



SkillWorksSM
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Capacity Building in Support of SkillWorks Partnerships

APRIL 2009

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Capacity Building in Support of SkillWorks Partnerships

Overview

SkillWorks was designed as a three-pronged approach to system change: workforce partnerships, public policy, and capacity building. The SkillWorks' capacity building program was designed to support and reinforce the other two aspects of the SkillWorks Initiative: workforce partnerships and public policy advocacy. This evaluation will focus on the capacity building efforts pursued in Years 3 through 5 of Phase I. During those years, capacity building was primarily aimed at enhancing the performance of the Implementation Partnerships:

1. The Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute (HCRTI), a partnership between two Community Development Corporations (CDCs), a CBO, a number of training providers, and multiple healthcare institutions in the Longwood Medical Area.
2. The Hotel Career Center (HCC), a partnership led by the International Institute of Boston with participation by the Hilton Hotels.
3. Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD), a partnership led by Partners HealthCare, a network of hospitals and other healthcare organizations along with service providers including Project Hope, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), and WorkSource.
4. Building Services Industry Career Path Project, a partnership led by

Voice and Future Fund, a nonprofit union-led educational provider, in partnership with building owners and maintenance contractors.

5. Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE), a partnership led by the Asian American Civic Association in partnership with two community-based organizations, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, and multiple automotive-related employers.
6. Community Health Worker Initiative led by Action for Boston Community Development, a broad-based partnership involving 11 employers; Bunker Hill and Mass Bay Community Colleges; Mass. Department of Public Health; Mass. Association of Community Health Workers; and the Mass. League of Community Health Centers.

The primary tools for capacity building included:

- ❖ group training and peer-learning opportunities;
- ❖ individualized, one-on-one technical assistance; and
- ❖ mini-grants to secure additional resources to pursue key capacity building efforts.

Of those tools, individualized technical assistance appears to have been the most effective form of support. Part of its success is due to the strong long-term relationships between capacity building providers and project directors at the

Implementation Partnerships, which established trust as well as a deep understanding of the needs and challenges faced by each partnership. Group training outcomes would likely have been improved had there been sustained individualized technical assistance to support implementation of concepts and strategies introduced in group settings.

It is impossible to thoroughly assess the impact of individual capacity interventions because multiple tools and interventions were used to address critical issues at the partnerships. Outcomes are best viewed within the context of each of the six SkillWorks Implementation Partnerships. Capacity building played an important role in sustaining a couple of faltering partnerships. Capacity building appears to be particularly impactful when the support can be introduced early in the formation of the partnership, a benefit that was only available to one of the six Phase I Implementation Partnerships. The greatest challenge in delivering capacity building is staff turnover. Staff turnover increases the need for capacity building but also heightens the risk that the Initiative will not reap the rewards of its investment given the turnover among the targets of capacity building, generally the project directors of the Implementation Partnerships. Future efforts will need to diffuse the knowledge more broadly in the organization in order to build a more lasting impact on the effectiveness of the partnerships.

Capacity Building Goals

During Phase I of the SkillWorks Initiative, two distinct models of capacity

building were pursued sequentially. The first model was operational during the first two years of the Initiative, 2003-2005. The second model was introduced in Year 3 and continued through the end of Phase I. The switch from the first model to the second model represented a refinement of the capacity building goals to focus more closely on increasing the effectiveness of the SkillWorks Implementation Partnerships and the public policy efforts.

Initial goals of SkillWorks' capacity building efforts emphasized broad upgrading of Boston's workforce development providers' skills

The capacity building activities delivered under the first model were conducted under the aegis of the Rockefeller Foundation's "Initiative to Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness in Workforce Development." The Rockefeller Foundation's capacity building activities began in 2001, prior to the start of the SkillWorks Initiative, but were brought into SkillWorks because of the alignment of the two initiatives' missions and goals. Those early capacity building activities, carried out by Management Consulting Services (MCS), supported five¹ Boston-based community-based organizations interested in workforce development to improve their operational competencies and performance. Four of five Boston organizations participating in the Rockefeller Initiative eventually became partners in SkillWorks Workforce Partnerships. In addition to the pre-

¹ Funded organizations included Asian American Civic Association, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, La Alianza Hispana (originally in partnership with Oficina Hispana), Project Place, Vietnamese American Civic Association.

existing capacity building activities, SkillWorks initially supported technical assistance for the partnerships under a contract with the Boston Private Industry Council.

