

**The Promise and Limits of Community and
Faith-Related Organizations as
Government Workforce Development Partners**

Final Evaluation Report on the California Community and Faith-Based Initiative

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In May 2002, the Employment Development Department's Audit and Evaluation Division (A&ED) organized a research consortium that included researchers at two California State University campuses (CSU Humboldt and CSU San Bernardino), the University of California, Davis, and three state entities (the Employment Development Department, the Health and Human Services Agency, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency). A total of \$250,000 was allocated for the work of the research consortium, with each of the partners responsible for conducting a specified number of case studies of CFBI-funded programs in different parts of California. Later, an additional \$250,000 allocation was made by EDD to the UC Davis research team to conduct a community network analysis and to prepare a final CFBI evaluation report.

While the separate research team reports paint a generally similar picture of how CFBI-funded organizations deliver services, and about the needs, characteristics, and attitudes of their program participants, we want to make it clear that the presentation and interpretation of the evaluation data in this final report are the sole responsibility of the UC Davis research team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the other members of the research consortium. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Shel Bockman and Barbara W. Sirotnik of CSU San Bernardino, Judith Little of CSU Humboldt, and Susan Ayres, Eric Glunt, and Seymour Morgan of the Employment Development Department. Dr. Glunt played the key role in organizing the research consortium, and took the lead in making EDD administrative data available for analysis.

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Executive Summary

From late 2000 until early 2005, the state of California sponsored a demonstration program that allocated more than \$17 million in state and federal funds to 40 competitively selected community and faith-related organizations. Conceived by the administration of Governor Gray Davis and implemented by the California Employment Development Department (EDD), the California Community and Faith-Based Initiative (CFBI) had two primary goals: 1) to expand access to workforce development services among hard-to-employ populations and 2) to develop the capacity of grantees to function effectively as government partners. The 40 grantees included 17 small nonprofit organizations without previous government contracting experience. Participants in the CFBI-funded programs included the homeless, previously incarcerated individuals, recovering substance abusers, emancipated foster care youth, refugees and new immigrants, abused women, mental health clients, and autistic youth.

State leaders set aside a portion of the total funds allocated to CFBI for an evaluation. The purpose was to learn whether the initiative achieved its intended goals and, if so, whether the resulting partnerships were effective in creating outcomes of public value. The evaluation was designed to provide an in-depth look at how community and faith-related organizations delivered services, to assess the roles these organizations play in local workforce networks, and to explore the role of faith in the funded organizations and their programs. The evaluation team used a variety of methods, including comparative case studies of 18 of the 40 CFBI-funded organizations, two surveys of all the organizations, more than 50 site visits, and over 450 individual interviews. The findings reported here take into account multiple perspectives (e.g., program participants, staff members, collaborators, public managers, and community representatives) and examine outcomes at the participant, organizational, and community levels of analysis.

Key Findings

1. The initiative expanded the reach of workforce development services to hard-to-employ individuals.
2. The initiative enhanced the organizational capacity of participating nonprofits, particularly those without previous government contracting experience. All but a few of the funded organizations effectively managed their grants.
3. A large majority of the funded community and faith-related organizations were viewed as valuable partners by state and local workforce officials.
4. Community and faith-related organizations have different strengths and limitations as service providers and as One-Stop partners, depending on which of three distinct roles they play in local workforce networks (remedial care, alternative network, or specialized service).
5. CFBI-funded organizations and their workforce programs are remarkably diverse, but staff and participant interviews reveal three valued features that are common to their service delivery approach (individual plans and attention, building self-esteem and self-motivation, and affinity-based mentoring).
6. The limited available evidence of the effectiveness and sustainability of CFBI-funded programs is mixed but promising.

The following sections summarize the evidence for each finding.

1. The initiative expanded the reach of workforce development services to hard-to-employ individuals.

- Compared to adults enrolled in WIA by local One-Stops, CFBI-funded organizations served significantly higher percentages of individuals in eight hard-to-employ categories tracked by EDD administrative data (limited English, ex-offenders, substance abuse, disability, less than high school education, homeless, on public assistance, low income).
- 42% of CFBI program participants interviewed (n=150) had never previously used employment services. They expressed many reasons why they were unable or unwilling to take advantage of the services at One-Stop Career Centers, including facility locations, transportation problems, distrust of government, and language and cultural barriers. For these individuals, community and faith-related organizations serve as alternative portals into the broader workforce development system.
- Participants typically receive services from multiple programs simultaneously; participant outcomes are seldom, if ever, the result of a single program.

2. The initiative enhanced the organizational capacity of participating nonprofits, particularly those without previous government contracting experience. All but a few of the funded organizations effectively managed their grants.

- By providing extensive, responsive, and sympathetic capacity-building assistance, and by tailoring program accountability requirements to the evolving capabilities of grantees, EDD made it possible for less experienced organizations to deal effectively with government restrictions and requirements.
- All grantees reported gains in organizational capacity (e.g., more staff, skills, technology, facilities, visibility) for which they openheartedly credited the EDD team, and viewed the focus on workforce services as complementing rather than compromising their pre-existing organizational missions.
- More established nonprofits were able to put CFBI funding to use more quickly, required less EDD time and instruction, and were less dependent on continued state funding, while start-up nonprofits took much longer to ramp up service delivery, needed more extensive capacity-building assistance, and were more likely to curtail services drastically or close their doors when the demonstration project ended.
- EDD was able to partner with a wide variety of faith-related organizations, including newly-formed entities, without major church-state problems arising. Key factors in achieving this result included limiting funds to 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations; extending eligibility to secular as well as to faith-related organizations; referring grantees to Charitable Choice guidelines that strictly prohibit use of public funds to proselytize; and troubleshooting issues during capacity-building site visits. In most funded programs, faith is evident as the motivating and sustaining ethic that guides organizational priorities and supports staff, but typically is either absent or incidental to the delivery of employment services.

- A small number (7 of 40) of more “faith-centered” organizations include optional faith-based practices in their work with participants, but staff stress that their understanding of faith precludes efforts to force acceptance of religious tenets. Of 30 participants interviewed at two faith-centered organizations, only two individuals voiced a complaint about faith-based practices (one wished for *more* religious content and the other changed her mind during the second round of interviews). Many others expressed appreciation for faith elements as offering them a spiritual component formerly missing in their lives, indicating that faith gave them a stronger sense of stability.

3. A large majority of the funded community and faith-related organizations were viewed as valuable partners by state and local workforce officials.

- EDD program managers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that 31 of the 40 organizations were effective overall partners. Only 4 organizations were identified as deficient partners (these were denied subsequent funding), and another 5 were given a “neutral” or “not sure” rating.
- Local One-Stop and Workforce Investment Board officials were skeptical about faith-based initiatives in the abstract and critical of the governor’s decision to use WIA discretionary funds for CFBI, yet tended to speak in positive terms about the contributions of particular CFBI-funded organizations in their community. They cited valuable assets offered by these organizations, including specialized expertise and experience with particular services, populations, or locales; relatively low staff-participant ratios that permit a high level of personal attention, sometimes of long duration; and program designs that feature staff-participant affinity, peer support, and a family-like atmosphere.
- Case studies identified the following key impediments to building effective partnerships between government and community and faith-related organizations:
 - lack of information about each other;
 - pre-existing prejudices that cause leaders on both sides to discount the approaches or effectiveness of the other;
 - reluctance of One-Stops to partner with an organization or program that may be short-lived (as in the case of many state-financed grant programs); and
 - personal/organizational rivalries and turf issues.

It takes time and patience to deal with these obstacles, and the evidence suggests that developing inter-organizational relationships where none had previously existed was difficult, particularly in the time frame of a short-term grant.

- Despite the many obstacles to building relationships between One-Stops and community and faith-related organizations, CFBI succeeded in moving beyond the pre-initiative baseline. Of the 32 organizations responding to our final survey, 14 reported previous experience in workforce development, and 13 of these identified some form of prior relationship to the local One-Stop. By the close of the initiative, 25 of 32 organizations indicated that they referred their participants to the One-Stop. Of these 25, 18 had developed some form of MOU with the One-Stop, 13 had received staff training for the One-Stop, 9 co-located their staff at the One-Stop, and 8 received funds from a One-Stop. In 6 cases, nonprofit staff had provided training to One-Stop personnel on how to deal with their target populations.

4. Community and faith-related organizations have different strengths and limitations as service providers and as One-Stop partners depending on which of three distinct roles they play in local workforce networks.

- *Remedial care and services.* In this role, organizations focus on helping participants achieve basic outcomes: gaining trust, sobriety, emotional support, social skills, self-confidence, etc. Remedial care organizations emphasize pre-employment services and are committed to meeting individuals “where they are,” treating each person as intrinsically valuable regardless of his or her immediate employability.
- *Alternative employment and training network.* Specializing in the needs of a particular population or locale, these organizations act as community brokers and network developers. They link participants to more advanced job training and to formal job placement services, either through their own service portfolio or through collaborative connections with other providers. Many organizations in this category cultivate relationships with employers who are willing to take a chance on individuals with criminal records, drug involvement, or checkered work histories.
- *Specialized service.* In this role, organizations provide a specific service to which One-Stops (or other agencies) can refer participants when they are ready, such as offering a complete employment-oriented wardrobe. They tend to serve relatively higher numbers of participants, but in a more specific fashion than do remedial care or alternative network organizations. A key difference in these programs is that the majority of participants are individuals who have already succeeded in navigating the One-Stop system or that of other workforce-related agencies.

5. CFBI-funded organizations and their workforce programs are remarkably diverse, but staff and participant interviews reveal three valued features that are common to their service delivery approach.

- They emphasize individual plans, devoting time and attention to each participant rather than relying on pre-set programs in which all participants receive more or less the same treatment and minimal personal support.
- While providing participants with access to new work-related skills and resources, they attempt to instill self-esteem and personal motivation, to enable participants to become active on their own behalf.
- They deploy program staff or volunteers based not only on their technical expertise and competence but also on their affinity with participants (e.g., demographic, cultural, or similar life experience). Staff are viewed by participants as credible and flexible coaches or mentors who serve as role models and help them navigate the road toward employment.

6. The limited available evidence of the effectiveness and sustainability of CFBI-funded workforce programs is mixed but promising.

- Case study evidence suggests that program effectiveness can be conceptualized along a variety of dimensions:
 - success in getting people in the door and keeping them engaged in the program;
 - delivering services efficiently;
 - removal of key employment barriers (e.g., illiteracy, addiction);
 - creating positive employment outcomes that move participants up the ladder of job readiness/placement; and
 - providing follow-up that supports retention, advancement, and increased self-sufficiency.

Absent a set of metrics to measure pre-employment services, it is difficult to quantify or fully appreciate the value that community and faith-related organizations bring as one part of a broader network of local organizations.

- Participants we interviewed report very high levels of satisfaction with services and substantial gains in work readiness:
 - 90% said that the CFBI organization made a significant difference in their life;
 - 88% reported increased confidence;
 - 73% reported improved communication skills;
 - 61% reported an improved family situation;
 - 59% reported feeling better supported in seeking work.
- Given the more job-ready populations they typically serve, One-Stop job placement rates are much higher than those of CFBI-funded organizations (81.4% to 49.5%). CFBI-funded organizations that emphasize the alternative network role had a 66.7% placement rate compared to 34.7% for the remedial care organizations and 51.6% for specialized service organizations. For many reasons, including those already discussed, we do not believe administrative data comparisons tell the full story of the public value created by the initiative.
- The end of EDD funding resulted in significant scaling down or closing of 60% of the CFBI-funded programs. Less than a quarter of the organizations had secured new funding for their workforce programs by the end of their CFBI grant. Smaller nonprofits reported that grants are scarcer and frequently favor larger organizations by requiring matching contributions. Despite the fact that serving hard-to-employ populations was one of three grant priorities, only one of the 18 CFBI organizations that applied for the California governor's 15% WIA discretionary funds in 2004-05 was successful, and it was a large, well-established nonprofit. Still, many smaller nonprofit leaders remain committed and optimistic, and some are volunteering their time to keep programs open until new funding can be found.

Conclusion and Recommendations

CFBI demonstrated how a public agency can use its power and resources to foster valuable partnerships with grassroots community-based organizations, including faith-related organizations. The beneficiaries in this case included participants who otherwise would not have been served, government One-Stop operators who gained partners to help serve hard-to-employ participants, and community-based organizations whose capacity to fulfill their particular service missions was enhanced.

Our findings are consistent with previous research, which suggests that many community and faith-related organizations can play valuable though limited roles in local workforce development networks, particularly in expanding the reach of workforce development services and in offering alternative portals into the workforce system for hard-to-employ citizens (Campbell 2002; Cnaan 1999; Monsma and Mounts 2002; Wineburg 2001; Wuthnow 2004). Few nonprofits can function as stand-alone *alternatives* to government programs, and we find little evidence to support the view that funding faith-related organizations creates overall cost efficiencies due to a “faith factor” or to the extensive use of volunteers. On the other hand, the evidence does suggest that a wide range of community-based organizations—small and large, secular and faith-related, experienced or new to providing workforce services—are assets as workforce development partners.

Whether this partnership potential is realized depends both on the scope of public investment in workforce development (i.e., making a significant commitment of funds and assistance) and on developing community intervention strategies that distinguish nonprofits according to their size, experience, target populations, and roles within local workforce networks. In the future, community and faith-based initiatives will benefit from implementation strategies that:

- coordinate the assets and roles of community and faith-related organizations as part of long-term network development processes in local communities, rather than the current emphasis on providing short-term funding to individual organizations without regard to community context;
- focus on taking advantage of the distinct assets of smaller and newer nonprofits (whether faith-related or secular) which are not well-integrated into local service delivery networks, rather than on leveling the playing field between secular and faith-related organizations;
- seize opportunities to partner with nonprofits in geographic areas or among cultural groups that are not served by One-Stops, whether in rural or urban settings;
- recognize that while some nonprofits may be able to provide intensive, personalized services at less cost than government programs, it takes significant public investment to increase the number of participants these relatively small programs can effectively serve, and to support their ability to meet government accountability requirements;
- move beyond established routines and traditional government/grant-recipient relationships, attending not only to how nonprofits can reshape their internal operations

in line with government requirements, but also to how government can adopt a more flexible, nurturing set of operating procedures and practices;

- provide funding for local One-Stop staff that can serve as government-nonprofit liaisons, promoting partnerships and attending to inter-organizational issues and local implementation dynamics; and
- adopt sensible approaches to handling church-state issues, in particular by limiting funding to 501c (3) nonprofit organizations.

First and foremost, however, there must be a genuine, sustained public commitment to funding public workforce development services, including the extra effort needed to reach and serve hard-to-employ populations. The most important policy story of recent years is not the shift toward funding faith-related organizations, but the dramatic decline in the overall level of funding for local social services and workforce programs (Campbell, Lemp, and Treiber 2006; Magnum 2000; Kuo 2006). Sprinkling a few short-term grants into communities via faith-based initiatives is not sufficient to realize the potential of community and faith-related organizations as government partners, a potential whose promise and limits have been well illustrated by the CFBI demonstration project.

Introduction

Policy Setting

During the past decade there have been dramatic shifts in federal policies dealing with welfare, work, and social programs. In 1996, welfare reform legislation mandated work participation as a requirement for receiving cash aid, creating a strong incentive for individuals on public assistance to enter the labor market. The same legislation introduced Charitable Choice guidelines as a principle of federal social policy. The two welfare reform provisions, along with the subsequent faith-based initiative of the Bush Administration, has increased interest in the distinctive roles faith-related organizations might play in delivering public services aimed at supporting employment among low-income citizens.

During this same period, community and faith-based nonprofit organizations have recognized that supporting their participants' efforts to secure stable employment at good wages is critical to their success, regardless of whether their focal mission is drug rehabilitation, refugee resettlement, youth development, ending homelessness, etc. The pursuit of workforce development grants or contracts with government has become one way to enhance both their mission and their bottom line.

This report summarizes the findings of a comprehensive evaluation of a state of California initiative in which community and faith-related organizations were used to deliver publicly funded workforce development services. Conceived by the administration of Governor Gray Davis, and implemented by the California Employment Development Department (EDD), the California Community and Faith-based Initiative (CFBI) sought to expand the delivery of workforce services to hard-to-employ citizens. Participants in CFBI-funded programs included the homeless, previously incarcerated individuals, recovering substance abusers, emancipated foster care youth, refugees and new immigrants, abused women, mental health clients, and autistic youth.

Past evaluations of government job training programs consistently find that service providers avoid enrolling and serving hard-to-employ participants¹ in order to meet performance standards more readily (Franklin and Ripley 1984; Lipsky, 1980; Magnum 2000). The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) exacerbates the disincentive by stipulating that employers are primary customers of the One-Stop Career Center system that implements WIA policy in local areas. This creates a dilemma for One-Stop operators. They must gain the confidence of employers while also reaching out to individuals with multiple barriers to employment. As one local Workforce Investment Board director states:

The employer is the one who has the job, and we have to train people to compete. I think the days of an entitlement mindset, of government or quasi-governmental entities that operate from that position of being reactive social service agencies, that's the absolute worst position to try to advocate for a client.

¹ Throughout this report, we will use the term "participants" to refer to the individuals served by workforce programs. This usage is deliberate, in that most CFBI-funded organizations view those they serve as participating in their own advancement, rather than as passive dependents who are being subjected to pre-set programs. Some of those we interview use the term "clients" or "customers," and we have kept their terminology intact when quoting. To encourage candor, all interview respondents were promised anonymity, and thus quotes are identified only by general categories.

Financial pressures exacerbate the One-Stop dilemma. Four of every five local workforce areas in California have seen their WIA allocations decline between 2001 and 2005 by an average of 26% (Campbell and Lemp, 2005). A Workforce Investment Board director comments:

We face the same challenge that any large government program faces in figuring out ‘How do we serve niche clientele?’ You get into a cost-benefit analysis about what it would cost to hire specialized staff to deal with language and cultural issues, and other barrier issues. It’s more cost effective for us to use third parties who are adept at working with this client group.

CFBI sought to demonstrate what could be accomplished when community and faith-based organizations with deep community connections were enlisted as government workforce development partners. The demonstration program grew out of strongly held political priorities among officials in the administration of Governor Gray Davis. In their public statements, these officials cited the ability of community and faith-related organizations to serve individuals that are often viewed by government providers as taking too much time and resources. One Davis administration official we interviewed said:

We wanted a response to structurally marginalized workers, a way to provide jobs that would get them out of poverty. I wanted neighborhood organizations to be stronger after we left.

CFBI has been controversial within California’s workforce development community, in part because it diverted funds that might otherwise have gone to existing government programs, and in part because it was seen as stemming from overtly political motives. One local workforce official expressed the skepticism:

All these faith-based initiatives that come from the state, many of those are worthless because the agencies are not equipped to provide the service. You just create multiple service levels instead of working through the existing One-Stop system. By not using the existing infrastructure you just make it harder, because the infrastructure needs the money to survive, and they can do it in a manner that is more productive in the long run than just funding programs for political gain.

Thus, the genesis of CFBI can be viewed from at least three perspectives: 1) as a creative state response to the post-welfare reform federal policy dictates and directions; 2) as an attempt to address the long-standing issues surrounding the delivery of workforce services to the hard-to-employ; and 3) as a reflection of the political priorities of the Davis administration. Whatever mix of motives may have been involved in its creation, CFBI created an important laboratory for developing policy relevant information related to the effort to expand partnerships between community and faith-related organizations and government.

A Brief History of the CFBI Program

The Davis administration launched CFBI after receiving approval from the state legislature in the FY 2000-01 state budget. Under the auspices of the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency, the state Employment Development Department was directed to establish a competitive grant process to solicit proposals from established 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. During four years of state funding, EDD’s Special Projects Division managed CFBI as a demonstration program with two primary goals: 1) to expand access to workforce development services among hard-to-employ populations; and 2) to build the capacity of CFBI-funded organizations to

function effectively as government partners. A portion of the CFBI funding was set aside for an evaluation, with the goal of examining whether this alternative means of serving the hard-to-employ was effective.

Using a combination of state general funds (Year 1) and federal WIA funds (subsequent years), the state allocated more than \$17 million to 40 community and faith-based organizations through a competitive grant process.² The WIA allocation came from the 15% discretionary funds that WIA provides to governors for selected projects. Twenty organizations were first funded in the original cycle during FY 2001-02, and another 20 organizations in FY 2002-03. Most grants started in the range of \$100,000-200,000 per year and gradually declined over the course of the initiative (see Appendix 1 for a list of grantees and their yearly funding allocations). With a few exceptions, participating organizations received two or three years of funding, and the last grants expired in March 2005. With the recall of Governor Davis in the fall of 2004, CFBI's administrative champions left power, and the program was discontinued.

Year 1 funding was available only to faith-based organizations or organizations that had a specific partnership with a faith-based organization. After the threat of a lawsuit that challenged the constitutionality of restricting funding exclusively to faith-based organizations, the state modified the second round funding process to make all community-based nonprofit organizations eligible. Year 2 funding was spread relatively evenly between secular and faith-based nonprofits.

From the beginning of the initiative, state program leaders took a number of steps designed to ensure that funded programs would respect existing church-state guidelines. First, they limited funds to registered 501(c)3 organizations, eliminating the thorny constitutional and operational issues that come when congregations receive funds for delivering public services. Second, they amended the original program design to open the proposal solicitation process to both secular and faith-related nonprofit organizations. Third, they referred grantees to Charitable Choice guidelines that strictly prohibit use of public funds to proselytize, and regularly repeated these cautions at technical assistance meetings with grantees. Fourth, EDD staff conducted site visits and other regular program reviews which allowed them to identify and troubleshoot any church-state issues that arose despite the above precautions. For example, in one case, a faith-related organization was asked and agreed (after careful deliberation) to remove a restriction in its personnel manual that specified that only individuals of the Christian faith could be hired. In another case, an organization was cautioned to maintain a strict separation between its EDD-funded workforce program and other organizational programs that emphasized religious elements.

Because CFBI's strategy was to take advantage of pre-existing links between a variety of community and faith-related organizations and various hard-to-employ populations, the budget language authorizing CFBI specified that funds would go to both large and small nonprofit organizations, including those which had never previously managed a government grant. Recognizing that less grant-savvy grassroots organizations need extra assistance, EDD put together a team of specially recruited program managers to help funded organizations build capacity. At the program's apex in 2002-03, approximately 20 program managers spent time at each of their assigned sites on a bi-weekly basis and were available for frequent phone consultations. In addition, EDD organized regional and statewide capacity-building meetings where CFBI-funded organizations shared experiences and learned from experts.

² Outside of the competitive grant process that is the focus of our evaluation, the state provided an additional sum of more than \$20 million to fund other community and faith-related organizations in California. These groups are also funded through the Employment Development Department to provide workforce development services that target hard-to-employ populations.

As the initiative progressed, EDD encouraged the participating organizations that had not done so already to make connections with a nearby One-Stop center, the primary state-funded workforce development institution in local communities. In many cases, EDD program managers assisted in making the necessary introductions. By the final year of the project, establishing a working connection with a One-Stop was included as one of the performance benchmarks each funded organization was expected to achieve. It also became an important focus of attention at the capacity-building meetings held for grantees.

The CFBI Evaluation

In May 2002, the Employment Development Department's Audit and Evaluation Division (A&ED) organized a research consortium that included researchers at two California State University campuses (Humboldt and San Bernardino), the University of California, Davis, and three state entities (the Employment Development Department, the Health and Human Services Agency, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency). A total of \$250,000 was allocated for the work of the research consortium, with each of the partners responsible for conducting a specified number of case studies of CFBI-funded programs in different parts of California. Later, an additional \$250,000 allocation was made by EDD to the UC Davis research team. This second contract was to conduct a community network analysis, and specified that UC Davis was responsible for integrating the evaluation findings from all the research teams, along with administrative data provided by EDD, into this final report.

While the separate research team reports paint a generally similar picture of how CFBI-funded organizations deliver services, and about the needs, characteristics, and attitudes of their program participants, we want to make it clear that the presentation and interpretation of the evaluation data in this final report are the sole responsibility of the UC Davis research team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the other members of the research consortium.³

Two practical and conceptual considerations loom large in any effort to evaluate a community and faith-based initiative: 1) the difficulty of defining or classifying the wide variety of community and faith-related organizations, and of characterizing the different assets and liabilities they present as government partners (Sider and Unruh 2004; Smith and Sosin 2001; Wuthnow 2004); and 2) the complex, historically-derived character of local social service delivery networks, which prohibit ready generalizations (Campbell 2002; Wineburg 2001).

Given these challenges, the research team chose a design that featured close field observation of a variety of CFBI-funded programs in their local settings, along with attention to questions and themes that cut across the local cases. The research takes into account multiple perspectives (e.g., program participants, staff members, collaborators, public managers), and examines outcomes at the participant, organizational, and community levels of analysis.

The initial phase of the evaluation sought to learn how CFBI programs identify, recruit, train, and support employment among unemployed or underemployed persons who are not typically served by existing government programs. The goal was to develop a detailed description, rather than a summative evaluation of whether or not, or by how much, the programs were succeeding. Indeed, one topic for exploration was how staff and participants in funded programs defined success.

³ We would like to acknowledge the major contributions of Shel Bockman and Barbara W. Sirotnik of CSU San Bernardino, Judith Little of CSU Humboldt, and Susan Ayres, Eric Glunt, and Seymour Morgan of the Employment Development Department. Dr. Glunt played the key role in organizing the research consortium, and took the lead in making administrative data available for analysis.

During this first phase, the two major research activities by members of the consortium included 1) an initial phone survey of executive directors to gain comparative data on all funded organizations (see Appendix 2 for protocol); and 2) in-depth case studies of 16-18 selected sites, including site visits and interviews with organization staff, participants, and other key informants. Fieldwork began early in 2003. Data gathering methods included multiple site visits to each program, review of available program documents, and semi-structured interviews using common protocols. All told, during the first phase of the research the four research teams conducted over 260 interviews with program participants, and more than 100 with program staff, directors, and board members.

In most cases, the research team met the goal of interviewing at least 10 program participants at each of the 18 case study sites, and approximately a third of the interviewees were re-interviewed approximately a year later. While we attempted to secure complete lists of participants in order to randomly select interviewees, this procedure was not possible at all sites, so the sample is best viewed as a form of convenience sampling and is not necessarily representative of all CFBI participants in a given program. In all cases, the actual set of participants interviewed was determined by many factors beyond our control: many people had moved without leaving forwarding information, many others failed to respond to repeated phone calls.

Among other findings (detailed elsewhere in this report), the initial phase of the research made it clear that community and faith-related organizations varied considerably in their roles and linkages within local workforce networks. Because EDD hoped that CFBI-funded organizations would develop relationships with One-Stops and other local workforce organizations, the UC Davis research team was asked to conduct a community network analysis as a second, separately-funded phase of the evaluation. In this second phase, we selected a sample of 14 of the 40 CFBI-funded organizations in 11 local workforce investment areas (LWIAs).⁴ The selection criteria also included a number of variables identified as important during the first phase of the research and in the research literature. For example, the 14 organizations in our sample include start-up and longstanding nonprofit organizations (Stevens 2001), grant-inspired and long-established workforce development programs (Harrison and Weiss 1998), urban and rural community settings, and local political cultures that do and do not emphasize privatized service delivery as a preferred mode of running government programs (Campbell 2002).

A variety of research activities supported the community network analysis, including:

- a semi-structured phone survey of the 14 executive directors, using a protocol designed to learn about their organization's relationship to other workforce development organizations;
- a site visit to each organization;
- a detailed network map, prepared during the site visit, showing the organization's connections with employers, funders, government agencies, technical assistance providers, faith-based organizations, community coalitions and partnerships, social and political leaders, competitor organizations, as well as connections at the regional, state, national, and international level (see example in figure 1, p. 55);
- interviews with 48 representatives of One-Stop centers, local Workforce Investment Boards, and other government agencies to learn about 1) how the hard-to-employ are

⁴ California has 50 local workforce investment areas. Geographically, some are counties, others a consortium of counties, and still others a consortium of cities or a single city. All these different types are represented in the 11 areas studied.

- served in the local workforce development network; 2) the impressions government stakeholders have of the public value of the CFBI-funded organizations; and 3) active partnerships that One-Stops may have developed with particular community and faith-related organizations (or vice versa);
- interviews with 25 employers, partner organizations, and (where applicable) congregations with whom the organizations had connections;
 - a focus group with 20 EDD program managers who monitor and assist the funded organizations; and
 - an information-sharing session focused on how community and faith-related organizations can develop more active partnerships with One-Stops among representatives, held among 20 CFBI grantees at one of EDD's statewide capacity-building conferences, notes from which were analyzed for key themes.

In addition, we conducted a "back-end survey" designed to provide comparable information across all 40 of the participating organizations. The semi-structured survey was conducted by telephone to coincide as closely as possible with the expiration of CFBI funds at the various organizations. Interviews began in mid-October 2004, and continued until mid-April 2005. The survey (see Appendix 2) covered a variety of topics with both closed and open-ended questions, and included detailed questions about the effect of the end of CFBI funding on the organization, staff, and program. We were able to complete surveys with 32 of the 36 CFBI organizations that were still in operation.

Throughout all phases of the evaluation, interviews were tape-recorded, then transcribed and coded using QSR N6 qualitative analysis software. Individuals interested in details about the specific methods used during the evaluation are encouraged to consult the list of reports and papers included in Appendix 3.

Research Findings

This section of the report summarizes the key findings of the evaluation, organized into three sections:

1. Characteristics of funded organizations and programs
2. The roles of CFBI-funded organizations within local workforce networks
3. Observed outcomes for participants, organizations, and community systems

Characteristics of Funded Organizations and Programs

The outstanding characteristic of the CFBI-funded organizations is their diversity. This includes their size, organizational mission, culture, target populations, the focus and variety of services they offer, their approach to delivering these services, and the degree to which they are faith-related (if at all). The degree of diversity is no surprise given the well-documented need for community-based nonprofit organizations to develop unique roles and identities. Indeed, this is the source of their potential value as government partners. But it creates a daunting partnership challenge for government managers: how to design public policies and programs that take advantage of the *particular* assets of different nonprofits while simultaneously protecting *universal* norms such as procedural fairness and regularity, accountability for results, and professional standards.

Challenges also exist for the nonprofit participants in these partnerships, who must balance the benefit of increased funding against the risk of compromising the organizational characteristics that make them most distinctive. On the one hand,

Involvement with government funding has been shown to substantially increase pressure on nonprofit organizations to professionalize their operations and to introduce a degree of bureaucratization into even smaller, more informal organizations (Frumkin and Kim 2002, p. 6).

Other research notes these same dynamics, but emphasizes the benefits of government funding (Kramer, 1981; Salamon, 1995). These benefits include the possibility that government grants might provide seed funding that fuels nonprofit initiative, confers nonprofit organizations legitimacy and visibility, builds managerial capacity, and enables them to offer better quality services.

CFBI provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about these challenges, and the effects of partnership on both government and nonprofit partners. California's Employment Development Department has an organizational culture steeped in bureaucratic norms and standard operating procedures, while the funded organizations include grassroots organizations that are "family-like" and emphasize treating each participant as a unique individual. What difficulties would be encountered in bridging these contrasting cultures?

The following sections highlight some of the key dimensions along which CFBI-funded nonprofits differed from one another.

Size, Experience and Community Connections

The CFBI-funded organizations vary dramatically in their size, contracting experience, and community networks. Seventeen of the 40 organizations had no previous government contracting

experience. Most of these organizations, designated as Tier 2 by EDD, were quite small, reporting annual budgets of less than \$400,000, even including the amounts received from EDD. Most had 6 or fewer staff who were typically paid hourly wages of \$15/hr or less; in a few cases employees were salaried but at essentially the same level of pay, roughly equivalent to \$30,000 per year.

Despite their small size and relative inexperience, these organizations averaged 40 or more linkages with local, regional, state, or national organizations.⁵ While some of these linkages are relatively unimportant, many represent close and meaningful organizational ties that provide referral or other benefits to participants, or support the organization in defining and pursuing its mission. The network maps suggest one reason why even very small community-based organizations may be worth the attention of government managers, since a contracting relationship with one organization may bring into play a wider community network of which they are a part. They also suggest that it might be wise to include some means of understanding the most important network relationships of an organization before entering into a contract, since the strength and nature of these connections influences program quality.

For the remaining 23 organizations, designated as Tier 1, the EDD contract was another in a series of government grants or contracts. These organizations were much larger, with budgets ranging from \$600,000 to \$25 million per year. Most had staffs of 10 or more. Not surprisingly, these types of organizations also had many more organizational connections than was the case among the smaller grantees, averaging around 200 per organization.

The case studies reveal that charismatic leaders founded many of the smaller Tier 2 organizations, often motivated by intense faith commitments and a strong desire “to give back to the community.” These leaders are highly regarded in their communities, but we found that visionary leaders in grassroots organizations are often administratively challenged. Their gifts are compassion and motivation, along with raising support, rather than managing the organization and its contracts. However, when appropriate staff or volunteer support is available to handle administrative functions, this need not be a fatal obstacle to the ability to manage organizations competently and work well as government partners.

In a few cases, leaders of CFBI organizations work without salaries, a reflection of the fact that they see their programs more as personal ministries or callings than as simply a job.

Types of Participants Served

EDD administrative data shows that 13,730 individuals participated in CFBI-funded programs over the course of the initiative. Table 1 shows their demographic characteristics. Compared to individuals served by adult WIA programs in California, CFBI participants were more likely to be young, female, and possess less than a high school education. Compared with the ethnic make-up among all Californians, Blacks were overrepresented in CFBI programs and Hispanics were underrepresented.

⁵ These were identified during the network mapping exercise, which prompted organization leaders with 9 categories of possible organizational connections. Any organization mentioned was counted as a connection. We did not attempt to specify the strength of connection.

Table 1. Demographic Comparison of Adult Participants in CFBI and WIA Programs
(July 2002-December 2004)

	CFBI ADULTS	WIA ADULTS
Age	N=13,730	N=51,865
Less than 19	9.7%	1.9%
19-21	11.4%	8.1%
22-54	73.6%	81.9%
Greater than 54	5.3%	8.1%
Gender		
Female	62.5%	54.4%
Male	37.5%	45.6%
Ethnicity		
Asian	12.5%	10.3%
Black	34.4%	19.2%
Hispanic	18.9%	36.9%
Native American	3.6%	1.0%
White	25.9%	30.4%
Mixed	4.7%	2.2%

Source: EDD administrative data

In our initial organizational survey we asked program leaders to characterize the types of participants in their programs (Table 2). The homeless and ex-offenders were the most frequently mentioned target populations, along with recovering substance abusers and foster care youth. Some of the organizations specialize in one of these groups, while others open their doors to anyone who shows up.

Table 2. Types of Participants Being Served by CFBI Programs (N=38)

POPULATION	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVING
Homeless/at risk of homelessness	13 (34%)
Parolees	12 (32%)
Low-income/welfare	12 (32%)
Recovering substance abusers	7 (18%)
Youth/foster care youth	7 (18%)
<i>Others: (mental health, refugees/immigrants, neighborhood residents/place based, domestic violence survivors, autistic youth, illiterate, all Native Americans)</i>	1 mention each

Note: Organizations could mention more than one participant group.

UC Davis interviews with 83 participants in CFBI programs revealed further details about their life situations, work histories, and aspirations.

- Over half lived with their own children.
- One in three volunteered that they struggled with substance abuse issues.
- One in five indicated they were immigrants to the United States, and most of those had been here for 10 or more years.

- About 60% of participants were raised in a religious or spiritual tradition, and approximately 80% currently consider themselves religious or spiritual persons.
- Approximately two-thirds of participants reported substantial past work experience; less than 1 in 5 had no previous work experience.
- A slight majority of those with some work experience had work histories with substantial gaps that might raise concerns for employers.
- The most typical reason for individuals to drop out of a CFBI program was a lapse in their recovery from substance abuse; in some cases, these individuals returned to the program at a later date or entered another similar program.

We explored the living arrangements of our respondents, and the responses indicated that it was the *stability* of the housing situation that matters most, rather than whether the respondent owns or rents, or how satisfied they are with their current arrangement. Likewise, it was the amount of *emotional support* from family, friends and/or roommates that was critical to participants' employment efforts, rather than simply whether he or she was married or single, or had children needing childcare. In some CFBI programs, all or most participants were living in a homeless shelter, and the search for a job was part of the larger search for stable housing.

One objective of the evaluation was to examine how community and faith-related organizations identify and engage potential participants. Slightly more than half of participants we interviewed were referred by a local government agency; in a significant number of cases they were court-ordered or referred by probation officers. Some of these individuals, and many others, connect with the specific program because of a referral or advice from a family member, friend, or pastor. Relatively few simply walk in or arrive solely by their own initiative. Administrative data collected during the first year of CFBI revealed that about a third of participants learned about the program from "the street or friends." Only a handful reported being referred to the CFBI-funded organization by EDD or a One-Stop.

A key finding is that many participants receive services from multiple programs simultaneously, often the result of deliberately forged collaborations. For example, here is a narrative describing how CFBI participants were recruited and served by Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA, from CSU Humboldt, field report):

Shelter managers let their residents know about the program; interested residents apply for participation at RCAA's Family Services division. If accepted for the program, participants are placed in a job at St. Vincent DePaul. Participants receive case management services at RCAA and on the job training and support by staff at St. Vincent's. Participants are strongly encouraged and provided help in obtaining the GED if they have not completed high school. Resume and interviewing techniques are provided at the Eureka One-Stop Center. Referrals to other services that participants might need (medical or psychological services, for example) are made, and participants receive assistance in obtaining appropriate clothing or tools for employment and housing assistance.

While not all participants benefit from a collaborative network as clearly thought out as this one, most find themselves navigating local networks in which services are braided together in complicated combinations, rather than dealing with a single program at a time.

Types of Services Offered

Drawing on the categories constructed by Monsma and Mounts (2002), we asked organizational representatives to tell us what types of services they provided to program participants (Table 3). Overall, the survey evidence showed that most CFBI-funded organizations offer multiple services (mean=8.5), and there appeared to be an equal emphasis on both “job-oriented” and “life-oriented” services.

Table 3. Services Offered by CFBI Organizations (N=38)

JOB ORIENTED	NUMBER OF ORGS	% OF ORGS
Job search	31	82%
Education/literacy	14	37%
Education/ESL	9	24%
Education/GED	13	34%
Education/vocational	29	76%
Job placement	30	79%
Job internships	15	39%
Client assessment	35	92%
Other job services	30	79%
LIFE ORIENTED		
Work preparedness	33	87%
Life skills	31	82%
Mentoring	27	71%
Substance abuse	19	50%
Other life-oriented	8	21%
Mean number of services	8.5	

However, the case studies revealed that the overall patterns hide striking differences between different types of community and faith-related organizations. Many tend to specialize in one or two services, and reputations built for those specializations are a critical reason why participants are referred to the sites by other local organizations and peers. As we document in a later section on local network roles, many of the smaller nonprofits that were new to government funding specialized in remedial services for participants that are not ready for formal job training or placement services.

The original survey asked what the EDD funding had enabled the organizations to do that they would not otherwise have been able to accomplish (Table 4). The most frequent responses—the ability to hire staff and to develop, expand, or refine programs—were relatively predictable. Essentially, the funding gave the organizations the ability to serve more participants, although a portion of the new funding often went to support administrative and reporting functions necessitated by the grant. A quarter of the organizations used EDD funds to purchase computers. Many went out of their way to tell us that providing basic computer literacy is critical to their work, since their participants typically have little access or experience with computers. In 7 of the 40 cases, EDD funding made the whole program possible, meaning that it was the first and only funding the organization had received from any source.

Table 4. What CFBI Organizations Did with EDD Money (N=38)

USE	FREQUENCY OF MENTIONS
Develop/add programs	17 (45%)
Hire staff	16 (42%)
Purchase computers/software	10 (26%)
Made whole program possible	7 (18%)
Facility improvement or expansion	5 (13%)
Transportation	4 (11%)

Note: Organizations could mention more than one use.

Faith-Orientation

Previous research has noted that the relationship of faith to organizational culture and service delivery is complex (Kramer, et al, 2005; Smith and Sosin 2001). For example, Wuthnow (2004) finds important differences in service-delivery roles between congregations and nonprofit faith-based organizations, though the two are frequently conflated in political rhetoric. Smith and Sosin (2001) suggest that relatively few faith-based organizations actually integrate faith-infused practices into their service delivery as presumed by many proponents and detractors of faith-based initiatives. A recent study concludes that “the intersection between faith and the content of services may be more complex than previously appreciated, and deserves significantly more monitoring and careful analysis” (Kramer et al, 2005, p. 5).

CFBI provided an excellent laboratory for examining the role of faith in organizations that provide workforce development services using public funds. During CFBI, EDD was able to partner with a wide variety of faith-related organizations, including newly-formed entities, without major problems arising that involved church-state relationships, client rights, or compromises to the core missions of the faith-related organizations. A key factor was the decision to prohibit congregations from being direct recipients of funds, as has been the case in some Bush administration proposals and programs (Ferris and Wright, 2004). By limiting funding to organizations with 501(c)3 status, CFBI avoided many of the tricky issues involved when public funds support organizations whose primary purpose is religious. This did not mean that congregations and their volunteer resources were not tapped however, as some CFBI-funded organizations have network connections with local congregations. For example, Reach Out 29 in Twenty-nine Palms is networked with 22 local churches who provide various support services to participants. In other cases, congregations provided office space or a nearby location to which participants wishing to speak with a pastor could be referred.

Federal Charitable Choice guidelines played a defining role in CFBI. However one feels about the overall policy direction and rhetoric that have accompanied the Charitable Choice debate at the federal level, the existence of codified guidelines as to what is and is not permissible helps both government and faith-related organizations to feel more comfortable with the idea of partnership. As one nonprofit director indicated,

If the rule was no prayer at all, anywhere in your organization, we couldn't do it. I think we've shown that a faith-related organization can advance its mission with integrity, with access for all, while taking government funds.

In general, the available evidence suggests that funded organizations were extremely wary about appearing to contravene the guidelines in a way that might put future funding at risk. Staff shared many accounts of how they censored their own expressions of faith rather than to risk non-compliance by pushing the boundaries. As a result, the research teams observed fewer differences than expected in the organizational style and service delivery patterns of faith-based and secular nonprofits. The CSU San Bernardino research team (final report, p. 51) observes:

When directly asked if faith plays a role in service delivery, none of the six sites acknowledge faith as an activity—whether it be voluntary attendance or religious services or the like, or in any formal embodiment of faith, religion, or spirituality.

But our findings suggest that faith does, in fact, have an implicit role in individual staff members' theories of change. Indeed, it appears that expressions of faith and any practice of such is left to the discretion of individual staff members in their efforts to counsel and service participants. So, in effect, based on the staff interviews, the values and principles of faith are incorporated into the mission of most programs under study, yet we find no evidence of faith and/or religion as a formally sanctioned approach or activity in any of these organizations.

No simple formulations or stereotypes can capture the varied and complex manner by which faith is expressed in CFBI organizations and their workforce programs. Our research in this area encountered many difficulties, not least of which is that different staff working at same organization often offer significantly different responses when asked about the role of faith in their programs. Even an apparently simple question, such as whether an organization considers itself “faith-related,” often provided surprises. For example, one representative of Catholic Charities indicated that she is more comfortable being identified simply as a community-based organization than as a faith-related organization. A representative of Jewish Vocational Services noted that they essentially function as a secular organization, although their mission is rooted in the Jewish principle of “Tsedakah, which translates directly into repairing the world.” One constant among all our organizational respondents with some faith-related connection is that they make a point of serving any individual, regardless of the participant's personal faith or religious affiliation.

In our initial survey, we asked CFBI organizational representatives an open-ended question: “Does faith play any direct or indirect role in your program?” The responses clustered in four categories, as depicted in Table 5. These data suggest CFBI succeeded in mobilizing tangible resources, organizational commitments, and perspectives that are characteristic of religious institutions and faith communities. At the same time, only 4 of the 38 organizations responding (11%) mentioned integrating identifiably faith-based practices into their programs, and those were careful to characterize these practices as optional for participants.⁶

⁶ In coding responses to the survey we looked for statements indicating that religious practices such as Bible studies, prayer, or pastoral counseling either took place on site or were led by the same staff that run the employment program. All respondents were careful to note the voluntary nature of any such activity.

Table 5. Roles Played by Faith in CFBI Organizations (by category of response; N=38)

CATEGORY OF RESPONSE	SAMPLE COMMENTS (REDACTED)
<p>No role or very indirect role</p> <p>N=10 26%</p>	<p>We don't do that like some other organizations. We recognize clients' unique characteristics, including faith and spirituality. We respond to faith questions if they come up. We have a (limited) partnership with a faith-related organization.</p>
<p>Source of motivation or approach to work</p> <p>N=21 55%</p>	<p>We are a sanctuary, a place where people feel safe and not judged. Faith is why we are doing this type of (difficult) work. Without our faith we would never have started this kind of work. I feel called to do this work. Our staff has a caring spirit and a sense of hope for participants, who respond to the heartfelt treatment they receive—in contrast to place where staff work for a paycheck or are just pushing numbers. We view ourselves as doing practical religion in the world. We are calling out people's God-given abilities by helping refugees connect to American work culture. We are building community by intensive relationship building with individuals and their communities, slowly developing trust. We are educating mainstream church members about the realities of the poor. When you are dealing with hard-to-employ folks, and disappointment, faith is a good thing to have. We recognize our clients' cultural values and Native American spirituality.</p>
<p>Source of tangible resources to support the work</p> <p>N=25 66%</p>	<p>Organization is located in or near a church. Organization exists as an outreach ministry of a church. We receive referrals from churches. We refer our clients to church pastors. Being clearly faith-related means that community members are more willing to employ our participants (often taking a perceived risk to do so). Tribal connections</p>
<p>Offer optional faith-based practices</p> <p>N=4 11%</p>	<p>Our participants get pastoral counseling from pastor/program leader. We offer optional Bible studies/prayer on site. We offer (not force) the Christian lifestyle as hope for a brighter future.</p>

Of the organizations with identified religious connections, all but 3 are Christian in orientation. Exceptions include a Jewish agency, one Native American organization, and one group with a core of Muslim staff, but who do not overtly portray their organization as Muslim to the public.

