One Baltimore for Jobs
Abstract
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In the aftermath of the uprising that followed the death of Freddie Gray, the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) was awarded a $5 million demonstration grant from the US Department of Labor via the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Prior to the start of the grant, city officials conducted a series of community conversations. Residents expressed feeling disconnected from employment services but also that workforce services were disconnected from one another.

With this in mind, MOED designed a program, One Baltimore for Jobs (1B4J), targeted toward young black males from distressed neighborhoods. It sought to *demonstrate* that a workforce system could be built that fused together occupational skills training with key support services. Previously, grants for training and support services were made separately and the "partnerships" were more of a hope than a reality. 1B4J fully integrated support services with occupational training by integrating the grants themselves and facilitated "warm handoffs." Highly trained service professionals – lawyers, educators, and child support administrators – came onto the training site and met with program participants to resolve barriers upfront so they could move more quickly through training and into a career that offered a family supporting wage.

MOED issued a series of connected Requests for Proposals. Thirteen grantees are now providing occupational skills training in key industry sectors (manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and transportation/logistics) that were shown to be growing and offered career pathways. Two other grantees provide adult education so that residents have the reading and math skills to enter the training and succeed on the job. And four grantees were brought on board as "community connectors" focused on conducting more intensive outreach to the most disconnected in Baltimore. In addition to the direct grants, MOED formed a partnership with the child support agency that enabled each 1B4J participant to have their order "right-sized" and for their driver's license to be automatically restored if it had been lost for failure to pay child support. In total, MOED funded 19 organizations directly and more than 50 community-based organizations through sub-grants.

The result has been a local workforce system that - for perhaps the first time – is actually functioning like an integrated network. With eight months left in the two-year grant, 1B4J has already exceeded every performance goal prescribed by the US Department of Labor. More than 900 residents have enrolled in training (700 was the goal), more than 750 have completed training (500 was the goal) and more than 500 (455 was the goal) have already entered the growing industries noted above. By the end of the grant, Baltimore may double many of the outcomes desired by its funders.

But the truth is, 1B4J was never about hitting numbers.

It was about developing a better way to serve Baltimore residents that would extend beyond the boundaries of a grant. It's too early to know the true impact of 1B4J on Baltimore's workforce system but there's strong reason for optimism.

- Child support administrators have already announced that they will continue to partner with the occupational skills providers after the grant concludes.
- A Practice Advisory team has been formed that allows frontline staff across the system to share information and cross-refer for the most appropriate service.
- Legal service organizations have formed relationships with training providers that have already resulted in non-1B4J participants receiving services and partnerships for other opportunities.
- A national foundation initiated a new grant opportunity noting that key elements were based on 1B4J and a second initiative is poised to be released utilizing the best practices formed by 1B4J.