SkillWorks' goals shifted in 2006 to focus more specifically on strengthening the capacity of SkillWorks partnerships

At the conclusion of the Rockefeller Initiative, the SkillWorks Funders Group decided to integrate capacity building more fully into the overall SkillWorks design. As a result, starting in Year 3, the goals of capacity building shifted from one of increasing the capacity of community-based organizations in Boston generally to specifically increasing the capacity of the SkillWorks Implementation Partnerships. The goal of capacity building was more narrowly defined as helping the partnerships achieve the goals spelled out in their applications and work plans with assistance that primarily focused on the staff and activities related to SkillWorks and not on the capacity of the lead organization in its entirety.

The broad goal of increasing the capacity of SkillWorks partnerships was translated into more specific objectives based on a needs assessment of each SkillWorks partnership. The most common objectives included: sharpening the partnerships' strategic focus, supporting the partnerships' leadership particularly during times of transition, and strengthening the partnerships' relationships with a variety of external stakeholders.

While the partnerships became the primary focus of capacity building, SkillWorks maintained the goal of sharing and documenting best or

promising practices from the Initiative with the broader workforce development community and pursued new strategies, on a limited basis, to achieve this goal.

Key Stakeholders

A subcommittee of the funders provided oversight of capacity building activities. The activities themselves were carried out by a mix of SkillWorks staff and consultants selected by and contracted through SkillWorks to organize and deliver capacity building services to the partnerships. Several partnerships also hired their own consultants, using SkillWorks funds to perform specific capacity building tasks approved by the capacity building committee. Capacity building services were offered by a capacity building team: Jennifer Freeman of Freeman Consulting, who took chief responsibility for organizing the group training and communications, worked closely with the SkillWorks director and with Ann Donner of Ann Donner Consulting. Each member of that team acted as the primary capacity building contact for at least one partnership.

Partnership directors were the primary focus of capacity building assistance

The staff directors of each of the workforce partnerships were the primary recipients of capacity building support. The capacity of the partnership directors was deemed to have a tremendous impact on program outcomes because their leadership affects many other aspects of the organization such as strategy, relationships with external stakeholders, and staff quality. The turnover in the staff director positions made the investment in the partnership director all the more necessary as capacity building assistance played a key

role in getting new directors up to speed. Only two of the six SkillWorks partnerships, BSCPP and PCWD, retained the same director for the five years.

Demand for capacity building assistance varied by partnership

The intensity of capacity building support provided varied by partnership. PACE and HCRTI received a substantial amount of capacity building assistance to improve their strategy and business model, support leadership transitions, and upgrade data and administrative capacity². Some partnerships, particularly BSCPP and PCWD, were never major recipients of capacity building services. These organizations had more stability in staffing, which decreased the need for assistance. PCWD also had strong administrative and data systems already in place. Leadership at both BSCPP and PCWD was also simply less open to receiving outside assistance. While SkillWorks made an initial effort to provide an “equal” intensity of services to each partnership, eventually capacity building support was focused on those partnerships that were receptive to it and had identified needs. Ultimately, focusing assistance where it was most needed and desired increased the potential yield on the investment of time and resources and, hence, was a wise choice. Capacity building providers ultimately realized that demand for their

² PACE and HCRTI received additional support prior to receiving their first SkillWorks Implementation grant. PACE received a planning grant in Year 1 of SkillWorks. Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, a lead organization involved in HCRTI, received assistance through the Rockefeller Foundation’s “Initiative to Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness in Workforce Development.”

services was correlated with the ultimate effectiveness of their assistance.

Key Activities and Outcomes

Capacity building activities to support the SkillWorks partnerships generally fell into three categories: provision of group training and peer-learning opportunities; individualized, one-on-one technical assistance; and mini-grants to secure additional resources to pursue key capacity-building efforts. In 2007, SkillWorks also funded additional capacity building by supporting three project directors’ attendance at the Aspen Institute’s Sector Skills Academy.

Group capacity building has been used to varying degrees with varying levels of success

Group capacity building has been used to varying degrees over the past three years as a cost-effective way to share information and best practices, teach particular tools, and bring experts to share their insights with partnership directors and, at times, partnership staff and stakeholders from other partner organizations. It was used fairly intensively in 2006 when there were eight group sessions, but the intensity was ratcheted down in 2007 and 2008 based on feedback from partnership directors.