A survey conducted at the end of the initiative employed the most widely used current typology for classifying the relationship of faith to service delivery practices (Sider and Unruh 2004). Putting that information together with the earlier survey data, and our case study observation, Table 6 shows the classifications for all 40 CFBI-funded organizations. The easiest organizations to classify are the overtly secular nonprofits (n=9), although even these sometimes have service delivery partnerships with faith-related organizations, or staff who indicated that their work is

influenced by religious or spiritual values. Among the faith-related organizations, some are faith-related in name and mission, but put no emphasis on faith in their delivery of employment-related services (n=24). A smaller number are more overtly faith-centered in the sense of including some optional faith-based practices in their work with participants (n=7). These include programs whose treatment modalities, such as 12-step programs, include mention of a Higher Power as an essential part of the program.⁷ Overall, however, faith is typically evident as the motivating and sustaining ethic that guides organizational priorities and supports staff, but is either absent or incidental to the delivery of employment services.

Table 6. Classifying the Role of Faith in CFBI-funded Programs (n=40)

HOW RELIGIOUS ARE THE CFBI-FUNDED PROGRAMS?*				
Type	Faith-Permeated	Faith-Centered	Faith-Background	Secular
Definition	“explicitly religious, mandatory content integrated into the program”	“explicitly religious content that is separated from the provision of care; beneficiaries have the option not to participate”	“no explicitly religious content in the program; the religious component is seen primarily in the motivation of individual staff members”	“no religious content”
# of CFBI programs	0	7	24	9
% of CFBI programs	0%	18%	60%	22%

*Typology based on Sider and Unruh, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, March 2004.

Some of our case studies support earlier literature suggesting that faith-based organizations may be particularly valuable and effective in dealing with particular populations, such as recovering addicts (Carlson-Thies and Skillen, 1996). For example, one faith-centered organization, Champions Recovery Alternative Program, bases its non-residential drug treatment on twelve-step programs. Readings invoking God as the Higher Power are used as meditations or to spark discussion in group sessions. Champions’ Executive Director is open about sharing her Christian faith, but the expression of this faith in services looks more like “extending hospitality” than like “instilling religion.” A local official says:

Just to let you know why Champions works, we had a client who had nine kids and did not look good, and refused to wear undergarments to work. So she didn’t fit in here, even though her clerical skills were fine. With Champions she just fit in perfectly. Sue loved her, and all those little things that matter here, didn’t matter over there, because she was just like everyone else. Sue puts faith first. She’s really, truly trying to work with the individual.

Another drug treatment program, Tabitha’s House, is residential. All residents are encouraged to attend a Bible study and other inspirational classes led by the organization’s leader as well as local church services. But the EDD-funded program is carefully designed to function as a job club/training forum only and has no overt faith component.

⁷ By the time of this second survey, optional faith-based components were claimed by three organizations in addition to the four who indicated so on the original survey.

In both of these organizations, staff we interviewed stressed that their understanding of faith precludes efforts to force acceptance of religious tenets. Instead, they seek to model a “way of life” that participants may never have known was possible given the grim circumstances in their lives. Of the 30 participants we interviewed at these two faith-centered organizations, only two individuals voiced a complaint about faith-based practices (one wished for *more* religious content; and the other changed her mind during the second round of interviews). Many others expressed appreciation for faith elements as offering them a spiritual component formerly missing in their lives, indicating that faith gave them a stronger sense of stability. A few participants spoke about the example being set by staff members who are considered exemplary mentors for their own faith development and/or recovery process. Examples of participant comments include:

Being around clean and sober people and being around Christian-based people helps me stay clean and sober.

Everybody has a real strong belief in Jesus Christ here, so I think that helps too. It helps a lot.

Many more voiced appreciation for exposure to role models who had overcome obstacles similar to those they face, irrespective of their faith commitments. Sample comments include:

We [staff and the participant] both have the same illnesses, and we’ve been there for one another through it.

This is the only place after a year of searching that helps me.

I’m not really religious and if it’s not your preference they don’t push it on you. They are just there for you regardless.

Service Delivery Approaches and Strategies

The hypothesis under-girding faith-based policy initiatives is that the commitments, culture, and/or resources of faith-related organizations have a unique potential to change lives in a manner that promotes employment and related social goals (Cisneros, 1996; Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boodie, 2000; Glenn, 2000; Monsma, 1996; Sherman, 2005; Sherman and Green, 2002). Specific features of faith-related organizations hypothesized to contribute to their success include community connections and legitimacy, holistic and highly personal attention to the material and spiritual needs of clients, attention to changing inner attitudes and motivations, a more inviting and less bureaucratic organizational culture, and—more controversially—the incorporation of specific religious practices (e.g., prayer, Bible study) into work with clients. A key objective of the evaluation was to discover whether and how community and faith-related organizations approach their work with clients differently than traditional employment development or welfare-to-work projects.

It is important to keep in mind that among the CFBI-funded organizations there is significant variability in service delivery approach. Some organizations, particularly those that are larger and more established, mimic traditional government service delivery in most respects. In this section we are primarily concerned with describing the CFBI organizations that employ strategies and approaches that are less typical of government programs. Even among these there is significant diversity, from how much professional distance is maintained in relating to

participants, to whether or not they focus on a single job-related skill or multiple routes to employment (CSU San Bernardino final report, p. 29).

In our initial organizational survey we asked leaders what made their programs unique, and their answers clustered in four categories: program culture, the holistic and integrated nature of the services offered, location/access, and the presence of highly committed staff, many of whom share backgrounds or life experiences similar to those of participants (Table 7). While it appears in many cases that these features are linked to the faith perspective of the organization or its staff, few if any are necessarily unique to faith-related organizations.

Table 7. What CFBI Organizations Say Makes Them Unique (by category of response, N=38)

UNIQUE FEATURE	SAMPLE COMMENTS (REDACTED)
Program Culture N=17 45%	We work with individuals as long as it takes. We have a home-like, family-style atmosphere. We take a personalized, caring approach. We have taken the time to build trust with the community. Our reputation is for really listening to people to find out how we can help.
Holistic, Integrated Services N=19 50%	We deal with the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. We work intensively with a small number; large amount of follow-up. We piggyback on other programs within our organization. We have therapy services in addition to the job coaching. We place people in housing, but also get them jobs so they keep it.
Location/Access N=9 24%	We are located where the target population lives. We see folks everyday rather than episodically. We accept walk-ins rather than by appointment only. We are more than a 9-5 program, people can come all day. We are the only workforce program in this area of county. We take our program to remote parts of our 5-county area.
Committed “Bi-Cultural” Staff N=9 24%	Staff can link the worlds of employers with those of participants. Staff have lives like the participants/are graduates of program. Staff are in touch with the community served. Every staff member here was either homeless or incarcerated at one time. We can reach people with a limited ability to speak English.
Other N=8 21%	People can choose us freely. We are both the trainer <i>and</i> the employer. We work with labor unions. We have a direct connection to jobs in the television production industry.

These findings were confirmed and elaborated upon during the case study research, which identified three common features in most CFBI-funded programs:

- They emphasize individual plans, time, and attention for each participant rather than simply relying on pre-set programs in which all participants receive more or less the same treatment and receive minimal personal support.
- While providing participants with access to new work-related skills and resources, they attempt to instill self-esteem and personal motivation, such that participants become active on their own behalf.

- They deploy program staff or volunteers based not only on their technical expertise and competence, but also on their affinity with participants (e.g., demographic, cultural, or similar life experience), and/or on their ability to work as credible and flexible coaches or mentors that help participants navigate the road toward employment.

These emphases appear different from those in many government-run employment programs, though the degree to which this is true varies, since some government programs embody similar features. For example, the EDD research team notes that the organizations they studied were able to provide services to participants more quickly than is sometimes the case in government programs, where screening processes often lead to delays.

Here is a description of the service delivery approach of Project Full Potential in Eureka (CSU Humboldt field report):

The staff of Project Full Potential treat each participant as a unique individual, assessing the specific needs and aspirations of each person. Participants move through classes and trainings as they need them. If participants fail to meet the job training expectations (arriving on time, being ready to work, etc.) the training period is extended and the case manager works more intensively with the participants to identify what might be the reasons for problem behaviors and to develop strategies to address them... While staff are very accessible to participants, they draw clear boundaries. They are professionals (not participants' friends), and they do not give out home phone numbers to participants.

As documented by the EDD research team, individual attention can take many forms, such as:

- calling someone who fails to attend a class;
- providing services beyond normal business hours;
- not requiring scheduled appointments;
- giving clients access to personal phone numbers;
- providing shelter at personal residences.

Some but not all CFBI-funded organizations provided connections to employers (see section on local network roles below), often developing relationships with employers who are willing to take a chance on individuals with prison records, histories of substance abuse, or poor work histories.

One relatively common story line appears in many participant interviews, and can be summarized as follows: "I came here and my life was a mess. I felt like I was no good. The people here understood my problems, they treated me like I mattered, and they taught me new skills. Now I have more self-esteem, I feel more confident about my life in general and my ability to find and/or keep a job." The organizations deploy various tools to promote these inner changes, including staff/volunteer mentoring, peer support, exposure to positive role models, and in some drug and alcohol recovery programs, an invitation to put trust in a "higher power."

The exact nature of the job coaching/mentoring approach varies from program to program, and to a lesser degree among different staff within programs. The approach typically involves a mix of exhortation, self-esteem building, job readiness training, skill development (particularly computer skills), help in finding needed resources, and interpersonal support. In some programs, staff/participant relationships are also marked by close bonds, friendship, and caring concern. Participants express appreciation for having both "someone to push me" and "someone to push *for* me." This dual form of support is communicated through frequent conversations, some planned (usually generated by staff) and some impromptu (usually opened by the participant

when staff make themselves readily available). It typically manifests itself in gradual transformations rather than dramatic conversions.

Participants particularly seem to value interpersonal encounters with staff that share life experiences or characteristics with them, and relate from the standpoint of “having been there themselves.” This enhances their credibility with participants, and creates an atmosphere that is different from an organizational setting where personal encounters are staged in ways that explicitly or implicitly accentuate the differences between participants and “expert helpers.”

Group interaction—sometimes conducted under protected circumstances that permit intense and intimate self-revelation, and sometimes a matter of daily routines—is either a deliberate part of many programs or results naturally from the program’s delivery of services. Where these peer groups appear, participants often consider them to be among the most valuable part of their experience with the program.

While most of the organizations we studied have defined program components, the organizations vary significantly in how flexibly participants move among components. In some cases, almost all the instruction is individualized, and participants proceed at their own pace. In others, there is a set class structure in which a group of participants experience the same training over a set period of time. As a general rule, even the more structured programs make many allowances for individual differences and allow individuals to repeat training components. For example, many CFBI-funded organizations assure participants that they may return for assistance whenever they need to, even after they have graduated from specific CFBI programs.

At the same time, the organizations we observed tend to be quite strict about their behavioral standards and expectations. This is particularly true in drug recovery programs, but almost all programs set some minimal behavioral standards as a way of teaching the type of discipline that will be expected at work. For example, in some programs participants are required to show up for classes properly dressed for a job.

It is important to keep in mind that much of what differentiates CFBI and government programs is a direct result of the varying rules of the game under which they operate. For example, community and faith-related organizations often exhibit a willingness to enroll and serve all kinds of participants regardless of whether they appear likely to find employment in the near future, including many individuals whom others would or have given up on. This stance is not an easy option for employment programs subject to meeting WIA performance standards, which have a strong incentive to limit services to those who are more readily employable. On the other hand, government programs funded under WIA have an obligation to provide core services to any job-seeker that walks in the door, while nonprofit programs can and often do set limits on how many and what types of participants are served. As detailed in the CSU San Bernardino final report (p. 26), the screening process used by organizations is geared to determine if the available services are a good match for participant needs, rather than being a means to screen out those deemed less likely to be immediately employable. This enables the organizations to specialize in particular types of clients, and/or to keep staff-participant ratios at low levels compared to those in One-Stops.

Community Network Analysis

Roles Played by Community and Faith-Related Organizations in Local Workforce Networks

Policy and program design often presumes that participants are served by only one program, which alone is responsible for whatever results are achieved. The research literature and CFBI participant data suggest a different reality; program participants frequently are served by multiple agencies, often sequentially and sometimes simultaneously (Rentz and Herman 2004; Wuthnow 2004). With this in mind, a second phase of the CFBI evaluation considered the roles community and faith-related organizations play in relation to other organizations in local networks.

The design for this phase of the evaluation mirrored other recent studies that have taken the dynamics of community social service networks as the point of departure (Campbell 2002; Sherman 2005; Sherman and Green 2002; Wineburg 2001; Wuthnow 2004). A key premise of these studies is that we cannot assess the public value of community and faith-based organizations in isolation. For example, Wineburg (2001, ch. 4) shows how the social services provided by the religious community are intricately braided with those provided by publicly-funded social service agencies, whether or not special faith-based initiatives are promoted.

A close examination of the 14 cases in the community network analysis reveals three distinct roles played by CFBI-funded organizations in local workforce networks:

- 1) source of *remedial care and services* that offer an alternative portal into the workforce development system;
- 2) developer of an *alternative employment and training network* that connects hard-to-employ participants with services and jobs tailored to their unique situations; and
- 3) provider of a *specialized service* to which One-Stops (or other agencies) can refer participants when they are ready.

Figure 2 (see page 56) presents a simplified network diagram depicting the three roles in relation to important challenges facing hard-to-employ participants as they attempt to overcome poverty-related barriers and move into the world of work. The challenges are depicted as if they are rungs on a ladder that the participants must climb to achieve secure employment at a family-supporting wage. To construct this ladder, we combined common descriptions of the services provided by One-Stops with a content analysis of what participants said they gained from their participation, and what staff said in answering the question “What counts as a successful outcome?”

Also depicted in the diagram is the relationship between the roles of nonprofit organizations and the current reach and scope of One-Stop services, with arrows depicting corresponding referral or partnership connections. Unlike One-Stops, many community and faith-related organizations regularly reach out into the communities and local institutions where the hard-to-employ reside, including prisons, drug recovery programs, and homeless shelters.

A key finding of our community network analysis is that community and faith-related organizations have different strengths and limitations as service providers and as One-Stop partners depending on which of the three roles they primarily play. The following sections summarize this information for each role.

Role 1: Remedial Care and Services

In this role, the focus is to help participants achieve remedial or basic outcomes that constitute the lower rungs of the self-sufficiency ladder: gaining trust, sobriety, emotional support, social skills, self-confidence, etc. From a workforce development perspective, these organizations emphasize pre-employment or job readiness services. Six of the 14 organizations studied in our community network analysis emphasized remedial care, and all are faith-related, including two of the three faith-centered organizations. These six organizations exhibit value-driven missions committed to meeting individuals “where they are,” treating each person as intrinsically valuable regardless of his or her immediate employability. They feature comparatively low staff-participant ratios (averaging 1 to 8), close relationships between staff and participants, and program designs that encourage peer support.⁸ When successful, graduates of remedial care programs are prepared to make use of more advanced employment and training services at One-Stops or other workforce organizations or, in some cases, are able to obtain jobs directly through the organization’s community connections.

An example is Champions Recovery Alternatives Program, founded in 2000 just months before receiving the CFBI grant. Champions is a substance abuse treatment program for youth and young adults, especially for those who are court-ordered to attend a certified drug and alcohol treatment program. The organization administers an intensive outpatient program designed to last for twelve months or until treatment goals are achieved. Central to the program are the Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Twelve Steps traditions. The program is divided into two phases—Intensive and Aftercare. Before graduating to the second phase, participants must either have a job or be enrolled in school. Throughout the treatment program, clients are required to attend AA/NA meetings and to take part in group and one-on-one counseling with staff members, most of whom are addicts in recovery. Rather than offering specific employment services themselves, Champions refers participants to the One-Stop located a few blocks down the street for job readiness training and placement services.

As Champions demonstrates, the remedial care role is to guide participants up the initial steps on the ladder toward self-sufficiency, building confidence one step at a time. A notable characteristic of many participants we interviewed is a lack a fundamental trust in other individuals, coupled with a debilitating lack of self-confidence. Participants facing these long-standing disabilities typically require significant, identity-transforming experiences that are incubated in a caring, personal relationship. Without the nonprofit’s intervention, participants would enter the One-Stop—if they entered it at all—set up for failure because they are simply not ready for the experience of navigating One-Stop services. The ladder must be ascended rung by rung; jumping halfway up the rungs in a single leap does not work. A comment from a nonprofit director speaks to this point:

Well, the One-Stop has a lot to offer. But the expectation is that people arrive on time, that they can use the One-Stop as a consultant, and that they perceive the incentives as significant enough to encourage them to actually show up...The One-Stop expects that they be well-dressed...It's much more like a business, so there's an expectation of professional behavior. I think people don't understand the issues facing our participants.

⁸ By contrast, caseloads in One Stop Career Centers often average 50 or more per case manager, according to a statewide survey of One-Stop directors (Campbell, Lemp, and Treiber, 2006).

Although the staff in welfare departments or One-Stop Career Centers may play important roles in the lives of the individuals they serve, they are seldom, if ever, the center of participants' lives, nor are the participants always the center of their attention. By contrast, many of the organizations we observed become integral to the daily lives of their participants. The most obvious example are programs that have a residential component, such as those connected to homeless shelters or drug recovery programs, but even the non-residential programs often feature strong, long-lasting relationships with participants. Our interviews were filled with references to a strong "sense of family;" for many participants the organization became a "home away from home." As one participant said, "This is more like a home, and I think you can just feel the tension at the other places." A government official recognizes the same trait:

There's a real family environment that takes place, over and above what I see in many other agencies. After you work there, my sense is, you become more family, people feel connected, and there is a real sense of loyalty. The executive director feels very connected to the staff, and cares a lot; the staff is her family.

From the perspective of the larger workforce development system, community and faith-related organizations emphasizing remedial care function as an alternative portal into the workforce development system. Their value derives from an ability to gain the trust of segments of the community who are suspicious of government programs. A One-Stop staff member says:

They have classes and offer similar services that we do in a particular area of town. The thing is you have people of different cultures who for whatever reason are more comfortable dealing with their own...they don't want to travel. Their customers would not come over here unless there was something special or a job for which we are recruiting. These are people who really like having services in their neighborhood.

If clients come to trust staff in a nonprofit organizations, and if those staff build relationships with staff in government programs, then it is possible to forge relationships in which participant trust is transferred to government providers. For example, one organization has developed a relationship with the One-Stop staff member who offers a basic orientation to One-Stop enrollees. Program participants are taken on a joint field trip to the One-Stop and introduced to the staff member.

Small steps like these clearly help, but building trust is inherently difficult, and depends a great deal on the particular individuals involved. Another organization has found it difficult to persuade even their better-prepared participants to use One-Stop services. This reluctance continues even though the organization made an arrangement to co-locate their staff at the One-Stop. In fact, even those co-located staff have not liked being at the One-Stop, preferring the more comfortable work setting in their own organization.

Remedial care organizations in our case study sample report having some employer connections, although they seldom had staff that were exclusively focused on developing employer relationships. As one Southern California program director explained (CSU San Bernardino final report, p. 20):

We have relationships with some of the local security companies. So depending on what the company needs at a particular time, if they have an opening, they'll call us...We try to help fill them. You know, there's a new Walmart in the area, we kind of also got hooked up with that.

Role 2: Developing an Alternative Employment and Training Network

Community and faith-related organizations in this category focus on building a community network of services that supports the unique circumstances of a particular participant population or a particular locale. This differs from the remedial care role in that these organizations are more likely to act as community brokers and network developers. In particular, they ensure that participants have access to more advanced job training that results in hard skills, and to formal job placement services that are an integral part of the program. In many cases these organizations develop these capabilities within their own service portfolio, while in others they are provided through formal collaborative connections to other providers. For example, many organizations in this category seek out employers who are willing to take a chance on individuals with criminal records, drug involvement, or checkered work histories. Not surprisingly, the five organizations we identified in this category averaged approximately five times as many network connections as those in the remedial services category (200 to 40). In three of the five cases in this category, the organization has created an active partnership with a nearby One-Stop that goes beyond simple referrals.

A good example is EARN (Employment Assistance Resource Network Program), a program of Welcome Home Ministries, one of three faith-centered organizations studied during the community network analysis. Beginning with individual visits to incarcerated women in 1996, Welcome Home has become a recognized antidote to recidivism in San Diego County jails. When EDD funds became available, inmates received visits and orientation before they were released and continued getting support and assistance in job training, job placement, and education as long as they needed help. Part of Welcome Home's success is due to its wide-reaching community network, particularly a large list of employers who have been identified as willing to take a risk in hiring individuals with a prison record.

Another example in this category is the Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministry (FIRM). FIRM employment and training programs are geared to the unique situation of Southeast Asian and other refugees, many of whom fear and distrust the government, and either avoid One-Stops entirely or are poorly served when they do use them. A FIRM staff member states:

Mostly our folks don't even come in the door (of the One-Stop). The One-Stop deals with everybody, whether you are low-income, or you're an executive of a company looking for a job, so there's a whole bunch of people walking in that door. But, the way the performance standards are made, the One-Stop staff only want the people who are going to succeed. So a refugee walks in...guess how many services they're going to get?

FIRM stepped into this breach to provide a wide range of culturally-sensitive services, including assessment, resume assistance, and active help with job placement and retention. FIRM job developers seek out opportunities with local employers and help with the often-difficult work of cultural translation. We found that the majority of government program representatives we interviewed agreed readily that FIRM services are distinctive.

Community and faith-related organizations that offer an alternative network thus share with remedial care organizations a close affinity with participants in a particular target group or geographic area. But along with their inward focus on participant care, they also prioritize the external work of building a supportive community network leading to participant job placement.

Role 3: Specialized Service

Three of the 14 organizations studied during the community network analysis provide specialized services and receive referrals from One-Stops or other public and nonprofit agencies. All 3 of these organizations are secular, although in each case they have direct or indirect ties to local faith-related organizations. A key difference in these programs is that the majority of participants are individuals who have already succeeded in navigating the One-Stop system or that of other public agencies, and are operating at the higher rungs of the self-sufficiency ladder. These organizations tend to serve relatively higher numbers of participants, but in a more specific fashion than do remedial care or alternative network organizations.

In many respects the specialized service role seems distinct from the type of value-added partnership envisioned in most community and faith-based initiatives. This type of contracting is more like what public agencies have always done. On the other hand, these organizations demonstrate that the transforming spark can reach participants even in interactions that are a far cry from the “intensive case management” or “holistic attention” often cited by proponents of a faith-based initiative.

For example, Wardrobe for Opportunity provides attractive work clothes to women who are looking for employment. They receive referrals from a number of San Francisco Bay Area One-Stops in addition to other public and nonprofit agencies, and draw on a wide network of community connections for donations and volunteers, including many religious organizations. In the space of a relatively brief encounter (typically one hour), Wardrobe services can make a remarkable difference, as a One-Stop representative comments:

It really is wonderful what they do. Our clients...I mean, you can see them standing taller. And I'm not one for flourishes, but it's the truth, they really feel so much better. Not only do they feel like they are starting to make progress in their lives, starting to get a sense of what's going on, of being a part of the community, but they also feel that somebody cares. Somebody put personal hands on me, and measured and fitted me...I think Wardrobe is universally respected, at a minimum, and probably loved.

A more traditional workforce partner was the Center for Career Studies at California State University, Long Beach. The Center provided vocational training (Certified Nursing Assistant, medical billing and coding, Microsoft Office) and job placement assistance to individuals referred from many One-Stops in the region. Like Wardrobe, the Center for Career Studies was a secular nonprofit with extensive network connections prior to the EDD grant.

A very different case in the specialized service category was the New Beginnings Partnership, the only example in our sample of a faith-centered organization joining with a secular nonprofit organization to secure a CFBI grant. Like the Center for Career Studies, New Beginnings primary service was job training, but unlike its urban counterpart, geography played a key role in defining its community niche. As stressed by a county welfare official, New Beginnings was the only training facility in northern Tulare County available to these individuals:

The number one thing is that they are providing a service that the Dinuba area needs because there are not other agencies that are willing to provide that here in this area because of the remoteness. I can't stress that enough.

While New Beginnings ceased operation after just two years of funding, they helped establish the need for a viable job training site in the location. This was one factor leading the local Workforce Investment Board's (WIBs) subsequent decision to locate a One-Stop center in the area.

Partnership Dynamics Between CFBI-funded Organizations and One-Stop Career Centers

Case study evidence suggests many reasons to make developing partnerships with community and faith-related organizations a priority for local One-Stops and WIBs. It also illuminates barriers to forming and sustaining these partnerships. The potential benefits will vary from case to case, but, in general, community and faith-related organizations bring assets that can complement the existing strengths of government workforce development programs. Among the qualities we frequently observed at CFBI-funded organization are:

- A value-driven mission committed to meeting individuals “where they are” and treating each person as intrinsically valuable, regardless of his or her immediate employability.
- Specialized expertise and experience with particular services, populations, or locales.
- Entrepreneurial flexibility that relatively quickly creates or adjusts program offerings to balance the strengths and weaknesses of other local providers.
- The trust of segments of the community who are suspicious of government programs.
- Relatively low staff-participant ratios that permit a high level of personal attention, sometimes of long duration.
- Staff who can serve as role models, often having overcome the same barriers participants face.
- Staff whose personal faith makes them resilient to setbacks, relatively immune to burn-out, and prepared to transcend their job descriptions to help their clients.
- A physical presence in locations that are not well served by One-Stops.
- Social capital connections to employers who are willing to take a chance on individuals with criminal records, drug involvement, or checkered work histories.
- Program designs that encourage peer support among fellow program participants.

Since government programs still control the lion's share of local workforce development resources, including access to training funds, active partnerships can bring more value to program participants. Nonprofit-government partnership connections can take many forms, including sharing information; referrals for services; training each other's staff; co-enrollment; and co-location of nonprofit staff on One-Stop premises. As one nonprofit director remarked, “They help us where we need it and we help them where they need it.”

For example, despite its value as an alternative to the One-Stop, FIRM leaders came to realize that many of their participants were ending up in a cycle of low-paying jobs, and really needed more extensive occupational skills training to advance. Under a recent MOU with a local One-Stop, FIRM now screens its participants and encourages a small number who are deemed ready to make use of the vocational training opportunities the One-Stop provides (bus driver, mechanic, truck driver, etc.). To facilitate the process, the One-Stop provides a grant of about \$100,000 to FIRM, which covers the cost of locating four FIRM staff at the One-Stop on a part-time basis (ranging from .25 FTE to .75 FTE). The remainder of the salaries of those full-time staff is paid by the CFBI grant. A key challenge is persuading FIRM customers that it is worth the time and effort to enroll in the One-Stop training programs, since the short-term need for “any job” often precludes them from adopting a longer-term perspective focused on getting a “better job.”

In another example, Welcome Home gladly accepts referrals from the One-Stop and also instructs One-Stop staff in the delicate art of working with ex-offenders so that they can provide training opportunities to Welcome Home clients. Co-enrollment is the rule rather than the exception in this partnership. At the time the CFBI grant was about to expire, plans were underway to co-locate Welcome Home staff at the One-Stop. Commenting on Welcome Home, a One-Stop partner says:

They are a great part of our team. I wouldn't trade working with them for anything...I had somebody that I was working one-on-one with and I couldn't figure out how to get him to the next level. We kept getting a stall. He kept putting nothing on the application for his felony conviction. I called Welcome Home and asked them to help me. They gave me a list of employer contacts that I could call. I gave all this information to the customer. Within two weeks he did the application and had a job.

In describing the rationale for partnerships between CFBI-funded organizations and One-Stops, we find a number of mutual benefits. Nonprofit leaders feel that having their own staff located at the One-Stop makes it easier to refer their own participants for One-Stop services, since a friendly and familiar face will greet them. The One-Stop hopes to take advantage of the special expertise and cultural skills of nonprofit organizations, including familiarity with participants' languages or knowledge of how to handle the unique employment barriers of particular individuals, such as an individual without a permanent address.

Based on our sample, it does not appear that an organization's degree of faith-centeredness has much to do with the likelihood of developing an active partnership with a One-Stop. A more likely causal variable is the attitude toward privatization in the local political culture. We find that active partnerships are most likely in areas where local workforce and welfare officials have longstanding commitments to contracting out services to private and nonprofit organizations (Campbell 2002). Another important variable is the strength and community visibility of the executive director, and that individual's ability to forge network relationships. Based on our comparative analysis, this ability is more likely to be found in more established nonprofits whose solid administrative footing and sufficient staff free the executive director to spend time on community networking rather than on internal program operations. Executive directors in the five organizations in the alternative network category estimated that they spend an average of 74% of their time on external networking, compared to an average of 35% for four executive directors in the remedial care category.

Our interviews also reveal substantial impediments to effective partnership development between community and faith-related organizations and One-Stop centers. These include:

- lack of information about each other;
- pre-existing prejudices that cause leaders on both sides to discount the approaches or effectiveness of the other;
- reluctance of One-Stops to partner with an organization or program that may be short-lived (as in the case of many state-financed grant programs); and
- personal/organizational rivalries and turf issues.

For example, some leaders of organizations that specialize in remedial services express strong resistance to the idea of sending their participants to a local One-Stop, where they fear their careful work of confidence-building will be undermined. As Wineburg (2001) and others have suggested, effective local partnerships with community and faith-related organizations require a

great deal of conversation and interaction over extended periods of time. Trusting relationships are built through mundane interactions—personal introductions, showing up at meetings, sharing newsletters, calling to reintroduce yourself to new staff members (given high turnover in many agencies), helping solve one another’s everyday problems, etc. Taking these small steps together can begin to overcome existing prejudices between a government and a faith-related organization. A One-Stop official states:

We have a lot of meetings, and that helps clear up misconceptions. In the past, I have had a lot of issues with the idea of faith-based initiatives, but you just have to get past that. It works for the right person; it’s right on the money for the person that needs to be there. And those of us in the system have to be open to that; it goes both ways. They have to stretch to partner with us; we have to stretch to see the benefits they bring.

Where staff is appropriately skilled, the interaction can be accelerated. A One-Stop partner with FIRM says:

They are also very good about screening, and getting certain information so that I can determine whether or not an individual is eligible for the worker opportunity tax credits. When I talk with them we have all our ducks in a row, and I don’t have to send them back to get more information, so I’m really thankful they are there.

In other cases, the reality of divergent interests can impede partnership. Speaking of his relationship to the One-Stop, one nonprofit staff member exclaims:

The reality is that One-Stops hold the funding strings and it’s hard for community and faith-related organizations to get access. They want us to do the work for them, but they don’t want to fund our services.

The flavor of what is required to build local partnerships between community and faith-related organizations and One-Stops is conveyed in the following list of suggestions generated by a group of CFBI grantees who have experienced some success in partnering with a One-Stop:

- Send One-Stops regular newsletters;
- Attend One-Stop partner meetings regularly;
- Have your CEO meet directly with the One-Stop director;
- Co-enroll your participants with both your program and the One-Stop (One-Stops like that you have pre-determined client eligibility up front);
- Have regular weekly meetings with the One-Stop case managers to follow up on participants you have referred to them;
- If your calls are not returned, someone needs to follow-up and go visit the One-Stop;
- Affiliating with a well-known community proponent is a key door-opener for getting access at the One-Stop.

As the following quote from a CFBI staff member in Southern California suggests (CSU San Bernardino final report, p. 56), the process of relationship building typically has its ups and down over time:

I would say that it ebbs and flows because you see changes from one fiscal year to the next with those agencies as well, because their priorities change and their personnel changes. We started out, for example, with a very strong relationship with [a particular

One-Stop]. And right around the time we got everything in place, their fiscal year ended and their director left. And the new director came in and everything went poof!

When successful, determined and patient efforts at relationship building can pay handsome dividends. Welcome Home traces its entire ministry to the decision of a local correctional official who granted the organization an exception to the normal policy that prohibits individuals who contact incarcerated inmates from having contact with the same inmates after their release. Strict adherence to the policy would have made it impossible for the group to accomplish its current mission of establishing trusting relationships while the inmate is still in jail, and then being there to support their reentry to society immediately upon their release. Because he had seen the value of Welcome Home's prison ministry, and had come to trust the executive director, the official was inclined to grant the exception.

Partnership Dynamics Between CFBI-funded Organizations and EDD

The literature on faith-based initiatives raises concerns about the capacity of community and faith-related organizations to operate with the constraints imposed by government (Kramer et.al., 2005). CFBI is notable for the extraordinary efforts taken by EDD's Special Projects Division to enable small and inexperienced nonprofit organizations to partner with government. By providing extensive, responsive, and sympathetic technical assistance and capacity-building, EDD made it possible for less experienced organizations funded through CFBI to deal effectively with government restrictions and requirements.

By the end of the third year of the initiative, EDD program managers rated 33 of the 36 remaining CFBI-funded organizations as "effective partners" and 32 of 36 organizations as "meeting or exceeding performance standards." In turn, EDD program managers get high marks from leaders of funded organizations for their quick and effective response to problems and for their consistently respectful and supportive approach. The degree of satisfaction was consistent across programs, and continued throughout the project despite the travel limitations imposed on EDD staff during the latter stages of CFBI. A self-described political conservative from a faith-related organization told us:

If all government programs were this responsive to local organizations I'd be a lot more supportive of them. We were asked to change some of our internal policies to be in compliance with church-state guidelines, which we really didn't want to do. But we agreed because we believed in what this program was trying to do and appreciated all the people we were dealing with.

Program managers are perceived as having given far more of themselves than CFBI grantees expect from a government program. We heard over and over how kind and patient the program managers were in introducing and explaining the complicated reporting procedures. The only negative comments we heard in this regard concerned EDD's policy of rotating program managers to different organizations periodically. In one admittedly unusual case, an organization was assigned five different program managers in four months. Although staff eventually learned to like and trust their new liaisons, they felt that having to adjust to different styles and ranges of knowledge caused unnecessary disruption in the flow of instruction and understanding.

Despite the positive experience of working with EDD's program managers, funded organizations still experienced the administrative and philosophical difficulties inherent in dealing with government bureaucracies. For example, government paperwork/reporting requirements place burdens on already overworked staff, and in some cases undercut the organizations' preferred

ways of interacting with clients. For example, Wardrobe for Opportunity works with a large number of participants in encounters that typically last a single hour, yet they faced the same paperwork requirements for each participant as did organizations that work intensively with a very few participants over long periods of time. In addition, WIA eligibility restrictions run against the open-door ethic of most of the organizations. As groups made the transition from using state general funds to WIA funds, many were disturbed by having to change long-established open-door policies in order to ensure compliance with such WIA regulations as the restriction against serving individuals who had not registered with the Selective Service system.

Our local case studies suggest a variety of policy mechanisms and program dynamics that played roles in supporting or constraining the CFBI partnership. This section discusses two of the most important examples.

Commitment to Building Community Capacity

One striking lesson of CFBI is the power of a public agency like EDD to act as a community change agent, rather than simply as a dispenser of funds or an auditor of compliance with federal regulations. Playing this change agent role requires a hands-on approach and flexibility that is not typical of a government program.

It is worth summarizing the manner in which EDD's Special Projects Division went about this task. First, EDD legitimized the smaller non-profits by bestowing funds upon them, thereby increasing their community visibility and self-confidence. Next, EDD sent the organizations trained professionals to coach them through 1) working with government requirements and restrictions; 2) developing organizational infrastructure that enabled them to display their professional readiness to other potential funders; 3) delivering their program and tracking the results more effectively; and 4) forging relationships with other EDD-funded organizations and with the local workforce development community. Finally, EDD used its position, connections, and influence to encourage the WIB and One-Stop leaders to give partnership with these organizations a chance, despite the risks and the expressed reluctance of some leaders on both sides. Other grant makers could presumably provide one or two of the kinds of support the CFBI-funded organizations received, but nobody but EDD could put pressure upon the official side of the workforce development system to create the opportunity for collaboration or at least cooperation with these smaller players.

From the perspective of the executive directors we interviewed, the state-funded program provided a number of advantages. It increased their visibility and legitimacy in the eyes of other stakeholders in the local workforce development network. It provided a set of colleagues around the state with whom they could share experiences and learn. And, in some cases, it provided connections to sources of funding and technical assistance outside the local community, helping them to steer clear of the infighting and competition that often plagues nonprofits in a single community.

Despite EDD's laudable efforts, our case study evidence does, in general, confirm the received wisdom that public agencies find it easier to partner with larger, more established nonprofits with which they share a common degree of professionalism and other traits of organizational culture. The strongest One-Stop connections we observed were made by the larger and more experienced alternative network organizations, not by those providing remedial services. This underscores an ongoing challenge to any attempt to reap public value by partnering with smaller nonprofits.

In a focus group, EDD program managers indicated that their work with organizations that lacked prior government grant experience did take significantly more time. They added that the extra time and cost associated with partnering with smaller and less experienced organizations needs to be weighed against the unique benefits brought by these organizations. A few EDD program managers argued that it is inappropriate to fund start-up organizations that require excessive amounts of technical assistance before they can begin to function effectively as partners. But other program managers appreciated the vitality provided by partnering with community leaders who are still on fire with a fresh vision. Many smaller CFBI-funded organizations were described by program managers as “just putting it all together” when their CFBI funds began to run out, and—consistent with much of the literature in community development—they recommended funding viable start-up programs for at least five years.

Table 8 summarizes the evaluation findings regarding the comparative strengths of experienced (tier 1) and inexperienced (tier 2) grantees.

Table 8. Comparative Strengths of Experienced and Inexperienced Grantees

STRENGTHS OF EXPERIENCED GRANTEES (Tier 1)	STRENGTHS OF INEXPERIENCED GRANTEES (Tier 2)
Experienced in running an effective program—already made and learned from mistakes.	More open to CFBI’s agenda, more ready to adapt their own programs and goals to fit.
Sophisticated in responding to government regulations and procedures.	“Visionaries,” still alight with the initial urgency of their mission.
Staff already trained and ready.	Most likely to reach the whole spectrum of people who would never enter a One-Stop.
Known and respected throughout their communities.	Strong internal motivation to do all the hand-holding and counseling that their clients need.
Well connected with workforce community, especially One-Stops, for referrals in both directions.	Tend to be narrowly focused on a specific target population and to be more familiar with them than other local organizations.
Able to provide a variety of services.	Provide a relatively inexpensive access point to hard-to-reach individuals for the local workforce effort.
Highly efficient in serving larger numbers of participants.	Complement the state’s overall workforce development goals and objectives of serving the whole target population.
High political visibility, making it easier to secure funding.	Strongly motivated to learn and, with technical assistance, become capable partners.
Can assist Tier 2 organizations by sharing best practices and other practical guidance.	Gets the funding deeper into the neighborhoods.

Despite its significant investment in capacity building, EDD chose not to renew contracts for four of the original 40 organizations. The specific reasons varied, although one EDD program manager said most failures were attributable in some way to “bad management.”

Approach to Performance Accountability

Some base their support for funding community and faith-related organizations on a perceived opposition between the inefficient red tape associated with government programs and the lack of the same in most nonprofit organizations. As one employer we interviewed comments:

Frankly, I think if there were zero government funds working on this and it was all churches and private sector, we would do twice as good a job for half of the money.

The CFBI experience casts doubt on this perspective, and highlights an issue that is less provocative but more germane: Who will bear the costs of the accountability and performance demands that will accompany any effort to extend government funds to community and faith-related organizations? EDD managed CFBI in such a way that it deflected many costs that might otherwise have been born by the funded organizations. One example is a key EDD decision about how to conduct CFBI audits. In line with its general approach to capacity building, EDD treated the initial audit as an organizational learning experience, rather than an occasion to weed out organizations that did not meet the usual standards early on. Participating groups had a chance to learn what was expected so that subsequent audits could focus on identifying real breaches of responsibility, rather than simply picking up errors due to inexperience. This approach stretched EDD's normal operating procedures, but there is no indication that doing so increased the likelihood of mismanagement of funds. If anything, the opposite is likely, as auditors took the time to ensure that organizations were aware of how to meet the proper standards.

Perhaps the most important mechanism supporting the types of partnership evident during CFBI is a flexible approach to handling performance accountability. Normally, WIA-funded agencies are required to meet stringent performance standards set by the federal government. Indeed, this is a major source of the difficulty One-Stops have in serving the hard-to-employ, and a reason why CFBI existed in the first place. During Year 1, funded organizations were exempt from these requirements because they were funded out of state general funds rather than federal WIA funds. When WIA funding kicked in during Year 2, participating organizations were required to incorporate WIA *eligibility* standards but, as a demonstration program, were considered exempt from WIA *performance* standards. Instead, EDD program managers and leaders of funded organizations negotiated a specially crafted set of performance benchmarks to which grantees were held accountable. While many of these benchmarks were designed around capacity-building goals rather than federal performance standards, the program managers repeatedly stressed to grantees the need to demonstrate performance as a way of attracting future grants.

CFBI suggests that any attempt to compare organizational effectiveness between community and faith-related organizations or between these organizations and One-Stops is fraught with difficulties and is potentially misleading. One official notes, "We need to develop a system of metrics to define the meaningful accomplishments of community and faith-related organizations in the areas of pre-employment."⁹ Until this happens, the contributions of community and faith-related organizations in the field of workforce development are likely to be subject to widely varying interpretations, many of which will overstate, under-appreciate, or completely miss the point of their actual value as one part of a broader set of local network organizations. As Renz and Herman (2004) have suggested, it may be more appropriate to begin thinking in terms of the concept of "network effectiveness," since the outcomes of value to participants and the public are the products of collaborations that involve many organizations. Wuthnow (2004) also points in this direction, noting that from the participant standpoint what matters is not so much the quality of any particular service they receive, but how the overall service portfolio they encounter by contacting different community organizations aids or hinders their progress.

⁹ The principle that participant characteristics should be taken into account is articulated in the federal guidelines on negotiating WIA performance measures. A number of human services departments are experimenting with constructing outcome measures appropriate for hard-to-serve participants.

Summary of Observed Outcomes

In this section we summarize CFBI outcomes for participants, organizations, and community systems. The evidence draws on the views of multiple stakeholders and was gathered using a wide range of evaluation methods. Cumulatively, the findings point to the fact that CFBI created significant public value (Moore, 1995). The beneficiaries include participants who otherwise would not be served, One-Stop operators who gain nonprofit partners to help deal with hard-to-employ participants, and community-based organizations whose capacity to fulfill their local mission is expanded.

Participant Outcomes

Expanding the Reach of Services

Participant interviews, staff surveys, and administrative data all confirm that CFBI did achieve its primary goal of expanding the reach of workforce development services to hard-to-employ populations. Survey and administrative data confirm that CFBI organizations were able to reach a greater proportion of the hard-to-employ with services than the traditional workforce system.

Out of a randomly selected sample of 152 CFBI program participants, 42% had never previously used employment services. When we asked program staff, “In general, have your participants used other workforce development services and programs?” 76% responded “almost none,” “a few,” or “some,” while 24% said “most.”

The administrative data collected during the CFBI demonstration period (see Table 9) shows the percentages of various categories of hard-to-employ individuals served by CFBI-funded organizations, compared to similar percentages for adults served in California’s One-Stop system. In every category, CFBI-funded organizations have served significantly higher percentages of the hard-to-employ.

Table 9. Percentage of Hard-to-Employ Enrolled by WIA and CFBI Programs
(July 2002-December 2004)

CATEGORY	CFBI	WIA
	N=13,730	N=51,865
Hard-to-Employ		
Homeless	23.3%	4.3%
Substance Abusers	21.4%	4.8%
Ex-Offenders	27.7%	14.4%
Disability	10.4%	3.2%
LT high school degree	32.8%	18.1%
On public assistance	27.7%	14.3%
Low-income	86.2%	68.5%
Limited English	11.1%	10.0%

When we combine the three hardest-to-employ categories—homeless, ex-offender, and substance abusers—the differences in service reach appear even more dramatic. Of all those served by CFBI organizations, 60.5% fall into one of these three categories, compared to 28.9% of those served by local One-Stops.

The findings of our qualitative fieldwork are consistent with these results. There are many reasons why participants are unable to use One-Stop services, or are resistant even to trying. Particularly in rural areas, geography and lack of transportation are commonly mentioned barriers. For example, one CFBI-funded organization estimates that 90% of their participants do not own or have access to a car. Another organization serves a tribal population that is widely dispersed, suspicious of government, and located a great distance from the nearest One-Stop center. In other cases, participant mindsets keep them from using the One-Stop. One staff member asserts, “Our clients just won’t go to the One-Stop without the intervention of one of our staff advocating at their side. They have the perception that their needs are too complex for the One-Stop to effectively address.” A staff member who works with refugees states that, “Refugees have the feeling that it is not safe and really aren’t comfortable sharing their barriers to employment with One-Stop staff.” A One-Stop representative comments, “Language is really a barrier, absolutely. We get people who call, and we have to pass the phone around to find someone who can talk with them.”

Conceptualizing Program Effectiveness

Program effectiveness can be conceptualized along a variety of dimensions: success in getting people in the door and keeping them engaged in the program; delivering services efficiently; removal of key employment barriers (e.g., illiteracy, addiction); creating positive employment outcomes that move participants up the ladder of job readiness/placement; and providing follow-up that supports retention, advancement, and increased self-sufficiency. It appears to be rare for a nonprofit organization to excel on all these dimensions, but many provide models in at least one of these areas. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that while many participants enjoyed tangible changes to their job situation or employability during the grant period, these were usually not seen as “the end” but as steps toward future career and educational goals (CSU San Bernardino final report, p. 38).

Participant Survey Data

We have measured effectiveness in several ways, beginning with a participant survey. Participants report high levels of satisfaction with services, and substantial gains in work readiness (Table 10). We have no way to assess whether this sense of satisfaction would be sustained after some time had passed, but it provides evidence that existing programs for the most part met with an enthusiastic participant response. In particular, the evidence suggests that participants clearly preferred CFBI-funded programs to those they had previously experienced at traditional workforce development agencies, such as One-Stop Centers (CSU San Bernardino final report, p. 36-41).

