

# Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan

## Year One Evaluation Report

October 2019



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	i
List of Figures .....	ii
List of Tables .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Acronyms .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
Overview .....	1
Austin’s Workforce System .....	2
Goals .....	3
Metrics .....	3
Methods to Achieve Goals .....	4
Ray Marshall Center’s Role .....	5
Baseline Year and Year One Outcomes .....	6
Enrollment .....	7
Completers .....	10
Overall Completion .....	10
Time to Completion .....	11
Credentials .....	12
Employment .....	15
Earnings .....	17
Baseline Year Median Earnings .....	17
Year One Median Earnings .....	18
Earnings Above Poverty .....	19
Outcomes By Sector .....	20
Training Provider Program Developments in Support of the MCWP .....	24
Overview .....	24
Developments in Support of the MCWP .....	25
Workforce Development Program Connections .....	30
Austin Area Collaborative Efforts .....	31
Recommendations .....	33

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Enrollment by Year and Organization.....	8
Figure 2. Baseline Year Enrollees, by Type and Enrollment Status.....	8
Figure 3. Year One Enrollees, by Type and Enrollment Status.....	9
Figure 4. Year One Completers, by Organization Type.....	11
Figure 5. Year One Completers, by Time to Completion.....	12
Figure 6. Number of Completers Earning an ACC Credential.....	14
Figure 7. Baseline Year Completers, by Organization.....	15
Figure 8. Year One Completers, by Organization.....	15
Figure 9. Share of Completers Employed In the First Quarter After Completion, by Year and Organization Type.....	16
Figure 10. Number of Completers Employed One Year Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type.....	17
Figure 11. Median Quarterly Earnings for Employed Baseline Year Completers.....	18
Figure 12. Median Quarterly Earnings for Employed Year One Completers.....	18
Figure 13. The Share of Completers Earning Above 200% FPG One Quarter Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type.....	19
Figure 14. The Number of Completers Earning Above 200% FPG One Quarter Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type.....	20
Figure 15. Enrollment by Sector.....	21
Figure 16. Completion by Sector.....	21
Figure 17. Average Earnings Gains for Completers, by Year and Organization Type.....	22
Figure 18. Median Quarterly Earnings in First Quarter Post Program Exit for Employed Completers.....	23

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Year One Enrollees, by Organization Type.....	10
Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Completers, by Organization Type.....	12

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## ACRONYMS

ABE.....	Adult Basic Education
ARCH .....	Austin Resource Center for the Homeless
ACC .....	Austin Community College
CBO .....	Community Based Organization
CCDF .....	Child Care Development Fund
CEP .....	Community Eligibility Provision
CNA .....	Certified Nurse Aide
CTE.....	Career and Technical Education
ECCE .....	Early Childhood Care and Education
EITC.....	Earned Income Tax Credit
ECM.....	Empowered Case Management
ESL .....	English as a Second Language
ETPS .....	Eligible Training Provider System
FPG .....	Federal Poverty Guidelines
GACC .....	Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
GAIN.....	General Assessment of Instructional Need
GCTA.....	Goodwill Career and Technical Academy
GED .....	General Education Diploma
HSE .....	High School Equivalency
OT .....	Occupational Training
OSHA.....	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
MCWP .....	Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan
MSA .....	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NAEYC.....	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NSLP .....	National School Lunch Program
PLC .....	Master Plan Leadership Council
RMC.....	Ray Marshall Center
RN .....	Registered Nurse
SNAP .....	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TABE .....	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF .....	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TSI.....	Texas Success Initiative Assessment
WERC .....	Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum
WFSCA.....	Workforce Solutions Capital Area Board
WFSRCA .....	Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Board
WIC.....	Women, Infants, and Children
WIOA.....	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



# INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

The Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (Austin Metro Area) is undergoing a period of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Total employment in the region grew more than 20% between 2010 and 2015, and the median household income increased by almost 20%. However, not all residents of the Austin Metro Area share in this prosperity. Although the median household income rose, the cost of housing rose more quickly. Recent data shows that 23% of homeowners and 48% of renters pay more than 30% of their incomes towards their mortgage or monthly rent. Furthermore, more than 99,000 families in the region live at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG), and more than 76,000 individuals living below the poverty level work.<sup>1</sup>

The Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan (MCWP) lays out a common agenda and establishes a framework for collaboration to coordinate the efforts of the region’s workforce development organizations and educational institutions. The overarching vision for this plan focuses on a more demand-driven workforce system that effectively engages employers, community-based organizations, and educational institutions; empowers residents to more efficiently match employers’ skills needs; and successfully prepares economically disadvantaged residents for good jobs.

The region estimates that in the five years since the MCWP’s launch the Austin Metro Area will seek more than 60,000 middle-skill jobs including both new and replacement positions. Of these middle skill openings, just over 50% stem from just three occupational sectors: healthcare, information

<p><b>VISION:</b></p> <p>A more demand-driven workforce system that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Effectively engages employers, community based organizations, and educational institutions;</i></li><li>• <i>Empowers residents to more efficiently match employers’ skills needs; and</i></li><li>• <i>Successfully prepares economically disadvantaged residents for middle-skill jobs.</i></li></ul>
<p><b>GOAL:</b></p> <p><i>To make Austin more affordable by improving economically disadvantaged residents’ access to better economic opportunities</i></p>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE:</b></p> <p><b>10,000</b></p> <p><i>Residents living at or below 200% of poverty will secure middle-skilled jobs by 2021</i></p>

Source: Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan (June 2017). Workforce Solutions Capital Area

<sup>1</sup> The Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area includes Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop, and Caldwell Counties.

technology, and skilled trades and/or advanced manufacturing. For the region’s economically disadvantaged residents—those who earn less than 200% FPG, many of whom are currently employed—this prospective job growth represents better economic opportunity provided they obtain the skills and credentials required to find higher earnings employment.

This report seeks to determine which relevant services and training the region provided and establish unduplicated records across the workforce system during the baseline and Year One periods to accurately measure the scale of efforts along with the outcomes of participants, including program completion, employment, and earnings. As the region continues to implement the MCWP, this evaluation report serves as a reference to how the system functioned prior to and immediately after this effort and provides accurate numbers with which to compare results of ongoing and future regional coordination and collaboration.

## **AUSTIN’S WORKFORCE SYSTEM<sup>2</sup>**

The Workforce Solutions Capital Area Board which serves Travis County leads the MCWP. Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Board which serves nine counties in the region, joined the MCWP this year.<sup>3</sup> Participants in the MCWP effort receive funding from four primary sources: federal funding distributed by the Texas Workforce Commission through Workforce Solutions Area Boards (WFSCA and WFSRCA), the State of Texas, Travis County, and the City of Austin.<sup>4</sup>

Participating Community Based Organizations (CBOs) provide occupational training and additional supports to qualifying individuals either in-house, through contracts with and referrals to secondary providers, or through partnerships with the Austin Community College District (ACC). Supports provided by CBOs include, but are not limited to, guidance and counseling, financial assistance for specific types of needs such as child care and transportation, as well as help with pre-employment/job readiness skills such as resume writing and interviewing proficiency.

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<sup>2</sup> The wider workforce system in Austin includes local school districts providing career training and supports, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and related dual credit courses coordinated with ACC, and apprenticeship opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> WFSRCA serves Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Lee, Llano, Fayette, Hays, and Williamson Counties.

<sup>4</sup> Funding sources across the three agencies include Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act federal pass-through funds, Texas Workforce Commission grants and contracts, and local tax revenue. Services provided to individuals using these funds must meet specific federal, state, and/or local requirements in order to qualify for these supports.

Austin Community College possesses 11 campuses and educates approximately 76,000 students each year offering over 100 programs in 10 areas of study leading to college credentials that include technical certifications, Associate degrees, and advanced technical awards.<sup>5</sup>

CBOs and ACC provide training and support to tens of thousands of local residents each year. This report presents and describes workforce development program participant employment and wage outcomes from efforts of workforce training providers during Year One of the Master Workforce Plan. This report focuses on low-income participants engaged in specific middle-skill training programs that aligns with the goals of the MCWP.<sup>6</sup>

## GOALS

The MCWP aims “to make living in Austin more affordable by improving economically disadvantaged residents’ access to better economic opportunities.” By focusing on economically disadvantaged residents, the region hopes to connect under-skilled individuals with Austin’s high demand for skilled labor.<sup>7</sup> Newly trained program completers enter the labor market with skills and a middle-skills credential that enhances their salary prospects. By aligning the workforce system with employer needs, the region hopes to capitalize on available local talent to include more area residents in the growing prosperity of the Austin Metro Area.

## METRICS

The MCWP’s seeks to improve the economic wellbeing of 10,000 area residents living at or below 200% FPG through employment in middle-skill jobs by 2021. The MCWP presents a road map outlining the engagement of area stakeholders through four key strategies and targeted outcomes. For each strategy, the plan also presents actions and tactics that will facilitate the achievement of the stated outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> In December 2017, the Austin Community College District (ACC) Board of Trustees approved the college’s first bachelor’s degree: BS in Nursing offered beginning Fall 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Occupational Skills Training: Training leading to an industry recognized Associate degree, certificate, certification or license, beyond a HSD/Equivalent and less than a 4-year degree that prepares participants for employment. These middle skills programs at ACC also include students in business-related programs.

