



UNDERSTANDING INTERIM PROGRESS MILESTONES  
IN YOUNG ADULT-SERVING  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



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**PPV**

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P/PV is a national nonprofit whose mission is to improve the effectiveness of social programs, particularly those that aim to help young people from high-poverty communities successfully transition to adulthood. Working in close partnership with organizations and their leaders, P/PV aims to:

- Promote the broad adoption of appropriate evaluation methods;
- Advance knowledge in several specific areas in which we have long-standing experience: juvenile and criminal justice, youth development (particularly out-of-school time and mentoring) and labor market transitions for young people; and
- Enable practitioners and organizations to use their own data, as well as evidence in these fields, to develop and improve their programs.

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## Executive Summary

Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) convened the Young Adult Milestones task force from Fall 2010 through Spring 2011 as a learning and capacity-building activity of the New York City Benchmarking Project. The group included representatives of eight NYC organizations that provide workforce services to low-income young adults facing a variety of life and skills-related challenges. With funding from the NYC Workforce Funders and JobsFirstNYC (including a project-specific grant from the William T. Grant Foundation), the group’s focus question was:

*What are meaningful short-term progress measures that can help young adult workforce programs know if participants are on track to accomplish employment or educational outcomes?*

Through a series of task force meetings, individual data analysis projects and conference calls to share lessons learned, the following themes emerged:

**Some progress measures were predictive of eventual success.** Achievement of target program attendance rates, reduction of specific participant barriers and attainment of skill credentials showed potential as useful and “predictive” progress measures related to successful outcomes for young adult participants, although sample sizes were often small and results were not always statistically significant.

**Lower-skilled young adults may require more than one year to earn a GED.** While organizations need more specific data (or bet-

ter technology to analyze the data they have) to understand the length of time and intensity of engagement required for lower-skilled participants with various characteristics to earn their GED or increase their literacy level, the experience of several programs suggests that such participants require much longer than a year.

**Participating organizations reported that they benefited from the opportunity for peer learning and focused data analysis.**

While the young adult-serving organizations have focused primarily on collecting and reporting data to funders about GED attainment and placement in jobs or postsecondary education, the Young Adult Milestones task force activities also helped organizations learn from their data internally. All eight organizations used the task force discussions and individual data analysis projects to understand some of the factors correlated with program performance. The organizations then identified actions to strengthen their internal data collection or reporting processes as a key next step to using data for performance improvement. Overall, participants found value in having the support and accountability of a peer-learning group engaged in similar tasks.

This report summarizes the task force’s activities, the data analyses that organizations performed individually and their results, and lessons learned from the project overall.

# Introduction

In the current economy, high joblessness persists for lower-skilled young adults. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall unemployment rate for 16- to 24-year-old high school graduates who have not attended college is 20 percent, and it climbs to almost 27 percent for those with less than a high school diploma—with rates even higher for some minority populations.<sup>i</sup> According to a recent study, approximately 172,000 young people in New York City ages 18 to 24 were “disconnected” (neither in school nor working) in 2010–2011. More than a quarter of this population does not have a high school diploma or GED.<sup>ii</sup>

The challenges facing many young adults in workforce programs are daunting. Participants often come with low reading and math levels and are discouraged by prior failures in school settings. They lack the role models or life experiences that would allow them to understand the expectations of a workplace. They face numerous hurdles to staying engaged and focused on their goals, such as unstable housing, substance abuse, incarceration or probation, and difficult family issues. Few have relationships with supportive adults or peers to help them navigate these obstacles.

In the midst of these challenges, progress toward obtaining employment or achieving an educational degree is often not linear or continuous, and small positive steps can be big victories. Programs serving very low-skilled participants may work with them for many months or even years to accomplish education-

al or employment gains, straining the motivation levels of both participants and staff over the long haul.

The workforce funding system (both public and private) continues to focus its accountability and reporting requirements on the primary outcomes of placement and retention in employment, attainment of a degree or certificate, and literacy or numeracy gains of at least one educational level.<sup>iii</sup> But for programs to engage in ongoing performance improvement, they would benefit from a better understanding of other measures as well.

# The Young Adult Milestones Task Force

To meet this need, P/PV convened the Young Adult Milestones task force from Fall 2010 through Spring 2011 as a learning and capacity-building activity of the New York City Benchmarking Project (see the next page for more information). The group included representatives of eight NYC organizations that provide workforce services to low-income young adults facing a variety of life and skills-related challenges. With funding from the NYC Workforce Funders and JobsFirstNYC (including a project-specific grant from the W. T. Grant Foundation), the group focused on answering the following questions:

- *What additional short-term measures might programs track as part of their continuous efforts to improve outcomes?*
- *Which measures might help programs mark important participant progress—in terms of behavior change or skill development—and focus services where they can be best used?*
- *Which measures would be credible as possible predictors of eventual success?*

In preparation for convening the Young Adult Milestones task force, P/PV built on a variety of past initiatives, principally the Youth Development Institute’s experience with the citywide Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS) initiative.<sup>iv</sup> In this 2007–2009 initiative, eight community-based organizations participated in a peer-learning model as they implemented a specific literacy curriculum infused with youth development principles such as high expectations, opportunities for youth to contribute, caring relationships and emotional

safety. Sites delivered the curriculum an average of 8 hours per week for a period ranging from 80 to 160 days. The initiative provided some insights into time standards for achieving literacy gains. It also pointed to some of the challenges in making use of data for program improvement, e.g., the challenge of not having low-cost database support.

The work of the task force was also informed by the concept of “momentum points” developed by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University in its longitudinal work on student achievement with community colleges in Washington state.<sup>v</sup> As described by CCRC, momentum points are short-term accomplishments that provide “momentum” to propel students toward more significant outcomes and increase the likelihood that those outcomes will be achieved. For example, completion of certain remedial math courses might be an early momentum point toward completing one year of college or earning an associate’s degree.

Finally, P/PV reviewed a variety of outcome measures used by federal workforce programs for youth and young adults (e.g., Workforce Investment Act, YouthBuild and Youth Opportunity programs) as well as those mentioned in studies or reports by such sources as Child Trends and the National Youth Employment Coalition.<sup>vi</sup> From this review, a draft list of potential progress milestones was developed and discussed with the group at its first meeting.

### The Benchmarking Project—Putting Data to Work

Since 2004, P/PV's national Benchmarking Project has worked to strengthen the workforce development field with a focus on three goals:

1. *Through data collection from a broad range of workforce programs, to begin to identify performance benchmarks for the workforce development field that account for the diverse factors that can affect results;*
2. *To increase the capacity of participating organizations to have an outcome-focused culture that uses data and other evidence to improve practice; and*
3. *To inform and influence funders regarding the challenges practitioners face in using and reporting data and how funders can support practitioners' continuous improvement efforts.*

As of October 2011, 332 programs from 200 organizations had engaged in the national Benchmarking Project, which is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. There are 49 participating organizations in New York and 19 in Chicago, and additional resources from the NYC Workforce Funders and a similar group of local foundations in Chicago have allowed for more intensive capacity-building activities in those two cities.

