A photograph of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a yellow patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, a woman in a yellow top and a man in a blue shirt and tie are seated at a table, engaged in conversation. The setting appears to be a professional meeting or office environment.

Illinois EPIC Pilot Project

Procedures Manual

Illinois Partnership of:
Department of Human
Services (DHS) and
Department of Commerce
and Economic
Opportunity

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Grant Awarded \$21.9 Million to Illinois

- **Purpose:** Develop and test a robust Employment and Training Program that will assist underemployed and unemployed Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants to:
 - Develop basic and technical skills and gain work experience to get good jobs
 - Find jobs with local businesses and increase earnings
 - Work toward self-sufficiency.
 - 19.5m allocated to Community Based Organizations.
- **Collaborative Partnership Includes:**
 - Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T)
 - Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) Program.
 - Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that have the best capacity to fully implement the program model.
 - Employers
 - Adult Education and Community College Partners and Local Workforce Innovation Areas

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be awarded a total of up to \$19.5 million on a competitive basis to serve a minimum of 2,500 SNAP recipients in seven targeted regions.

168 / 168 DHS Region 2

1,874 / 1,874 DHS Region 1 South

130 / 130 DHS Region 3

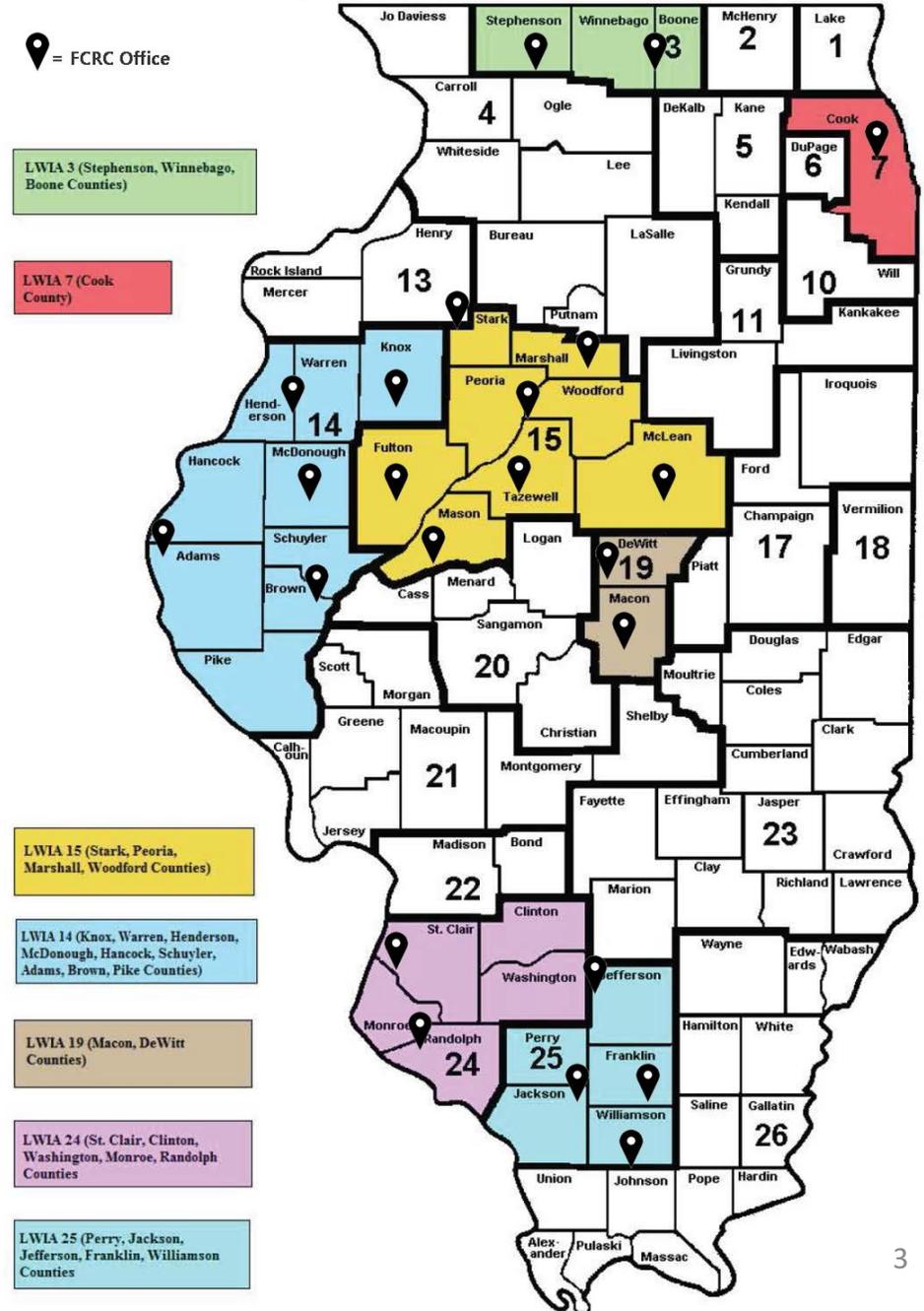
94 / 94 DHS Region 4

234 / 234 DHS Region 5

Statewide
Expanded Services = 2,500
Core Services = 2,500

5,000 Total

JTED-SNAP PILOT PROJECT TARGETED LWIAs



Locations

The Illinois pilot project targets 7 LWIA's (3, 7, 14, 15, 19, 24, 25) that represents a cross-section of areas needed for a robust evaluation of the program. They have different mixtures of targeted sectors and economic growth, urban and rural mix, and availability of services needed for serving the targeted SNAP populations.

SNAP recipients will be referred to CBO's from the Local DHS office that represents the counties identified (below) in the targeted LWIAs.