While group capacity building was beneficial in that it brought the partnerships together and established a common knowledge base, partnerships reported that it did not always meet their needs because they did not always find the information relevant to their situation. The challenge was to find content that met the needs of all



partnerships despite their variation in sector affiliation and organizational capacity. Based on feedback from project directors, group sessions shifted in 2007 to include only two formal training workshops combined with four peer learning sessions for project directors. These learning sessions were designed to allow directors to exchange information and share experiences with each other.

Training workshops also became more focused in 2007 and 2008 as partnership needs became clearer. In 2008, the topics of group sessions included:

- ❖ “Developing Meaningful and Measurable Outcomes with Employers,” facilitated by Rebekah Lashman of Commonwealth Corporation;
- ❖ “Strategies for Using Data to Improve Performance,” facilitated by Marty Miles of Public/Private Ventures; and
- ❖ “Business Planning as a Sustainability Strategy,” led by Newell Lessell of ICA Group and Liz O'Connor of Strategy Matters.

Some of the workshops included follow up with the partnerships in the form of individualized technical assistance or small group sessions to encourage partnerships to apply the lessons learned to their individual circumstances.

Peer learning opportunities were a valued component of capacity building

In SkillWorks’ initial years, project directors had limited opportunities to exchange information. Group activities focused on presentations by outside speakers. Partnership directors found limited opportunities to bounce ideas off each other or offer each other moral or operational support. Starting in 2006, the

directors would occasionally meet after work hours to offer this support informally. These meetings happened outside the formal purview of the SkillWorks Initiative. Eventually, project directors made clear to the SkillWorks director and the capacity building consultants that such meetings were very useful and would benefit from SkillWorks’ formal support. In response, SkillWorks added regular³ meetings of the project directors in 2007. All of the project directors participated with the exception of PCWD, which was no longer receiving SkillWorks funding at the time the meetings were instituted. Directors generally found these meetings very helpful not only as a means of sharing best practices, but also as an opportunity for joint problem-solving. Perhaps even more importantly, they were a valuable opportunity to provide emotional support and reduce the feeling of isolation the directors often felt initially. Since the project directors’ meetings were so well received, the capacity building agenda was further expanded to include peer learning sessions with career coaches from the all Workforce partnerships. Ultimately, meetings of both groups fell off toward the second half of the final year due to scheduling challenges, staff turnover, and a general winding down of Phase I activities.

Attendance at the Aspen Institute’s Sector Academy provided valuable exposure to national models and different workforce stakeholders

The three project directors that attended Aspen Institute’s Sector Academy found the experience tremendously valuable. Project directors valued the opportunity

³ Frequency varied over time from monthly to quarterly depending on the schedule availability of the directors.

to network with others in the field in a very different manner than they believed they would have done in a Boston-focused group. Rather than setting up tactical relationships, they networked about best practices and interesting ideas. In general, the experience deepened their knowledge of workforce development institutions at work nationally; particularly valuable was their exposure to the public workforce training system. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the Implementation Partnerships benefited from that investment over the long-term. All three project directors who attended the Sector Academy have since left their respective partnerships.

One-on-one technical assistance was a critical component of the SkillWorks capacity building model

Each SkillWorks partnership had a point person for capacity building assistance, either one of the designated consultants or the Initiative director. This person was assigned to work individually with the partnership although the nature of the assistance varied over time as partnership needs evolved. The work was highly customized and most commonly was provided as executive coaching for the project director; though occasionally in the form of research, analysis, or writing.

Technical assistance providers had varying levels of involvement with the partnerships. Assistance tended to be most intensive at times of transitions for the partnerships. For instance, technical assistance providers were closely involved when HCRTI was seeking a new organizational lead agency, engaging in meetings at least weekly. The CHW Initiative also made use of intensive technical assistance when it was initially funded. Individualized technical

assistance was used to support the new director and establish procedures for administering the large and complex partnership. Intensive support was also offered to the new director of PACE when she started in 2007.

Individualized technical assistance most enabled the capacity building team to balance the interests and concerns of the funders, the mission of the SkillWorks Initiative, and the wishes and needs of the project directors and their sponsoring organizations. The consultants played a key role in helping the project directors, many of whom were not only new to the SkillWorks Initiative but, in some cases, new to the industry or to sector partnerships generally, to understand the goals and expectations of the Initiative and better align their organizations with the SkillWorks mission.