Staff from many of the participating organizations have regularly engaged in peer-learning forums, training workshops and technical assistance activities designed to support using data to improve performance. These activities have focused on ways to strengthen organizations' "data culture" through creating reports that are more useful to staff, facilitating regular discussions about how various factors might correlate with results, training to increase database skills and setting clear expectations about data quality.

## Young Adult Milestones Task Force Activities

To recruit members for the Young Adult Milestones Task Force, P/PV invited 10 organizations whose program data submitted as part of the Benchmarking Project indicated that 50 percent or more of their participants were age 24 or younger. These organizations had also participated in the staff training workshops, peer-learning forums or technical assistance activities focused on data management that are part of the NYC Benchmarking Learning Group. The eight organizations that decided to participate represented a good mix of populations served, program size and service strategy:

- Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
- The Door—A Center of Alternatives, Inc.
- F.E.G.S. Education and Youth Services Division—The Academy
- Friends of Island Academy
- Henry Street Settlement
- Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT)
- Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Inc.

One organization that was unable to participate was the New Heights Neighborhood Center (New Heights), which subsequently closed in 2011 because of funding issues. Previously, however, New Heights had been an active participant in NYC Benchmarking Project activities and was engaged in its own intensive data analysis related to young adult outcomes. While New Heights was not part of the task force, a description of its relevant activities is included

as an addendum to this report.

The task force began meeting monthly in Fall 2010. While representation varied across organizations, staff who attended the meetings were usually in employment services, evaluation or performance improvement management roles. In the first two meetings, organizations shared information about how they defined and measured success in their young adult employment programs, how those measures were reported to various funders and what data systems they used for reporting. Organizations also discussed the various “progress milestones” they used to assess whether participants are becoming better prepared for employment or postsecondary success. Task force participants shared their hunches and experience about which indicators are most predictive of eventual success. A summary of the types of progress milestones discussed by the group appears on the next page.

Task force members each developed proposals for small in-house data analysis projects that would help them “test their hunches”—using past participant data—about how a particular progress milestone was correlated with eventual outcomes for a designated group of participants. P/PV provided feedback to those proposals and support as organizations worked on their data analysis. This support included individual check-in calls and, in two cases, additional data analysis assistance. During monthly conference calls, organizations shared progress, challenges and lessons learned. Some analysis was slowed because of incomplete data or staff turnover, but all projects were completed by December 2011.

***Examples of Progress Milestones Used by Task Force Programs<sup>vii</sup>***

**1. Meets standards for regular attendance/punctuality, such as:**

- No more than three days missed in a two-month period
- Completion of 45 hours in a particular activity
- No more than three unexcused absences
- 80 percent attendance
- Engagement levels—e.g., attends at least two appointments in three months

**2. Increases in literacy indicators, using recognized tools such as:**

- TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) scores
- BEST Plus (Basic English Skills Test oral interview) scores
- GED predictor test scores
- GED scores—overall and on individual subjects

**3. Industry credential indicators:**

- National Retail Federation certification in customer service<sup>viii</sup>
- Other industry-recognized credentials (e.g., Microsoft Office Specialist certification,<sup>ix</sup> state certifications in food handling)
- Tests showing progress toward credentials (e.g., Microsoft Office quizzes)

**4. Satisfactory completion of skills training:**

- Demonstrated technical skills proficiency (e.g., portfolio of acceptable documents)
- Test scores related to technical skills and industry standards
- Demonstrated knowledge gain in financial literacy workshop

**5. Demonstrated readiness for job search or workplace:**

- Satisfactory program ratings on assessments of various work readiness factors
- Document readiness (driver’s license, Social Security card, etc.)
- Interviewing skills tested in practice setting and “approved” by external volunteer interviewers
- Completion of electronic career portfolio and realistic job search plan
- Ability to accurately discuss arrest and conviction record
- Stable housing and transportation arrangements
- Affordable and reliable childcare in place

**6. Successful internship completion:**

- Completion of at least 80 percent of expected internship hours
- Positive/high ratings on work performance by internship site supervisor

**7. Completion of college-related milestones:**

- College “access” portfolio (e.g., application and essay)
- College semester or specific number of credits
- Remedial precollege courses

## Overall Summary of Analysis Results

The analysis projects that organizations conducted were designed primarily to increase internal learning and capacity building around using data as a resource. But there was also a secondary goal: to understand how certain progress milestones correlated with longer-term outcomes, such as GED attainment, job placement or job retention. As noted in the individual project summaries that appear later in this report, some findings were not statistically significant (likely due, in part, to small sample sizes). But they do provide direction for further exploration by these organizations and others in the field:

### Two organizations found a correlation between **“barrier reduction”** and positive outcomes.

- The Isaacs Center found that a pilot group of participants receiving more intensive housing and criminal justice–related services had better job placement and retention results.
- CASES found that participants who did not have any positive drug tests after the program start date also had better employment and education outcomes.

### Two organizations found that meeting **attendance thresholds** was correlated with some of their positive outcomes.

- OBT found that participants attending 80 percent or more of planned hours had better job placement and retention outcomes than those who attended at a lower rate.

- CASES found that those who met their attendance threshold (no more than one unexcused absence) had better education outcomes but did not have better job placement outcomes.

### One organization found that **credential attainment** was correlated with better outcomes.

- OBT found that participants who had attained their GED and/or an industry credential during the program had better job placement and retention outcomes.

### One organization analyzed **project completion** as a milestone but did not find a correlation with placement outcomes.

- Henry Street Settlement found that participants who had completed assigned projects as a requirement for graduation did not have better job placement results than those who completed the required hours for graduation but did not finish the projects.

### Three organizations used the project to gather **baseline information about the amount of time required** for participants to obtain their GED and/or advance by a grade level on the TABE—to better inform participant, staff and funder expectations.

- The Door analyzed participants by entry TABE score and created a chart showing the number of participants for each subgroup who attained a GED, when various participants earned it (in months) and the number who dropped out of the program.

- Cypress Hills gained insights about how long individual participants had been engaged in GED services, how much TABE scores had increased relative to different lengths of engagement and how the change in TABE score between pre- and post-tests varied depending on the initial score.
- F.E.G.S. Academy gained better information on the average amount of time participants in its GED prep and pre-GED cohorts were taking to earn the credential. It also used the project to create agreement among its staff about how to define an “active participant.”