Adams, Boone, Brown, Clinton, Cook, DeWitt, Franklin, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Macon, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McLean, Monroe, Peoria, Perry, Pike, Randolph, Schuyler, St. Clair, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Warren, Washington, Williamson, Winnebago, and Woodford

Sectors

Illinois identified 11 growth industries along with their demand occupations for the EPIC pilot program. Eight of the 11 (highlighted in red) industries will be targeted for EPIC training.

Nine of the sectors are part of the Illinois Pathways initiatives and include:

<https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/default.aspx>

- Agriculture
- **Architecture and Construction**
- Energy
- **Finance**
- **Health Care**
- **Information Technology**
- **Manufacturing**
- **Transportation and Logistics**
- Research and Development

JTED-SNAP pilot project will also include two additional growth industries:

- **Hospitality**
- **Administrative Support**

Partners

Program Partnership Roles

- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Department of Commerce
- Community Based Organizations (CBO) EPIC Providers
- Employers
- Education and Workforce Partners

Participants

EPIC clients are referred to CBO's by DHS. SNAP recipients must go through the orientation process, attend a follow-up meeting with their DHS case manager, and go through random assignment to have potential access the EPIC services. CBO's can refer clients to the DHS office but can not recruit or provide EPIC services to anyone that is not referred by the DHS office.

Category 1 - Individuals Already Working. For the EPIC pilot this category will serve SNAP recipients that are currently working, but need training to increase their skill base for career advancement, to earn higher wages and benefits, and/or to obtain more work hours.

Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed Individuals with Low Skills and/or Limited Work Experience
For the EPIC pilot, this category will serve SNAP recipients who experience low skills (without a high school diploma or equivalent and/or lacking the basic and technical skills needed to access entry-level occupations in the targeted sectors) or limited work experience (unemployed or underemployed individuals without continuous, full-time work experience in the last year).

