

# CONNECTING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM



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# Neighborhood Centers Add Value to Workforce System

- Services provided on-site (emergency bill paying, housing, childcare, computer lab)
- Extensive referral network
- Pre-existing trust factor within the neighborhood
- Close proximity to the homes of participants
- Services available for all family members
- Understand the unique needs of the specific neighborhood

# Test Your Reality

- ⦿ Problem: gaps in service delivery system that neighborhood centers could fill.
- ⦿ Hypothesis: Neighborhood centers could provide assessment, literacy, career advising, case management and support, then **refer** to one-stop center for WIA training and job placement
- ⦿ Reality: Neighborhood centers needed to hire an employment and training liaison to supplement and connect with the workforce system.

# Achievements

- 2+ grade level increase in literacy
- Ongoing connection to solve family and personal problems (3 month supply of food)
- Peer-to-peer connections, neighbors help each other
- Job readiness – interview, resume prep, career paths

# Lessons Learned

- ⦿ “Connect” requires more than “Refer”
- ⦿ Share workforce system resources
- ⦿ Workforce system may have limited capacity to serve *emerging industries and small businesses* -- seek sector-based partner
- ⦿ Be realistic about neighborhood organization’s core competencies (they don’t know what they don’t know)
- ⦿ Partnership requires both parties to bring resources and help to build each other’s capacity. Not a one-way relationship.

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