Workforce Atlas Formative Research: Presentation of Findings

Results for Development Institute
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Formative Research Questions

- 1. What barriers exist for primary users in seeking employment and self-improvement opportunities, both nationally and in our three pilot cities (Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Houston)?
- 2. What are the **existing services available to primary users** who are interested in improving their literacy and employability skills? What are they?
- 3. Are there **examples of successful programs** in each of the three pilot cities? What lessons can be learned from them?
- 4. What **lessons and best practices can be leveraged** from existing or previously implemented programs working with low-literate and underemployed adults?
- 5. What **feedback do interviewees have** about the Workforce Atlas (WA) model? Does it fill a need in their community? What challenges to the foresee?



Data Collection

Conducted 13 interviews with service providers, including:

- 11 interviews with adult basic education (ABE) and workforce programs in pilot cities:
 - Houston (3)
 - Philadelphia (3)*
 - Minneapolis (5)
- One additional ABE provider (from Kansas city)
- One distance learning, ABE, and digital platform expert

Held 6 informal conference discussion sessions:

Each with 6-10 ProLiteracy Conference attendees

Desk Study:

 Oreoluwa Badaki, from the University of Pennsylvania, conducted a brief review of literature to identify learners' barriers. Additionally, R4D scanned the field for example programs and initiatives working in this space.



Analysis Methodology



5. Presentation



1.Interviews, conference discussions, desk study



2. Transcription

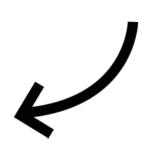




4. Analysis



3. Coding





Background: What role(s) do interviewees play?

- Oversee/contribute to (as administrator, teachers, trainer, or volunteer) direct
 service provision of literacy and employability skills development. (8)
- Focus on overseeing and facilitating work of ABE/workforce skills providers including connecting them to each other. (3)
- Focus on digital initiatives: include strategic thinking and content development around the role of digital learning for adult education and employability skills training. (3)
- Develop curriculum and programing for ABE and workforce providers. (3)
- Coordinate student needs and experience, includes recruitment, orientation, and placement. Follow-through on student service provision. (2)
- Focus on linking secondary education and ABE providers with employers and industry opportunities. (1)



Background: What types of organizations did we speak with?

- Direct provision: Working with low-wage workers on basic literacy, ELL, GED and other certifications and workforce skills training. (6)
- Coordination and tracking of learners by requested services, learning levels, and training completion, through a broader network of providers. (3)
- Workforce/vocational training, matchmaking, and other services for underemployed or low-skilled adults. (3)
- Professional development trainings for teachers or volunteers working with low-literate low-skilled adults. (3)
- Strategizing about and implementing digital approaches to literacy and skills development, including distance learning. (1)



Research Question 1: Barriers

What barriers exist for primary users in seeking employment and self-improvement opportunities, both nationally and in our three pilot cities (Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Houston)?



As umptions About Primat Users

Primary users have access to technology through phones, public access points, literacy and employment centers

Primary users have interest, time, motivation to engage with self-assessment and improvement

Primary users have digital literacy skills necessary for browsing the platform

Primary users are not aware of how their literacy and competency levels align with career opportunities

Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

> Primary users lack employability skills (interviewing, resume development, etc.)

Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths

Planned Activities

Foundational Activities

Identification of pilot sites for platform promotion and user facilitation

Development of "Learning Connections 2.0" platform with technology and academic partners

Web-Platform Activities

Website tutorials: welcome and introduce primary users to the platform and its services

Profile development: primary users' individual space, aggregates information and incentives

Assessments and surveys: primary users are assessed on skills, competencies, and aspiration

Resources: primary users are linked to selfimprovement resources and opportunities

Skill-building tools: primary users are provided online tools for building employability skills

Community forum: online forum for primary userguided discussion and knowledge sharing

Pilot site Activities

Pilot sites promote and raise awareness about "Learning Connections 2.0" platform

Pilot site facilitates primary users engagement with "Learning Connections 2.0" platform, providing access and fostering sustained engagement

Supplementary literacy or employability services: pilot sites may supplement "Learning Connections 2.0" activities with pre-existing training or counseling services*