Table 10. Self-Reported Participant Outcomes

<p>EXPANDED ACCESS TO WORKFORCE SERVICES (self-reported)</p> <p>42% of participants have never previously used employment services 90% say that the CFBI organization made a significant difference in their life 93% would refer a friend to the CFBI organization</p>
<p>WORK READINESS GAINS (self-reported)</p> <p>88% of participants reported increased confidence 73% report improved communication skills 61% report improved family situation 59% report feeling better supported in seeking work 32% enrolled in school of some type 10% completed GED or work certificate since Spring 2003</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT STATUS (self-reported)</p> <p>52% of participant sample employed (78 of 151 interviewed in Spring 2003) 84% of those unsubsidized 59% of participant sample employed (24 of 41 interviewed in March 2004) 66.6% of those full-time 33.3% of those part-time or seasonal 37% were employed in both Spring 2003 and March 2004</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES (for 24 participants employed in March 2004)</p> <p>Mean pay rate: \$10 hour Mean hours worked: 32.3 Average length of time of the job: 14 months</p>

While it is true that a small number of testimonials is not a sound basis for making large-scale public policy decisions, it is important not to forget the life changes—or even life-saving changes—that mark the humanly meaningful outcomes for some participants. As one young participant in a program that specializes in substance-abuse treatment said:

Before I came here, I didn't see that there was much of a future for me other than maybe jail, institution, and death. I didn't expect to live past the age of maybe 28. But now I'm going to live my life like I'll live till 90.

Another participant states:

When I first came here I was suicidal because, you know, you go from being an engineer to nothing in one night, you lose your whole family, you lose everything you have, and then you have a doctor telling you you're never going to learn again. That's a pretty hard hit...They gave me hope. So literally, they kept me alive.

EDD Administrative Data

Although CFBI-funded organizations were exempt from WIA performance standards, they were required to submit the same performance data as other WIA programs. Using administrative data from EDD, we compared the job placement rates at exit for adults in WIA One-Stop Programs with those for adult CFBI participants (Table 11).¹⁰ The data show that, overall, One-Stop job placement rates are much higher than those of CFBI-funded organizations (81.4% to 49.5%). This finding is not too surprising in light of case study evidence that many CFBI organizations focus on pre-employment services, and serve harder-to-employ participants.

Table 11. Job Placement and Retention Rates for One-Stop and CFBI Exiters
(July 2002-December 2004)

	WIA	CFBI (overall)	Remedial Care CFBI	Alternative Network CFBI	Specialized Services CFBI	Tier 1 Experienced CFBI	Tier 2 Inexperienced CFBI
Placement Rate (Employed at Exit)	81.4% (31,220)	49.5% (2,124)	34.7% (323)	66.7% (687)	51.6% (251)	53.1% (1,192)	39.7% (392)
Adult Retention Rate	85.7% (25,651)	78.6% (2,126)	75.4% (257)	81.3% (444)	80.2% (189)	79.3% (833)	71.5% (228)

Source: CA Employment Development Department Note: N's for specific categories may be lower than overall N due to missing data.

To refine the analysis of outcomes, we broke down the CFBI exiters in two ways. The first comparison divided exiters into three categories based on the three types of local network roles played by the CFBI organization in which they were enrolled. We were able to classify 23 of the 40 CFBI-funded organizations into one of the three categories (offering remedial, alternative, or specialized services), based on a combination of our own field observations and the self-categorizations of organizational leaders interviewed at the end of the initiative (see Appendix 4). As expected, the gap between One-Stop *job placement* outcomes and CFBI outcomes is much wider for the remedial care organizations than it is for the alternative network organizations. Since remedial care organizations were the least likely to focus on job placement, we compared their placement rates with those of alternative network organizations and specialized services organizations. The placement rates for exiters in the remedial care organizations average 34.7% compared to 66.7% for the alternative network organizations, and 51.6% for specialized service organizations (Source: EDD administrative data analysis).

Numbers for *job retention* paint a more favorable picture of the comparative performance of CFBI-funded organizations. The adult retention rate of CFBI-funded organizations was 78.6% compared to 85.7% for adult One-Stop participants. Remedial care organizations posted a

¹⁰ Our field research uncovered numerous examples demonstrating ways that performance measures captured by administrative data can mislead. Even if the services participants receive alter their lives significantly, the results are not always immediately measurable. For example, the Northern California Indian Development Council (NCIDC) trains tribal residents in construction. They have succeeded in creating a tribal construction workforce, such that contractors who come into the community now hire many more locals than in the past, when they typically filled jobs with non-tribal workers. Still, the availability of construction work is episodic. Training may not result in placement at 3, 6, or even 9 months, as tracked by the performance measures, but eventually it does, at least in some cases. In between, the locals have adapted a fairly resilient subsistence economy. Arguably, the training has made a major improvement over past conditions, but that value is not fully reflected by the performance measures. Clearly, no single metric can adequately tell the story about the public value created by workforce programs.

retention rate of 75.4%, compared to 81.3% for alternative network organizations and 80.2% for specialized services organizations.

We then compared the outcomes of Tier 1 exiters (those served by experienced organizations) against those served by Tier 2 organizations (those without previous government contracting experience). Tier 1 exiters entered employment at a rate of 53.1% compared to 39.7% for Tier 2 organizations. A smaller gap exists for retention rates, with Tier 1 exiters at 79.3% compared to 71.5% for Tier 2 exiters.

Finally, we compared pre- and post-wages of participants in CFBI and local workforce area programs. Of the people who had a zero wage before entering a program, 46.8% of the CFBI participants and 66% of the local area participants improved their wages after program participation.

Perspectives of EDD Program Managers

Our interview and focus group data provides another means for assessing performance. We asked EDD program managers to rate the CFBI-funded organizations as potential partners with government. The program managers were given a series of statements designed to have them rate the overall promise of the 40 funded organizations using a Likert scale. Program managers agreed or strongly agreed that 31 of the 40 organizations were effective overall partners. Only 4 organizations were identified as deficient partners, and another 5 were given a “neutral” or “not sure” rating.

Perspectives of Local Workforce Officials

As Renz and Herman (2004) suggest, “nonprofit effectiveness is a social construction” in which the perceptions of significant stakeholders matter a great deal. In this regard, the most telling and complex assessment of the public value generated by CFBI comes from analysis of interviews with local One-Stop and Workforce Investment Board officials. The interview data reveal one clear pattern: local leaders are skeptical about faith-based initiatives in the abstract and critical of the governor’s decision to use WIA discretionary funds for CFBI, but speak in positive terms about the contributions of particular CFBI-funded organizations in their community. One WIB director’s comments capture the dichotomy:

Some of the CFBI money came here, and we partnered with those organizations that got funded in our area. We were lucky. It works with those that got funded in our area. But from the time I was a child we were taught about the separation of church and state. These organizations do some good work, but they can’t begin to comply—the small ones anyway, not the large ones. They don’t have the capability and they don’t have the accountability. If religion can help someone do better, that’s a good thing. But I am uncomfortable with funding it with federal funds.

One reason CFBI is viewed negatively by local officials is because it allocated the governor’s 15% discretionary funds to nonprofit programs at a time when budget cuts were hampering the ability of the One-Stop system to maintain its basic infrastructure. Local officials also did not like the fact that they were not consulted on which organizations were selected, and believe it is unwise to provide government funds to groups with minimal or no track record. The following comments are typical expressions of their skepticism:

I understand the faith-based initiative hasn't been easy to implement. Some of the request for proposals I've read seem like they ask a lot from basically pretty small and grassroots organizations, that don't really have a sophisticated enough organizational structure or accounting system.

I know that the faith-based organizations that were eligible for funding under this program didn't necessarily have experience in the job placement area. They had experience in outreach, because a lot of the populations traditionally came to them for services. So it was a good way, a conduit, to get people into the system, but I don't think it could really end there at the faith-level.

These same One-Stop and local Workforce Investment Board officials, however, when asked about the value of particular community and faith-related organizations in their own communities, offered mostly positive assessments. Local officials tended to 1) recognize that these groups served clients that they had difficulty serving, or who would simply never come through their doors, and 2) welcome any new infusion of workforce funds into the community, even funds over which they had no direct control.

We value all of our community and faith-based service providers and particularly those who are able to reach those that we can't.

I think that we are able to assist more of our targeted population with the help of other service providers, such as [the CFBI-funded organization]. I just wish there was more money to establish more effective relationships with the programs in the community.

Many faith-based groups already do a lot of things around employment and training, a lot of support for people in that kind of thing, so why not bring them in and work together? It's another resource, another way to get things done. If they can help us meet our job of finding people jobs because they can reach a certain group, it's just a way of reaching out to those in need.

We need them as much as they need us. They serve on many boards with us. We definitely see them as a viable and contributing entity. They have the connections. Why not take advantage of them? They help make a difference.

They're great. My experience has been that they provide an opportunity for folks to get sober.

The most consistent criticisms we heard in discussing particular CFBI-funded organizations did not focus on the issues of capacity or quality that were raised in the abstract discussions. Instead, the most common concern is the lack of stable, long-term funding associated with a state initiative, raising the prospect that incipient partnerships will be too short lived to be worth the investment.

It was hard to count on [the CFBI-funded organization] because the staff came and went, and so you didn't always know that the program would be consistent. It wasn't because it is a faith-based program, it's because their funding is uncertain. Our key concern is that these special projects raise participant expectations, and then the funding ends and we are left holding the bag.

When community and faith-related organizations are only funded for 2-3 years, it's a race against time, particularly for less established organizations that spend much of their time getting their internal operations in order. Some opportunities never materialize. "To be honest, I don't think their leader at that time really wanted to work with us," says a One-Stop representative. "We met, but there was never any follow-up. After the new Executive Director came on board, that changed, and we are willing to work together. Unfortunately, now their funding is running out."

Client Attitudes and Behavior as a Critical Variable

Our case studies underscore another important limit on the effectiveness of community and faith-related organizations, based on the simple reality that these organizations serve volatile populations. In ways that are beyond the organizations' control, participants themselves can undermine even the most exemplary programs and staff efforts. As one nonprofit staff member describes, "It's exhausting meeting people where they are." Another staff member states:

When all is said and done, it's really up to them. We can support them, but unless they make a decision to change, their lives are not going to improve. It's discouraging to work with someone and then see them throw it all away again by going back to drugs or ending up back in prison.

A repeated theme in staff interviews is the frustration of working with a particular participant who appears to be making progress, only to slide back into destructive patterns that are inconsistent with maintaining employment. A remarkable characteristic of the organizations we observed is their willingness to sustain the work they do in the face of inevitable failures and disappointments with particular program participants.

Organizational Outcomes

A recent report on federal faith-based policy initiatives notes "whether these programs are sustainable over time remains an important question, and also merits sustained tracking" (Kramer et al 2005, p. 72-3). One objective of our evaluation was to ascertain whether the grantees were able to develop effective sustainability strategies.

We have looked at sustainability from three perspectives. First, have the organizations been able to find the necessary funding to continue their workforce programs beyond the end of the CFBI demonstration project? Second, was their organizational capacity enhanced by their participation in the initiative? Third, were the programs able to function in an arena defined by strict auditing and performance standards without losing the unique characteristics that set them apart from government programs in the first place?

To summarize the evidence related to these questions, we draw on the case study research and the back-end survey.

Program Sustainability: Are CFBI-funded Workforce Programs Continuing?

The majority of the 32 organizations we were able to contact for the back-end survey (60%) report that their CFBI-funded program would need to be either scaled down or closed completely (Table 12). In some cases, "scaled down" means that they now serve fewer clients and/or serve them less intensively by using other organizational funds. In other cases, remaining staff (sometimes limited to the program's founder) essentially volunteer their time in hopes that new money will be forthcoming. In still other cases, only the most minimal of services are available. As one respondent stated, "We are still flying, we are just not flying too high." We found this to

be a buoyantly optimistic group of respondents and learned that they are reluctant to perceive their program as beyond resuscitation. Counting as “continuing” a program that has been dramatically scaled back may account for the surprisingly low number of Tier 2 (less-experienced) organizations that reported that they had closed their program completely. Somewhat surprisingly, the general pattern of survey responses was similar across both experienced (Tier 1) and new (Tier 2) government grantees.

Table 12. Post-CFBI Status of CFBI-funded Workforce Programs
(n= 32; some respondents did not answer all questions)

POST-CFBI STATUS OF CFBI-FUNDED PROGRAMS	TIER 1	TIER 2	TOTAL
Closed	2	1	3 (10%)
Downsized	9	6	15 (50%)
Continuing w/new funds	5	3	8 (27%)
Continuing w/parent org funds	3	1	4 (13%)

Slightly less than a quarter of the organizations had secured a new funding source for their CFBI-funded program at the time of our interview. Notably, of the 3 Tier 2 organizations that had received new funding, each have staff or volunteers with previous experience working with government social programs.

This failure to sustain most CFBI-funded workforce programs came about despite a successful effort by EDD program managers to make the organizations aware of new funding opportunities, which resulted in numerous funding applications. Organizational leaders expressed considerable frustration and were often perplexed as to why they weren’t getting funded. Many spoke of the difficulty of competing with far larger organizations with much longer track records; others noted that the particular populations they served (ex-felons, mentally handicapped) were not as attractive to funders as, say, needy children. Still more found through their research that funders were simply making less money available every year, meaning that fewer organizations were receiving grants of any size.

One prominent new funding opportunity was the 2004-05 request for proposals (RFP) under the Governor’s 15% discretionary WIA funding, which included “serving hard-to-employ populations” as one of three priority areas. In essence, this pot of money could have been drawn upon to fund another year of CFBI grants, had the Schwarzenegger administration not chosen to discontinue the CFBI program. Jewish Vocational Services, which is one of the larger and more sophisticated nonprofits, was the only one of the 18 CFBI-funded organizations that applied for these funds that was successful. A number of the smaller organizations that were the special targets of the CFBI initiative told us that they had been encouraged to apply and therefore were particularly disappointed by the outcome. A similar result occurred during the 2005-06 request for proposals, when one of 8 CFBI organizations that applied was funded. Again, it was a larger and more established organization, Lutheran Social Services, which was selected.

A sharp decline in available WIA funding in California has heightened the competition for limited competitive dollars. Smaller nonprofits were at a clear disadvantage in the state RFP process in which the criteria are heavily weighted toward larger and more experienced organizations, including local workforce investment areas, and programs that emphasized hard skills training rather than job readiness and support. For example, funded organizations had to provide substantial matching funds, and the average grant award of \$560,000 presumed that funded organizations had considerable service delivery capacity. At the local level, One-Stops who were willing to consider partnering with community and faith-related organizations when

they could bring CFBI dollars to the table, were naturally more reluctant to continue those partnerships when doing so would require using their own limited WIA resources. These funding realities leave most of the CFBI-funded organizations with considerable uncertainty about the near-term future of their workforce programs. Arguably, however, this is the norm in the nonprofit world, where living from grant to grant is quite common, and secure, long-term funding is elusive.

Table 13 describes some of the ways CFBI-funded organizations are coping with the end of funding.

Table 13. Strategies CFBI-funded Organizations Use to Cope with End of Funding

WHAT HAPPENS TO STAFF:
Reduce hours of paid staff.
Shift paid staff to programs within the same organization that are funded by other grants.
Let paid staff go and/or replace them with volunteers.
Nonprofit directors get another job and continue running the organization and writing grant proposals during “free time.”
WHAT HAPPENS TO PARTICIPANTS:
Reduce scope of service (less services, less intensive services) while continuing some form of the service.
Reduce numbers served.
Refer participants to other organizations when the service can no longer be offered.
Continue staff-participant contact on a personal basis.
WHAT HAPPENS TO FACILITIES:
Move to smaller quarters and/or share quarters with other programs.
Close building/suites used during height of CFBI program altogether.
Work from home.

A few of the smaller and less experienced nonprofits have succeeded in securing new grant funding to sustain their workforce programs. Even those organizations that have not attracted new funds thus far are quite positive about their experience during CFBI and how it has positioned them for the future. As we demonstrate in the next section, most are determined and optimistic about finding a way to keep a proven program going, even if it means enduring a period of downsizing or having to work as volunteers for a time. Most organizational leaders say they are more aware of the benefits of partnering with the One-Stop system than they were prior to CFBI, even though their program may be functioning at a much lower level at the moment. Finally, many participating organizations, even established organizations, credit the EDD grant with helping them develop the formalized employment component that is critical to the long-term success of their participants.

Organizational Capacity: Was It Enhanced by the CFBI Experience?

The literature reveals that organizational capacity building has multiple possible meanings and can thus take on many different shapes and forms (Cairns, Harris, and Young, 2005). As already noted, the EDD effort worked both to build the ability of funded organizations to comply with government reporting requirements, and to help more generally with organizational development needs, particularly those of the newer organizations.

Table 14 summarizes coded responses to questions about whether the grant experience improved organizational capacity or altered the organizational mission.¹¹

Table 14. Effect of CFBI Grant on Organizational Capacity

(n= 32; some respondents did not answer all questions)

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY POST-CFBI	TIER 1	TIER 2	TOTAL
Less	2	0	2 (6%)
Same	5	2	7 (22%)
Greater	13	10	23 (72%)

Nearly everyone we interviewed reported gains in organizational capacity for which they openheartedly credited the EDD team. For example, nearly half offered without prompting that the grant experience brought greater community visibility with attendant opportunities for funding. New grantees were somewhat more likely to report gains in organizational capacity. Capacity building was provided for:

- staff (hire more personnel);
- skills (reporting, management, policies and procedures);
- technology (computer purchases);
- bricks and mortar (from the backroom to the storefront);
- operational funds (more services, more clients);
- marketing (networking, high community visibility);
- additional assets (operational funds and name recognition).

In general, the organizations welcomed EDD capacity-building assistance, but a distinction was made between support that helped improve the organization’s overall operations (e.g., personnel management) and support that increased their ability to fulfill government requirements. The latter required extra resources that may or may not pay off in the future because it was geared to this particular grant program.

Of note, the focus of EDD’s capacity building was on training community and faith-related organizations to speak government’s language, but little was done to address the reciprocal question of how government might learn from the community and faith-related organizations and their ways of providing services. What could government learn from the grassroots organizations? For example, what could government learn about how to better serve the hard-to-employ through long-term care? How might they change their staffing patterns to provide a greater sense of affinity for program participants? How could outcomes measures be changed in light of the need for comprehensive, long-term assistance in addition to focused, short-term results?

CFBI suggests the possibility of developing a more reciprocal approach to capacity-building, and of redefining government roles in relation to community based organizations. Examples of potential government roles include:

- as “consultant” for growing the funded nonprofits as viable organizations, rather than simply as grant provider;

¹¹ In some cases, two or more questions were coded to arrive at the categorizations; where categorization was in doubt, we did a more thorough review of the interview transcripts.

- as asset provider (e.g., money for technology, bricks and mortar, start-up capital);
- as network developer, creating visibility and connections between local organizations; and
- as provider of unrestricted funds allowing local organizations to decide what to do with the money rather than requiring pre-set plans and strict outcome measurement.

These possibilities move away from the contracting model to an approach that supports and encourages the innovations and diverse approaches that non-profits apply. It would treat non-profits more like small businesses for which you provide incentives. Government could also have a role in monitoring these small non-profits’ growth and outcomes over a long period of time while providing mutual learning opportunities among the non-profits.

Many participating nonprofits found that their experience with CFBI served to clarify and implement their program missions. We heard expressions of gratitude to EDD for imposing rigorous administrative measures that forced them to confront and resolve many details they had overlooked. As one director told us:

One of the ways that EDD was so helpful was helping us put together the benchmarks, which was kind of a pain, but it forced us to do it, 'cause a lot of times when you have only so much time on a given day, you have to have deadlines for these items, otherwise you don't get them done.

Directors and staff were also forced to learn and become fluent in government jargon. As a result, organizations which may never have pushed themselves to develop a professional polish now find themselves well-equipped to describe and promote their programs in the competitive language of successful grant seekers.

When asked if they would do it again, all 32 organizations said, “Yes,” with no hesitation.

Mission Integrity: Did the CFBI Experience Change Basic Missions?

According to survey respondents, participating in CFBI did not alter the mission of their organization. Our back-end survey found that three-quarters of the responding organizations reported no change to their mission as a consequence of accepting public funds, as shown in Table 15. Of the one quarter that did, most indicated that the change was due to the *addition* of workforce services to their core services, rather than to a change in their basic mission. Only a couple of respondents had changed the way they delivered services to comply with church-state restrictions—by honoring prohibitions against praying with participants or using religious language, for example.

Table 15. Effect of CFBI Grant on Organizational Mission

(n= 32; some respondents did not answer all questions)

DID ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION CHANGE?	TIER 1	TIER 2	TOTAL
No	15	7	22 (69%)
Yes	3	5	8 (25%)
Not sure	2	0	2 (6%)

We know of only one organization that expressed active concern that its pre-existing mission might be compromised by participation in CFBI. This occurred in one of the few cases in which

a faith-related organization was sought out as a program partner by a secular organization that needed their participation to qualify for a CFBI grant during the first year of funding. During the initiative, the faith-related partner's board of directors began to fear that its primary mission of running a transitional housing program might be compromised by the energy diverted into the collaborative workforce program. For reasons having nothing to do with the organization's performance, EDD chose not to continue funding the partnership and the issue died away.

Getting entangled with government usually comes at a price—resources have to be made available to fulfill government requirements, and the directive for one's work now comes from government's perceived needs. The CFBIs stated in general that this didn't change their mission, but the organizations were sometimes not quite as "free" in choosing their course of intervention as they had been before.

Summary of Evidence Related to Organizational and Program Sustainability

There seems no doubt that the experience of participating in CFBI was a valuable one for the organizations that partnered with EDD. Even those that have not yet succeeded in landing a new contract now see themselves as legitimate contenders for government grants. To greater or lesser degrees, depending on their current circumstances, they can now handle government contracts, locate grant opportunities, demonstrate their capabilities in the appropriate terms, and maintain the necessary administrative and organizational structure. The smaller organizations that survived consider themselves much better off, with a heightened sense of professionalism that gives them an advantage in their future efforts. Of particular importance is the fact that they are comfortable seeing themselves in the role of government partner, and would welcome further opportunities. For many, a certain gloss of naïve zeal has been buffed away, but their determination and their conviction about the value of what they are doing remains undimmed.

Community System Outcomes

As government partners, community and faith-related organizations have shown their worth in providing niche programs that offer services to a culturally-distinct group, or location-specific programs that fill geographic gaps in the existing service delivery infrastructure. Unlike One-Stop Centers, these organizations can position themselves at the boundaries of society, where individuals are attempting to enter or re-enter the economic mainstream from one or more positions of marginalization. As refugee resettlement programs have long recognized, this difficult work requires cultural translation, support in navigating the system, learning new basic skills, help in finding entry level work, and formal and informal counseling. Key local institutions that are potentially involved in this work include homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation programs, and transitional programs for ex-offenders or foster care youth.

Community case studies reveal that many factors affect the degree of interaction between community and faith-related organizations and other workforce entities, including the size of the city and county, the organizational density of local workforce networks, the attitude of local WIBs and One-Stops toward faith-related organizations (and vice versa), the size of the organization, the services it offers, and so on. Case study and survey data demonstrate that integration into the local workforce system has not been accomplished evenly across the participating organizations and local areas.

In an attempt to understand the impact of CFBI on the relationship between funded nonprofits and One-Stops, our back-end survey asked a number of close-ended questions which revealed an expansion in the number and depth of inter-organizational relationships. Of the 32 organizations

responding, 14 had previous experience in workforce development, and 13 of these had some form of prior relationship to the local One-Stop. By the close of the initiative, 25 of 32 organizations indicated that they referred their participants to the One-Stop. Of these 25, 18 had developed some form of memorandum of understanding with the One-Stop, 13 had received staff training for the One-Stop, 9 co-located their staff at the One-Stop, and 8 received funds from a One-Stop. In six cases, nonprofit staff had provided training to One-Stop personnel on how to deal with their target populations.

These data suggest that, despite the many obstacles to building One-Stop relationships, CFBI succeeded in moving beyond the pre-initiative baseline. The following snapshots suggest the nature of what was accomplished within the new relationships:

Champions Recovery Alternatives Program

Champions was founded in 2000 as a substance abuse treatment program for youth and young adults, especially for those who have been arrested and are court-ordered to attend a certified drug and alcohol treatment program. From its inception, Champions has been connected with the One-Stop just down the street, referring participants there for job readiness training and placement services. The executive director credits EDD's investment through CFBI and subsequent WIA funding for giving Champions credibility in the human services/workforce development community and also for enabling the organization to attract other funding sources. Although EDD's funding is at an end, Champions recently received a new contract from the local Kings County Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Program, as well as other competitive grant funds.

CSU Long Beach Center for Career Studies: FAITH Program

Since 1982, the Center has been known in the region for its vocational training. The FAITH program funded by EDD continued that tradition in both training (Certified Nursing Assistant, medical billing and coding, Microsoft Office) and job placement services. The FAITH program benefited from and enhanced the Center's long-standing connection with numerous One-Stops. Participants were not only referred from the One-Stops but, in many cases, were co-enrolled and co-case-managed by Center and One-Stop staff: "When the One-Stop lacks something we pick them up; when we lack something, they pick us up." This created a win-win situation as both entities could claim credit for participant enrollment and outcomes. The lead staff person's connection to Buddhist temples in the Cambodian community provided another source of referrals into the FAITH program. Unable to replace vital EDD funding, the CFBI-funded program is not providing services at this time.

Episcopal Community Services: WAYS Program

Episcopal Community Services (ECS) has been in existence for about 60 years, and the WAYS program was launched with the funds received from EDD. The program served foster youth between the ages of 14 and 25, particularly those who have gotten into trouble, using a curriculum developed by the San Diego Workforce Partnership. The WAYS staff acted as advocates for their participants, providing educational opportunities for the younger participants, job training and placement for the older ones, and self-esteem-building life skills for both. WAYS participants would not normally be willing to enter the traditional workforce development system, but they can when support is provided. The WAYS program forged a close partnership with the local One-Stop, secured with a Letter of Commitment. When the CFBI program ended, WAYS staff and their functions were reabsorbed by ECS.

Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM)

FIRM provides employment and training services geared to the needs of Southeast Asian and other refugees. Under a MOU with a local One-Stop, FIRM screened its customers and encourages those who are deemed ready to make use of the vocational training opportunities the One-Stop provides (bus driver, mechanic, truck driver, etc.). To facilitate the process, the One-Stop provided a grant of about \$100,000 to FIRM, which covered the cost of locating four FIRM staff at the One-Stop on a part-time basis (ranging from .25 FTE to .75 FTE). The remainder of the salaries of those full-time staff was paid by the CFBI grant.

Helping Hands of Hope

After receiving participants referred from rehabilitation programs, probation, or others, Helping Hands put them through a six-week employment readiness class to acquaint them with computers and help them develop an individual employment plan. Students who negotiated the class and began to overcome self-esteem barriers were then accompanied to the nearby One-Stop for one of the regular orientation meetings: “We get them ready for the One-Stop.” The Helping Hands staff person attended quarterly meetings for community-based programs convened by a One-Stop staff person. This program is no longer operating.

Northern California Indian Development Council (NCIDC)

NCIDC provides employment and training services that include vocational training (home health care, construction trades, child care) arranged in collaboration with local community colleges and adult schools. They serve tribal community jurisdictions where One-Stops are not located, including many remote areas. Because the tribal communities are physically isolated, the program seldom sends or receives referrals from the nearest One-Stop, though NCIDC is a mandated partner with the local Workforce Investment Board.

Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA)

RCAA provides employment and training services to homeless individuals. While they are a mandated partner in the local One-Stop, and sometimes accompany their participants to the One-Stop to receive certain basic services, they find their participants are at a disadvantage at the One-Stop or other government programs, lacking even an address to use in filling out eligibility forms. RCAA has used the EDD grant to create a local network of organizations (including faith-based, non-profit, and public organizations) that offers a more accessible continuum of employment and training services. Those participants who test as clean and sober and appear ready are connected with on-the-job training opportunities. Essentially RCAA is an alternative portal into workforce development for homeless individuals with a need for intensive services beyond what the One-Stop can provide.

San Diego Second Chance: STRIVE Program

Second Chance runs an intensive three-week job readiness training program leading to employment using a strict “boot camp” model. Second Chance has traditionally referred participants to the local One-Stop for particular services, and for over two years had an arrangement whereby two staff were co-located at the One-Stop. Though mutually satisfactory to both partners, the arrangement ended when the One-Stop had to cut back funding to support those staff, after which Second Chance determined that they would get more value from deploying the

staff in their own organization. The Second Chance director is a member of the Providers' Advisory Council convened by the One-Stop.

Wardrobe for Opportunity: Dress for Success and Pathways for Opportunity Programs

Since 1996, Wardrobe has been providing high-quality interviewing and work outfits to women who qualify for their program (and has expanded this service to include clothing for men as well). From its inception, one of Wardrobe's primary sources of referrals has been the local Bay Area One-Stops. A Wardrobe staff person visits One-Stops in person and stays in regular phone contact in order to develop relationships with front-line staff who make the referrals. A nearby One-Stop also allows Wardrobe to use its facilities to operate the Pathways for Opportunity program, partially funded by EDD, to support employed women who are interested in improving their work situation.

Welcome Home Ministries: EARN Program

Part of Welcome Home's success is due to its wide-reaching community network, in which the local One-Stop is a pivotal player. Welcome Home gladly accepts referrals from the One-Stop and also instructs One-Stop staff in the delicate art of working with ex-offenders so that they can provide training opportunities to Welcome Home participants. For a time, Welcome Home staff were collocated at the One-Stop and both partners hope to renew that relationship. After its CFBI grant ended, Welcome Home received a mutli-million dollar grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency

Zaferia got its start in response to the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, and operated in a church basement. It referred some of its participants to the local One-Stop to receive services they themselves couldn't provide, such as some types of job training or employment subsidies. However, using public transportation to get to the One-Stop from the neighborhood Zaferia serves was difficult, and many of their participants found the One-Stop intimidating. Zaferia staff made efforts to learn more about One-Stop offerings and to get One-Stop staff to serve on their board, but was unable to connect successfully. During their CFBI grant, a nearby and larger nonprofit organization which used to be a major source of referrals decided instead to offer its own job readiness program, which limited Zaferia's program participation. Zaferia did not survive after CFBI ended.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

California's Employment Development Department successfully implemented a demonstration program that enabled a broad range of community and faith-based organizations to play valuable roles as government workforce development partners. The beneficiaries include participants who otherwise would not be served, One-Stop operators who gain nonprofit partners to help deal with the special needs of hard-to-employ participants, and community-based organizations whose capacity to fulfill their local mission is expanded. While we have not attempted to calculate a specific dollar value, it is clear that the funded activities have led to a reduction in societal costs when individuals are removed from public assistance, spared incarceration, and empowered to contribute to their communities as sober and productive citizens. Our findings are consistent with previous research, which suggests that many community and faith-related organizations can play valuable but limited roles in local workforce development networks, particularly to expand the reach of workforce development services and to offer alternative portals into the workforce system for hard-to-employ citizens (Campbell 2002; Cnaan 1999; Monsma and Mounts 2002; Sherman 2005; Sherman and Green 2002; Wineburg 2001; Wuthnow 2004).

Under the Workforce Investment Act, it has been difficult for all but a few of the larger and more experienced nonprofit organizations to participate in providing employment and training services (Giloth 2004b; Public Policy Associates 2003). Despite the built-in obstacles, EDD enabled many small and less experienced community organizations to become viable partners through their participation in CFBI by providing multi-faceted capacity-building assistance, handling WIA reporting and accountability requirements with appropriate flexibility, and taking a prudent and cautious approach to church-state issues.

Rethinking What Makes Community and Faith-Related Organizations Valuable

Overall, CFBI evidence supports the need to recast, rather than reject outright, the claim that the effectiveness of faith-related organizations is due to the role faith itself plays in transforming lives. In CFBI-funded organizations, spiritually-based transformations of participants are actually a small subset of a larger and more important class of transformative personal relationships. Many nonprofit groups—secular and faith-related—promote these transformations by extending hospitality through acts of caring in ways that *can* be reconciled with church-state guidelines. The key variable is not faith per se, but whether the organization builds its service delivery approach around the episodic service encounters typical of bureaucracy, or concentrates instead on building more personally meaningful and often longer-term relationships with individual participants (Guttek 1995). As Wuthnow (2004, p. 159) has observed:

The research that has been conducted among faith-based organizations, although quite sparse, suggests that it is probably their ability to forge encompassing whole-person, personally transforming relationships with clients that accounts for any special success they may have.

Relationship-intensive services are staff intensive, take advantage of cultural and life experience affinity between staff and participants, and require much lower staff-participant ratios than are typical in a One-Stop office or welfare department. It costs taxpayers much less when this work is contracted out to non-union, lower-wage nonprofit staff than it would if the equivalent services were provided using union-waged public employees. Analysts might differ on whether this represents a compelling rationale for these initiatives or exposes how they exploit individuals who are willing to do the work for less money out of their own conviction that they are doing God's work. One empirical issue in need of clarification is whether faith-based initiatives shift

work from existing public sector employees, and to what degree, or if instead they are creating new jobs that would not otherwise have been available. This question inevitably turns more on the scope of overall public investment in serving these populations than on what type of organization is funded to do the work.

The ongoing debate over faith-based initiatives has tended to focus on constitutional questions surrounding the role of faith in publicly-funded service delivery. The California initiative highlights a different lens for viewing these initiatives, one in which government attempts to organize and utilize the existing civic capacities of community and faith-related organizations in a mutual effort to address public problems. Neither panacea or pending disaster, these efforts bear further study and reflection as experiments in revitalizing democracy and combating poverty. At root, the initiatives face the challenge of building meaningful connections between the norms and practices of two distinct types of organizations and organizational cultures, one formal, professional, and bureaucratic, and the other featuring family-like environments, individualized programs, and voluntary citizen action.

Lessons for Public Policy

Juxtaposed against current federal programs (White House Office on Community and Faith-based Initiatives 2001), the CFBI experiment suggests promising directions for public policy. The California initiative illustrates critical distinctions that can refocus policy attention and illuminate the nature of the public commitment required to effectively implement a community and faith-based initiative. Table 16 summarizes the key policy-related lessons, which are discussed in more detail below.

Table 16. Refocusing Policy Attention

TOPIC	CURRENT PREOCCUPATION	ISSUES NEEDING MORE ATTENTION
A Level Playing Field	Secular vs. faith-related Legal and regulatory distinctions between secular and faith-related organizations	Large vs. small nonprofits How to take advantage of the distinctive strengths of smaller and newer nonprofit organizations (whether faith-related or secular) by integrating them into local service delivery networks dominated by large, established organizations
Comparative Effectiveness	Faith factor The compassion exhibited by faith-based providers and the role of faith in transforming individual lives	Role of affinity and hospitality Finding the proper balance between hospitality, staff-client affinity, and professional expertise in serving different populations and in different service delivery settings
Comparative Efficiency	Government red tape Freedom from government red tape enabling faith-related organizations to deliver services more efficiently.	Staff wages and staff-participant ratios How do and how should staff wage rates and staff-participant ratios vary across different types of service deliverers who must be equally accountable for the use of public funds
Intervention Strategy	National and state initiatives Emphasis on short-term funding with strong political overtones	Local network development Supporting patient, ongoing, iterative conversation that builds long-term partnerships by making use of community assets and confronting the prejudices and cultural distinctions that exist among government and nonprofit leaders

I. A Level Playing Field

What organizational distinctions should policy emphasize?

Supporters of faith-based initiatives often cite the need to level the playing field by ensuring that religious organizations are not discriminated against in government contracting (White House Office of Community and Faith-Based Initiatives 2001). Opponents worry that this activity will go too far, creating a form of reverse discrimination that compromises church-state separation (Ferris, Nathan, and Wright 2004).

CFBI evidence suggests that the more relevant policy distinction is between large, established organizations with a history of government contracting, and small, less established nonprofit organizations which typically are not well integrated with local workforce networks, but possess assets that may help achieve public policy objectives. These two categories—large/established and small/inexperienced—each include some faith-related and some secular organizations. As noted in the CSU San Bernardino report (p. 67), a key role for public workforce development agencies is to support collaboration between those more established programs which provide specialized skills training and those less established organizations which are focused more on meeting the emotional and social support needs of participants. In general, the emphasis should be on long-term local network development, rather than short-term funding that is not well-integrated with local dynamics.

Should policy treat community and faith-related organizations as competitors or partners?

CFBI evidence shows that community and faith-related organizations—particularly those smaller organizations that offer remedial services and a family-like setting—attract and serve large percentages of participants who have not previously used traditional workforce development programs or who have felt stigmatized in trying to use those systems in the past. Given this pattern, policy should view community and faith-related organizations not as *competitors* but as government *partners* whose unique assets reach under-served populations in ways that can enhance or supplement particular public policy objectives. This may be particularly advantageous in states like California that have large immigrant populations and myriads of languages and cultures represented among the citizenry.

This is different than the usual starting point in the national debate, which presumes that community and faith-related organizations provide alternative services to the same participants served by government programs. Preoccupied with the issue of comparative effectiveness, policy and program design often makes the mistake of presuming that participants are served by only one program, which alone is responsible for whatever results are achieved. CFBI evidence suggests a reality that is quite different: program participants are served by multiple agencies, public and private, often sequentially and sometimes simultaneously.

What roles can community and faith-related organizations play in local service delivery networks?

A close examination of CFBI-funded organizations reveals that they play one of three distinct roles in local workforce networks:

- source of *remedial care and services* that offers an alternative portal into the workforce development system for individuals that are not yet job ready,

- developer of an *alternative employment and training network* that connects hard-to-employ participants with services and jobs tailored to their unique situations, and
- provider of a *specialized service* to which One-Stops (or other agencies) can refer certain participants when they are ready.

Partnering with nonprofit organizations in areas not served by One-Stops, whether in rural settings or in urban enclaves, may be a particularly promising strategy to expand the reach of workforce services.

What factors support implementation of government partnerships with community and faith-related organizations?

CFBI required the willingness of both the EDD Special Projects Unit and their nonprofit partners to move beyond established routines and traditional government/grant-recipient relationships. The key is a mutual, cooperative effort among the two parties, where 1) government displays a willingness not only to invest in providing technical assistance to grantees, but also to adopt a more flexible, nurturing set of operating procedures; 2) government develops an ability to distinguish and relate differently to nonprofits at different stages of organizational development (start-up, early years, mature); and 3) nonprofit organizations make an active effort to reshape their internal operations in line with established government reporting and accountability requirements and professional norms, while holding on to what makes them distinctive. The manner and spirit in which programs are implemented can make a major difference. CFBI-funded organizations particularly valued the quality of individual attention they received from EDD program managers.

CFBI also suggests the need for government programs to learn from what makes nonprofit organizations successful with certain participants. Two-way capacity-building efforts are needed, including attention to how government might reshape its practices to support and mimic successful approaches found in community and faith-related organizations.

II. Comparative Effectiveness

What value does faith add, if any?

Current federal policy assumes the efficacy of the compassion exhibited by faith-based providers and the role of religious faith in transforming individual lives. In the CFBI experiment, faith motivations—such as a calling to minister to the disadvantaged and marginalized in society—led nonprofit staff to provide workforce development services to groups that might otherwise never have been reached. Staff often attributed their resilience to strong spiritual values that enabled them to withstand the disappointments inherent in working with hard-to-employ populations. We found no difference between the staff of faith-related and non-faith-related nonprofits in this regard: both were equally willing to go beyond their job descriptions to offer the help their clients needed. Both were often admired as role models whose personal faith and success in transcending their own barriers inspired participants to grapple with the limiting issues in their lives. However, because faith was not a primary emphasis in the delivery of services in most CFBI-funded programs, our evaluation does not provide conclusive evidence as to the efficacy of faith in transforming lives. It does, however, support the efficacy of partnering with community and faith-based organizations as a strategy for expanding the reach of workforce development services.

What mechanisms support partnerships with faith-related organizations that respect Constitutional guidelines for separation of church and state?

The Bush administration has created significant controversy by pursuing administrative directives and legislation that allow public funding and enhanced religious freedom for religious groups, including congregations, who receive public funds (Ferris and Wright 2004). By contrast, CFBI used four mechanisms to protect church-state separation while enlisting faith-related organizations as government partners. First, they limited funds to registered 501c(3) organizations, eliminating the thorny constitutional and operational issues that come when congregations receive funds for service delivery. Second, they amended the original program design to open the proposal solicitation process to both secular and faith-related nonprofit organizations, avoiding the charge of discrimination. Third, they referred grantees to Charitable Choice guidelines that strictly prohibit use of public funds to proselytize. Fourth, EDD staff conducted site visits and other regular program reviews which allowed them to identify and troubleshoot any church-state issues that arose despite the above precautions.

What program approaches leads to effective participant outcomes?

During CFBI, both staff and participants credited a “family-like atmosphere,” including affinity, hospitality, and individual attention, as the key factors in reaching and motivating the hard-to-employ. We observed both secular and faith-based programs that exhibited these characteristics. A vital component of many programs is setting and maintaining rules so that participants understand the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Remedial programs in particular are guided by a “tough love” philosophy under which self-esteem is carefully fostered while aberrant behavior is not tolerated.

Many smaller nonprofits wrestle with the inevitable tension between building and sustaining supportive personal relationships with participants, on the one hand, and complying with professional norms and formal accountability requirements on the other. CFBI-funded organizations that succeeded in sustaining their workforce programs past the grant period tended to have organizational cultures that mixed professionalism and a family-like atmosphere, and staff that demonstrated an ability to learn and adapt based on new information.

What approaches to performance measurement encourage effectiveness?

Within the California WIA system there is widespread concern that current performance measures are not valid as indicators of local implementation or systems improvement, and that they discourage service providers from enrolling hard-to-employ participants (Campbell and Lemp 2005). CFBI evidence suggests that we need better metrics for assessing program performance in the areas of pre-employment or employment readiness services. Many community and faith-related organizations specialize in this work, rather than in employment and placement services, and their successes or failures are not captured by measures of job placement. Policy makers should also consider whether the considerable resources devoted to bureaucratic modes of accountability might be better spent providing staff that can regularly visit funded programs and attend to organizational issues and local implementation dynamics. The real need is for better attention to local network improvement, perhaps aided by community-wide indicators or new measures of overall systems performance.

III. Comparative Efficiency

What creates efficiency in the use of public funds?

Current federal policy assumes that community and faith-related organizations can deliver services more efficiently because they are free from government red tape. CFBI evidence suggests that nonprofit organizations are more flexible in many respects, but become subject to much of the same red tape as other programs as soon as they accept public funds. For example, a significant amount of the capacity-building assistance provided by EDD program managers was aimed at helping grantees deal with the complexities of the computer-based reporting system required by the government.

A more appropriate way to begin a discussion about program efficiency is to note that community and faith-related organizations often feature lower staff-participant ratios than public programs, and a key reason that they can afford these ratios is that their staff often work for low pay and few if any benefits. There should be more debate about the long-term viability and appropriateness of this situation, particularly if community and faith-related organizations are to be welcomed as full partners in public service delivery networks. These organizations often make a point of hiring successful individuals from the populations they serve, but they become a less than ideal employer if they offer substandard pay of uncertain duration.

What level of public investment is needed to support a community and faith-based initiative?

Contrary to those who might view expanding the use of community and faith-related organizations as a way to cut spending on public services, we find that the observed benefits from CFBI required a significant new investment of both public funds and staff resources, at least initially. California spent more than \$17 million on the competitively-funded CFBI program, diverting resources from a declining pool of funds in the state General Fund (during the initial year) and from the governor's 15% discretionary portion of its federal WIA allocation (in subsequent years). A considerable portion of the total CFBI allocation supported the project-wide capacity-building effort, and many inexperienced organizations required as much as two years of relatively intense guidance and supervision before they could function independently, needing only periodic visits and phone contact with the Special Projects Division staff.

Faith-based and other community-based organizations have many valuable assets to bring to the table on behalf of hard-to-employ populations, if they are invited to do so and supported appropriately. First and foremost, however, there must be a genuine, sustained public commitment to funding public services, including the extra efforts needed to reach and serve hard-to-employ populations.

IV. Intervention Strategy

What intervention strategy is best suited to meeting policy goals?

Both the California initiative and federal policy have offered only short-term funding to individual organizations. Each was motivated in part by the desire to provide both symbolic reassurance and tangible benefits to key political constituencies. If the real intention is to support the organic, long-term development of local planning and service delivery networks, policy designers should consider a fundamental shift in how these initiatives are conceived and executed.

CFBI evidence confirms earlier research that emphasizes the need for policy approaches that support the patient, ongoing, iterative conversation that is required to build local partnerships in the face of shrinking federal resources and of existing organizational rivalries and prejudices (Wineburg 2001). Supporting this shift in perspective is the fact that individual participant outcomes can seldom be attributed to a single program. Also, our study found that the CFBI organizations who have sustained their programs past the grant period are those with the strongest network of local organizational relationships. Sometimes the conversations will need to take place across local policy areas that have not typically had strong connections. For example, the CSU San Bernardino report (p. 68) notes that transportation is often a significant impediment to the employability of hard-to-employ participants, yet we observed very few collaborations involving transportation agencies.

Even if the current strategy relying on federal or state agencies to deliver these programs continues, capacity-building efforts should incorporate a *community development* perspective. For example, government can select capacity-building intermediaries who themselves work on a community or regional scale and with a broad community development perspective. Alternatively, as in the CFBI case, government agencies can reinvent themselves in a manner that treats community intervention as a holistic process, rather than as a series of discrete grants and programs with little attention to developing long-term, inter-organizational relationships.

What approach to capacity building and partnership development is most promising?

The limited success of CFBI-funded organizations in sustaining their workforce programs through competitive grant-seeking suggests that a more effective strategy for building long-term partnerships might be to funnel funds through local entities, particularly for smaller nonprofits. While no single federal or state initiative can hope to spark major alterations in nonprofit service delivery roles—deeply rooted in their mission, culture, and capacity—it is quite possible to envision an initiative that focuses on coordinating nonprofit roles and assets with those of other local organizations. Ironically, the most malleable aspect of the equation—*network development*—is the one that seldom receives the attention it deserves. Few if any funding sources give grants for network development, as opposed to funding particular organizations or programs. One step in this direction, illustrated in a few communities during welfare reform, is to redirect program funds to support community liaison positions responsible for developing relationships between government and nonprofits (Campbell 2002).