While these individualized services were highly valued by the partnerships, interviews suggest that the assistance would not have been effective if the TA providers had not also earned the trust of the partnership directors. In fact, individualized technical assistance was most effective in 2007 and 2008 once the consultants had time to establish stronger relationships with the partnerships.

Partnerships were given mini-grants to support specialized capacity building assistance on topics unique to the given partnership

In addition to individualized technical assistance, mini-grants have been awarded to partnerships over the past three years to support a more intensive and customized capacity building project. Workforce partnerships submitted proposals for review by the Capacity Building Committee of the Funders Group. The most significant

investment in mini-grants was made in 2006, with 12 grants. There were four grants made in 2007 and only two in 2008. The decline in awards was due to a combination of factors. Partnerships were still carrying out projects funded in previous years so project directors were disinclined to take on new projects while still coordinating and managing the consultants as well as integrating the results of their work. An additional reason for the declining number of capacity building mini-grants appears to be a more stringent application review process implemented by the Capacity Building Committee.

While some mini-grants supported activities by existing staff, the majority involved contracting out services to consultants. Unlike the other aspects of capacity building, the mini-grants allowed the partnerships to hire their own consultants to perform the desired services. Mini-grants supported a variety of capacity building goals including:

- ❖ enhancing employer involvement through research or communication tools;
- ❖ sharpening partnership strategy and leadership through strategic planning, transition planning, and executive coaching; and
- ❖ improving service delivery through new curriculum or assessment tools.

The SkillWorks Initiative also took steps to support the capacity development of the broader workforce development community

While focusing primarily on the partnerships, the SkillWorks Initiative did invest in capacity building efforts beyond those aimed at direct grantees. SkillWorks met with the Commonwealth

Corporation (CommCorp), the Mayor's Office of Jobs & Community Services (JCS), and the Commonwealth Workforce Coalition (CWC), to identify opportunities for joint training. As a result, SkillWorks and CWC co-sponsored a number of trainings and SkillWorks opened some of the group workshops to CommCorp and JCS grantees. SkillWorks also organized a forum, with the assistance of Jobs for the Future (JFF), on educational pathways that was open to the broader workforce community.

SkillWorks used its communications strategy for capacity building purposes as well. SkillWorks sought to share the models of collaboration developed by the Implementation Partnerships with the field in partnership profiles developed in collaboration with JFF.

Partnership-Specific Outcomes

The ultimate goal of capacity building over the past three years has been to strengthen each workforce partnership's ability to achieve its planned goals and outcomes. The discussion below will highlight where capacity building appeared to have a direct impact on the organization's ability to more effectively pursue those outcomes.

Health Care and Research Training Institute (HCRTI):

Capacity building assistance was a critical support to HCRTI when the organization's survival was threatened

Capacity building support played an integral part in reaching a positive outcome in 2007 when HCRTI's future was in doubt. Faced with ineffective business and service delivery models and

the exit of its lead agencies from the partnership, HCRTI could have dissolved. The fact that HCRTI evolved into the Healthcare Training Institute (HTI) with a clearer focus for its services and a new home at Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) is due to the hard work of HCRTI and JVS staff and also to the critical capacity building support the partnership received in 2007. The employer interviews, which were funded by a SkillWorks mini-grant, offered critical insights that clarified the challenges the redesigned HTI would face. The individualized technical assistance also was critical to HTI's success because it brokered the transition from HCRTI to JVS.

Despite some of the positive outcomes related to capacity building interventions, there is an outstanding question of whether there was adequate return generated by the TA investment made in HCRTI. Over the course of Phase I, HCRTI was a major recipient of capacity building assistance. The outcomes resulting from that assistance are mixed. In 2006, HCRTI received over \$50,000 in capacity building mini-grants to strengthen MIS systems, conduct transition planning, develop sustainability plans, and to support executive coaching. In 2007, HCRTI worked closely with the capacity building consultant who provided at least weekly support for more than six months. Interviews conducted for this evaluation raised the question of whether the investment to save HCRTI in some form was worth the investment of capacity building resources. Certainly some investments in HCRTI, particularly the MIS improvements, yielded limited results. In addition, much effort was placed on supporting the leadership of HCRTI, particularly following the transition from the founding director to a

new director in 2006. With the transfer of HCRTI services, programs, and participants to JVS and the departure of all HCRTI staff including the project director by 2008, it does not appear that the capacity building investment (transition planning, executive coaching, Aspen Institute) will have a lasting impact on the project's new incarnation within JVS.

