

The UNC Evaluation of the Jobs to Careers initiative was tasked by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to evaluate the 17 grantee demonstration projects participating in the Jobs to Careers: Promoting Work-Based Learning for Quality Care program. This national initiative is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in collaboration with the Hitachi Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor. The foundations support partnerships of employers and educational institutions to advance and reward the skill and career development of frontline workers. The Jobs to Careers program seeks to establish systems that train, develop, reward, and advance current frontline health and health care workers to improve the quality of care and ensure the quality of services provided to patients and communities. These frontline health and healthcare workers (FLWs)—at least half of the healthcare workforce—provide their patients and clients with preventive and early intervention services, chronic illness management strategies, and long-term and post-hospitalization rehabilitative care. For a detailed examination of the occupations included in the frontline health and healthcare workforce see *Workers Who Care: A Graphical Profile of the Frontline Health and Health Care Workforce* (2006).

Despite their critical and growing responsibilities, few FLWs earn enough to support a family, and their lack of access to training and credentials compounds the limits on their opportunities to advance. These jobs are characterized by heavy workloads, low pay, and few benefits. Job turnover tends to be high, and efforts to improve this work by creating more stable and better-prepared workforce are crucial as our health care system faces rising demand from an aging population.

The seventeen Jobs to Careers demonstration sites are broad-based local partnerships comprised of health or health care employers, educational institutions, and other community organizations. The partnerships are part of an overall effort to develop and redesign systems that support and institutionalize learning and career advancement for frontline workers; additionally, it will test new models of work-based learning.

This report is the culmination of the arm of individualized reporting at the level of the grantee partnership. To date, the memos provided to sites focused on process evaluation. The purpose of this final report on PCC is to summarize the project and its context, identify and describe the systems changes that have been achieved, assess the project impact at the individual FLW level and enumerate the lessons learned through the grant period.

1. Description of Partnership and Project

1.1. Collaborating Partners

Educational Partner (Lead)

Portland Community College (PCC) is the lead partner for the Jobs to Careers grantee partnership. PCC is a large educational institution with over 88,000 students. It is a public two-year college with three comprehensive campuses that offer both professional-technical programs and community and development education. PCC is the largest community college provider of allied health education in Oregon.

There are two separate entities from PCC engaged in the Jobs to Careers project, the Division of Workforce Training and Economic Development and the Gerontology program. The Division of Workforce Training and Economic Development includes several departments such as the Customized and Workplace Training and the Institute for Health Professionals and is seated within the extended learning campus. This division focuses mainly on delivering work-based continuing education training that is responsive to industry needs but not tied to credentials. The division of Workforce Training and Economic Development has worked closely with assisted living partners in the past, and was a partner in an assisted living facility training consortium that developed a Resident Assistant curriculum using the direct input of frontline workers and formal job profiling.

The second entity from PCC, the Gerontology program, is from a separate academic department within PCC. Although housed within the sociology department, the Gerontology program is its own academic program, and works within the credit earning side. In recent years, the Gerontology program has tried to become increasingly responsive to the job preparation and career development needs of students.

With the Jobs to Careers project, these two entities worked to synergize their work and aims, and partner with employers in the community to provide credit for prior learning and/or for work-based learning, and promote the development and adoption of voluntary standards for training of frontline workers in long-term care throughout the state of Oregon.

Employer Partners

Five employers collaborated with PCC to implement the Jobs to Careers project. These employers are all large systems of community-based long-term care facilities; each initially committed one facility to the project. These facilities include: Cedar Sinai Park (Rose Schnitzer Manor), Providence Benedictine (Orchard House), Farmington Centers (Farmington Square Tualatin), Concepts in Community Living (Taft Home), and Marquis Vintage Suites (Wilsonville site).

Cedar Sinai Park is a faith-based (Jewish) non-profit campus of organizations. Rose Schnitzer Manor (RSM), the assisted living facility involved with the Jobs to Careers project, consists of 141 apartments. Residents at RSM are predominantly Jewish (90%), although only approximately 20% of the staff is Jewish. RSM employs several groups of frontline health and healthcare workers. On the direct caregiving side, the frontline workers consist of resident assistants and health care coordinators (medication aides). Other frontline staff positions include food servers, housekeeping, and maintenance staff. Frontline health care workers at RSM are predominantly from the Bosnian and Hispanic ethnic groups, and English as a Second Language is an issue for many of these workers. RSM has committed to providing the Jobs to Careers training program to all of the frontline caregiving staff (RAs and medication aides), and expects to extend this training to additional frontline staff – specifically food servers – in the

future. Training responsibilities are shared between supervisors and administrators, with each responsible for a certain number of modules.