State workforce leaders should consider investing a portion of 15% discretionary funds to support establishing a nonprofit liaison function in local One-Stops. The position would have responsibility for building programmatic connections and relationships with local nonprofits. Some of the key tasks supported through these positions would be to:

- coordinate with existing nonprofit coordinating bodies to map community resources/assets, particularly in terms of organizations that work with hard-to-employ populations;
- assist with introductions and information sharing;
- facilitate two-way referrals between community and faith-related organizations and government programs;
- seize opportunities for cross-training or co-location of staff;
- facilitate access to state and federal funding opportunities;
- develop local funding and support (e.g., community foundations, general support for charitable giving, etc.); and

- facilitate access to capacity-building opportunities for smaller, less experienced nonprofits, including setting up mentoring relationships with more established nonprofits.

A variety of these and other mechanisms could be used singly or in combination to support partnership development and maintenance. Once mutual awareness, trust, and communication have been established, some of the benefits of enhanced partnerships can be realized without necessitating large amounts of continued funding.

What types of research and evaluation should be used to monitor and assess community and faith-based initiatives?

Policy makers and program designers should ensure that faith-based initiatives combine both process and outcomes evaluation so that they move beyond the current preoccupation with comparative effectiveness. Evaluative studies often carry the conceptual baggage of the competitive market model, designed to ensure that government funding goes to the most efficient and effective providers. While this approach should not be neglected entirely—e.g., assessing the comparative effectiveness of different programs in reaching a similar target group, or making judgments about which local programs might be particularly worthy of long-term investment—informing policy choices must also include a broader and deeper understanding of how services are actually delivered within community networks, the salient characteristics of the populations served, how program participants experience the services, and how the community receives program graduates. The type of local knowledge that facilitates longer-term partnership development and makes use of the full range of community assets must be part of the equation. Researchers can help inform this community change process, but will need to move beyond traditional approaches to evaluation in order to become more useful (Campbell and Glunt 2006).

What broader policy changes would support the objectives of community and faith-based initiatives?

The most important story of recent federal policy is not the shift toward funding faith-related organizations but the dramatic decline in the overall level of funding for local social services and workforce programs (Campbell, Lemp, and Treiber 2006; Magnum 2000; Kuo 2006). Current budget and policy priorities create a shrinking pool of resources, increasing competition among social service providers, and undercutting the patient, long-term community planning that is necessary to make good on the promising aspects of engaging community and faith-based organizations in public service delivery. A potential benefit of increasing the role of private, nonprofit organizations in service delivery is that it can help broaden the base for a political coalition which can pursue the goal of expanding public funding for social services.

Figure 1. Example of Organizational Network Map

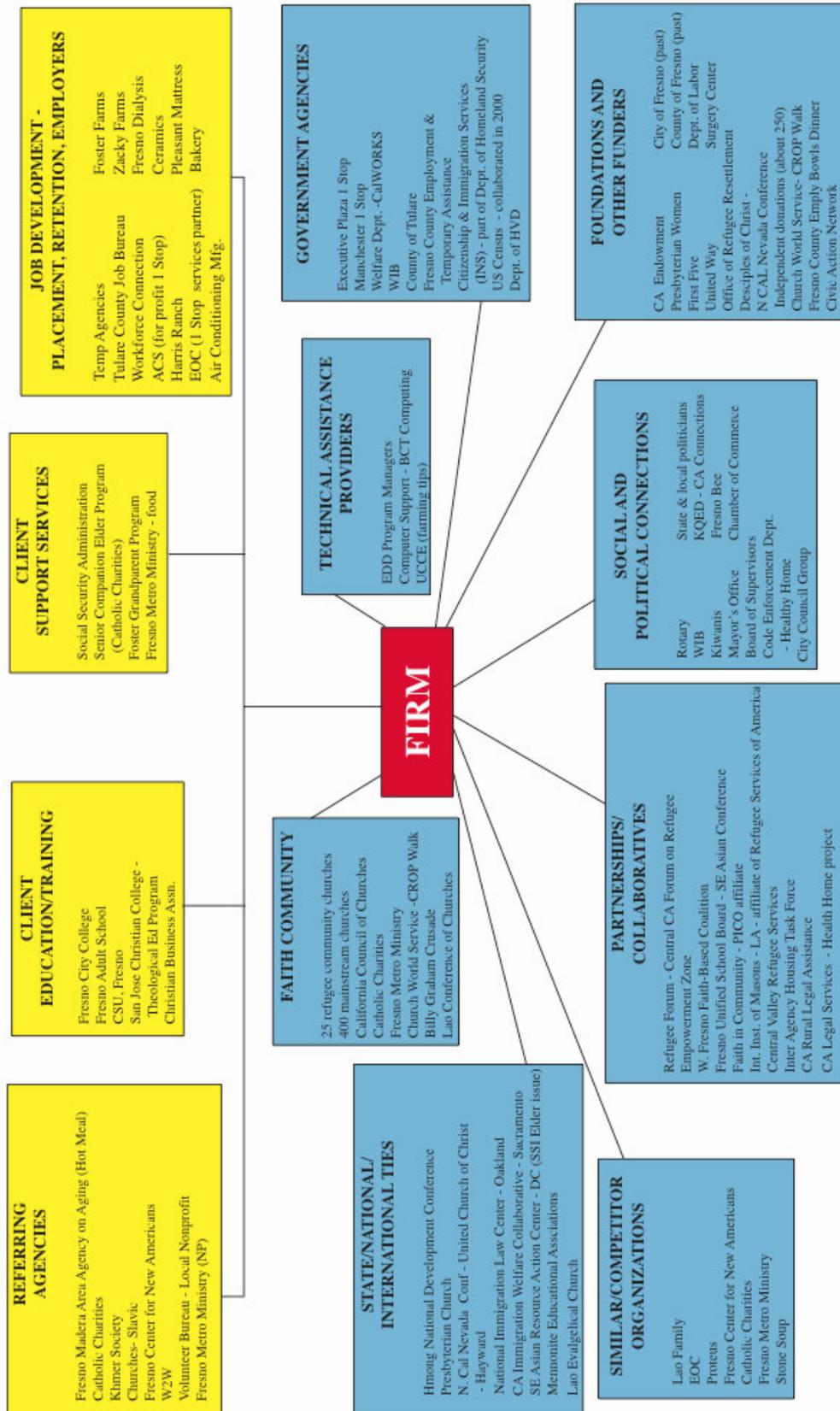
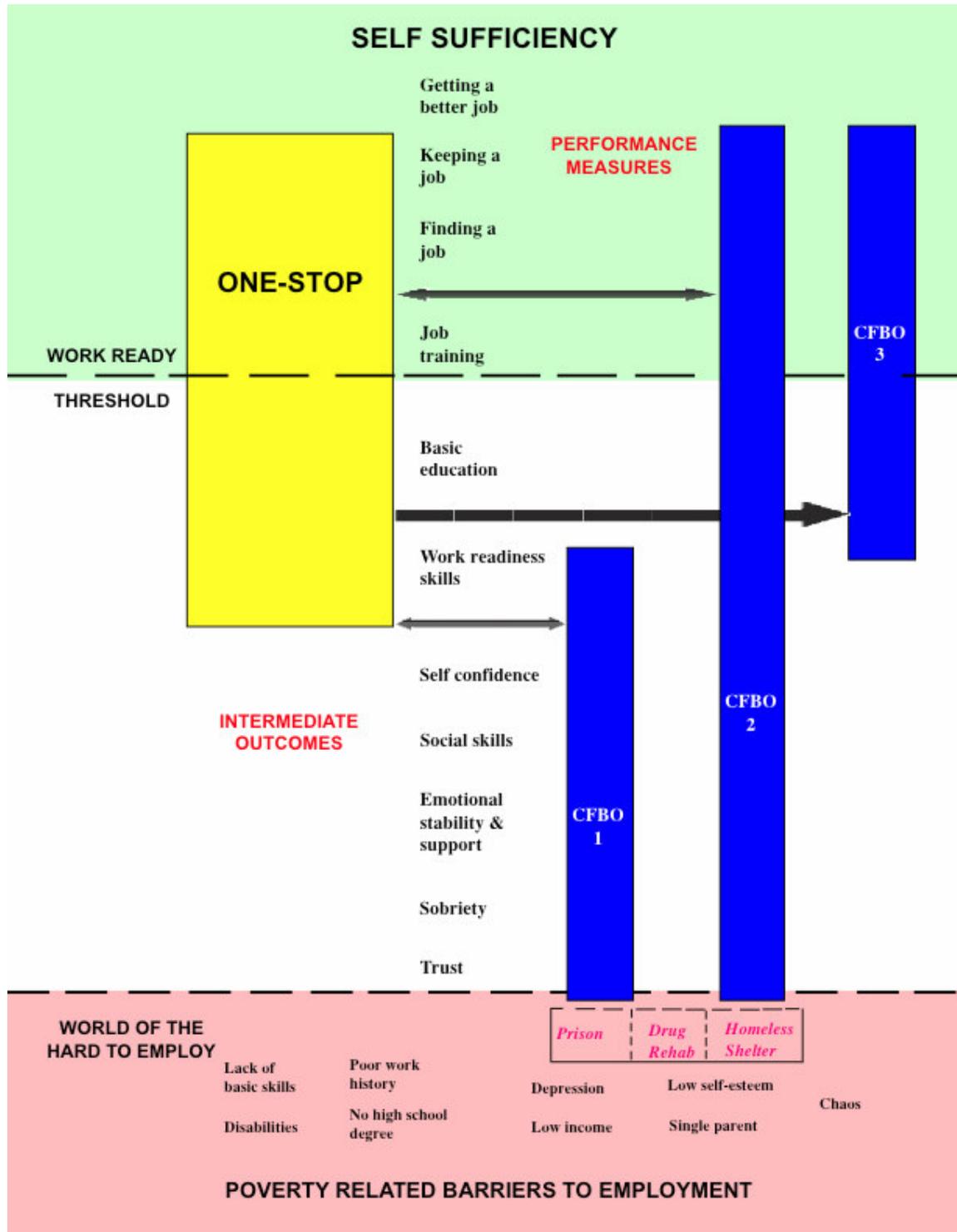


Figure 2. Simplified Diagram of 3 Network Roles Played by CFBI-funded Organizations



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Appendix 1. CFBI Funding Allocations by Year and Funding Source

(sgf=State General Fund; wia=Federal Workforce Investment Act; wtw=Department of Labor Welfare to Work Grant)

ORGANIZATION	PY 00-01	PY 01-02		PY 02-03		PY 03-04	TOTAL
	sgf	sgf	wia	wtw	wia	wia	
African American Community Empowerment	200,000		140,000		98,000		438,000
Alliance for Community Care		268,000			187,600		455,600
Avalon Multipurpose Center		150,000			105,000	40,000	295,000
Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa	212,000		148,000		103,600		463,600
Champions Recovery	200,000		140,000		98,000	40,000	478,000
Christian Partnership	200,000		140,000	11,000	98,000		449,000
Community Resource Talent Development	200,000		140,000		98,000		438,000
CSU Long Beach Foundation	410,000		287,000		195,900		892,900
Emmanuel		268,000			187,600		455,600
Episcopal Community Services	400,000		280,000		196,000		876,000
Faithful Service Outreach	420,000		294,000		200,800	90,000	1,004,800
Foothill Family Shelter		88,000			61,600	40,000	189,600
Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries	409,000		286,300		195,410	40,000	930,710
Gilead House	39,000		27,300	3,000	40,000		109,300
GirlSource Inc.		101,000			70,700	50,000	221,700
Helping Hands of Hope		150,000			105,000	40,000	295,000
Institute For Urban Research & Development		225,000			157,500	40,000	422,500
Jewish Vocational Service (San Francisco)		268,000			187,600		455,600
Lutheran Social Services	135,500		94,850		\$66,395		296,745
The Millineum Ministries Group	198,000		138,600				336,600
My Sister's House		150,000			105,000		255,000
Northern California Indian Development Council	420,000		294,000		200,800	70,000	984,800
New Beginnings	300,000		210,000				510,000
Ninth District CME	350,000		245,000		171,500		766,500
Operation WORK	139,000		97,300		\$68,110	40,000	344,410
Orange County Conservation Corps		268,000			187,600		455,600
Penny Lane		268,000			187,600		455,600
Praisley Foundation		150,000			105,000		255,000
Raeverly's Resource Center		150,000			105,000	40,000	295,000
Reach Out 29	200,000		140,000		98,000		438,000
Redwood Community Action Agency		268,000			187,600		455,600
San Diego Second Chance		268,000			187,600		455,600

Organization	PY 00-01	PY 01-02		PY 02-03		PY 03-04	Total
SF Child Abuse Prevention Center		172,000		13,000	120,400		305,400
Small Steps		150,000		13,000	105,000	40,000	308,000
Tabitha's House	175,000		122,500	10,000	85,750	60,000	453,250
Valley Achievement Center		138,000			76,135	40,000	254,135
Wardrobe for Opportunity		100,000			70,000	40,000	210,000
Welcome Home Ministries	92,500		126,000		88,200		406,700
Young Talented Achievers		150,000					150,000
Zaferia Shalom	200,000		140,000		98,000		438,000
Totals	5,000,000	3,750,000	3,490,850	50,000	4,700,000	710,000	17,700,850

(Source: Employment Development Department)

Appendix 2. Protocols for Phone Surveys of Participating Organizations

A. Initial Survey

California Faith-Based Organization Survey October, 2002

Hi, my name is _____. I'm with [university] and we are studying the 40 California Community and Faith-Based Initiative projects for EDD. Do you have a few moments to talk now about your project and how it operates? It should only take about 20-30 minutes.

IF NOT A CONVENIENT TIME, RESCHEDULE.....

The questions I'll be asking you will help us decide which of the 40 sites will be selected for more in-depth study. Do you mind if I tape-record this conversation, just to be sure that I don't miss anything you say?

Program description

1. How long has your organization been in existence?
2. How long has the program funded by EDD been under way?
3. Just briefly, what is the nature and purpose of your program?
4. What has the EDD money enabled you to do?
5. What services are you currently providing?
 - Job oriented (i.e. teaching certain skills or putting people in touch with job opportunities):
 - ___ Client assessment
 - ___ Education/literacy
 - ___ Education/ESL
 - ___ Education/GED preparation
 - ___ Education/vocational training, work skills (including computer training)
 - ___ Job search (including resume preparation)
 - ___ Job placement
 - ___ Job internships/apprenticeships
 - ___ Job-related follow-up
 - ___ Other _____
 - Life oriented (i.e. services related to client attitudes, behavior, or values):
 - ___ Work preparedness (clothes, work motivation, meeting employer expectations, etc.)
 - ___ Life skills (budgeting, decision-making, self-esteem, etc.)
 - ___ Mentoring
 - ___ Substance abuse treatment/counseling
 - ___ Other _____
6. How long do participants spend in the program, or in particular phases of the program?
7. What would you say makes your program unique—what might set it apart from other programs with similar goals?

8. What do you consider to be the main barriers to effectively implementing your program?
9. Does faith play any direct or indirect role in the program?
10. What local organizations are you working with or collaborating with? What about the local One-Stop?
11. How many *paid* personnel do you have and what is their function?
12. How many *volunteer* personnel and what do they do?
13. If this program is chosen for in-depth study, how should we go about setting up interviews with staff and volunteers?

Participants

14. What kinds of people does your program seek to serve?
15. How do you connect with these folks? Where do they come from?
16. How many participants do you have in the program at present?
17. How many do you expect to have when the program is fully implemented?
18. What elements would go into your definition of a “successful” program participant?
19. How do you go about measuring whether a participant has been successful, both in technical terms (e.g., what you would report to EDD) and in the more intangible aspects of the program (e.g., improved self-esteem)?
20. In general, have these participants used other workforce development services and programs?
21. What would be the best way to go about setting up interviews with program participants, both current ones and graduates? <Probe: Do you have a way of tracking and contacting past participants?>

Reciprocation

22. As we research these programs, we are hoping to learn things that will be helpful to the programs we’re studying. Is there something in particular you would like to know about other programs, for example, or about your participants’ reactions to your program?

Thank you for your help with this survey. If your program is chosen for in-depth evaluation we will be contacting you program in the future for follow-up information. Are you the best person to contact for follow-up information in the future? IF NO, ASK FOR THE BEST CONTACT PERSON AND RECORD BELOW.

Name	Title	Telephone Number
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B. Back-end Survey

CFBO *Back-End Survey* Interview Protocol

Now that the California CFBI demonstration project is winding down—and has ended for some CFBOs—we at UC Davis are conducting the last of the surveys required by the CFBI evaluation. The purpose of this interview is to help others learn from your experiences—what having this grant money enabled your organization to accomplish, what worked well and what didn't, what you would do next time, what your future plans are for your organization and yourself. We appreciate your taking the time to talk to us. Your reflections on this program will provide vital information to policy-makers as future programs of this nature are considered. As always, everything you say is confidential.

First, some basic information:

1. We wondered how the services [CFBO] offer might fit in the local workforce development system—for example what [CFBO] does that a One-Stop can't duplicate. Please tell us which of the following models comes closest to describing what makes you a valuable partner for government:

Model 1: Our organization focuses on helping program participants achieve basic outcomes (e.g., trust, sobriety, emotional support, social skills, self-confidence) so that they can then make use of more advanced employment and training services at One-Stops or other facilities.

Model 2: Our organization provides a specific, specialized service (e.g., work wardrobes, skills training) that helps program participants who are already work ready, or nearly so. One-Stops refer to you for a specific defined service that is discrete in time and content.

Model 3: Our organization provides program participants with a broad range of services. We could stand alone without the One-Stop, we could be an alternative to the One-Stop, for clients who needed or preferred that option.

If you feel that [CFBO] fits into none or more than one of these models, please explain.

2. This question is about Participants and Training

A. If [CFBO] provides job-oriented training or education, which of the following have you offered?

- Advanced skills training of long duration (more than 3 weeks) [more than basic computer literacy, New Beginnings kitchen, a salable skill]
- Advanced skills training of short duration (3 or less weeks)
- Basic computer literacy
- Other basic skills training [basic clerical, basic math]
- GED
- ESL
- Other

- B. What was your highest monthly total of participants during the grant period? In other words, what was the most clients you served in a single month?

The Current Situation:

3. Is the EDD-funded program still underway?
- A. If not, when did it close?
- B. Is it scheduled to close at a particular date?
4. Do you have a relationship with any One-Stop(s) at present (or when the program closed)?
- A. Did EDD assist in introducing you to One-Stop? If yes, was this helpful? If no, did you introduce yourself? Did the One-Stop reach out to you?
- B. Does/did the One-Stop refer program participants to you? How many per month, just roughly?
- C. Do/did you refer your program participants to a One-Stop? How many per month, just roughly?
- D. Have your program participants ever been trained by One-Stop personnel?
- E. Have your program staff ever been trained by One-Stop personnel?
- F. Has your staff ever trained One-Stop personnel?
- G. Has your staff ever been co-located at a One-Stop? If yes, how many staff (FTE?)
Which staff members/phone numbers (for a follow-up interview)?
- H. Has your organization ever received funding from a local One-Stop or WIB?
Approximately how much per year?
- I. Do/did you have a formal MOU with a local One-Stop or WIB?
- J. What factors have aided or constrained your ability to develop a working relationship with a One-Stop?
5. Please tell us whether your organizational capacity [how able to accomplish its mission and be a government partner] is greater, less, or about the same as when CFBI began in the following areas:
- ability to cope with government reporting requirements
 - basic bookkeeping, personnel policies and administrative systems
 - quality of services offered to participants
 - community visibility of your organization
6. If you feel your organizational capacity has improved, why do you think it has? *Probe: How much of that is due to help from EDD? What other factors entered in?*

Looking Back:

7. Please tell us what your budget (from all sources) was for the following fiscal years: 2003-04, 2002-03, 2001-02.
8. During the period of the EDD grant, where else have you gotten funding—from what other organizations? *Probe for different government agencies.*
9. Is this more, less, or about the same as when [CFBO] received its first EDD grant?
10. At the peak of the EDD-funded program, how many paid staff (FTE) did you have?
11. What do you feel your organization’s most important achievements have been during this CFBI “demonstration project”? What are you, personally, proudest of?
12. Looking back, what would you do differently?
13. What was the best thing about CFBI for you? And the worst thing?
Probe: Do you feel that the government let you down by not continuing to fund the program?
14. What are the main benefits you have received from working with EDD?
15. Would you say that working with government has changed your organization in any significant way, good or bad?
 - A. Has it altered [CFBO]’s core mission in any way? How?
 - B. Has it changed the services you offer to clients? How?
16. If you had it to do over again, would you pursue this grant? Why or why not?

The Faith Connection:

17. As you know, there has been a certain amount of controversy about whether the state should give money to faith-related organizations, and we wonder whether and how that might have affected [CFBO]—its mission, staff, or program. First, please tell us which of the following categories comes closest to describing your EDD-funded program.

Category 1. [CFBO] has no religious content.

Category 2. [CFBO] has no explicitly religious content in the program; the religious component is seen primarily in the motivation of individual staff members.

Category 3. [CFBO] has explicitly religious content that is separated from the provision of care; beneficiaries have the option not to participate.

Category 4. [CFBO] has explicitly religious, mandatory content integrated into the program.

18. Would your answer to the question above have been different at any previous point during the CFBI grant?
19. Are you affiliated in any way with a religious congregation/house of worship? If yes, which one? *[need denomination]*
20. Based on your experience with the EDD grant, what suggestions would you make to government officials interested in launching a community and faith-based initiative?

Looking to the Future:

21. If the EDD-funded program is or will be shutting down:
 - A. What is happening to program participants? *Probe: Where will they be served? Will you be staying in touch with some of them?*
 - B. What is happening to program staff?
 - C. What is next for you? *Probe: Will you continue to work for non-profit organizations, or will you enter the public or private sectors? What job description interests you most?*
22. If the program will continue:
 - A. Is downsizing necessary?
 - B. From what source will you seek funding? How will you go after it?
 - C. What do you see for the near future—say, the next year? After that?
 - D. Do you anticipate forming a closer alliance with any One-Stop? Why or why not?
23. Anything else?

Appendix 3. List of UC Davis CFBI Evaluation Reports and Related Papers

Campbell, David and Eric Glunt. 2006. Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-based Programs: A Local Network Perspective. In *Faith-Based Social Services: Measures, Assessments, and Effectiveness*, The Haworth Press.

Campbell, David. November 2005. After the Initiative Ends: A Necrology of California's Community and Faith-based Initiative. Paper presented at the annual meeting of ARNOVA, November 17-20, 2005, Washington, D.C.

Campbell, David. June 2005. CFBO Roles In Serving The Hard-To-Employ: A Government-Led Partnership To Realize Public Value. California Communities Program, *Working Paper #8*.

Campbell, David. June 2005. Making Faith-based Initiatives Community Friendly. Paper presented at the meeting of the Community Development Society in Baltimore, Maryland, June 26-29, 2005.

Campbell, David. February 2005. Community and Faith-Based Initiative: Community Network Analysis: Third Report of the UC Davis Research Team.

Campbell, David. February 2005. Evaluation of the California Community and Faith-based Initiative (CFBI): Second Report of the UC Davis Research Team.

Campbell, David. August 2003. Evaluation of The California Community And Faith-Based Initiative (CFBI): First Report of the UC Davis Research Team.

Appendix 4. Classification of CFBI Organizations by Local Network Role*

REMEDIAL CARE

Zaferia Shalom
Helping Hands of Hope
Champions Recovery
Tabitha's House
Episcopal Community Services
Catholic Charities
Emmanuel Family Life Center
Faithful Service Outreach
Penny Lane
Avalon Multi-purpose Center
9th District CME
Small Steps

ALTERNATIVE NETWORK

Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministry (FIRM)
San Diego Second Chance
Northern California Indian Development
Redwood Community Action
San Francisco Jewish Vocational Services
Reach-Out 29
Welcome Home Ministries
Institute for Urban Research and Development

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Wardrobe for Opportunity
CSU Long Beach
New Beginnings Dinuba

* Note: We were able to classify the majority of CFBI-funded programs with whom we had conducted extensive fieldwork, but lacked sufficient data to confidently classify all 40 organizations.

Appendix 5. Case Study Descriptions of Six CFBI-funded Organizations

Case Study #1

Catholic Charities Coach-2-Career Program

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Santa Rosa, the Family Support Center (a homeless shelter)
Primary program participants	Residents of the homeless shelter and other individuals needing assistance
Years established prior to EDD grant	
Catholic Charities	50
Coach-2-Career program	0
Previous government grants?	
Catholic Charities	Yes
Coach-2-Career program	No
Previous workforce development experience	No
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak	2 (Santa Rosa only)
Total participants at CFBI peak	20 (Santa Rosa only)
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	1:10
Role of faith in service delivery	Faith-background
CFBI funding allocations	2001-2002: \$212,000 2002-2003: \$ 48,000 2003-2004: \$108,300

Since 1954, Catholic Charities of the Santa Rosa Diocese has provided assistance to 60,000 individuals annually, whatever their religious affiliation, throughout Sonoma, Napa, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. The program for which CFBI and WIA funds have been used, Coach-2-Career, is designed to help the homeless and/or those struggling with substance abuse issues make the transition to independence by preparing for and obtaining employment. Over the lifetime of the EDD grants, Coach-2-Career has served Catholic Charities clients in Santa Rosa, Napa, and Lake Counties.

Presently the Coach-2-Career program works primarily with the Family Support Center in Santa Rosa, a homeless shelter, although it also accepts self-referred individuals who can benefit from its services. The Program Coordinator assesses a client's work history and helps gather necessary background documents, coaches the client through resume-writing and interviewing techniques, helps locate jobs and arrange transportation for interviews, provides the necessary telephone number and address for call-backs, helps match clients with volunteer mentors, and generally functions as a supportive, safe, dedicated point of contact for the client. A system for providing mentors to interested clients is based on obtaining volunteers from churches (via notices in church bulletins), Sonoma State University, and local high schools. Program staff and participants agree that Coach-2-Career owes its success to the intense personal relationship that develops between the Coordinator and the job seeker, a kind of "coaching" that benefits from the unusual degree of on-going access which facilitates forging close ties between clients and Coordinator and keeping track of progress on a day-to-day basis.

Throughout its tenure, Catholic Charities has provided a cornucopia of assistance programs for people in need, whatever their religious affiliation may be, in accordance with its mission statement: *Catholic Charities reaches out to all people in need, offers hope, and builds a spirit of community.* The program for which CFBI and WIA funds have been used is called Coach-2-Career, and it has served Catholic Charities clients in Santa Rosa and in Napa during the last two years.

Case Study Description

The major facets of this case study include:

- a detailed description of the CFBI-funded program and the staff members who construct and deliver the program on a day-to-day basis;
- a profile of the program participants as seen both through our interpretations of interviews with 16 of them and through staff perceptions; and
- analysis of what the semi-structured interviews reveal about participant experiences while in the program and their progress toward the goal of stable employment.

Coach-2-Career Program

Program description. Both program sites are administered by the Regional Director of Catholic Charities in Santa Rosa—where the larger portion of services are provided—and each is run by a single highly motivated coordinator who routinely exceeds job description and part-time status to serve the clients. Beyond these commonalities, the Coach-2-Career program has evolved differently in the two counties, shaped by the needs of the population served, the nature of each county’s social service network, and the personality and style of the program coordinator responsible for delivering the program in each area.

In Santa Rosa, the Coach-2-Career program is located in the Program Coordinator’s office, one room of the sprawling Catholic Charities building (once a hospital) that houses the Family Support Center, a homeless shelter. The program serves, but is not limited to, residents of the shelter who are looking for jobs so that they can make the transition to independence. The Coordinator assesses a client’s work history and helps gather necessary background documents, coaches the client through resumé-writing and interviewing technique, helps locate jobs and arrange transportation for interviews, provides the necessary telephone number and address for call-backs, helps match clients with volunteer mentors, and generally functions as a supportive, safe, dedicated point of contact for the client. A system for providing mentors to interested clients is based on obtaining volunteers from churches (via notices in church bulletins), Sonoma State University, and local high schools.

In Napa, the Coach-2-Career Coordinator shares a room in the Catholic Charities suite within a multi-agency building on a side street. The program has focused on people 18 years of age and older who have multiple barriers to overcome in seeking to join or rejoin the workforce. The Napa program was designed to serve emancipated foster youth—the focus of several Napa-based Catholic Charities programs—and has expanded to include mentally and physically disabled adults. The Coordinator has been able to leverage services offered by Napa County’s well-developed network of community-based and public agencies for the clients’ benefit, obtaining subsidized training for them, and job-incentive funds for employers who hire them.

Distinguishing features. (1) The Coach-2-Career program is one of two programs (among the six we have profiled) that are being delivered in two counties simultaneously and the only one that has adapted itself to the particular attributes of the counties it serves. (2) Both parts of the program serve “in-house” populations referred from other Catholic Charities programs, thus enjoying an unusual degree of on-going access which facilitates forging close ties between clients and Coordinators and keeping track of progress on a day-to-day basis. (3) The coaching element in the program’s name is evident at both sites, with the Coordinators taking a primary role in motivating and reassuring their clients in addition to helping them locate the sort of job they want. (4) The Santa Rosa program pairs clients with mentors who are volunteer community members. (5) The Napa program networks with several other organizations to tailor job training opportunities to the special needs of clients with mental and physical disabilities and to access employer-incentive hiring plans to put these clients to work.

Profile of Santa Rosa program participants. Although it is not a requirement, many Coach-2-Career clients are or have been residents of the Family Support Center, a homeless shelter. Most are undergoing major life upheavals and transitions. Approximately 30-60 individuals are enrolled in the program at any given time, with a smaller subset of those being actively served on a day-to-day basis.

As the Santa Rosa Coordinator told us, characterizing the homeless is not a straightforward proposition.

You know what? I want to tell you right now that anybody can be homeless, you can be homeless in a matter of minutes if your boss says, 'You're fired.' Where you going to go if you have no family? Therefore 'homeless' is not...stereotyping of the drug addicts, people don't want to work. But no, we have a lot of families that are really, really smart, they have a good jobs and everything, it happens to be, they get into an accident, and they got divorced, whatever the situation will be, so 'homeless' is not a matter of doing nothing...Unfortunately, they have a bad name, I don't know why, but...that's not the way I look at it.

Based on staff estimates, Santa Rosa’s Coach-2-Career participants include about three times more women than men, a mix of ages from their 20s to their 40s, more Whites than African Americans and Hispanics, and as many as 80 percent with a history of substance abuse.

Profile of Napa program participants. In Napa, many of the younger clients live in the facilities Catholic Charities runs in Napa for emancipated foster youth. Disabled adults often enter the program through the network of social services with which the Coordinator works. The Coordinator manages a caseload of about 20 clients at a time who are in different phases of the program and have varying requirements for intensive one-on-one interaction. The majority of Napa’s clients are 18 to about 45 years of age and there are slightly more women than men. Again, substance abuse has been identified as a major problem for both Hispanics and Whites in the program. About half of the clients are either attending some sort of vocational classes or preparing to do so.

Coach-2-Career staff. As we understand it, the two Program Coordinators constitute the full Coach-2-Career staff. One is responsible for managing the Santa Rosa operation and the other for the Napa operation. Both individuals holding these positions are energetic, dedicated people whose roles include counseling their clients, giving them practical help toward stabilizing their lives, preparing them to seek employment, and assisting them in their search for a good job. Their work doesn’t end there, however. Even when their charges are successfully employed, the Coordinators remain available for consultation and problem-solving as long as their clients need

their help. The Napa Coordinator made this clear: “But yet, you know, they may...come back 2 years from now, and say, ‘I need to talk, I need help,’ and I want them to have that place, that comfort zone.”

The Santa Rosa Coordinator has the additional responsibilities of overseeing his Napa counterpart and helping to match his clients with community mentors. Both Coordinators have found their way to their present positions through a long chain of related experiences that have given them a depth of wisdom and patience in dealing with the Coach-2-Career target population.

How Staff define success. The program’s goal is to help clients find the kind of job that will pay enough to support them and their families, ending the cycle of homelessness and/or substance abuse. In order to accomplish this, Coach-2-Career clients typically need to see themselves in a new light, as competent, worthwhile individuals who deserve a good job and can succeed at it. A vital component of their mission, as the Coordinators see it, is to convince their clients that they can succeed. Watching clients’ attitudes change over time toward themselves and their future is at least as satisfying a result to the Coordinators as placing them in a job. They describe their pleasure in their clients’ success with warmth:

We have a lot of clients, they come here, they say, ‘You have no idea how much you've helped me.’ ‘I really appreciate your help. I'm never going to forget.’—Yeahhh , and I'm like, ‘Excellent, excellent! That's what we want to hear!’

[The] change in my clients, from sad to happy, and from insecure to secure. When you see those frowns turn into a smile, and they walk in and they're smiling when they see you, you know, that's... that gives me the most ultimate reward.

At the same time, both Coordinators have developed the ability to set boundaries for themselves so they can withstand the disappointments that are an intrinsic part of their work. Each describes a personal faith that helps them place their efforts for their clients on a continuum of success, knowing that they are doing their best and trusting that their clients will find their way when the time is right.

Challenges to success: for program participants. The people served at both sites have complex personal issues to overcome, such as attaining sobriety, finding housing, and addressing past misfortunes. Sometimes they are unable to cope with them. If they break the rules Catholic Charities sets for staying in the shelter or in subsidized housing, they must leave, setting back the clock on their progress toward self-sufficiency. Many clients lack skills and education, placing them at a competitive disadvantage for employment, and often the need for money is so pressing that it isn’t possible to return to school or take training courses unless this is subsidized.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. Building credibility among potential employers requires a solid reputation for providing satisfactory workers. Coordinators indicate that no matter how hard they try and how many resources they pull together for their clients, there are times that clients fail to appear for interviews or don’t show up for work. The best-intentioned employer becomes unreceptive if this happens too often. Another challenge is that Catholic Charities obtains a large part of its funding (42%) from government sources and budgetary cutbacks can force programs that feed into Catholic Charities to be curtailed or shut down, breaking the internal referral link and weakening the coherence of the program.

The place of faith in the program. Despite its name, Catholic Charities never makes an issue of the religious affiliation of people who come to them for help. “We don’t even *ask* what religious

affiliation a person is; we don't care. If they're a person in need, they're a person in need." Nor is the faith or lack of faith of prospective employees an issue; all that matters is how well they can do the job. The organization makes an effort to maintain a connection with Catholic parishes across the Santa Rosa Diocese, but this is in order to identify local needs and to assist in fundraising. Both Coordinators referred to a strong personal faith that enables them to give of themselves and connect at a deep level with the people they serve. This faith also helps to sustain them through the inevitable disappointments in their work. Asked whether and where Coach-2-Career was faith-based, one Coordinator said, "Probably with the clients, in helping—they know *we believe* they're going to make it. That's the way I feel, that's the way I look at it."

Program Participants

Interview sample

Of the 38 program participants whose names were provided to us by EDD, we actually interviewed 16 participants. Anticipating some difficulty in connecting with these participants, we elected not to reduce the list we received from EDD by the random sampling process as we did in some other cases. The Coach-2-Career participants with whom we were able to speak differed from the overall populations described by the two Coordinators and so we consider the analysis that follows to be in the nature of a revealing description rather than the product of a truly representative sample.

In Santa Rosa, we were able to conduct in-person interviews with six people, four of whom were male (ages 39-47) and two female (29 and 37) and we could not reach by telephone any of the other people in that sample. Since women ordinarily outnumber men in Santa Rosa's Coach-2-Career program, and since the program serves more people in their 20s than we encountered, this ad-hoc sample is skewed toward the male gender and the older end of the continuum.

In Napa, we held in-person conversations with three women (ages 27, 34, and 48) and spoke via telephone to seven more participants for a total of 10 interviews. Overall, respondents fell into two age groups: 20-22 years (5 females and 1 male) and 46-48 years (3 females and 1 male). We took this—very tentatively—to be generally representative of the two populations served: emancipated foster youth and disabled adults. We did note, however, that considerably more women are included in our sample than are actually served by the Napa Coach-2-Career program.

Descriptive Profile of Coach-2-Career Participants Interviewed

Living arrangements. Most people we interviewed live in a rental unit of some kind, varying from a single room and a very small trailer to a three-bedroom apartment or a house. Two people own houses and two live with their parents in a house. Two people live alone, three live with one child, four have two children (or one and "one on the way"), and one has three children at home. Of those who live with their children, seven have partners (five are married) who share housing costs. Half of our respondents would like to move, most to larger places, and the intensity of their desire ranges from "I'd do *anything* to get into a house!" to "Yeah [I'd like to live on my own], but I'm kinda lazy about it." We caught two people at a moment of unhappiness with their living arrangements: one, a professional woman who lost her condo and is now living in a single room with her dog and trying to rebuild her life, and the other, a well-educated man with a history of homelessness who is living with his pregnant wife and baby daughter in a tiny trailer, far enough away from town that the lack of transportation is an impediment to finding a job.

Employment. We asked the people in our sample about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. Overall, there were more younger women than older ones in our sample and most of the former reported experience in retail and food service settings. Most of the respondents have substantial employment experience. For example, two of the older women we spoke with have logged a number of years in the school system as teacher's aides and one had been a secretary with a steady job for over 10 years. All of the men we spoke with had worked; past jobs included farming, landscaping, baking, sales, carpentry, shipping and purchasing, plus many fill-in jobs such as furniture moving and mechanical work.

Of the people in our sample who were currently employed, one individual was delighted with his current job; four said they enjoyed their positions (clothing store sales, furniture sales, grocery store courtesy clerk, and nanny, respectively); three were luke-warm about their jobs (general warehouse clerk, retail cashier, and wait staff) and would prefer something that offered more money and responsibility; and two said frankly that they disliked their jobs (landscaping, retail cashier). Two people reported holding down two jobs to make ends meet.

When asked what sort of work they would like to do in the future, several people in our sample thought they would like to have their own businesses. Others chose careers that required more education, such as nursing, drug and alcohol counseling, social service, pre-school education, and veterinary care.

Education. Nearly three-quarters of the people in our sample were high school graduates and six had spent time in college as well. One received an AA degree. A few respondents showed no interest in returning to school at all, two hoped to have the opportunity in the future, and several voiced their intention to pursue particular courses of study as soon as they could—in art, the medical field, human services, and computers.

Social self-classification. We asked our respondents whether they had any difficulty in talking to strangers or making new friends, and about one-third of the people in our sample answered in a non-committal fashion. The ones who saw themselves as friendly and open were in the minority; more described themselves as “shy,” “kind of like in this rut and that’s one of the areas that I really, really need to resurface,” “not a very trusting person.” One Santa Rosa man who was trying to rebuild his life after being caught up in gang-related problems said, “I like to have a lot of friends, but—this time I try to find the right persons.”

Personal faith. Just over half of our respondents reported being brought up in a religious tradition (five in the Catholic faith) and 11 now consider themselves to be spiritual people, though only three say that they actively attend church. In making the distinction between spirituality and church-going, one Santa Rosa man told us:

Mmm, I go to the church once in a while, but in my own ideas, I think you love God and God loves you when you do your things, and not necessarily you have to go to a church. For me, when I’m going to my clients, I’m going to the church; when I help my kids, I’m going to the church; and when I fight with nobody, I’m going to the church.

We wondered whether the name “Catholic Charities” had any influence on respondents’ feelings or behavior vis-à-vis attending Sunday services, and our sample tended to deny this. In Santa Rosa, a woman said that even people staying in the shelter aren’t required to go to church. One of the men who talked to us responded to “And they don’t insist on it? Even though it’s called Catholic Charities?” with the comment:

No, no, no, that's my preference, if I want to believe in something. Which I don't, because I'm pretty open to suggestions.

Napa participants expressed a similar lack of pressure. A young man raised in the Catholic faith was asked if he still considered himself a Catholic and responded offhandedly, "Yeah, but not very."

Respondents' experience with the Coach-2-Career program. In this section, we are primarily reporting our interpretation of the perceptions of the 16 Coach-2-Career program participants we interviewed, taken from their responses to our questions as detailed below. In some areas, we also draw upon the initial scoping survey we did with the Regional Director responsible for the Coach-2-Career program in both Santa Rosa and Napa, as well as on the interviews conducted with the Coordinators of the Santa Rosa and Napa programs, to present a more complete picture of the program.

Entry into the program. We asked respondents how they happened to come to the Coach-2-Career program. In Santa Rosa, we learned that our six subjects either had a connection with the homeless shelter—referred by Catholic Charities personnel or noticed a flier posted in the Santa Rosa facility—or with the Coordinator himself. When they presented themselves at the Coach-2-Career office, they seem to have reached a point of commitment. All of them have their own place to live, but they need to find a job that will pay the bills, or they need help in furthering their education while still on public assistance.

In Napa, the entrance point to the program was less distinct although it did have one common element: the Coordinator. Most of our respondents associated her with the Dreamcatchers program (where she also works part-time), although they also mention links to agencies such as Job Connections and Vocational Rehabilitation. The reason these respondents who were already plugged into the system gave for coming to Coach-2-Career is that they wanted to work, or to continue to work, with the Coordinator. In Napa, the Coordinator does some recruiting at local colleges and substance abuse treatment facilities.

Services offered/received. In both locations, there is an initial conversation between the Coordinator and prospective participants to exchange information during which in-coming individuals talk about their life and work experiences, their concerns, and their immediate and long-term needs and goals. In return, they learn what the program can offer them, including the mechanics of finding and applying for jobs (locating job openings, creating resumés, completing job applications, going to interviews), basic skill-building functions such as familiarity with computers and office procedures (telephones, filing), and a variety of "soft" skills (handling money, building self-confidence and self-esteem, setting personal goals). The Santa Rosa program has access to clothing so that clients who need interview outfits can obtain them at no cost and can also assist in paying fees for career counseling at the local junior college. Another Santa Rosa offering is matching clients with designated mentors, people from the community who meet with them about once a week to provide a wide variety of one-on-one services. These include working with them to hone specific skills, finding and applying for jobs, helping them get established in the community, and spending time together as friends and helpers.

In both programs, clients and Coordinators work together in a highly focused, personal way, concentrating on the client's greatest needs. Respondents in the Santa Rosa program reported getting help with their resumés, being coached on how to present themselves at interviews, having opportunities to use office computers for practice and to check job postings, being assisted in applying for college and GED instruction, and receiving assistance in a myriad of unofficial

ways by the Coordinator. Napa respondents said they also received actual work experience in the Catholic Charities office (sometimes with a stipend paid through Dreamcatchers) as well as support prior to, on the way to, and during interviews and even consultations with shopping for clothes.

Relationship with staff and mentors. Half of our respondents said directly that their Coordinators were mentors to them: people with whom they could discuss everything in their lives. The fact that Coach-2-Career Coordinators provide such personalized services to their clients seems to have nurtured our respondents' budding awareness that they are worthy people. For some it is a new concept. Over and over, we heard expressions of heart-felt gratitude as clients from both programs tried to say how much the genuine concern and commitment of the Coordinators meant, and still mean, to them. Some examples:

She's a wonderful, caring, and understanding person, and she will do anything in her power to make you fulfill whatever achievements and goals that you have in mind, and I would like you to know, as far as my personal feelings about her, that she's wonderful. Wonderful.

It just inspires me...I can just come over and talk to him whenever I'm struggling with things and he's just real confident...he enthuses you a lot to make yourself do better and proceed. He's good [laughs], I like him a lot 'cause, you know, he did help me out a lot.

[S]he took me under her wing and she gave me that special input that I needed to focus on the good aspects that I've already achieved and had under my belt and focusing in on what to do next and where to go from here.

[I]f someone does show that they're significantly interested in trying to better themselves and get a position and such, he does offer for clients to even give him a call on a Sunday morning if they need to get to a job, or they have an interview they need to get to, he's 100% there for them...

One person in each program confided that she wouldn't even have gone to get essential dental care had it not been for the encouragement of their respective Coordinators. As the Santa Rosa dental patient told us,

I wouldn't ever got my teeth pulled out if it wasn't for [him] and the Coach-2-Career. He said, 'The only thing you can do is hurt yourself by not going to the dentist, by not taking care of yourself,' and he's right. He's right.

The Coordinators also knew when and how to be very firm with their clients, as several respondents told us.

A lot of times he told me, 'Okay, I got a lot of work for you, that's up to you if you want to find a job, here is the list, just go and talk to those people, you know.' And I talked to those people. They help me to get a job, and to keep it, you know, to keep it.

I go through depression, so most of the time I'm not motivated to do anything [half laugh], and [she] really helps me get going [laughs], she kind of gives me that kick in the butt that I need [laughs heartily].

Well, to be honest with you, they always be on top of me, this guy, calling me, 'Hey, you know what? Why don't you come over here, I got some job for you, I just want you to

call them'...And he always be there, you know, pushing me. And you know, I'm the kind of person that if he didn't push me, something make me to stop there and don't keep going. And this guy, you know, I glad that he always be there, pushing me.

By comparison with the warmth they expressed for their Coordinator, the Santa Rosa respondents who had been connected with volunteer mentors were somewhat lukewarm about the experience. Often the mentors were described as quite young, very kind, and helpful in particular areas, such as helping construct resumés, writing letters on one client's behalf in legal matters, even taking a client and his children on outings. One client told us that his mentor ignored his job preferences and set him up with an interview that was doomed from the start, although "meeting with the mentor did help lift me up a fair amount as far as, you know, he seemed genuine in his expression that I look like a good candidate." Another client, well into his 40s, respected his much younger mentor for his "...writing, and a lot of things that he would know 'cause he went to school, and had I went, I might have got that."