Outputs

- Pilot sites engage primary users, connect them to "Learning Connections 2.0"
- Primary users explore platform (browse, create profile)
- Primary users complete literacy, numeracy, skills, and aspiration assessments and surveys
- Primary users utilize platform resources (including tools and community forum)
- Primary users are aware of their competencies & relevant opportunities
- Primary users select and pursue career and self-improvement path
- Primary invest time and resources into self-improvement through platformreferred resources and support

Long-term Outcomes

- Primary users develop improved literacy and employability skills
- Primary users secure "meaningful employment"
- Quality of life for primary users is improved
- Primary users counter stereotypes to and embrace continuum of life-long learning
- Primary users exemplify and pass on strong values on academic and professional development to family and broader community

What are **learners' barriers**?

"What we found was, the self confidence or lack thereof really prevented people from giving themselves a chance to build a different narrative. There is a lot of that, where people were really cutting themselves short because they had built this narrative about you know, I can't do it, I haven't looked into it, or I don't have access to resources."

- Program implementer from Houston



What are **learners' barriers**?

"A lot of our learners are providers [for their families]. I was actually at a re-entry meeting this morning and that was a huge...featuring some returning citizens themselves and they were like, look, I have to get a job to support my family. And education, although they see the value in it, if they're working a couple shifts, they may not have time with everything else, with family, and everything else going on to like go back to school to do that."

- Program implementer from Philadelphia



What are **learners' barriers**? (continued)

- Individuals lack personal conviction and confidence to pursue a learning, job, or career opportunities with no additional support or introduction. (12)
- Family responsibilities often make it difficult for individuals to attend trainings consistently. Childcare, for example, is not always available or affordable. (10)
- Emotional and mental heath can hinder individuals' ability to identify and pursue a new career paths. (7)
- Lack of cultural capital: many low-skilled adults, youth, and immigrants, have little understanding of the employment process. (7)
- Individuals have significant logistical challenges accessing services due to lack of affordable or convenient transportation. (7)
- Learners lack access to technology (incl. infrastructure, instruction, connectivity, and time to spare) in their schools, workplaces, and homes, as well as in prison. (6)
- Individuals want to invest in future careers through education and training, but need jobs now. (6)
- Lack of skills (literacy, numeracy, and technical), education certifications, and inability to engage in services to obtain these limit the possible opportunities for many learners.
 (6)



What are **learners' barriers**? (continued)

- Many individuals do not know what career they would like to pursue, and are not aware of apprenticeships, vocational training, and other career development opportunities. (3)
- Individuals lack soft skills required for workforce engagement, both in securing and retaining work. (3)
- **Digital literacy and awareness can be a limiting factor:** many learners lack the skills required to navigate websites and lack awareness of digital platforms like craigslist, job board, and others. (3)
- Learners may not be accustomed to or have a difficult time learning. Past negative experiences with education or school can hinder their abilities. (2)
- Low-literate or low-skilled individuals can be seen as "lacking" or "deficient" by employers, educators, and other relevant stakeholders hindering their progress. (4)
- Prior history, including financial and criminal records, are a major barrier for engagement in future careers, and limit participation in improvement. (2)
- Learners are not always able to access services from ABE and employability providers who have funding limitations. (2)



What are barriers specific to certain groups?

"You have to be super clear about what you mean by every step along the pathway. Because a lot of times, these learners (ELL learners) are guessing. So it's really hard to step out of our worldview and the knowledge that we have and recognize where learners really struggle with understanding. Like they haven't navigated these steps before so they don't have that meta knowledge about what the steps are..."

- Program implementer from Minneapolis



What are barriers **specific to certain groups**? (continued)

- Immigrant communities face significant cultural barriers to getting jobs, including a lack of social capital, and navigating an employment system that is foreign to them. (7)
- Challenges related to living in or frequenting impoverished communities, including drug use, safety, basic needs, can be a barrier to self-improvement and growth. (5)
- For former convicts or returning citizens there is an immediate need/pressure to get a job, and often support their families. (5)
- "Culture of poverty" and stigma of success can be a hindrance particularly for members of the African American community in accessing services and technology consistently. (4)



"Workforce Atlas" Revised Theory of Change Assumptions

Assumptions About Primary Users

Primary users have access to technology through phones, public access points, literacy and employment centers

Primary users have interest, time, motivation to engage with self-assessment and improvement

Primary users have digital literacy skills necessary for browsing the platform

Primary users are not aware of how their literacy and competency levels align with career opportunities

Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

> Primary users lack employability skills (interviewing, resume development, etc.)

Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths



Primary users have limited access to technology, hindering their ability to access selfimprovement resources

Primary users' lack of selfconfidence, motivation, and time, is a major barrier to selfimprovement and growth

Many primary users lack the digital literacy skills necessary for browsing online resources

Users are tested, though many are not aware of their literacy and competency levels

information about career paths and opportunities

Primary users lack employability skills as well as the cultural capital required to procure and secure work

Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths

Revised Assumptions About Primary Users

Primary users' have limited access to technology, hindering their ability to access selfimprovement resources

Primary users' lack of selfconfidence, motivation, and time, is a major barrier to selfimprovement and growth

Many primary users lack the digital literacy skills necessary for browsing online resources

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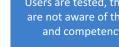
Primary users are not aware of how their literacy and competency levels align with career opportunities

Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

Primary users lack employability skills as well as the cultural capital required to procure and secure work

Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths







Many primary users lack





Reflections and Recommendations on Barriers

- 1. Barriers to self-improvement extend far beyond skills gaps and confidence, include extensive external and structural barriers. WA should work directly with local service providers that tackle these barriers if it wants to lead to improved career outcomes for its users.
- **2. WA should focus on ways to motivate learners** to identify and pursue skills and career improvement.
- **3. Digital literacy of users should not be assumed**. WA should focus on making platforms as user-friendly as possible to the individual user, or seek support of pilot sites.
- **4.** Many learners are not familiar with the process of identifying and pursuing career opportunities. WA could include resources to support learners in acquiring this knowledge.
- 5. Given certain community-specific barriers, **WA may chose to develop** specific support or features to those particular groups of learners.



Research Questions 2 & 3: Services Available and Example Programs

What are the existing services available to primary users who are interested in improving their literacy and employability skills? Are there examples of successful programs in each of the three pilot cities? What lessons can be learned from them?



Literacy Services

ABE and/or basic English courses, ELL classes, literacy level assessments, family literacy, and more.

Career Planning Services

Assess learners for potential careers, career exploration and goal setting, counseling, labor market information, career navigator, and more.

Employability Skills

Digital literacy instruction, soft skills training, citizenship classes.



What challenges have respondents faced in providing services?

- Matching learners to potential career/learning paths can be challenging.
 (3)
- It can be difficult to understand what learners' barriers are and build the necessary trust to support them in overcoming such barriers. (3)
- Life and family barriers, including physical or mental health challenges can impact individuals' studies and work. (3)
- The available tools are too high-level, either for learners to use themselves, or in the recommendations and guidance given to learners. (2)
- Workforce integration with education, most recently promoted by WIOA, requires a learning curve for program staff. (2)
- Tracking student progress can be challenging with a large number of learners and difficulties with maintaining communication. (2)
- Respondents have limited resources, including operating funds and time, to serve learners. (2)



What services do respondents provide via technology?

- Online courses and resources, including an introductory course to adult learning, careers and English literacy courses. (9)
- Digital literacy instruction, including online resources, dedicated courses, and one-on-one support. (5)
- Classwork that can be completed on mobile phones. (4)
- Hybrid mentoring services via technology, complemented by individual coaching or tutoring support (in-person, online, or via phone). (3)
- Student progress tracking using an electronic student information system,
 which learners may or may not have access to. (3)
- Assess learners' literacy, potential career options, and other learning targets (such as how to recognize a social security). (3)
- Integrate digital literacy into other resources/classes to give learners extra exposure and support. (3)



What **challenges** have respondents faced in providing services **via technology**?