Providence Benedictine's Orchard House (OH) is an assisted living facility within the Providence Benedictine Nursing Center, and operates under the Providence Health System. Providence Benedictine is a faith-based (Catholic) non-profit organization. OH contains 50 apartments, and all frontline health care workers at this facility are referred to as "service partners." Although all service partners are trained as both resident assistants and as medication aides, there is also the possibility for advancement to the "shift coordinator" position, a frontline worker leadership role. The supervisor for all frontline workers at OH is the Housing Director. The training program is mandatory for all caregiving staff. Responsibility for teaching the modules is distributed between the supervisor, the RN, and two shift coordinators.

Concepts in Community Living's Taft Home is an 80-unit residential care facility located in downtown Portland. Residents at Taft Home are older adults that tend to have behavioral health – primarily mental health – problems. The training program is mandatory for all frontline workers, including caregiving, housekeeping, and kitchen staff. The caregiving staff includes RAs and medication aides. Taft Home has hired a training coordinator to manage frontline worker schedules and conduct the trainings.

Farmington Center's Farmington Square Tualatin site is an assisted living facility specializing in memory care. This facility has a 57-resident capacity, and offers a mix of private and shared rooms. Frontline workers include direct caregivers and lead medication aides who report to resident care managers. Although some of the training modules have been incorporated into the mandatory new hire orientation, completion of all 27 modules is voluntary. The Jobs to Careers training responsibilities are shared among managers and the lead administrator. This site currently has a number of staff with limited English proficiency, which has posed some challenges with implementing the program. The previous HR manager at Tualatin was bilingual but that individual left, and now there is no one in the administration that is bilingual. The current administrator at the Tualatin site believes a certain level of proficiency is a requirement of performing caregiver duties and now screens for this when considering new hires.

Marquis Vintage Suites at Wilsonville is an assisted living facility that is part of Marquis Companies, which has seven assisted living facilities overall. The training program was mandatory for all caregivers. Training responsibilities were divided among five trainers, including the nurse, the administrator, and medication aides. Although during the grant period the training was limited to direct caregivers, Marquis intends to expand the program to other frontline staff, including the front receptionists, the dietary staff, and housekeepers. The Wilsonville site at Marquis has 16 caregivers that participated in the training program, including the medication aides that attended the Train the Trainer workshop and were also trainers. ESL has not been an issue for this site because one of their trainers is bilingual and has been able to work with caregivers that have ESL issues. However, Marquis expects that when they extend the program to the housekeeping staff they will have more difficulties because while caregivers are required to have a certain level of English proficiency, housekeeping staff are not.

Local Evaluation Partner

Diana White, PhD, at Portland State University, was integrated into the implementation of this project and was awarded supplemental funds from the Jobs to Careers initiative to examine return on investment; particularly how the program related to quality of care within the employer partners. While the results from her study will not be discussed at length here, Dr. White and her team have collected

extensive resident satisfaction data, as well as data from frontline staff and supervisors. Some of this outcome data has been used to illustrate positive outcomes from the project, which has been pleasing to employers and has also been used as a tool in recruiting additional employers to the project.

1.2 Project Description

Assisted living facilities represent one of the community-based care segments of the long-term care sector. Frontline workers in community-based long-term care tend to be unlicensed and uncertified. They can enter jobs without experience or training. As a consequence, assisted living facilities train their caregivers on-site. However, most of these facilities do not have a training curriculum that systematically covers the necessary competencies for these positions. The purpose of the training program for this partnership is to train frontline workers using a standardized curriculum and develop a new, industry-recognized, portable credential for workers who successfully complete the curriculum.

The curriculum utilized in the training program is based on previous efforts by Portland Community College (PCC) and two of its employer partners to develop skill standards for frontline workers and design a work-based training curriculum through the Assisted Living Facility Training Consortium (ALFC) project in 2003-2005. The Jobs to Careers training program builds on these efforts by implementing standardized training in the five employer facilities and developing certificates for workers through the gerontology department that state they have successfully completed the curriculum. The training is designed primarily for caregiving staff, typically resident assistants and medication aides, though it can be offered to other frontline staff as well. The curriculum focuses on caring for the elderly and comprises a total of 27 modules. These modules include topics such as roles and responsibilities, resident service plans, personal care, self-care, and diabetes care. The curriculum is tiered in that it includes modules for resident assistants as well as additional modules that focus on the training needs of medication aides. Completion of the modules results in either a Resident Assistant I or Resident Assistant II certificate, depending on the number and depth of the modules completed by the participant.

