

ABSTRACT
Workforce Innovation Fund Application

Applicant Name: Worksystems, Inc. (WSI)

Applicant Category: Consortium of WIBs

Lead Applicant City/State: Portland, Oregon

Areas Served: Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington

Project Name: *Housing Works: A Regional Workforce/Housing Alliance*

Funding Level Requested: 4,675,330 - **technical costs**
\$821,000 - **evaluation costs**

Project Type: B

Description of Proposed Project

Housing Works: A Regional Workforce-Housing Alliance weaves together the strengths, expertise, and capacity of the region's Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), Public Housing Authorities (PHA), and employers to support 480 PHA housing residents gain the life and employment skills necessary to attain self-sufficiency. In the process, it will identify and address barriers to service integration and create a high-performance service delivery system with the capacity to target limited resources on generating positive employment outcomes for low-skilled PHA residents with a prolonged history of poverty

Housing Works' will achieve four goals: 1) Increase collaboration between the region's workforce development providers and PHAs through the execution of formal agreements that dedicate ongoing resources to coordinated/co-funded services, and through purposeful policy alignment that reduces barriers to partnership over time. 2) Increase the efficiency of the region's workforce development and PHA

services by co-investing resources in the PHA resident population with the shared goal of eliminating program redundancies and increasing resident employment. 3) Increase the earning potential of PHA residents by improving access to and retention in training services linked to high-demand occupations. 4) Accelerate a path to self-sufficiency for work-able PHA residents through attainment and retention of employment in high-demand occupations with pathways for advancement.

Housing Works has been designed to replicate and expand upon a successful collaboration between two project partners, Home Forward and Worksystems, Inc. in 2010. Known as the 'Paul Allen Model' (PAM) to acknowledge substantial support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the pilot offered Home Forward residents a broad array of co-resourced and co-staffed workforce development services, sector-based training, and other supports to move them into living wage jobs. Outcomes of the year-long pilot indicate *PAM* dramatically increased wages and employability for enrolled Home Forward residents: of the 34 participants completing training, 21 attained new employment and 4 are still engaged in training activities. Moreover, the average household income for participants increased by 159% (\$13,594 to \$31,631).

Description of Proposed Evaluation Strategy

As noted earlier, *Housing Works* is a Project Type B, which requires a rigorous approach to evaluation. Since the project is demonstrating a systemic change, the evaluation will include extensive qualitative data collection and analysis that documents the systems changes from the point of view of multiple stakeholders and assesses their value. Within this systems innovation, it also aims to deliver training and employment services, using a case management approach, which are intended to yield more positive outcomes for participants; the project will employ a rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation design to assess the effectiveness of this service approach. Taken together, the qualitative and quantitative data will allow a very clear picture to be drawn not only of what worked and to what extent, but also of why and how those results were achieved and how they are valued by stakeholders.

Effectiveness of the *systems change* will be assessed using both qualitative and quantitative data. Interview, survey, and focus group data will provide rich insight into the perspectives, experiences, and results of participants, comparison group members, employers, project leaders and staff, and other stakeholders regarding the systems change. In addition, analysis of administrative records will provide important quantitative insight into cost-efficiencies and leveraging of funds. Fidelity scales will be used to assess adherence to the *Housing Works* model in the four sites at the outset and over time.

Effectiveness of *services to participants* will be assessed by comparing their results to those of a comparison group that is constructed using propensity score matching, a process that addresses potential bias in the selection of participants and strengthens the internal validity of the study. The difference between the credentials, employment, and income of the participants at the beginning and the end of the study will reveal the progress they have made. Likewise, the difference between the credentials, employment, and income of the nonparticipant comparison group members at the beginning and the end of the study will show the progress they have made. The difference of differences between the participant and comparison groups will provide insight into the causal relationship between the services provided by the program and the results obtained.

Public Contact Information:

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