Program Eligibility Definitions

- **Business as Usual:** IDHS staff provide eligibility and case management services for receiving SNAP benefits. Case workers call/check-in with customers on a regular basis. Eligible SNAP customers are referred to IDHS partners (contracted Providers) for employment and training services to assist with developing job skills necessary for obtaining employment and becoming self-sufficient. These Providers are responsible for securing appropriate work experience, community service, educational and employment opportunities for customers.
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBO):** Qualified JTED providers selected to carry out the job training and employment program for enrolled SNAP participants. CBOs don't work with customers until the customer's have been randomly assigned to the Expanded Services Group.
- **Core Service Group:** Participants will receive "business as usual" services from IDHS.
- **Expanded Service Group:** Participants will receive JTED-SNAP program services provide through the CBOs.
- **Illinois workNet® (IwN):** State's online workforce development web portal. It will provide all of the resources, guidance, tools, and reports for customers, IDHS and DCEO staff, and CBOs. It will also provide data to Mathematica.
- **JTED:** An existing job training and employment program sponsored through DCEO. The program is provided through community-based organizations and provides work experience and job training.

Program Eligibility Definitions

- **EPIC Eligibility:** Completion of required program eligibility process activities that indicate if SNAP customers are a fit for the program and lead to random assignment.
- **Mathematica:** Mathematica Policy Research employees are national leaders in thorough and innovative program evaluation, objective policy research and interpretation, sophisticated survey design and data collection, and comprehensive performance measurement and data management. They will be providing the random assignment tool and handling the program evaluation. <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/about-mathematica>
- **Participants:** Underemployed and unemployed SNAP recipients in Illinois.
- **Random Assignment (RA):** A process used to ensure each participant has the same probability of being assigned to a particular group (i.e. core services or expanded services) in the study.
- **ABAWDS:** Able Body Adults Without Dependents

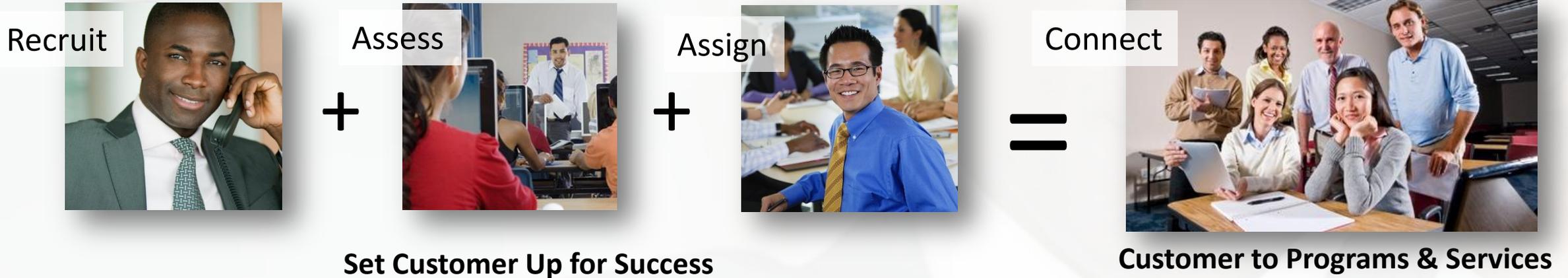


Recruit Step

Process for IDHS Staff
Recruitment and Referral

IDHS Program Eligibility Process: 3-Step Process

The JTED/SNAP Pilot ETP begins with IDHS offices or IDHS designees. The program eligibility process is critical to the success of the project. The design of the pilot, requires a **core** and **expanded** services group of equal numbers for comparison. **Once people are put into these groups they will not be removed.**