Interaction with other agencies. Respondents from both programs have had some experience with private and state employment agencies. Probed for a comparison between their experience in those programs and at Catholic Charities, a few respondents shared comments. Of a local private agency, a Napa woman said, "They were on a scale of 1-10, a 6. They didn't help me personally...and they were very lax in communicating with me about any scheduled job." A Santa Rosa man said of the local EDD office, "[There's no resources accessible there. There's the telephones to call and file for unemployment and that's basically it." Encouraged past a visible hesitation, he continued, "There were some fairly rude individuals there..." The most devastating review of a facility came from a quiet Santa Rosa man:

I went to SonomaWORKS. They didn't do anything 'cause I can't read or write, so they're not willing to help me. Well, I'm not eligible for their help because I couldn't read or write, so they didn't want to take the time to train me, or the money to put out for me, so I really—I was useless in their eyes.

Santa Rosa respondents reported being referred by the Coach-2-Career Coordinator to other departments within Catholic Charities for help with housing and for financial assistance in other areas.

There was considerable blurring of boundaries between Napa County programs, to judge by respondents' difficulty in distinguishing where one left off and another began. The Job Connection, "Voc Rehab," Dreamcatchers, and Coach-2-Career appeared to merge seamlessly as participants passed through them, encountering familiar faces and enjoying the thoughtful assistance of helpful teams. In such an environment, where networking and service delivery integration are well-advanced, it can be difficult for anyone to isolate the impact of any single program.

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience with Coach-2-Career, we classified possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness), remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment), educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED instruction, entering college, vocational training), and employment (getting a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal outcomes. According to the majority of our respondents, the way the Coordinators of the Coach-2-Career program helped them to feel about themselves was the most valuable outcome of all. The unflinching support and encouragement they received, together with practical

assistance, gave them pride in themselves and a sense of self-confidence some had never felt before:

I didn't have no training or no skills, you know, and being on that note I didn't have self-worth for myself. Now I feel 100% better about myself, oh yeah. I feel sure of myself.

An analysis of personal improvements acknowledged by our respondents reveals that seven feel more confident about work, four reported an increase in their general confidence, four are more confident in their sobriety, and two are pleased by improvements in their communication skills.

Remedial outcomes. Two Napa respondents were candid about the difficulties they encountered in holding jobs before they went into recovery programs, and they know that their past records are problematic. The Coordinator is working with one woman to help her find ways to field difficult questions from prospective employers honestly but positively. The resolution of some other barriers to employment—illiteracy and language problems, for example—are discussed under educational outcomes.

Educational outcomes. One respondent in the Napa program explained how the paid job her Coordinator had helped to arrange was accepted by her college as an internship, giving her college credits in addition to a salary. Another member of the Napa program agreed to take a series of morning computer classes as long as the Coordinator could switch to an afternoon schedule to work with her on other matters. A young Santa Rosa woman told us how her Coordinator had gone to the local junior college and collected all the necessary applications on her behalf, something she had been too frightened to do. Now she is not only enrolled in college but is completing her GED on the side (“[A]ctually the JC doesn't require you to have a GED to take classes there, but it's just my own personal thing that I wanted to do.”). An older Santa Rosa man also intends to get his GED. The Santa Rosa man who couldn't read and write is attending the Adult Literacy School and is getting more skilled with the office computer. Several respondents plan to obtain associate degrees and/or to take vocational classes, and two Hispanic men will take ESL classes soon.

Employment outcomes. At the time that we interviewed them, 11 of the 16 respondents were employed. Training and education are important elements of job-preparedness, but nothing is more vital than the self-confidence people in the Coach-2-Career program gained. For example:

I used to do sales all the time, in Spanish, but it's different in English. So he's saying, 'You're doing good, you're doing good,' [he's] pushing me to do it, so I got a little confident, I went over there and I talked to different managers, and they finally gave me a job.

Respondents in both programs credit their Coordinators for helping them prepare themselves to make the most positive impression possible on prospective employers, for not letting them slack off or give up after repeated disappointments, and for ultimately getting them placed in good jobs.

Participant Perspectives on Coach-2-Career.

Overall impressions. We asked our respondents whether they thought participating in the Coach-2-Career program had made or would make a significant difference in their lives. Of those who answered directly, ten said that it would, adding their own comments:

It's been the most positive thing in my life for a very long time, and in that respect, it's significant.

It works. If you're willing to put the time in to work the program, it'll work for you. But you have to put the time in to work it.

I feel really positive about this program, they're doing a lot of great things in this area. This program, I feel, is really powerful and it can do so very much.

The only thing I know is, they're good people. Yeah, and if you need help, they're there for you.

If it weren't for Catholic Charities, I would have no means to go to a job interview. The ability to open doors is the main thing.

In addition, near the end of each interview, we asked our respondents to tell us what they thought was the best thing for them about the Coach-2-Career program and also to make suggestions for improving the program. These suggestions are reported just as we received them, with no attempt made to place them in any order or to screen them for practicality.

What was the best thing about the program? Half of our respondents cited the coaching style of the Coordinators and the positive effect it had on them. Others referred to elements of the program, such as the availability of computers and assistance with resumés ("I never had one before!"). One Santa Rosa man said, "Part of it is seeing other people getting positions, good positions," and another said simply, "Keeping my job."

How could the program be improved? [Note: In this section we are merely passing along the comments of participants, without judging or endorsing them.] Of the 14 people who responded to this question, four were unable to think of any suggestions and two comments from Napa respondents referred not to the Coach-2-Career program itself but to experiences with a couple of its Napa County collaborators. (underscoring, perhaps, the lack of differentiation among the programs from the clients' perspectives).

There were three suggestions for the Santa Rosa program. One man who had benefited from being strongly encouraged to make direct contact with prospective employers felt that the Coordinator should push other clients similarly: "Maybe if they just push a little more the people, you know, to do the things." Another respondent thought that greater care should be taken to pair clients with like-minded mentors and a third wished that more people, particularly those in need who aren't in the homeless shelter, could share in the benefits of the Coach-2-Career program.

There were five suggestions for the Napa program, two from one individual. One woman wanted the Coordinator to remain involved with clients for a longer period after they accept new jobs, possibly working with the new supervisor to ease the transition into employment. Another suggestion was to involve clients more fully in the process of setting personal and professional goals. A second woman wished that the Napa program had its own funds to help clients purchase clothing for interviews and work, another was impatient with the time it takes to be placed in an actual job, and a third wanted the Coordinator to keep in closer touch with her.

Future interaction with the program. When asked whether respondents thought they would remain in touch with the Coordinators of their respective programs even after they had moved into permanent jobs, a majority felt that they would. We also asked if they would recommend Coach-2-Career to a friend, and here the response was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone who responded to the question said without hesitation that they would.

January 2005 Update

Just as we were completing our first evaluation of Catholic Charities' Coach-2-Career program, the decision was made to close the Napa County portion of the program (another program in Napa County was providing similar services to many of the same participants) and to set up a similar branch in the underserved Lake County area. During our second evaluation, we learned that although the Lake County program continues to connect individuals with the Lake County Resource Center and with EDD for job and training opportunities, its character is sufficiently different from the original Coach-2-Career model that we didn't attempt to evaluate it.

For the purposes of this report, we will focus on the ongoing Santa Rosa Coach-2-Career program in describing its present status and future outlook. The second round of participant interviews included individuals from both Santa Rosa and Napa counties.

Coach-2-Career, January 2005

The Coordinator of the Santa Rosa Coach-2-Career Program is the only staff member who is still working directly with clients. The final WIA funds were exhausted and EDD oversight ceased in September, 2004, but the Catholic Charities Board of Directors has underwritten the Coordinator's efforts to continue preparing job seekers to qualify for and locate well-paying jobs. Although the loss of financial support means that he can no longer outfit them with good shoes and clothes, nor can he offer money for haircuts, the Coordinator is proud to say that the clients themselves haven't seen any differences in the services the Coach-2-Career programs provides. They continue to receive training in computer literacy and other basic skills, support in studying for their GEDs, assistance in setting up job interviews, and help with transportation to interviews in addition to the personal coaching that is the Coordinator's specialty. He estimates that 17 clients will be served in January 2005, not far from the peak figure of 20 served in one month when there were two staff members working with participants. Coach-2-Career presently has an MOU with the local Job Link (One-Stop), where clients are sent to take advantage of training opportunities that may exist.

Reflections on the CFBI Experience

Although Catholic Charities itself is a well-established organization, experienced in all aspects of managing funds and complex programs, the Coach-2-Career program began with the first CFBI grant. Its Coordinator feels that both he and the program benefited greatly from the assistance he received from EDD program managers and other support personnel in dealing with government reporting requirements and administration. Even the quality of services provided to program participants was enhanced by the guidance he received. He also gained useful insights into accessing government funds through grant opportunities.

The Coordinator sees the Coach-2-Career program's greatest achievement as helping people find and keep good jobs, enabling them to make real and lasting improvements in their lives and the lives of their families, especially their children. He is proudest of his own contribution in "getting people off the street, getting little kids a roof over their heads, people staying off drugs." Asked what he might do differently, the Coordinator said that he would concentrate more heavily on two areas: forging better relationships with large area corporations so that his clients could have better access to more jobs, and working to educate the community about the homeless and their potential as useful citizens so that they could have more opportunities for employment.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

In March, 2004 we conducted the second round of interviews with Coach-2-Career participants. Though all 16 respondents had freely given us re-contact information during the first round of interviews, we could only locate 7 this time around. Six phone numbers were no longer in service and 3 contacts respondents had given us were suspicious and even hostile, denying that they knew the subject or refusing to accept a message.

Of the 7 participants we spoke with, none were still enrolled in the program. Two felt that they had completed it, though there was no graduation or certificate per se, and 4 of the 5 participants who left the program did so to take a job. Five individuals are working now, 3 at the jobs they had during our first round of interviews. Three are working 40 hours a week. Wages range from \$7.50/hour (cashier at Ross clothing store) to \$11.60 (grounds maintenance at Travis AFB). Two are going to school, 1 while working part-time—she is at the internship phase of becoming a clinic assistant. The other is taking a year-long ESL course at the local community college. Of those who answered the questions, 3 said Coach-2-Career has made a significant difference in their lives and 5 would refer others to the program or have done so already. Asked what they gained from the program, 6 participants indicated having increased self-confidence. For example:

I would say I personally gained self-confidence and a positive attitude, basically coming out of my shell, and feeling good about myself, and about my future, and achieving new, realistic goals for myself.

Believing in me (half laugh), I can do it. [S]o I just feel very good, because I done things that before I said I could never make it, because I didn't believe in myself. But now I know that I can.

In addition to being more personally confident, another participant went on to say:

I would have to say I gained trust, loyalty, and patience.

Future of the Coach-2-Career Program

Both the Director and the Coordinator of the Coach-2-Career program are convinced of its importance and are determined to continue it. When asked whether downsizing would be necessary, the Coordinator said, "It can't get any smaller than this!" He expects to continue to work full-time to provide the services that have been effective over the past 3 years and to seek additional funds. He will pursue government grants for training dollars, try to interest local wineries in sponsoring the program, and explore establishing closer ties with the local Job Link facility. With a firmer financial base, the Coordinator would like to expand the program to include classroom activities for homeless and other locally- and self-referred participants. The Director concurs and is looking for funding opportunities that will place the Santa Rosa Coach-2-Career program on a firmer footing, enable the Lake County program to expand, and permit Catholic Charities to extend the Coach-2-Career concept into Mendocino County.

Case Study #2

Champions Recovery Alternative Programs

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Small city in rural Kings County in the Southern San Joaquin Valley
Primary program participants	Teen and young adult substance abusers
Years established prior to EDD grant	1
Previous government grants	No
Previous workforce development experience	Yes
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak	8.5
Total participants at CFBI peak	60
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	1-7
Role of faith in service delivery	Faith-centered
CFBI funding allocations	Total program budget
2000-01: \$200,000	2001: \$206,000
2001-02: \$140,000 (18 mo.)	2002: \$274,000
2002-04: \$ 98,000 (16 mo.)	2003: \$322,000
	2004: \$307,000

Champions was established to work with teenagers and young adults whose lives have become unmanageable due to their addiction to chemical substances, although older adults are also served. The organization offers a multi-faceted substance abuse treatment program, administered as an intensive outpatient program designed to last for 12 months or until treatment goals have been achieved. Central to the treatment program are the Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Twelve Steps traditions. Many program participants are court-referred to Champions after one or more criminal offenses, while others have been referred by Child Protective Services, local churches, or are self-referred. Most come from economically disadvantaged households, and their lives have often been tragically complicated by the behavior of addicted and abusive parents. For many participants, Champions is the last chance they have to avoid prison and/or a descent into debilitating health problems, violence, or death.

Champions was founded in May, 2000 and is currently located in a graceful Victorian building in downtown Hanford, the county seat of rural Kings County. The idea for the program was incubated at the nearby Koinonia Christian Church by the current director, who established Champions as a 501(c)3 in January, 2001. The program was certified by the state Alcohol and Drug Program in September, 2001. Monies received through EDD have been a vital source of funding for the Recovery Alternative Programs from January, 2001, to the present. As the Executive Director states:

When they [EDD] came on the scene, that gave us credence to the community...before that, we were just grassroots. It was a lot of ‘feel good, do good’—but they didn’t take us seriously.

Case Study Description

The major facets of this case study include:

- a detailed description of the CFBI-funded program and the staff members who construct and deliver the program on a day-to-day basis;
- a profile of the program participants as seen both through our interpretations of interviews with 16 of them and through staff perceptions; and
- analysis of what the semi-structured interviews reveal about participant experiences while in the program and their progress toward the goal of stable employment.

The Champions Program

Program description. Champions defines its mission as *To put into order disordered lives* and its purpose as *To provide a safe and supportive environment for young adults and their families who struggle with alcohol and other drugs, or any other life-controlling issues, in a continuum of care.* The program is divided into two phases—Intensive and Aftercare—and according to the program design, the client must either have a job or be enrolled in school before graduating into the second stage. Throughout the treatment program, clients are required to attend AA/NA meetings off-site in addition to taking part in group and one-on-one counseling with staff members. Champions has such an effective tracking system for following up with program graduates that the Kings County Health and Human Services Department recently contracted with Champions to follow their cases as well.

Distinguishing features. Champions shares many characteristics with other drug recovery programs, but is notable because: (1) it addresses problems peculiar to the 14-25-year-old population; (2) most of its staff members are in recovery from abuse issues themselves and thus able to give credible guidance and serve as role models to the clients; (3) clients who have advanced through the program are required, as part of their recovery, to serve as peer counselors to newer clients; (4) it is faith-based, which “...means that we address the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. You cannot treat one part of a person’s life without the other;” and (5) it uses a computerized assessment tool called the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) which allows incoming clients to be evaluated in seven “life domains,” providing a reality check for both clients and staff; (6) for many participants, Champions is the last chance they have to avoid prison and/or a descent into debilitating health problems, violence, or death.

Program participants. Champions was established to serve teenagers and young adults whose lives have become unmanageable due to addictive and other lifestyle dysfunctions, although older adults are also served. Many of them are court-referred to Champions after one or more criminal offenses or gang-related incidents. Some have been referred by Child Protective Services, some by local churches, and some are self-referred. Although the caseload varies, the official cap is 115 clients participating in the program. According to staff, more clients are Hispanic than White and more are male than female. Most come from economically-disadvantaged households, and their lives have often been tragically complicated by the behavior of addicted and abusive parents.

Program personnel. The number and function of staff members changes periodically due to fiscal constraints and attrition. At the time we visited the program initially (in February, 2003) there were four counselors—for male and female teenagers and male and female young adults—in addition to an administrator who oversees the program’s day-to-day operation, and a receptionist. The Executive Director’s duties have shifted away from hands-on work toward administrative

tasks as Champions has matured, though on our visit it was clear that she still interacts with participants on a familiar, first name basis. When we visited the staff roster was almost full. Since that time, cutbacks in funding and subsequent board decisions have led to the departure of some staff members, and forced a “postponement” of the program for teens.

The counselors have all been trained in substance abuse treatment, some have academic degrees as well, and expressed to us that they have a “passion” for the work. Using their credibility as recovering addicts themselves, they take pride in gaining the trust of their clients and being available to them day and night. Many clients we interviewed spoke with intense feeling about counselors who “saved my life” by being there at the darkest times.

How staff define success. It is very difficult to find indicators of success in a program like Champions for several reasons; first, this younger population has yet to stabilize; second, the clients are facing multiple barriers and may score higher rates of success in some areas than in others; and third, the full effects of such a program tend to be felt over a period of years, not months. Asked whether clients could complete the program in under the stipulated year, the Executive Director said,

It can't be done in less because they didn't get where they are overnight... [it takes time before] they start learning to live life on life's terms and then they're ready to really listen and go back and do it with more of a personal application.

Champions envisions success for its clients in the following terms: Sobriety, and gaining the essential self-esteem that sustained sobriety implies; rebuilding their lives; and achieving self-sufficiency through education and employment. The ASI provides a more objective measure of attitudinal and behavioral change.

Challenges to success: for program participants. Beyond their personal barriers to success, which can range from habitual addiction to the presence of felonies on their record, Champions clients live in a rural county that ranks among California's top ten for poverty, crime, and unemployment.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. Locating and retaining counselors who have the necessary training and experience is a difficult task, made all the harder by the fact that Hanford is a small town in the Central Valley without the urban advantages of selection, amenities, and competitive salaries. Finding sufficient funds to keep the program operating at its optimal level is a demanding proposition under the most advantageous economic conditions, and it is made more difficult in the current economy.

The place of faith in the program. Champions' brochures emphasize its drug recovery mission, not its faith-based nature, but the Executive Director and a number of staff are Christian in their own beliefs. There are a few visible expressions of spirituality in the communal part of the building—a Biblical verse in a small pastoral mural and some framed inspirational posters—and a few mementos in individual offices. Staff members we interviewed referred to a personal faith that helped them withstand some of the disappointments inherent in the work. Participants are encouraged to follow a spiritual regimen based on the AA/NA program's “Higher Power that we choose to call God.” The Executive Director answered our question about the role faith plays in the program by saying,

Faith isn't spoken as in the four walls of a church or through the pages of the Bible, it's practical religion, it's practical faith, it's understanding that each person was created with a purpose and a destiny. And it was not to do drugs!"

In our interviews with clients, the presence or absence of spiritual guidance was seldom mentioned.

Program Participants

Interview sample. The first EDD roster of Champions participants listed 99 clients who entered the program in 2002. Via random sampling methods, we reduced that number to 22 program participants and asked the Executive Director for help in setting up in-person interviews with them in February. In the course of two on-site visits, we were successful in conducting ten interviews with randomly selected individuals plus six additional conversations with clients who were available on the premises. (Because these six were not a part of our random sample, we have not included them in the dataset of comparative tables developed across our six case studies. Their comments have added to our understanding of the program, however, and are occasionally included in this portion of our report.) Two of the official interviews with former Champions clients were arranged for us at off-site facilities, one at a segment of juvenile hall referred to as the "Boot Camp" and one at a residential treatment home. We hoped to expand our random sample and secured a second list from EDD of program participants entering in the early part of 2003 (a list of 15 clients which we randomly reduced to 8). Unfortunately, even with the help of Champions staff, we were unable to reach these participants by telephone. The bottom line is that we attempted to contact 30 Champions clients and actually spoke with 10, plus the six we encountered at Champions in February 2003, resulting in the total of 16 participant interviews described below.

Our respondents ranged in age from 16 to 55 years of age. Thirteen of our 16 respondents were less than 30 years old. Six were women, four in their early 20s; all three of the teenagers were male. Three older respondents were married and several were living with domestic partners. In telling us their stories, many respondents referred to several siblings and step-siblings, and mentioned complicated extended families living nearby. Nearly all had grown up and attended schools in the surrounding area.

Description of Champions Participants Interviewed

Living arrangements. Most of the teenagers and younger adults spoke of living with one or both parents—often a step-parent—when we spoke with them, and most lived in Hanford or nearby Lemoore. Older adults in our sample shared apartments or houses with their spouses/domestic partners. Despite long-standing attachments to the Hanford area, lifestyles of the younger respondents—especially of the younger men—seemed to include time spent "on the street," sometimes punctuated with periods of incarceration as a result of following their addictions. Describing current living situations, many respondents sounded perched rather than settled, possibly due to in part to the interactions they described with unstable and even abusive adults in their lives:

...my dad was gone, you know, all the time; he had just gotten out of prison and he was like taking off a month at a time, without coming back to eat or whatever...and, you know, it was getting my mom real upset, you know, and it was starting to affect me... And my mom moved out of that apartment [in Lemoore], she's staying here in Hanford with my grandma...

I have like family problems, because like my sister's husband's a user and he's being abusive, so I went up there and helped her move. And like just this weekend my little brother was working for his dad, which is my step-dad. He [the step-dad] started freaking out...he was on like PCP and crank and he has a chemical imbalance when he drinks...Took seven cops to get him out of the trailer. I had to go up there and try to cover my brother...he's fine now, moving down here too.

Employment. We asked our sample of Champions participants about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. Some of our respondents have been working since their childhoods: in a grocery store and in retail stores (3), at a day care center and at an optometrist's office, on a hog ranch and in a pistachio plant, at restaurants (6), at a ski resort and in a casino, in a warehouse; have served in the military; and have done office work (2), property management, telemarketing, home health care, house cleaning, limousine rental, auto repair, welding (2), carpentry, roofing and general construction, truck driving, and landscaping. Some of the younger respondents emphasized that they were working after school and in the summers.

At the time of our interviews, seven people reported having jobs, at least four of which were full time. Their work included carpentry, being the foreman in charge of erecting metal buildings, cleaning restrooms, cleaning and cooking at a fast-food restaurant, cashiering at a gas station, and handling medical records and dietary consultations at a local hospital. At least two respondents who didn't have jobs were actively looking for work and two were living in facilities that they are not allowed to leave.

A number of our respondents had given considerable thought to the work they wanted to do in the future. Several already had well-paying jobs they enjoyed (carpentry, foreman/metal buildings, medical records) and others aspired to careers in welding, accounting, and counseling. Less well-formed aspirations included becoming a mechanic and entering the medical field in some capacity, such as an R.N. or a physician's assistant. Two respondents were concerned about the felonies on their records with respect to employment. One said:

...it's hard to find work with a felony on my record. And until I can complete this class so that I can get it dropped off...But I mean, there's people who don't want to hire [you with] a felony on your record. So I'm still looking, though.

One respondent knew only that she wanted to make a great deal of money and another had visions of turning his family estate in Virginia into a nursery.

Education. The two youngest respondents were still in school, a freshman and junior respectively. Six people had completed high school, two of whom had gone to college for two years or more. Five left high school in the 11th grade and three of them have plans to finish the requirements for their diplomas in adult school. Of the three respondents who left school in the 10th grade, one saw no need to return to school and the other two would like to finish.

Social self-classification. We asked our respondents whether they had any difficulty talking to strangers or making new friends. Of the ones who responded, a few indicated that they had no trouble establishing superficial relationships with people they didn't know, but more respondents became quite reserved:

It's not easy to talk to strangers and it's...it's not easy to make friends, either, because...not because probably who they are, just who I am. Yeah, I don't trust people that much.

Others generally went slowly among strangers, preferring to wait until they revealed who they were before opening up themselves.

It depends...if they're in like a situation like I'm in or something, or we're in a group or something like that, and they come out talking about it...yeah, I'll start giving my input, and if, after I say something, if they can give me—if they say something back again, after they've heard me talk, then I know that I can connect with that person—yeah.

When asked whether respondents had formed close friendships with others in the Champions program, those who had been in therapeutic groups with other participants tended to respond warmly:

I made friends with all of them. We're all close, yeah, it's like a big family... Yeah, almost everybody in the group I think of as friends. Except for maybe like one or two people 'cause either they weren't here that long or I just, you know, couldn't relate to them really.

I think that if we want to have a relationship with somebody we can have it here, and I think more than anybody people that are here can understand you because we're like going through the same thing.

Some respondents recognized that they need to choose their friends more carefully so that they don't find themselves drawn into situations that might cause them to relapse, as one told us:

Basically, you know, the friends that I used to have I really don't contact them no more. And usually just because I've known them for so many years, I usually would be hanging out with them, or—you know, if I did...I know for sure I probably would relapse, because they'll be around...

Personal faith. Asked about their spiritual upbringing, seven said that their families were Catholic, and those who indicated that the family had gone to church emphasized that it tended to be a Sunday routine without much meaning to them personally. Two grew up in the Pentecostal tradition, two followed family affiliations as they changed, and one attempted to fit into other families' religions since her own family seemed disinterested. One man clearly reacted against the religion of his youth...

Well, most of my family were Southern Baptists. Growing up as a kid I always hated going to church because it was the whole hellfire and brimstone, if you don't do this you're going to go to hell kind of viewpoint. And I don't believe that myself.

Four of the remaining five respondents were not raised in any particular spiritual tradition and the fifth simply didn't acknowledge the question.

With regard to their current spirituality, ten respondents spoke—some very eloquently—about the place of faith in their lives at this time. Some have embraced their traditional religion with new fervor and pride, some have selected a new kind of faith that fits them better, and others have developed their own philosophies. An example of each:

I'm—I'm proud of my religion, I'm proud of who I am, and, you know what I mean? Everyone has to have religion in them, they got to have God in them, and I do.

They taught me that you can turn everything over to Him [and] your life will be a lot better, which it has. I've turned a lot over to Him and just left it alone, and my mind is a lot clearer. I feel I had a lot of stuff on my chest I needed to get off and I just feel a whole lot lighter now.

Well, I kind of have my own beliefs. I've read on...just about every form of religion out there. I took what made sense to me out of each one of them and kind of put them all together.

Two people are trying to decide what they want from religion and which direction they should go, two don't consider themselves particularly spiritual, and one is passive about the issue. There is also one who is adamant about not liking religion in any form:

I've been baptized but I don't really care much for religion. It doesn't...you know, I'm a very open-minded person. I'll sit and, you know, people can talk to me, I'll talk to them, you know. I'm not going to be, oh, shut up, you know, but like, just, you know, I never caught onto it. I think it's all...in my view, I think it's a bunch of crap. I don't like it. I just live for myself.

Respondents' Experience with the Champions Program

In this section, we are primarily reporting our interpretation of the perceptions of the program participants we interviewed, taken from their responses to our questions. In some cases, we also refer to the initial scoping survey as well as to the interviews conducted with program staff.

Entry into the program. We asked respondents how they happened to come to the Champions program. Twelve were court-ordered to a treatment program under Prop. 36. Asked whether they were offered a choice of programs, seven recalled that their probation officer had sent them directly to Champions and three remembered the “choice” that was offered them was between going to Champions and going to jail. A respondent who made that choice remembers his first day at Champions:

Actually, it was...overwhelming because it was like I was getting a second chance. That's the way I thought of [it]—I mean, I felt relieved that I wasn't going to jail. I mean, it was just great.

Five court-ordered respondents felt that they really did have a choice among local programs and elected to follow the favorable recommendations of people who had been through the program. People who came voluntarily to Champions included one who had heard of the program through his church and another who decided to come in on her own because before she was court-ordered because:

I wanted to change my life around. I was tired of just going out there, using, and also I'm trying to get my daughter back, which is a big part of it.

A respondent who had gotten a DUI made a similar decision:

Cause I knew people that went here. Champions—what they said—is for teens, and that’s the main thing, I just heard is it’s for teens, so I called here, cause I didn’t want to go somewhere where a bunch of adults were, and they said it’s for teen, people my age, people that I can relate to more with ’cause they’re going through the same things I was, pretty much.

The court-ordered entrance into Champions has a problematic aspect, since the success of the program is so dependent upon whether the participant arrives at Champions when they are ready to change:

At this point, to be honest, it’s more like ’cause I have to do it, but I’m trying to turn it into what I want to do. And it *is* what I want...there’s just so much on my mind (laughs). I get a lot out of this program, but I think that I’ll get a lot more when I’m more ready to—and I can’t say that when I’m more ready to—because I need to be ready now, you know.

Services offered/received. During intake, the Addiction Severity Index is administered so that a treatment plan can be designed for each client according to individual need. This assessment tool covers “all seven life domains—drug and alcohol, their medical history, their legal, their family, their psych-social, their education and vocational, and their spirituality too.” The treatment plan guides the course and intensity of a client’s path through Champions basic services featuring one-on-one sessions with counselors and three-hour, in-house group meetings per week in combination with outside AA/NA meetings. Clients progress through the treatment at their own pace and are encouraged and supported every step of the way by the staff and by one another. In some cases, the nature of this continual interaction creates powerful bonds between clients and staff, and an opportunity to promote healing from the pain these young people have experienced.

Along the way, Champions staff model and encourage self-reliance and the acceptance of responsibility, one expression of which is the requirement to find and hold a job. In addition, short courses and activities of a practical nature are arranged. Clients spoke of “cooking classes” and a client-run food-service booth at the Farmers’ Market, complete with Champions tee-shirts.

Clients respond in their own ways to being treated as valuable people. One young respondent marveled,

They know that I’m telling the truth, you know, they believe me, somebody *believes* me, you know, without me having to—you know—I don’t even have to explain myself.

For some clients, being trusted enables them to trust in return, and this allows them to begin to open up and say what they are really thinking and feeling:

...they’re always willing to listen to any kind of problems you have no matter what it’s about. They said that they’ll be there. And they have. And you can either talk about it in group or you can ask them to come up here like we are and talk. It’s like, hey, all they ask is for you to show your emotions and talk about it and, you know, communicate with them. That’s all they ask for, and they’re there. They don’t pressure you, they’re like—‘When you’re ready, you’ll come see me and then we can start talking,’ and that’s all it is. They don’t pressure us here.

Champions makes peer interaction a fundamental part of the program, an aspect that respondents like and come to count upon. Helping each other becomes an essential part of the recovery process:

What's cool is like some of the people here, they used to be into drugs, and then they turned, you know, they turned their own life around and start—and then they're trying to help younger people so they don't have to go through what they went through.

Relationship with staff. Champions counselors tend to become mentors to their clients, and those who stick with the program often come to depend upon the counselors to be surrogate parents:

I feel like I can trust him, and he—he's like—he's like a dad to me, kind of. We're more than welcome to come in here, we're more than welcome to call them on the phone and tell them our problems, what we're doing...they'll help, a ride, or anything. They're there for—they don't treat us like we're just clients. They treat us like we're family. That's what they treat us like.

Any time that you're feeling down and out, I don't know why it is but the counselors here can just kind of pull it right out of you. And maybe they've just got used to reading people, or maybe it's the fact that they really care, but they won't let you stay unhappy.

She's like, you know, with everybody, she's like your buddy, and that's strange; she's like—she's like your age and is helping here, you know, and I feel real comfortable talking with her, you know, and when I need to talk to her, she's always—ready to talk to me.

The message from the staff to clients is often brutally frank:

During my first session here she came in and introduced herself and told us what the program was going to be all about and that some of us would make it and some of us would not. And the fact that we would have to accept some of—the term she used was, 'Some must die so others may live.' And what she meant by that is some people would have to not literally die but go back to jail or prison for others to learn a lesson. And that was really hard for me to accept at first, but I've come to accept it since.

Interaction with other agencies. Champions maintains connections with resources throughout the local area and makes some referrals. One respondent spoke of being referred for grief counseling and another for domestic violence counseling. On occasion, Champions refers clients to a residential facility for more intensive treatment. A respondent who had abandoned his program at Champions three times was grateful that the staff didn't give up on him:

You know, they really cared about me. Usually...the people that I meet...like you gotta get to know 'em to, you know, help you out, and...the little time that I been there, they helped me so much...they were willing to call my probation officer and tell him that, you know, 'He needs a residential home,' and that was—that was gonna be good for me, instead of putting me in prison.

Champions also works with job placement agencies such as EDD and helps clients connect with the local One-Stop to complete the program requirement for locating a job:

Yeah, this place—One-Stop?—and I'm supposed to go over there and set up stuff so they can help me with the school and stuff and all that. We talked to them over the phone and that was last week. Like they say they can help me find a better job...

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience with Champions, we classified possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness); remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment); educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED instruction, entering college, vocational training); and employment (getting a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal outcomes. Respondents told us what they had gained in the way of personal resources because of their experience at Champions:

More courage, just not caring what other people think about you. It's like okay, if you don't like me, but still—I'm straight.

I've learned that no matter what—no matter where you came from, that you always have something to offer to somebody, you know.

Yeah, it gave me a bunch of confidence. I never had any in myself, now I think I can do anything (chuckles).

Remedial outcomes. As our efforts to contact potential interviewees taught us, many Champions clients relapse and end up back in jail. For others, however, the program provides a turning point that makes a positive difference:

I really didn't think that there was any way I was gonna make anything out of myself. You know, I probably, you know, was going to be a low-life but, you know, they showed me that—that there's something else, because you know, I can break the cycle. Because my dad was pretty bad...marijuana, and you know, didn't even realize that I don't have to be like the rest of 'em, I can be different. I probably wouldn't have even had a job, you know, 'cause I always used to think, you know, like I was crap, pretty much. I never thought good of myself. And then there's people here telling me all good things about me, makes me feel better and stuff.

Educational outcomes. Beginning to believe that they can afford to have some hope for the future has made some respondents more determined to complete their academic education and also to take some vocational courses:

Well, they helped me, they've already made me get a job, and I'm planning to go back to school as soon as I get my work schedule stable. I'm just waiting to go back home to Virginia, go to Virginia Tech. I've already been accepted there, so just waiting to get done with the program, be done with my probation so I can go home.

I think—like right now, I can just go to adult school and take one class and graduate, that's all I have to do. That's easy, man. I can do that. Yeah, I'm going to. Just to get it over with.

Employment outcomes. Some respondents accept the fact that the Champions program requires them to find work, and then go out and do it:

I did go and get a job because they said in order for us to move on, you know...we needed to get a job, and I found a job.

Two of our respondents considered how the program might help them gain employment. One said:

You know a lot of good jobs—they test. It [the program] helps me realize that—if I want a good job, they'll help me stay off and be able to get that job that I want. I think it can help me if, I mean, if I use it as a reference. I mean, if somebody calls, they'll give me a good reference, 'cause I'm going through the program.

Participant Perspectives on the Program

Overall impressions. We asked our respondents whether they thought participating in the program had made or would make a significant difference in their lives. All but one of the respondents who answered this question indicated that it had already had an impact on their life. For example:

I think it has made a *big* difference in my life....I'm a different person, I can see it and everybody sees it—the change in me.

It has made me realize who I am now, and they've made me realize that I'm more...that I—I can do it, whatever I want, I can do it.

Two people recognized the distinction between being helped by a program and being given the tools to help oneself in the future:

Oh, yes, this has made a definite change in my life. It's like turned me totally around, like a big 180, you know, and put me in the different direction down the right road. You know, with the help of myself, too—that's what's good about this place. They help you, but it's mainly you've got to help yourself with the help of someone, you know. And that's cool. Well, after this, when I'm done with this, I'm going to know a lot of things, you know, when certain things in my life that are bad, I'm going to know how to deal with them better, you know.

Another respondent saw Champions as the vital catalyst that moved him past the powerful negative social influences in his life:

Yeah, I mean, I knew what I had to do, and that's—I know, but a lot of people don't want to—they know what they need to do but they're afraid to go do it... 'cause people look at us different.

The single court-ordered individual who maintained throughout the interview that he didn't need to be at Champions because his life had never been out of control acknowledged that the program had a lot of merit for those who did need help. For him, the benefits had been from customs peripheral to the program itself:

Well, at least we always have a reading out of the Bible and stuff, and there's nothing wrong with that. That's more knowledge to your power. And I don't know [chuckles]—I think it's good. Its helped me.

Near the end of each interview, we also asked our respondents to tell us what they thought was the best thing for them about the program and also to make suggestions for improving the program.

What was the best thing about the program? The responses to this question probably reveal more about the speakers and the painful circumstances that brought them to Champions than about the program itself. Some of the heart-felt replies below reflect this:

It's like its given me part of my life back, you know what I'm saying? 'Cause at first I never had that, I never enjoyed life. It'll make things better by making me succeed in life. You know, for me to become somebody instead of just throwing someone away.

The best thing that I got out of it...those other kids my age, you know, that were kind of in trouble for—being similar to the reason that I was there, and you know, we all ended up, a lot of us—we'd all go do the Farmers' Market and stuff like that together, and we had—we all had *fun* together, and we were all, you know, not doing drugs, not breaking the law, you know, and—that—that was like a wake-up call for me 'cause I realized that I could—you know, I had a lot—a lot of fun with Champions, and I was never—never doing drugs.

The best thing is that it helps people, really. It really does help people. Some people don't got family, but right here they feel like they are your family. They show you—they show you that they're, you know, that you're special and that you're important to them and that they want to really help you. Other places don't do that. They just try to put you in a room or just try to make you work around the yard or something.

How could the program be improved? It was difficult to get most respondents to focus on the concept of improving the program itself; when pressed, several commented on peripheral issues such as the difficulty of complying with the demanding schedule of meetings while holding down a full-time job or going to school and of finding child care so that mothers didn't have to choose between missing meetings or bringing children along. The respondent who brought up this issue felt that the counselor didn't fully sympathize with the problem:

A lot of them have dogs, they don't have kids, so I don't think he understands, you know.

The only thing another respondent could think of to change was the new practice of asking clients to pay for part of their services:

Just the financial. 'Cause right now I'm not working now and got a bill already. My first bill was 60 bucks and I haven't received a second one yet. Recently they started billing us. I don't [know why].

A respondent who remembered when Champions operated an inpatient facility thought it would be a good idea to do that again:

That would be the only thing I would...that would really be an asset to Champions, because if they had [homes] open up and they could take care...of 15 or 20 people off the streets, you know, that really need it, 'cause there are people that—there's women with kids and men with kids, and they don't have no place to go.

Other suggestions included:

As far as improvements, I'd like this program to be able to pay for more extracurricular trips, do more activities, especially activities in the community. When we have benefited the community, we used to hold our car wash at Alicia's Mexican restaurant. A lot of the members of the community would come up and ask what our program was about, and once we told them, it put a smile on their face.

I think having a teen AA meeting instead of—you know, I mean, 'cause it's cool going to the other AA meetings and hearing older people talk about it, but it's just hard to sit there, you don't know nobody and it's hard to relate.

Only one program participant expressed some dissatisfaction with the expression of faith at Champions, but in a novel direction. He thought there was too little of it:

A lot of people say, well, it's not a God program, you know it's a spiritual...NA and AA are spiritual. But people that followed NA and AA are all real Christians. So eventually they became more Christian, and it's all...you can go in the Bible and find the scriptures to support the steps. And so I think that could be stressed more.

Future interaction with the program. When asked whether respondents thought they would remain in touch with the Champions counselors who had worked with them even after they graduated, nearly all respondents felt that they would:

Yeah, it's something—something that's really important to me, and the reason why I like this [pause]—I love to keep going there—the fact that the program's based on trust.

I can always come here anytime I want and, you know, talk to somebody and they'll help me, you know.

We also asked if they would recommend Champions to a friend, and everyone who responded to the question said without hesitation that they would, some noting that they already had:

Oh, yes, definitely!

They're awesome! They're awesome!

Yeah, it's a safe place for recovery. I mean, they care about people, you know?

January 2005 Update

Champions, January 2005

In FY 2003, Champions received \$101,000 in Welfare-to-Work funds, to be spent within 5 months, which turned out to be a mixed blessing. To meet the goals and objectives of that grant, 5 staff (FTE) were added. Unfortunately, the Welfare-to-Work funds ran out concurrently with reduced CFBI allocations, resulting in the layoff of 8 staff and a suspension of the Teen Program. In the subsequent months, Champions worked hard to establish a best practices program model, and to generate hard data on participant outcomes. This work led the organization to receive new funding under a contract with the Kings County Health and Human Services Department, which enabled it to restore and expand the teen part of its program.

A contract with the Kings County Youth Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) program has allowed Champions to continue treating this population as of September, 2004 as the acknowledged youth treatment providers of Kings County. Although EDD funds have run out, the director has been successful in cementing several other alliances that provide support for the program and expand it into some new areas. For example, Champions now has a contract to do a therapeutic community program with youth in juvenile hall; a contract with the insurance company Pacific Care Behavioral Health Services as group provider, serving—among others—employees of Kings County; and a contract with the Substance Abuse Services Coordinating Agency for providing substance abuse treatment for parolees. It is worth noting that the last two organizations came to Champions and requested that the director apply.

Beyond these successes in securing funding, Champions' director has concentrated on upgrading the organization. Her objective in the past year has been to bring Champions to "best practices" status as measured by widely accepted standards for drug treatment programs. The director tells us that the Champions treatment program now aligns with the recommendations of the Little Hoover Commission and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, a source of both satisfaction and good public relations that has helped the organization qualify for such grants as the one from the Kings County AOD.

Reflections on the CFBI Experience

The director credits EDD with helping Champions develop from the small grassroots group that applied for a CFBI grant to the more effective organizations it is now. EDD patiently taught her to cope with government reporting requirements ("learned a new language," as she tells it), to put the necessary administrative structure in place, and even helped her improve the quality of services to clients. EDD program managers "always pulled me through mistakes, helped me grow," she said. The best things about CFBI were, first, putting "money to a dream, made the dream a reality. We were babies, just born; they grew us up." Secondly, EDD brought Champions:

...up to a level of professionalism we wouldn't have been motivated to achieve for a long time. We would have been providing a lot of warm fuzzies for a long time without the requirements that government placed on us.

Champions' greatest achievement has been "when clients get their jobs, their kids, their *lives* back—when they are set free from drugs." The director is proud that a couple of clients are going to school to become counselors and "they will be running the program someday." What would she do differently? She would think twice before accepting funds that had to be expended in a short period and she would be a tougher boss. She recognizes now that she followed her emotions too readily and "gave too much grace to employees—it caused a lot of grief." She learned a great deal about screening staff from that experience.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

We spoke with 16 program participants during the first round, 10 of whom were randomly selected and can be included in this study. With the help of Champions' director and staff, we located 7 of the randomly-selected group in December, 2003 and January, 2004. Four had been court-ordered to attend the program; 1 was still enrolled and was about to join the 3 who had graduated. Of the 3 who left without graduating, 1 was discharged by Champions for missing too many meetings, 1 violated parole, and 1 was pulled out by his mother when Champions was required to charge for services. Asked what they gained from the program, 4 described having a

new way of thinking about drugs that kept them from relapsing, about their lives, and about their options, and 3 mentioned having greater confidence in themselves:

I see it [what she gained] as a different way out of things, rather than...drown myself in drugs and...now I do other things to keep my...mind [occupied].

Uhm...(long pause) probably a lot of self-confidence...that...you know...that, you know...the path that I took before I went to Champions...you know, I thought that was my only path I could take, but, I guess, when I went to Champions, they helped me realize there was more that I could take, not just only one, even though that one was the wrong path to take.

Two of the 7 are currently working, one full-time at \$7.00/hour and the other 24-36 hours/week at \$14.00/hour. Three others are interested in getting a job and 2 consider themselves stay-at-home moms. Two were in high school when we talked, 1 had gone back and graduated, and 1 was about to sign up at the adult school to get her diploma. The best thing about the program for 6 respondents was the people (and for 3, specifically the staff). As one participant said:

The one-on-one training, the one-on-one learning....And knowing that all them went through the same problem as we did. And then when we talked about something, they know where we're coming from. It's not like talking to your family, like you could talk to them, but they don't understand...exactly what you went through. And talking with them, they know exactly...everything you did.

Of those who told us what they didn't like, 2 mentioned a staff member they thought was unfair and 2 were annoyed by changes in the program and in the paperwork required. All said the program had made a significant difference in their lives, 5 with considerable ardor, and all would refer a friend—4 already have.

Future of Champions

The director sees no need to downsize Champions or to reduce its scope in the foreseeable future. In fact, she has set her sights on expanding Champions to include a residential facility for treating parolees and other individuals who need more support than an outpatient program can offer, something that is sorely needed in Kings County. Ideally, the facility would include a vocational training component to give recovering addicts the practical preparation they need to succeed in the outside world. Since several funders have assured her of their support when the time comes to begin this venture and the land is already selected, the director believes that this plan may become a reality within the next couple of years.

Case Study #3

Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM) The Partners Program

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Established in Fresno close to Southeast Asian community
Primary program participants	Southeast Asian refugees/immigrants
Years established prior to EDD grant	
FIRM	7
Partners Program	6
Previous government grants	Yes
Previous workforce development experience	Yes
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak	6
Total participants at CFBI peak	50
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	1:8
Role of faith in service delivery	Faith-background
CFBI funding allocations	Total program budget
2001-02: \$409,000	2001-02: \$409,000
2002-03: \$286,300	2002-03: \$286,300
2003-04: \$235,410 (17 months through Nov. 2004)	2003-04: \$341,110
	2004-05: \$224,700

FIRM was founded in 1994 to assist the Southeast Asian and other refugee populations (especially Hispanic, Slavic, and Ethiopian) in Fresno. Because of their large numbers, now estimated at more than 50,000 people, the Southeast Asian refugees are the primary focus. An initial grant from the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee allowed FIRM to start an employment services program, which was subsequently funded for many years under a grant with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement's Community Service Employment Opportunity Program (CSEOP). EDD funds have been used continue the vital mission of finding jobs for refugees and immigrants. The Executive Director expands FIRM's mission statement—*Sharing Christ's love to build communities of hope with New Americans*—to add the commitment "...that employment is a central part of what helps people feel hopeful in this new culture."

FIRM is presently situated in a remodeled school building located directly across the street from one of the main Southeast Asian communities. The Partners Program, nearly as old as FIRM itself, continues to be adapted to the changing needs of both the Southeast Asian refugee communities and the employers of Fresno County. Bilingual program staff work with participants who range from older refugees with significant language and cultural barriers to young adults who have gone to school in the U.S. Staff help participants prepare a resume and search for job openings among employers accustomed to hiring from FIRM. When jobs are located, case managers may accompany candidates with limited English to help fill out applications and to act as interpreter. Customers not yet placed use FIRM as an ongoing resource, calling and coming in to access the job list that is compiled from at least three web sites, updating and faxing their resumes, and learning new skills. Local employers say that FIRM has an excellent reputation for its high level of service, careful screening, conscientious follow-

through, and—most importantly—the well-prepared, cooperative, high-caliber candidates they provide. FIRM is also respected for its mission, performance, and leadership by the local workforce development community. FIRM staff members presently co-locate at a nearby One-Stop as part of a subcontract to recruit and assist members of this underserved population.