**One organization used the project time to rethink its conceptual framework about how participants’ psychological “readiness” to make behavioral changes evolves over time in relation to program engagement strategies.**

- Friends of Island Academy explored the “stages of change” theoretical framework about behavior change to begin to identify stages of participant “readiness” and how the types and intensity of program strategies should vary depending on a participant’s stage at entry and at other assessment points during the program.<sup>x</sup>

## Recommendations

The following themes and recommendations emerge from the reflections of Young Adult Milestones task force organizations and P/PV’s own observations about their experience:

**To improve results, programs should identify which key “interim milestones” they will track to better monitor participant progress and identify other factors that may affect success.** For example, weekly program attendance is a useful milestone measure to start with, as it helps programs understand the level of engagement needed for participants to best achieve outcomes such as literacy gains or a GED. But it’s only a starting point, as low attendance usually results from a combination of other factors including participant motivators, external barriers or obstacles, the degree to which participants perceive that their needs are being addressed and how well staff engage participants. Once good data are available on aggregate and individual attendance patterns, going deeper to ask *why* someone is or isn’t attending can lead to a focus on other important data, as the Isaacs Center’s work on barrier reduction shows. Programs should “start small,” learning what they can from an initial small sample of data (e.g., two weeks’ of attendance records) and then reassessing what data is important to collect.

**Improving data quality—and agreeing on “who to count” in a particular measure—is a critical first step to conducting meaningful analysis and identifying the most useful milestones.** Organizations participating in the

task force generally did not have problems pulling data on long-term outcomes that they reported to funders, such as job placements, job retention and GED attainment. But for some organizations, data on participant attendance, initial and follow-up TABE scores, and other details of service delivery were sometimes missing—hindering data analysis. But these setbacks provided good learning opportunities for organizations on issues they needed to address, including making sure all staff understood the meaning of data “quality” and how each member contributes to it.

The experience of the Young Adult Milestones task force also underscores the value of purposefully defining the focus of measurement to produce the most meaningful and useful lessons. Several organizations wrestled in different ways with “who to count”—that is, who was sufficiently engaged in services to be included when calculating the rate of outcome achievement. For example, as part of its work in the Benchmarking Project, F.E.G.S. developed staff consensus that only young people who had engaged in a service at least twice a month for three consecutive months would be counted as “active participants” for analysis purposes. F.E.G.S. also focused analysis for GED attainment on only those participants who had TABE grade-level scores above 9.0 at program entry (as opposed to those with scores of 6.0 to 9.0, who were analyzed as a “pre-GED” group).

**Funders and other stakeholders need more realistic expectations about the length of time and investment required for lower-skilled young people to meet long-term education and employment goals.** The analyses conducted by The Door and Cypress Hills showed that participants with reading levels below sixth grade often needed to participate in services for well beyond 12 months (the usual length of a funding grant) to make substantial literacy gains. More work is needed to learn if trends exist about when participants struggle in or drop out of the process and to suggest short-term interventions or incentives that could accelerate progress or at least prevent participants from disengaging. Contracts and funding agreements need to acknowledge the longer time required through longer grant periods or the recognition of annual short-term gains as a valid positive outcome.

**Funders need to continue to support young adult-serving organizations' efforts to collect and use more data about the incremental milestones that lead to employment and education success.** The organizations participating in the Young Adult Milestones task force have varying levels of sophistication and resources for using data for internal program assessment and improvement. To some extent, the greatest challenge facing the task force programs involved the focus on analyzing data already collected on past participants, which often meant that programs had not collected the data they were now interested in examining. In some cases, the desire to collect more data was hindered by insufficient staff resources. Even where data were available, cuts in staffing levels or limitations in management information system capacity made it difficult for some organizations to create the reports they needed to conduct deeper analysis. Additional funding support could help address these needs.

**Funders need to continue to support and encourage more peer learning and sharing around progress milestones.** The Young Adult Milestones task force included a good mix of program-focused and evaluation staff who could raise strong “data” questions with one another but also had useful firsthand experience with participants. Both types of staff said they valued the opportunity to step back from looking solely at data on outcomes to reflect together on the stories and factors contributing to those numbers. Some members of the group indicated that they don’t often have the time and space—or the exchange of ideas—that was provided by the group’s meetings to generate hypotheses about success factors and to identify potentially applicable data analyses. One organization said that the group’s conversations about “momentum points” had sparked several changes in program design as well as data collection.

## Conclusion

Low-skilled young adults often face a steep uphill climb in achieving their GED, and face even greater challenges in finding employment in one of the most difficult job markets in decades. Their progress is often stop and start, and the questions of how to better measure engagement and sustain momentum over the long haul are critical for providers to answer.

Similarly, the process of improving organizations' capacity to use data for program learning and improvement is also slow and incremental. The Young Adult Milestones task force afforded providers the opportunity to “start small” with some focused inquiry, inspired and informed by an exchange of ideas with peers, about what interim measures could best help them keep participants “on track.” This is valuable and important work. Continued funder support for this type of “inquiry for improvement” work by individual organizations and peer-learning groups will be critical for producing new insights about the milestones of accomplishment that most sustain young adults' momentum toward success.

## Summaries: Individual Organizations' Analysis Activities and Results

### Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)— Career Exploration Program

**Background:** CASES' Career Exploration Program serves youth ages 16 to 19 referred through the organization's Court Employment Project. It offers a four-week structured employment readiness class, followed by placement in a 10-week internship (with a stipend) in an area of participants' career interest. The program also includes academic support, such as referrals to on-site classes, education-focused training activities to support college application and college field trips.

**Hypothesis:** CASES tested its hunch that participants who met particular attendance thresholds or stayed drug free would be more successful in achieving employment or educational outcomes.

**Data Analyzed:** CASES looked at information on 117 graduates of its Career Exploration Program during fiscal years 2008 and 2009. It classified graduates around three potential milestones:

- Program Engagement (job readiness class and internship attendance)
  - \* Those with no more than one unexcused absence from their four-week job readiness class and 10-week internship
  - \* Those with more than one unexcused absence
- Educational Class Attendance
  - \* Of those scheduled to attend at least five weeks of educational classes on-site at CASES or in public school:
    - \* Those with attendance rates greater than or equal to 75 percent
    - \* Those with attendance rates lower than 75 percent
- High-Risk Behaviors: Drug Use
  - \* Those without a positive drug test during the program
  - \* Those with a positive drug test during the program

For each of the milestones, CASES staff looked at correlations with two outcomes:

- Education: Did participants earn their high school diploma/GED or enroll in college?
- Employment: Did participants obtain employment (either full- or part-time)?

**Results of Analysis:** As described in the table (on the next page) prepared by CASES staff:

- Program Engagement as a Milestone: Having no more than one unexcused absence from the one-month job readiness program or internship was not correlated with employment success, as 70 percent of both groups were eventually employed. (Unfortunately, CASES staff were not able to look at employment retention outcomes.) In terms of *education*, the group with fewer absences had more success than the group with more absences (42 percent vs. 35 percent).

- Educational Class Attendance as a Milestone: Relative to *employment*, 70 percent of those who achieved the educational class attendance milestone were employed, versus 57 percent of those with lower attendance rates. Likewise, participants achieving the milestone of at least 75 percent class attendance were more likely to achieve desired *education* outcomes, i.e., diploma attainment or college enrollment (44 percent vs. 33 percent).
- High-Risk Behaviors—Drug Use as a Milestone: Participants who did not have a positive drug test after starting the program had higher *employment* outcomes (73 percent vs. 61 percent). They were also more likely to achieve *education* outcomes (43 percent vs. 29 percent).