<sup>7</sup> Economically disadvantaged individuals are defined in this report as those having an income at or below specific Federal Poverty Guidelines. See appendix A of the Baseline Report for more detail on FPG income thresholds and a map of poverty concentration in the MSA. See the technical appendix in the Baseline Report for a discussion on how FPGs were calculated for all participants in this study.

Strategies	Outcomes
<b>Awareness &amp; Enrollment:</b> Cultivate interest in high-demand middle-skill careers.	Enroll <b>30,000</b> economically disadvantaged area residents in middle-skill training programs.
<b>Training &amp; Completion:</b> Equip workers with skills they need to succeed.	Of the 30,000 enrolled in middle-skill training, <b>12,000</b> earn a credential.
<b>Placement &amp; Employment:</b> Connect employers with local talent to fill middle-skill jobs.	Of the 12,000 earning a middle-skill credential, <b>8,000</b> placed in middle-skill jobs.
<b>Upskilling:</b> Assist frontline workers in acquiring skills to advance into middle-skill jobs.	<b>2,000</b> workers making below 200% FPG will be upskilled to enter employment with improved economic opportunity.

### METHODS TO ACHIEVE GOALS

The community intends to achieve these goals through a variety of processes. First, by engaging in integrated community leadership where participants from all major regional stakeholders are represented in leadership decisions.

Data is a key component of this regional effort, used both confidentially and publicly. Confidential program-level performance metrics will be regularly presented to organizations as a feedback loop for reflection, allowing for changes in curriculum, supports, and other adjustments in future years. Regional performance in future years will use the same metrics developed in this report to measure community progress.

While all participating organizations collect and maintain crucial participant data, not all organizations collect the same information and not all organizations use the same definition for specific data elements. The MCWP encourages agencies and programs to align data definitions, establish similar collection schedules, and consider how best to learn more with the data on hand.

The Baseline Report, available online, provides agency-level context, including identifying training programs, describing their structure, and examining whether selected occupations allow individuals to escape poverty.

Another key effort includes program coordination. WFSCA will aid programs in developing, tracking, and meeting appropriate targets and increasing the ease of cross-program referrals, potentially developing cross-program referrals standard processes. Working together is intended to allow programs to collectively identify gaps in programs’ internal processes, increasing the ability of programs to train individuals for high skilled and high paying

employment. The regional approach also enables partner organizations to work together (with guidance from WFSCA) to determine local barriers to capacity, allowing the region to increase the number of individuals served and supported through workforce programs. These coordination efforts are included in this report.

## **RAY MARSHALL CENTER'S ROLE**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Board contracted RMC to conduct an evaluation of outcomes for workforce development training participants, beginning with the Baseline Report intended to measure enrollment and outcomes prior to the implementation of the MCWP to establish baseline numbers. The RMC's work includes obtaining data from all participating organizations, providing recommendations for improving program data, and developing both confidential program and regional metrics to measure community progress. CBOs collect data and use data definitions required by their various funders. RMC reviewed the currently available data and makes recommendations for future consistency in data collection across all CBOs to support the outcomes of the MCWP with respect for the current program priorities and limitations. Although the CBO participant outcomes presented in this report are aggregated for the total group of program participants, RMC reviews with each CBO confidential program specific data to facilitate the organizations' participation in the MCWP objective.

## BASELINE YEAR AND YEAR ONE OUTCOMES

This report includes all participants who enrolled in or completed occupational skills training or an Associate Degree program within the sectors identified in the MCWP who experienced poverty prior to enrolling in those programs.<sup>8,ii</sup> Researchers selected the final year (FY 2015-2016) from the Baseline Report to serve as a Baseline Year, allowing for appropriate comparisons across years as the MCWP progresses.<sup>9</sup> Individuals who enrolled between the early fall of 2015 through to the end of summer 2016, prior to the implementation of the MCWP, are referred to as Baseline Year participants. Individuals who enrolled between the early fall of 2017 through to the end of summer 2018 are referred to as Year One participants.

- *Enrollment* represents any individual enrolled in a program during that year, regardless of whether the individual was newly enrolled in that year or whether the individual had previously enrolled in a prior year but had not completed. *Enrollment* represents all individuals in the local workforce system during that year.
- *Completers* include anyone who completed a program in that year, regardless of their entry period. So, an individual who started and completed a short-term training program is counted in completion numbers for that year and an individual who started a program three years prior to their completion year is counted in that year's completion numbers.

This snapshot approach to enrollment and completion acknowledges that individuals participating in these programs may take time to complete them; the number of completers in relation to the number of enrollees in any given year does not represent a completion or persistence rate, since enrollees might be engaged in longer term training and completers in that year might have entered a program prior to that year.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Occupational skills training includes training that results in a non-degree credential such as a certificate, industry certification, and licenses. Future regional work will also include apprenticeship certifications.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on all three baseline years, please refer to the Baseline Report.

<sup>10</sup> The Baseline Report calculates a *completion rate* which indicates whether enrollees in that year were found to have completed a program using multiple years of available data. Since this report includes a much shorter timeframe, and participants in some programs may take several years to complete, a completion rate is not re-calculated. For completers, researchers provide information on the length of time to complete. For more information on the completion rate, please refer to the Baseline Report.

The MCWP continues to expand its reach by including additional programs serving low-income individuals with education and training in the targeted regional sectors. Baseline participants in workforce training programs include those enrolled or who completed selected programs through American YouthWorks, Capital IDEA, Goodwill of Central Texas, Skillpoint Alliance, and WFSCA (WERC participants).<sup>11</sup> Year One participants include participants enrolling or completing these Baseline Year programs as well as participants in both Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area and WFSCA's WIOA participants reported through TWIST. Enrollments and outcomes for participants in all of these programs are reported collectively under the banner of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).<sup>12</sup>

College enrollees in Austin Community College identified as likely to be low-income may choose three types of programs: an Associate Degree, a Certificate program, or a short-term credential.<sup>13</sup> Since each of these programs through ACC result in substantially different types of credentials, enrollments and outcomes for students at ACC are broken out for each wherever possible.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Presented enrollment data include only individuals from the mentioned organizations for whom the Ray Marshall Center received data (Figure 1). In the Baseline Year, the region enrolled 6,750 individuals in education and training programs within a Master Community Workforce Plan industry sector. In Year One, the region enrolled 6,027 low-income individuals in MCWP aligned education and training.<sup>14</sup> This regional decline in enrollment between these

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<sup>11</sup> WERC is a workforce development and job training funded through contracts with Travis County and The City of Austin. WERC participants include participants in WERC-funded programs through Skillpoint Alliance and Austin Area Urban League. A number of WIOA programs managed by WFSCA and reported through The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) are not included in the Baseline Year due to discrepancies in data maintained at RMC from the Texas Workforce Commission and information reported through WFSCA. Year One results include participants reported through TWIST.

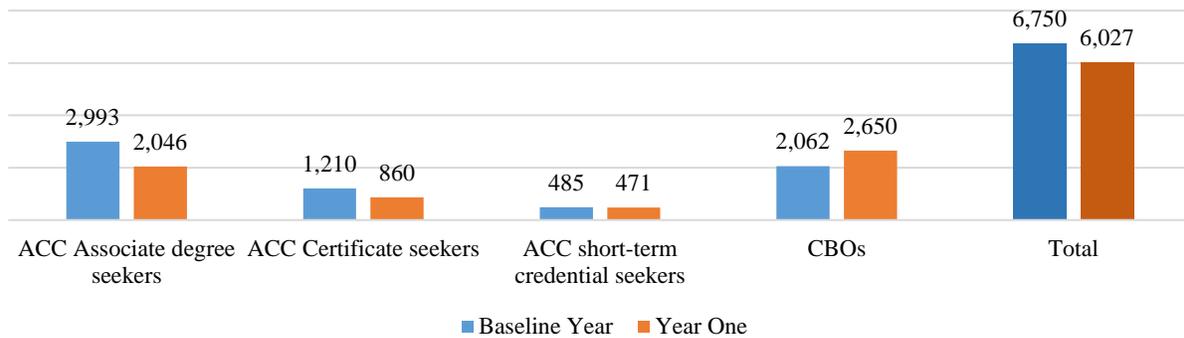
<sup>12</sup> Researchers acknowledge that including participations from additional organizations changes both the numerator and denominator when looking at results from the baseline year to year one. Throughout this report totals include all participants from all organizations for whom researchers obtained data. A supplement to this report provides enrollment and completion only for organizations included in the Baseline Year as well as Year One, allowing for clearer year-to-year comparisons.

<sup>13</sup> ACC program types includes those who are seeking and Associates degree, students seeking a specific certificate, and, those in the short-term credential category seeking a continuing education certificate, marketable skills achievement, or field of study credential.

<sup>14</sup> ACC enrolled 11,758 individuals not co-enrolled in a CBO program in MCWP-focused educational programs during Year One; presented numbers include only those classified as low-income. For more information on this classification, please see the Baseline Report.