Trainers from each employer site are responsible for teaching the curriculum to the participants. Each of the five employer sites made their own decisions about who would be responsible for teaching the curriculum, which frontline staff would be eligible to participate, whether the training program would be voluntary or mandatory, and how the training sessions would be scheduled.

PCC provides the curriculum to the employer facilities. PCC also conducts Train the Trainer workshops that provide guidance to selected trainers on how to successfully implement the modules in their workplace. The Train the Trainer workshops cover topics such as different learning styles and how to deliver the material to adult and ESL learners. The perceived utility of the ESL topic covered in the Train the Trainer modules varied according to its relevance for the particular employer site.

In addition to the Train the Trainer workshops, PCC also committed to offering two career development workshops for frontline workers and two workshops for supervisors at each employer site. These workshops address concepts of coaching and peer support with regards to workers' professional development as well as resources and opportunities available to workers at the college level. While not all employers took advantage of these offerings, the workshops were conducted with FLW and supervisor groups at interested employers.

1.3 Work-based learning

In this section, we examine the project in relation to the first six dimensions of work-based learning. The other dimensions of work-based learning are examined in relationship to systems change and individual outcomes.

1.3.1. Curriculum embedded in the work process

All of the employers report incorporating at least some of the modules into their orientation and/or training process for new hires. However, during the grant period, each employer focused on delivering the standardized program to their incumbent workers. The desire for standardized training and the fit of the modules to the FLW training needs was cited by administrators and/or managers at all five employer sites as a reason for participating in the Jobs to Careers training program. Administrators at two of the employer sites also noted that the material covered in several of the training modules counted towards the required 12 hours of training mandated by the state. Therefore, they plan to continue utilizing those modules in future continuing education sessions.

1.3.2. Learning is embedded in the work process

All of the learning occurs at the employer site, and all of the trainers are employees – either higher level FLWs, managers, or administrators. At three of the five employer sites, trainers administer training sessions around workers’ normal full-time duties. The fourth employer site paid its on-call RN to deliver specific modules for the duration of the Jobs to Careers grant, but also distributes training responsibilities for the other modules to administrators and shift coordinators (frontline workers with additional supervisory responsibilities). The fifth employer hired a full-time training coordinator to teach the modules to all of their frontline workers and has committed to maintaining this position after the end of the grant.

Depending on what worked best for the employer, trainers either deliver the training modules in one-on-one or small group sessions. Whenever possible, trainers try to demonstrate skills on the floor. However, given the wide variety of topics covered in the modules, this approach was not always feasible. For example, certain emergency situations covered in the modules do not happen frequently enough within the facility for an “on-the-floor” demonstration to be possible. In those situations, trainers simulate the necessary procedures.

1.3.3. Assessment embedded in the work process

The trainers, the majority of whom attended the Train the Trainer workshop, deliver the curriculum and coach participants until they feel confident that they understand the material. Trainers determine when the participant has successfully learned and demonstrated the skills within the module. In conducting their assessment, trainers utilize a competency check-off that is included as part of the curriculum. All trainers indicated that conducting the trainings as one-on-one sessions or in small groups made it easier to determine if participants had actually learned the material.

1.3.4. Coworker, instructor, and supervisor involvement

The involvement of coworkers, administrators, and supervisors in the training program varies between employer sites. Each employer site took a different approach in determining who would conduct the training and/or how training responsibilities would be divided. At almost every employer site, managers are involved in training some of the modules. Almost all of the employers also utilize FLWs in “elevated” positions (medication aides or shift coordinators) as trainers. Instructors from PCC do not directly train participants; they are only responsible for hosting the Train the Trainer and career development workshops.

1.3.5. Active/experiential learning

All of the employer sites report emphasizing teachable moments, which are either discussed in the workplace as they happened or presented during all-staff meetings to inform all workers. Additionally, all of the training modules are designed to cover the basic skills that caregiving staff need to fulfill their roles; therefore, the material covered in these modules is directly applicable to the workplace.

