



JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT WORK



Economic Impact of Job Training
Programs in Metro Atlanta

ATLANTA
CareerRise

JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Supported By:

ATLANTA
CareerRise

Participating Nonprofits:

Construction Education Foundation of Georgia, Goodwill of North Georgia, Latin American Association, Per Scholas Atlanta, The Center for Working Families and Urban League of Greater Atlanta

Data Analysis:

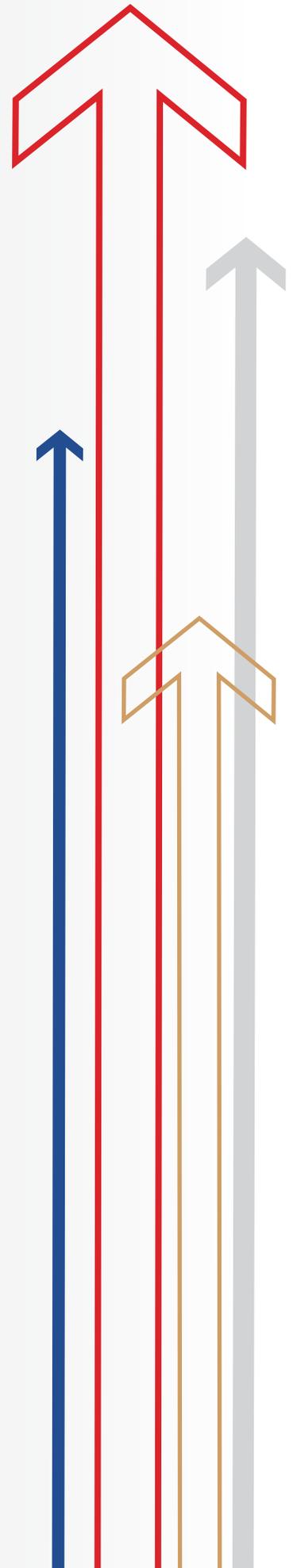
North Highland

Implementation Partners:

Atlanta Regional Commission, Endurance Project Management, Georgia BLU, Metro Atlanta Chamber and United Way of Greater Atlanta

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Executive Summary

Project Goals and Context

Atlanta CareerRise convened a group of nonprofit, community-based workforce development organizations in Metro Atlanta to create a data alliance. This alliance is focused on advocating for resources for programs that provide employment and training opportunities for low-income individuals, improving the use of and collection of data practices, and tracking their collaborative impact.

One of the initial objectives of this alliance was to complete an examination of the effectiveness of pre-employment job training programs and the success rate achieved through job training and placement services. This report, **Job Training Programs That Work: Economic Impact of Job Training Programs in Metro Atlanta**, was developed using the framework of the 2016 Job Training Alliance Impact Study with the permission of the Job Training Alliance, Boston, Massachusetts.

Atlanta CareerRise supported the development of this study while retaining North Highland to complete the data analysis and Endurance Project Management for project management services.

Highlights

This study documents and synthesizes a comprehensive set of outcomes related to job training and assistance over a two-year period: program outputs and demographics (Section II), employment and earned income (Section III), public benefits, taxes paid, and return on investment (Sections IV and V). The results of this study are based in the metro Atlanta region and may differ in other regions of the state due to differing labor dynamics.

At a high-level, the data shows that despite significant barriers to employment and career advancement, individuals who completed their job training programs achieved higher employment rates and greatly increased their contribution to the local community.

- Program graduates who maintained their employment for six months contributed to at least **\$12.9M** in wage dollars annually (pre-tax) and an increase of **\$2.1M** paid annually in new state and federal taxes;
- **93%** of program participants completed their respective program;
- The average hourly wage of participants employed at intake and employed six months later increased by **67%**;
- Program graduates achieve high rates of post-program employment (**85%**) and 6-month employment retention (**78%**);
- An annual reduction of **\$231,036** was spent on TANF and SNAP benefits;
- Programs achieved a **103%** return on direct training cost based on annual new wages.

Additionally, the results of this data analysis compare favorably with national outcomes benchmarks collected by the Benchmarking Data Project managed by the Corporation for Skilled Workforce. For example, post-program job retention demonstrated by the nonprofits in this study is 11.3% higher than the national average and the average hourly wage is \$1.17 (9.2%) higher¹. Therefore, job training programs that are short-term, lead program completers to an industry-recognized certification, and are driven by industry demand are a valuable investment and should receive targeted support as a part of the region's economic development infrastructure.

1. *APPLES TO APPLES Making Data Work for Community-Based Workforce Development Programs*, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, skilledwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A2A-update-full-report-FINALMay102016.pdf.



Approach

Atlanta CareerRise reached out to community-based, workforce development organizations in Metro Atlanta to participate in this study in the spring of 2017. An organization could participate if they:

- 1) Were a community based, workforce development organization;
- 2) Implemented programs that were short-term, driven by industry demand and community need, and were outcomes based;
- 3) Committed to providing program data from 2015 or 2016 cohorts.

A total of six organizations, representing nine programs (see Table 1), are included in the analysis discussed in this report.

