

# **THE RIPPLE EFFECT:**

**STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS  
WITH LIMITED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**



# Purpose/Focus

- ▣ Discuss the concept of “engagement” and its impact on program design, content, and priorities
- ▣ Describe a specific support initiative that has revolutionized engagement, retention and outcomes for IPIC’s targeted programs
- ▣ Provide practical examples and strategies for implementing successful engagement efforts
- ▣ Deliver the perspective of a training alumnus on his experience and the “must-haves” for engaging young adults with limited employment opportunities

# What does it Mean to “Engage”?

- ▣ “Engage” – (1) To occupy the attention or efforts of [a person]; (2) To attract and hold fast; (3) To bind, as by pledge, promise, contract or oath; to make liable.
  
- ▣ For those Serving a Target Population with Barriers to Employment:
  - How do you get them to come?
  - How do you keep them coming back?
  - How do you help lead them to success?

# Program Design Strategies

- ▣ Begin with the end in mind
  - Demonstrate – and demand--leadership
- ▣ Design intentionally
  - Ensure that all components and activities connect directly to the “end” that you are seeking
  - Understand the relationship between behaviors and outcomes
- ▣ Focus on process
  - Perform comprehensive measures of interim progress
  - Maximize opportunities for meaningful practice

# Program Design Strategies (cont'd)

- ▣ Develop supporting relationships with anticipated program/client needs in mind
- ▣ Understand that “the end” is not “the end”
- ▣ Build and implement with your narrative in mind

# One Key Strategy

- ▣ Imagine...an ideal CBO initiative to address outreach, placement and retention for out of school young adults with a number of significant barriers to employment.
- ▣ **What would you like to see in it?**

# How About...

- ▣ Access to social services
- ▣ But include help to social service agencies to enhance their focus to **workforce development**
- ▣ Provide high quality/high standards employment/ training and GED options
- ▣ Use of case management and integrated MIS systems
- ▣ Extensive professional development
- ▣ Reliable ongoing help for just about anything that comes up (i.e., technical assistance & capacity building)
- ▣ Real and useful ties to employers
- ▣ Flexibility in contracting (including performance-based contracts)

**But what is missing from this list?**

**“Barrier-Busting” Vouchers to cover  
the cost of *qualifying* emergency  
expenses!**

# **The IPIC Youth Employment Services (YES) Voucher Initiative**

*Promoting Outreach, Placement and Retention  
Through Barrier Busting Vouchers Administered  
by Community-Based Organizations in Partnership  
with IPIC, the Lilly Endowment and WIA*

# Characteristics of Indianapolis' YES Voucher Initiative

- ▣ Assists out-of-school 17 to 25 year olds with limited employment opportunities as they work to find employment and upgrade their work and academic credentials
- ▣ YES network is comprised of 12-17 contracted CBOs who offer workforce development training/case management for qualifying young adults
- ▣ The Indianapolis definition of “vouchers”
  - Short-term, emergency assistance to address qualifying barrier(s) that may derail progress towards training/employment goals if left unaddressed
  - **Assistance goes to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties; not to participants**
- ▣ Includes “Conditional Cash Transfers” --bonuses based on accomplishment of work-readiness and life goals set forth in participants' Achievement Agreement



# What are some typical financial barriers among YES clients that impact outreach, placement and retention in training and work initiatives?

- Transportation
- Legal assistance
  - Probation fees
  - Driving fines
  - Court costs
- Clothing – work, interview, uniforms, etc.
- Individual and family counseling
- Drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals
- Education & training assistance
- Mentoring
- Child care
- Temporary housing/shelter
- Materials for individuals with disabilities
- Financial counseling
- Dependent care
- Limited health and dental care
- Emergency assistance

## ▣ Questions...

- Fears of gaming and abuse
- Fear of participant dependency
- Fear of having weak sustainability plans
- Fear about systems needed for monitoring