Whenever possible, trainers ask participants to directly relate material in the modules to their daily work. For example, at several sites, trainers reviewing the resident service plan module ask participants to propose a service plan for a current resident.

1.3.6. Career coaching

As mentioned previously, PCC provides a number of career development workshops for supervisors and frontline workers at each of the employer sites. These workshops are designed to encourage workers to become more aware of the resources and career development options available to them through the college.

Aside from the career development workshops offered through PCC, the amount of career coaching that happens at the employer site varies, but is almost always conducted on an informal basis. Taft Home is the only employer site that hired a designated training coordinator to oversee the scheduling and help frontline workers with their career development. Other employers discuss career development with their frontline workers, but informally.

Despite employers' efforts to promote frontline worker career development, many workers still lack knowledge about existing HR policies that support career development and about the steps required to advance their careers varies between sites. Frontline workers' lack of confidence to discuss career development options with administrators and managers appeared to be a contributing barrier in at least two of the employer sites. However, several administrators and managers indicated that the Jobs to Careers training program has made them more aware of their frontline workers' needs and about the importance of offering them career development opportunities. This awareness has led to a positive shift in attitude towards the workers.

2. Systems changes

2.1 Partnership

2.1.1. Partnership between educational partners within PCC

The relationship between the two educational entities at PCC was new, and allowed for the development of a connection between the credit and not-for-credit continuing education side of PCC. The educational partners feel that this relationship has been critical in allowing PCC to meet the educational needs of employers and incumbent workers. The Division of Workforce Training and Economic Development had many of the long-standing connections with employers and professional associations that were critical for implementing and disseminating information about a work-based learning model. The two educational partners within PCC will continue to collaborate on future initiatives, particularly with regards to expanding the curricula to other employers in long-term care, community-based settings.

2.1.2. Partnership between PCC and the employers

PCC had an existing relationship with two of the employer organizations, Cedar Sinai Park (RSM) and Providence Benedictine Community Care (OH). From 2003-2005, these organizations worked together

on an Assisted Living Facility Training Consortium (ALFTC) project. For this project, PCC conducted skill analyses for two entry-level unlicensed frontline worker positions. These analyses allowed them to develop skill standards for these positions and design the work-based learning curriculum that is being delivered in the Jobs to Careers grant. PCC had not previously partnered with the other employers involved with the grant.

PCC has worked to strengthen these relationships over the course of the grant. Throughout the grant period, PCC and representatives from each of the employer sites committed to attending monthly Practice Committee meetings. During these meetings, the partners provided regular updates to one another about their organizations' current grant activities. Employers also discussed challenges and successes, which allowed them to learn from one another's experiences and really focus on the implementation process.

As evidence of increased linkages, several of the employers will continue to partner with PCC and implement the training curriculum at other assisted living facilities within their systems. Some of the employers will also continue to partner with PCC as it attempts to expand delivery of the curriculum to other community-based long-term care settings, such as home health.

2.2 Employer

2.2.1 HR policies and practices

Several employers report that they now offer workers tuition advancement instead of reimbursement. All of the employers also committed to delivering the Jobs to Careers training curriculum during work hours, so program participants do not have to commit unpaid time to complete the curriculum.

2.2.2. Organizational culture and the unique context of assisted living

The unique context of assisted living made it easier for facilities to adopt a work-based learning model. As one manager noted, because no prior experience is required for frontline workers in assisted living, facilities must adopt a learning environment. Frontline workers typically learn skills on-the-job; however, prior to the Jobs to Careers training program, the content was not standardized and systematically delivered. The unique context of assisted living increases the imperative to apply work-based learning models, and staff at these facilities are better equipped to accommodating teaching within the daily work process.

“Assisted living is just a teaching environment because people come here without experience and so it has to be a teaching environment... that’s the only way you can do it in assisted living.”

~ALF manager

2.2.3. Work process

All of the employer sites indicated that scheduling times to deliver the training modules was initially challenging. However, all of the sites can now fit the training within their existing work processes. Any scheduling changes implemented by employers during the grant period are not permanent because employers' biggest challenge was training all of their incumbent caregiving staff. Now that these workers are trained, employers do not feel that maintaining the training for new hires will be as challenging, particularly as the process is now embedded in the workplace.