**Observations/Reflections:** CASES staff were very engaged in the analysis. They expanded their initial data sample and eliminated outliers to refine their findings. They were aware of their data limitations: For example, long-term outcomes had been captured only for “graduates” of the program, and employment data were primarily self-reported. Nonetheless, the analysis exercise did validate the need to continue emphasizing the importance of attendance and participants’ remaining drug free—and monitoring those as critical milestones.

**CASES: Career Exploration Graduates From Fiscal Years 2008  
and 2009 With at Least One Postprogram Contact**

Interim Milestones	Education Success	Employment Success
<b>Definition of Success</b>	Earned diploma or enrolled in college	Obtained full- or part-time employment
<b>Time Frame for Outcomes</b>	Career Exploration exit-present	Career Exploration exit-present
<b>Overall % Successful</b>	39% (46/117)	70% (82/117)
<b><i>Engagement</i></b>		
No more than 1 unexcused absence from job readiness class and internship	42% (30/71)	70% (50/71)
More than 1 unexcused absence from job readiness class and internship	35% (16/46)	70% (32/46)
<b><i>Education</i></b>		
Educational attendance* $\geq$ 75%, among those scheduled to attend at least 5 weeks of class (60 appointments)	44% (24/54)	70% (38/54)
Educational attendance* $<$ 75%, among those scheduled to attend at least 5 weeks of class (60 appointments)	33% (7/21)	57% (12/21)
<b><i>High-Risk Behaviors</i></b>		
No drug test positive after Career Exploration start date	43% (37/86)	73% (63/86)
Any drug test positive after Career Exploration start date	29% (9/31)	61% (19/31)

N=117

\*On-site at CASES or public school

## Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

**Background:** Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (Cypress Hills) serves the Cypress Hills area in Brooklyn with a diverse set of community service and neighborhood development programs. Its YouthLEAD (Youth Learning, Educating others and Achieving our Dreams) program provides GED instruction and employment services for young people ages 16 to 24 who are not in school or working. Participants in its YouthBuild program (no longer operating) received similar services and also gained experience in construction while working on Cypress Hills' affordable-housing projects.

**Hypothesis:** Cypress Hills wanted to explore whether a threshold of attendance correlated with better GED attainment rates, gains in reading level or increased job placement. Based on factors described below, the analysis was eventually narrowed to focus on two primary relationships:

- What is the correlation between the number of days students were enrolled in the program and changes in TABE scores?
- What relationship exists between the initial TABE level and the amount of change between the first and second tests? Are participants with lower initial scores more likely to show substantial improvement compared with those starting from a higher level?

**Data Analyzed:** Cypress Hills pulled together records for 420 individuals who had completed intake and were enrolled in YouthLEAD or YouthBuild from May 2006 to December 2010. The dataset included initial and follow-up TABE scores, the number of days participants had been enrolled in the program and job placement information.

Cypress Hills asked P/PV to assist with its data analysis because it lacked sufficient in-house capacity to complete the task. After consulting with P/PV, Cypress Hills agreed that the sample would be reduced to 132 participants, based on the following factors:

- Limited job placement data made it unlikely analysis would produce any substantive findings on the correlation between attendance and placement.
- Some of the differences in initial and follow-up TABE scores were too broad (statistical outliers), or one of the two TABE scores was missing.
- In certain cases, the number of days enrolled was not an accurate reflection of how much time the participant had consistently spent in programming. For some participants enrolled over a long period, there had been large chunks of nonattendance.

### Results of Analysis:

- Cypress Hills learned that the majority of the YouthLEAD and YouthBuild participants in the reduced dataset had been engaged between three and nine months: 27 percent had attended programming for 91 to 180 days, and another 24 percent had attended for 181 to 270 days.
- More than 76 percent of the sample had initial TABE scores between 5.0 and 9.9, with the greatest concentrations at the low and high ends of that range: 24 percent at 5.0–5.9 and 17 percent at 9.0–9.9.

- Analysis of changes in TABE scores between initial and follow-up testing showed that:
  - \* 41 percent of participants increased their TABE scores by up to 1.9 grade levels.
  - \* 20 percent increased scores between two and four levels.
  - \* Almost 5 percent increased scores by more than four levels.
  - \* Another 27 percent actually decreased scores by up to 1.9 grade levels.
  - \* 7 percent decreased scores between two and four levels.
- Analysis showed the following average TABE score changes over 180-day intervals of program enrollment (see table below).

Program Days Enrolled	Average TABE Score Change From Test 1 to Test 2	Number of Participants
1–180	+ .77 grade level	59
181–360	+ .44 grade level	47
361–540	+ .94 grade level	14
541–720	+ 1.65 grade levels*	11

*\*Statistically significant, though sample size is small.*

- The average increase in grade level was greater for those with lower initial TABE scores, while for 16 participants with initial scores of 10.0 or higher an average decrease in grade level was observed (see second table below).

Initial TABE Score	Average TABE Score Change From Test 1 to Test 2	Number of Participants
2.0–5.9	+ 1.13 grade levels	46
6.0–7.9	+ 1.14 grade levels	35
8.0–9.9	+ .61 grade level	35
10.0–11.9	– .63 grade level*	10
12.0–12.9	– 1.58 grade levels*	6

*\*Statistically significant, though sample size is small.*

**Observations/Reflections:** The Young Adult Milestones analysis activity helped Cypress Hills identify issues related to how attendance, TABE score and placement data were being recorded—issues now being addressed as the organization implements enhancements in its Efforts to Outcomes software. With larger sample sizes that accompany more complete data, Cypress Hills will be able to better test how TABE score changes are correlated with attendance and other outcomes. Although the number of participants who experienced a decrease in TABE grade level was small (12%), Cypress Hills wants to explore possible causes for those decreases, particularly for participants who entered with higher literacy levels. Were there factors related to when the follow-up tests were administered or how motivated participants were when they took them? Had very long periods of time elapsed between the first and second tests? Are there other issues related to TABE scores at the higher end of the scale?

## The Door—A Center of Alternatives, Inc.: EPOCH Program

**Background:** The Door—A Center of Alternatives, Inc., is a youth development agency providing a full range of integrated services at a single site, free of charge to anyone between the ages of 12 and 21. The Door’s mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth services in a caring, diverse environment. The cornerstone of The Door’s career and education services for disconnected youth is the EPOCH program,<sup>xi</sup> which aims to prepare out-of-school young people for placement in college and/or employment by providing a variety of programming that develops the potential for economic self-sufficiency.

EPOCH participants have access to pre-GED and GED instruction, precollege math and English courses, and college preparation services—in addition to attending weekly community meetings and foundational classes focused on academics, leadership, and social and emotional development. The model is open-entry, open-exit: All young people participate in an initial intake/commitment phase and can then choose from a menu of programs. In addition to academic support, participants have access to workshops to prepare for City University of New York (CUNY) admission, career exploration assistance, work readiness workshops, internships, occupational training in customer service/retail skills, job and college placement assistance, and post-placement retention and advancement services.