- Learners lack access to technology (incl. infrastructure, instruction, connectivity, and time to spare) in their schools, workplaces, and homes, as well as in prison. (6)
- Learners are starting with very low digital literacy, which can make initial training/onboarding challenging. (5)
- Retention is low, particularly with online courses. (2)
- Learners have difficulty with creating and storing passwords. (2)



Career One Stop



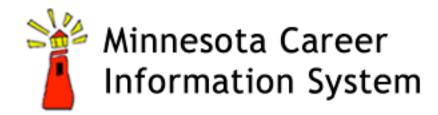
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor one-stop-shop online for:

- Employment and career path information, including career profiles,
 videos, salary data, and local information on job availability
- Skills and interests assessments (self-reported and ONET interest profiler)
- Tools to help job seekers find local resources for training and improve job searching skills. Resources also available for career advisors



Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS)



An internet-based system that combines career, educational, and labor market information into one comprehensive exploration tool. Allows learners to:

- Learn about over 520 occupations
- Develop a personal portfolio and personal learning plan
- Research colleges, universities, and career schools
- Find scholarships and financial aid
- Improve job search skills and create a resume



myPlace Online



Philadelphia Literacy & Adult Career Education

Sponsored by the Office of Adult Education

- Online platform used to coordinate service provision to adult learners across over 30 centers across Philadelphia.
- Learners enter the system by calling or visiting one of myPlace's 5 intake centers. myPlace then allows service providers to refer learners to virtual or in-person courses and track their progress.
- Online courses available on literacy, numeracy, and basic digital literacy.



Houston Workforce Solutions



- Network of 24 career centers and 10 additional information centers which help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers
 - **Learners:** offers career planning guidance, tips and advice for improving job search, training and education opportunities and financial support
 - Employers: offers recruiting, screening, testing and training for potential hires, industry specific guidance, HR consulting and training opportunities
- Includes labor market data on demand, career/industry profiles, links to skill and interest assessments.



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Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

> Primary users lack employability skills (interviewing, resume development, etc.)

Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths



Primary users' access to technology is a major challenge to implementing technology based interventions

Primary users lack of selfconfidence, motivation, and time, is a major barrier to improvement

Many lack the digital literacy skills necessary for browsing online resources

Users are tested, though many are not aware of their literacy and competency levels

Many primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities

Primary users lack employability skills as well as soft skills required to procure and secure work

Service providers are aware and supportive of primary users in overcoming barriers and pursuing employability and literacy improvement

Revised Assumptions About Primary Users

Primary users' access to technology is a major challenge to implementing technology based interventions

Primary users lack of selfconfidence, motivation, and time, is a major barrier to improvement

Primary users lack the digital literacy skills necessary for browsing online resources

Primary users are not aware of how their literacy and competency levels align with career opportunities

Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

> Primary users lack employability skills (interviewing, resume development, etc.)

Primary users receive support from ABE and employability service providers in pursuing employability and literacy improvement pathways

nhibitors

Facilitators

Inhibitors

Facilitators

Reflections and Recommendations on Services Available and Example Programs

- 1. Many tools and resources exist to provide career pathway guidance to learners, both nationally and locally. However, matching learners to potential career or learning paths can still be challenging for service providers. Current online resources are too high-level for low-literate users, may not always have relevant information. Providers also face difficulties understanding learners' barriers and tracking their progress.
- 2. Workforce Atlas could aim to differentiate itself from existing platforms by focusing on providing both learners and service providers with a platform designed specifically for low-literate users and supplement ABE programing.
- 3. The main challenges cited by respondents to providing services via technology were **learners' lack of access to technology and low digital literacy**. Given these challenges, it is possible that WA may be a more useful as a tool for service providers or for learners to use *in the context* of their participation in a program.



Research Question 4: Lessons and Best Practices

What lessons and best practices can be leveraged from existing or previously implemented programs working with low-literate and underemployed adults?



What are possible **solutions to target user barriers**?

- The navigator: an individual mentor or coach is needed to support a learner in identifying, understanding, and pursuing opportunities. (8)
- The warm handoff: by leading the learner to an opportunity, and making them comfortable about how to engage, service providers can overcome barriers related to lack of social and cultural capital, as well as lack of confidence. (7)
- Self motivated learners tend to overcome barriers. In spite of many challenges, a small number of learners are able to identify and successful pursue opportunities independently. (3)
- Developing trust within the community is crucial to ensure learners engage. Community outreach is important to incentivize engagement with the services provided. (2)
- Peer mentoring, motivational speakers and examples, particularly ones who have faced similar challenges, can help to provide learners with a model to follow, increasing confidence and diminishing stigma. (2)
- Persistence and engaging lessons can lead to improvements in digital literacy skills, which is an important and impactful skill. (2)
- Support systems at home, including family, friends, can motivate a learner to follow-through and succeed. (2)



What are **lessons on how to motivate learners** to self-improvement?