Employer sites that distributed training responsibilities to managers and/or administrators indicated that the training process also improved relationships between these staff and the frontline workers. Managers and administrators appreciated the opportunity to get to know the frontline workers. Although frontline workers at these sites were initially very intimidated at the thought of working with upper management/administration, the experience quickly helped them overcome those fears and they now find these individuals much more approachable. An administrator at one of the employer sites stated that improved relationships within the organization were a major positive outcome of the program. This administrator also indicated that his familiarity with the frontline staff directly contributed to one families' decision to place a resident with their facility.

2.3 Educational Partner

2.3.1 Academic policies and practices

One of the major systems changes for the educational partners has been obtaining approval to award a gerontology certificate and three college credits to participants that successfully complete the modules within the training program. The gerontology program and the Division of Workforce Training and Economic Development within PCC have been trying to make the culture within PCC more supportive of career development for incumbent workers. Being able to award credit for work-based learning is one step towards that goal.

PCC has also developed eight short-term, job-focused certificates. These certificates include a general gerontology certificate, three different Activity Professional certificates at different levels (Assistant, Director, and Consultant), Advanced Behavioral and Cognitive Care, Horticultural Therapy, and End of Life care. Each of these specialized certificates meet criteria set by the corresponding professional associations. For example, the three different levels of the Activity Professional certificates correspond to the categories set by the National Certification Council of Activity Professionals and the Advanced Behavioral and Cognitive Care certificate is linked to the National Certification Board of Alzheimer's Care out of the University of Chicago. The credits for these certificates are stackable and can be used towards obtaining an Associate's of Applied Science.

To provide further support for adult and employee learners, the gerontology program has also begun offering most of its courses in a blended format. Students have the option of taking the course entirely online, or attending courses in-person and turning in their assignments online. Offering courses in this format allows them to better accommodate the needs of adult learners, who often have families and/or work responsibilities that can make participation in traditional classroom-based courses more challenging.

2.3.2. Faculty/Organizational culture

Although the partners within PCC have been able to implement credit for work-based learning within the gerontology department, support for this concept within the overall credit side of the PCC campus is mixed. In implementing the Jobs to Careers grant, the director of the gerontology program and the director of the Division of Workforce Training and Economic Development at PCC led a taskforce to examine the possibility of developing credit for prior learning within all of PCC. The taskforce determined that faculty within PCC are not yet prepared to fully accept the concept of work-based learning. A few examples of credit for prior learning and/or work-based learning do exist within PCC, and some faculty members are supportive of this type of educational model. However, many more faculty members are still resistant to the concept. Expressed concerns include whether this type of learning will

meet academic standards and whether programs within PCC will lose FTE if they “give away” credits in this fashion.

The educational partners within PCC have worked hard to address these concerns. During the grant, they brought in employers to speak with the Educational Advisory Council at PCC. They also obtained a letter of support for work-based learning from the funders. As a result of these efforts, PCC is now supporting the concept of a work readiness certificate through the ACT Work Keys, a model of contextualized learning whereby people can demonstrate basic competencies in areas such as reading and math and have them be accepted by the college.

The educational partners were also able to gain approval to pilot the concept of credit for work-based learning within the gerontology program. However, at the present time, the culture within the credit side of PCC is not receptive to developing and implementing this type of learning within the whole college. As the gerontology program currently has very robust student enrollment, and expects to continue pursuing these innovative educational models, it is possible that demonstrated success in this program will eventually help address other faculty members’ concerns and modify the culture within PCC as a whole.

3. Individual level outcomes

3.1. Social support

At the sites where training responsibilities were shared with administrators and managers, improved relationships with FLWs were reported. The training provided an opportunity for administrators and managers to get to know staff better. Although some FLWs were initially intimidated at the thought of training with these their bosses, the interactions were reported as positive. Initially, FLWs benefitted from reassurance that the training was not “evaluative” and would not cost them their positions.

3.2. Self-confidence

Many frontline workers expressed an interest in continuing their formal education. Several aspired to become nurses. Barriers to realizing their aspirations typically included competing family demands, financial limitations, and low self efficacy for classroom learning. Several frontline workers indicated that successfully completing the Jobs to Careers training curriculum increased their confidence that success in a learning environment was achievable.

3.3. Job satisfaction / career commitment

The frontline workers all expressed appreciation for the recognition they received from their employers after completing the modules. Although some of the workers that had worked in assisted living for a substantial period of time felt they already knew the material covered in the modules, all of the workers valued their interactions with the residents and appreciated learning skills that would allow them to provide better care. Most frontline workers said they planned to continue working in this setting. The few workers that indicated they would eventually leave said that job satisfaction was not the problem; rather, the low pay and limited career mobility within the assisted living setting were major barriers to their staying in this

“I need someone to push me because I say I’ll do that, I’ll go to school and do that but I... just need someone to tell me, to just be there, to help out.”