**Hypothesis:** The Door wanted to explore a hunch that the rate of GED attainment—and the length of time required—would vary based on the TABE scores of EPOCH participants when they entered the program. Because these initial baseline data were not yet collected, The Door staff also used the task force initiative to gather them.

**Data Analyzed:** Staff analyzed data from the “Infused GED”<sup>xii</sup> component for participants enrolled during the period of September 2009 through August 2010, looking at their GED attainment rate through mid-January 2011.

**Results of Analysis:** Results from the analysis are presented in the chart at the end of this section. Highlights include these findings:

- Of the 191 enrollees in the full-day GED program, 41 percent had attained their GED, 46 percent had dropped out and 13 percent were still receiving services. Some of those who had dropped out were still participating in other EPOCH training, placement or internship components. Others were assisted in finding an external part-time GED program that better met their needs.
- 20 percent of enrollees had TABE entry scores below 6.0, and an additional 39 percent scored between 6.0 and 8.9 at entry. Of those participants with scores below 9.0, 19 percent had achieved a GED, but 63 percent had dropped out. On the other hand, for those entering EPOCH with scores of 9.0 or above, 71 percent had achieved their GED, while only 23 percent had dropped out.
- Of those who attained their GED, 40 percent did so in 6 months or less of EPOCH classes (the vast majority of whom tested initially with TABE scores above 9.0), 28 percent took 7 to 12 months and 32 percent needed more than a year to pass the test.

**Observations/Reflections:** The Door has used its analysis to inform the expectations of participants, staff and funders about the time and investment needed to complete the GED. Staff said that the findings had prompted them to consider whether providing assistance with part-time employment might help some participants make the longer-term commitment to stay engaged in the program. The analysis also focused attention on what other incentives or progress milestones will help keep lower-skilled participants motivated over the long haul.

The EPOCH program is currently using an Access SQL database system but will most likely convert to a Salesforce database in the next year. The program has also experienced significant cuts in funding to support its GED and academic support services and staff, limiting its ability to dive more deeply into attendance data. But whenever capacity becomes available for further analysis, staff want to understand the points at which participants most frequently drop out and why.

**EPOCH Year 3 Snapshot (September 2009–August 2010)**  
**Infused GED Attainment Rate**  
**Attainment Rate Data (September 1, 2009–January 14, 2011)**

	Total Enrollees	GED Attainers as of 1/14/2011	Attained GED in						Cont'd in Y4	Dropped
			0–3 Months	4–6 Months	7–9 Months	10–12 Months	13–15 Months	> 15 Months		
2.0-3.9	9	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7
4.0-5.9	30	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	24
6.0-8.9	74	18	0	3	5	3	1	6	16	40
9.0-9.9	26	12	0	2	2	2	2	4	4	10
10.0 and up	49	41	19	5	7	1	2	7	1	7
No test	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>88</b>

## F.E.G.S. Youth and Education Services—The Academy

**Background:** The F.E.G.S. Academy in the Bronx serves young adults aging out of the foster care system. The Academy provides academic services, such as tutoring, homework assistance and GED classes; career development services, including career exploration, job readiness training, job shadowing, internships and job placement; postsecondary education planning; and supportive services, including mentoring, counseling and personal skills development.

**Hypothesis:** F.E.G.S. wanted to explore the correlation between participant attendance and success in attaining a GED. The staff were also interested in the effect that other “service touches” (e.g., counseling, follow-up calls) seem to have on participant success or progress.

**Data Analyzed:** F.E.G.S. encountered difficulty in compiling a complete dataset to analyze (see Observations/Reflections below), but staff were able to look at data relative to 100 participants who had obtained their GEDs, divided between those in the GED prep class (those testing at a 10.0 grade level or higher on the TABE) and pre-GED class (those testing at the 6.0 to 9.0 grade levels).

**Results of Analysis:** For the GED prep class, those who ultimately passed the GED test attended an average of 90 hours. Those in the pre-GED class who ultimately passed attended for an average of 140 hours. But staff were unable to learn more about attendance patterns or thresholds that seemed to make a difference from the data available at the time.

Staff also looked at six months’ worth of information about “service touches” (counseling phone calls or brief conversations). They did not see any clear statistical indications that the frequency or type of interaction was making a difference, but they plan to continue collecting and analyzing these types of data.

**Observations/Reflections:** The data F.E.G.S. staff were able to analyze helped inform their expectations about the amount of time participants need to engage in GED preparation to be successful. Even though F.E.G.S. staff wanted to conduct much more detailed analysis, they encountered the following types of database issues and delays not unusual for workforce providers:

- The agency overall had recently implemented a new database, CareerFirst, but because staff were not clear about data entry procedures, the information about GED completions and attendance was very incomplete. In response, staff developed a detailed database manual, and more training is now provided regularly.
- Additional time was needed for temporary staff to re-enter old data from earlier spreadsheets and databases because the data could not easily be imported into CareerFirst.

During the task force period, F.E.G.S. staff also made some important decisions about how they would define participants as “actively engaged” in programming. Staff agreed that only participants who engaged in a service at least twice a month over a three-month period would be classified as “active”—and therefore counted as part of data analysis on performance. They also worked on ways to classify participants by dosage level—e.g., participants engaging during 50 percent or more of the available days compared with those engaging less often.

Having made progress in these areas, F.E.G.S. wants to explore other questions as its data quality improves, such as:

- What is the connection between entry TABE scores and the length of time needed to attain a GED? How many hours of instruction is it taking for participants to progress from one TABE grade level to another?
- Is successful completion of an internship correlated with obtaining unsubsidized employment?

## Friends of Island Academy

**Background:** Located in Manhattan, Friends of Island Academy (Friends) works with young people primarily ages 16 to 21 who are returning from incarceration at Rikers Island, beginning with prerelease assessment and relationship building. Since 2008, Friends has deliberately and steadily shifted from site-centered services to neighborhood-centered youth and family-driven services. Youth members' long-term progress is sustained by rooting it in the community and providing a mobile safety net. Through a network of neighborhood-based advocacy and services, Friends (1) prepares and supports families for a youth's transition home from custody; (2) facilitates and supports youth enrollment, engagement and advancement in secondary education; (3) prepares youth for the world of work through job readiness, placement and retention services; (4) helps youth address and navigate system barriers to advancement; and (5) enlists formal and informal community leaders, local residents, faith-based organizations and third-party resources/mentors for youth in the neighborhood.

