

Research to Practice Partnerships:

Lessons Learned from the HPOG University Partnership Research Grants

OFA HPOG Grantee Meeting

July 29, 2021



Northwestern University





Welcome & Overview

Panelists

- **Philip Hong**, Ph.D., Director, Center for Research on Self-Sufficiency, Loyola University of Chicago School of Social Work
- **Jessica Santos**, Ph.D., Director of Community-Engaged Research, Institute for Economic and Racial Equity, Brandeis University
- **Lauren Tighe**, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University
- **Jackie Rhodes**, Senior Manager, Workforce Innovations and Poverty Solutions, ICF (moderator)

Objectives

Through this session, we aim to:

- Learn about the HPOG University Partnerships (HPOG UP) project, and how the HPOG UP researchers worked with grantees The Workplace, CAP Tulsa, and Chicago State University to grow their partnerships and use early research findings to inform and improve their programming.
- Discuss recommendations for the future of health care/career pathways training programs based on the findings from each HPOG UP project.

Some Background

The [HPOG University Partnerships \(HPOG UP\) 2.0](#) research grants supported research and evaluation studies focused on questions relevant to HPOG Program goals and objectives, from September 2016 – September 2020.

HPOG UP 2.0 included 3 grantees:

- Brandeis University
- Loyola University of Chicago
- Northwestern University

About the HPOG UP Grantees

Brandeis
partnering with The
WorkPlace
(Bridgeport, CT)

**Health CareeRx
Academy**

The Workplace Health CareeRx Academy is built on a partnership of health care providers, educators, trainers, and community-based organizations and provides occupational training, work readiness, and other support to aspiring and current health care workers in Fairfield County, CT.

As a result of HPOG UP, the Health CareeRx Academy incorporated a series of career advancement modules into their workforce training program.

Loyola
partnering with
**Chicago State
University**

STEP UP

The Partnership to STEP UP in Health Careers (STEP UP) is a career laddering program that provides educational training for Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) recipients and low-income eligible individuals in high demand healthcare fields. STEP UP is operated by Chicago State University in partnership with South Suburban Community College and Metropolitan Family Services to provide training and career laddering in Community Health, Health Information Administration, Medical Assistant, Nursing, Personal Care Aid, and Occupational Therapy.

Northwestern
partnering with the
**Community Action
Project of Tulsa (CAP
Tulsa)**

CareerAdvance

CareerAdvance is a two-generation programing serving low-income parents and children together by offering education and training in the healthcare sector to parents while their children are enrolled in Head Start, other early childhood education or care, or early elementary school

The program provides numerous additional supportive services to families.



This session summarizes key takeaways from a new report that shares lessons learned and early findings from the HPOG UP 2.0 research grants.

The report was written by ICF in collaboration with the 3 grantees, and funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE).



New Report

Research to Practice Partnerships: Early Findings and Lessons Learned from the HPOG University Partnership 2.0 Research Grants

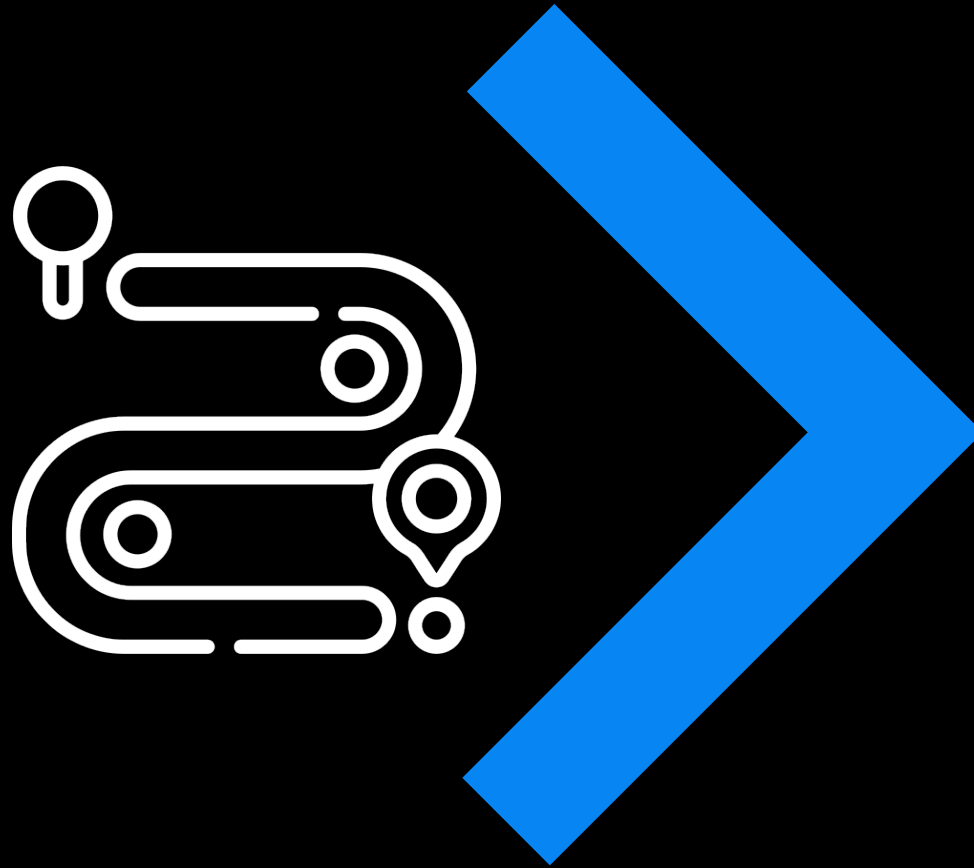
HPOG and the Translation of Research to Practice