~FLW Participant

type of work in the long run. This issue is common within long-term care, and not unique to the employers within the Jobs to Careers training program.

3.4. Career advancement

As mentioned previously, PCC successfully developed eight certificates in different competency areas related to caring for the elderly. Credit earned from completion of these certificates also articulates with the Gerontology program's college degree. PCC is also able to provide three gerontology elective credits to FLWs that successfully complete the work-based curriculum; however, details about how the credits will be transferred and any potential fees have not yet been finalized.

In terms of career advancement at the employer level, FLWs that completed the modules all had a graduation ceremony at the employer site. This ceremony included presentation of a signed certificate from PCC that listed the module areas completed on the back. At one of the employer sites, workers that successfully complete the program also wear a different color name plate to signify the additional training they have.

At the time the grant ended, none of the employer sites were able to provide pay raises for participants that successfully completed the program. The reasons for not doing so varied between sites. For several of the employer sites, part of the problem was described as economic. As a result of the recession, several of the sites are facing serious census problems. Administrators facing the possibility of laying off frontline workers and/or struggling with pressure from their corporate headquarters feel that a pay raise is not feasible. One of the employer sites not facing a census problem is planning to implement a pay raise for workers that complete the curriculum; however, given the need for consistent HR policies across all facilities within the chain to which it belongs, the site will not be able to do so until the training program has been implemented at the other facilities within its parent organization. Below, Table 1 describes the outcomes achieved by participants as of the end of the grant period. It also describes the percentage of participants that required basic skills remediation. Table 2 reports the status of participants as of the end of the grant period. Most workers were continuing to participate in the training program; attrition from the program is twenty percent.

Table 1: Participant Outcomes: PCC (N = 70)							
	N	%	Min	Max	Mean	Median	SD
Career Advancement							
Wage Increase	33	47.14%	\$ 0.15	\$ 1.25	\$ 0.42	\$ 0.44	\$ 0.23
Promotion	2	2.86%					
Title Change	12	17.14%					
Education/Training							
Certification	5	7.14%					
Associates	2	2.86%					
Bachelor's	4	5.71%					
Career Coaching							
Career Plan	2	2.86%					
Education Plan	4	5.71%					
Basic Skills Remediation							
Need Literacy	5	7.14%					
Received Literacy	1	20.00%					
Need Math	0	0.00%					
Received Math	N/A	N/A					
Need ESL	8	11.43%					
Received ESL	0	0.00%					

*The majority of the wage increases reported by employer sites reflect annual cost of living adjustments, rather than raises for completion of the training program.

Table 2: PCC Participant Status (N=70)		
	N	%
Currently active / participating	52	74.29%
Number of completes	4	5.71%
No longer employed	9	12.86%
Still employed, not participating	0	0.00%
Other	3	4.29%
Missing Data	2	2.86%

4. Lessons learned

4.1 Key elements to which success is attributed

4.1.1. Practice Committee meetings

All of the partners indicated that the monthly Practice Committee meetings were critical to the successful implementation of the training program. Early Practice Committee meetings allowed the partners to develop an implementation plan that identified the implementation team and helped promote communication and buy-in. On a practical level, these early meetings forced employers to develop and commit to a line-item budget for training purposes. Once the implementation process began, the Practice Committee meetings were invaluable for promoting ongoing communication and learning between partners. Employers felt that being able to share success stories and challenges was useful in keeping morale and buy-in high, as well as with moving forward. The employer sites were able

to learn from one another. For example, one employer found that making a training chart that tracked module completion available to participants was valuable for (1) making certain both trainers and participants kept track of which modules had been completed; and (2) motivated participants to make progress in the program. Subsequently, the rest of the employers adopted a similar system.

On another level, the Practice Committee meetings also helped strengthen relationships between the partners, which has helped the partners move forward and plan collaboration on future initiatives.

You have to say, this is so important that even though I've had a busy day, at 2 o'clock I'm meeting these three people in this room and I'm going to do that

~ALF Manager

4.1.2. Flexibility of the curriculum

Employers valued the flexibility of the curriculum, and the way that they could adopt the training schedule and stretch it out according to their needs. Several employers emphasized that the key to the success of the training was to tailor the training times to workers' convenience instead of to trainers'.