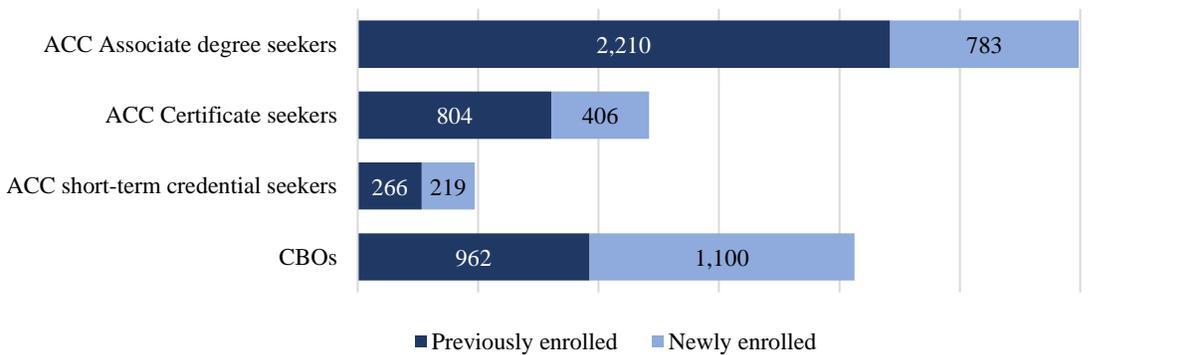
years was led by a drop at ACC in low-income enrollees, while CBOs increased their Year One enrollment by more than 500. The decline in enrollment numbers at ACC appears to be associated with a general decline in the share of individuals in poverty in the region, so while the number of students served overall in the region remained relatively stable, the share of those classified as low-income dropped between the two years.

**Figure 1. Enrollment by Year and Organization**

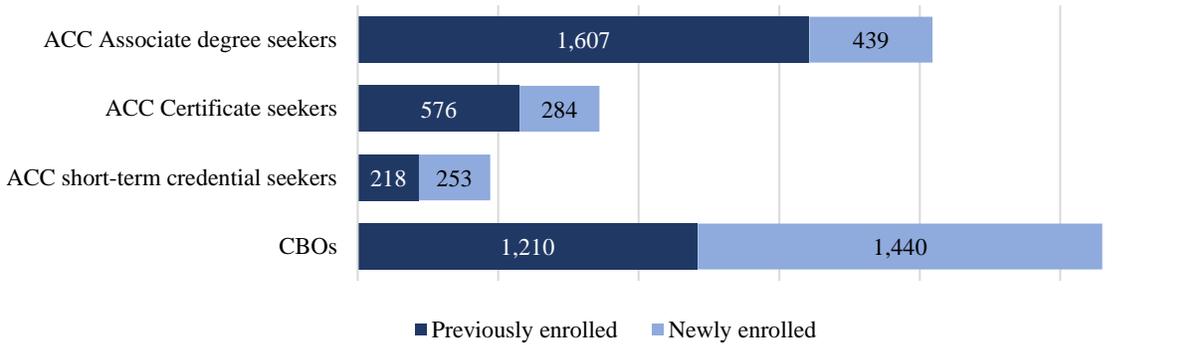


ACC’s decline in enrollment of low-income students in MCWP programs between the Baseline Year (Figure 2) and Year One (Figure 3) include both the number of previously enrolled and newly enrolled low-income students. The one exception to this decline includes a larger number of individuals newly enrolled in ACC’s short-term credential programs in Year One compared to the Baseline Year. CBOs experienced an increase in both previously enrolled and an increase in the number of individuals who enrolled for the first time between the Baseline Year and Year One.

**Figure 2. Baseline Year Enrollees, by Type and Enrollment Status**



**Figure 3. Year One Enrollees, by Type and Enrollment Status**



While roughly a third of participants are from a Hispanic background at ACC, Hispanic participants make up 44% of CBO enrollment (Table 1).<sup>15</sup> African American participants made up just over a quarter of all CBO enrollees. Enrollees in ACC’s Associate Degree and certificate programs tend to skew younger, with roughly three-quarters of them being under 22 years of age, while 70% of ACC’s short-term credential seekers are over 22 years of age (Table 1).<sup>16</sup> ACC serves primarily young adult low-income learners while CBOs serve primarily adult low-income learners, with half of CBO enrollees entering their program between 22 and 39 years of age.

<sup>15</sup> Baseline year demographic characteristics were published in the MCWP Evaluation Baseline Report.

<sup>16</sup> Demographic figures in Table 1 include all enrollees during Year One.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Year One Enrollees, by Organization Type**

	Year One			
	ACC Associate Degree seekers	ACC Certificate seekers	ACC Short-term Cred seekers	CBOs
<b>Age Group<sup>17</sup></b>				
21 and younger	76%	74%	47%	30%
22 - 39 years	20%	20%	37%	50%
40 - 59 years	3%	5%	14%	18%
60 years & older	0%	0%	1%	2%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	53%	61%	39%	37%
Female	47%	39%	61%	63%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Non-Hispanic White	49%	47%	47%	20%
Non-Hispanic Black	6%	7%	12%	26%
Hispanic	35%	35%	29%	44%
Non-Hispanic Other	9%	9%	10%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>2,650</b>

ACC Associate Degree and Certificate programs serve more men than women, while ACC short-term credential seekers and CBO enrollees are more likely to be female.

## COMPLETERS

### *Overall Completion*

The region graduated 931 participants in the Baseline Year (Figure 4).<sup>18</sup> In Year One, a total of 1,679 individuals completed their programs, representing an increase of 80% for the region. This increase in the number of completers occurred across all types of ACC programs and for CBOs (Figure 4).<sup>19</sup> ACC Associate Degree seekers experienced the largest percentage gain between the two years, increasing by 108% between the Baseline Year and Year One. CBOs experienced the largest increase in the number of completers (394) between the Baseline Year and Year One.<sup>20</sup> For ACC these increases may be due to a sizable portion of previously

<sup>17</sup> All ages in this report refer to the age at program entry.

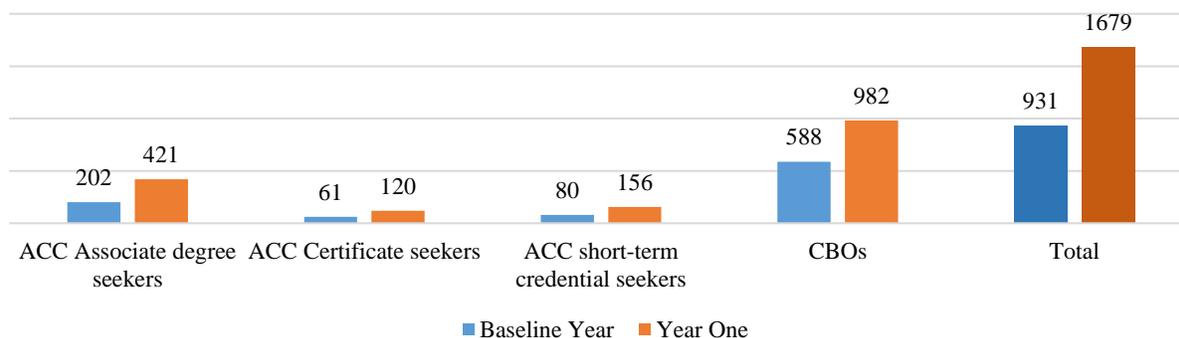
<sup>18</sup> ACC completed 2,392 individuals not co-enrolled in a CBO program in MCWP-focused educational programs during Year One; presented numbers include only those classified as low-income. For more information on this classification, please see the Baseline Report.

<sup>19</sup> Completers may have enrolled in a program for several years prior to finishing and thus the number of completers are not necessarily tied to the number of enrollees each year.

<sup>20</sup> Part of the increase in CBO enrollment stems from an increase in the number of programs measured; however,

enrolled low-income individuals completing their program after several years of effort (see next section). For CBOs this increase in completion appears to primarily stem from an increase in enrollment numbers that year (see next section).

**Figure 4. Year One Completers, by Organization Type**



### ***Time to Completion***

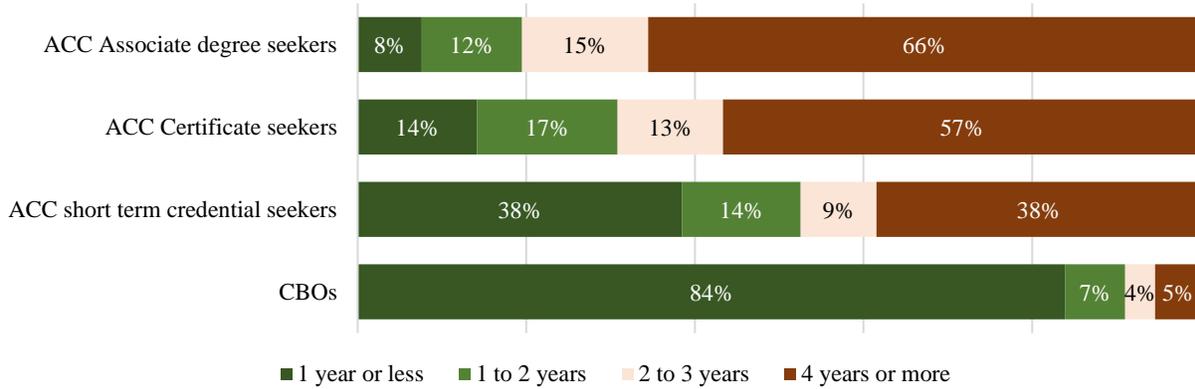
Whereas the large majority (84%) of CBO completers finished within a year, a majority of ACC Associate Degree seekers (66%) and ACC Certificate seekers (57%) took four or more years to complete (Figure 5). The differences across programs in how long it takes to complete will play a significant role as the region attempts to reach its target completion numbers.

