Career Advancement Program (CAP)[1]
A Program of the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS)

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

1. Introduction

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) has funded approximately 40 initiatives across some 20 sponsoring agencies aimed at reducing the number of working poor, young adults, and children living in poverty in New York City. CEO is committed to evaluating its programs and policies and is developing a specific evaluation plan for each of its initiatives. For example, several major new initiatives will implement random assignment evaluations or other rigorous designs. Some programs are slated to receive implementation and outcome evaluations, while others may be evaluated using readily available administrative data. This differentiated approach reflects the varied scale of the CEO interventions, data and evaluation opportunities, and finite program and evaluation resources. Westat and Metis Associates are evaluating many of these programs on behalf of CEO. The purposes of the evaluations are to collect and report data on the implementation, progress, and outcomes of the programs in the CEO initiative to inform policy and program decision-making within CEO and the agencies that sponsor the programs.

The first phase of the Westat/Metis evaluation is to conduct a systematic review of selected CEO programs. The program reviews involve Westat/Metis staff reviewing program documents, obtaining available implementation and outcome data, interviewing program administrators, and, where appropriate, going on-site to observe program activities and interview direct service staff and participants. The results are used to assess the program design and implementation, develop a logic model to represent the underlying theory of each program, determine the extent to which the program meets key CEO criteria, examine the measurement and information systems for the program, and provide options for next steps.

The Career Advancement Program (CAP) is one of eight CEO initiatives sponsored by the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS). The SBS CAP began as a pilot program under the name of *Earn*More at the Upper Manhattan Workforce1 Career Center (UMWF1CC) in July 2007 under the operation of Seedco, a provider of employment preparation services and the contractor (operator) for the career center. Seedco's strategy for all its programs is to partner with its network of community-based organizations (CBOs). Thus, *Earn*More CAP's services are provided at the UMWF1CC and at three CBOs: the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), and the Henry Street Settlement (HSS). SBS planned to expand CAP to two additional WF1CCs in FY 2008 (at the Queens WF1CC in April and the Bronx WF1CC in May) and one additional WF1CC in FY 2009 with the Brooklyn WF1CC CAP scheduled to begin operations in September 2008.

Information and data for this Program Review Report are based on interviews conducted by Westat/Metis staff between December 2007 and February 2008 with staff of the CEO and the sponsoring agency, SBS. Interviews were conducted in January 2008 with the staff of Seedco, the program operator at the UMWF1CC, and *Earn*More, including three of the direct service staff (Job

[1] Formerly named Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC), the local Career Advancement Program located at the Upper Manhattan Workforce1 Career Center is named *Earn*More.

Asset Training Coaches [JATCs]) and an administrator of one of the program's three partner CBOs. In addition, an informational interview was conducted with researchers from MDRC, an education and social policy research organization that is conducting a demonstration project on which SBS CAP was based. Program documents and monthly data reports were obtained from Seedco (through April 2008) and management reports from SBS (through June 2008). The program started in July 2007.[2]

This Program Review Report provides an overview and assessment of the program on several dimensions, including its goals, fidelity to the program model, target population and clients served thus far, program services, and agency management. CEO and the relevant sponsoring agency were invited to identify specific questions of interest to be included as part of these standardized program reviews.

A key analytic tool in the program review is development of a logic model that serves as a visual representation of the underlying logic or theory of a program. The program logic model details the program's context, assumptions, and resources and their relationships to one another. By examining the program's internal logic and external context, the evaluation team and reader are able to determine if the program design is consistent with overall goals and capable of achieving its intended outcomes. Toward this end, this brief focuses on early outcomes and the challenges faced in achieving them.