Key Themes

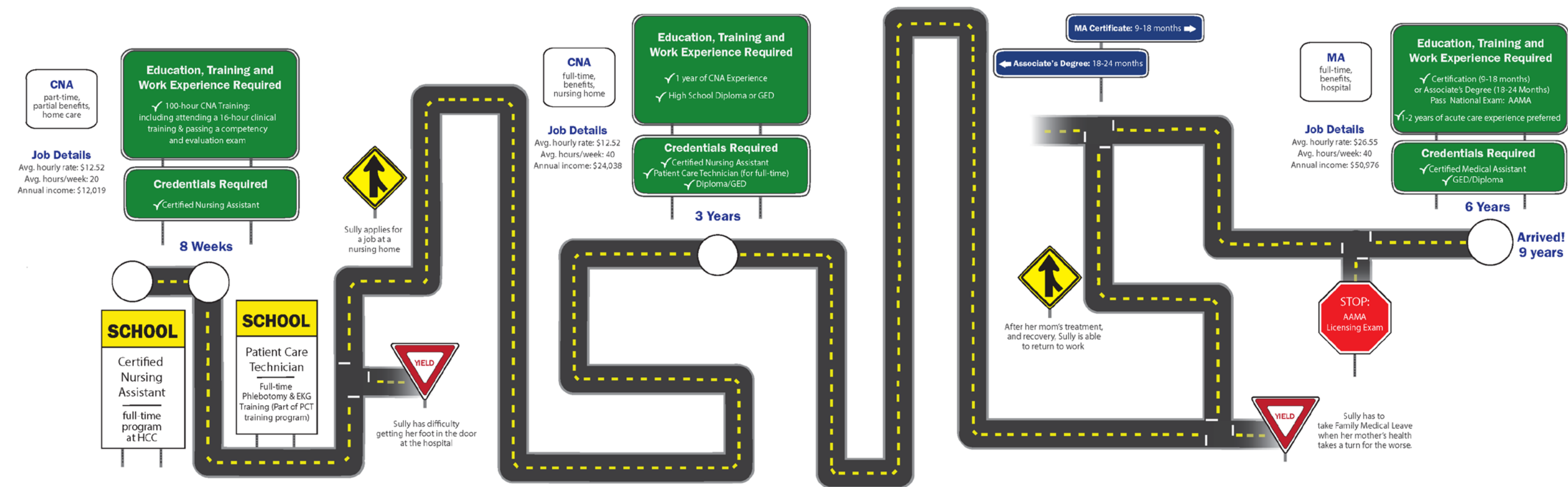
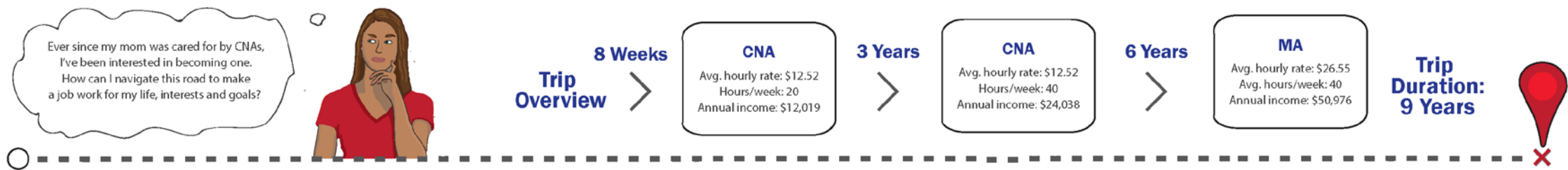
Theme 1: Tailored Training and Individualized Career Pathways



- Adapt pathways to individual circumstances
- Support individuals through advancement challenges

Research in Action: Brandeis | The WorkPlace, Health CareerRx Academy

Sully's Career Map: Certified Nursing Assistant to Medical Assistant



Micro-Advancements and Career Mapping


_____ 's Career Map: _____ to _____

What motivates me to work in healthcare?

