enrollment form also includes employment history data for participants' two most recent jobs among which are the start and end date, job title, average hours per week, starting and ending wage and reason for leaving. These data can help us link employment outcomes to prior employment history.

V. Next Steps

We deliver this report at a time when there are still substantial unknowns regarding what the implementation of Career Bridge will look like in the coming year. Given our findings in the Preliminary Report, it is clear that continuing the status quo of program operations is unsustainable, even assuming no increase in service delivery targets. OED and HSD have acknowledged as much and have already taken steps intended to expand program capacity and alter the service delivery model so it is better aligned with stated program goals and participant needs. However, the exact nature of these changes is still unclear.

The unknowns regarding the final program model and who will be operating Career Bridge make it difficult to fully specify an evaluation approach. In lieu of a more detailed evaluation plan, we have attempted in this report to build off our previous work. In this report we identify a relatively condensed list of program outputs and outcomes that could support a more robust understanding of program operations. Moreover, we identified those areas where we found the existing data collection infrastructure to be lacking. Our hope is that these efforts support decisions OED and HSD make in selecting a CBDO to operate Career Bridge and in how they work with the CBDO to document program operations. We assume that, following the selection of the CBDO, we will have additional conversations about how data collection systems that OED and HSD require to monitor program improvement can also support evaluation needs.

Appendix A

OED and HSD's response to the Statement of Legislative Intent lays out an expansive vision of the impact that Career Bridge can have. In addition to the employment-focused, individual-level outcomes we discuss in this report, the departments expect Career Bridge to have a wide-ranging impact on the community at large. These goals are focused on strengthening community institutions and relationships to support the more general advancement of low-income populations through improved access to public benefits and the existing service delivery infrastructure, expanded service offerings meeting the specific needs of program participants, and greater self-efficacy of targeted populations within the community. In addition, the response notes goals associated with policy changes that support improved services for disenfranchised populations.

The response to the Statement of Legislative Intent also places a specific focus on reduced recidivism for Career Bridge participants. Although HSD and OED do not see Career Bridge as a program specifically targeting this population, they identify reduced recidivism for program participants with a criminal history as a priority outcome. Additionally, the response notes that the agencies see increasing the diversity of participants served by Career Bridge as a priority community-level outcome.

These represent important goals that reflect the Executive branch agencies' view that Career Bridge has the potential to have broader effects on low-income and historically disenfranchised communities in Seattle. The difficulty, especially from a methodological perspective, is how to capture the impact of Career Bridge on these outcomes.

In some cases, this difficulty stems from ease of access to existing individual-level data. In the case of recidivism, criminal justice records at the local, state, and federal level could provide quality data on recidivism rates for the target population, and they could even facilitate a broader comparison to recidivism rates for a comparable population not served by Career Bridge. However, accessing these data is a labor-intensive process. An alternative is self-reported data by participants or their sponsors. However, this approach has a high potential of understating recidivism rates, as it is not well-equipped to capture information from participants who become disconnected from the program – often those most at risk for recidivating.

Community-level outcomes are even more problematic from a data collection and methodological perspective. For example, the logic model developed by OED and HSD includes policy changes as a system-level goal. It is extremely difficult to document causality within the political process, given the vast array of inputs. Similarly, it is difficult to systematically measure "increased empowerment of community networks to respond to community need."

Despite these challenges, it may be beneficial for HSD and OED to identify a small number of measureable outcomes that they feel align with the broader stated goals. For example, one of the goals they note is the increased access to existing services for historically disenfranchised populations. One way to capture progress in this area would be to analyze the referral sources to programs like SJI's Career Pathways programs. If OED and HSD expect that Career Bridge can contribute to the increased diversity of the populations being referred to these services, it may be worthwhile to explore any changes in the referral sources sending participants to these programs or in the demographic characteristics of the individuals being referred.

Similarly, if a goal of the program is the re-allocation of existing city resources to be better responsive to the needs of specific target populations, a review of changes in funding for key programs and service delivery partners may be beneficial. However, it is again important to note that such changes do not happen in a vacuum and that they interact with a more expansive and complex set of political and policy conversations.

Finally, in parallel to the work MEF is conducting for the Office of City Auditor, HSD has designated Career Bridge program funds to support an internal evaluation. Our understanding is that much of this evaluation work to date has focused on qualitative data collection to capture participant experiences, largely in service of allowing for real time feedback and program improvement. Moving forward, it may be useful for HSD to think through how these resources can support documentation of key outcomes that align with the community-level goals that OED and HSD have articulated.