The Partners Program

Program and staff description. This program is nearly as old as FIRM itself and has been adapted over the years to the economic resources available and to the changing needs of both the Southeast Asian refugee communities and the employers of Fresno County. At present, the Partners Program occupies a suite of rooms in FIRM's new facility, a remodeled Armenian school located directly across the street from one of the main Southeast Asian communities. Here, job-seekers are greeted and multilingual Case Managers assess their skills, particularly their ability to speak English. Together they prepare a resume and, when jobs are located, the Case Manager accompanies candidates with limited English to the job site to help fill out applications and to act as interpreter when necessary. Throughout this process, a Job Readiness Specialist prepares candidates for the new experience of working within the American culture. Customers who are not yet placed use FIRM as an ongoing resource, calling and coming in to access the "job list" that is compiled from at least three web sites, updating and faxing their resumes, learning new skills, obtaining help in other areas of their lives, and sometimes visiting just to hear their own language spoken. At the same time, the Job Developer works with employers to help develop new jobs and extend the range of existing ones; to educate them about working with refugees; to recruit from the community when a block of jobs becomes available, to screen candidates and to deliver selected ones to the site; and to offer support services to employers. Conversations with three area employers suggest that FIRM has an excellent reputation for its high level of service, careful screening, conscientious follow-through, and—most importantly—the well-prepared, cooperative, high-caliber candidates they provide. FIRM's reputation in other parts of the community appears equally high as reflected by the positive reactions to the organization's mission, performance, and leadership we received from two ranking individuals in local workforce development.

Distinguishing features. FIRM is unique among the six programs we are evaluating for the following reasons: (1) It serves the Southeast Asian and other refugee populations with job development and placement staff who speak the languages and understand the customs. In addition, the Executive Director and Director of Employment Services practice a level of dedication to this population that is akin to immersion, until very recently this extended to living in the heart of the refugee community. (2) With the assistance of the CSEOP program over the years, FIRM has built long-standing relationships with several area employers and as a result they have become accustomed to working with refugee populations. (3) FIRM is now the only provider of employment services in Fresno County who is able to accept anyone who comes to them for help. As the Director of Employment Services pointed out:

We're the only one now that can have walk-in customers. Almost every other agency that I know of at this time, because they're funded by the county, can only take CalWORKS recipients and only those referred directly, to that agency, by name, by the county. So that makes us truly unique, that we're the only program that people can choose to come to.

We heard from many informants that staff at traditional government programs are reluctant to enroll refugees in services, fearing that to do so would jeopardize their ability to meet

performance standards. FIRM's open door policy stands in marked contrast, and gives staff in other agencies a place to refer clients who are deemed more difficult to employ.

Program participants (called "customers" at FIRM). The largest Southeast Asian refugee group in Fresno County is Hmong, followed by Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. FIRM also serves Slavic, Ethiopian, and Somali refugees, as well as adults of any ethnicity who are on public assistance and are "timing out." At present, staff members tell us that most of their customers are women and that they fall between the ages of 20 to 30. Younger members of the Southeast Asian population are likely to have been in public schools and speak English sufficiently well to gain employment in English-only establishments, but refugees older than about 30 are often unable to read and write any language at all and are unable or reluctant to speak English. For many of FIRM's programs, there tend to be more older than younger customers. For this program, staff members notice that the distribution is reversed: in a 70-30 split, the larger percentage of customers are the younger ones.

How the staff defines success. Staff members who work most closely with FIRM's target population consider a warm and continuing relationship with their customers an important indicator of success, reasoning that they can't serve people who don't come in. The staff also feel that educating their customers in the ways of the larger culture is essential to helping them establish and maintain employment. Next in importance is finding good jobs for as many of their customers as possible, a difficult proposition in Fresno County's economically depressed and highly seasonal economy. If success can be measured in numbers of customers served, FIRM appears to be about twice as successful as it needs to be under the terms of its contract with EDD. Staff-provided estimates of customers served by the program range from 600 to 700, with the official target number set at 245. A less measurable kind of success is the accumulation of necessary skills, both at FIRM and on the job, which will make it easier for customers to obtain better positions. Another form of success from FIRM's standpoint is developing a roster of local employers who recognize the merits of hiring members of this population.

Challenges to success: for program participants. The primary barrier for Southeast Asian refugees is language. The inability to speak and read English restricts the kinds of jobs open to a large part of the population. Cultural differences also create many challenges. Many Southeast Asians understate their own competencies, a trait that can get in the way of getting a job or progressing within the employment ranks. There can also be a lack of interest in "climbing the ladder of success," traceable to the mindset of generations of farmers who had no employment opportunities beyond farming. Other misunderstandings occur in the workplace—when an employee who is absent fails to call in, for example—and can sometimes make it difficult for a wife to work if the husband is unemployed. Transportation is also an issue when jobs exist outside the city of Fresno where public transit is less available. Many participants arrive at FIRM when they have reached or are nearing welfare time limits, and a sense of urgency or panic is present. They are understandably eager to find jobs fast, but this is often not possible.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. It can be difficult to find enough linguistically and culturally appropriate staff to deal effectively with the flow of customers; the need still outpaces FIRM's ability to fill it. There is considerable competition among job placement agencies for the attention of the largest employers that offer the most unskilled positions—firms such as the Zacky and Foster Farms chicken processing productions—and the big temporary help agencies seem to receive special consideration. Another issue is that at present, FIRM is racing against the clock as customers on public assistance exhaust their lifetime benefits. This is particularly devastating for the older members of the community and FIRM is having a very difficult time discovering options for them.

The place of faith in the program. There is some visual evidence of FIRM's faith-based orientation at the site, including a few Biblical quotes, a large illustrated cross made out of bamboo in a meeting room, and the prominently displayed mission statement. Behind the scenes, the connection is even more apparent. Executive Director Rev. Sharon Stanley's salary is paid by various sources within the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and several of FIRM's programs owe their resources to her talent for fund-raising at churches in California and Nevada. With regard to the role of faith where FIRM is concerned, the Executive Director declared:

I'll say it plays a direct role in some of our hearts!—in being motivated to do what we do and in staying hopeful in the midst of all the typical nonprofit funding challenges.

Staff members identified themselves as belonging to a variety of religions, many Christian, some with roots in the Buddhist or Shaman cultures of their childhoods, but they made it clear that these personal preferences had nothing to do with their work practices. Asked about the role of faith-based organizations in general, one staff member said:

...I strongly believe in faith-based organizations because of what I heard from the community, that because they know that we are a faith-based organization, that we will definitely do good deeds by helping them, you know, providing them with the different types of services we're providing now.

Program Participants

Interview sample. We began with a list provided by EDD of 66 participants who entered the Partners Program in 2002, and reduced that number via random sampling methods to 24. Since the Partners Program is the only one in our study in which a majority of the participants speak little or no English, the interview process was considerably more complicated at FIRM than it was elsewhere. We were very fortunate to have the wholehearted assistance of the Partners Program director and staff, who contacted the 22 potential subjects, were successful in scheduling interviews with 12 of them over a two-day period in the middle of March, 2003, and spent those two days reminding people of their appointments, rearranging the schedule, and bringing often nervous subjects to the room set aside for our use.

The interview process itself was somewhat less satisfactory. In retrospect, given the fundamental importance of the quality of the translation, we should have devoted more time, effort, and expense to choosing our translator (who was not connected with FIRM). As it was, we relied upon the recommendations of others and discovered too late that our translator had difficulty speaking English clearly, was unskilled in "drawing out" respondents, and interposed herself between the participant and the interviewer whether the participant was having trouble speaking English or not. The unfortunate result is a set of interviews that is less able than we would like to present the complexity and texture of the lives of the twelve respondents and their experiences with FIRM. We have attempted to supplement the picture of FIRM's Partners Program gained from program participants by obtaining some reflections of the program from local community sources: three employers and two workforce development professionals.

Our respondents fell into two distinct groups: seven were between the ages of 20 and 35 and five were over 40. There were eight women and four men. Three respondents—a 22-year-old man, a 40-year-old man, and a 44-year-old woman—said that they had been coming to the program for two years, and a 24-year-old had been coming for a year. All four of these respondents spoke

English, although the older woman didn't reveal that she could until nearly at the end of the interview, when she said clearly:

I don't know how to read, I [don't] know how to write, but I talk. Yeah, I can talk very good! (laughs with glee at interviewer's surprise).

Four respondents had been coming to the program for five to nine months and the remaining four had been reporting to FIRM for only two or three months. The younger group was the more proficient in English, although it was often difficult to tell whether respondents were truly unable to speak English, were responding politely to the translator's insistence on speaking to them in Hmong and/or Lao regardless of their competence in English, or were just shy and uncomfortable. Those who appeared especially unsure of themselves, male and female alike, seemed to take comfort in the presence of someone who spoke their language.

Description of Partners Program Participants Interviewed

Arrival and settlement. Our respondents—three of whom are Lao and nine Hmong—arrived in the U.S. from 1979 to 1993, with one coming in 1979, seven coming in the 1980s, and four in 1992-1993. From the seven who told us where they settled initially, we learned that destinations included Tennessee, Oklahoma, Minnesota (2), Illinois, and Fresno (2). Eight were children when they reached this country: four were teenagers, two were infants, and the other three were between 5 and 10 years old. Of the two respondents (one a 43-year-old woman, the other a 25-year-old man) who said they weren't American citizens, the first had made many expensive, frustrating efforts to cut through the red tape that prevented her and her husband from applying for citizenship. The other said he didn't have time. At least four have U.S. citizenship (a 53-year-old woman with the help of FIRM), and, of the remaining six who didn't say one way or the other, it seems likely from their ages and familiarity with English that at least five are probably U.S. citizens.

Living arrangements. Tradition and financial circumstance appear to be primary factors in determining the size and composition of our respondents' household. Women who have the three largest families, with seven, eight, and ten children respectively, are all in their 40s, suggesting that they continued having children after they arrived here as they would have done in their native country. Six households consist of four people or less, in combinations which usually included the respondent and one or more small children. At least one family followed the traditional pattern where a son and his family lived with his parents. One respondent explained that he, his wife, and their two children had moved in with his younger brother's family because he was having so much difficulty in finding work.

According to FIRM staff, our interviews took place at a time when the Fresno rental vacancy rates were at very low levels (1-2%), and changes in landlords were resulting in both price increases and new regulations at key housing sites for Southeast Asian refugees. For example, some landlords were now limiting the number of people who could live in an apartment to five people, threatening one of the ways refugee families have stretched their finances to make ends meet.

Employment. We asked the people in our sample about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. The men among our respondents had performed warehouse, production, and janitorial work; had worked in a box-making factory, on a garbage truck, and for a temporary help agency in various capacities; had done years of electronic assembly; and had been a cook in a series of Chinese restaurants.

Women reported being paid minimum wage by Home Health to care for their aging parents, growing specialty vegetables and selling them at farmers' markets, performing seasonal work at a large Fresno bakery (2), working in the medical field and with disabled children, sewing, and working as a bank teller. Several of these jobs were left behind when respondents moved to another state. In one case, the respondent lost a strategic effort to leverage a non-existent job offer into a higher raise from his current boss, and in another case a sanitation engineer quit his job with the local garbage company told us in English "I cannot fix meal, you know. The smell was too bad." The highly skilled seamstress whose job at a mattress factory was terminated by mutual agreement with her employer after two months was too painstaking at her work and consequently too slow for the production line emphasis on quantity over quality. Two respondents' indicated they had quit good jobs that they liked, but did not specify why.

Present employment fell far short of this population's most desired type of position: a "production job" that would be permanent and full time, would have benefits and no threat of lay-offs, and that wouldn't require English. This type of employment has been possible in at least some of the areas that Southeast Asian refugees have located in the U.S., such as North Carolina where textile and other jobs were available. Among our sample, one man was delivering pizzas, two women were taking care of aging parents for In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), another was doing housecleaning, and the woman who does fine sewing was making decorative pillows and doing clothing alterations from her home. FIRM is currently trying to match IHSS eligible refugees with refugees seeking employment, potentially expanding this employment niche.

In asking what kinds of jobs or careers our respondents would like to have in the future, we ran into repeated assertions of our respondents' desire for work, any sort of work. Our interpreter translated the request of a 44-year-old woman as:

But she would like to have full-time job. Any kind of job. Whatever she can do, but she would like to have full-time job. It doesn't matter what kind of job, as long as the job is a full-time.

A young man who has a high school diploma told us in his own English:

I like to do [anything] in a company, you know, I will...anything—just get a job today, you know, just for myself and my family—I can do.

A young, well-spoken woman with experience in job placement told us that she actually wanted to get a position at FIRM. She explained why, giving a glimpse of the work done here and the satisfaction it can offer:

It's really nice to find someone a job, they get really happy because they've been looking for a long time. You go out there and look for a job, you have a lot of—other people competing with you, and you don't have no help behind you, and it's hard. That's why I like it, I mean, being an agency, help other people, that's what I want to do.

Education. Eight of our respondents had high school diplomas and six of them had either signed up for college or had already been attending. Of these six, one was starting in the fall with the goal of becoming a radiologist. A woman holding her AA degree planned to go on to Fresno State for some medical classes when her two children were old enough for school. One intended to sign up for classes as soon as she satisfied residency requirements. One was in his second year, but had yet to select a major. One had "a hard time and hard times" during his second year

and thought he would work for a year or two. And one allowed peer pressure to influence her decision to drop out after one year:

Everybody was like, 'oh, don't go to school, don't go to class,' you know, everybody that was my age dropped out of college. That's one thing I regret, though...I'm planning to back, I want to wait until my son go to school first, because—he's a brat, no one can take care of him.

The one respondent who had attended high school but had not graduated said, unaided,

Yeah, I go to school, to school, I go to Adult School, and—I need to learn English, but, you know, it's not get into my head because I'm thinking about [finding a] job.

Two women reported going to Adult School, one for a year of ESL and one for three years. In addition, the second woman had taken a class in nutrition five years earlier. One woman had attended seven years of mission school in Thailand and the remaining woman who could speak English when she wanted to did not mention formal schooling.

Social self-classification. In other case study interviews, we asked our respondents whether they had any difficulty talking to strangers or making new friends and whether they had made friends with program staff and participants. These were such complicated concepts to convey to the translator, and respondents looked so puzzled as they attempted to address the questions, that we did not pursue this avenue. We were interested in the way that anecdotal remarks incidental to other discussions illuminated a couple of the social issues with which women in this population are dealing, such as the effect of the “empty nest syndrome” in a culture where families are supposed to revere and support aging parents, not abandon them:

She was a mother. So she was thinking that when you are a mother, and then you just taking care all the children, all the year, go—Maybe the children grow up, they ain't going to help you, you know, for stuff, but then, now you go, when the children grow up, they move out, and then you [left] out, and you don't education, you don't have nothing left, and you really feel depressed. [In the old culture, her children would be] close to her, more, you know, like the way—mmmm—family back together, you are stay together, even you marry or you don't marry, you will stay—you know, for example, daughter will marry, you move out with the husband, for son, they will be in the same house. It doesn't matter how many people, yes, the son—and, you know, the grandchildren, those will be staying.

As more women in this population seek and find jobs, they leave behind their friends who may be less qualified for work or restricted by various cultural constraints. The women left at home (at least two of which have ventured out to FIRM at this point and are among our sample) become lonely. As one said, “I have good friends but, you know, they have jobs.” Speaking through the translator after that, she explained that she had hoped to make friends among Partners Program participants with whom to go job hunting herself, but that didn't seem to be working very well. The woman who has been coming to FIRM for two years has been on a similar search; as the translator expressed it, she didn't want us:

...to think that she's not an outgoing person...Yeah, she like social [unintelligible], she don't want to stay home just, you know—so she want to have friends, and talk to friends, so that's how her life.

Personal faith. Half of our respondents were brought up in a religion that the translator identified as Shamanism or “home spirit.” Four respondents indicated that they grew up in the Buddhist faith, and two recalled no particular spiritual orientation. Current expressions of faith were less classifiable, though none identified themselves as a Christian. Although six people indicated a preference for “the traditional religion,” as one person called it, there was more discussion of what that meant. One young woman was developing her own relationship with the one God she believed existed “up there,” except she returns to a traditional stance “in some situations where it comes to praying I think for family health.” Another woman found that her family was returning, albeit in an unstructured manner, to the old tradition:

When we first came we went to church. But we stopped going to church, I don’t know, it’s because of the old people. Now we just—now we just doesn’t have any—our own tradition.

Three people consider themselves to be Buddhists today and one preferred not to answer the question. A 25-year-old man, asked whether his religion was home spirit, showed no sign of recent influence when he said:

Yes. I know what you say, but I don’t know how to tell you, because I don’t know how to say, like ‘Buddhist,’ or ‘Hmong culture.’ I don’t know how to say ‘Hmong culture.’ I know Christian, yeah, that’s—(half laugh) I go to Christian for like couple months, long time ago.

Respondents’ Experience with the Partners Program

In this section, we are reporting our interpretation of the perceptions of the program participants we interviewed, taken from their responses to our questions. In some cases, we also refer to the initial scoping survey, as well as to the interviews conducted with program staff.

Entry into the program. We asked respondents how they happened to come to the Partners Program and, of the eleven answers we received, four said that friends had recommended FIRM to them. One of the friends had said,

Mmmm, they’re helpful. Help you find a job. They for people that’s—doesn’t finish high school, or whatsoever. I mean, I finished high school and they still helped me.

An older woman was referred by friends, according to the translator:

These friends say that because she does not speak English, and then she does not know how to find job, so she come here, they will help her.

Three respondents were sent to the Partners Program by relatives already acquainted with FIRM: a sister who knew one of the case managers, a brother who had found two jobs through the program, and a mother who took part in the Elder Program downstairs in the FIRM building. Two respondents caught mention of the program in the media, one on the radio and one in the local newspaper. Of the remaining two, one respondent was sent by someone she met in a medical clinic who had gotten that job through FIRM and the other was referred by a job agency called Fresno Center for New Americans. They couldn’t serve her there because she was an American citizen and was not on welfare.

Services offered/received. There was a single-minded desire among the respondents we talked to be placed in a good job and everything else was unimportant. Questions about the desirability of gaining more skills in order to become qualified for more and better-paying jobs were brushed away with relatively terse responses. One of the women we spoke with provided some insight into this issue, as explained through the translator:

She say no [to FIRM helping improve skills] because I don't have the background knowledge. She say FIRM helped just to get GED diploma, and get some computer class, but here big point is that, if you don't go to work, where you going to get money?

Interviews with staff members confirmed that this is generally their experience as well and that, although training beyond immediate job preparedness could be arranged, there is little if any call for it. The main requests for assistance revolved around preparing a resume, filling out applications, faxing either or both to prospective employers, and for those not comfortable speaking English and/or lacking transportation, accompanying respondents to the job site.

We asked our respondents how they felt they were helped in attaining their goal of steady work. One common point of contact seems to be the Job List. All the customers call or come in to check on it on a regular basis. Another is maintaining up-to-date resumes in the program's computer. The younger job seekers were sophisticated in their use of the program's streamlined application transmission system:

Oh, they just give me a list of jobs, where I just apply for, or I write down the name and then—'cause the FIRM have my resumé and stuff like that, or they just put in application for me. I just come in, whenever I have time.

A woman with less English at her command was a more typical customer. She checked the job list in person once or twice a month, although there is an agreement that she will be called if a likely job opportunity turns up. She accepted help in filling out applications, and she was taken by a staff member to the employer's facility for interviews. Another woman who has taken advantage of this service even though she speaks excellent English explained why:

It's better than to walk in on your own, without them noticing you, you know. How like some place, they don't hire you just because of your application; sometime you need some help. Like—some place only hire you when you go through agency, that's how it is.

Since the time of our interviews, FIRM has added a pre-school program at its site that serves 3-5 year olds. The hope is that this will provide an additional support service to aid individuals with young children who are seeking employment, as well as FIRM staff, two of whom have children enrolled.

Relationship with staff. A mentoring relationship seems to be a rare occurrence between staff members and their customers. Always friendly and helpful, Partners Program staff generally maintain some emotional distance by keeping their interaction with the customers relatively businesslike. None of our respondents reported having a special relationship with just one of the staff, nor did it seem to be expected that one-on-one counseling was necessary to establish trustful rapport with a customer. Respondents expressed their appreciation for the comfortable atmosphere and the willing help program staff provided:

Actually, I'm comfortable with everybody, 'cause everybody's friendly with me, they... Well, they just friendly in here.

Interaction with other agencies. Our respondents are very eager to find work and seek help from any agency with resources that might help them. The same names came up in conversation repeatedly—temporary help agencies such as Manpower and Kelly Services; agencies with a cultural edge such as Fresno Center for New Americans and Lao Family; even EDD, although the respondent who mentioned them did so without affection:

I went to EDD, but they don't really help you. They just post a job, and no one comes to talk to you, you're just like you're walking into a place where you're not welcome. They just leave the paper up on the wall, and you want to, it's like—it's not the same, you got to get personal, too—you know what I mean? Get to know each other, how ability, what you can do, and stuff, you know, so they can...find a job that fits you, that's what I like.

Asked whether temporary help agencies have anyone who speaks Hmong or Lao, one respondent said they did not. Another said that they did not have Lao but they did have Hmong (we couldn't get the name of that company). Several respondents indicated that FIRM was their favorite because it was a friendlier place than others:

I did [visit the other agency], but they weren't that friendly, so I—so I decided to come here, stay here.

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience with the Partners Program, we classified possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness); remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment); educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED instruction, entering college, vocational training); and employment (getting a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal outcomes. Respondents in this sample made no comments that suggested that they had changed their attitudes significantly due to the presence of the Partners Program in their lives. At least outwardly, their attitudes toward FIRM seem to fluctuate according to whether or not the program succeeded in finding them a job. If and how their underlying sense of confidence, self-esteem or hope may be changing was difficult to determine given the difficulties we experienced in these interviews.

Remedial outcomes. Because the ability to speak English well seems so critical to this population's success, we had trouble understanding why the Partners Program wasn't trying to address this issue with classes, tutoring, referrals to other programs, or some other approach that would help remove this barrier. When we asked the Director of Employment Services about this, she made two points. First, this is a very independent population that has had access to training programs for a couple of decades but, for the most part, hasn't elected to take advantage of them:

Yeah, most of them have gone through Fresno Adult School, the Hmong have been here for maybe 20 years, over 20 years, some of them haven't been, they came in later than that, but a lot of them—they've been to school, you know, they've taken Fresno Adult School classes, maybe for a long time. So, you know, they've been through all of that...Now, if we get them jobs where there are a lot of other Hmong people, they're still going to speak Hmong, and they're still not going to learn.

Her second point was one we had already learned earlier that day, namely that the participants often speak and understand English considerably better than they are ready to admit:

And a lot of times they'll say they can't speak English, but, you know, I can communicate with them, you probably can, too—and it's just fearful, you know, they're just fearful, they'll call, or they'll come in, and they'll say, 'Dammit, is there a Hmong person around here (laughs)?' And they speak English, you know.

Educational outcomes. One of our respondents seemed pleased that FIRM had been helpful in enabling her to obtain a GED and some computer courses, but that was the only instance of partnership in formal education that we encountered. It appears, judging by the preponderance of people with high school diplomas and college experience among our small sample, that the value of education is well understood in this population. With our limited understanding of this population, it is hard to reconcile this observation with the demonstrated reluctance in upgrading skills to obtain more and better jobs.

Employment outcomes. The bottom line among our respondents was FIRM's ability to find them work. Many of our respondents seemed disappointed in their luck so far and several expressed their displeasure that FIRM had not found them work in two months, five months, seven months. Although four people in our sample had been offered work and had either accepted or turned down a job relatively recently, a sort of "What have you done for me lately?" attitude seemed prevalent. At the same time, several respondents reported refusing or quitting jobs ad lib, which was somewhat confusing to us. Clear enough, however, was the translated comment of one of our older female respondents:

She say she does feel depressed, because—uh—people who come in '97, they all—the welfare all cut, so she feels sort of discouraged why she did not find—she not get a job.

Participant Perspectives on the Program

Overall impressions. Near the end of our interviews, we generally ask our respondents whether they think participating in a given program had made or would make a significant difference in their lives. The purpose of this is to obtain an oblique assessment of the program through the participants' eyes. This was very difficult to communicate to the translator, and we elected to omit it altogether. We moved along to the end of the discussion and asked our respondents to tell us two things: what they thought was the best thing for them about the program and also what suggestions for improvement they would like to make.

What was the best thing about the program? Several respondents were willing to acknowledge the positive aspects of working with FIRM:

Oh, they work well with you, um, like, you know, say you really need a job, and they—like the kind of jobs you need, they like help you find it, you know, that's—but, you know, it's better than looking in the ads and just go apply yourself, you know. 'Cause—I guess they—give you good references, yeah.

The best thing is, you have peoples in here, and when you come, they direct you where to go for help. And they send you to like different agencies, so you be able to know where to start to find employment jobs.

The best thing about FIRM? They keep on calling you. Yeah, they keep calling you. They keep you updated with what they have over here, if you have no job, that's one thing that's good. I mean, you don't have to call them, they'll call you.

They're nice, they really help you find job, and something like—things that you don't understand, you can ask them, they're very open.

They are very friendly—and if you don't know anything, they would teach you how to do it, and they would help you do anything you want, that you don't know.

The final response to this question was processed through the translator and emerged as:

Okay. She finally get her job that she like, but then one the best thing about FIRM, FIRM try to contact her employer, so see how well they treat their, you know, FIRM's people, so they try to find a way to find employers, and then later contact to the employer later. They check to make sure it's going well, on how the—you know, the client's doing, so they do check.

The respondent, asked whether FIRM also checks to see if she's happy, indicated via the translator that they did:

And they do that, okay, all right.

How could the program be improved? Several people had no suggestions to offer and four wanted to pass along some thoughts to FIRM. Their comments are presented in order in which we received them and are modified only by an attempt to clarify their meaning:

Her opinion is that FIRM ought to find more jobs and take the ladies like her that don't speak English along to these jobs. And they should use the opportunity while they're there to try to get more jobs added. In other words, FIRM is basically doing all right but they should try harder.

The Partners Program should try harder to figure out how to help customers get jobs faster—to create a special job line that will make it possible to get jobs more quickly.

FIRM should gather together people with interests in various areas, such as sewing, and hold training classes in that interest. In her opinion, she say if...these people like to learn how to cook, they will teach them how to cook; if these people like how to sewing machine, well, show them, you know—train them that area...It would be done in FIRM, days, evenings, it depends those people's interest.

His thought is that FIRM could contact more employers and could help more people who don't read or write or speak English.

In lieu of suggestions, one person wanted to pass along a positive comment:

There's nothing easier—you have to try on your own, too, you can't just depend on other people. You know what I mean? It's all in your ability to go look for a job. They did their part, it's us that have to do our part. You know? We have to come in and look for the job, and call in, and they'll help us set up stuff, you know, appointments and stuff. They can't get any better. I mean, they're good already (laughs).

Future interaction with the program. We asked our respondents whether they thought they would continue to remain in touch with the Partners Program, and everyone who understood the question nodded affirmatively and said that they would. We also asked if they would recommend FIRM to a friend, and here the response was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone who responded to the question said without hesitation that they would continue to remain in touch. A two-year veteran who had complained several times about not having gotten a job recently said:

Oh, no—for people that doesn't know how to speak English, they can just come to the people in here that can help them translate, or help them read application. Like the Hmong kids or the Lao kids, yeah.

And the last comment, offered via the translator, was:

She love FIRM, and she will try to come to, you know, support FIRM.

January, 2005 Update

EDD funding for the Partner's Program ended in November, 2004, but the program is as necessary as ever and continues with the help of two other funding sources: its Contract for Recruitment with the Fresno County Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), the local One-Stop operator, and the County of Fresno Jobs First Serving New Refugee Arrivals program (Welfare-to-Work funds). FIRM's obligation under the EOC contract is to serve as the One-Stop's recruitment arm for the Asian population in Fresno. The affiliation was initiated by the One-Stop in response to the local Workforce Investment Board's concern that Southeast Asian refugees were being badly underserved (only 50 a year were visiting the One-Stop out of a population of many thousands). Two FIRM employees are co-located at the One-Stop to work with members of this population who are sent by FIRM (66 in the last year) or who come to the One-Stop on their own. FIRM staff who work at the One-Stop find their duties there stressful; functioning within a rigid bureaucracy is very different from working within the fluid, personal ambience of a faith-based nonprofit organization. At the program's peak, there were 6 FTEs working with various aspects of serving FIRM's customers; now there are 3.5. The New Arrivals program began in November, 2004 and is now well under way. It is expected to serve 25-28 individuals this month.

Reflections on the CFBI Experience

FIRM's Director of Employment Programs told us that this experience in coping with government reporting requirements had a good influence on FIRM's development, making it more sophisticated in running policies and procedures for the Partners Program. He gave EDD credit for "making it easy" for FIRM to fulfill its requirements and also for improving the quality of services offered to its customers. Under CFBI, he feels that FIRM's most important achievement has been "helping people get jobs when they couldn't be served anywhere else" by providing the sense of community that made them comfortable and built trust. He is proudest of seeing the program to a successful conclusion, meeting state guidelines, serving over 400 customers, and finding jobs for more than 200 of them. It is good to know "that you've helped people, had an impact on the lives of the people who came seeking help." These successes have better positioned FIRM to qualify for other grants.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

Of the 12 participants in the Partners Program we spoke with in the first round of interviews, we were only able to re-interview 4, despite the hard work FIRM staff members did to make contact and schedule appointments. Between the small number of respondents and our mutual difficulty in understanding one another, participant interviews were not useful in illuminating the effectiveness of the program. The 3 men and 1 woman were cooperative and helpful, but none in this small sample had gotten their present jobs through FIRM. All were working full time—1 worked two jobs full time—and the highest wage mentioned was \$8.00 per hour. Two stayed in touch with FIRM in case a better job might become available. The 3 men have attended college but dropped out temporarily due to lack of funds; the woman has an AA degree but will stay home with her 3 small children for the foreseeable future. Asked what they liked best about FIRM, two respondents had positive things to say:

The people here are friendly, you know. Whatever I like, if I need help on some paperwork I can come and ask and really talk to 'em, so I can't really say anything, yeah.

FIRM is great because they know the Hmong. I can refer friends here who speak Hmong. They know the language and can help them.

Three participants said they would refer a friend to FIRM and two said they already have.

Community Reflections

The fact that FIRM is nearly alone in doing this work has made the organization highly visible among local employers and workforce development professionals. We spoke with several businesses that regularly hire candidates referred by FIRM and learned that they very much appreciated FIRM's level of involvement in the screening and application processes. We heard only positive comments about the caliber of worker FIRM provides. We also spoke with the head of the Workforce Investment Board in Fresno County and with officials at the One-Stop and EDD, and again received complementary reports on FIRM's dedication and expertise. The fact that the One-Stop selected and funded FIRM to assist in its effort to recruit members of the Southeast Asian population is an impressive demonstration of respect.

Future of the Partners Program

As FIRM recognized early, an employment element is essential to helping refugees gain a foothold in their new country. The program has been downsized to operate within its reduced budget—\$100,000 less this year—and is undergoing a shift to serve the new arrivals. Realistically, the Director of Employment Programs expects that funds dedicated to this new population will diminish as they become integrated into the society. To continue to offer practical assistance to Southeast Asians, he envisions seeking grant funds from a variety of sources—targeting federal, state, and county opportunities—and exploring new directions for FIRM. One possibility he sees is going into the medical field, an area that has tremendous potential in Fresno.

Case Study #4

New Beginnings Partnership

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Dinuba, a small city in rural Tulare County
Primary program participants	Women in Welfare-to-Work Program
Years established prior to EDD grant	0
Previous government grants	No
Previous workforce development experience	No
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak	6
Total participants at CFBI peak	32
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	1:5
Role of faith in service delivery	Faith-secular partnership
CFBI funding allocations	2001-02: \$300,000 2002-03: \$210,000 2003-04: Not refunded

The New Beginnings Partnership was created in March, 2000 when Valley Education Foundation (VEF), a non-profit community service organization that provides educational training in the Visalia area, joined with Open Gate Ministries in Dinuba to apply for a grant under the California Faith-Based Initiative program. Open Gate Ministries, the faith-based component of the partnership, is an independent Christian organization founded nearly 30 years ago that operates a homeless shelter serving 200-300 individuals a year, a food distribution program, a thrift store, and a direct assistance program for the needy in the Dinuba area. As a result of connections made by the Open Gate Ministries Executive Director, the New Beginnings program has been housed in the city's Memorial Building in Dinuba. CFBI and WIA funds were the program's primary support from its inception, with supplemental support for job placement and development services provided under the Tulare Office of Education's SEE program (Services for Education and Employment). This program was not renewed by EDD for the 2003-2004 funding year and closed at the end of July, 2003.

The major facets of this case study as presented here include:

- a description of the program itself and a brief sketch of the staff members who construct and deliver the program on a day-to-day basis;
- a profile of the program participants seen both through our interpretations of interviews with 21 of them and through staff perceptions; and
- an analysis of what our semi-structured interviews reveal about participant experiences while in the program and their progress toward the goal of stable employment.

The New Beginnings Program

Program description. New Beginnings has offered four training programs designed to give clients practical experience as they learn. At the time of our visit, two of the programs were the mainstays: the 16-week *Office Skills* and *Culinary Arts* courses. *Office Skills* features self-paced computer training overseen by an instructor together with opportunities to practice office

procedures at the Open Gate Ministries food bank: interviewing potential recipients, answering the phone, doing data entry, and filing. *Culinary Arts* teaches food preparation, cooking, kitchen procedures, and serving techniques which students practice under actual restaurant conditions by making and serving lunch to the public at the Memorial Building several days a week, taking advantage of the complete kitchen facilities. An additional benefit of this program is the opportunity to receive “Serve Safe” training and certification in food handling. The other two courses—*Maintenance* and *Retail*—flourished under capable instructors during the early stages of the grant. When these individuals moved on, these training programs became less central. The *Maintenance* program involved learning to clean floors, bathrooms, and windows; maintain gardens; and perform minor repairs. Students put these techniques to practical use in the Memorial Building and at the Open Gate Ministries homeless shelter. The *Retail* program shows students how to operate a cash register and maintain stock by operating the Open Gate Ministries’ thrift shop. In addition to the training programs, clients receive personalized assistance in locating employment and are referred as needed to local educational facilities and other area services.

Distinguishing features. (1) The New Beginnings Partnership provides an essential service to public assistance recipients who lack transportation and is the only training facility in rural northern Tulare County available to them. (2) The hands-on experience offered by all four training programs gives students an opportunity to hone skills in on-the-job settings. (3) Program participants are able to return to New Beginnings after they complete the training for which they contracted; to brush-up on their computer skills, as space permits, and take an additional training course. Several individuals told us that they had graduated from *Office Skills* and gone on to *Culinary Arts*, and vice versa. They can continue to seek assistance from the staff as well. (4) The small town setting sometimes has an impact—either positive or negative—on the program and on the participants. For example, it’s difficult to conceal substance abuse issues or incidents of child or spousal abuse in Dinuba, which are immediately reported to caseworkers or other proper authorities. This can be disruptive to the training programs on occasion but can also lead to important remedial activities. (5) Program staff have many life experiences in common with the clientele they serve, allowing them to empathize with their clients and gain their trust. (6) New Beginnings is the only program in our study with dual citizenship, so to speak, in both the faith-based and secular nonprofit worlds. This has required program leaders to confront and resolve a number of philosophical and administrative differences between the boards and staffs of Open Gate Ministries and Valley Educational Foundation. Considerable diplomacy on the part of many parties was necessary as the partnership evolved, and MOUs were rewritten on several occasions. All this was made more difficult by the departure of the VEF Director shortly after the CFBI grant was awarded, since he had originally conceived the program and wrote the CFBI grant. Open Gate was the fiscal agent for the first CFBI grant (state general funds), while VEF became the fiscal agent under the second grant (WIA funds). New Beginnings leaders are to be commended for their commitment to the value of the program and their ability to keep it operating in the face of substantial obstacles. At the same time, the case illustrates the importance of having a solid collaboration in place prior to receiving a substantial grant.

Program participants. The majority of New Beginnings clients are Hispanic—primarily second- and third-generation—and most (an estimated 90-95 percent) are women in an age range of 22 to 38. The staff Job Developer thought that perhaps 90% of program participants had not graduated from high school and that 90% headed up single-parent households. Many program participants have grown up with welfare being regarded as the standard means of family support, and many lead stormy lives that include substance abuse and spousal abuse or simply a lack of support; sometimes these issues intrude while they are at New Beginnings and must be addressed there. In

an effort to explain how this situation impacts his approach to teaching, the Office Computer Instructor told us:

I think a lot of what people don't understand, that I deal with in my job, is that there's times when there's extreme lack of motivation. Students come in that have been there for three or four months and...they get burned out. And I have students come in from day one and they're already like that, and it could be any number of reasons. I was talking about the home life...they go home and they tell their spouse or significant other that 'Welfare is making me go to school,' and then the spouse says, 'Well, I don't know why, because you're not getting a job!' and that sort of thing, why do they care, they already have it set in their head, 'I can't get a job because so-and-so won't let me,' so that all won't succeed. There's quite a few that you know it can't be laziness, there's something else there, and you can do all you can to help that person, but the bottom line is, they still go home every night, and got the same problems, you know. And that's where...That's what the problem is, yeah.

Most of New Beginnings' clients are referred by TulareWORKS in Dinuba and are receiving public assistance, although the program also accepts self-referred candidates. During the program's early months, the training courses operated out of the Open Gate Ministries facilities and at that time residents of the Open Gate Ministries homeless shelter were the first participants. The Open Gate Ministries Executive Director explains:

We never anticipated that the number of people that could be served through this program would become as great as it was. We thought maybe there would be 10 people from the shelter involved in the program, but it didn't take long to realize that the people in the shelter were not ready for training. They had other, more important things to be mitigated, and even though we pushed the training program, they just couldn't concentrate on that, because they didn't have a place for their family to live...And so we had to open it up to the community, anybody that Welfare-to-Work would send over our way.

Once it became clear that people in the homeless shelter at Open Gate Ministries were dealing with fundamental issues that needed resolution before training for employment could be helpful to them, the Program Director went to the Tulare County Welfare Department and arranged to work with their hardest-to-serve population. New Beginnings was housed in downtown Dinuba for a year before moving to its present location in August, 2002. When we were conducting on-site interviews there in February, 2003, 37 students were enrolled in the training programs.

Program personnel. The program's staffing levels and configuration fluctuate with the availability of funds but the the Program Director and her Administrative Assistant have remained in place to see that the program continues to function properly. They have often been assisted by members of the *Office Skills* program, who benefit from the opportunity to learn telephone and filing techniques in an on-the-job setting. At least one other position has been kept filled: the Office Computer Instructor. When we were conducting on-site interviews in February, 2003, there was also a Job Developer/ Employment Specialist whose job it was to attract and educate employers, as well as to counsel students on job-related issues, to provide them with the essential tools (e.g., a resume, interviewing tips), and to match them with suitable employment opportunities.

The Program Director is a dedicated, highly skilled, and experienced individual whose daily responsibilities include coping with her complicated role as intermediary between the two sponsoring organizations with tact and dispatch, handling the intake duties with new clients and

maintaining friendly contact with continuing ones, guiding staff and making programmatic decisions, interfacing with community agencies and the public, and performing the demanding record-keeping functions associated with government grants. In addition, she is frequently pressed into serving as an informal mentor to clients experiencing personal difficulties. The most satisfying aspect of her work is when the students recognize what the training programs can really do for them:

...when we see them beginning to realize, 'This is what I need to do!' or helping to lose their barriers and seeing that there's a different side of life than they've been living...and once we've seen that, then it assures us that they're going to be able to become employed now. And to see, you know, a change in the way they're seeing things, and start understanding...budgeting, and, you know, what it is to become more independent, to be able to make a decision, I think that's the most rewarding, is to see that we're helping them in their lives, we're not pushing them out there to make a number but helping with their lives—helping their fears, and maybe not follow that same route as they did maybe from their parents, and help them, you know, get out of that rut.

There are acute disappointments built into the work as well, however, and she counsels herself and her staff not to take it personally when a client who showed great promise suddenly returns to a dysfunctional lifestyle. She deals with these issues on a secular basis; her own spirituality is a private matter.

The Office Computer Instructor is in charge of a classroom of 12 computers and 15-20 students who are working on a self-paced learning program. He inserts hands-on training on other office equipment as well as a practical grasp of computer hardware and software so that people who typically arrive with no computer experience whatsoever can begin to grasp some of the principles with minimal apprehension. The goal is to enable them to gain an entry-level position in a business environment. "Get employed. Definitely." One of the tasks he assigns himself is finding ways to motivate his students to learn when some of them have such troubled lives that they are very hard to reach:

Motivation...that was one of the hardest things I had to learn to teach, to teach somebody to want to learn, nobody ever told me I had to do that, it was something I had to learn on my own. [But] without that, everything else won't come. I have a lot of things that I use [to] help motivate, but it's up to them, it's...tough sometimes, but definitely, I believe that without that, that I wouldn't be—my class wouldn't be as successful as it is.

In return for his concern and dedication, students give him consistently high evaluations.

How success is defined. Students feel successful when they complete difficult parts of their training—when they advance from one computer training manual to the next, when they master culinary techniques and successfully cook a meal. Graduating from those two training courses gave participants a sense of self-efficacy and the belief that they could bring practical skills that were as good as anyone else's to an employer and could compete successfully for a job. The New Beginnings Program Director gauged the clients' success by their test results at the conclusion of the courses and also by seeing participants identify and deal with underlying issues that have caused them to require public assistance in the first place. The Office Computer Instructor offered his own definition of success:

Watching a student come in from absolute no training, zero—I wouldn't call it ability, but basically, education or training, some of them come in with very little education, not even

a GED or high school diploma, and watching them go from that to completely developing their skills, and getting employed, and being happy in what they're doing. That makes my job worth doing.

At the time of our February, 2003 visit, the instructor reported that about 50 percent of his students had found jobs and remained in them.

The Open Gate Ministries Executive Director emphasizes that self-sufficiency is the ultimate goal:

Here we had a chance to take these people under our wing and train them, and then help them find jobs, which takes them to another level where they *can* be self-sufficient. And our whole goal all along was to help people become self-sufficient. *Jobs* are the *most important thing* to self-sufficiency. If you don't have a job, you can't do for yourself, because you don't have an income...So, in that sense, we offered a very important component...because without a job, you don't know who you are—you just don't know who you are. You can have all this history, and this faith in yourself, but if you don't have a job, you don't know where you're going to be tomorrow! You don't know if you're going to be able to *afford* tomorrow! See, and these people have lived this way, many of them, for quite some time, and they just are overwhelmed with appreciation when you've helped them find out who they are and become something that they wanted to be. And actually walked *beside* them, and mitigated whatever circumstances that needed to be mitigated.

Challenges to success: for program participants. One of the greatest problems for those seeking jobs in this rural area is the lack of nearby employment opportunities; a well-trained individual needs to go to larger urban centers to find well-paying office and food service positions. Coupled with this issue—and considered the greatest hurdle by the staff—is obtaining consistently reliable transportation. Bus service in this area is almost non-existent and many people, especially women, can't afford or have no access to a car. Another difficulty that affects primarily women is an inability to find and afford child care. Many program participants are living with relatives because they can't afford housing for themselves and their children, which can lead to unpleasant family situations that impact their effectiveness. Domestic violence is also a frequent problem. Substance abuse has intruded into the lives of students and can result in termination from the program. Those not comfortable with English are not only limited in the training program they can take, but also in finding good jobs. Few women we talked to were looking further than the local fruit packer or fast-food restaurant for employment.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. Programmatic barriers include the unwieldy alliance between two independent organizations with little in common beyond the New Beginnings Partnership. For example, there are two boards of directors with differing perspectives and goals that have oversight responsibilities for the program. The Program Manager, a VEF employee, must not only administer a complex set of training programs for hard-to-serve individuals, but must also negotiate a practical path among conflicting directions received from the two parent organizations. Fiscal difficulties that have resulted in the loss of key staff members have also plagued the program.

Open Gate Ministries has appreciated the fact that CFBI program managers are willing to come to them to resolve issues and provide needed technical assistance. The faith-based organization willingly changed the New Beginnings personnel procedures to prohibit religious discrimination in hiring at the request of EDD. Even so, Open Gate's board had difficulty accepting some

aspects of its association with VEF, and began to wonder if it was not straying too far from its pre-existing mission. The board began to balk at continuing to support the program.

The place of faith in the program. In its everyday mission and operation, New Beginnings is one of the most secular among the six organizations we are evaluating, despite its connection with Open Gate Ministries. Pressed to consider whether faith has played even an *indirect* role in the program's work, the Program Director said that Open Gate Ministries' connections in the Dinuba area have sometimes assisted in arranging housing, donating clothing, and even locating jobs on occasion. The Program Director also feels that the presence of a faith-based entity might be somewhat comforting to program participants because it may be perceived as being more sympathetic and less judgmental than other employment and training programs, especially those run by the government.

The Open Gate Ministries Executive Director describes the importance of the faith connection as follows:

Well our organization would not exist without that connection. However, because we were not allowed to proselytize, through the use of any of these funds, we didn't even attempt to make any kind of faith connection with the students. However, because of our learning environment being the shelter, and being the thrift store, where the staff is all faith-based and enthused in those areas, you always had the influence of the faith-based people around them. That added a discipline dimension, that added a spiritual dimension, and it added an emotional-stability dimension, and it added an outlook—you know, purposeful dimension. All of those things are caught as well as taught.