Assuming a similar distribution for the time it takes for future completers in each program, it will take four or more years for 66% of Year One newly enrolled ACC Associate Degree seekers (1,061 individuals) to complete their program and thus while they will be counted as enrollees throughout the MCWP Evaluation, they would not be included as completers until after the regional initiative measures whether it has reached its target goals.

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CBOs from the Baseline Year completed more participants in Year One.

**Figure 5. Year One Completers, by Time to Completion**



Completers across all organization types roughly matched the same demographic profile as current enrollees in Year One (Table 2 and Table 1).

**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Completers, by Organization Type**

	All Completers			
	ACC Associate seekers	ACC Certificate seekers	ACC Short-term Cred seekers	CBOs
<b>Age Group</b>				
21 and younger	71%	64%	59%	22%
22 - 39 years	24%	29%	28%	50%
40 - 59 years	5%	7%	12%	24%
60 years & older	0%	0%	1%	4%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	52%	62%	44%	42%
Female	48%	38%	56%	57%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Non-Hispanic White	52%	50%	47%	23%
Non-Hispanic Black	6%	6%	13%	28%
Hispanic	32%	38%	32%	38%
Non-Hispanic Other	9%	5%	7%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>982</b>

## CREDENTIALS

Certificate and credential information is notoriously difficult to track and poses its own unique challenges. For many of these middle skills programs, the goal of training is to prepare participants to qualify for and receive some credential for use in the job market. Completion of a

program may not indicate full preparedness for a desired credential. Further complicating matters, the tightness of some job-specific labor markets means that firms may hire an individual who has yet to receive a credential but is skilled enough to perform the work. Where a credential is earned after completion of the program by taking a certification exam, organizations not responsible for issuing the credential are often forced to rely on students to return with evidence.

This issue cuts across the type of program, including both ACC and CBOs. Occasionally instructors for specific programs are certified to proctor these credential tests or are connected to the credentialing community and can bring instructors into the class to proctor an exam. In these cases, programs likely have a clearer sense of who completed and received a credential. Some types of middle-skills careers begin with the first of several credentials, each building (or stacking) up the skills of the worker and sometimes leading to licensure.

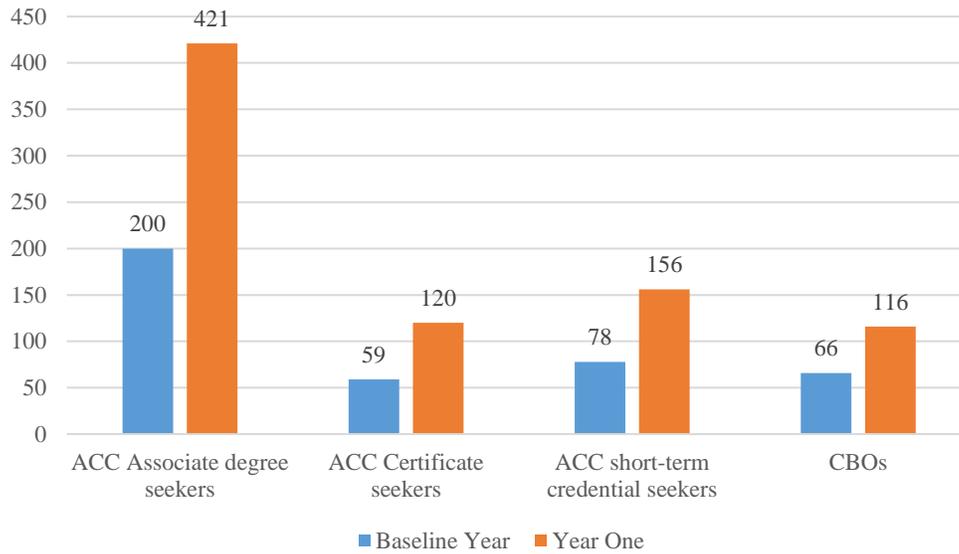
CBOs often rely on third-party credentials because they are often industry-specific, in high demand, and rigorous. CBOs can issue course completion information, which serves as an indicator of skills learned by participants, but this should be distinguished from the industry certified or recognized credential. Being a community college, ACC provides a credential to completers, but that too should be distinguished from third-party credentials, though it may hold greater weight in the job market than an indicator of course completion. The issue of what counts as an appropriate credential and the extent to which an organization has direct access to these credentials should be a prime topic for the region to discuss in the future.

Every individual (100%) who completed a program at ACC received a credential (Figure 6).<sup>21</sup> Increases in the number of ACC credentials earned matches the number of completers in each year for those solely attending ACC.

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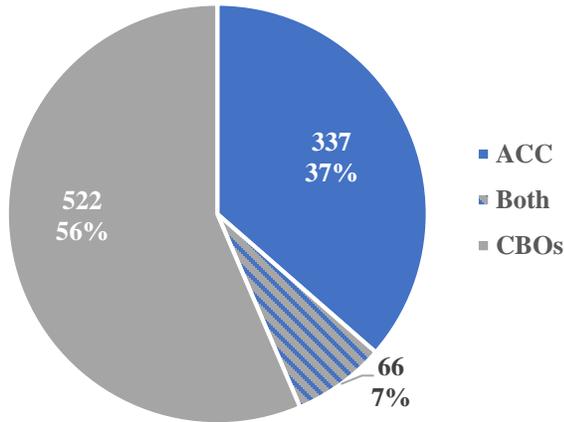
<sup>21</sup> Note that these figures represent estimates. The ACC dataset only included ACC students enrolled in the 3 program sectors of interest. Thus, when we say a CBO participant earned an ACC credential in the past 2 years, we mean a CBO participant earned an ACC credential in these 3 program sectors in the past two years. We only have 2-year history for the 2015-16 completers. For 2014-15 completers, we only have a 1-year history. For 2013-14 completers, we only have < 1-year history.

**Figure 6. Number of Completers Earning an ACC Credential**

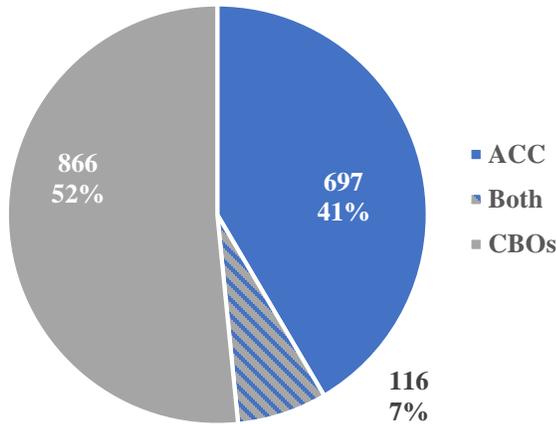


Completers from a CBO might also have received some form of credential (an Associate degree, a Certification, or a shorter-term credential) through ACC. Researchers linked all CBO completers with data from ACC to determine whether an individual enrolled in a CBO had received an ACC credential within the year they completed their CBO program while they were co-enrolled in both. For the Baseline Year, a total of 522 individuals (56%) completed a CBO program, with 337 (37%) completing an ACC program, while 66 (7%) completed a CBO program and received some type of credential from ACC. For Year One, a total of 866 (52%) individuals completed a CBO program, with 697 (41%) completing an ACC program, while 116 (7%) completed a CBO program and received some type of credential from ACC (Figures 7 and 8). While the number of completers increased, the share of all completers who finished a CBO program and completed at ACC remained the same between the Baseline Year and Year One.

**Figure 7. Baseline Year Completers, by Organization**



**Figure 8. Year One Completers, by Organization**



Researchers look forward to obtaining consistent and reliable credential data from all participating organizations in future years to more clearly establish the relationship between receipt of a middle-skills credential and labor market performance.