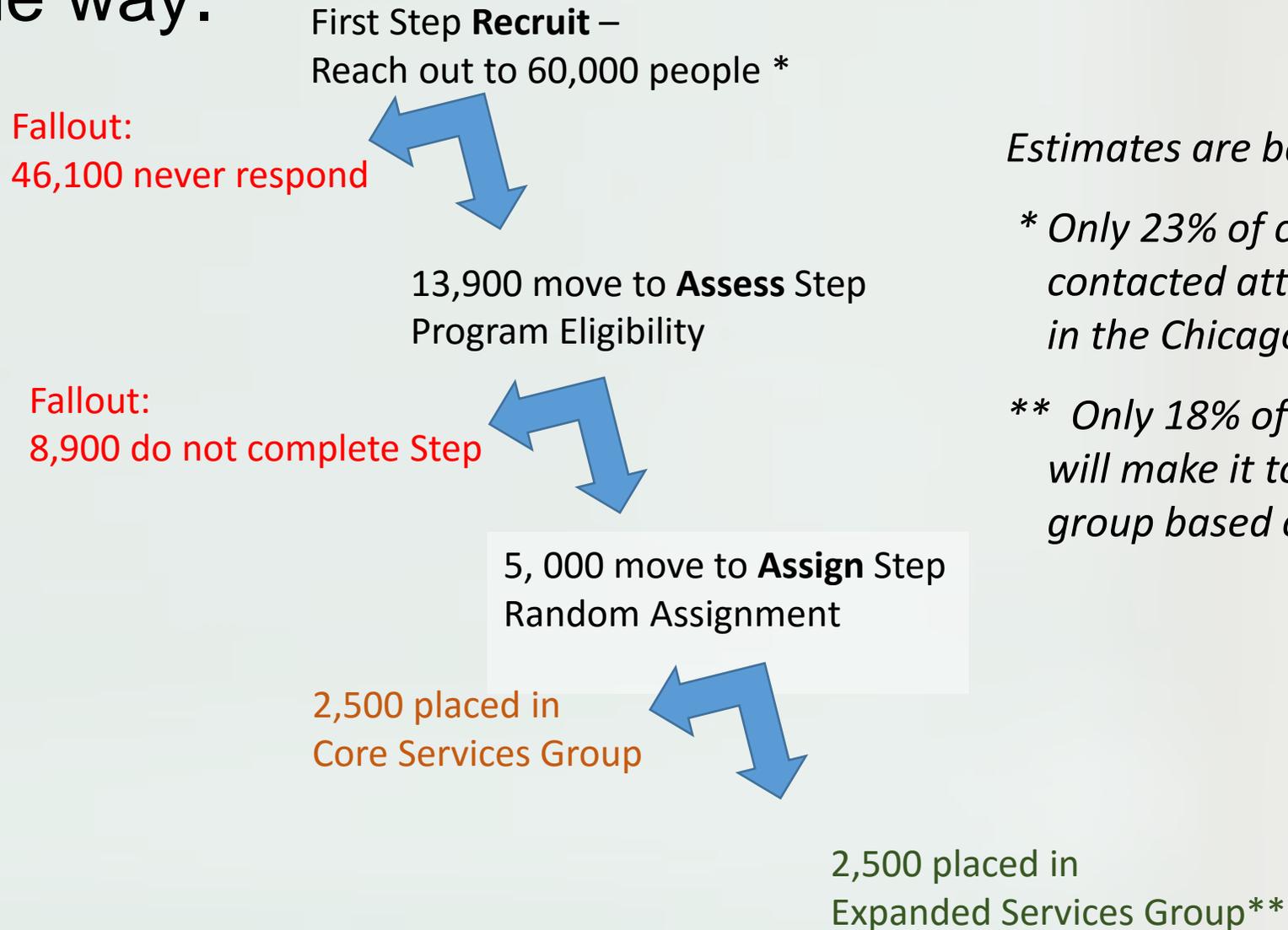
IDHS has customers go through an application/assessment process that is used to:

- Match them with the careers based on their skills and interests.
- Determine if they meet the baseline requirements to succeed in the field.
- Identify customer that are motivated to fully participate.
- Match them with the CBO that can best meet their needs.

Core Service
Business as Usual

Expanded Services
Connect to
JTED-SNAP **CBO**
Training Services

Recruitment is important because there is participation fallout along the way.