- Coaching, either virtually or in-person, is one of the most effective tools to ensure that learners follow-through with self-improvement. (4)
- A welcoming environment is crucial to encouraging learners. It is important that learners feel supported and encouraged as they progress. (3)
- Course work and resources need to be active, engaging and relevant.
 Learners respond best if the resources tie closely to real-life opportunities.
 (2)
- Holistic support for the individual is important to ensure they are developing across different dimensions. (2)



Reflections and Recommendations on Lessons and Best Practices

- 1. Individual support to learners by a navigator or coach has been cited as the common denominator for success. WA should consider incorporating virtual navigators to their platform, or working directly with organizations that provide coaching support.
- 2. A "warm handoff" from ABE and employability skills programs to career and training opportunities has been cited as a best practice. However, this requires local networks and social capital. In order to be successful, WA needs to establish itself as a trusted source and/or partner with local organizations with a good reputation.
- 3. The importance of holistic and engaging support for learners, including the support provided by peer mentors, family members, and others within their community, indicates that WA should consider resources outside of its assessment and career data as a part of their platform. Virtual peer testimonials, success stories, and family outreach could be considered.



Research Question 5: Feedback on the Workforce Atlas Model

What feedback do interviewees have about the Workforce Atlas model? Does it fill a need in their community? What challenges to the foresee?



Does the WA model fill a particular need?

- Workforce Atlas would be a great resource for existing programs to supplement and facilitate their support of learners. (12)
- Many learners do not know about types of occupations are accessible to them and need exposure to those opportunities. (6)
- Service providers lack tools to help them find and track long-term career pathways for learners. (6)
- Creative, simple, and independent means for assessing and exploring career interests and aspirations are rare and fill a great need. (5)
- There is a need for resources that learners themselves can use for motivation and show them a pathway that is possible for them. (4)



Does the WA model fill a particular need? (continued)

- Workforce Atlas may fill the need for more efficient and direct ways to guide learners towards an employment pathway. (3)
- There is a need for resources like Workforce Atlas that are free for service providers and users to use. (3)
- Many learners are not aware of products, platforms, and services that could help them. Ranging from craigslist to government services and support. (2)
- Workforce Atlas could fill a need for resources and opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. (2)



What challenges do you anticipate for the implementers of WA?

- **Digital literacy of learners will be a challenge.** It's important to ensure that the platform is clear and user friendly and intuitive and that starting up on the platform does not require significant effort and teaching. (9)
- Getting the platform's language right will be a challenge to ensure that valuable information is disseminated, but that low-literate learners and learners with little understanding of employability language can make use of the resources and recommendations provided. (8)
- Keeping career development, training, and ABE resources up to date on the platform will likely be a major challenge. Consider partnering with local organizations and having them support in updating data. (6)
- Cost and access are likely to be major challenges. Programs often mirror the populations they serve, in that they have limited funding and access to technology which can hinder their ability to utilize the platform. Access issues are compounded in low tech areas like prisons, rural areas. (6)
- Challenges are different depending where you are: rural vs urban, some cities have more history with employability than others. (4)



What challenges do you anticipate for the implementers of WA? (continued)

- Learners are unlikely to act on information alone. Need to know what next steps to take, and receive some guidance, whether virtual or in-person. (4)
- **User buy-in challenge:** other in-state platforms already exist that do assessments, career matching, and resource linking. Ensuring the platform is a value add, and not redundant and complementary is a challenge. (3)
- Assessments can come with limitations including biases, and should not be the only piece of data that informs career selection. Consideration for how relevant a career or job is locally, the big picture of whether a job is really good for someone need to be considered, which is why some sort of coaching could be important. (3)
- Assessments can be intimidating, and give people pause. Learners already undergo significant testing. Should try to ensure complementarity and keep it simple. (3)