The results are based on a study of 809 individuals participating in the 9 programs. This number serves as the starting sample size for all indicators. However, the cumulative “n” of some indicators is less than 809 based on the strength of the data (this is indicated throughout this report where applicable). To maintain consistency and clearly draw out one-year effects, this study examines the results of program cohorts enrolled in training in either calendar year 2015 or 2016.

“Number one, their mission is putting people to work. I can say that’s exactly what they did for me. They helped me get to work and helped me know that I could achieve the goal I was working toward.”

— Tommie,
Contact Center Specialist,
Goodwill of North Georgia

Methodology

Data aggregation occurred in phases:

- 1) A preliminary discussion was conducted among community-based workforce development organizations in May 2017 to gauge organizational interest in participating in the study and to see which other groups should be included;
- 2) After participating organizations were identified, the group met to identify the data points needed to complete this study. Once data points were defined, the individual organizations submitted their exported data points by September 2017;
- 3) North Highland then compiled all data sets, aligning the content as needed, to allow for clean data manipulation and summaries. Endurance Project Management and North Highland followed up with the organizations to clarify ambiguous data points and to identify sound proxies where data was not available.

Table 1: List of Participating Organizations and Programs

Organizations	Programs
Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA)	Construction Ready
Goodwill of North Georgia	Advanced Manufacturing and Maintenance Electronics, Soldering, Assembly & Training Floor Installation Program Floor Tech/Custodial Skills
Latin American Association	Certified Nurses Aid
Per Scholas Atlanta	Information Technology
The Center for Working Families	Certified Nurses Aid Training
Urban League of Greater Atlanta	Training to Work 2 – Adult Reentry



Conclusions

To the knowledge of the data alliance, this study is the first time that Metro Atlanta's nonprofit providers of workforce development services have shared data to analyze comparative outputs, outcomes on individuals' earnings, and the impact of their work on the community in terms of taxes and benefit payments. These organizations comprise an essential segment of the workforce development pipeline, supporting individuals with a combination of job training, employability skills enhancement, and coaching and case management. These services result in high-quality outcomes and significant benefits to the individuals and community that more than offset the direct costs of the training.

This analysis reinforces the value of robust data collection and standardized outcome metrics and shows that job training programs:

- Are a **sound investment into the region's economy**;
- Return **immediate and sustained benefits** to the community;
- Effectively **advance individuals with significant barriers** to employment.

The partners in this study recommend the following*:

- Establish **sustained and flexible sources of funding** to scale effective programs, increase outcomes and achieve economies of scale;
- Provide **access to wage data, aggregate data-sharing and analytics** to the nonprofit sector to increase effectiveness;
- Support **access to additional credentialing and career pathways in growth occupations** to advance individuals to living wages;
- **Integrate training with evidence-based best practices for mitigating barriers to employment** such as criminal history, transportation and childcare.

High quality job training is a valuable tool to address economic immobility in the region. Participation and alignment of providers, employers, philanthropy, and state and local government will increase impact through scaling and improved outcomes across the region's community-based service providers.

** The recommendations of this report were written in collaboration with Atlanta CareerRise and the participating nonprofit, workforce development agencies.*

“High quality job training is an investment that pays off for individuals, employers, our communities, and our regional economy. Moving all individuals who want to work into pathways to sustainable-wage careers must be a priority in Metro Atlanta's economic development plan.”

— Milton J. Little, Jr.,
President and CEO,
United Way of Greater Atlanta

Program Demographics & Results

The impact study examined a number of program outputs in terms of their relation to factors as barriers to employment, employment status upon intake, program participation, and completion of job training. Participating organizations provided demographic information of program participants.

Participant Demographics

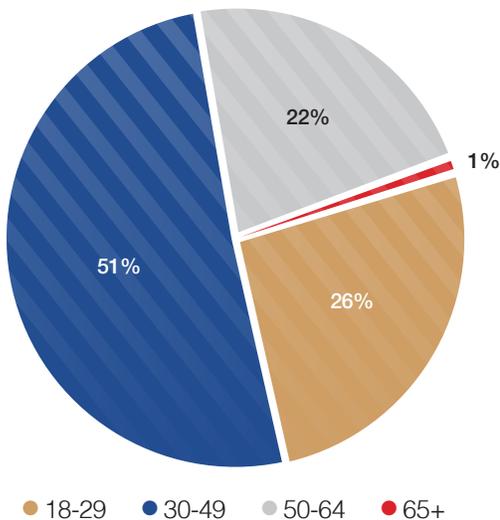
Organizations that participated in the *Job Training Programs That Work* study manage programs in the Metro Atlanta area. Therefore, the participant demographics only reflect programs in the Metro Atlanta area and not the entire state of Georgia. The data from the participating programs identified that:

- **73%** of program participants were male;
- **51.7%** of program participants were between the ages of 30-49;
- **7%** of program participants were Veterans;
- **82%** of program participants identify as Black/African American;
- **18%** of program participants receive some form of public benefits;
- **25%** of program participants have dependents;
- **29%** of program participants reside in zip codes 30314 (SW Atlanta) and 30318 (MW Atlanta). The next highest is **6%** from 30336 (I-85 South corridor).