## **EMPLOYMENT<sup>22</sup>**

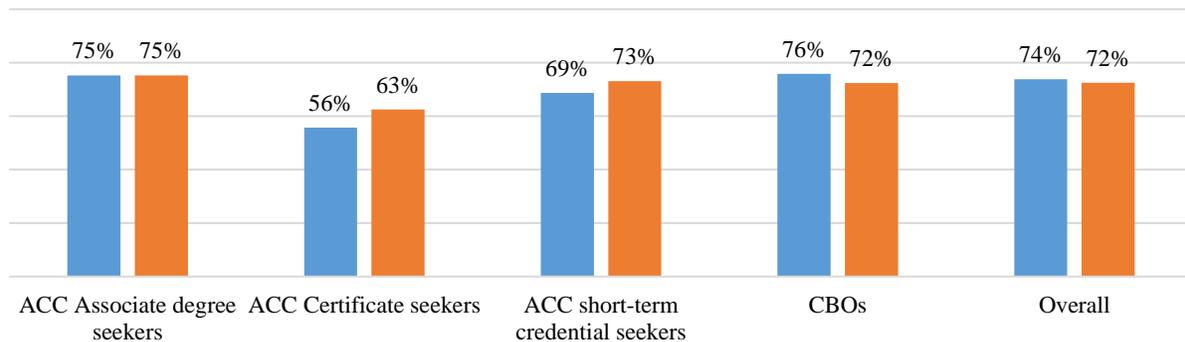
A chief objective of these programs is to ensure individuals can find employment after training; CBOs are often mandated to encourage and verify this employment to secure ongoing

<sup>22</sup> Employment determined by linking individuals to their TWC Unemployment Insurance wage record reported to the state by their employer. This data includes all jobs worked and all money earned in regular employment. UI wage records do not indicate how many hours a week and individual worked.

funding. In the Baseline Report, researchers examined the employment outcomes of individuals the year after they completed their education or training. This report focuses on employment *in the first quarter after completing a program* and both Baseline Year and Year One employment and earnings information use this metric. Employment and earnings outcomes for Baseline Year completers indicates that the first quarter of employment represents the lowest share of employment for the year following program completion; thus figures for Year One likely represent low-end estimates of employment and earnings the year after completers finished a program. Follow-up reports on all MCWP cohorts will continue to track these individuals up to and beyond a full year after completing their program.

The share of employed completers the first quarter after completing their program remained relatively stable between the Baseline Year (74%) and Year One (72%). ACC Associate Degree completers (75%), ACC short term certificate completers (73%) and CBO completers (72%) all found employment at similar rates (Figure 9). In both years, ACC certificate completers found employment at the lowest rates in relation to other types of programs.<sup>23</sup>

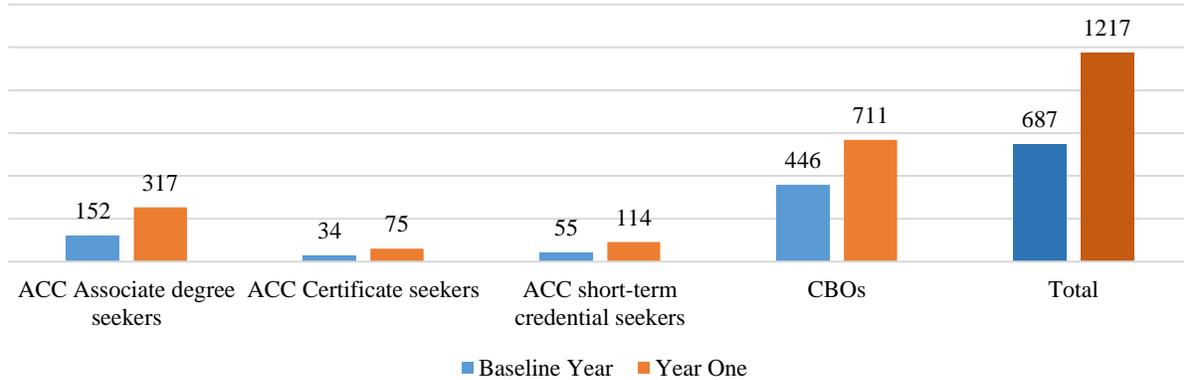
**Figure 9. Share of Completers Employed In the First Quarter After Completion, by Year and Organization Type**



<sup>23</sup> These programs include training for some occupations that might be less likely to be included in Texas UI wage records, including a commercial driver’s license (CDL) truck driver certification. Truck drivers who work as contract labor, as true for all who work in contract labor, do not have their income reported in UI.

These employment rates contribute different numbers of employees to the region, with the largest contribution coming from CBOs, with 711 completers finding employment (Figure 11). The number of ACC completers, across all types of degrees, who found employment more than doubled between the Baseline Year and Year One.

**Figure 10. Number of Completers Employed One Year Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type**



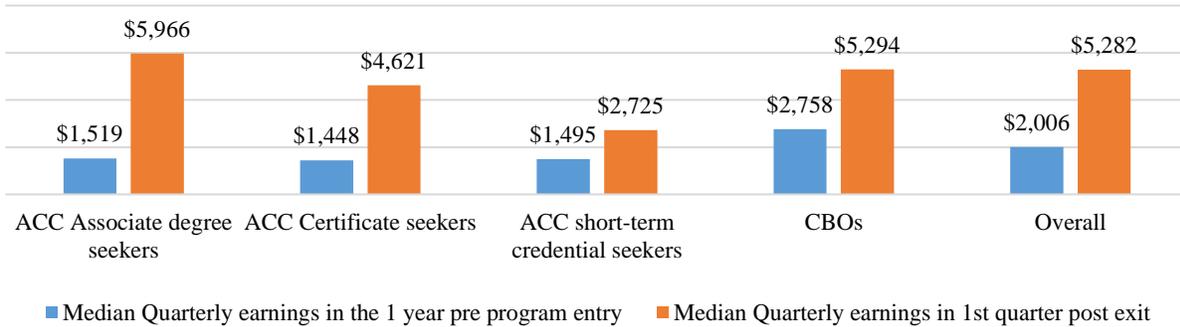
## EARNINGS

### *Baseline Year Median Earnings*

The quarterly median earnings for MCWP completers in the Baseline Year who found employment in the first quarter was \$5,282 an increase of \$3,276 from the median of the four quarters prior to enrolling in a program (Figure 11).<sup>24</sup> This represents a 163% increase from their pre-entry average quarterly earnings. ACC Associate Degree completers earned a median of \$5,966 in the quarter after finishing, the highest median income among all programs. CBO completers earned a median of \$5,294 in the first quarter after finishing.

<sup>24</sup> Researchers use the median value for these calculations since using the average is more susceptible to influence by outliers. The median represents the value in the middle of the distribution of all values, such that half of individuals measured will earn less than the median and half of the individuals earn more than the median.

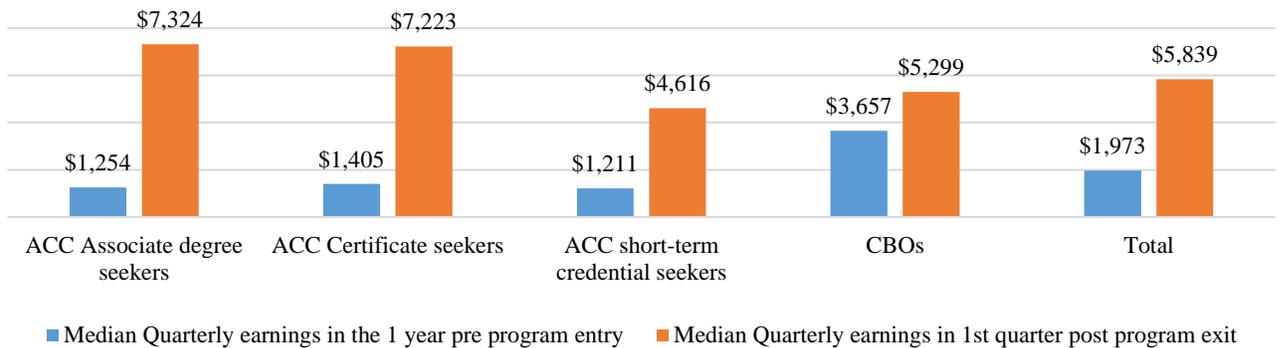
**Figure 11. Median Quarterly Earnings for Employed Baseline Year Completers**



***Year One Median Earnings***

The quarterly median earnings for MCWP completers in Year One who found employment in the first semester was \$5,839 an increase of \$3,866 from the median of the four quarters prior to enrolling in a program (Figure 12). This represents a 196% increase from their pre-entry average quarterly earnings. ACC Associate Degree completers earned a median of \$7,324 in the quarter after finishing and ACC Certificate completers earned \$7,223, the highest two median incomes among all programs. CBO completers earned a median of \$5,299 in the quarter after finishing.

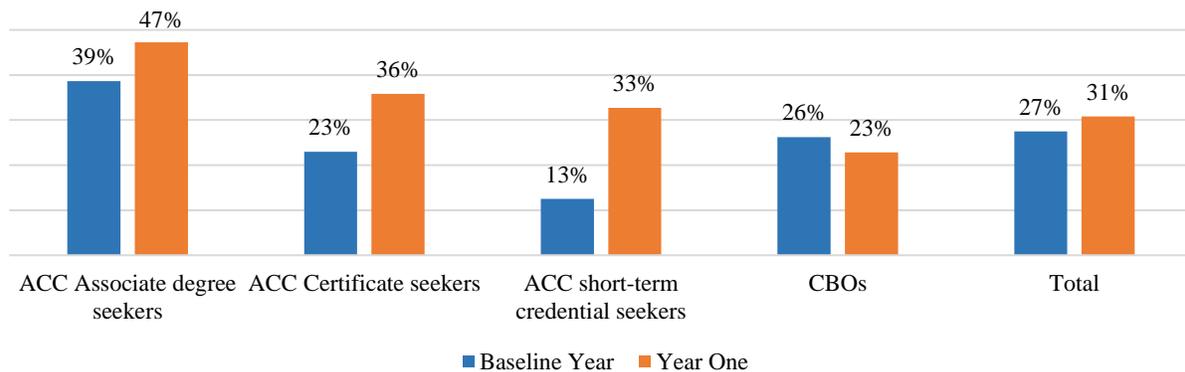
**Figure 12. Median Quarterly Earnings for Employed Year One Completers**



## EARNINGS ABOVE POVERTY<sup>25</sup>

The share of program completers moved out of poverty (defined as earnings above 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines) in the first quarter after completing a program increased from 27% in the Baseline Year to 31% in Year One (Figure 13). Just under half (47%) of ACC Associate Degree completers earned more than poverty wages in the first quarter after completing their program. Roughly a third of ACC completers earning a certificate or short-term credential earned above poverty wages in the first quarter after completing, while under a quarter of CBO completers did so.