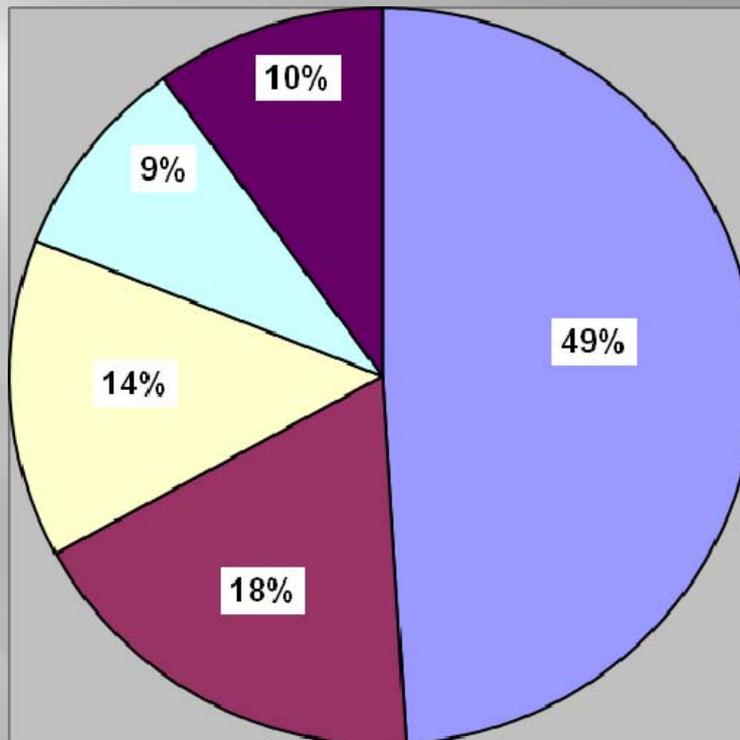
## ▣ ...and Answers

- Ceilings on the amounts of single vouchers and maximum available to a single participant
- Restrictions repeat customers
- Restrictions on approved uses
- Require pre-requisites (participant co-pay, accomplishment of certain amounts of program time and/or goals) before issuing vouchers
- Proprietary data management system in place

# Outcomes

- ▣ Since 2003, 10,800 vouchers issued to almost 2,700 individuals (over \$2 million)
- ▣ Over 1,500 youths have secured jobs
- ▣ 900 have retained jobs at least 60 days
- ▣ Almost 600 have retained jobs for 180 days
- ▣ Evaluation by Brandeis University shows the critical role of an intermediary and leadership