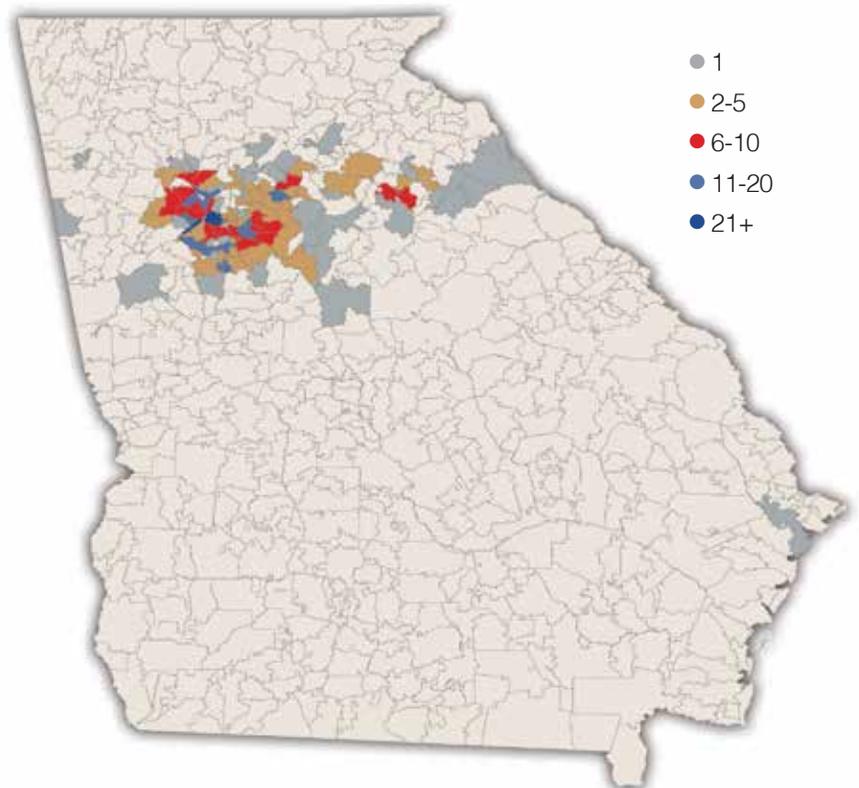
“ From orientation I knew that the soft skills were going to be difficult. Balancing my home life was the biggest obstacle. I knew I had to make a commitment and go for it.”

— Cierra,
Certified Nursing Assistant,
The Center for Working Families

Program Participants Age



Program Participants Zip Code

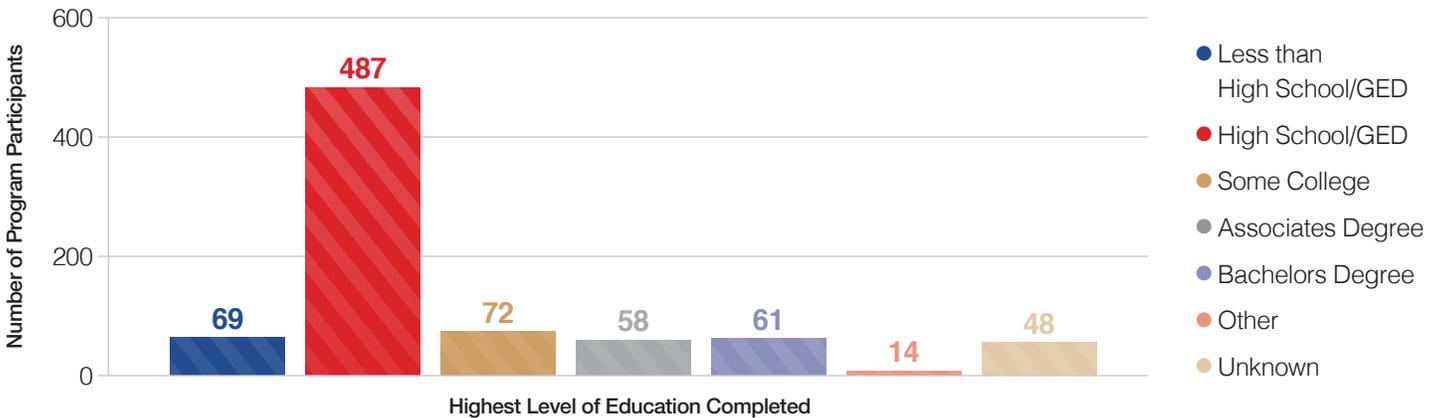


Barriers to Employment

Each of the participating organization’s programs include training in both employability and technical skills to help participants overcome barriers to successful employment. When looking at barriers to employment as a group, there was a focus on better understanding the education levels of participants as well as their criminal history and whether transportation was an issue.

- Education Level. **69%** of program participants have a GED/High School Diploma or less.
- Criminal Background. **47%** of program participants reported having a criminal history.
- Transportation. **38%** of program participants reported that transportation was a barrier.