Partnership for Automotive Career Education (PACE):

A substantial investment of capacity building resources was dedicated to PACE, but the partnership was unable to fully capitalize on the assistance

PACE was a major recipient of capacity building assistance both in the form of individualized technical assistance and mini-grants for outside consulting assistance. Over its four years of implementation, PACE received almost \$54,000 in mini-grants that supported a strategic planning process, efforts to upgrade administrative systems, and a sustainability strategy. In addition, a capacity building consultant provided intensive coaching and technical assistance to the partnership director communicating on a weekly basis for approximately one year.

The outcomes related to this assistance are mixed. The initial strategy developed by consultants selected by PACE was not of sufficient depth or quality to move the partnership forward. The grant to support administrative improvements was not considered to have yielded substantial improvements in organizational capacity. Individualized technical assistance did assist PACE in securing a final year of funding from SkillWorks. The assistance also supported the development of a ROI analysis and the implementation of an employer survey. In the end, the

partnership director was the primary recipient of the support. With her departure from PACE, much of that investment left with her.

PACE's sustainability plan, funded by a capacity building mini-grant, contained a thorough and well researched business plan to impact program operations. For instance, one recommendation of the plan was to include internships as part of PACE, which the partnership has recently incorporated. PACE is also moving forward on the plan's recommendations around charging employers for incumbent training. The ultimate outcome of the sustainability plan remains to be seen, however, because future funding for the PACE program, since the conclusion of SkillWorks Phase I, remains uncertain.

Hotel Career Center (HCC):

With relatively modest investments of capacity building assistance, HCC was able to leverage support to strengthen the organization

HCC was never the most intensive user of capacity building support, but the partnership was able to use it strategically to address potential weaknesses and build a stronger program. Individualized technical assistance was used most intensively when a new director came on board in 2006. Capacity building helped the new director get up to speed quickly, assisting on issues related to internal management but mostly around expanding HCC's external networks. Capacity building assistance helped foster a critical alliance between JVS and HCC that, through their successful application to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, expanded both organizations' scope of services and employers served.

Not every capacity building investment at HCC produced as positive an outcome as the alliance with JVS. With the support of a mini-grant, HCC developed and implemented new curriculum for training front desk personnel, but the impact was limited by the small number of openings for such personnel. Poor placement rates caused HCC to discontinue the training after one cycle. A second mini-grant to develop and implement the business value assessment tool did not directly generate significant outputs in terms of readily used measurement tools or new positive employer outcomes.

CHW Initiative:

Unlike other partnerships, the CHW Initiative benefited from intensive capacity building assistance from planning through implementation

The CHW Initiative received a planning grant in 2006, Year 3 of Phase I, and continued into implementation in 2007. Given its later start, the CHW Initiative benefited from the new capacity building model from inception. SkillWorks identified that the large number of stakeholders involved in this partnership could make implementation difficult. In response, SkillWorks specifically allocated intensive capacity building assistance for the CHW Initiative beginning in the planning phase.

With this assistance, the CHW Initiative stayed on track from planning through implementation. The partnership committee structures, developed with capacity building assistance, proved effective and the CHW Initiative has enjoyed high levels of partner engagement. Another benefit from early engagement appeared to be broader partnership access for the capacity building consultant. While some

partnerships balked at the idea of the capacity building consultant sitting in on partnership meetings, she was welcome at the CHW Initiative, which gave her greater context for better advising of the director. As the CHW Initiative became more established, the partnership director did not need as much capacity building assistance. The amount of assistance gradually decreased, though regular informal contact and executive coaching continued to be beneficial.

The CHW Initiative also made good use of a small mini-grant that it used to develop a new assessment tool to determine appropriate placement for participants. The assessment tool has already been used effectively at the CHW Initiative, and the Initiative has also been working with area colleges to utilize the same assessment tool to help participants gain college credit for their training.

The CHW Initiative and HCC both point to a relationship between the capacity building investment and the effectiveness of the partnership director. At both partnerships, the capacity building assistance was leveraged by a particularly strong director. With the departure of the CHW Initiative's original director in mid-2008, it is unclear how much of the capacity building investment departed with her, and to what extent the benefit of that investment remains with the partnership.