Trip Overview > **Time** **Job:** _____
Avg hourly rate: _____
Hours/week: _____
Annual Income: _____

> **Time** **Job:** _____
Avg hourly rate: _____
Hours/week: _____
Annual Income: _____

> **Time** **Job:** _____
Avg hourly rate: _____
Hours/week: _____
Annual Income: _____

Trip Duration: _____ **Time** 

What skills and experience do I already have that will help me?

Where am I starting?

Job: _____
Time: _____
Benefits: _____
Location: _____

Job Details:

Education, Training, and Work Experience Required

Credentials Required

Years/months

Job: _____
Time: _____
Benefits: _____
Location: _____

Job Details:

Education, Training, and Work Experience Required

Credentials Required

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Job: _____
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Job Details:

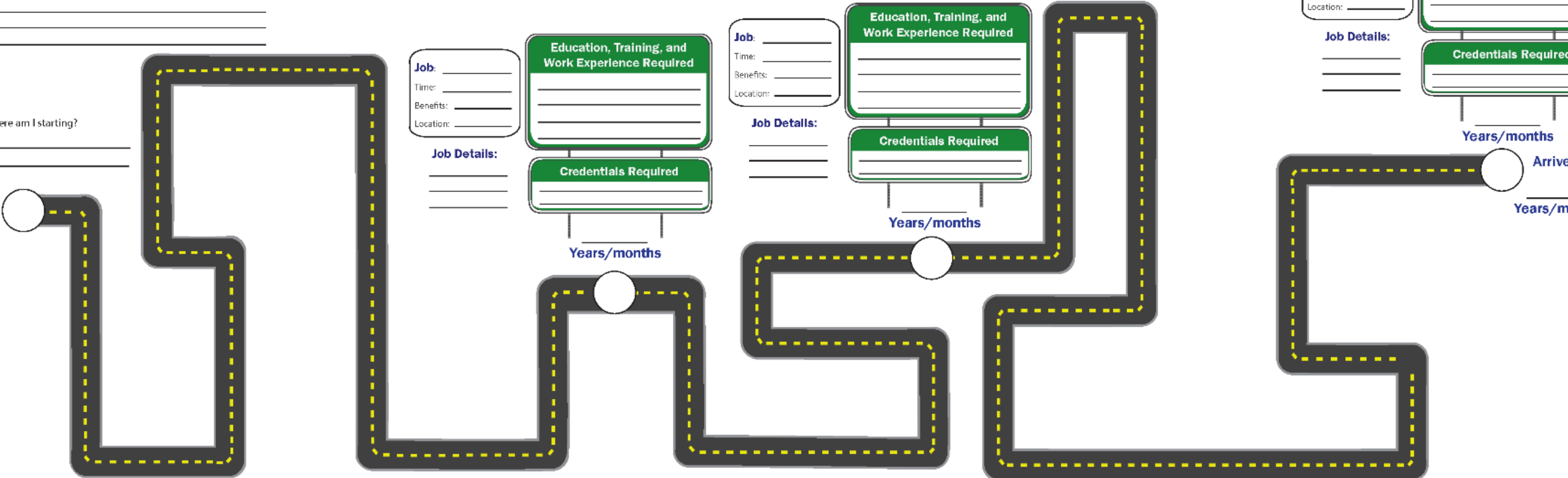
Education, Training, and Work Experience Required

Credentials Required

Years/months

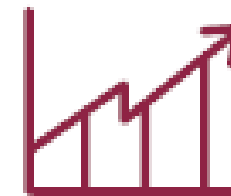
Arrived!