Estimates are based historical data:

** Only 23% of customers that are contacted attend orientation sessions in the Chicago area.*

*** Only 18% of the customers in step 1 will make it to the expanded services group based on prior history with ATIM.*

Program Design

Developing a Model For The Future: Connecting Human Services, Education & Workforce

As citizens are advancing through school and into careers or businesses, they are at some point(s) benefiting from programs and services offered across the state.

To best serve everyone throughout their life in Illinois, it is essential for the agencies to provide clear and direct access to information and data on programs, customers, and outcomes.



CBO's Role in Assessment and Placement

Acceptance Requirements

- Academic Baseline
- Physical Baseline

Collaboration

- DHS FCRC Regional Administrator
- Local CBO's

Immediate Engagement

- Contact
- Assess
- Engage
- Activities prior to placement in educational components
 - ✓ Work readiness
 - ✓ Work experience
 - ✓ Community service

Targeted Participants

Category 1 (a) – Employed But Skill/Wage Deficient (Incumbent Workers)

- working 30 hours or more per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits
- exempt from the SNAP work requirements but elect to volunteer for services offered
- no more than 15% exempt from the work requirements may be served under this grant
- work with local employers to provide employer-driven curriculum and technical training
- Evaluated on workers' increased earnings over time
- paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, employed full time (30hrs per week), and retained for 90 days

Targeted Participants

Category 1 (b)– Employed But Skill/Wage Deficient (Incumbent Worker)

- working less than 30 hours per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits
- meet the work registrant requirement
- cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month
- work with local employers to provide employer-driven curriculum and technical training
- evaluated on the completion of training and earned credential, gainful employment in a self-sufficient career pathway, and retention
- paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, employed full time (30hrs per week), and retained for 90 days

Targeted Participants

Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed SNAP Work Registrants

- meet the work registrant requirement
- cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month
- SNAP participants targeted will be Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- other SNAP work registrants that are long term unemployed or significantly underemployed with one or more barriers to employment
- training through developed internal programs or/and in partnerships with community colleges and adult education programs
- paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, employed full time (30hrs per week), and retained for 90 days

Employer Engagement and Work-Based Learning

- Meet the specific skill needs of the local employer and sector (demand driven).
- Established employer partnerships and MOU that defines the role of each party.
- Establish work based learning sites with employer partners for participant placement in paid work experience. CBO is the employer of record.
- Anticipated average cost of work experience is \$1,600 per participant. Anticipated term of work experience is 20 hours per week for eight weeks. This can be adjusted locally based on the approved budget and program design.
- Work experience site needs to relate to the career plan. Ideal situation is to place participant at a work experience site that can transition into permanent employment.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

- Industry recognized credentials need to be embedded in the curriculum that are stackable, transferable and meet the specific skill needs of the local employer and sector (demand driven).
- During the term of the EPIC pilot project we will utilize the DOL career ladder/lattice tool to identify/develop career pathways/ladders/lattices.
- Identify and establish relationships with other service providers to develop seamless transition of training and supportive services for participants to move up their career ladder.
- Identify entry and exit points along the career pathway to meet specific needs of the participant. (Including reentry plan)