Additional feedback for WA:

- Some service providers were hesitant about Pearson's role in WA, worried that they will attempt to make it a for-profit effort. (3)
- Incorporating tools from digital platforms that users are already aware of, Facebook, etc. such as a digital chat box or navigator may increase usability of the platform. (2)
- Respondents cited wanting to be involved in pilot. (2)



Reflections and Recommendations on Feedback

- 1. WA should consider having service providers as its primary users, who could use it as a tool to assess, match, and track learners' pursuit of employment and training opportunities.
- 2. Extensive user testing will be crucial to ensure that learners can understand and navigate the platform.
- 3. Given the low confidence of learners, **WA should aim to only provide** relevant training and opportunity resources to prevent users from running into closed doors. Partnering with local ABE networks and providers to crowdsource this data could be an interesting solution to this challenge.
- 4. As WA markets itself to pilot cities, it should **thoughtfully approach existing service providers** as well as its relation to Pearson to prevent any conflict with local stakeholders.



Concluding Recommendations

- 1. WA should expand the role of service provider pilot partners. Consider thinking of them as an implementation partner and work directly alongside them to overcome learner barriers. Some experimentation may be helpful to determine the exact role and responsibility of pilot partners.
- 2. Given gaps in learners' digital literacy, technology access, and user motivation, WA may want to consider service providers as the platform's primary users. WA could be designed as tool to supplement existing programing.
- 3. Motivation to identify and pursue opportunities is a major barrier, not a facilitator. Consider moving beyond assessments and data to include both in-person and virtual steps to motivate and keep folks engaged, such as tutorials, peer testimonials, or a virtual mentor or navigator.



Concluding Recommendations (continued)

- 4. WA should consider including resources to learners on searching, applying for, and securing work and training opportunities. A "how-to" on pursuing opportunities could help bridge the confidence and cultural capital gaps.
- 5. The relevance of local data is crucial for successful career opportunity guidance. Partnering with existing local databases and implementers could be important in ensuring local data is up-to-date.
- 6. WA's value add is likely to be its simplicity and accessibility. Other resources already exist, but many are not targeted towards low-literate users. User testing will be crucial to make sure the right balance is struck.



Discussion Questions

1. What specific questions or reflections do you have based on these findings?

2. What are the implications of findings and recommendations for platform design?

3. What are the implications of findings and recommendations for working with partners in pilot cities?



Appendix



Assumption 1: Primary users have access to technology through phones, public access points, literacy and employment centers

When asked about challenges to implementing technology based programs, respondents said:

 Learners lack access to technology (incl. infrastructure, instruction, connectivity, and time to spare) in their schools, workplaces, and homes, as well as in prison. (6)



Assumption 2: Primary users have interest, time, motivation to engage with self-assessment and improvement

- Individuals lack personal conviction and confidence to pursue a job or career opportunity with no additional support or introduction. (12)
- Family responsibilities often make it difficult for individuals to attend trainings consistently.
 Childcare for example is not always available or affordable. (10)
- Emotional and mental health can hinder individuals' ability to identify and pursue a new career paths. (7)
- Individuals have significant logistical challenges accessing services due to lack of affordable or convenient transportation. (7)
- Individuals want to invest in future careers through education and training, but need jobs now. (6)
- Learners may not be accustomed to or have a difficult time learning. Past negative experiences with education or school can hinder their abilities. (2)

When asked about learners' abilities to overcome barriers, some service providers said:

Self motivated learners tend to overcome barriers. In spite of many challenges, a small number of learners are able to identify and successful pursue opportunities independently.
 (3)



Assumption 3: Primary users have digital literacy skills necessary for browsing the platform

 Digital Literacy and awareness can be a limiting factor: many learners lack the skills to independently navigate websites. They are also not aware of digital platforms like craigslist, job board, and others that could aid them in job searches. (3)



Assumption 4: Primary users are not aware of how their literacy and competency levels align with career opportunities

 Lack of skills (literacy, numeracy, and technical), education certifications, and inability to engage in services to obtain these limit the possible opportunities for many learners. (6)



Assumption 5: Primary users lack information about career paths and opportunities that align with their aspirations

 Many individuals do not know what career they would like to pursue, and are not aware of apprenticeships, vocational training, and other career development opportunities. (3)



Assumption 6: Primary users lack employability skills (interviewing, resume development, etc.)