Years/months



Loyola University of Chicago | Chicago State University

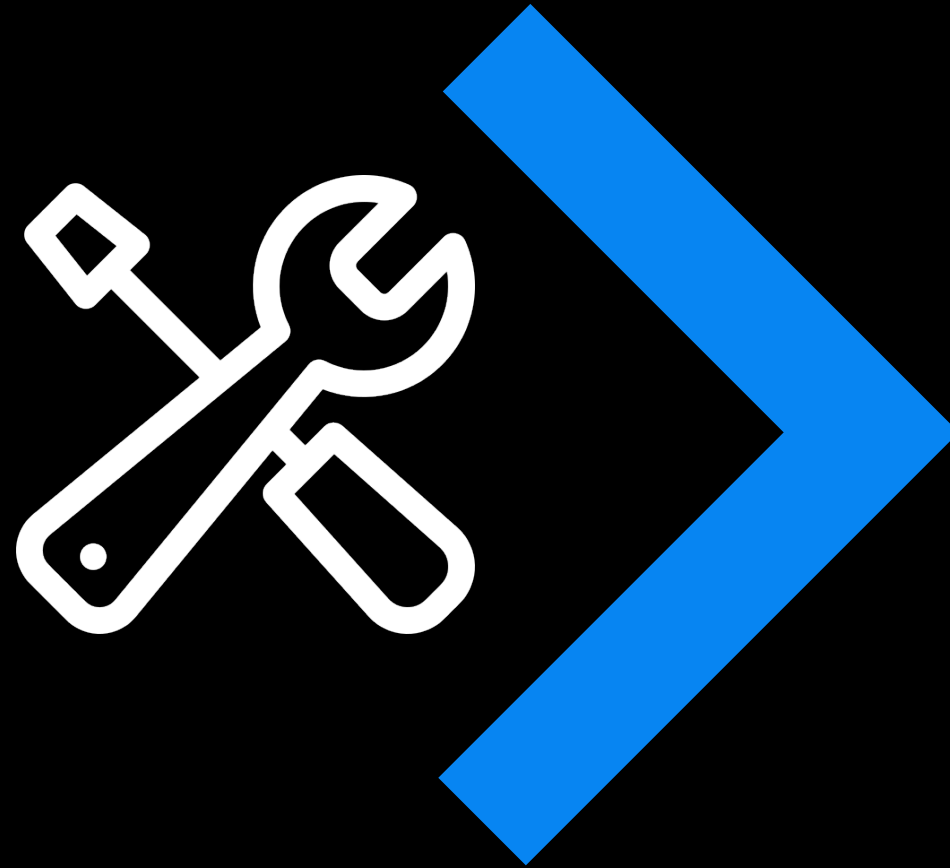
- STEP-UP offers personalized assessment and individualized academic and career planning through the H.O.P.E. Academy, a mandatory program that allows students to explore health care career pathways, understand available support services, and receive academic advising.
- This holistic approach also fosters personal growth and mental wellbeing through professional development, mentoring, job readiness training, and leadership modeling.
- Psychological self-sufficiency (PSS)—perceived barriers and employment hope—is measured across time to track individualized process.



Northwestern University | CAP Tulsa

- CAP Tulsa uses a human-centered design approach to gather participant feedback and make changes to program design to accommodate working parents
- The program encourages participants to pace learning based on what is reasonable given their own personal responsibilities and constraints, tailoring course load to individual needs and goals
- Short certificates are stackable so participants can easily leave and reenter the program





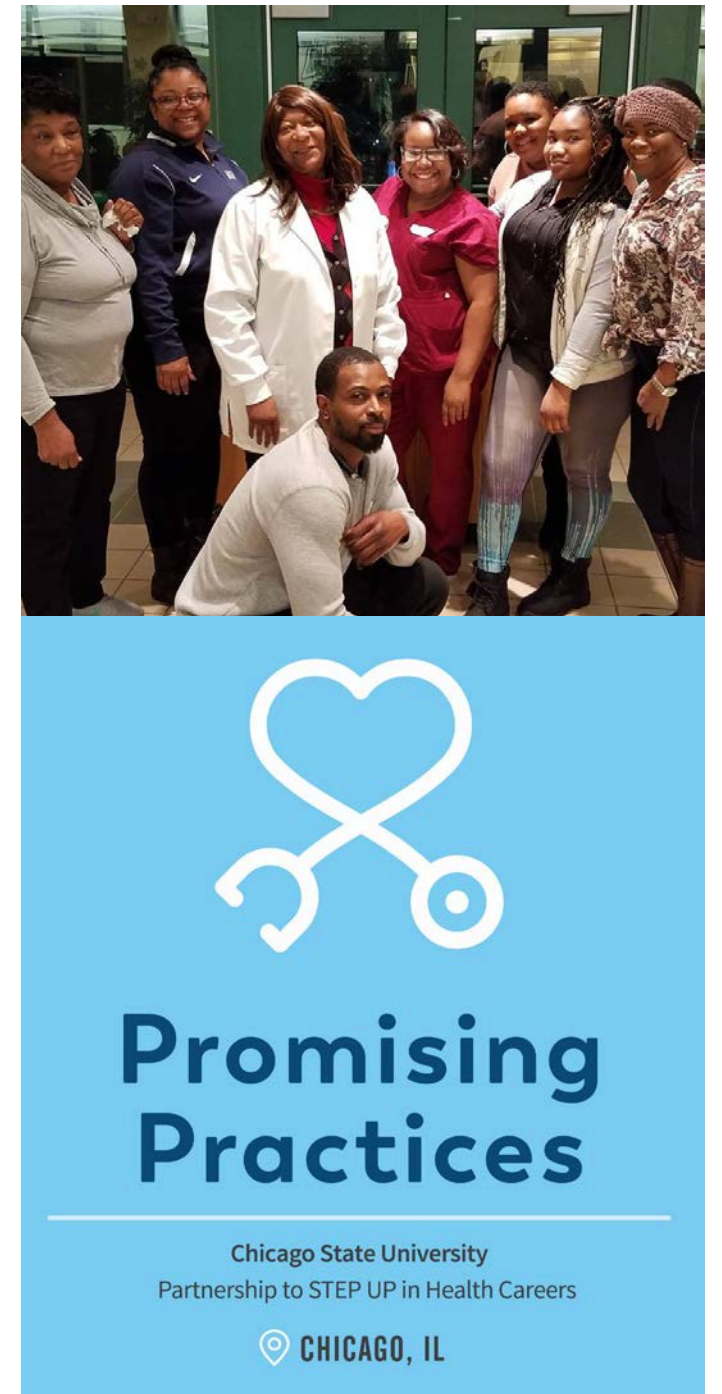
Theme 2:

Intentional and Intensive Supports to Address Barriers and Challenges

- Provide appropriate supportive services to bolster retention and long-term growth
- Examples include:
 - Low/no cost education
 - Coaching and tutoring
 - Childcare

Loyola University of Chicago | Chicago State University

- To improve pass rates on the CNA exam, the STEP-UP program created a required tutoring program to help students strengthen concepts they learn in the classroom in a safe and supportive learning environment.
- They not only study together, but also provide peer support.
- Program success is seen in completion rates, certification, and student reviews.



Northwestern University | CAP Tulsa

- Many of those seeking workforce development opportunities in health care, particularly among the TANF population, are mothers with children.
- CAP Tulsa provides supports to address parents' needs:
 - Providing low or no cost education for parents and their children
 - Coordinating parent-child schedules
 - Offering childcare
 - Providing intensive coaching and opportunities for peer connection
- Tulsa Community WorkAdvance (TCW) has become more family-oriented since HPOG 2.0.



Brandeis University | The WorkPlace

- Redefining and expanding on the features of a career that reflect advancement
- Supporting HPOG participants by adding career advancement content to workforce training
- Challenging the “bootstraps” narrative



Hours

Moving from part-time to full-time, from per diem to permanent, from inconsistent to consistent schedules, and to a schedule that works best with people's lives.



Pay

Increases in hourly wage or in hours worked; both contribute to pay increases.



Benefits

Moving to a job or workplace with benefits, such as paid time off and affordable employer-based health insurance.