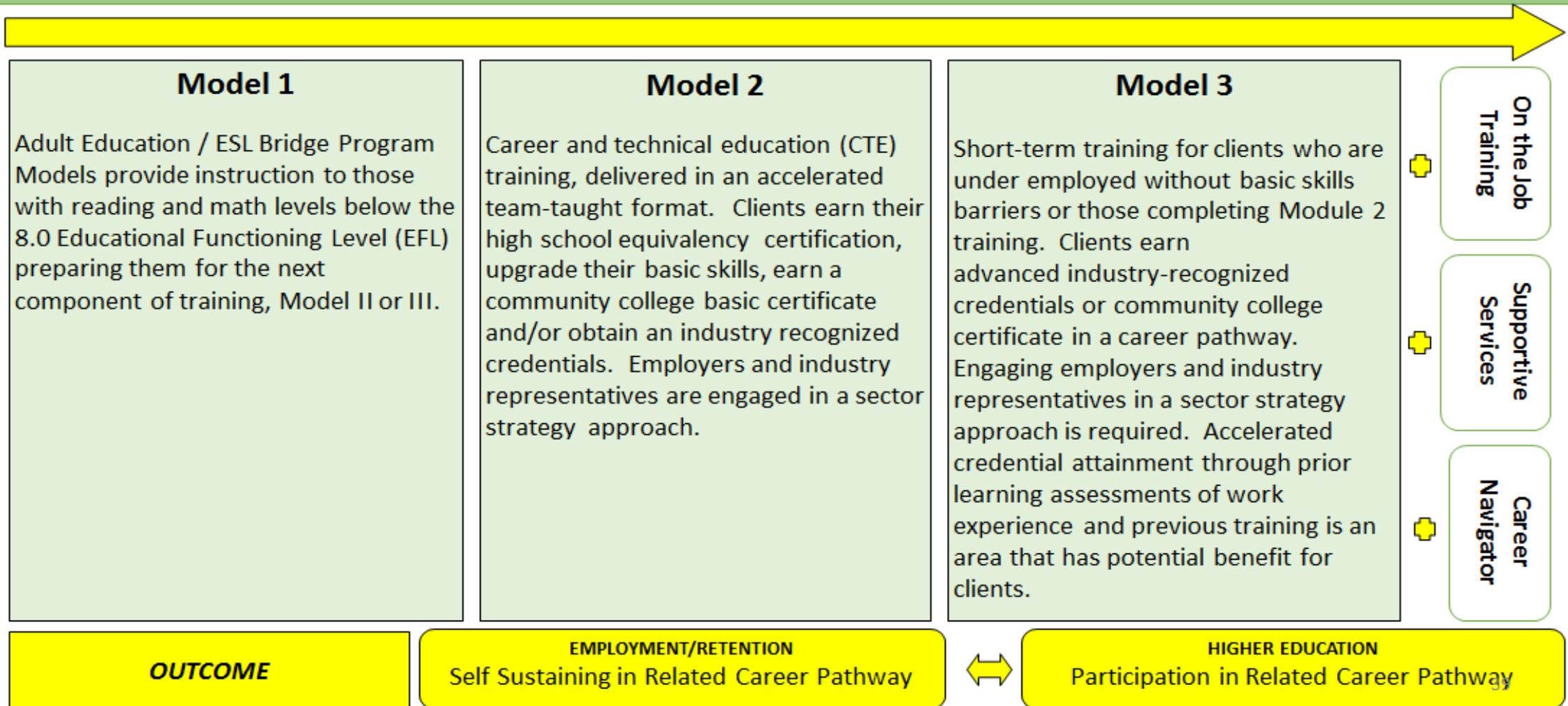
Accelerated and Enhanced Training and Work-Based Learning

The EPIC model is to improve the integration of adult education, accelerated training and work-based learning.

- (1) Integration of bridge programs with adult education, career and technical education and work experience.
- (2) Acceleration and integration of adult education and technical training which can incorporate the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)-led Integrated Career and Academic Prep System (ICAPS) model,
- (3) Expanded work-based learning for the unemployed with limited work experience through on-the-job training, work experience and transitional employment. Work experience is paid by EPIC but a participant can be co-enrolled in other programs to receive OJT, transitional employment, and apprenticeships .

Program Requirements

Services Received By Treatment Group



Program Requirements

Assessment

- Participants ability to succeed in program
- Realignment
- Work readiness and placement

Case Navigation

- A career plan must be established to guide the participants through a career pathway based on the modules defined under ***Accelerated and Enhanced Training and Work-Based Learning. (ISTEP)***
- Career navigation services should include, at a minimum; job assessment, career readiness, accelerated training placement and support, work experience placement and support, job placement, supportive services and necessary follow-up and referral upon completion of the program

Supportive Services

- Supportive services may include transportation assistance, day care expenses, work clothes, tools and supplies, or other items that are required for participation in the program.