Program Participants: Educational Achievement



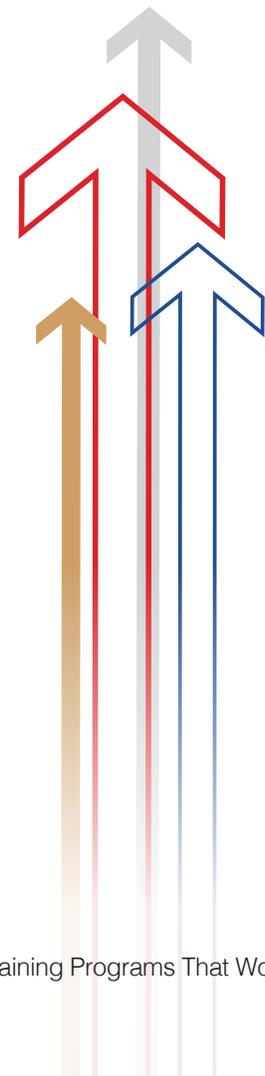
Program Completion

93% of program participants successfully completed their programs. The table below provides a full picture of these results:

Table 2: Program Enrollment and Completion Data	
Number of participating programs	9
Number of program participants	809
Number of program completers	754
Program Completion Rate	93%

“The first year out of prison is the most difficult time in a person’s life, trying to find housing, a stable good job, and navigating through ever-changing technology, can be overwhelming. For me, the Urban League provided exactly what I need to be human again, to be what I’ve dreamed of being, and provided me with the resources I needed.”

– Participant, T2W2 Program, Urban League of Greater Atlanta



Employment Outcomes

Table 3: Pre-Program Employment Status

The high need of the population served is evident not only in the barriers to employment but in the fact that 84% of program participants were unemployed at that start of the program. The table below illustrates employment status among all 809 program participants:

Table 3: Pre-Program Employment Status of Enrollees	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Employed at intake	126	16%
Unemployed at intake	682	84%
Total	809	100%

Table 4 and 5: Post-Program Employment Status

A large proportion of program completers*—85% of 754 program completers—successfully found employment within 90 days of completing their program. The percentage of program completers who were able to retain their employment for six months after their first day on the job remains high. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the results:

Table 4: Employment Status for Program Completers*	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Employed post-program	639	85%
Unemployed post-program	115	15%
Total	754	100%

* Post-program employment outcomes were calculated based on those that completed the program, not participants. Participating organizations did not have sufficient/strong data for those who dropped out of the program before completion.

Table 5: Employment Status at 6 Months for Those Who Gained Employment	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Program completers who were employed post-program who were still employed at 6 months from their first day on the job**	498	78%

** To ensure comparability, this figure only uses data from programs providing employment data at post-program (90 days after program completion) and post-program retention (six months from the first day on the job).

Table 6: Earned Income Results

Table 6 compares pre-program and post-program hourly wages for individuals who completed their program:

- 1) Those program participants who were employed at intake, completed their program, and were employed post-program (103 program completers);
- 2) Those program participants who were unemployed at intake, completed their program and were employed post-program (534 program completers). Post-program employment is defined as finding employment within the first 90 days of program completion.

Table 6: Employment Status for Program Completers	Pre-Program Average Hourly Wage	Post-Program Average Hourly Wage	\$ Change	% Change
Employed at intake and employed post-program (n= 103)	\$10.55	\$12.40	\$1.85	17%
Unemployed at intake and employed at post-program (n= 534)	\$0.00	\$12.72	\$12.72	N/A
Average post-program wages for all participants (n= 637)	N/A	\$12.67	N/A	N/A



“ I didn’t know about the healthcare career path and the Latin American Association showed me how to start. I got certified as a CNA by LAA and later moved forward with the PCT training. I can’t believe I went from \$7.25/hr to \$18/hr in one year.”

— Diana, Certified Nurses Aid, Latin American Association

Table 7: Employment Status for Post-Program Retention

Table 7 compares pre-program and post-program retention* hourly wages for individuals who completed their program:

- 1) Those program participants who were employed at intake, completed their program and were employed at post-program retention (83 program completers);
- 2) Those program participants who were unemployed at intake, completed their program and were employed at post-program retention (415 program completers).

Table 7: Employment Status for Post-Program Retention	Pre-Program Average Hourly Wage	Post-Program Retention Average Hourly Wage	\$ Change	% Change
Program completers who were employed at intake and employed post-program retention (n= 83)	\$10.87	\$16.06	\$5.19	47%
Unemployed at intake and employed at post-program retention (n= 415)	\$0.00	\$12.37	\$12.37	N/A
Average post-program retention wages for all participants (n= 498)	N/A	\$12.98	N/A	N/A

*Post-program retention is defined as maintaining employment for six months from their first day on the job.



“ I have been on the job for three years and honestly that’s the longest I’ve been on any job. Being on one job for that period of time is a great accomplishment. Its been a tremendous opportunity to be here and I thank God for Westside Works.”

— Gene,
Construction Ready,
CEFGA



Table 8: Estimated Annual Income

Table 8 extrapolates the estimates of the average annual incomes of employed participants, based on the hourly wages provided. Program participants who completed their program, were employed at post-program and post-program retention earned a total of **\$12.9 million** dollars annually. Key assumptions are as follows:

- At Pre-Program. For the 126 program participants who were employed prior to the start of their program, the average hourly wage (\$10.55) was multiplied by 2,000 working hours and the number of program completers;
- At Post-Program. For the 637 program participants who completed their program and were employed at post-program (first 90 days after program completion), the average hourly wage (\$12.67) was multiplied by 2,000 working hours and the number of program completers;
- At Post-Program Retention. For the 498 program completers who, were still employed six months after their first day on the job, the average hourly wage (\$12.98) was multiplied by 2,000 working hours and the number of program completers.