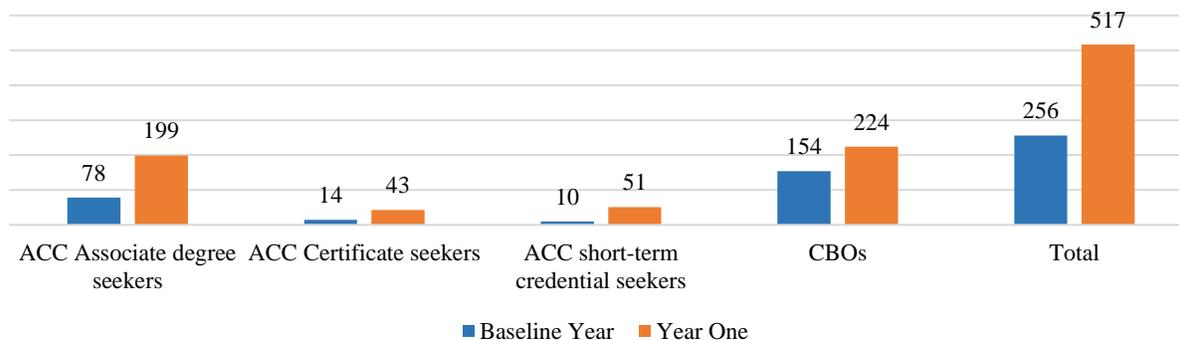
**Figure 13. The Share of Completers Earning Above 200% FPG One Quarter Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type**



In Year One, the region’s measured workforce system including ACC, brought 517 individuals out of poverty (Figure 14). In the Baseline Year, the system brought 256 individuals out of poverty. The number earning above poverty shows that CBOs contribute 224 while ACC contributes 293 individuals to our regional effort to move individuals out of poverty.

<sup>25</sup> Researchers defined poverty as any family, including a family of one, earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines FPG. Families move out of poverty when they earn more than 200% of the FPG.

**Figure 14. The Number of Completers Earning Above 200% FPG One Quarter Following Completion, by Year and Organization Type**



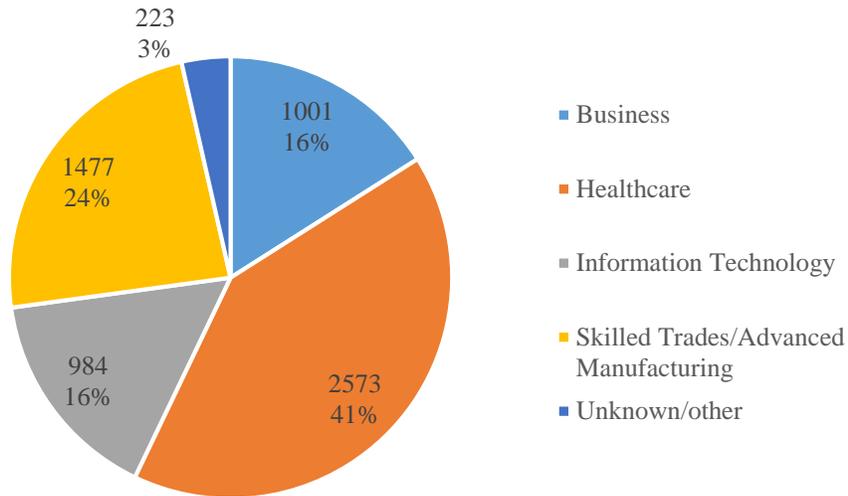
The programs seek to provide skills and knowledge allowing an individual to increase their earnings in the labor market, both short-term but also longer term. Individuals who might not have found high-wage jobs in the first quarter should still have relevant employer-ready skills and, as demonstrated in the Baseline Report, continue to experience earnings increases beyond those earned in their first quarter after program completion.

## OUTCOMES BY SECTOR

The MCWP focuses on specific industry sectors in an effort to meet the local employer demand for skilled labor and to ensure that individuals seeking training receive it in a sector for which employment and earning prospects are positive. In Year One the region enrolled 6,027 individuals, with the largest share of enrollees (41%) selecting a program related to healthcare, a quarter of enrollees receiving training in skilled trades and/or advanced manufacturing, with the remainder of enrollees with identifiable sectoral training enrolling in information technology (16%) or business education (16%).<sup>26</sup>

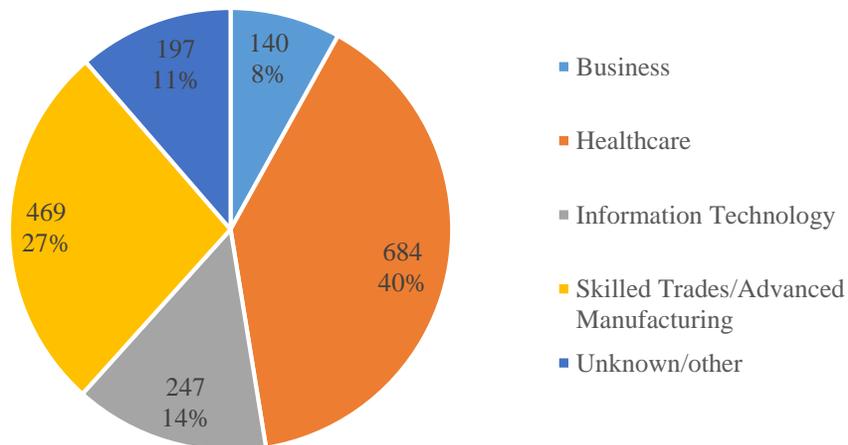
<sup>26</sup> Some programs provided incomplete information on the specific sector targeted and while a sector could not be assigned, the individual did enroll in a MCWP program.

**Figure 15. Enrollment by Sector**



Of the 1,679 completers in Year One, the majority (40%) completed a program with a focus on an occupation in healthcare, over a quarter (27%) completed a program focused on skilled trades and/or advanced manufacturing employment, with smaller shares completing a program in either information technology (14%) or business (8%).<sup>27</sup>

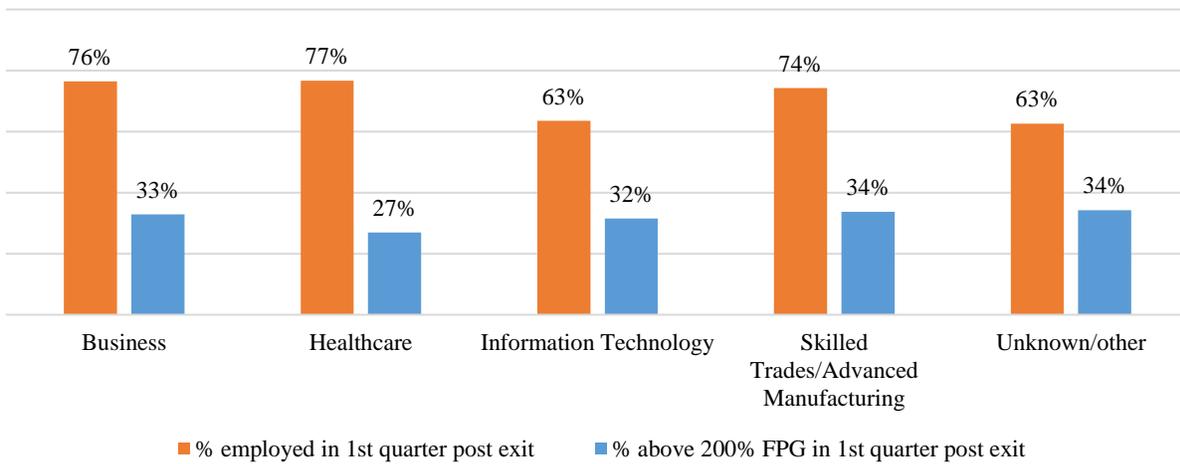
**Figure 16. Completion by Sector**



<sup>27</sup> Some programs provided incomplete information on the specific sector targeted and while a sector could not be assigned, the individual did complete the program. At ACC, this can indicate an individual enrolled in a MCWP program, completed that program, and then received a more general Associate Degree title.