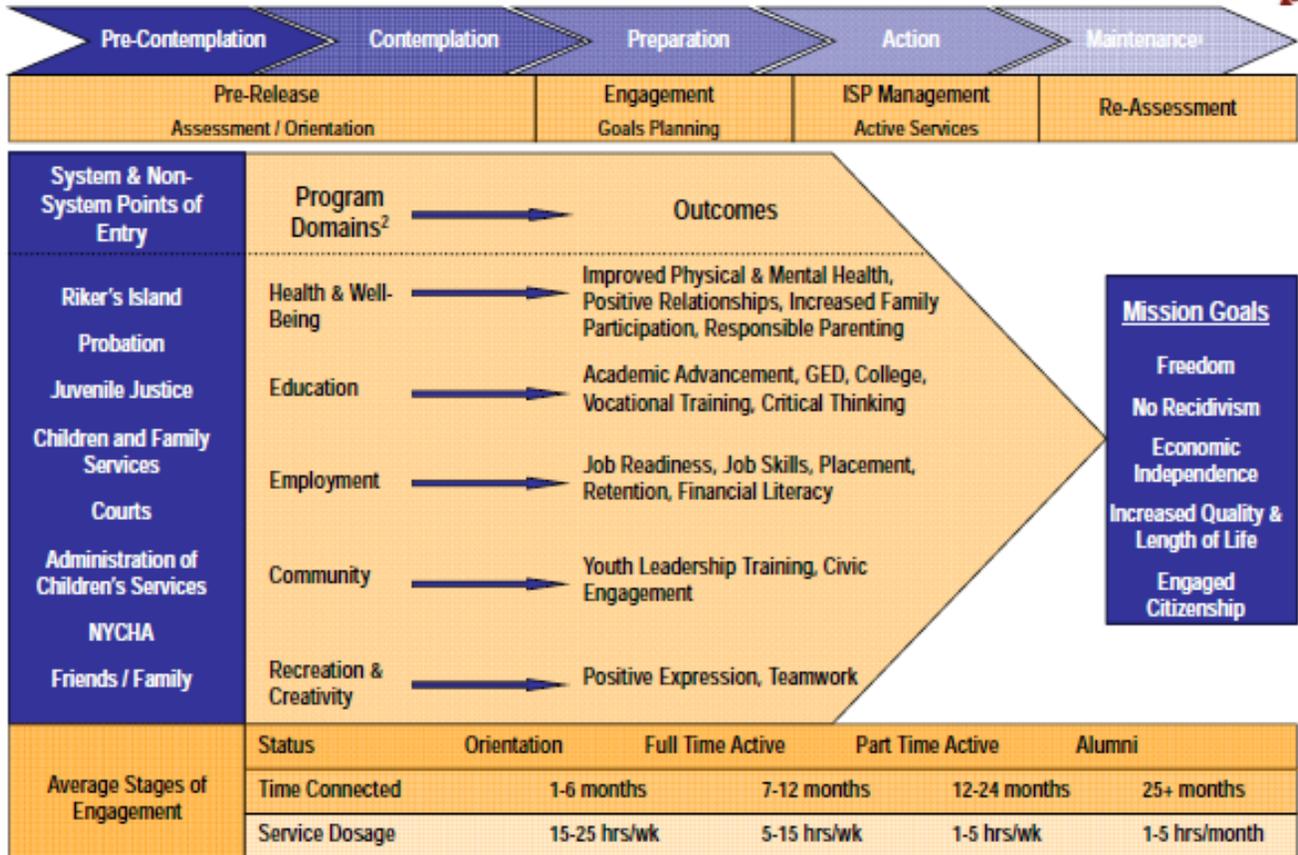
**Hypothesis:** Friends was interested in exploring the “stages of change” theory presented in James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente's Transtheoretical Model of Change<sup>xiii</sup> within a positive youth development framework. The same model has been used by Roca, Inc., a nationally known program in the Boston area working with youth who are disconnected from school or work and often involved in the juvenile justice system. The framework assesses an individual's readiness to embrace a new, healthier behavior and then provides strategies or processes appropriate for that readiness level. The stages are pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation/planning, action and maintenance/sustaining in crisis (see the matrix on the next page). Friends wanted to move to a model that correlated a participant's “stage” with the level of participant engagement and type of staff relationship that was needed to support continued movement toward action and sustained change.

**Data Analyzed:** Friends had data on a small sample of participants (20 to 25) that included basic demographics, entry TABE scores, referral sources, status as court-mandated to attend the program, attendance rates and outcomes in a variety of areas: health and well-being, education, employment, community leadership and recreation/creativity.

**Results of Analysis:** Friends staff developed an “engagement matrix” that linked the stages of change with participant “status” definitions (e.g., full-time active, part-time active), the dosage of services needed (e.g., 5 to 20 hours per week) and the length of time participants must be connected to move to the next stage (e.g., 1 to 6 months). While the framework is still conceptual, it has helped staff determine what kinds of data they want to track in the future.

**Observations/Reflections:** A clear next step for Friends is to use its data to isolate specific behavior indicators to help staff identify where a participant is on the stages continuum, as well as to better understand the most effective types of interactions for a participant at each stage. Staff have been collecting data in this new framework for only a few months, but they want to begin to use these data to identify which services need to be increased or changed based on a participant's readiness for change—and eventually to understand if such adaptations affect participant outcomes.

**FRIENDS OF ISLAND ACADEMY ENGAGEMENT MATRIX**



■ Youth

■ Friends of Island Academy

<sup>1</sup> Prochaska and DeClemente's Transtheoretical Model of Change.

<sup>2</sup> Program principles follow the Positive Youth Justice Model (Butts, J.A., Bazemore, G., Meroe, A.S. (2010).

Revised: 08/22/11

## Henry Street Settlement—Young Adult Internship Program

**Background:** Located in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, Henry Street Settlement’s Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) serves 16- to 24-year-olds not currently in school or working. The program includes a three-week job readiness training component followed by an 11-week paid internship at an external worksite. Participants then receive at least nine months of follow-up services to help them find employment or achieve an education-related outcome (GED or enrollment in postsecondary education).

**Hypothesis:** Henry Street staff used the Young Adult Milestones task force meetings to help them think through ways to enhance the standard YAIP model, as designed by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). While the DYCD criteria for someone to be counted as a successful “completer” of YAIP services at that time was participation in 175 hours of classes and internship, Henry Street staff’s hunch was that adding requirements that also demonstrated skills competency—in this case, completion of group projects, a portfolio of job search documents and a PowerPoint career-related presentation—would lead to better outcomes. They designed services to include these additional elements, creating a new level of YAIP achievement called “graduate” for those who completed those elements. They also added a three-day unpaid pre-orientation component before the job readiness workshops for participants to demonstrate their motivation level and ability to attend on time.

**Data Analyzed:** Henry Street analyzed the results of 30 YAIP participants in the cohort served between November 2010 and February 2011. Because it had significantly changed its recruitment design, Henry Street decided it was not appropriate to compare results of this cohort with those of earlier cohorts. As a result, staff compared the outcomes of those participants who had met the increased “graduation” requirements with the outcomes of participants who had met only the DYCD completion requirement.

**Results of Analysis:** Henry Street did not see a big difference between the percentage of “graduates” who achieved a desired initial work or education outcome and the percentage of “completers” who did so. But future analysis can determine if longer-term retention outcomes show any differences between the two groups, or if overall improvements are visible in cohorts using the new model.