Table 8: Estimated Annual Income Earned for All Program Participants (Pre-Tax)

Pre-program (n= 126 participants employed at intake)	\$2,659,780
Employed post-program (n= 637 program completers)	\$ 16,141,580
Employed post-program retention (n= 498 program completers) *	\$ 12,928,080**

* One of the participating organizations did not have post-program retention data

** This calculation does not include any increase in pay that occurred after post-program retention.

Public Assistance Outcomes

The effects of these job training and employment assistance programs extend beyond immediate impacts for the worker. A quality job will, in the long-term, enable a household to accrue wealth and generate increased income, resulting in a decreased use of public benefits and increased governmental savings. This study also examined how these employment outcomes translated into reduced public assistance, focusing on TANF and SNAP benefits. Overall, an estimated savings of approximately **\$236,036** annually is due to the employment held by program completers.

Table 9: Comparison of TANF Benefits Received Pre- and Post-Program

Indicator	Pre-Program N= 13	Post-Program N= 6	\$ Change	% Change
Monthly	\$3,653	\$1,686	1,967	-54%
Annualized	\$43,836	\$20,232	23,604	

Table 10: Comparison of SNAP Benefits Received Pre- and Post-Program

Indicator	Pre-Program N= 190	Post-Program N= 56	\$ Change	% Change
Monthly	\$24,510	\$7,224	\$17,286	-71%
Annualized	\$294,120	\$86,688	\$207,432	

Table 11: Overall Comparison of Total Benefits Received Pre- and Post-Program (SNAP & TANF)

Indicator	Pre-Program N= 203	Post-Program N= 61	\$ Change	% Change
Monthly	\$28,163	\$8,910	\$19,253	-68%
Annualized	\$337,956	\$106,920	\$231,036	



“ Per Scholas has provided me with an opportunity to earn my IT certification as well as employment! As a result, I was given a foundation to build upon for my IT career as well as take better financial care of my son.

— Rabiah,
Information Technology,
Per Scholas Atlanta

Methodology

To create a comparison across pre-program and post-program, all TANF and SNAP figures were calculated only for those participants who gained employment post-program (90 days after program completion). All data reported are for programs administered in 2015 & 2016. Assumptions made and sources are listed below.

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)

- Pre-Program Eligibility and Benefit Amount. Information on participants' receipt of TANF benefits at intake into the program was self-reported to each individual program. Only 13 individuals reported receiving TANF at the start of the program, although the dollar amounts of those benefits were not reported. Therefore, a figure of \$280 monthly (standard benefit for a household of one person) was used to estimate the amount received by participants.
- Post-Program Eligibility. Participants were assumed to be eligible for TANF post-program if they received TANF at the start of the program, completed their program, and their estimated monthly income was below the threshold of \$784, the Gross Income Eligibility Standard for a household of one with the rent allowance (private, unsubsidized housing). Individuals not receiving TANF at intake were assumed to not be receiving it post-program, regardless of whether they qualified based on estimated monthly earned income. This assumption was made based on the rationale that a person who was not receiving benefits prior to gaining employment is no more likely, once employed, to seek out or secure such benefits.*
- Post-Program Benefit Amount. Where participants were deemed eligible for TANF, a figure of \$280 (standard benefit for a household of one) was used as the estimated benefit amount received by the participant.*

*TANF threshold and benefit amounts were verified by the Office of Family Independence, Georgia Department of Human Services

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

- Pre-Program Eligibility and Benefit Amount. Information on participants receipt of SNAP benefits at intake into the program was self-reported to each individual program. One hundred and ninety individuals reported receiving SNAP benefits at the start of the program, although the dollar amount was not provided. Therefore, a figure of \$129 was used to estimate the amount received by participant.*
- Post-Program Eligibility. Participants were assumed to be eligible for SNAP post-program if they received SNAP at the start of the program, they completed their program, and their estimated annual income was below the threshold of \$15,444 annually, the Gross Income Eligibility Standard for a household of one. Individuals not receiving SNAP at intake were assumed to not be receiving it post-program, regardless of whether they qualified based on estimated monthly earned income. This assumption was made based on the rationale that a person who was not receiving benefits prior to gaining employment is no more likely, once employed, to seek out or secure such benefits.*
Annual threshold can be found: <https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1582>
- Post-Program Benefit Amount. Where participants were deemed eligible for SNAP, the historical average monthly benefit amount of \$129 was used.*

*SNAP threshold and benefit amounts were verified by the Office of Family Independence, Georgia Department of Human Services

Low number of TANF and SNAP Participants

All programs in this study allow individuals to self-report their receipt of public benefits including TANF and SNAP. Industry practices acknowledge the stigma associated with reporting of public benefits and often a fear of losing benefits at the completion of the program. Therefore, participating organizations assume that the number of individuals receiving benefits and the reduction of use of benefits might be higher than what the data reports. Also contributing to low public benefit usage may be the high male population (73%) that has fewer dependents.



Federal & State Taxes

To provide an accurate picture of the implications of the post-program employment, below is an estimate of how much employed program completers would be paying in taxes as members of workforce, based on earned income calculations after they were able to retain employment six months after their first day on the job. Table 12 illustrates estimated Federal, FICA and State taxes paid pre- and post-program.