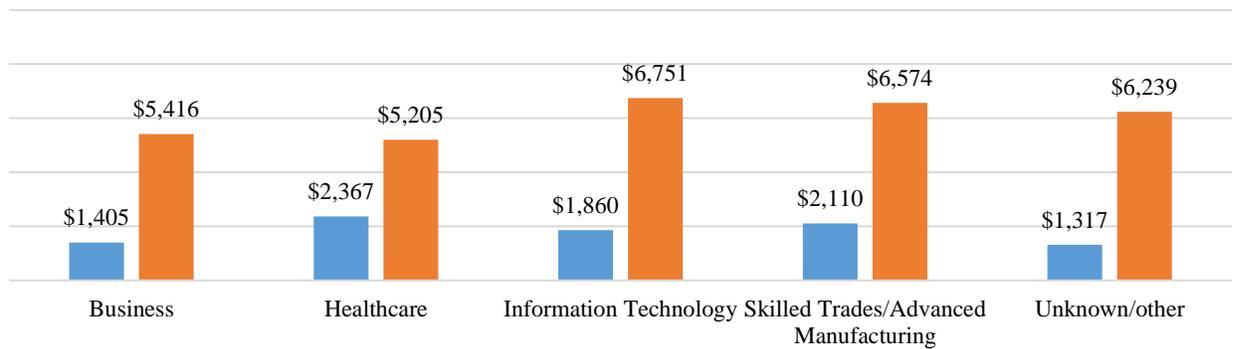
Employment outcomes for completers by sector show that roughly three fourths of completers found employment in the first quarter after completion if they completed a program in business, healthcare, or skilled trades and/or manufacturing, while individuals completing information technology (63%) or with an unknown sector (63%) found employment at slightly lower rates (Figure 17). Roughly a third of completers in nearly all sectors earned above 200% FPG in the first quarter post exit except for those in the healthcare (27%) sector, with just over a fourth doing so.

**Figure 17. Employment Outcomes of Completers, by Year and Training Sector**



Median quarterly earnings in their first quarter after completion differed depending on the sector of training completed, with individuals completing programs in business and healthcare making median quarterly earnings in the first quarter after completing their program of just over \$5,000 and individuals completing programs in information technology and skilled trades and/or advanced manufacturing earning a median just over \$6,500 (Figure 18).

**Figure 18. Median Quarterly Earnings in First Quarter Post Program Exit for Employed Completers**



■ Median Quarterly earnings in the 1 year pre program entry    ■ Median Quarterly earnings in 1st quarter post program exit

## TRAINING PROVIDER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE MCWP

### OVERVIEW

This section presents a brief description of the training provider program developments in support of the Master Community Workforce Plan during Year One.<sup>28</sup> Many of the new initiatives that began during or just before Year One will continue to build into future initiatives and so, where possible, this context is provided. For example, Workforce Solutions Capital Area's Bridging the Talent Gap initiative, in partnership with the Greater Austin Chamber, the College Hub, Peloton U, and ACC, is working with Austin employers to identify current employees who want to pursue further education to help employers braid tuition assistance with other funding sources and connecting their employees to wrap-around services to enhance education completion prospects. This began with a survey asking more than 100 employers in the Austin region about, among several topics, their tuition assistance policies intended to support this initiative. The survey portion occurred during part of Year One and Year Two of the MCWP. Thus several updates in the section below mention the current year because efforts started in Year One continue.

These types of new developments and collaborations are critical to scaling up individual programmatic efforts to support low-income families in the region. This section of the report includes three parts. First, researchers provide a description of what types of new efforts regional organizations initiated in direct support of or aligned with the MCWP. Next, researchers provide an overview of ongoing workforce development connections across two MCWP participating organizations. Finally, researchers discuss ongoing collaborative efforts across multiple organizations. Because these efforts are varied and many, researchers provide brief descriptions to update the region.

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<sup>28</sup> Information on all Baseline Year training service providers, their target populations, and methods were provided in the Baseline Report. This year, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area also joined the MCWP; information on this organization is provided in Appendix X of this report. A forthcoming supplemental report will provide a continually updated list of currently participating training service providers each year.

## ***Developments in Support of the MCWP***

### ***Workforce Solutions Capital Area***

WFSCA coordinates regional efforts as the backbone organization leading the MCWP. Leading this effort includes supporting a number of collaborative efforts presented in a subsequent section of this report.

In partnership with WFSCA and KVUE, Texas Mutual launched Trade Up Texas, a six month awareness campaign for careers in the trade industry. Short videos provide individual experiences in skilled trades. Local opportunities were provided through an ‘Apprenticeship Showcase’ where individuals could learn about these types of job opportunities and the training needed to qualify for them.

WFSCA deployed an opportunity youth career fair, providing individuals access to in-demand career opportunities as well as the ability to job shadow with local employers.

WFSCA continued to utilize a Training Effectiveness Matrix tool to measure the return on investment training for each contracted program provider to allow them to make clearer decisions on the effectiveness of each provider.

### ***Skillpoint Alliance***

Staff responded to the needs of electrical employers and updated the curriculum to support the skills needed by the industry; increasing the program efficiency and changing the course structure from eight to four weeks. With this new training model Skillpoint intends to increase the number of classes offered and participants trained.

In FY 2018, Skillpoint was awarded a grant to develop and implement a mentorship program. Skillpoint staff with experience in high school and secondary education mentorship programs designed the local model. The goal of the program is to strengthen industry employer partnerships and help participants navigate their initial entrance into the industry. The mentorship model relies upon industry employers to participate as mentors to inform curriculum, and provide relevant conversations with participants about the industry and the culture of the industry.

The CNA course curriculum has been updated to include more time for certification exam preparation and a shorter waiting period between graduation and certification testing.

### ***Goodwill Career and Technical Academy***

The GCTA was able to expand its course offerings from four TWC approved courses to six, which included the addition of PC Tech Training and Phlebotomy to the existing offerings of

Nurse Aide, Commercial Truck Driving, Building Maintenance, and Electrical Helper.

In 2018, the success of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Capital Campaign allowed GCTA to expand facilities and provide scholarships to community members for occupational training.

To reopen doors to employment, GWCT is coordinating with the UT Austin Law School to expand opportunities for individuals to receive services through the Texas Law Expunction Project and the Driver's License Recovery Project.

### ***American YouthWorks***

Recent upgrades to the health corps equipment combined with facility improvements enabled AYW to become an official training provider, reducing the time between program graduation and certification testing.

A Mentor Coordinator works with area employers to implement the Professional Networking Partnership (PNP) program. Through the PNP employers have an opportunity to meet students, assist in developing interview skills, and offer job shadowing opportunities.

### ***Capital IDEA***

Capital IDEA offers a four-part CareerUp video series as well as an online application and dashboard for prospective students to track their application progress.

Union Partner Program: Capital IDEA provides support for students entering Electrician, Plumbers and Pipefitters apprenticeship programs: A minimum of two years of union fees, professional tools, and additional training costs.

### ***Austin Community College***

Three ACC programs were selected to highlight in this report: the Continuing Education departments' innovative model for offering advanced manufacturing training at regional correctional facilities; an initiative to expand Earn and Learn opportunities in IT careers for low-income students; and an Adult Career Pathways program that combines courses in English language, high school equivalency, or college preparation with technical training that leads to an industry recognized certification.

#### ***Advanced Manufacturing Training at Regional Correctional Facilities***

ACC developed and implemented an innovative training model at the Lockhart Correctional Facility for Women to offer certification as a manufacturing production technician. Participants receive industry recognized instruction on core competencies of manufacturing production, including four individual certificate modules on safety; quality practices and

measurement; manufacturing processes and production; and maintenance awareness. The program is 14 weeks long and provides 160 hours of instruction. The Austin Regional Manufacturing Association (ARMA) is collaborating with ACC to connect program completers who intend to stay in Central Texas upon release with area second chance employers. Continuing Education intends to expand programming at the Lockhart facility this year, as well as implement training programs at the Kyle Correctional Center, the Hays Juvenile Justice Center, the Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center, and the Travis State Jail facility.

Funding for the various training programs is typically secured through contracts with the correctional facility, but support can also include a braided funding model leveraging TWC Adult Education and Literacy funds from local area grantees, and federal WIOA funds distributed through the local workforce boards.

Training programs offered in correctional facilities encounter unique barriers:

- the lack of internet access in correctional facilities requires the securing of paper curriculum and course materials – materials typically available only online;
- challenges in securing participant documents required to qualify for WIOA funding, including social security cards, HS transcripts, and birth certificates;
- the inconsistencies of individual participant sentencing time-frames; and
- the development of relationships with fair chance employers in the various communities where participants hope to return after their release to seek employment.

“Most [incarcerated] folks are really interested in what they can do to better their lives so they can do something better when they go home...one student has petitioned to stay at the prison longer [beyond her sentence term] in order to complete the class.” Donald Tracy, Director, ACC Continuing Education, Business Operations and Marketing.

#### *Earn-and-Learn Opportunities in IT Careers for Low-Income Students*

ACC is creating new internal systems to increase the number of Earn-and-Learn pathways that provide paid work experience for students while they complete their college programs (e.g. internships and apprenticeship opportunities). A current example is the IT Career ACCelerator program offered in partnership with Capital IDEA and the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA). The program offers the following majors: Software Tester, Local Area Network (LAN) Administrator, and PC Support Technician. HACA provides internships for

predominantly low-income students who have little or no IT experience. Working as a cohort, these students repair and update donated computers that are used in HACA's computer courses. Capital IDEA provides wrap-around support services to students, as well as job and additional internship placement services.