**Observations/Reflections:** In addition to making changes to its YAIP program, Henry Street used the “momentum point” concept from the Young Adult Milestones task force to design an incentive program for its Project Rise (funded by the Social Innovation Fund). The program pays cash rewards to participants who reach key milestones or momentum points, such as 80 percent attendance, TABE score increases of two levels, passing the GED predictor, registering and taking the GED test, and so on. It’s still too early for Henry Street to analyze what effect this effort might be having on outcomes.

## Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT)

**Background:** OBT’s youth education and GED programs in the Sunset Park and Bushwick neighborhoods of Brooklyn provide young adults ages 17 to 21 with a variety of services over a 22-week period, including workshops and classes in business English, business math, GED and pre-GED (if needed), keyboarding, office procedures, workplace culture and Microsoft Office applications, as well as job placement and retention support.

**Hypothesis:** OBT staff wanted to test their hunch that higher attendance rates in their program would correlate with eventual improved job placement and retention. They were also interested in learning how attainment of a GED or a credential during the program affected participants’ outcomes.

**Data Analyzed:** OBT analyzed data from participants who had enrolled in one of two 22-week cohorts over a one-year period. Of that group, 59 percent had been placed in employment and 21 percent had enrolled in college. The group was divided into two attendance categories: “high attenders,” who had attended 80 percent or more of the maximum days possible (58 percent of the group), and “low attenders,” who participated less than 80 percent of possible days (the remaining 42 percent). OBT looked at job placement outcomes as well as three- and six-month retention results to test its hypothesis.

OBT also examined differences in placement and retention results between participants who had attained a GED and those who had not. Finally, a small sample (16 percent of the participants) had earned an industry-recognized credential while in the program (e.g., Microsoft Office Specialist or National Retail Federation certification), and OBT looked at differences in outcomes between those participants and non-credential holders.

**Results of Analysis:** OBT staff did the initial analysis of their data and then asked P/PV for additional assistance. Very few of the findings were statistically significant, probably because in many cases the sample sizes of subgroups being analyzed were small. But findings still provided general insights to inform program operations and suggest factors worthy of greater attention.

Attendance as a Milestone: The level of participants’ attendance in the program did correlate with differences in job placement and retention rates, though the differences were not statistically significant:

- 66 percent of “high attenders” were placed, compared with 60 percent of “low attenders.”
- 55 percent of “high attenders” were retained at three months, compared with 45 percent of “low attenders.”
- 52 percent of “high attenders” were retained at six months, compared with 33 percent of “low attenders.”

GED Attainment as a Milestone: Analysis showed that GED attainment had a statistically significant impact on placement:

- 71 percent of those who attained their GED were placed, compared with 42 percent of those without a degree.

Those with their GED also had higher job retention at three and six months, but these differences were not statistically significant, possibly because of small sample sizes:

- At three months, 61 percent of GED attainers were employed, compared with 29 percent of those without their degree.
- At six months, 49 percent of GED attainers were employed, compared with 26 percent of those without their degree.

Industry Credentials as a Milestone: Again, while the findings were not statistically significant, possibly because of small sample sizes, those participants who did earn one or more industry credentials while in OBT's program showed higher outcomes:

- 94 percent of credential holders were placed, compared with 56 percent of non-credential holders.
- 88 percent of credential holders achieved three-month retention, compared with 43 percent of non-credential holders.
- 88 percent of credential holders achieved six-month retention, compared with 35 percent of non-credential holders.

**Observations/Reflections:** OBT continues to conduct additional analysis and to explore other ways to learn from its data. Even though it wasn't analyzing the effects of different milestones, OBT also looked at the correlation of outcomes with various demographics and other factors. Some of OBT's other statistically significant findings included:

- Participants who had their high school diploma when they entered OBT also had higher job retention rates at three and six months, though placement differences were not significant.
- Interestingly, participants whose starting wage in jobs was less than \$9 an hour had higher job retention rates than participants hired at \$9 or more.

## Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Inc.

**Background:** Based in East Harlem, the Isaacs Center’s five-week Youth Employment and Education Services (YES) serves out-of-school youth ages 17 to 24. YES’s job readiness and computer literacy component uses the national STRIVE<sup>xiv</sup> model, which involves intensive workshops and two years of follow-up support, including job development and re-placement assistance.

**Hypothesis:** In 2010–2011, the Isaacs Center began a pilot program to test its hypothesis that focusing more intensively on specific areas of “barrier reduction” for participants after program completion would increase their chances of accomplishing outcomes (job placement, job retention or college enrollment). The pilot involved weekly engagement of individual participants by a retention specialist/social worker for six months after their participation in the job readiness program. Interventions focused on helping participants navigate NYC housing options, obtain valid ID, stabilize family relationships, develop employment documents (such as resumes, cover letters and sample applications), obtain public benefits, seek medical or mental health treatment and address criminal record issues.

**Data Analyzed:** The pilot focused on 25 YES participants, all of whom had a criminal background, unstable housing situations or both. Not only did the Isaacs Center want to look at the overall differences in outcomes between those who received more intensive contacts and those who did not, it also wanted to mine the data further to learn if the number or type of interventions made a difference.

**Results of Analysis:** During the pilot period, the percentage of barrier reduction (BR) program participants in stable housing situations increased from 28 percent to 76 percent. The number of participants without a current criminal justice or police issue went from 10 in May 2010 to 23 in March 2011.

Overall, the outcomes of the 25 participants in the pilot group were higher than the cumulative results of YES 2008–2010:

- **Job Placement:** 68 percent of program graduates in the BR group were employed, compared with 43 percent of those in the general group.
- **Three-Month Job Retention:** 92 percent of the BR group achieved three-month retention, compared with 79 percent of the general group.
- **Twelve-Month Job Retention:** The BR group’s results were lower than those of the general group (50 percent vs. 63 percent), although the initial sample size of those who had passed the 12-month point was very small, and the Isaacs Center continues to update the analysis.

**Observations/Reflections:** One of the lessons learned by the Isaacs Center while conducting the pilot was the need to better code case notes in order to analyze the number and types of interventions experienced by participants in the barrier reduction pilot. Based on the results of the pilot group, the Isaacs Center has decided to increase its barrier reduction work to include 50 participants in 2012. Staff are also refining their recruitment and orientation processes to try to get more specific information up front about issues that could present challenges for participants.

## ADDENDUM: New Heights Neighborhood Center

**Background:** From 1997 to 2011, New Heights Neighborhood Center, Inc. (New Heights) served older youth ages 18 to 24 from the Washington Heights/Inwood, Harlem and South Bronx communities who were out of work/out of school and in transition. Most of New Heights’ participants had obtained fewer than 5 high school credits (out of 44) before entering the program. New Heights’ goal was to connect these young people to the world of work, with supports, so that they could become self-sufficient and self-advocating. Over the years, New Heights staff developed a flexible open-door service model that met individualized and collective needs in a nonlinear way, allowing the participants to experience success in the areas in which disengaged youth typically have failed—education and employment.