Building Services Career Path Project (BSCPP):

Capacity building funding supported BSCPP's implementation of the newly-created Training Fund, the cornerstone of sustainable workforce development in the sector

BSCPP's primary use of capacity building resources was through the mini-grant

program. Awards were received to support a communications campaign, data management, and start-up design and operations for the Training Fund. In total, BSCPP received more than \$41,000 in mini-grants. The clearest outcome from these mini-grants is the Training Fund, which is now operational, although there is an outstanding question as to whether this outcome could have been achieved without the addition of SkillWorks capacity building funds given that the Training Fund has its own source of funds through employer contributions.

Beyond the mini-grants, BSCPP's director did not see the personal or organizational need for individualized technical assistance. BSCPP did attend most group sessions and particularly valued the project director's meetings but there are no specific outcomes to point to as a result of this involvement.

Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD):

PCWD only benefited from the refocused capacity building for one year so outcomes are limited

PCWD, which did not pursue re-funding in the final two years of Phase I, only had one year to benefit from SkillWorks redefined capacity building approach. PCWD received a mini-grant to revamp its website and also received assistance researching models of training conducted on employer paid release time. PCWD used that research to pilot a class for ten participants on paid release time. The pilot confirmed that managers will not support release time without resources to pay for backfill. PCWD also attended some group capacity building activities and some project directors' meetings even after its SkillWorks funding ended; however, PCWD had already addressed internally many of the issues discussed in

these sessions and, as a result, was more helpful as a model of best practices than as a recipient of assistance. Overall, there are few long-term outcomes to point to as a result of the SkillWorks capacity building assistance.

Conclusions

Capacity building was a necessary and useful component of SkillWorks. Capacity building assistance sustained some partnerships that might otherwise have failed. It helped to strengthen some partnerships, particularly those that had

directors who were receptive to the assistance and had the competence to capitalize on the support provided.

Despite some positive outcomes, the most effective implementation strategy remains an open question given the pervasive turnover in leadership. Diffusing the assistance to the broader partnership and program staff may ultimately be a more cost-efficient option and yield more sustainable long-term outcomes.

Lessons Learned

- ❖ **Partnerships' receptiveness to capacity building assistance is fundamental to its effectiveness.** For capacity building to be successful, there needs to be demand within the partnership for the assistance. In Phase I, not all partnerships were equally open to assistance. The Initiative was wise to focus its resources on those partnerships that had both the greatest need as well as the greatest interest in assistance. Funders should consider putting mechanisms in place that might encourage partnerships to make good use of capacity building assistance. For instance, the annual reapplication process could be used to identify particular capacity building needs. Partnerships could be asked in their proposals to articulate how they will use capacity building assistance in the coming year to address any perceived challenges. As part of quarterly or annual reporting to the Initiative director, partnerships could be asked to provide updates on how they have improved operations through the use of capacity building assistance.
- ❖ **Individualized technical assistance is a critical component of capacity building.** The customized nature of the assistance means that the assistance is directly addressing a specific partnership need. Unlike mini-grants in which most consultants hired had no previous experience with SkillWorks, the capacity building consultants providing individualized technical assistance had deep knowledge of the SkillWorks Initiative and were able to keep funder interests in mind as they supported the partnerships. Individualized technical assistance also appeared useful as a "case management" tool, keeping project directors focused on capacity building even when daily operational concerns could have easily caused the partnerships to neglect the longer-term capacity building needs. Individualized technical assistance can likely increase the effectiveness of group training, using individualized follow-up to reinforce the tools and learning, although evidence to support this theory was limited in Phase I.
- ❖ **Long-term relationships between partnerships and capacity building providers can increase the effectiveness of the assistance.** Long-term relationships allowed providers to develop a deep understanding of partnership needs. Long-term relationships also foster the trust between the provider and the partnerships. Partnerships needed to trust that they could share organizational challenges with the capacity building consultants without that information being immediately passed to funders. That level of trust took time to develop but was fundamental to the success of individualized technical assistance.
- ❖ **Capacity building investments early in the development of partnerships are highly beneficial.** The investment of capacity building resources in the CHW Initiative during its planning phase appears to have greatly benefited the organization in its first year of implementation.
- ❖ **Diffusing capacity building assistance among multiple stakeholders within the partnerships is important.** Turnover among partnership directors, the primary recipients of capacity building assistance, limited the apparent return on some capacity building investments.

SEEING OPPORTUNITIES. CREATING SOLUTIONS.

SkillWorks, a public-private partnership, is addressing the needs of employers for more skilled workers and of workers for more and better access to jobs that pay a family-supporting wage.

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This report was made possible by SkillWorks' funders. The authors thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of these funders.