

What We Learned from the Community College Training Grant Application Process

NELP Conference


June 2, 2011

Ed Strong

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce




Community Trade Adjustment Assistance

- ▶ Part of larger Trade Act - aimed at supports for individuals and communities adversely affected by foreign trade
 - ▶ Amended in Recovery Act (stimulus money) to add money to Trade Adjustment Assistance to support community college reform so that workers could benefit better from education opportunities
- 

Overview of Grants

- ▶ \$500 Million available to community colleges (broader pool of applicants but cc's used for short hand) for systems transformation
- ▶ Solicitation announced in late January 2011
- ▶ Applications submitted by April 21, 2011
- ▶ No training or support services allowed
- ▶ Minimum of \$2.5mil for each state; could be multiple applications within any state; consortia of applicants could apply for up to \$20 million
- ▶ 300 applications received

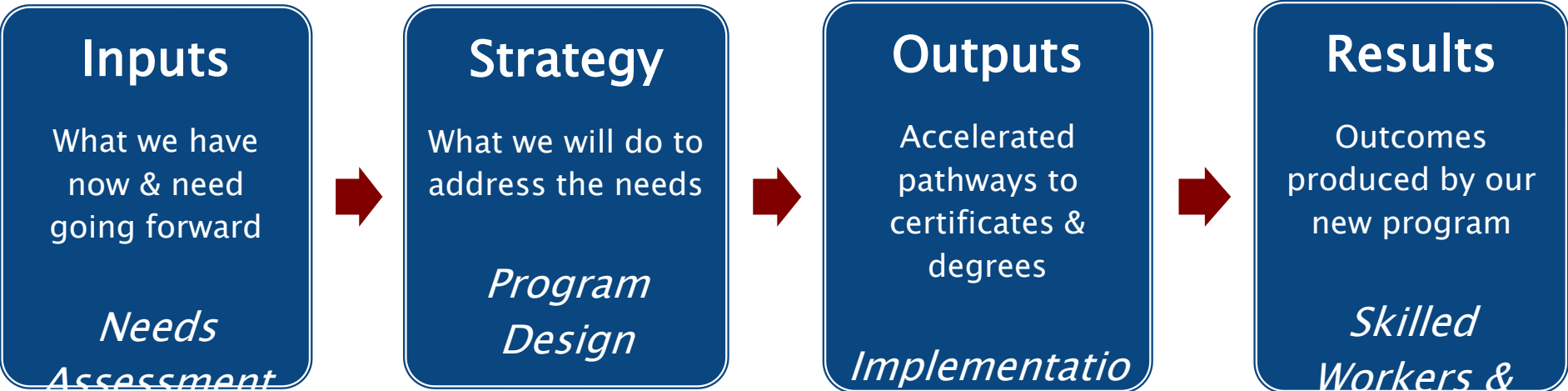
Overview of Grant (cont)

- ▶ Solicitation collaboration of DOL and Ed Departments at federal level
 - ▶ Funding from DOL program stream – Trade Adjustment Assistance Act
 - ▶ Reforms proposed had to meet needs of Trade impacted workers
 - ▶ Programs designed included employment related outcomes
 - ▶ After design completed, programs open to anyone
- 

Overview of Grants (cont)

- ▶ Options for reform had to follow one or more of four priorities
 - Accelerate progress for low-skilled and other workers
 - Improve retention and reduce time to completion
 - Build programs that meet industry needs – career pathways
 - Strengthen on-line and technology-enabled learning
- ▶ Ultimate interest – re-designing delivery system to help dislocated workers find easier path to relevant labor market credentials / degrees

C3T Logic Model



- Identification of TAA worker characteristics
- Growth industries these TAA workers (and others like them) can access with the right education, skills & credentials
- Evidence of gaps in education program delivery

- Evidence-based design and change strategies
- Hands-on involvement of consortium members and business partners
- Creation of new, accelerated programs to transform college capacity and meet industry needs


- Progress measures
- Implementation measures

- Outcome measures
- Industry needs met through better retention and accelerated learning


CSW Role

- ▶ Worked with Complete College America (CCA) to assist CCA state consortia apply for funding
- ▶ Grants align with CCA completion agenda
- ▶ Melding of CCA interests with SGA requirements
- ▶ Worked with 15 states intensively to help them develop strongest applications possible
- ▶ Strengthen connection of colleges with public workforce system
- ▶ Strengthen college employer engagement capacity


Key Learnings

- ▶ Adult learner needs do not drive system design even though that is largest population base
 - ▶ On the whole, little connection between colleges and Workforce Boards or One-Stop centers
 - ▶ Weak employer engagement strategies currently exist within colleges
 - ▶ Defining employer engagement through sector strategies is quite rare
 - ▶ System change is not easy and there are many points of resistance
- 


Adult Learners / Dislocated Workers

- ▶ Has become largest segment of college students
 - ▶ Colleges essentially designed for full-time students transitioning from K-12
 - ▶ Divide between credit and non-credit side of colleges is huge
 - ▶ Remediation is needed by most adult learners and is delivered a separate function
 - ▶ Completion rates overall at community colleges are below 25% – even worse for adult learners
- 

Workforce Connections

- ▶ Some colleges didn't know what a WIB is
 - ▶ Employment outcomes were foreign concepts
 - ▶ Identifying needs of Trade impacted workers was a stretch - mixed bag on existing collaborations for data collection
 - ▶ In general where there were connections, they were for referrals and training funds, not for employer engagement
- 

Employer Engagement

- ▶ Colleges thought employer advisory committees represented good employer engagement
 - ▶ Often placement was responsibility of the faculty
 - ▶ Curriculum design was a college controlled function
 - ▶ Education course offerings little informed by employer demand
- 


Sector Strategies

- ▶ What we mean by “sector strategies”
 - Data based selection of sectors
 - Intermediary supports the process
 - Employers in sectors join together at same table to solve common problems
 - Employers drive the process
- ▶ Sector strategies are the new norm for many states
- ▶ Sector strategies have proven to be more effective in terms of outcomes than traditional training

Systems Change

- ▶ Can't do one change and expect big results e..g. student services redesign
- ▶ Resistance to a new model is well entrenched – applies to any change strategy
- ▶ Early in determining what works for adult learners
- ▶ Trying to build research base through grants to inform future investments
- ▶ Applicants are proposing fundamental changes e.g. block scheduling, embedded remediation, targeted curriculum, compressed delivery

Where We Go From Here

- ▶ Grant announcements due no earlier than September
 - ▶ Post-award possible learning network
 - ▶ Required sharing of grant findings
 - ▶ Rigorous evaluations
 - ▶ Immediate need for employer engagement through sector strategies – academies for states
- 

Questions and Discussion

Contact Information

Ed Strong

734-769-2900 Ext 253

estrong@skilledwork.org

www.skilledwork.org