“The program increased IT student retention numbers, semester-to-semester, between 80 and 90 percent and helped expand IT internships from one semester to two semesters.” David Borden, Director of Career ACCelerator.

### *Adult Career Pathways Program*

The adult career pathways program combines courses in English language, high school equivalency, or college preparation with technical training that leads to an industry recognized certification. Certifications are available in several areas: business, information technology, design, manufacturing, construction and applied technologies. Career Pathways classes are co-taught by an expert in the pathway field of study and an adult education specialist. Classes and services are free for the majority of students, with funding that is provided mainly through WIOA funds.

### *Strategic Plan Update*

ACC officially updated its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan to align the college's access, persistence, and completion goals with state and regional priorities a project that had been underway for some time. ACC also disaggregated all measures and outcome targets by race and ethnicity to help close equity gaps and place all students on guided pathways to reach their educational and career goals. To realize these objectives, ACC will apply data informed decision making to guide policies and practices to create and sustain an environment where all students feel welcome and supported on their college path.

## ***Workforce Development Program Connections***

### **Partnerships and collaborations with Capital IDEA**

- Capital IDEA staff attend Skillpoint hiring events to recruit CNA course completers to continue their education and training along the nursing career pathway with Capital IDEA support.
- Capital IDEA coordinates and supports a College Prep Academy, offered at the ACC Highland Campus, an intensive 6.5 hour per day, five-day a week, 12 week program designed to build math, reading, writing, and study skills.
- Ninety-five percent of Capital IDEA students enroll in ACC. Capital IDEA also has staff and offices at the ACC Highland campus.
- Capital IDEA collaborates with the ACC Career ACCelerator to provide paid internships to IT students.<sup>29</sup>
- Workforce Solutions Capital Areas' (WFSCA) WIOA program partners with Capital IDEA to provide funding for some of the participants training related costs.
- WFSCA provides child care services for Capital IDEA participants living in Travis County.

### **Partnerships and collaborations across other organizations:**

- American YouthWorks provides education and skills training for LifeWorks participants.
- Austin Area Urban League participants receive technical training in partnership with Goodwill and ACC.
- Austin Career Institute partners with the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas to implement an English @ Work curriculum and to coordinate the services of an AmeriCorps volunteer to assist with interview and resume writing, online job applications, and job placement.

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<sup>29</sup> Entry-level IT jobs may pay less than the target wage, but the career path is expected to quickly lead to occupations that surpass that rate. As the IT Career Expressway ramps up in the next year, it will rebalance the occupational prevalence of healthcare occupations. Jackobs attributes the model to the Workforce Potential Project, conducted by the Ray Marshall Center in 2012 on behalf of the Austin Area Research Association (AARO). <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/business/acc-programs-aim-build-a-fast-track-to-higher-pay/npbsx/>

## ***Austin Area Collaborative Efforts***

### ***Workforce Master plan Executive Council***

To ensure that the Austin Region continues to have an actionable and accountable workforce plan, Workforce Solutions Capital Area formed the regional Workforce Development Executive Council, in coordination with Workforce Solutions Rural Capital and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. This Council, comprised of policy makers, private sector leaders, educators, funders and elected officials has three primary objectives: a) better data visibility into the education and workforce system; b) alignment of resources to shared goals; and c) quantifiable business engagement that results in a better prepared local talent supply. The Workforce Development Executive Council will serve as a guiding and monitoring entity, continuously assessing best practices, developing sector-level strategies and working cooperatively to achieve the goals of the Plan. The Council convened for the first time in September of 2019 and will continue to meet twice annually. They will also be responsible for recommendations related to the next version of the region’s Master Community Workforce Plan. For the first year of the Executive Council (2019-2020), the Co-Chairs are Austin Mayor Steve Adler and Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt.

### ***Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative***

*Workforce Solutions Capital Area* serves as the backbone organization for the Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative. A consortium of Travis County/Austin-area community organizations working to collectively address the systemic barriers that effect the participation of youth (ages 16 to 24) in education and employment.<sup>30</sup> Participating organizations include: American YouthWorks, Austin Community College, Capital IDEA, Goodwill, and Skillpoint Alliance.

### ***Youth Employment Partnership***

The Youth Employment Partnership (YEP), a *Workforce Solutions Capital Area-funded program*, is a collaboration of four community partners whose goal is to help young people transition from high school to post-secondary education, training, or suitable employment.<sup>31</sup> Partner organizations: American YouthWorks, Community in Schools, Goodwill, and LifeWorks.

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<sup>30</sup> For additional information see: <http://www.wfscapitalarea.com/YouthServices/AOYC>

<sup>31</sup> For additional information see: <http://www.wfscapitalarea.com/YouthServices/YEP>

### ***Central Texas Healthcare Partnership***

In January of 2019, WFSCA assumed the management of The Healthcare Workforce Alliance of Central Texas, a membership organization that brings together industry and education. Through organized clinical placements hwACT establishes standards for compliance within the region while collaborating as an organization to help address healthcare issues. This work brings together higher education partners and industry to further the work of the Healthcare Sector Partnership which seeks to align local training efforts to meet employer demands for a diverse, trained healthcare workforce.

### ***Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable***

The Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable is a coalition working to promote a community that values and supports equity for formerly incarcerated persons and individuals with criminal histories. To achieve this goal, the Roundtable addresses the challenges to reentry and reintegration faced by formerly incarcerated individuals.<sup>32</sup> Planning Council members include representatives from ACC, Goodwill, and WFSCA.

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<sup>32</sup> For additional information see: <https://www.reentryroundtable.net/>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With just over 6,000 individuals participating in workforce system training programs in Year One, with 1,679 completing a program, and 517 completers earning above 200% FPG one quarter after completing a program, reaching the goal of 10,000 low-income residents earning above 200% FPG wages will continue to require effort across the entire spectrum of the workforce system as described in this report. Changes in enrollment numbers, tracking timely completion rates, securing good employment, and providing supports to completing participants to ensure they reach their earnings goals are the broad fronts to which this effort will need to focus. A number of regional strategies appear likely to continue to boost enrollment, completion, employment, and earnings outcomes:

- ❖ *Leverage existing opportunities through direct enrollment relationship:* Formalizing direct recruitment/enrollment to ACC from CBO training and support service providers, as well as high school career and technical education programs that specifically serve low-income individuals and families would likely improve greater uptake of the existing programs.
- ❖ *Co-enroll students to further increase completion rates:* Baseline report data demonstrates that higher shares of completers who co-enrolled at ACC and a CBO earn above 200% FPG than those in just one of the two. By co-enrolling ACC students in support services such as Capital IDEA and WIOA case management (in the case on continuing education), students are likely to receive support and resources leading them to complete their program and earning above poverty wages.
- ❖ *Promote unified pathways and a shared outreach model:* For many regional CBOs and even some of the ACC programs, recruitment remains a challenge. Low-income individuals and families often possess a deficit of knowledge when it comes to understanding the opportunities for training and education available to them, how to apply and how to pay for it, as well as what job and earnings they can expect to attain upon completion. By developing shared outreach, cross-training staff and continuously updating partners in the Master Plan on their respective services, the region should be able to increase the number of individuals aware of all their options, leading to improved

assessment of their optimal pathway, leading to increased enrollment and eventually to completion and employment.

- ❖ *Replicate best practice essential skills across the partnership.* Interview and communication skills, time management, money management and tech literacy all contribute to greater placement outcomes for participants. For organizations that teach these skills well, their model can be shared and replicated with other training and support organizations.
- ❖ *Engage training partners to provide hybrid models of training, such as apprenticeships to provide low-income students the opportunity to earn and learn from day one.* For many low-income families, taking time off from work to learn or re-train is likely a difficult option. When it's a choice between providing for their family or increasing their skillsets through training and education, short-term costs are often too great in relation to the long term wage gain. Apprenticeships, which will be measured in subsequent years in this ongoing evaluation, offer an opportunity to both earn and learn at the same time.
- ❖ *Learn from one another:* Program completers receive greater labor market impact for an Associate Degree, but it takes a long time to complete. CBOs effectively train participants, but don't get the same aggregate bump in earnings. Both organizations should learn which mechanisms work for the other they could emulate or coordinate on, for example creating mechanisms to identify current and new ACC students who might benefit from CBO programs, or developing appropriate transition processes for CBO completers to enroll in a related next-step ACC program.
- ❖ *Regional Deep Dive on Credentials:* Create a middle skills credential collaborative including RMC and both ACC and CBO participants to determine how credential data is collected and develop recommendations for improvements in process.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> From the Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan (June 2017)  
<http://www.wfscapitalarea.com/Portals/0/all-content/Master%20Community%20Workforce%20Plan/AustinMetroAreaMasterCommunityWorkforcePlan.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> Each organization, in coordination with WFSCA and RMC, determined which programs to include in the baseline report, including which programs engaged in occupational skills training. Information on the process for identifying low-income individuals is included in the technical appendix.