New Heights offered three key areas of service: (1) case management and support; (2) education; and (3) career development and employment. Programs and services were envisioned as a continuum: Stage I—Engagement; Stage II—“I-Reach”; and Stage III—“Jobs Conexion.” With innovative partnerships in education and workforce development, this continuum of services was founded on youth development principles and a strong employee assistance program (EAP)–type framework. The amount of time it took to serve participants varied depending on where they fell along the continuum.

New Heights was unable to participate in the Young Adult Milestones task force because of its strategic decision to close in 2011. The decision was made because the organization wished to avoid future struggles to meet annual grant and contractual expectations with respect to job placement. New Heights had learned through experience that it needed to provide multiyear support with comprehensive services to address the myriad challenges confronting out-of-work/out-of-school older youth—and that job placement outcomes were often unrealistic within the one-year time frame of available funding streams.

Before 2011, New Heights had participated actively in P/PV’s NYC Benchmarking Project peer-learning forums and related technical assistance activities. As part of that process, New Heights staff did relevant data collection and analysis on milestones of success for its young people. It utilized a database developed over more than five years with data on participant demographics, participation levels and results.

**Hypothesis:** New Heights pursued many areas of inquiry, but some of its most relevant questions were:

- How long did it take participants to actually obtain their GED and/or make the transition to a good job?
- How well were participants moving “along the continuum,” transitioning from the comprehensive education, career and support services “I-Reach” phase to the career- and employment-focused “Jobs Conexion” phase? Were the increased supports provided by New Heights making a difference?
- What were important milestone data points to track along the way?

**Data Analyzed:** New Heights had collected demographic data on almost 1,000 young adults enrolled from 2006 through its closing in 2011. It looked at factors such as gender, age at intake, high school credits earned at intake, time out of school at intake, and participants' perceptions about how long it would take them to find employment and obtain a GED. New Heights did further analysis of participation levels, services received and progress made toward GEDs and employment for the 700 young adults who had received more comprehensive services in the "I-Reach" and "Jobs Conexion" components from 2008 to 2011.

**Results of Analysis:** Some of New Heights' key findings included:

- Time for accomplishing outcomes: Data showed that the typical New Heights participant took 18 to 24 months to obtain a GED and 12 to 18 months to make the transition into a good job. Participants had expected the process to take much less time: About two thirds of participants entering New Heights' programming said that they would be able to accomplish both of these outcomes in less than six months.
- Support for increased engagement along the continuum: New Heights saw significant increases over the 2008–2010 period in the percentage of participants transitioning from the "I-Reach" component to the "Jobs Conexion" component (from 39 percent transitioning in 2008 to 89 percent transitioning in 2010). The organization had wanted to conduct additional analysis to understand how the increases in engagement correlated with participant demographics and specific supports received, but was unable to complete that work before it closed.

**Observations/Reflections:** New Heights had a culture focused on data and evaluation for many years. At the time of its closing, it was becoming more focused on understanding what types of milestones best contribute to long-term success and what types of supports are most effective. But the data New Heights analyzed before it closed confirmed that the process for out-of-school/out-of-work youth to secure employment and a GED is complex and often requires much longer than a year. In a funding environment that is more and more focused on yearly outcomes, it will be important to continue to identify other measures of meaningful progress.

Participating Organizations

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<p><b>F.E.G.S. Health and Human Services System/Education and Youth Services</b>  <a href="http://www.fegs.org">www.fegs.org</a>                  Courtney Hawkins, <i>Vice President,</i>  <i>Education and Youth Services</i>  <a href="mailto:chawkins@fegs.org">chawkins@fegs.org</a></p>	<p><b>Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Inc.</b>  <a href="http://www.isaacscenter.org">www.isaacscenter.org</a>                  Christopher Bloodworth, <i>Director,</i>  <i>Youth Employment and Education</i>  <a href="mailto:cbloodworth@isaacscenter.org">cbloodworth@isaacscenter.org</a></p>

NOTE:

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## Endnotes

- <sup>i</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2012. “Household Data, Not Seasonally Adjusted (A-16): Employment Status of the Civilian Non-Institutional Population 16 to 24 Years of Age by School Enrollment, Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Educational Attainment.” Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- <sup>ii</sup> Parrott, James, and Lazar Treschan. Publication pending—2012. *Barriers to Entry: The Challenges Facing Young Adults in the New York City Labor Market*. New York: Fiscal Policy Institute and Community Service Society.
- <sup>iii</sup> US Department of Labor. 2006. “Common Measures Policy for the Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA[s]) Performance Accountability System and Related Performance Issues.” Washington, DC: US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Retrieved 1/30/12 from <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05.pdf>.
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- <sup>v</sup> Leinback, D. Timothy, and Davis Jenkins. 2008. *Using Longitudinal Data to Increase Community College Student Success: A Guide to Measuring Milestone and Momentum Point Attainment*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- <sup>vi</sup> See: US Department of Labor. 2005. “Common Measures.” Washington, DC: US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. See also: US Department of Labor. 2010. “DOL YouthBuild Program Outcomes Description Sheet.” Washington, DC: US Department of Labor. Retrieved 1/30/12 from [www.ybhandbooks.org/files/tools/DOL-YB-Program-Outcomes-Description-Sheet.pdf](http://www.ybhandbooks.org/files/tools/DOL-YB-Program-Outcomes-Description-Sheet.pdf). See also: Jackson, Russell H., R. Malene Dixon, Ann McCoy et al. 2007. “Youth Opportunity Grant Initiative: Impact and Synthesis Report.” Houston: Decision Information Resources, Inc. Retrieved 1/30/12 from [http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText\\_Documents/YO%20Impact%20and%20Synthesis%20Report.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/YO%20Impact%20and%20Synthesis%20Report.pdf).
- <sup>vii</sup> This list also includes some measures used by New Heights.
- <sup>viii</sup> National Retail Federation Foundation, [www.nrffoundation.com/content/retail-certifications](http://www.nrffoundation.com/content/retail-certifications).
- <sup>ix</sup> Microsoft Office Specialist certification, [www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/mos.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/mos.aspx).
- <sup>x</sup> Prochaska, James O., and Carlo C. DiClemente. 1992. “Stages of Change in the Modification of Problem Behaviors.” *Progress Behavior Modification*, 28: 183–218.
- <sup>xi</sup> According to The Door’s website, EPOCH represents “the beginning of a new period marked by radical changes and new developments.” See [www.door.org/programs-services/ged/epoch](http://www.door.org/programs-services/ged/epoch).
- <sup>xii</sup> The Infused GED component of The Door’s EPOCH program refers to the “infusion” of GED programming with the opportunity to attend other classes that help participants build life and leadership skills while exploring career and personal interests.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Prochaska and DiClemente. “Stages of Change.”
- <sup>xiv</sup> For more information on the national STRIVE program and its model, see <http://strivenational.org/strivesite>.