Program Participants

Interview sample. Interviews with program participants added to our understanding. Although our sample is not representative of all program participants, the interviews provide a revealing glimpse of several aspects of their lives and beliefs. The participant list we received from EDD contained 31 names and we attempted to contact all of them. We actually spoke with 22 individuals (the highest number among our six CFBOs), 14 in person and eight by telephone. An interpreter unaffiliated with New Beginnings but familiar with the area conducted three of the interviews in Spanish for us. Of the three men on our list, we were able to reach only one and were unable to complete that interview, so the results reported here apply almost exclusively to female participants. Half of the respondents for whom we have data were in the 18-24 age range and the rest divided evenly between 25-34 and 35-44. Only five of our respondents had not completed high school—unlike the 90 percent estimated for program participants by the Job Developer—and seven report some college, one with an AA degree.

Living arrangements. Of the respondents who talked about their homes, ten live in Dinuba, five live in Orosi, a few miles away, and two are further out. Those who don't live in Dinuba are at the mercy of the transit system, sometimes arriving at New Beginnings as much as an hour after class officially begins. All of our respondents have at least one child, most have two children, and two have four and five children, respectively. In all but three cases, children are younger than school-aged, requiring either day care or their mothers' presence. Six respondents live with relatives—mother, parents, grandparents, brother, cousin—and most would prefer to have their own place. Two are relatively newly separated, four live with their husbands, and two speak of their boyfriends as permanent members of the household. Ten live in houses, at least three of which are rented, and all but one of the rest live in apartments—the exception is a woman who lives with her young son in a rented room. About half of the respondents who either live with

family members or live in apartments would like to move; the rest express contentment with their present arrangements. One woman who was homeless for a while is happy that she and her two children were taken in by her brother and sister-in-law.

Employment. We asked the people in our sample about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. Only two of our respondents said that they had never worked for a living because they have focused either on raising children or on going to school. This is not an area that offers much part-time or after-school opportunity to teenagers. Even minimum wage jobs tend to be snapped up by adults trying to support their families. Their experience is often limited to babysitting or volunteer work at the schools. Of respondents who have held paying jobs, the preponderance of them mentioned that at some time they had worked either in the agricultural fields (3) or in the packing houses (9). One was a medical assistant for 12 years before the doctor retired and one in a convalescent home (“I liked working with the older people until they started hitting me...I worked with the Alzheimer’s, so they’re kinda—they’re very combative.”) Another woman had been a bank teller and three have at some time worked in food service, one for nearly three years:

Taco Bell! I’ve always wanted to work at Taco Bell, ever since I was like 16, and I worked there for 2 or 3 years. I was so happy. When I was working, I’d be early for work and I would just like do my best and, you know, the guy who owns Taco Bell even told me one time, he goes, ‘You’re one of the best employees that I’ve ever had and I hate to see you go!’ I wanted to cry.

An older woman with no job experience parlayed her volunteer classroom work into occasional substitute teaching and convinced a local insurance agent to try her out for two months on filing and telephone duties, holding both jobs at once and walking the three miles between them. Retail sales, some work at a temporary agency, and housekeeping at the local Best Western complete the past employment experience of these respondents.

At the time of our interviews, the only man among the respondents held a managerial position in a Visalia restaurant and five were poised to begin jobs already arranged at packing houses. Of others who reported having a job, one was providing child care, one worked the graveyard shift at a gas station, one worked at a local pizza parlor, and one had just accepted a position as Culinary Arts Instructor at New Beginnings in the wake of the chef who had departed for medical reasons. Ten others said they were not working; several of them thought of their training course at New Beginnings as their job at this time:

By the time I’m done, I’ll get my certificate and that’ll help me find a job that’s gonna be higher than just the average minimum wage. But even so, it’s just learning the new stuff, ’cause it’s a challenge. Yeah, you feel better.

Future aspirations included finding an office job (5), being a cook at a hospital or school cafeteria (this from two women, one of whom admitted that, before her experience at New Beginnings, she could barely cook for her family), cooking at a restaurant (2), providing licensed child care, working at a school in any capacity that involved children, going back to being a medical assistant, and being a cashier at a grocery store:

Oh, I really want to work in a grocery store [laughs]. I know it doesn’t sound so dreamy and everything like that, but it’s what I want to do, I would be happy working at a grocery store, as a cashier. [I want to do it because of] the interaction with people.

[sighs] Going back to fast-food would be like, hard, 'cause you'd have to start all over at the bottom again. That's why I'm here. To better myself.

Education. As noted above, our respondents demonstrate a higher level of education than the Job Developer's estimate for all New Beginnings participants. At least five have attended college (one has received an AA degree and another is in her third year of studying accounting) and no fewer than 13 have their high school diplomas. One determined woman who had left school during her sophomore year to be with her husband reported:

I didn't go back to high school, but I did go back to Adult School when I was 23 and I got my high school diploma, I wasn't going to settle for the GED. I mean, they told me it was the same; I don't know—I want my diploma. So I went through the same classes, I had all my stacks of books, but I *got* my diploma.

One Spanish-speaking woman who was born in Mexico attended ESL instruction at the local community college, and two more took courses to enable them to become a medical assistant and a licensed child care provider, respectively.

Social self-classification. The Program Director saw significant coherence among the students with respect to both personal and job-related matters:

The clients really help us out with that [being alert to substance abuse on and off the premises] too; everybody knows everything in this town, so they kind of let us know heads up [about potentially abusive men waiting outside]...and we try to get back with them; it takes a team to make this happen. Yeah, they kind of watch out for each other... helping each other out with job resources—'I'm going here applying and I saw this over here but I don't want it, but you...'—you know, they let each other know what's going on.

To get a feeling for the peer relationships they might be building, we asked our respondents about their success in making friends among New Beginnings staff or with fellow students. Nine respondents felt that the friendships they formed at New Beginnings, including with staff members, would be of long standing:

I believe they're all my friends...you meet people, and some people have a little bit more problems than you have, and you can't help the whole world but, you know, if you listen and you give a little advice every now and then, you make some friends along the way.

We'd have birthday parties for children this year and... and invited some people from here and they'd come and be supportive. And they're really helpful. And a lot of times in this community, there's a lot of people that don't have a lot of money... You know, people are real friendly out here, and if you're ever in need, people are always willing to give you what they have, even if it's only a little bit.

The young woman who recently separated from her husband was particularly delighted to make friends in the program:

The people that come here, they're like real friendly, it's awesome... You know, being with someone for so long, and not having any type of, you know, friend, 'cause *they* would, you know, get upset and everything like that—coming here, it's like wow, I got

friends! It's like I have people that I can relate to, they either went through the same thing or they're going through the same thing and it's like—you're not alone!

Some women renewed acquaintance with old friends, particularly among Open Gate Ministries staff, that dated back to needier times when they were given food and shelter there. A few women enjoyed the on-site companionship of fellow students but doubted that the relationships would extend beyond the end of their studies.

Personal faith. Of the respondents who addressed this issue, nine were raised in the Catholic faith, two called their early religious affiliation "Christian," and at least six said that they weren't raised in any spiritual tradition. At present, 10 people considered themselves to be religious or spiritual people and most—but not all—were regular church-goers (one attended a church she associated with Open Gate Ministries). As one woman said:

I believe in God and I don't go to church every Sunday, but I believe. I'm Christian religion... 'Cause you know, the world's so crazy nowadays, you gotta—you gotta have faith it's gonna get better.

Three women didn't see themselves as especially religious but said that they did still believe, and four didn't consider themselves to be spiritual at all.

Although parts of the New Beginnings program explicitly requires students to assist in some of Open Gate Ministries activities or to perform various tasks on their premises, none of our respondents mentioned that they found this to be offensive from a spiritual point of view. A number of participants really appreciated the opportunity to help people in need, such as when they participated in the food distribution program.

Respondents' Experience with New Beginnings. In this section, we are primarily reporting our interpretation of the perceptions of the program participants we interviewed, taken from their responses to our questions. In some cases, we also refer to the initial scoping survey, as well as to the interviews conducted with program staff.

Entry into the program. We asked respondents how they happened to come to New Beginnings and it turned out that all but two of them had been referred by TulareWORKS. Some were only told about New Beginnings' training programs. Others spoke of being given a choice between New Beginnings and Proteus, another job training and placement facility, and elected to go to New Beginnings because it was closer. Of the two women who found the program on their own, one saw it advertised in the Dinuba *Sentinel* and the other discovered it when she came with her sister to rent space on the Memorial Building's patio.

Several respondents reported taking a placement test at TulareWORKS and using the results of the test to decide which training program best suited their goals and abilities; others knew ahead of time which one they wanted. In some cases, the *Office Skills* course was full when they arrived and respondents went into *Culinary Arts*, their second choice, instead.

Services offered /received. In addition to the training programs that are the reason for New Beginnings' existence, the program officially offers skilled assessment of clients' needs and abilities, basic preparation for seeking and holding jobs, job development and placement assistance, and referrals to other agencies and programs for further education, counseling for clients and their children, housing, child care, and transportation. The staff also performs a host

of informal services such as driving clients to interviews and picking them up, and offering a friendly ear when they need to talk.

Fifteen of our respondents signed up for *Office Skills* —which they called “the computer class”—and 13 of them had either finished the course or were still taking it at the time of our interviews. Ten enrolled in *Culinary Arts*—“cooking class”—and eight had finished or were still involved in it when we spoke. Four told us that they finished their computer training, took their certificate, and then signed up for the cooking course, which is where they were when we interviewed them. One woman was bumped from computers into cooking because there were fewer computers than there were candidates for the course; another said she was progressing too slowly in computers and was switched to *Retail* (where she spent only two months). Because this experience in *Retail* is incomplete and because we were unable to speak to anyone who had taken the *Maintenance* course, we looked only at the computer and cooking classes.

Office Skills students reveled in recounting the things they were learning about computers, from how to build one (an exercise invented by the instructor in order to demystify the hardware) to sampling and gaining proficiency in software such as Office 98, Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, and Publisher. They also learned how to access e-mail (each had her own e-mail address) and the Internet. In addition, they were given a taste of office comportment. As one student explained:

They expect you to come dressed nicely, more like office-type, and no, like, cussing profanity, nothing like that. Respect others and just basically behave, yeah.

They learned to answer the phone properly, both at New Beginnings and at Open Gate Ministries, and to use fax and copying machines.

Culinary Arts students also enjoyed describing the skills they were learning, which include using simple and complex equipment to turn raw vegetables and meats into finished meals; learning how to manage a professional kitchen, from maintaining an inventory and ordering food to keeping the surfaces and utensils clean and safe; mastering meal-planning for varying numbers of people; and developing all the skills necessary to operate an actual restaurant three days a week. Students enjoyed different aspects of the experience; one very practical woman said:

I like that they taught me how to properly chop the vegetables, but also they would allow us to take leftovers home. I liked sampling the foods.

In addition, they are given the opportunity to earn the highly respected Serve Safe certificate, valid for five years, if they successfully complete an intensive course of study on food handling safety and pass the National Restaurant Association’s qualifying exam.

Relationship with staff. Without exception, members of the computer class spoke of their instructor with affection and respect:

He’s always willing, if you ask him a question, he’s willing to do it up on the board and he can just keep going and going. He jokes around and stuff, and he knows how to control the class, and I like him as a teacher.

You feel so comfortable, you could pour yourself out to him, and he’s there for all of us. That’s why I say he’s so awesome...you don’t feel like he’s going to be judging you, knowing that we don’t have jobs, he still doesn’t make us feel like we’re nothing.

Some clients felt a bit reserved with the Program Director and Administrative Assistant, referring to them collectively as The Office, while others recognized them as friends and allies:

Well, the Administrative Assistant, she's really nice, like we talk to her really good, outside of school and inside of school, yeah, and [the Program Director], she's really nice. At first I was like, she's an *instructor*, but now we joke around and everything.

[The Program Director], she goes out of her way and she like gives us rides places we need and like they're there, you know, they help you a lot. They recommend you to places. You need something, they'll like 'Oh, go here, or go there!' you know. Yeah, they're a big help.

Several respondents recalled a particular Job Developer as very helpful and were sorry he was no longer there. One woman told us, "He was always on top of everything, you know, he was real good about that. But—they had to let him go, so..." Asked why he was let go, she responded succinctly, "Budget cuts."

Interaction with other agencies. TulareWORKS was the parent agency for nearly all our respondents. One woman explained how "the worker" at TulareWORKS would arrange for members of the cooking class to go to a uniform shop in Visalia to pick out chef coats, aprons, and other necessities. Respondents knew that if they needed counseling or medical assistance they could go to their worker at TulareWORKS for referrals. None of the people we spoke to had gone to a job agency per se, although one had an unpleasant recollection of a single visit to Proteus and two others mentioned C-SET, "a job placement place. It was all right but I like it better here." Several respondents mentioned a temporary help agency that had apparently made a presentation at New Beginnings, and were disappointed not to have been contacted:

Through this program here there was one that came, it's not Manpower but it's kind of like, yes, temporary help, and I signed up my name, but they never—I never heard anything on it. We made resumés, and we turned them in to them, and they said, 'We'll call you,' but I haven't heard.

Interaction with Open Gate Ministries. Several respondents had benefited directly from Open Gate Ministries' shelter and food programs in the past and expressed warm feelings for members of the staff who had been kind to them. A number of participants we spoke with signed up to work at Open Gate, answering phones, filing, or preparing boxes with food. In earlier stages of the partnership, participants in the New Beginnings maintenance training program helped construct a building at the Open Gate Ministries site, while other participants were involved in a reorganization of the Open Gate thrift store.

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience, we classified possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness); remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment); educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED instruction, entering college, vocational training); and employment (getting a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal outcomes. Several respondents told us that their self-confidence and self-esteem had risen throughout the program as they discovered their ability to learn new skills and to be comfortable with new people. They were grateful to the supportive staff and to friendly fellow students, and felt prepared to take the next step in their lives:

It's helped me so much, yeah, I've come a long way. I didn't feel I was gonna really be here, you know, I didn't even think I was gonna work, I didn't know how—I *felt* like I didn't know how. And being here, too, helped me do stuff more myself. You know, feeling I *could* go out there, and I could work.

...when you're out of work for a while...you lose contact socially with people outside and then all of a sudden you feel like you can't do the work. When they see that you're doing well in class, they tell you, they pat you on the back, and they tell you, 'You're doing great, you can improve on this, or you can improve on that,' and then when there are job openings coming, you know, open for you, they come and they tell you, they say, 'I think you could qualify for this job, I think this would be good for you, you should go out.' And so it builds your confidence, too, it makes you feel good about yourself.

Educational outcomes. Beyond the achievement of completing their training courses and receiving certificates, two women who left school before graduating had been inspired to look into obtaining their GEDs and planning to pursue instruction through TulareWORKS, and three spoke of enrolling in or returning to college. In addition, members of the New Beginnings *Culinary Arts* class were very serious about their attainment in having obtained their Serve Safe certificate.

Employment outcomes. Graduates of the computer and cooking courses gained broad knowledge of their subject as well as hands-on experience and confidence in their new ability to compete with anyone for good jobs. In addition, *Office Skills* students could obtain a certificate guaranteeing that they could type 45 words a minute that they thought would be an important adjunct to applying for many positions.

Participant Perspectives on the Program

Overall impressions. We asked our respondents whether they thought participating in the program had made or would make a significant difference in their lives. Of the 18 people who answered this question, 14 believed that it would. One woman expressed her feelings this way:

Programs like this, for people who don't have a whole lot of money, like me, myself, I can't attend college or find someplace where I'd have to pay to get help.

Programs like this, they help people like me, you know, to come into a class, learn what I can, and then go back out and find a job...with computer skills. So I love this program [laughs]. It's very helpful to me.

Most people felt that their training programs were excellent, thorough and accessible, accomplishing a great deal in a short period of time. As one member of the cooking class said:

I think we learn things that probably an actual culinary arts school class learns, and it takes them a while to learn, and we pick it up quick!

A respondent who had taken both the computer and the cooking classes agreed:

In the kitchen I like it 'cause it's hands-on, you're actually in there waitressing and everything. Like the books in the computer class, they're really easy and everything, it's

like step-by-step telling you how to do it, you could learn it really fast, catch on pretty quick.

We took advantage of the opportunity to see the program through our respondents' eyes by asking, near the end of each interview, what they thought was the best thing for them about the program. We also asked them to make any suggestions they could think of for improving the program. Suggestions are reported as we received them, with no attempt made to place them in any order or to screen them for practicality.

What was the best thing about the program? The majority of the people who answered this question found ways to say how much they valued their new knowledge, not only for its practical value in the job market but also for the satisfaction of having skills they could be proud of. One woman said simply: "The *very* best? That I'm learning something!" The hands-on nature of the training got high marks as well. Respondents also liked the sense of being part of a supportive group; as one woman told us, "The best thing for me is, I guess, being there—it feels like a family, you know, we all support each other." Another said, "I would probably have to say the efforts of everybody trying to help you get ahead, the staff and also the students."

How could the program be improved? Our three Spanish-speaking respondents expressed unanimous disappointment that no instruction was delivered in Spanish. One really wanted to work with computers and the opportunity was denied her. Nearly everyone who had taken the computer class told us that the teaching conditions were very difficult for the instructor because people in the class were at such different skill levels. They wanted him to be able to teach the whole class at once rather than having to work with individuals. Several people expressed the need for more computers and one pointed out that the ability to preserve one's work is also needed. One woman wished that people in her computer class wouldn't play their music so loudly because it made it hard to concentrate, and another felt that attendance rules were too lenient. Another woman would have liked to join in the *Retail* program but felt the store was too messy and questioned the type of training she might receive there. Another thought the job readiness instruction needed to be made more engaging, and the cooking class would benefit from better organized activities on Monday and Tuesday when the restaurant isn't open. A number of people said they wanted a lot more assistance in finding jobs than they were getting.

Future interaction with the program. One of the tenets of New Beginnings is that clients are welcome to return whenever they need to as long as the program exists. A number of respondents appreciated that offer and thought that they would at least stop in to say hello. We also asked if they would recommend New Beginnings to a friend and most respondents said that they would. For example:

Yeah, I would. I would really recommend it, it's a good experience!

Yeah, I told my aunt...like she wants to be a secretary, I go, 'Just go to New Beginnings!'

Future of the New Beginnings Program and the Case Study

New Beginnings is the only one of our six case study sites that was not refunded by CFBI for the 2003-04 year. The Program Director was informed of this decision in a brief letter near the end of July, 2003. Apparently the decision not to refund is related to an audit of the departed VEF Director's handling of an earlier workforce development grant rather than to any deficiencies in New Beginnings itself. The Program Director indicates she has not received negative feedback

from EDD sources, and that the program has been satisfactorily meeting its performance and reporting targets.

Since EDD was the program's only fiscal sponsor, New Beginnings was forced to discharge its staff, dismiss its students, and close its doors. A number of students wrote gratifying letters saying how much they enjoyed the training programs and hoped that they could somehow continue. As of August, 2003, it appeared that another workforce development entity, a nonprofit called Proteus, will be attempting to underwrite the *Office Skills* and *Culinary Arts* training programs. This effort illustrates the value the programs are perceived to have, and the ongoing need for such programs in the northern part of Tulare County. As the Open Gate Executive Director states:

And they'll never forget each other. I mean, there won't be a single person that came through this program, that made it through, that'll ever forget Merla. Or the teachers.... It just emphasized so much for us the expanding *need* and it makes me feel that our organization should double and triple in size so that we can do more.

The UC Davis evaluation team intends to follow-up on developments at New Beginnings and with program participants, just as we will do with our other five case studies.

January 2005 Update

When they were notified by EDD that the program would not be re-funded, New Beginnings management made efforts to connect with a local non-profit workforce development entity to continue the *Office Skills* and *Culinary Arts* training programs. Unfortunately the incipient collaboration ended abruptly in August and the program closed, leaving many disappointed participants. Since that time, a new facility called the Dinuba Vocational Center has opened in the City of Dinuba, offering One-Stop services together with opportunities for training and further education.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

During our first round of interviews, we spoke with 22 New Beginnings participants, including 3 monolingual Spanish speakers. From January to March, 2004, we worked on finding these individuals with the assistance of the former New Beginnings program director, the director of Open Gate Ministries, and a case manager at TulareWORKS. With their help, we managed to locate 7 former participants, 1 of whom was Spanish-speaking.

Of the 7 participants we spoke with during the second round of interviews, 3 had taken *Office Skills*, 3 had taken *Culinary Arts*, and 1 had gone through both. Three of the 7 had graduated before New Beginnings abruptly closed, 2 had left to take jobs, and 3 considered themselves still enrolled at the time the program ended (including the woman who completed the *Office Skills* course but was still in the process of earning the Serve Safe certificate). In describing what they had gained from their experience with New Beginnings, 6 spoke of gaining confidence in themselves and their abilities to learn new skills and find good jobs. For example:

How to work with others. I learned how to budget my finances. I just feel more confident in myself, that I can set a goal and accomplish it. By taking the program, I pretty much learned that...okay, it's okay to try new things, and I can do good at something new, I don't have to stick with the same stuff all the time.

Four placed a high value on the practical skills they had learned. As one participant said:

And then, I put in applications, for different places, for cooks, and eventually, I got hired as a cook. And I think one of the reasons why I got hired was, I didn't really have a lot of experience, but I think the most important thing was that I did have the 'Serve Safe' certificate. I think they, on the resume, you know, that was one of the key things that probably.

Participants in the programs felt they also learned important social skills through their studies. Four specifically acknowledged improvements in their ability to communicate and interact with others. One told us:

You know, I feel like I can approach people better, I feel more confident as to how to approach them, and how to communicate easily with them, how to make them feel more comfortable speaking with me, I think I learned that also.

Five of the seven respondents had been referred to New Beginnings by TulareWORKS and four were still receiving some form of public assistance, particularly food stamps. Three were employed—one at the same job she had during the first round of interviews, two expected to return to seasonal work when the packing houses opened. One was attending Reedley College and one had completed a Medical Office Procedures course at the Visalia Adult School and was looking for a position in her field. Only one job offered full-time, 40-hour-per-week work; other permanent jobs ranged from 23 to 30 hours per week. When the packing houses are in full swing, employees can work 12-16 hours per day, every day of the week, although one respondent said she insists on time off on Sundays.

Participants spoke broadly about the best things for them in New Beginnings. Areas where their opinions converged included the quality of the training they received (4), the excellence and personal concern of the instructors in both programs (2), and the interaction with fellow students (2). Others were grateful that there was a training program nearby that met their needs. For example:

I think the very best thing about it was that it was here, and close by in town, and that it met my needs at the time where I was in great need of it, and that I had benefit, I really had benefit from taking it, just the short period of time that it was opened, I really did benefit in a great way.

Also mentioned was the opportunity to gain hands-on work experience in both programs and to help others:

For the computer class, we'd go to Open Gate, and really like help out there, and it felt like we were doing something, not just being home, just doing something, that felt really good.

Five of the seven participants felt that New Beginnings had made a significant difference in their lives, and several expressed strong feelings about the program closing:

I think it was a sad thing for it to happen, because I feel that people were learning, and they were just getting confident in what they were doing, and for it to shut down, it was like...it was just disappointing to a lot of people.

Just that it's really made a difference in my life, and its been a real big impact, and I'm really thankful that there was a program for me to be in...it made a difference in my life, and I feel like I'm successful from, you know, attending this course. And I just hope, that there would be more grant money.

Case Study #5

Tabitha’s House Goals for Life Program

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Facility occupies former motel in Bakersfield, Kern County
Primary program participants	Men and women in residential substance abuse recovery program
Years established prior to EDD grant	
Tabitha’s House	9
Goals for Life program	0
Previous government grants	No
Previous workforce development experience	No
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak	4
Total participants at CFBI peak	25
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	1:6
Role of faith in service delivery	Faith-centered
CFBI funding allocations	2001-02: \$175,000 (12 mo.)
[Note: Total program budget has consisted of the CFBI funds plus donations and client room rental payments until 6/2004 HUD grant for \$408,500]	2002-03: \$122,000 (18 mo.)
	2003-04: \$ 60,000 (16 mo.)

Tabitha’s House is a faith-based sober-living facility founded in Bakersfield in 1992 by Miss Benny Jacobs, an ordained minister, and housed in what used to be the El Rancho Motel, once known locally as Drug Central. “It was a place to go to get drugs and do drugs,” the Goals for Life Program Coordinator told us. “Now it’s a safe place.” Seventy-two units provide housing for recovering addicts and their families. EDD funds covered salaries and overhead associated with the Goals for Life program’s job readiness course. Participants are referred to Tabitha’s House by the Probation Department and Child Protective Services or by friends, family, or churches, or they select it themselves from a list of treatment options when they’re about to be released. After spending 30 days in the residential program, clients are eligible to sign up for the 10-week Goals for Life program. Classroom instruction on work preparedness is lively and interactive, with students expected to make decisions and explain their reasoning. They also attend a computer class and do some of their Goals homework assignments and job hunting via computer. Underlying the standard coursework is a continual effort to help build the students’ self-esteem and self-confidence, to teach and model boundary-setting, and to give them ways to solve problems without relapsing into their addictions.

The Goals for Life Program

Program description. Tabitha’s House is the only organization in our study where participants in one program live within another program’s treatment facility, which raises some special considerations vis à vis evaluation. First, it becomes difficult—and probably impossible—for participants, staff, and evaluators to distinguish between the effects on program participants of the Goals for Life employment-oriented program on the one hand and the effects of living within the

Tabitha's House spiritually-based rules and guidelines on the other. Second, although the Goals for Life materials are entirely secular and the two instructors are determined not to risk censure by permitting the faith-charged atmosphere of Tabitha's House to penetrate into the Goals classroom, it is next to impossible to avoid some philosophical overlap in attitude and teaching style. Since our task is to learn about the Goals for Life program in the context of helping participants rejoin the workforce, we are interested in anything that makes it especially effective, including its setting and the spiritual orientation of its instructors and students.

After clients have been in the Tabitha's House residential program for 30 days, they are eligible to sign up for the 10-week Goals for Life program. Their first step is to take a pre-test to determine their education and skill levels in various areas. Classroom instruction on work preparedness is lively and interactive, with students expected to complete work sheets, make decisions, and explain their reasoning. They are also expected to attend a computer class and become sufficiently proficient to do some of their Goals for Life homework assignments and job hunting via computer. Underlying the standard coursework is a continual effort to help build the students' self-esteem and self-confidence, to teach and model boundary-setting, and to give them ways to solve problems without relapsing into drug use.

Distinguishing features. (1) Unlike other faith-based substance abuse treatment programs in the Bakersfield area, Tabitha's House has a very active and successful employment component, a feature considered vital by program participants:

In a lot of these programs, they do the spiritually-based but they don't prepare you and get you jobs and help you get working. You know, I don't really understand how that works when someone gets out because, to me, if you're not working, and don't have that part of it set up, what happens to you, you know? Maybe you get lucky and you get that job and things work out for you, but if you don't get that job, it'd be so easy to get depressed and just fall back into what you used to do.

(2) It is unusual for treatment facilities to provide accommodations for the participant's children and spouse or partner. (3) Many of the Tabitha's House staff, including one of the Goals for Life instructors, are in recovery from chemical dependencies themselves and have dealt successfully with problems similar to those faced by their clients. "The clients here can really relate to someone that has been-there-done-that kind of thing," the Program Coordinator said. (4) Living at Tabitha's House gives Goals for Life students more access to their instructors than most job readiness programs permit. Thanks to the staff's open-door policy, students can come for assistance with homework and with concerns about job-related issues, or just to talk about personal matters. (5) Women who attend Goals for Life classes and GED instruction can count upon on-site child care at no cost to them while they are in class so that they can concentrate on their work.

Program participants. Although both men and women choose Tabitha's House as their residential substance abuse treatment facility, nearly all the Goals for Life participants have been women. Many of them have come to Tabitha's House via a painful route that has included arrest and incarceration, and have been court-ordered to a treatment program or referred by probation and parole officers. Tabitha's House also accepts "dual diagnosis" clients—those with a history of both substance abuse and mental disorders—referred by the County Mental Health Department. In addition, the Program Coordinator explained:

A lot of them have resorted to prostitution and that kind of stuff, so their self-esteem is just gone. ... [early in the class] I tell them to tell me, in the class setting, three good

things about themselves. And they can list 20 negative things but it's really hard for them to scrounge up just one or two positives. So by the time they finish our classes and are ready to go out there, they know all kinds of good things about themselves. It's pretty neat.

Their ages range from 19 to 50-something, with the majority in their mid-20s to mid-40s. The ethnic mix varies from one Goals class to another but includes primarily Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics.

Program personnel. The two Goals for Life instructors have other responsibilities (the Coordinator is also the grant writer and is taking on new duties in the Outpatient program; the Job Development Instructor is also the program's Administrative Assistant) beyond teaching segments of the Goals program. In addition, both make themselves available to their students outside of class and have established supportive mentor-like relationships with them. They also are called on to deal with problems that arise in dealing with residents, who sometimes need to be reminded of their responsibilities and obligations (e.g., keep their rooms clean, respect common areas). Both instructors have experience with substance abuse and the attendant lifestyle, one through her own experience and the other through living all her life with an alcoholic father. They come to Tabitha's House from other helping professions and find this experience to be highly fulfilling despite the disappointments and setbacks inherent in working with this volatile population. One of the instructors adheres to the faith that Miss Benny practices and the other has developed her own kind of spirituality. Both depend upon their spiritual support, together with the support of the staff and director, to help them cope with distress when clients in whom they have invested a great deal of themselves go off track. The Tabitha's House residential program depends on a number of volunteers in lieu of paid staff to perform a variety of function necessary to serve the clients and keep the old motel in reasonable repair, but the Goals for Life program has no volunteer assistance at this time.

How staff define success. There are several stages of success at Tabitha's. Learning to value oneself is primary and essential, for that makes it possible to maintain a recovery program. This sets the stage for learning new skills, which opens the door to getting a good job or obtaining a college degree. The instructors articulated some of these points:

I think the most important goal would be to re-teach and re-think and re-build self-esteem. Yes, we want them all to get back and go out to work, but I think to be able to do those things you need to have a little bit better self-esteem than you had in the past. And of course we all want them to stay sober, that's the bottom line.

Success is that a client that comes through and goes through our 10-week class, and I can think of 5, 6, 7, 8 clients that have never had a job before, and when they're done with our class, they're out putting resumes. To me, that's a success.

Getting them clean so once they get a job they can sustain that job.

I try to explain to them, they can go get a job, but *keeping* a job is what we want to accomplish. And get them off of welfare, and SSI, and all that stuff.

And just by their attitude and how they're carrying themselves lets us know that they're being successful. And the first time they get their check and don't want to cash it, they want to show it to me—*that* kind of stuff shows success.

Challenges to success: for program participants. Some of the barriers are internal to members of this population. Clients arrive at Tabitha's House with a multitude of problems of which substance abuse is only one. Some must virtually reinvent their lives in order to make a successful transition to being self-sufficient in the real world, and in some cases old habits and connections prove too strong to overcome this time around. Some clients leave Tabitha's House and then return, feeling that now they are ready for change, and do succeed; some leave and return yet again; some never make it. Other barriers that Goals for Life clients face are external:

...how the community thinks about drug rehabilitation programs. I think a lot of communities think like, 'Once an addict, always an addict; they'll never change.' And that's not true.

The Goals for Life Coordinator finds that a number of local employers will give ex-offenders a chance while others refuse even to consider hiring someone with a history of substance abuse and a police record.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. Helping newly trained and enthusiastic clients locate good jobs can be difficult in a sluggish economy, especially when employers hesitate to risk hiring people who have had difficulties in the past. Subjecting people whose self-esteem is still fragile to a series of disappointments can be counterproductive to the goals and purpose of the Tabitha's House rehabilitation program. In the past, Tabitha's House has been able to depend on spontaneous contributions of goods and money from area churches and other organizations, rather than developing a grant seeking capacity. The CFBI grant has been one catalyst for encouraging the kind of grant seeking that other non-profits do as a matter of course. At the moment, however, the Goals for Life Program is dependent on EDD funds which may not be forthcoming in the future.

The place of faith in the program. Tabitha's House makes no effort to conceal the powerful Christian orientation of its residential program. "Most of our residents really didn't know life before, and we want them to experience a *way of life*," notes Miss Benny. Residents are encouraged, but not forced, to take part in her Bible study and other spiritual growth classes. We encountered only one Goals for Life participant who objected openly to this; others, even non-believers, expressed their gratitude for the efforts made to give them the chance to learn more about the Christian life:

And... uh... at night... it got kind of boring, and other people are readin' the Bible, so I started readin' the Bible, and the more I read the Bible, the more my life changed (half laugh).

They helped me find it to where I now wake up at 4 or 5 in the morning, and I just start my day with Christ, I pray, and read my Bible, every day, 7 days a week, at least 45 minutes to an hour... when my children get up in the morning, I've already done my prayer and my Bible reading, but every morning before they go to school, I read them a little story out of the Bible, and my children now can tell you what size the ark is, most people don't know that, you know, but because I've read them the story, and then I ask them questions as we're walking down to the bus stop, you know, to get them excited about it, they really like it, and then we read and pray together at night, and it's incredible how it's changed my life.

One instructor said:

When the girls come into our program, they're beaten down. And *they* think nobody loves them. And giving them something to believe in that they can't see—and once they build that, they have a hope that they *can* change, and life *can* be good, and that they're loved. In the Goals program, I don't focus it just on faith. I want the girls to have a little bit of everything, and then—whatever works for them, is how I think. Because what might work for Sandy won't work for Debby.

Program Participants

Interview sample. The first EDD roster of Goals for Life participants listed 46 clients who entered between May and December, 2002. Via random sampling methods, we reduced the list by half and were able to set up 10 in-person interviews in March, 2003. We later requested a second list (11 names entered in January, 2003) so that we could talk to some more recent program graduates, constructed another random sample, and talked to an additional four people. In other words, we attempted to contact 27 people in all and obtained 13 interviews, seven conducted in person at Tabitha's House and six done over the phone. In every case, our respondents were open, courteous, and friendly.

Expecting 13 people to be representative of all the Goals for Life participants since the program's inception is clearly unrealistic; all we can do is to describe some of the characteristics and experiences of the participants who were kind enough to talk to us. Our respondents ranged in age from 21-46. Nearly everyone we interviewed had at least one child, although in several cases their children were not living with them at that time. Three of our respondents were men. In the course of our conversations, five women mentioned that this was the second (for one, the third) time they had returned to Tabitha's House after a relapse.

Living arrangements. Residents of Tabitha's House live in what might be described as small apartments. The rent per month is \$500 for singles and \$700 for families. A number of respondents made it clear that they didn't want to leave Tabitha's House even though their treatment year was drawing to a close—or had ended some time ago—and were grateful for the policy of not insisting people depart before they feel ready. We were interested in learning what kinds of accommodations our respondents expected to have when they left Tabitha's House after their treatment year. Several women planned to move in temporarily, along with their children, with their relatives—generally a parent or grandparent—in order to save some money to get a place of their own; others hoped to find apartments in the Bakersfield area or to move away to a place like Arizona.

Employment. We asked the people in our sample about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. The men spoke of past employment in construction and in the oil fields, driving trucks, and doing apartment maintenance. Two of the women have been on disability much of their lives and have never worked. The rest described a variety of jobs, including dog grooming, cashiering (2) waitressing, parking cars, day care, clerical work (2), cake decorating and deli, and working in an ice cream shop, fast-food restaurants (3), and family businesses.

At the time of our interviews, six people were working full-time for pay outside the premises of Tabitha's House and one was working on a volunteer basis inside the facility. The kinds of employment included being a manicurist, a well puller on an oil rig, a weigh master at a truck

scale, plumbing swimming pools, and working in food service and for a temporary help agency. Several others were actively pursuing outside positions.

When we asked our respondents what they would like to do in the future, many women said that they enjoy meeting and working with people in a number of capacities. We learned that several would like to use their recovery to inspire others. For example, one woman who has never worked sees herself counseling women who, due to chemical dependency, have lost their children and have lost hope in themselves. Another would concentrate on teaching parenting skills to a similar population and a third would work with at-risk children who have been molested or are starting to do drugs. One young woman spoke of learning to be a dental hygienist and another of becoming a medical assistant. Others will continue with the work they are doing now and will look for other possibilities. Two of the men will continue or return to careers in the oil fields and the third will seek employment in construction or landscaping.

Education. Only four of our respondents had not finished high school. Of the high school graduates, seven have attended college for varying periods of time and a number of them are looking into returning. In addition, one man completed a course at a truck driving school.

Social self-classification. We asked our respondents whether they had any difficulty talking to strangers or making new friends. A number of them spoke of feeling shy most of their lives but finding themselves opening up at Tabitha's House. Others see themselves as outgoing by nature. We also asked whether respondents have formed new friendships during their time at Tabitha's House, especially enduring friendships that will last beyond the program. Without exception, our respondents put staff members into that category. As one woman told us:

And I'm so close to everybody here at Tabitha's House that I know that even after I graduate I'll be coming back to the Goals staff and saying 'hi' to them, and visiting. And who knows, maybe someday I'll come back and be a speaker.

A smaller number have found good friends among other people in the program—one woman said, "About 170 of them!" Another respondent referred to friendships that have extended beyond the program already. "I have friends that have graduated and left the program that I still talk with, or we'll barbecue on weekends, or whatnot." Other participants were selective about the people they spend time with. One man said, "I kinda stay with one set, [the ones who] want to make something out of themselves."

Personal faith. From the respondents who answered this question, we learned that eight did not feel that they had been raised in a religious or spiritual tradition. The rest had had some exposure to religion—"Well...my parents sent us to church but I don't remember them going with us"—but it hadn't been a central point in their life. Most of our respondents acknowledged a tremendous—even transformational—change in this area of their lives since coming to Tabitha's House. Joyful expressions of faith were the rule rather than the exception within this sample:

I'm full of Jesus! I knew Him, you know, but since I've come to Tabitha's House, Jesus is not just *on* me, now He's *in* me!

I think that the personal relationship with Christ that I have now today is through the teachings of this program, that allowed me to obtain that relationship. Had I not come to this program, I would not have a relationship with Christ that I have today.

Asked what brought this change about, respondents gave credit to Tabitha's House teachings, including the Bible study:

Ahhh—these programs, and how my life's changed around since I started readin' the Bible.

...just finding myself and going to classes, and just spending some time to myself and...getting back in the reading [of] the Bible, and just mainly the classes and stuff.

The classes here. Being able to get closer to God, having them explain just how to do it, and that...just because we've sinned, we're not going to die and go to hell...as long as we believe and confess, and that's helped me a lot.

Several people tied a strong personal faith to being successful in their recovery, based upon the success of others who had graduated from the program. For example:

She stayed here two years and changed remarkably. I never thought that she would go into a home and take it to heart... [Previously] she had got off parole also, and her and I spent most of our time in and out of prison. At any rate, she made it. She's very successful, she got off disability, she's working...

...seeing some of the people that graduated from here already, they come back, and they're doing well spiritually, and they're not messing up their lives any more. I can't really speak on anyone else but for me...I learned here, if you walk away from God, you just—walk away. Things don't seem to go as well.

...the program works. I've seen many, many people graduate, people that graduated five years ago that come back, and you can see how well they're doing.

Even respondents who have skepticism about religion were giving it a chance, based on what they were seeing around them. One woman said:

I would still call myself non-denominational. But my faith is much stronger since I've been exposed to the teachings and the beliefs. ... And a lot [in the Bible studies] I still find that I have a hard time accepting it, not that I don't believe it; like, well, it doesn't apply to me today. But I actually like the Bible studies a lot...those studies can help you at least come closer to an acceptance if not an answer.

This woman was annoyed with the small dissenting faction (she estimated 2-3 percent) who act out during the theological classes:

Some people, it drives me crazy with the way they downtalk it. Even while they're sitting there in class. It's beyond rude, it's like, you have your right to your opinion but so does everybody else, so you should keep your opinions to yourself. I mean, there's a lot of people out there who just don't believe yet because they haven't been exposed to it enough, but that's different than actually being forcefully put-down, you know? A lot of these people are still vulnerable in that if they have the right teachings, they can believe it and they really come a long ways, and yet if they have the wrong teachings, they can really go back the other way. So I think maybe we all should work with the program and let happen what's going to happen with each person.

Asked whether the obligatory nature of the classes and the requirements for attending church would put too much pressure on a person who wasn't religious, one of the men reassured us from his own experience:

They didn't push it on me. There's a lot of spiritual teaching, they don't push it on you but, I mean [long pause] you're gonna, you're gonna grow, a little, and it may be slow growth, but you will grow, spiritually, in time.

The only person among our respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the religious nature of the program told us:

[I don't like the religious studies] because I feel like a person who—the Lord is here when you should be able to know Him on your own, if you really want to know Him... There's Bible studies in the morning, and I know most of the people here don't want to go. And they don't like going out to *their* church for two to three hours on Sundays.

Two respondents chose instead to emphasize the voluntary nature of joining Tabitha's House in the first place:

And so, if there's something that you wanted to change, there's a million other programs out here, this is Miss Benny's program and the way she runs it works good for a lot of people. And some it doesn't, but there's other programs out there; some people need more than one program.

...they know before they come in that this is a Christian home, so there are certain requirements, and... if they don't want to be here, then they don't got to. So everyone here knows that, and [she believes] it doesn't bother anyone.

Respondents' Experience with the Goals for Life program. In this section, we report our interpretation of the perceptions of the program participants we interviewed, taken from their responses to our questions. In some cases, we also refer to the initial scoping survey, as well as to the interviews conducted with program staff.

Entry into the program. We asked respondents how they happened to come to Tabitha's House and thus into the Goals for Life program, which only serves residents. At least eight respondents who were entering the residential program for the first time were court-ordered and/or referred by their probation officers. They did have a choice of programs, however, which one woman described to us:

They said there were some programs that I could choose from, and he [the probation officer] gave me a list of about five or six that he felt comfortable with, and Tabitha's House was one of the ones that would allow me to come with my children, so I chose this one and he, of course, endorsed it; he suggested it.

Another respondent did her own research:

Well, basically, the judge sentenced me to a year in an in-home program and I went to the law library and asked them for a copy of all the homes that were available to me. There were three pages, actually. A lot of them were state-funded programs...and I chose to go into one that was not...so that I could work and pay my own way. I figured it would be nice to be in a place that would let you live your life and be there to support you. This is

the one I chose...number one, it was a program that my daughter could come live with me at...and Tabitha's House was the cheaper of the self-paid programs. It didn't bother me in the least [that it's a faith-based program] and as far as me liking it that way, I've never really had much experience with religion, and I was open to just about anything.

Other first time court-ordered respondents acted on the advice of relatives and friends who had some personal knowledge of Tabitha's House:

My cousin went there. And she made it through, and she's doing fine already. I mean, she's been out of here for 3 years now, and she's still doing really, really good, and so she recommended it.

Concerned relatives checked out Tabitha's house for two first-time respondents, and another followed the advice of her pastor.

People who entered the program voluntarily included some who had dropped out previously and had convinced Miss Benny to give them another chance. Others saw it as their last chance to turn their lives around:

I'd lost my children for the third time and I was just [distracted], and I just basically wanted to turn my life [around]. I wasn't court-ordered here but it helped to get my children back... My husband heard about Tabitha's House 'cause my cousin was in the program, and so then a couple of other people told us about Miss Benny, and we came here.

One woman had worked at a nearby treatment facility and selected Tabitha's House for herself and her husband as a sort of wedding present when they married so that they could begin their life together clean and sober.

Services offered/received. The Goals for Life program teaches such standard practices as responding to advertisements with formal letters, writing resumes, filling out applications, and preparing for and undergoing interviews (videotaped so that they can watch themselves fidget). Toward the end of the course they watch a video that shows how to dress appropriately for various kinds of jobs. Throughout the 10-week course, the underlying themes are "You can do it" and "You're worth it." It is this aspect of the course to which most respondents referred when asked what they learned:

Patience... Learning how to present myself before people...My dressing, my appearance—they go into everything. They are helping me with the areas of my life, that it's okay to talk about the issues that had caused me to relapse in my past...And that's something else I learned from the Goals class: the only stupid questions are the ones not asked.

There was so much positive input...It really boosted morale, self-esteem. It wasn't just educational, there was, you know, a lot of feedback, a lot of participation...There was a lot of information given to us, whether it was best to go back to school or work.

Well, basically, from them I feel like I got confidence. Just the fact that they made me feel like regardless of what I've done, or what my record looks like, there's [work] out there. If I'm willing to do it, there's ways of doing it; I just have to self-help a little. If I had to put my finger on it [what taught her that], probably just because they talk to us and

treat us like we're people. Not just part of a number system. It's amazing what that can do for a person's self-confidence when they're already down on themselves. Just somebody saying, 'You can do it.' And someone that's willing to be there whenever they can be to answer questions or just sit and talk, which is what the ladies in the Goals program have provided for all of us here.

I learned—the most important thing I learned is that I'm not alone, there's other people out there like me.

Respondents also appreciated the educational component of the Goals course:

I learned to put words in proper perspective. I never been really of a serious type, a business-minded person, and I mean—it just may be something small to you, but due to the lifestyle I come from, it really meant a lot to me to learn...working computers, oh, that was fabulous! Not to see somebody do it but to be on the computer doing something positive for my own self.

I like the focus on the career part. A lot of girls have gotten jobs, after they leave here, when they finish the Goals. It makes 'em—more experienced; there's a hope that they can still get a job.

It really helped me with the things that it took me to get the kind of job that I wanted. Oh yeah. If I wanted to learn—the stuff I learned in the program really helped me go through the interview, that got me the job.

Peer interaction was another helpful attribute of the Goals program. Students were encouraged to share experiences and help one another along the way and the instructors were regarded as peers as well, due to their common experiential history:

And then, of course, the group itself, we help each other too...the ones of us that had a little more experience in this area helped out the ones that didn't—you know, we're kind of a family here. I like it.

Probably Goals helped me more than anything...just people talking, you know, not that I was the only one, and the teachers, you know, that have gone through the same thing that I had gone through, so they could relate to us. And just to get, you know, out talking again...

Relationship with staff. Several respondents—male and female alike—sometimes choked up as they tried to express their feelings about the many areas in which the Goals instructors and Miss Benny have helped them. Respondents most often valued, first, the respect and honesty with which they were treated; second, the staff's availability and willingness to talk; and third, the way one of the instructors has put her own life on display without reservation to show that past history, however painful, can be overcome and a new way of life successfully embraced.