## Numbers of Vouchers Received



■ 1-2 vouchers

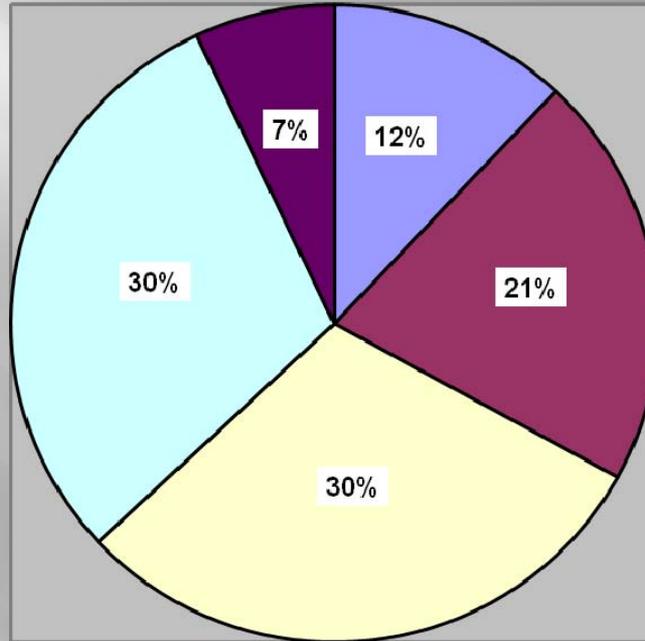
■ 3-4 vouchers

■ 5-6 vouchers

■ 7-8 vouchers

■ 9+ vouchers

## Sum of Vouchers Received



■ Less than \$200

■ \$200-\$499

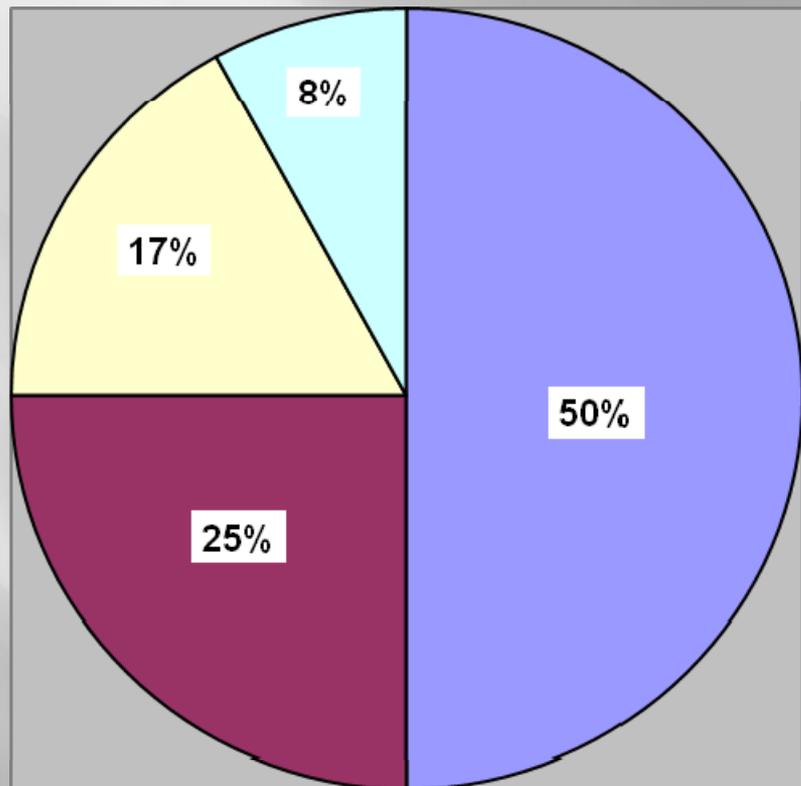
■ \$500-\$999

■ \$1,000-\$1,999

■ \$2,000+



## Could You Have Continued Your Education, Training, or Jobs Without a Voucher?



- No
- Maybe
- Yes
- Don't know

# Can the Vouchers Model Work in Your Community? YES!

- ▣ Local United Way could set aside a pool for 'cash assistance'.
- ▣ CBOs could run a fundraising campaign together to raise voucher dollars.
- ▣ Local foundations may find this idea appealing, especially small and family foundations seeking an upfront and personal kind of philanthropy.
- ▣ Federal and state policies could help promote public/private partnerships involving vouchers
- ▣ Emphasis on support leading to self-sufficiency builds on traditions of self-help and self-reliance in Faith-Based Organizations

# Implementation Assistance

IPIC, Lilly Endowment & Brandeis University are available to assist communities who are interested in replicating the YES voucher model. We can provide:

- ▣ Manuals and implementation guides
- ▣ Research reports
- ▣ Forms and procedures
- ▣ Training protocols
- ▣ Monitoring of client files
- ▣ Spot check lessons
- ▣ Templates from MIS system

# The Rules of Engagement

# The Foundation

*“ People can and will change their lives for the better if given respect, opportunity, skills, a supportive peer group, caring teachers and mentors, and a vision of what their life could be.”*

*--Unknown*



# The Rules of Engagement

## ▣ RAP

- Respect

- Attention

- Provision

# Rules of Engagement (cont'd): “How do we find our clients?”

- ▣ Strategies for
  - Recruitment
  - Intake and Screening Processes
  - Identifying and Cultivating True Commitment

# Rules of Engagement (cont'd): “How do we keep our clients coming back?”

- ▣ Strategies for:
  - Helping young adults to discover and embrace “WIIFM?”
  - Ensuring Meaningful Training Contacts
  - Creating a “Success-FULL” Environment

# Rules of Engagement (cont'd): “How do we help lead our clients to success?”

## ▣ Strategies for:

- Presenting the vision for success
- Providing direction to meaningful employment
- Effective follow-up
  - ▣ For contact
  - ▣ For potential improvement

# For More Information, Please Contact:

- Thomas Major, Jr., Associate Director, Youth & Young Adult Initiatives, Indianapolis Private Industry Council; (317) 684-2228; [tmajor@ipic.org](mailto:tmajor@ipic.org)
- Clint Johnson, President & CEO, Courage to Encourage LLC; (317) 213-2139; [couragetoencourage@gmail.com](mailto:couragetoencourage@gmail.com)
- Matthew Rager, YES Program Manager, Indianapolis Private Industry Council; (317) 684-2372; [mrager@ipic.org](mailto:mrager@ipic.org)
- IPIC Website: [www.ipic.org](http://www.ipic.org)