4.1.3. Employer commitment to the program

Commitment of upper level administration/management to the training program was high. Examples of employers' commitment to the program included making the training mandatory for all workers, tailoring the curricula to existing work processes, and making certain that the curriculum was offered at times convenient for frontline workers.

4.1.4. Initial implementation successes

Implementation successes at the employer facilities participating in the Jobs to Careers grant have helped PCC disseminate the program to and obtain buy-in from a large number of additional employers across the state of Oregon. These successes have also convinced the corporate offices of participating employers to expand the training program to additional groups of frontline workers and facilities.

4.2 The most recalcitrant challenges

4.2.1. Scheduling

Developing a systematic approach to scheduling training sessions has been a major challenge for all of the employer sites. Once the incumbent workers have been trained, employers believe it will be much easier to embed the training in the orientation and training of new hires. However, initially determining how the training of incumbent workers would be conducted was difficult. Several employers have indicated that it is important to schedule the trainings at a time that was convenient for the participants, rather than for the trainers.

Examples of how each site tailored the scheduling to FLW needs include:

- One employer hired a training coordinator whose full-time responsibility is to train each FLW on all 27 modules. This coordinator conducts the training at the time and location most convenient for each of the participants.
- Another employer delivers some of the materials at the mandatory monthly staff meetings, and then arranges for trainers and participants to have some work time – ½ an hour before and after shifts – to meet in small groups of two to three individuals to cover the rest of the material.

- One employer reported that managers and administrators involved with the training make an effort to stay late or come very early to work with staff on different shifts. Given the smaller size of this facility, it is the only way to get all of the staff trained in a timely fashion. An additional bonus is that frontline staff appreciate these efforts and time investment on the part of management, and it helps them feel more valued.

4.2.2. FLW Reluctance to Participate

Another recurring challenge – primarily for the sites at which the training program is mandatory – is dealing with incumbent FLWs who are reluctant to participate because they believe they already know the material. Employers have had to address this issue in a number of ways, such as by making the program mandatory, penalizing no-shows with write-ups, or offering incentives for participation.

4.2.3. Low Pay

Another on-going complaint among the higher-level FLWs – the medication aides – is the low pay. Although they enjoy their working environments and their interactions with residents, medication aides at several sites – including those with increased supervisory and/or program training responsibilities, said their pay was too low and had led them to consider leaving long-term care for another industry. This challenge is not specific to the Jobs to Careers training program but does speak to the need to offer financial incentives for FLWs who take on additional responsibility. It also highlights the need for additional career development opportunities if workers are to be retained in the long-term care setting.

5. Business case

5.1 Employer

Employers believe the standardized training of frontline workers offered several benefits to their organization. Some employers describe these benefits in quality of care terms. Others describe it in terms of FLW job satisfaction, resident satisfaction, or as a way to market their facility to potential residents and/or prospective FLW hires. Some employers plan to use the program to help meet state continuing education requirements and also to retain frontline worker groups that typically have high turnover rates. All of the employers will continue to offer the training after the end of the Jobs to Careers grant.

5.2 Educational Organization

The educational partners believe that this type of training program helps the college meet community needs. PCC serves an older population, with many students taking classes for job-related purposes. The Jobs to Careers program helped meet both employer and adult learner needs and has helped increase Gerontology program enrollment. PCC also feels that the program is serving the community in that it is helping move assisted living towards setting voluntary standards for FLW training within the state of Oregon.

6. Sustainability

Employers

All of the employers expected to continue offering the curricula as part of their new hire training. Some employers also expected to extend the training, either to other facilities within their system or to additional types of frontline workers, such as housekeeping and dining staff, within their facility.

Educational Partner

At PCC, the certificates are established and self-sustaining. Additional assisted living facilities around the state of Oregon have attended PCC's Train the Trainer workshop and begun implementing the curricula within their facilities. PCC is also collaborating with other institutions to apply for three different funding streams in order to continue offering the Train the Trainer workshops. For example, PCC and its partners have applied for a Department of Labor grant that would allow them to extend the standardized FLW training curriculum to other types of community-based long-term care organizations and home care organizations. If these applications are successful, PCC expects to partner with several of its employer partners from the Jobs to Careers grant in extending the curriculum to these facilities.