Table 12: Comparison of Taxes Paid Pre- and Post-Program Retention	Indicator	Pre-Program N= 126	Post-Program Retention N= 498	\$ Change	% Change
Estimated Federal Taxes Paid by Participants	Annualized	\$139,608	\$926,856	787,248	564%
Estimated FICA	Annualized	\$203,364	\$1,001,448	798,084	392%
Estimate State Taxes Paid by Participants	Annualized	\$117,306	\$616,896	499,590	426%
Total Taxes (Federal, FICA & State)	Annualized	\$460,278	\$2,545,200	2,084,922	453%

Methodology

As standard proxies for the federal and state tax calculations, the average annual earned income amount was calculated by the multiplication of the average hourly wage (\$10.55) for each program participant that was employed pre-program and (\$12.98) for each program completer that was employed six months after their first day on the job (post-program retention) by 2,000 hours per year. All calculations assume that all individuals are continuously employed and paying taxes for a full 12 months.

For all tax calculations, the assumption was made that each individual was a household size of one, "single".

- Federal Taxes. Estimated at the Effective Rate of 7.08% as according to smartasset.com (<https://smartasset.com/taxes/georgia-tax-calculator>).
- FICA Taxes. Estimated at the Effective Rate of 7.65% as according to smartasset.com (<https://smartasset.com/taxes/georgia-tax-calculator>).
- State Taxes. Estimated state taxes were calculated based on the Georgia earned income tax wage of 4.71% (<https://smartasset.com/taxes/georgia-tax-calculator>).

Overall Implications

The analysis of data provided by the eight job training programs that had post-program retention data showed that they provide an annual financial benefit to the taxpaying public by **\$2.3 million** through savings in benefits provided and income taxes paid. This benefit continues to accrue each year that participants are employed following the first year.

I am so grateful for the partnership that we have been able to form with Per Scholas and I thank you for sending us great candidates. We have hired 10 graduates since March and all have added value to the various platforms we support. The skills that Per Scholas graduates gain from the program sets them apart from other candidates because they come in with a foundation of hardware knowledge that helps them be successful in training and acclimate to the calls very quickly.

— Tricea Marshall,
Computer Generated Solutions Inc.

Annual Reduction in Benefits + New Taxes Paid **\$2,315,958**

Program ROI

The return on investment (ROI) measures the success of the program; it takes into account both the completion rate of the program and the increased earning potential of the participant. Table 12 illustrates the increase in earnings based on pre-program earnings and post-program retention earnings.

Methodology

To calculate the ROI, the Change in Earnings was subtracted from the Direct Cost of the Program and divided by the Direct Cost of the Program.

- **Pre-Program Earnings.** For those program participants that were employed pre-program, completed their program, and retained employment for six months after their first day on the job (N= 83), their pre-program average wage (\$10.87) was multiplied by 2,000 hours per year and the number of program completers. For individuals who were unemployed at the start of their program (N2= 415), the Georgia minimum wage of \$5.15 was used as the average wage that was multiplied by 2,000 hours per year and the number of program completers.*
- **Post-Program Retention Earnings.** For programs who had participants (n= 498) that completed their program, were employed post-program, and maintained employment 6 months after their first day on the job (post-program retention), each program's (p= 8) average hourly wage was calculated by multiplying the number of post-program retention participants by 2,000 hours per year. The program totals were then added together.
- **Direct Cost of Program.** During the second phase of data aggregation, participating organizations defined direct costs as the following: recruitment of participants, coaching/facilitation of trainings, costs for training space, logistics, tests/certifications, and tracking participant data, etc. Each participating program provided the direct cost of their program by individual. To find the direct cost per program, the direct cost per individual was multiplied by the number of program participants. Those totals were then added together.



Table 13: Return on Investment

Pre-Program Earnings N= 83 N2= 415*	Post-Program Retention Earnings N= 498	Change in Earnings	Direct Cost of Program	ROI
\$6,078,860.00	\$12,689,040	\$6,857,440	\$3,382,228	103%

* The Pre-Program average wage amount for the 415 participants who were unemployed at the start of the program is a conservative number. We assumed that individuals who were unemployed were capable of finding full-time employment at minimum wage. Therefore, their annual income was calculated as \$10,300 (pre-tax) instead of \$0.00.