- Lack of cultural capital: many low-skilled adults, youth, and immigrants, have little understanding of the employment process. (7)
- Individuals lack soft skills required for workforce engagement, both in securing and retaining work. (3)



Assumption 7: Primary users lack support in identifying and pursuing employability and literacy improvement paths

 Low-literate or low-skilled individuals can be seen as "lacking" or "deficient" by employers, educators, and other relevant stakeholders hindering their progress. (4)



Who do our respondents serve as a **target population**?

- English Language Learners (ELL) and native speakers (7)
- Adults 16 years and over, although some programs may target younger individuals such the 16-21 age group or teen parents (5)
- Caregivers, which reportedly both motivates learners and can lead to inadequate time for studies and work (4)
- Low-income (4) and low-literate (2) populations
- Other characteristics mentioned: un- or underemployed workers (3); citizens returning from incarceration (2); and individuals with learning disabilities (2).



What literacy services do our respondents provide?

- Respondents offer ABE and/or basic English courses, either in-person or online. (9)
- Respondents offer ELL classes. (6)
- Respondents assess learners' literacy levels, often using the TABE or CASAS, either orally or through online or paper tools. (6)
- Respondents offer a software program for learners to practice their
 English skills ranging from basic through advanced skills, including desktop or mobile tools. (4)
- Respondents offer family literacy, to ensure parents are able to read to and with their children. (2)
- Respondents participate in a professional working group of literacy providers to coordinate and ensure quality of services. (2)



What career guidance do our respondents provide?

- Assess learners for potential careers which match their skills and/or interests, using oral or written assessments, either in-person, online, or by phone. (9, of whom, 4 use the ONET Interest Profiler)
- Offer learners a course, or tool to facilitate career exploration and goal setting. Ranging from online interest or career path inventories to share with learners, or as complex as formal curriculum or online course. (9)
- Offer learners support in career counseling/planning, including recommending in-demand careers or online/printed tools and resources.
 (7)
- Offer national and/or regional labor market/job information to learners.
 (7)



What career guidance do our respondents provide?

- Respondents expose learners to careers and other workforce themes and content within adult education courses. (5)
- Respondents assist learners with job searches either through individual support, or by providing resources with opportunity listings. (5)
- Respondents partner with employers, technical colleges, training programs, and others to create strategic work-related training opportunities for learners. (5)
- Respondents offer learners a "career navigator/employment counsellor," an individual similar to a case manager who is dedicated to supporting learners through their career pathway. (3)
- Respondents recruit potential candidates for employers, either using a technology platform or sourcing from their current learners. (2)
- Respondents create online personal profiles or learning plans for learners in order to plan and/or track progress. (2)



What **employability skills** do our respondents provide?

- Respondents offer ELL, ABE, and other literacy and numeracy instruction, which can be integrated into career-focused courses or training programs.
 (7)
- Respondents offer digital literacy instruction. (5)
- Respondents offer instruction and/or practice on "soft skills," such as communication, ability to use forms, and familiarity with job-related vocabulary. (3)
- Respondents offer citizenship classes, which can be integrated with ELL.
 (2)



What did respondents share about **program effectiveness**?

- Embedded funding allows providers to offer holistic services. (1)
 - "Other workforce areas will treat each set of funding they get in silo's, and so let's say someone needed child care, they would go to someone that was the expert at child care, they'd get their funding, then they'd get someone else to do their training component, then they'd get sent to someone else to take care of their food stamps.... All of our funding is embedded so one person can handle all of it which is good because these people, our personal service rep's, work as kind of serve as detectives and problem-solvers from one desk and they can find some one transport assistance, get them connected to a housing opportunities and child care and literacy services all from one place, and so it really just depends on what they need."
- Initiatives should have an institutional "home," with hands-on individual support. (1)
 - "What we find is that it really helps if there is a home like so maybe learners that are at a program already could use it in some way but they are getting the coaching, like the tool tells them what they need or gives them some ideas and then there is a human that is going to help them with the connect."