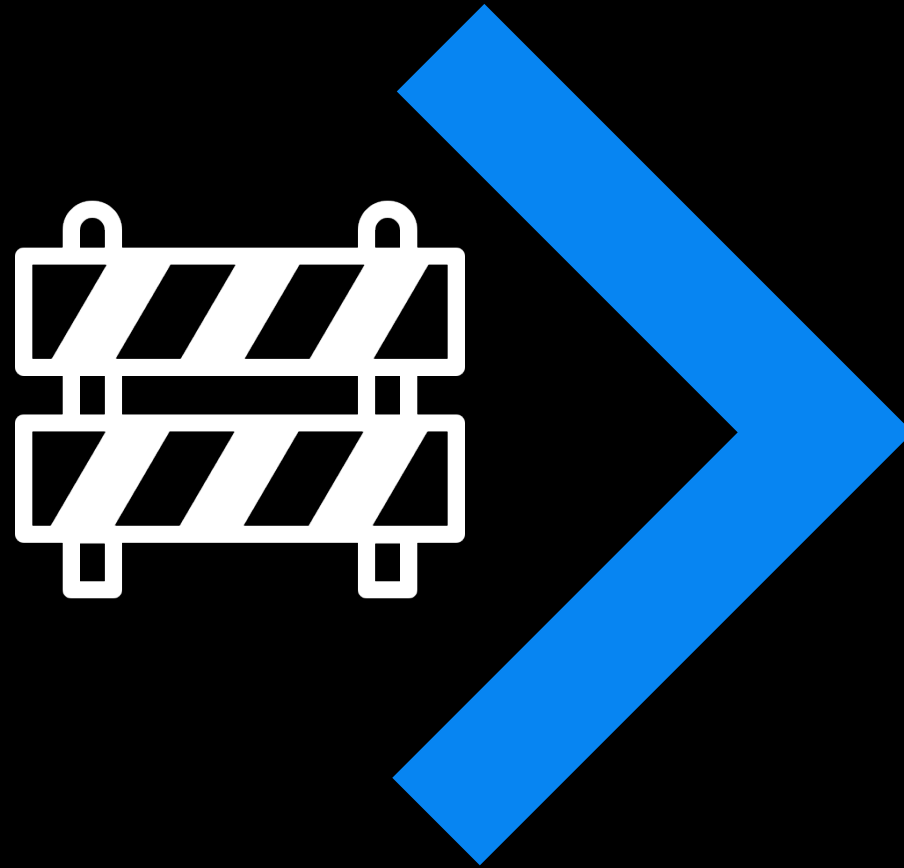
Commute Time

Finding a job closer to home, which reduces transportation costs and allows for more time with family.



Responsibility and Self-Fulfillment

Moves that create a more satisfying work experience, such as jobs that offer more responsibilities or the ability to specialize.



Theme 3:

Opportunities for Identifying and Tackling Structural Barriers and Promoting Equity

- Program and policy flexibility as critical success factors in the participant experience
- While individuals' motivation and hope are key success factors, institutional dynamics also play an important role

Northwestern University | CAP Tulsa

- A light touch is not enough - programs must use intentional, intensive, and tailored strategies to help participants navigate structural barriers.
- At the same time, organizations themselves must do more to eliminate barriers and open doors to opportunity.
- As HPOG 2.0 comes to a close, CAP Tulsa has thought deeply how to reach more families.