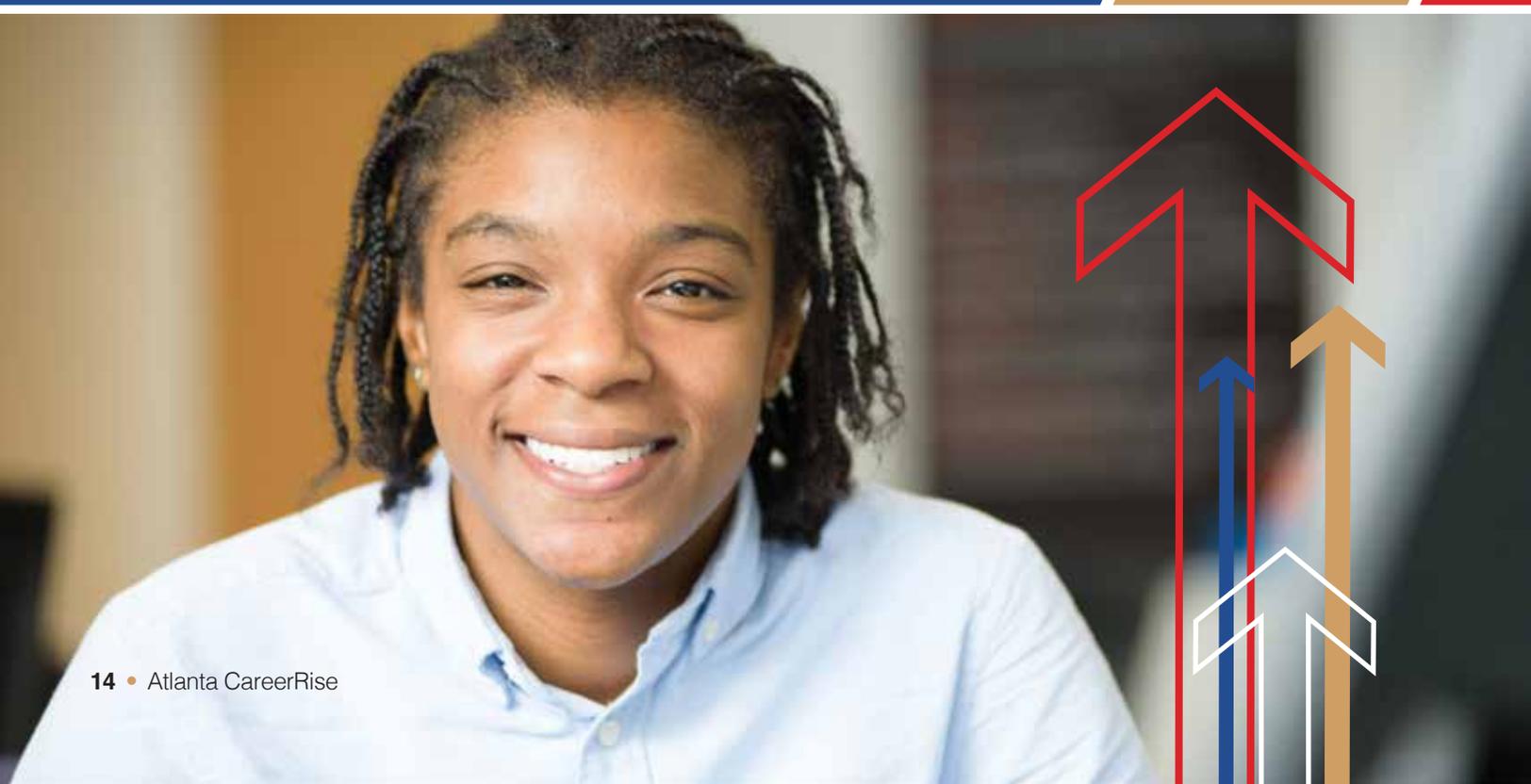
Conclusions

To the knowledge of this data alliance, this study is the first time that Metro Atlanta's nonprofit providers of workforce development services have shared data to analyze comparative outputs, outcomes on individuals' earnings, and the impact of their work on the community in terms of taxes and public benefit payments. Six nonprofit community-based organizations representing nine diverse occupational training programs that enrolled more than 800 individuals in training in 2015-2016 aligned and shared data points to enable the quantitative estimates presented in this report. It should be noted that wage data is self-reported/documented through the individual and providers, and not independently verified through a third party, such as the Department of Labor's UI wage data.

This report highlights the importance of collecting and analyzing outcome data in order to get a realistic picture of program results. The participating nonprofits should be commended for their investment of effort into the data collection and quality. Complete data informs future work focused on continuous improvement of programs and services, such as examining results for certain demographics or the impact of specific curriculum or program enhancements.

The analysis of the data completed by the data alliance suggests the following:

- **Effective and accountable job training programs are a sound investment in the region's economic development.** Significant positive economic impacts accrue to the individuals—and local economy—due to spending power from new wages. Based on the 6-month retention figure, nearly \$13 million was injected into the economy in annual earnings by individuals who retained employment at the 6-month mark. Given that 26% of participants are between the ages of 18-29, and another 51% are between 30 and 39, the participants have many working years left, and the effect of the increased wages on their lifetime earning power is likely to be magnified.
- **Job training is an investment that pays immediate and sustained benefits to the community.** The programs 103% Return on Investment (ROI) is based on direct program costs and change in wages. Of course, additional costs are entailed in operating nonprofits that are not included in the direct program costs used for the ROI calculation, but this shows that community-based workforce development organizations are providing opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed that are producing immediate and sustained benefits to both participants and tax payers.



- **The nonprofit community effectively serves individuals that have experienced significant barriers to employment and career advancement.** Forty-seven percent of program participants had a criminal history, 38% had challenges in obtaining reliable transportation, and 69% of program participants' highest level of education achieved was a High School Diploma/ GED or lower. Eighty-four percent of these individuals were unemployed at program intake. Given unemployment rates in 2015-2016 had significantly fallen from recession-era highs, this further supports the premise that barriers to employment were real and significant.
- **Despite the barriers, the participating programs achieved notable success.** The high program completion rate (93%) and post-program placement rate (85%) result in rapid injection of new wages—and taxes paid—into the local economy. Of those who gained employment, a high number stayed employed. At six months, 78% retained employment.