Examples of their comments follow:

Because you know that if you talk to somebody and you're not going to get some whitewashed answer that's out of a textbook, that you'll open up because you're more comfortable.

They're in the office during the daytime hours if you need them. And they're always friendly and willing to talk. They treat us like we're on the same level. Because so many times, you know, felons—people just out of jail—we get treated like we're below, you know, the dirt under their feet and we're not worth the time, but they don't treat us that way. And that's a *good* thing!

It's [the Goals program] really awesome. And you know what, it was an inspiration to me because, for one, she was an addict like my mother, and her story was just—it was awesome, and she overcame her addiction and she was doing something about it to help other people, and that really just touched me. And everything she had to say was just awesome, and they gave us positive affirmations, you know, goals, and that we wrote and hung on her wall, and those really helped a lot.

Interaction with other agencies. Several respondents reported being referred to the Career Services Center for job-seeking experience, and there the Goals program helped them again:

It was really helpful to know how to get on the computer, because you have to there, and there's a lady that will help you but, you know, they get awful busy, so if you don't know what you're doing, you're going to be stuck.

One man expressed a common complaint about other job agencies:

I went out probably on...I would say over 30 different interviews, or application places, and never once got a job through one of those other agencies. And a lot of jobs were minimum wage, were \$6.00 an hour or \$7.00 an hour, and I was going out on them anyway because at the time I had to have work...but the realization of it was that I could draw a welfare check and it was more money than minimum wage.

A Goals instructor referred one respondent to the West Tech temporary help agency and he was very pleased with the job he got through them. Respondents who had sampled other temporary help agencies on their own didn't like them:

...because they were so impersonal, and if you didn't meet their criteria exactly, which basically was, you have to have a year-long work history in order to even qualify; well, if I had a year-long work history, I wouldn't be there (laughs). But the Goals program basically hooked me up with different ideas like the Career Services Center here in Bakersfield.

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience, we classified possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness); remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment); educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED instruction, entering college, vocational training); and employment (getting a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal outcomes. Every one of the respondents we spoke with indicated that they were feeling better about themselves and their futures than they did when they arrived. For example:

Very much so. I used to hang my head down when I talked to a person; I'd find myself even more [ashamed]. I can look you in the eye and talk to you because—I *am* somebody!

Respondents were also learning to take responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviors, and for the results they encountered:

If this program works, if you want it to, it's really self-determination, what you want to do for yourself. It's really up to the individual how much they [accomplish].

And it's just really a program where, if you want to change, they really help you change. And if you don't want to change, they send you down the road.

Remedial outcomes. It is difficult to separate the responses we received into ones dealing exclusively with Goals, since it and the residential program are both addressing the goal of enabling participants to overcome their addictions from different directions. For example:

[The program helps] just to show how you can live a sober life, and spiritual life, and—you don't need to run amuck to (laughs) have fun. And, you know, just to get my self back.

Yes, I feel ready to take on a job at this point, as long as I know that I can come back here and cry on somebody's shoulder if I need to, and that's another thing that they do provide for us.

Educational outcomes. Goals instructors encourage students who have not completed their high school educations to study for and take GED exams while they're at Tabitha's House and to consider enrolling in or returning to college. Respondents often take their words to heart:

I never graduated, you know, I was a C- and D and F student when I did go to school, but being a member in that Goals class, I'm going back to school.

They also teach you goals for your life, they make you have a brighter outlook on things. They put something in my head to where—I told 'em one day that I would probably never be able to go to school 'cause I have a heart problem, and I was wrong, because now I am a full-time student at Bakersfield College.

I am going back to school. Right now, I'm currently in the process of enrolling at Summit Bible College. You can get to work in facilities like this, to teach classes, to be a counselor... There's a lot of different things you can do.

Employment outcomes. As part of the Goals program, students are expected to look for work and it is a proud moment when they find it:

When you participate in Goals, they ask you to job search, too. So I had been job searching, but finally, a job came through, so—I've been working since last Friday! It's really taught me a lot this time... Like I said, when I did the program before, they didn't have Goals, *we* didn't have Goals, it was just a faith-based program. But now that they have these other options for us, I think that's what really [makes the program work].

As a matter of fact, I gained employment—I think I was here a couple months, and I gained employment [at] the Centennial Gardens as a parking attendant, so it really helped me.

Goals for Life instructors are careful to ascertain the skills and preferences of each respondent before sending them out to look for work, and use the resume-building process to help bring to the surface all the positive parts of a participant's history and present them in the most positive light possible. Respondents appreciated this intensive assistance and noted that it paid off:

And she [the Goals instructor] really took time, and one-on-one, and searched whatever methods she had to search, and I ended up getting the job, paying more money than...When I got my first job out of Goals for Life, the starting wage was \$18.70, and within three weeks, I think I was making \$29.00 an hour, and I never even worked in that field, but all my experience, and the things I had done in the past, even though I didn't think about going to that kind of work, all my experience and the stuff that I'd been doing my whole life, led right to that would be a perfect position for me. She helped me do a resume on the computer. It looked real nice and professional, and I knew all the information on the resume. And she just helped me with every step.

One respondent contrasted the Goals approach to her experience with the local CalWORKS office:

Well, CalWORKS, they just wanted me to get into something where I could get a job right away, [not like Goals, where they work with you] to see what you really like, what you're good at...If you do well at it, then you like it, you stick with it, and that's what they help you with here, they teach you how to keep a job, that means you have to like it in order to keep it. You don't like it, you're not gonna stay.

Participant Perspectives on the Program

Overall impressions. We asked our respondents whether they thought participating in the program had made or would make a significant difference in their lives. Everyone in our sample said that it already had. In addition to the reasons already quoted throughout this paper, several said that they felt that their lives have been saved.

Near the end of each interview, we also asked our respondents to tell us what they thought was the best thing for them about the program and also to make suggestions for improving the program.

What was the best thing about the program? The following comments reflect the sense of the responses we received to this question:

The morale building and self-esteem, and the fact that they trust—you know, the fact that there's always an open door.

A lot of it, I think, is the teachers that did it...they had went through the same thing I did, so it showed me, you know, that you can still build your life, and get past it, and, you know, have a sensible life.

The best thing is, I guess, how the class is ran. Because the stuff that we do in there, it just helps us individually grow.

I got my confidence back, to get out into the real world to get my job back, you know. I'm not the only one, everyone has problems, and it helped me spiritually and through my drug rehab. Mostly, though, to get my confidence back, to get back out in the world.

A lot of outlets, I have a lot of outlets right now. Before, I was real negative; now I'm very positive—because of the people that run this [Goals program]. Because negative don't get you nowhere.

I guess it's the friendliness of the staff. And the concern that they have that you are there in class and that you are able to succeed.

It was mainly just—help me get a job, especially because I'm a felon, I got all kinds of stuff on my record. I needed that foot in the door, yeah (laughs).

The best thing was...I would say I got sent to jobs that were actually hiring...for the type of work that I wanted, the goals that I had learned to set through the Goals program, and I went to interviews for the jobs that met those. Other programs that I've gone through...they would send you to anything...and it wouldn't matter if it was a minimum wage job. I have a lot of kids and minimum is just not going to cut it; I get more money on welfare than working 40 hours on minimum wage. So, she really understood all that, and really sent me to the jobs that could make a difference, you know.

It helped employ me. I mean, that's really important for everybody in here, 'cause...even if you're not gonna use any more, if you get out without a job—really, where are you? You're right back where you were. You know, unless you're working, and a regular member of society, you're bound for failure as far as I'm concerned.

The best thing about it is that it works. Cause it worked for me. I just gained a sense of responsibility!

How could the program be improved? A number of respondents had some thoughtful suggestions. One was to establish a relationship with an outside job placement agency so that when Goals students or graduates were sufficiently stabilized and felt ready to go to work, the agency would place them, even temporarily, in a job that might already be arranged for the purpose of giving people some experience in the workplace. The author of this suggestion thought that perhaps a temporary help agency might be the appropriate place to work on this basis:

Maybe... a little more support in transportation? Even if we start out with, like, bus cards. [Staff member] has transportation for people; you go to her and let her know, we have appointments. [It would help] to give her some financial support in that transportation issue.

The only thing I might be able to say is, to have alternative class times for people like me that are working, and so that I wouldn't have to miss the class times; there would be the availability of actually going in for the hour. ...It wasn't really a problem for me, because like I said, they were willing to help me out with it, but if I had to put in an honest criticism, I would say they have to provide some evening/makeup class or something. And same with the computer class that goes along with Goals—in my opinion, they need to make the computer hours more readily available for the working group.

So it would be really cool if we had...and I don't know if they could do that in a place like this, but like the Internet access to where you can apply online is easier.

I think more assistance with [information for] disabled people. For example, I went up to the college and tried to enroll, I wasn't aware there was a disability office at the college...And then, where I was directed, I wasn't eligible.

Future interaction with the program. When asked whether respondents thought they would remain in touch with the staff after they graduated, this interview sample demonstrated an unusual solidarity when all of them said immediately that they would. We also asked if they would recommend the Goals for Life program to a friend, we received another set of positive responses. A couple of examples:

Oh yes, I recommend them. When I'm on the bus and I see people, I always encourage them to stop by here. And it works.

You betcha. And I have. A lot of the girls I was in jail with this last time I encouraged to find help, and that maybe this would be one source.

And the things that I've learned here, are nothing short of—a miracle of God. This place is—this place is a miracle.

Goals for Life, January, 2005

Although the Goals program has remained substantially as described in our initial report, the present Program Director told us about some of the things that have changed since she joined Tabitha's House in February, 2004. For example, there is a greater emphasis—and greater demonstrated success—in helping clients gain employment and continue their education, especially in completing the GED course offered at Bakersfield College. Classroom instruction has become more structured, with more accountability expected in the areas of attendance, participation, and behavior. Where once all participants in Goals were in recovery from substance abuse, formerly homeless residents have been part of the mix (as long as they meet EDD qualifications) since April, 2004 when Tabitha's House received a HUD grant to serve that population. The Program Director notes that, as a general rule, this group tends to be easier to place in jobs than those newly in recovery, which has helped to increase employment figures.

Reflections on the CFBI Experience

The present Program Director did not experience the early challenges of aligning a free-form faith-based grassroots organization with a highly structured government-based reporting system. However, she has benefited greatly from the continuing support provided by EDD's Program Manager, who has been a constant presence both in person and by phone, and feels that Tabitha's House owes its considerably improved organizational capacity to EDD's assistance. Practical outcomes of this assistance include winning a large federal grant and gaining the respect of such referring agencies as the Department of Probation and Child Protective Services, which the Program Director believes is "a remarkable accomplishment for a small faith-based minority-owned organization in Bakersfield." Asked what was best about CFBI, she felt that it entrusted community-based organizations like Tabitha's House with the means to serve their own special constituencies rather than making all decisions at the state level.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

Of the 14 participants we spoke with during the first round, we were able to reconnect with 9 in December, 2003 and January, 2004. All had graduated from the Goals program but 5 of them were still living at Tabitha's House. Asked what they had gained from Goals, most respondents spoke of improvements in their self-confidence (5) and self-esteem (2). They valued employment-oriented skills they learned through the program, such as better communication (2), the ability to look for work (2), and techniques for handling interviews, especially when they had felonies and/or substance abuse on their records (2). As one respondent says,

I think that most of the time the Goals program helps most of the people I know with self-esteem, and just the courage to keep trying, which I already have (laughs), but, you know, and a lot of the people that are in the home have never had jobs, they don't know how to go about...even looking for work. So a lot of times Goals teaches you that, and it kinds of gives you some quick ins to where to go, and how to do it, and where to go get help with resumes, and what a resume is, you know, that type of thing.

Five of the 9 (all women) have jobs, although the two who are employed by family-run businesses weren't working regularly. Positions included cooking at McDonald's, building swimming pools, weighing trucks, and housecleaning. Wages ranged from \$7.00 to \$10.00 per hour. Another respondent has a dormant pressure-washing business that he expected to start up again in the spring. A single father volunteers 50-60 hours per week doing maintenance at Tabitha's House and repairs vehicles on the side, an arrangement that allows him to raise his young family of four. Two respondents are enrolled in school, one in a local Bible college and the other in a nursing program (while working full time). Two others have definite plans to continue their education.

The best thing about the Goals program for 5 people was the help they received from the instructors, who were interested in every aspect of their lives, always ready to talk about problems, and helped them set both short- and long-term goals for themselves. One of the respondents captured the trepidation many felt about looking for jobs and their gratitude to the staff when she said:

The best part of the program for me was helping me to overcome my intimidation, and the fear of actually going out looking for a job, and then maybe...being turned down from a job. Overcoming that. And how I would react to it. And how I'd feel about it. ...the Goals for Life is just wonderful, there's not, you know, a lot of words to say, except for...the staff there is there to help you, and they will help you get a job, and they will help you. I mean, they can't get the job for you, you have to do it yourself, but they can sure build your confidence and your self-esteem to do that.

All 9 participants were very positive about their experience at Tabitha's House and would gladly refer others needing help to the facility; 3 already have. We were interested to find that the only individual in the first round who objected to the faith-permeated nature of Tabitha's House now sees that part of her experience as important to her recovery:

[Y]ou don't have to be a spiritual person to go through the Goals. You know, I wouldn't say you have to be spiritual...Yeah, I'm saying, even if somebody didn't have any spiritual...you know, life at all, they could walk in there and still gain something, yes, they could.

Since only residents can enter Goals, respondents couldn't refer others directly to the program but they would be willing to—as one said, “Yeah, if they were not in Tab, I'd have to refer them to come into Tabitha's House first.” Three felt that the Goals program had made a significant difference in their lives and all said that it had been helpful to them.

Future of the Goals for Life Program

EDD funding for the Goals program ceased at the end of January, 2005, but the program will continue. Whether it will have to be downsized is not yet clear. Tabitha's House has applied for WIA funds to help support it and, if successful in obtaining a second HUD contract, would adapt the program more to the needs of the homeless population. The Program Director envisions a closer relationship with the local One-Stop for training and other pre-employment services while Goals would concentrate on providing soft skills. There would be a greater emphasis on money handling—budgeting, cleaning up credit records—and locating housing as well as employment. Tabitha's House itself plans to relocate to new facilities this year and expects to expand its operation as funding is obtained, working with both the homeless and addicts on a residential basis.

Case Study #6

Wardrobe for Opportunity: Dressing for Success and Pathways to Opportunity Programs

Organizational Profile

Local setting	Alameda and Contra Costa Counties
Primary program participants	Women preparing for job interviews or employed
Years established prior to EDD grant	6
Previous government grants?	No
Previous workforce development experience	Yes
Total staff (FTE) at CFBI peak/ Total volunteer hours at CFBI peak	5.5 1,000 hours
Total participants at CFBI peak Dressing for Success Pathways to Opportunity	170/month 21/session
Approximate staff-participant ratio at CFBI peak	<i>Dressing.:</i> 1:31; <i>Pathways:</i> 1:10
Role of faith in service delivery	Secular program
CFBI funding allocations 2002-03: \$100,000 (18 mo.) 2003-05: \$110,000 (15 mo.)	Total program budget 2002: \$368,000 2003: \$425,000 2004: \$465,000

Wardrobe for Opportunity describes itself as “a volunteer-based nonprofit organization founded in 1996 that provides free business clothing and career support to economically disadvantaged women in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties so that they can project the image and self-esteem to find and maintain employment.” Founded in 1996, Wardrobe for Opportunity’s Dressing for Success program provides free business clothing to women in Alameda and Contra Costa counties who cannot afford appropriate work wardrobes. Dressing for Success served almost 5,000 individuals in its first six years of operation. A newer program, Pathways to Opportunity, serves a small, select group of women to improve job retention and advancement. The money received from the EDD grant enabled Wardrobe to complement the clothing already available through donations with selective purchases of hard to secure items, such as shoes, accessories, or large-sized outfits, and to hold an extra 8-week session of the Pathways program.

The major facets of this case study as presented here include

- a description of the program itself and a brief sketch of the staff members who construct and deliver the program on a day-to-day basis;
- a profile of the program participants seen both through our interpretations of interviews with 21 of them and through staff perceptions; and
- an analysis of what our semi-structured interviews reveal about participant experiences while in the program and their progress toward the goal of stable employment.

The Dressing for Success and Pathways to Opportunity Programs

Program description. Dressing for Success, the program that offers stylish professional clothing and accessories, was first established in a small house in Walnut Creek and has since expanded to

include a similar but smaller boutique in the back of a clothing store in Oakland. Ninety percent of Wardrobe's effort is devoted to this undertaking. Women come to Wardrobe primarily by referral from public and nonprofit service providers and make an appointment to spend an hour choosing two interview outfits in consultation with a trained volunteer "dresser." Those who succeed in getting jobs are able to return to select another 3-5 work outfits. While helping clients pick out clothing that flatters them and is appropriate for the interview or job, volunteers explain how to dress and accessorize with skill and panache. The experience is carefully designed to help participants develop a positive self-image and greater confidence as an applicant and employee.

Pathways to Opportunity is a job-retention program designed for employed women in their initial months of employment. As one staff member stated: "About the time the welfare department is celebrating because someone has found a job is usually the hardest time for the client, who is dealing with new work demands, child care, transportation, clothing, financial issues, etc." Program brochures describe an effort that *helps "working poor women" overcome workplace, financial, and personal challenges during the first months of employment.* Led by two skilled trainers, a group of about 20 women make a firm commitment to meet on eight (increased from seven by popular request) Saturday mornings for interactive instruction. A flexible curriculum is adapted to reflect the group's interests. Each group develops an intimacy and a personality of its own, providing peer support and a forum for problem solving. The trainers offer one-on-one coaching sessions to those who want them and arrange a panel presentation of potential role models that is one of the most popular parts of the program. Participants in Pathways who have not already visited Wardrobe for free outfits are invited to do so.

Distinguishing features. (1) Wardrobe has by far the most successful community volunteer program in our study—140 of them (giving 7,000 hours annually) are trained and supervised by the staff Volunteer Coordinator—and receive high marks from the clients with whom they work. (2) The organization is very clever at leveraging its assets—primarily donated clothing and volunteer labor—so that approximately 80 percent of its program funds go "out the door to people," as the Executive Director describes it. (3) Compared to other CFBI organizations, Wardrobe's Dress for Success program serves a much larger number of clients each year (albeit in a more limited fashion), illustrating how a nonprofit that occupies a clear service delivery niche can be a valuable partner to many other organizations and have a substantial impact on many lives. (4) Staff report that the experience of working with low-income people has softened the attitudes of volunteers toward this population and has dispelled some unexamined generalizations they formerly held about "poor people." (5) The clothing must meet extremely high standards of quality and condition before being offered to the clients; the program doesn't use thrift-store material. (6) The women we interviewed who have experienced one or both of the programs are uniformly enthusiastic about their experiences. (7) At the annual benefit luncheon, two clients are chosen to be the Women of the Year, an honor that carries with it a cash award, several gifts from local merchants, and the right to pick out a new outfit every month.

Program participants. Wardrobe was established to serve East Bay women who are in low-income situations, although it attracts women in need from around the Bay Area. About half its clients come from Oakland, and of these, about 90 percent are African-American. Pathways participants are largely White, with a couple of African-American and Hispanic women. The age range for Wardrobe clients tends to center around women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, with occasional teenagers and a few people in their 50s. Pathways participants range from the 20s into the 50s. As one staff person describes it:

Many of our clients have never worn a suit before, some of them have never worked before, some of them haven't worked in 20 years, some of them are, you know, we've had

everybody from welfare, generational welfare, to Ph.D.'s, come through here. It's just a matter of circumstances. I like to say to my volunteers when I do an orientation: 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.'

The Pathways participants we interviewed tended to be older and more mature compared to the respondents in the other five CFBI programs we are profiling. Describing her fellow Pathways participants, one woman noted:

I think the women who come through this program, they're really ready for something, you know, they're really ready, and they're open...to learning, and to communicating, and I'm just like inspired by, you know, how motivated they are. And many of these women have a lot of...you know, barriers to overcome, or have overcome a lot of barriers, and they're fighters, you know, which is very inspiring.

Program staff and volunteers. Wardrobe's paid staff includes a full-time Executive Director whose agenda includes considerable fundraising activities, a full-time Program Manager, a part-time Program Service Coordinator, and a part-time Volunteer Coordinator, plus contract trainers who conduct the Pathway sessions in pairs. All are women of varying ages, and they bring varied work and educational backgrounds to their positions. Uniformly, they bring a strong sense of commitment to the work and enjoy working for an organization that can play such a meaningful role in the lives of other women. As one remarked, "I just wanted to do something that was a passion."

As in many small nonprofits, Wardrobe staff must wear many hats, but each has a primary area of responsibility that is clearly defined. One staff person works with referring agencies to ensure that Wardrobe's policies and procedures are understood and that a more or less steady flow of participants is forthcoming. Given their experience of frequent staff turnover in the referring agencies, program staff resend Wardrobe's packets of materials and revisit agencies regularly to maintain connections. This same person coordinates clothes collection at a variety of drop-off locations around the area.

Another staff person takes the lead in scheduling appointments and matching participants and volunteers. She calls participants the day before to remind them of their appointment—even so the no-show rate is about 20%. This staff person also greets participants when they arrive, extending warm hospitality, and letting them know what to expect.

Another staff person coordinates the volunteers, handling recruitment, orientations, and any problems that may arise. A great deal of care is taken to create the right ambiance so that clients feel treated with respect, and the experience is fun for both client and volunteer:

So, the client comes in, you check out what they're going to be doing, get an idea of what kind of size they need and everything...you set your boundaries, you introduce yourself and then you start the fun of dressing, because it's an instant gratification thing: 'Hi, I'm Joan, I'm going to be your dresser today, I'm glad to meet you, this is going to be fun.' You know, set it up, an expectation of making it light and fun, because it should be.

Community volunteers (almost exclusively women) come from a multitude of directions—from the wealthy neighborhood in which the Walnut Creek program is located; from friends of the founder, board members, and other volunteers; from churches and businesses that contribute financially to Wardrobe; from the web site, the annual fund-raising picnic, and word-of-mouth. Besides dressing the clients, volunteers spend their time sorting and inventorying donated

clothing and cleaning, ironing, and racking it; shopping for attractive clothing in all sizes so that clients who need extra large or extra small sizes are not disappointed; and assisting the Executive Director with fundraising.

The Pathways trainers must apply to Wardrobe to be facilitators of the Saturday sessions. They work in teams of two. For one popular session the trainers invite in a panel of working women who have succeeded in overcoming challenges to become employed. Otherwise, the trainers use a published workforce preparation curriculum, which emphasizes topics like conflict resolution, dealing with people who are not like yourself, and problem-solving, and adapting these materials to meet the specific needs and interests of the group members.

So when we get into problem-solving, people would look at some of the issues that were happening right then and there, on their jobs, and decide, 'You know what? I'm going to start looking to use my skills, my strengths, my ways of communicating, at a different place.' They kind of recapture some of their dreams. Which is really a heady experience.

The Pathways trainer that we interviewed indicated that she provides her phone number to participants, and invites them to call when the need arises. A few participants take advantage of this and develop a mentoring relationship with the trainer. For example, one participant called some weeks after the training had ended to get advice related to an upcoming job interview.

How Staff Define Success. The basic theory of change underlying Wardrobe's Dress for Success program begins with the premise that personal image as reflected in clothing is a key component of presenting oneself at a job interview. As the program's founder describes it:

I'm a career counselor by profession, and worked in the out-placement business for a number of years, and one of the things that I did with people was work on their professional image. This was very important, because your first impression is almost 60% visual, so when I lay eyes on you, I decide in my subconscious if I'm going to give you an opportunity to present what you have to say, basically. So I got to thinking that for people who didn't have money, this must be a huge barrier for employment.

The free professional clothing provided by the program is intended to help lower income women who would otherwise be at a competitive disadvantage in job interviews. The ultimate goal of the program is to help participants find and keep jobs. The more immediate outcome sought is to boost participants' self-esteem and self-confidence as they embark on a job interview. As one staff member described this goal: "I think just in a very basic level, just having someone find an outfit that they like, and that they go out of here feeling a little bit more self-confident than they did coming in." Asked how she knows if the program is succeeding, another member of the program staff said:

If they're happy, I mean, if they leave with a big, fat smile on their face, and they're excited. Once in a while we'll have a client that will come in, and it's like she's just going through the motions, but then there'll be a client that will come in with like...you know, you see that they have some kind of hope, and so...it makes it more exciting for you, and you want to give them more clothes, you want to help them out more, and when you have that feeling, it's just so much compassion for this person, of wanting to help them even more than you need to. That's it, that's success.

The Pathways program was developed in response to the concern that many participants who succeed in getting jobs have trouble keeping them. The goal of this program is job retention, and the ultimate measure of success is whether a participant can retain their current job or advance to a better job. More proximal measures of success include progress in solving problems or overcoming barriers that impact their ability to keep a job.

For the project director, all this work fits within a larger context of meaning: “For me, it’s all about eliminating poverty. So success is helping women and children thrive in California.”

Challenges to success: for program participants. Low incomes are the primary barrier, especially as this impacts participant wardrobes. Although they may be employed, some of the women referred to Wardrobe by service organizations may be struggling with ongoing poverty, mental and physical abuse at home, chemical dependencies, and the challenges of rebuilding their lives after the death or departure of a partner, after incarceration, or after illness. These are all issues that may block their ability to locate and qualify for better-paying jobs.

Challenges to success: for the program itself. As an organization that relies heavily on private and corporate giving, Wardrobe faces difficult fundraising challenges in the current economic climate. The CFBI funds are welcome, but at the same time the programmatic and reporting requirements for the WIA grant are so demanding that Wardrobe has been forced to increase its overhead by hiring a part-time employee to cope with the paperwork and tracking. EDD paperwork—designed for job training programs—does not fit well with Wardrobe’s typical encounter with a client, which takes place in the space of a one-hour appointment in which the client is to be dressed. It appears to make little sense to fill out four different forms as part of that time. In addition, staff fear that the WIA profile forms that clients must fill out will serve as reminders of their difficulties and bring them down with a crash just when the Wardrobe experience was making them feel happy and optimistic about their futures.

The place of faith in the program. Aside from receiving donations and referrals from local churches on occasion, Wardrobe doesn’t have a faith component per se. Some staff members spoke of their own commitment to this kind of work as stemming from a spiritual upbringing and beliefs. As one said, “I think that my—not so much religious—but my spiritual upbringing and spiritual beliefs are what draws me to this kind of work and helps me stay in this kind of work.” Other staff indicated they are not particularly religious, and one stated, “I was looking around for some way to give back, with my professional background, in the community.”

Program Participants

Interview sample. We randomly selected 28 names from the list of 538 program participants provided to us by EDD. The sample was constructed to include 14 individuals who had experienced both Pathways and Dress for Success, and 14 who had only experienced Dress for Success. Of the 28, we succeeded in completing interviews with 12 individuals, nine of whom had been part of the Pathways program. All the interviews were conducted over the telephone.

The participants we were able to interview included nine individuals over the age of 35, and in general these individuals displayed a maturity that exceeded that of participants in the other five CFBI programs we have profiled. By its very nature, the Wardrobe program is dealing with a somewhat selective group of clients—namely, women who are either on the verge of employment or have already become employed. Many of these individuals have had to overcome significant barriers to get to where they are. For example, two mentioned histories of substance abuse. One of the pleasures associated with Wardrobe programs is that they encounter these clients at the

point where they are “recapturing their dreams,” and our transcripts reveal the joy and energy that is unleashed in many of the women.

Descriptive profile on Wardrobe participants. For simplicity, we are combining those with and without Pathways experience in the following sections.

Living arrangements. Only one participant we interviewed did not live in an apartment or house (she lives in a shelter for individuals with disabilities). Two live with a spouse and their children; three live alone with their children; five others do not live with children; and two interviews did not reveal the living situation. The ages of the children vary from very young in some cases to a house full of teenagers in another, and at least one participant has two grandchildren. Asked to assess the quality of their housing/living situation, a number expressed misgivings, or aspirations to move into a better situation:

I want to better myself. I want to be able to buy a house, my own, something that I can call my own, yeah.

No, I live in a bad neighborhood, so I stay indoors most of the time.

No, I live with others, yeah, I'm in a share-rental situation where I rent a couple of rooms in a house, condo actually. I've done that for quite some time, there's no other way I can survive.

No, no, actually, the neighborhood isn't so bad, it's just the complex that I live in, anybody with bad kids, they live in here, you know, got to deal with kids, so I don't let my kids play a lot with them.

Employment. We asked the people interviewed about their employment history, their current job status, and the kinds of work they would like to do in the future. All of the Wardrobe participants for whom we have useable data report previous employment experience, and most were employed at the time of the interview. Three individuals made comments that indicated a work history that might raise questions for potential employers.

Most of those who are employed make between \$10-14 per hour in office, clerk, or classroom aide positions. One woman is a materials handler who loads freight, and another is a food service worker for a school district. One of the participants has a salaried professional job as a disability specialist and housing coordinator. Many of the women who had participated in Pathways were contemplating moving into new types of jobs, drawing on their new sense of confidence. One said:

I'm looking for...an administrative/accounting position. So the job I went to for today was as a sheriff's aide, and...you know, that's many hats, really (laughs). I think it went really well, it was a panel interview, and they asked me some tough questions and I gave them, I feel, very good answers. I think that I would be great for this position, because I'm a people person and I'm into problem-solving, and I don't panic.

Education. More than half of the respondents have either previously completed a post-secondary certificate or degree program, or are currently pursuing such a degree. Three individuals indicated their intent to pursue such a degree in the future (e.g., an AA degree in day care, a RN license, a dental hygienist). None of the Wardrobe participants for whom we have data had less than a high school degree. Wardrobe is the only organization in our study for which this is true.

Social self-classification. We asked our respondents whether they had any difficulty in talking to strangers or making friends. Five indicated this was easy for them, three said that it was difficult, and four gave non-committal responses. One of those for whom this is difficult put it this way:

Uhm... its not really easy. I would not do this before I did Pathways, and I wouldn't talk to strangers or anything, because, you know, I'm really shy, or I don't have like the best communication skills, but now I'm more open to trying to meet new friends, or talking to strangers and just, you know, letting people know who I am.

Personal faith. Seven of the respondents indicated that they were raised in a religious or spiritual tradition, and all but two consider themselves religious or spiritual persons today. Since Wardrobe is not a faith-related organization, we did not explore their perceptions of religious aspects of the program.

Respondents' experience with Wardrobe. In this section, we report our interpretation of the perceptions of the 12 Wardrobe participants we interviewed about various aspects of their experience with Wardrobe. In some cases, we have drawn on staff interviews as well to present a more complete picture.

Entry into the Program. Ten of the 12 Wardrobe respondents were referred to the program by a public agency, usually a social service agency or a One-Stop. The other two were referred by other nonprofit organizations. According to staff, additional referrals come from other community organizations, including churches. The main sources are welfare and/or One-Stop caseworkers.

For some, the arrival at Wardrobe is simply an opportunity to take advantage of the donated clothes—clearly welcomed but not life changing. For others, the experience has deeper meaning:

My counselor mentioned it [Wardrobe] to me, she had received the flyer, and she mentioned it to me, and I checked them. First I went to get some clothes, and then through my counselor at EDD I became introduced to Pathways, and then I called the contact, and we talked some more, and I liked her format, and what she had in mind and so forth, and, of course, being unemployed for so long. I really needed an introduction back into humanity (embarrassed small laugh). I had lost so much self-esteem and everything, and it was really hard to keep myself going. It was like a blessing to me.

Services offered/received. Obviously, the primary service offered is clothing for work. Dressing for Success clients appreciate the attention to details: “They gave me, you know, it's the blouse and the outfit, and the jacket, and the heels, and stockings, and makeup, everything to go with it.” The training and professional demeanor of the volunteers allows them to provide these services in ways that do not feel condescending to the clients, who respond to the experience with enthusiasm and excitement. One client said happily, “They made me feel like a movie star.”

Participants describe the Pathways program as a mix of lecture, interactive discussion, and one-on-one attention. In effect, the program serves as a sort of job retention club that focuses on providing peer support and soft skills, such as goal-setting, work-style analysis, verbal and non-verbal communication, problem-solving/problem-prevention, and conflict resolution. Our respondents expressed particular appreciation for the session in which a panel of professional women speak about their experiences, providing positive role models to which they can aspire:

Some other people made decisions to quit the job they were in and go back to school, things they really wanted to do, you know, let this stressful job go and really plant themselves where they really can be more useful, you know. It was a great program.

One participant especially appreciated the way the sessions made reaching goals appear manageable:

It's sort of broken up in little pieces, like, if I wanted to be a surgeon, you know, just thinking about that is huge, and I would say, 'I can't be a surgeon,' but the way they break it up, they make you feel like, you know, if you take this stuff, and take this stuff, and take this stuff, you can be a surgeon (half laugh).

Relationship with staff and mentors. Dressing for Success participants describe a pleasant experience with respectful staff who combine good listening skills—so they have a good sense of client desires and needs—with an ability to coach the clients with various tips and suggestions. Even clients who are somewhat uncomfortable at first with the idea of being “dressed” by a stranger are won over by the way they are treated:

At first I felt like it was like an invasion, I don't know, I didn't like it. But the person, you know, they, like really grow on you really quick, because they're like nice, and they listen, and, you know, they listen to your opinion, it's not like, 'Well, I think you really should wear this, because it really does make a statement,' and then, if you say, 'No, I don't like it,' like I said several times, 'cause I'm not a dress person, but she kept bringing me dresses, and finally I spoke up, and I said, 'No, no more dresses,' and that was the end of that, but they just really... I don't know where they come from, but I'm glad they're there when they're there, because it's a real benefit to those who have a complex about weight, height, you know, the size of their arms, or whatever, they have knowledge on how to make it look good.

Pathways participants we spoke with had high praise for the trainers, though few indicated they had developed especially close relationships with them. More important for some was the peer support network that developed over the course of the group. This dynamic was strong enough that many of the women we spoke with wished the weekly sessions were longer, and that more sessions could be added at the end:

It was really the support group aspect of it, I think. We had, you know, differences in what we were interested in, but we were all basically trying to improve ourselves and our situations, and the fact that we had support from other people in the group, and definitely support from the leaders, that when we had our one-on-one chats, that was very helpful.

Interaction with other agencies. All 12 Wardrobe participants had previous experience with employment agencies. They appreciated the fact that their caseworkers knew about Wardrobe and had referred them to one or both of the Wardrobe programs. Rather than drawing comparisons between how they were treated in the different types of settings, their interviews suggest appreciation both for Wardrobe and for the linkages in the system that allowed them to become aware of the special services Wardrobe offers.

Reported outcomes. In trying to understand what program participants gained from their experience with Wardrobe, we coded open-ended interview data, classifying possible outcomes into four categories: attitudinal (confidence, hopefulness): remedial (removal of a basic underlying barrier to employment): educational (activities sparked by the program such as GED

instruction, entering college, vocational training): and employment (getting/retaining a job or work experience due to the program).

Attitudinal Outcomes. If our sample is an indication, Wardrobe is promoting significant improvement in participants' outlooks toward work and life. Many clients commented that having better clothes to wear increased their sense of personal confidence:

It gave me the opportunity to look more professional. The clothes make you feel confident, you just feel like I'm wearing this outfit that makes me look like a hundred bucks.

The clothes were really important because I had to go through several interviews. I've gotten several new jobs and raises, and greater and greater responsibility.

When I left out of there I felt maybe it was time for me to make some decisions, and then I start implementing them and like I say, might make my life a little different, a little off key for a minute, but I know in the end it's all worth it.

Most of respondents commented that they were more confident about their ability to find and/or keep a job. For one, this was because she had learned to be more realistic in setting her job goals:

I feel confident in my future inasmuch as I realize that the Bay Area is still stuck in a very bad place, economically. I'm still not going to walk into a company...plop my resume down on the desk, and say, 'You need me.' This isn't going to work. I think that my future lies in working with a temporary agency...Pathways has opened my eyes a little, brought me into the 21 century.

Another woman finds confidence in being clearer about what she wants:

Just the way I think, my perception of people...just being aware of my likes and dislikes. It's pretty hard to explain...confidence, like I'm running the show pretty much, so you don't have to sit there and take something you don't like.

Others credit the Wardrobe experience with strengthening their personal support system or improving their ability to communicate.

Remedial Outcomes. If they have had significant remedial barriers to overcome, the participants we interviewed appear to have dealt with those prior to arriving at Wardrobe. For example, the two Wardrobe respondents who indicated past histories of substance abuse had made major strides in their recovery before arriving at the program, so that the support they received could reinforce an already established trajectory in their lives.

Educational outcomes. As indicated earlier, the Wardrobe participants we interviewed are older and better educated than participants in the other CFBI programs. About half the respondents are currently pursuing vocational certificates or associate degrees, and three already have vocational certificates. The types of skills and support provided by Pathways appears to aid the women in juggling work with school, or to give them sufficient confidence to pursue a degree that will lead to a better job.

Employment Outcomes. Three-quarters of the Wardrobe respondents were employed at the time of our interview. It is impossible to know for sure if the clothes provided by Wardrobe make the

difference between getting and not getting a job, though this link in the program logic is clearly plausible. While Wardrobe cannot take full credit for the apparently strong employment outcomes—after all, they are dealing with clients who are already job-ready in most cases—the testimonies of our respondents suggest the program plays a very meaningful role.

It's a good head start on getting your foot in the career world, because usually, especially moms, or people that are my age, they get wrapped up in taking care of their kids, and they don't really have a lot of suits, or things, to go out and get work. And I think that that is so nice that there's an opportunity there because suits are expensive, I mean, if you go to buy a suit, it could cost \$300, you know, and people in the position that I'm in don't have that kind of money to go out and buy a suit. And you really need to look nice if you're going to be going to an interview to get the job, so I see nothing but good things about that whole thing.

I'm wearing some of my Wardrobe clothes today, and I do get compliments on them at work. Dressing for Success is so practical, and it's exactly what you need when you are working...the variety and colors and some nicer blouses and pants, that are not just run-of-the-mill.

I do tax work, and you have to dress a certain way to be able to deal with people's finances. They gave me some great outfits.

Participant Perspectives on Wardrobe

Overall impressions. All of the Wardrobe participants we asked indicated that the experience had made a significant difference in their life, and that they would refer a friend to the program:

The opportunities that I got, you know, didn't exist for me before. They're out there, and you just have to be willing and able to just get out there and get them, and I just have the confidence within myself to go out and get whatever I need now, it's like...I don't have to be scared, or you know, because everybody's out there trying to do the same thing, so... they just gave me a lot of confidence in myself.

It's more of a personal experience for me to become self-sufficient, like to bloom again, as a woman, you know, it's just a woman thing (laughs).

What was the best thing about the program? Wardrobe participants especially valued the peer support provided by the Pathways program, and the personal growth and development that resulted. The careful individual attention in the Dress for Success program also was noted. Examples of client responses are below:

How to say 'no', and to know that I was in charge of my own life, and, you know, my own dealings with my job, and I was able to uh...not feel so pressured in my job. Right now, like today, I can leave my job and it wouldn't even be a problem. That's why I'm going to nursing now.

Yeah. Yeah, I've grown to have probably 15 new friends (laughs happily). We stay in touch, and, you know, we call each other, and for support, and, you know, if we're doing something different in our lives, and you have a question on it or something, it's OK to call one of the girls, and I liked it.

The makeup was really good for me, because I hadn't worn makeup in years, and everybody was always telling me to wear it, but I never would. And then they showed us how to do things like pluck your eyebrows, and do all that stuff, to make yourself look better on the job, and for the job interview.

Ahhhh...the loving and the caring that the employees have for people. To be honest, for me, it was that support, the people that they have running it.

The best thing about Wardrobe would probably be knowing that there's women out there who are just trying to help other women succeed, and that it was just a really kind environment.

How could the program be improved? [Note: In this section we are merely passing along comments we heard, without judging or endorsing them, for the purpose of providing feedback to program staff.] A majority of respondents could not think of a single constructive criticism to offer the Wardrobe staff, merely repeating what a great experience they had. One Pathways participant offered a criticism that actually is quite complementary:

I had some awesome teachers. But we didn't have enough time. I would have loved for the classes to be longer (each Saturday) and with fewer breaks between weeks. Like every 3 classes, we had, like a Saturday that we didn't come. It was like something worth going to on my Saturdays, I really enjoyed going.

One participant noted the distinction in the quality of clothes available at the Oakland site compared to the Concord site, and another noted the relatively cramped quarters in Concord as things that might be improved.

Future interaction with the program. Most respondents do not expect ongoing interaction with the program, which is not surprising given the nature of the program. An exception is one woman pursuing a degree who hopes to come back for clothes when she eventually gets a job, and another who is holding onto her referral as an incentive to losing some weight—something the all-woman organization will understand completely.

Wardrobe for Opportunity, January 2005

Its EDD funds run out in March, 2005, but Wardrobe's Dressing for Success and Pathways to Opportunity programs will continue without interruption, kept viable by on-going fundraising. Since our first round of observation and interviews, Wardrobe has outgrown its Walnut Creek facility and has transferred its headquarters to a larger, more suitable building in Oakland. Not only did this mission-based decision double the space available, it has also given Wardrobe a more professional look and ambiance. In addition, Wardrobe has long wished to offer business clothing to men as well as to women, and this move has made it possible. In May, 2004 Wardrobe expanded its dressing program to include men and has served 135 male job candidates since that part of the program (not dependent upon EDD funds) was launched.

Taking the philosophy that "you don't value what you don't pay for," the Director told us that Wardrobe has imposed a small referral agency fee—\$50 to \$100—for the dressing portion of the program. About 50 of their non-government partners are paying this fee without complaint, but the Director notes that government agencies seem to have a difficulty with it (she thinks that this may be a bureaucratic problem rather than a disagreement with the concept). So far, Wardrobe

has continued to accept referrals from CalWORKs programs around the Bay Area, but will not continue to work with them if they don't pay the fee.

Wardrobe held a large appreciation brunch for all its volunteers and invited them to give candid feedback about the program, what they liked and what they didn't like (the latter was confidential). The volunteers expressed their pleasure in the work they were doing at Wardrobe, saying that they liked seeing "real, tangible results" and enjoyed "giving back to the community."

The Pathways program added a financial planning component to its curricula, thanks to a grant from Allstate Insurance.

Reflections on the CFBI Experience

Looking back on her experience with the CFBI demonstration project, the Director credited EDD with increasing Wardrobe's organizational capacity "greatly." Getting used to government reporting procedures took some time, but the "EDD [staff] were so supportive, so trusting, wanted us to do well. They spent a lot of time and were really responsive—it was like having an ally. They were the most supportive of any funder I have ever had." Among the positive results of complying with government requirements is the fact that Wardrobe now has written documentation of their administrative systems. Having the grant funds allowed the Director to concentrate on improving the organization and its services instead of having to devote most of her time to fundraising. Wardrobe was the subject of a flurry of media attention when the CFBI check was delivered, increasing its visibility and gaining additional supporters and partners. With EDD's assistance, Wardrobe approached the surrounding One-Stops and made presentations at all of them, leading to increased referrals and to an arrangement with one of them to provide space for the Pathways program. Wardrobe also benefited from meeting and working with other CFBOs involved in EDD program.

Second Round of Participant Interviews

Of the 12 participants originally interviewed, we were able to contact all but 3 in January, 2004 and 8 agreed to talk with us. All 8 had graduated from the program and all felt that they had gained a great deal from it, citing self-discovery (3), increased self-esteem (3), and enhanced communication skills (3) among their list of positive outcomes. Six people had used local One-Stops and found them mostly helpful. Seven of the 8 were working, 5 at the same job they had at the time of the first round of interviews, and 1 was finishing an "externship." The nature of their work varied enormously including creating materials in Braille, preparing taxes, running a forklift, and providing social services at the Jobs Consortium. Only 2 were able to get full-time work (40 hours/week plus some overtime) but all wished to increase their hours. Wages ranged from \$10.00/hour plus commission to \$17.00/hour. Five had attended school since our last conversation or were in school now. This group includes one of the full-time workers and 3 who were hoping to go into the medical field. Four already have a degree and all have had some education beyond high school.

Asked what was best about Dressing for Success, respondents appreciated the kindness, patience, and interest of the dressers (4), enjoyed being pampered (3), liked learning new ways to create outfits (3), and loved the nice clothes (2). The things respondents remembered as being best about Pathways all revolved around the experience of being together—sharing experiences (4), the bonding and camaraderie (3), the support from the group (2), and just the group itself (6), especially the instructors (4). The only complaints respondents were able to generate about either program had to do primarily with logistical problems. All but one participant felt that the

Wardrobe experience made a significant difference in their lives; they said, “Oh, dramatically!” and “Oh yeah. Hugely. Yeah, I think so, absolutely.” All would refer others to Wardrobe (5 specifically to both programs). About the Dressing program, one respondent said:

I felt like a little princess now. And they're so nice about it, so willing to do it, you know, they don't get an attitude, and act like, “You've tried on 10 dresses, can you pick something already?” They don't do that, they really try and make you feel good about you.

And another, speaking of Pathways, told us,

Sharing. Class-time. Sharing at the end of class. We would all get in a circle, and for that moment, you could just be yourself, and, if you had a bad day, or if you cried, you know, it was just such a bond.

Future of Wardrobe's Programs

The Walnut Creek operation will be closed shortly. It is too small, has very little room for parking, and is convenient for volunteers but not for the program participants. A new facility is opening in Concord that will be easier for participants to access without being too inconvenient for volunteers. Wardrobe plans to open a thrift shop to sell the high quality non-work clothing donated to them rather than re-donating it to other thrift stores. This should provide significant income to help support ongoing programs.

Wardrobe plans to continue building capacity to serve both male and female clients. In five years, Wardrobe expects that its program will consist of 40% men. Eventually Wardrobe's board would like to expand its mission of “helping job seekers to thrive” by becoming a center for job preparedness, partnering with other groups, and reducing its focus on clothing to 50%.