Employment and Retention Services

- Clients placed in employment will receive follow-up services 30, 60 and 90 days after their placement.

Program Administration

Grantees must:

- 1) Participate in the SNAP E&T pilot evaluation and not actively recruit or provide services to control group members.
- 2) Provide employment related services to program participants, even if the participant determines at a future date they are not interested in the targeted industry or is placed but loses a job.
- 3) Have the capacity to leverage other funding sources to support services provided in the pilot project and blend resources for efficiency and sustainability.
- 4) Work with other CBO providers on reassignment of program participants, if necessary.
- 5) Continue to develop strong employer relationships and methods to recruit employers.

Program Administration

Grantees must:

- 6) Provided a minimum of 80 hours a month of service to the SNAP participant if the participant is considered mandatory.
- 7) Report back to DHS within 2 business days after the initial client appointment to report status of meeting (using 2151 referral form).
- 8) CBO must make at least one attempt to reach out to SNAP clients that do not show for the initial appointment to reschedule and engage the client in the EPIC program services.
- 9) Report on the client's engagement on a monthly basis through the DHS 2151A form.

Program Outcomes

EPIC Pilot Program is a performance based grant. Grantees will earn funds based on completion of the negotiated benchmarks identified below:

- Enrolled in Training
- Completing Training
- Job Placement
- Employment Retention

The basis is determined by applying the total average cost per participant to the performance measure in the following ratio: 20% applied to Enrolled, 30% applied to Completing Training, 30% applied to Employed, and 20% applied to Retaining Employment.

The grant amount may be decreased by the attributed cost per performance measure and proportionate to the size of the shortfall.

Budget

Training: Costs associated with providing assistance to a participant to acquire or upgrade skills to enable the participant to become employed. These costs are associated with the three training modules and must be directly related to the training benefit received by the SNAP participant whether the grantee is a certified training providers and/or an education partner(s) is providing the training. Cost can include but is not limited to instructor wages and benefits, physical cost of instruction, tuition, books, supplies, and fees related to the training.

Participant Wages: Includes compensation for services rendered limited to participant wages and benefits which includes FICA and workers compensation (Only). Participants may be placed in work experience for up to 8 weeks at a rate no less than the prevailing or areas minimum wage. The number of hours worked per week may be determined by the local provider, taking into consideration the ability for the participant to concurrently be receiving adult basic education and career and technical training, and that these individuals cannot be require to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month. It is anticipated that not all participants and/or career sectors will participate in work experience. Participant Wages should be budgeted around 18% of the total budget or \$1,600 average cost per participant.

Supportive Services: Includes, but is not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in training and employment activities authorized under the program. Supportive services will be provided on a case by case basis and will not exceed \$500 per person. This will be expended based on need. It is anticipated that not everyone will require these services so for budgeting plan on an average cost of \$220 per client.

Budget

Career Navigators: Grant funds will support appropriate staffing (salary and benefits) for the term of the grant for Career Navigators that will provide the following services: the development of participant's career and education training plans that provides direct linkages to academic and occupational learning; barrier assessment and alleviation; employer coordination and recruitment; placement and retention; coordination of continuing education in a career pathway and other services related to the final outcome of participant placement and retention in a career or placed in higher level education opportunities.

Administration: Includes, but is not limited to, accounting; budgeting; financial and cash management; procurement and purchasing; property management; payroll; and audit costs. No more than 5% of the total funds may be budgeted and expended for project administration.



Grant Regulations

- Monitoring Visits
- Accounting and Record Retention
- Audits
- Grant Disbursements
- Payroll Disbursements
- Final DCEO Grantee Report - FDGR

Ongoing Support & Training

Ongoing support & training will be provided to the CBOs through:

- Training Webinars
- Weekly Technical Assistance Conference Calls
- Regional Training



Today

I Will Make a Difference