Although defining “good” performance depends on a variety of parameters, this performance compares favorably with national outcome benchmarks collected by the Benchmarking Data Project managed by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. In their 2016 report¹ citing benchmarks for programs offering skills training leading to certification where most or all of participants received the skills training, Metro Atlanta programs' composite performance compares well above median values, and near high-performer benchmarks.

Table 14. Comparison of Metro Atlanta Outcomes to National Benchmarks of Skills Training Programs Leading to Certification

Outcome	National Median Benchmark	National High Performer (75th Percentile) Benchmark	Metro Atlanta Composite of Participating Programs
Program Completion	84.2%	95.0%	93%
Completer Placement	77.1%	90.0%	85%
Wage at Placement	\$11.50	\$13.09	\$12.67
6-month retention	66.7%	79.4%	78%

This suggests that although these programs are performing well, there is the potential for improvement in outcomes through intentional interventions aimed at specific outcome metrics.

The **Job Training Programs That Work: Economic Impact of Job Training Programs in Metro Atlanta** report clearly illustrates the positive impacts and return on job training programs offered by regional nonprofit organizations. Such organizations comprise an essential segment of the workforce development pipeline, supporting individuals with a combination of job training, employability skills enhancement, and coaching and case management. To increase the impact of these programs, the data alliance makes the following recommendations:

- **Establish sustained and flexible sources of funding to scale effective programs, increase outcomes and achieve economies of scale.** Given that the poverty rate in Georgia is 16% and 37% of working families in Georgia earn less than 200% of the poverty line², there is a large unmet demand for upskilling and preparing individuals for successful employment. The community-based organizations participating in this work are largely supported by philanthropy, and must compete with a multitude of social issues on an annual basis to secure funding streams, making longer term commitments and regular, replicable training programs difficult. Some federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding is integrated into a few of these programs, but such funding likewise is not usually predictable and committed in such a way to allow for longer-term planning and replication, and may not support coaching and work supports that can increase success for high-barrier populations. The costs of scaling these successful programs cannot be borne by philanthropy alone; there is a need for innovative, predictable and flexible funding streams available to high-quality, data-driven organizations. This would result in the operation of a workforce development infrastructure as recognizable and valued by economic development practitioners as physical infrastructure investments.

1. *APPLES TO APPLES Making Data Work for Community-Based Workforce Development Programs*, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, skilledwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A2A-update-full-report-FINALMay102016.pdf.

2. *Spotlight on Poverty & Opportunity, Georgia Summary*, <https://spotlightonpoverty.org/states/georgia/>.

- Provide access to wage data, aggregate data-sharing and analytics to the nonprofit sector to increase effectiveness.** This study focused on a limited number of providers and job training programs in Metro Atlanta. As the data alliance looks to replicate this report in future years, it is important for the broader nonprofit community to review their data collection processes and harmonize metrics to allow aggregation of data. In addition, the Metro area could compare its performance year over year, as well as in the larger context of national benchmarking standards. In addition, more communities are utilizing public sector longitudinal data sources and analytics to further identify opportunities to improve outcomes as a best practice.
- Support access to additional credentialing and career pathways in high growth occupations to advance individuals to living wages.** The results of this study show that these programs are a vital resource for getting individuals into the workforce. At the start of the program, 682 individuals were unemployed at program intake and, of those 682, 498 were employed at post-program retention and were earning an average hourly wage of \$12.72. However, when looking at the livable wage for one adult and one child in the city of Atlanta, individuals need to earn \$23.18 per hour³. To continue to move individuals out of poverty, the funding community and employers need to support programs linked to high growth sectors and real employer needs for additional advancement and credentialing to ensure individuals can continue to gain skills necessary to improve their earning potential.
- Integrate training with evidence-based best practices for mitigating barriers to employment such as criminal history, transportation and childcare.** Barriers to employment are real and widespread among participants in these programs, and strategies to mitigate these barriers vary by program. Evidence-based research into the design and implementation of these strategies and the resulting outcomes is needed.



Short-term job training programs offered by effective and accountable community-based organizations in Metro Atlanta are a smart investment for the individual, employers and the economy. Increasing the scale and effectiveness across the nonprofit sector offers a tool to address the region's economic immobility issues.

Atlanta CareerRise and its partners sincerely thank the Job Training Alliance for their generous permission to replicate much of their methodology from their 2016 report, Job Training Works, Pays and Saves.

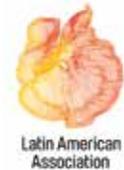
3. Living wage calculator. <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/13089>.

ATLANTA CareerRise

Atlanta CareerRise is a regional funder collaborative, bringing together local funders around a shared strategic vision for workforce development in a 13-county region. By pooling and aligning resources from philanthropic, corporate, public and other funders in an investment strategy to achieve its vision, the collaborative is a catalyst to create sectoral workforce partnerships, train workers, and improve workforce practices.

CareerRise was founded in 2011 through a grant from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and local investors and is managed by the United Way of Greater Atlanta.

Partners



Project Management:



Data Analysis:



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