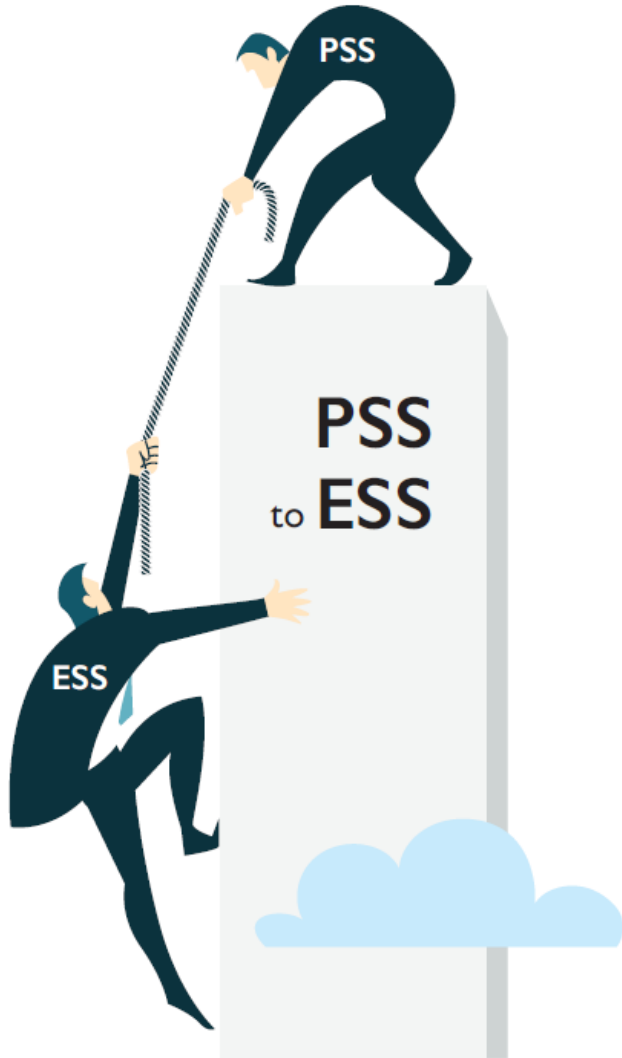
Brandeis University | The WorkPlace

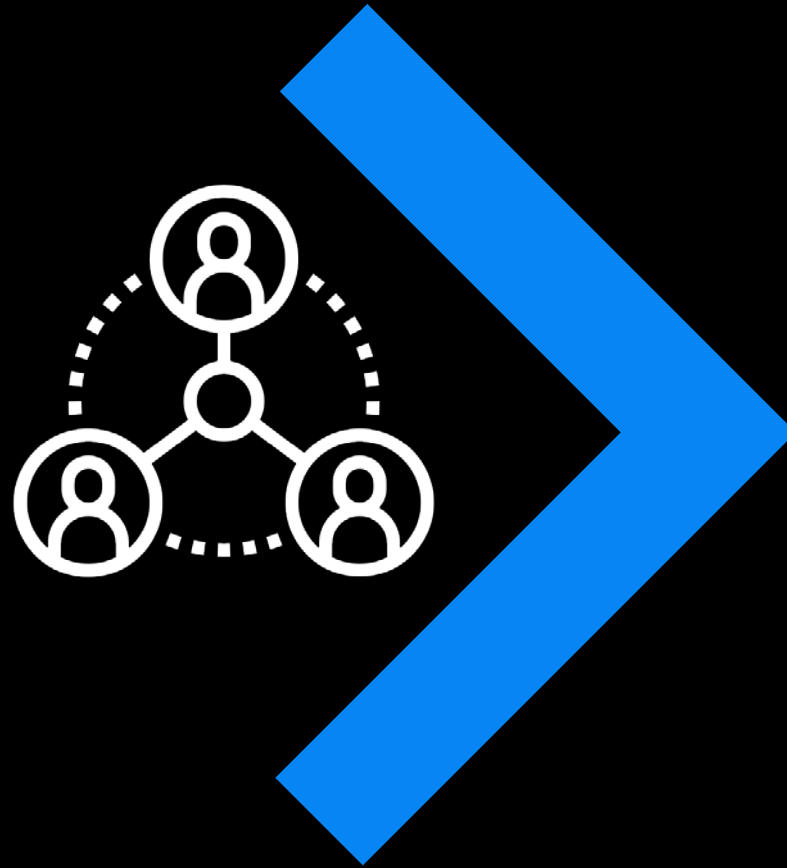
Challenging the “bootstraps” narrative and acknowledging racial inequities



Loyola University of Chicago | Chicago State University

Reducing institutional/system barriers and advancing pro-equity organizational culture.





Theme 4: Active Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Collaboration

- Strong regional infrastructure can make a significant difference in education and training outcomes, as well as:
 - Job placement
 - Retention
 - Long-term advancement

Loyola University of Chicago | Chicago State University



**TRANSFORMING IMPOSSIBLE
INTO POSSIBLE (TIP)[®]**
A HUMAN-CENTERED MODEL FOR BUILDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY



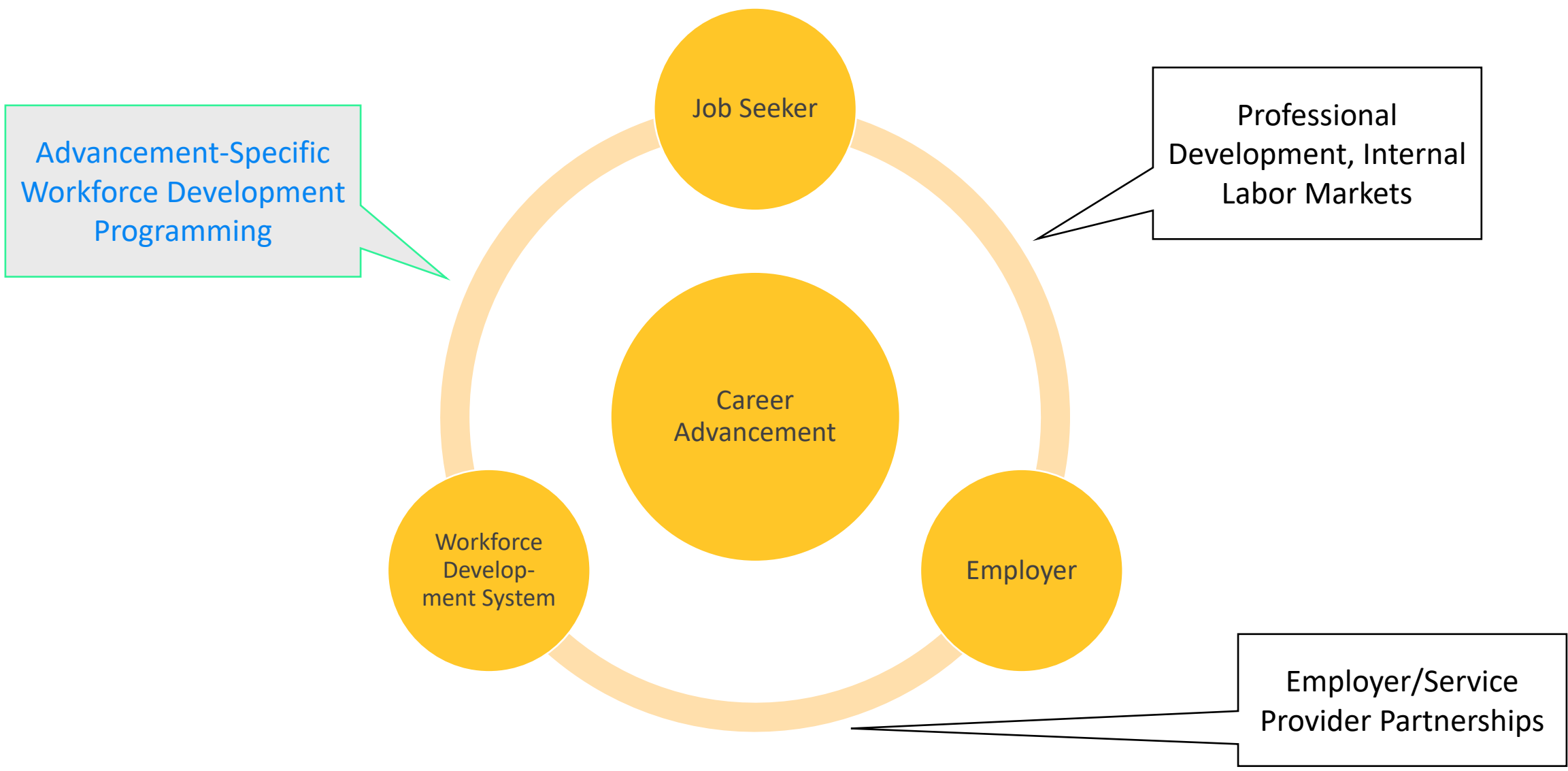
Northwestern University | CAP Tulsa

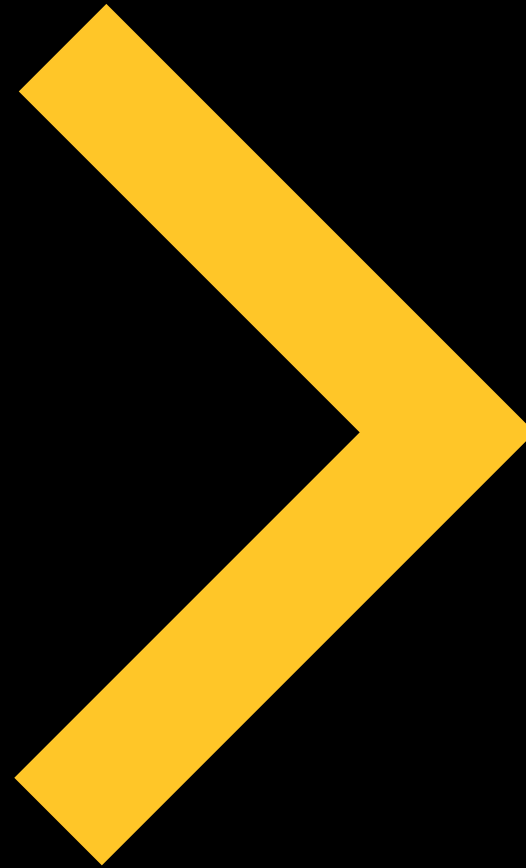
- Labor market analysis of Tulsa – health care fields are growing
- CAP Tulsa and Tulsa Community WorkAdvance continuing strong relationship, including a connection and referral system
 - Job coaching and career exploration
 - Implementing new data system to track outcomes of referrals
- City of Tulsa also addressing community needs
 - Retrain Tulsa
 - Tulsa Financial Empowerment Center



Brandeis University | The WorkPlace

A multi-stakeholder responsibility





Key Takeaways: Research-Practitioner Partnerships

- Partnerships work well when they are organic, relational, and built on common understanding.
- Research (and workforce programming) should consider a long-term lens.
- Data collection and analysis methodologies must be adaptable to both program context and external factors.

Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships: Keys to Success

Brandeis The WorkPlace

- Shared goals and commitment to participants and equity
- CareeRx Academy's openness to learning, innovating, and adapting
- Researchers' willingness to identify and share hard truths

Loyola Chicago State

- A shared commitment to and understanding of the study and data collection process
 - Loyola has seen continuity in data collection and management because the team has proactively stayed connected
- Partnerships that are organic and relational
 - Establishing mutually beneficial partnerships requires persistence and developing trust
- Multiple interactions to generate interest and commitment for a win-win solution for health care employers and employees

Northwestern CAP Tulsa

- Long-standing relationship with CAP Tulsa that is open, comfortable, and trusting
- Reciprocal relationship that involves a process of shared learning, as workforce training was relatively new to both partners at the start of the project
- Constant communication and discussion of key findings or issues
- Managing expectations on both ends

Thank You!

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- Jessica Santos, Brandeis University (jsantos@brandeis.edu)
- Lauren Tighe, Northwestern University (lauren.tighe@northwestern.edu)
- Jackie Rhodes, ICF (Jackie.Rhodes@icf.com)