2. Overview and Assessment of the Program

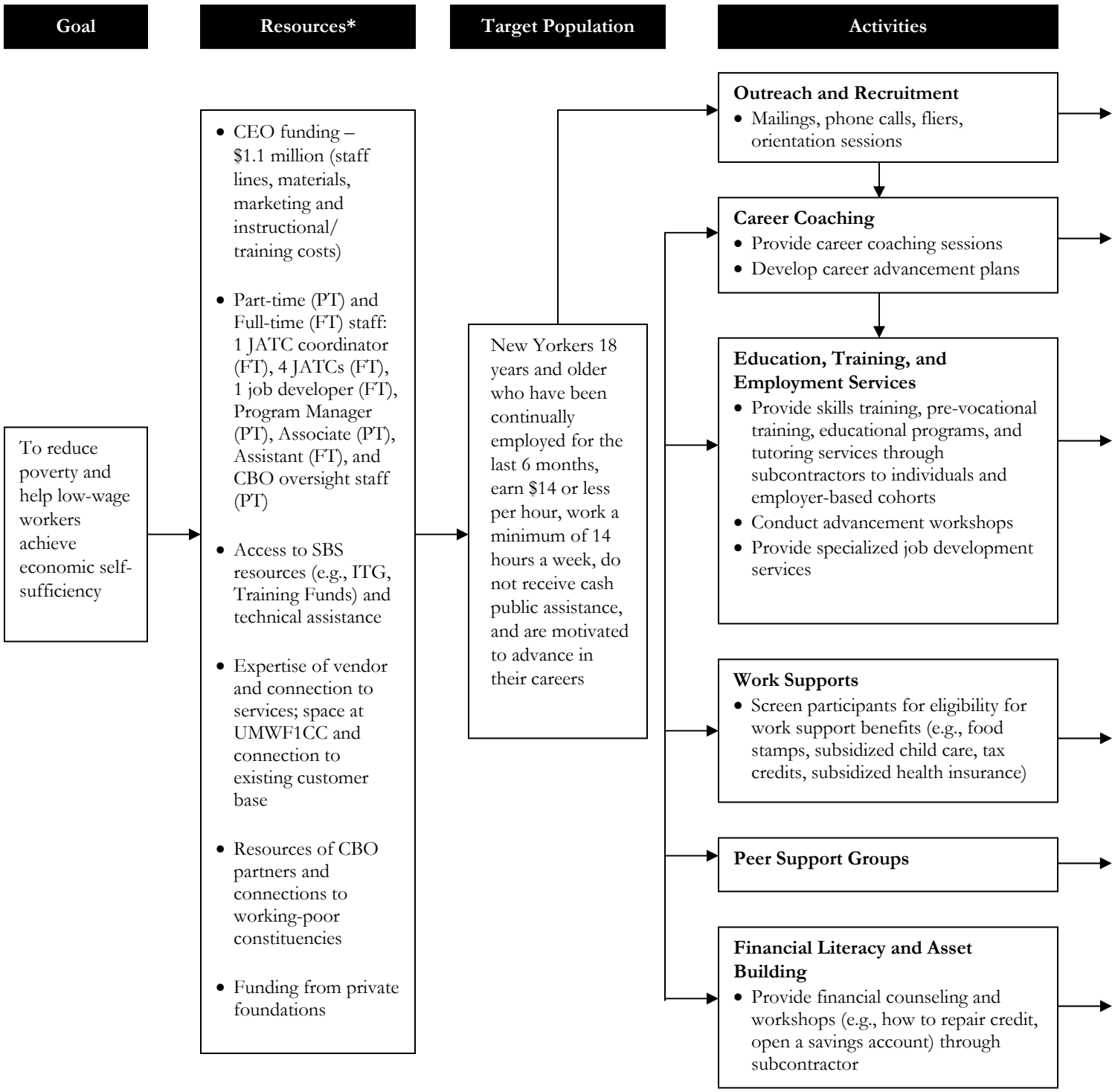
Program Goal(s). The goal of the SBS CAP is to help low-income workers advance out of poverty by providing them with career advancement services, facilitated access to benefits and work supports, training and education, and financial literacy and asset-building activities. By the end of FY 2008, *Earn*More CAP planned to enroll 460 individuals on a rolling basis, of whom 200 were expected to have benefited from the program by increasing their earnings through job upgrades at their current or new employers. In Year 2, each CAP program is expected to expand to 500 people of whom, on average, 275 will receive an upgrade.

The CAP model is displayed in a logic model—or theory of action—format on the following two pages. The logic model includes the program's context, assumptions, and resources. Each activity is linked to the number of individuals targeted to participate in the different activities (outputs), as well as short- and long-term participant outcomes.

[2] While other CAP sites have opened since the interviews were conducted, they are not discussed in this report because they were not in operation at the time of the interviews.

Career Advancement Program (CAP)

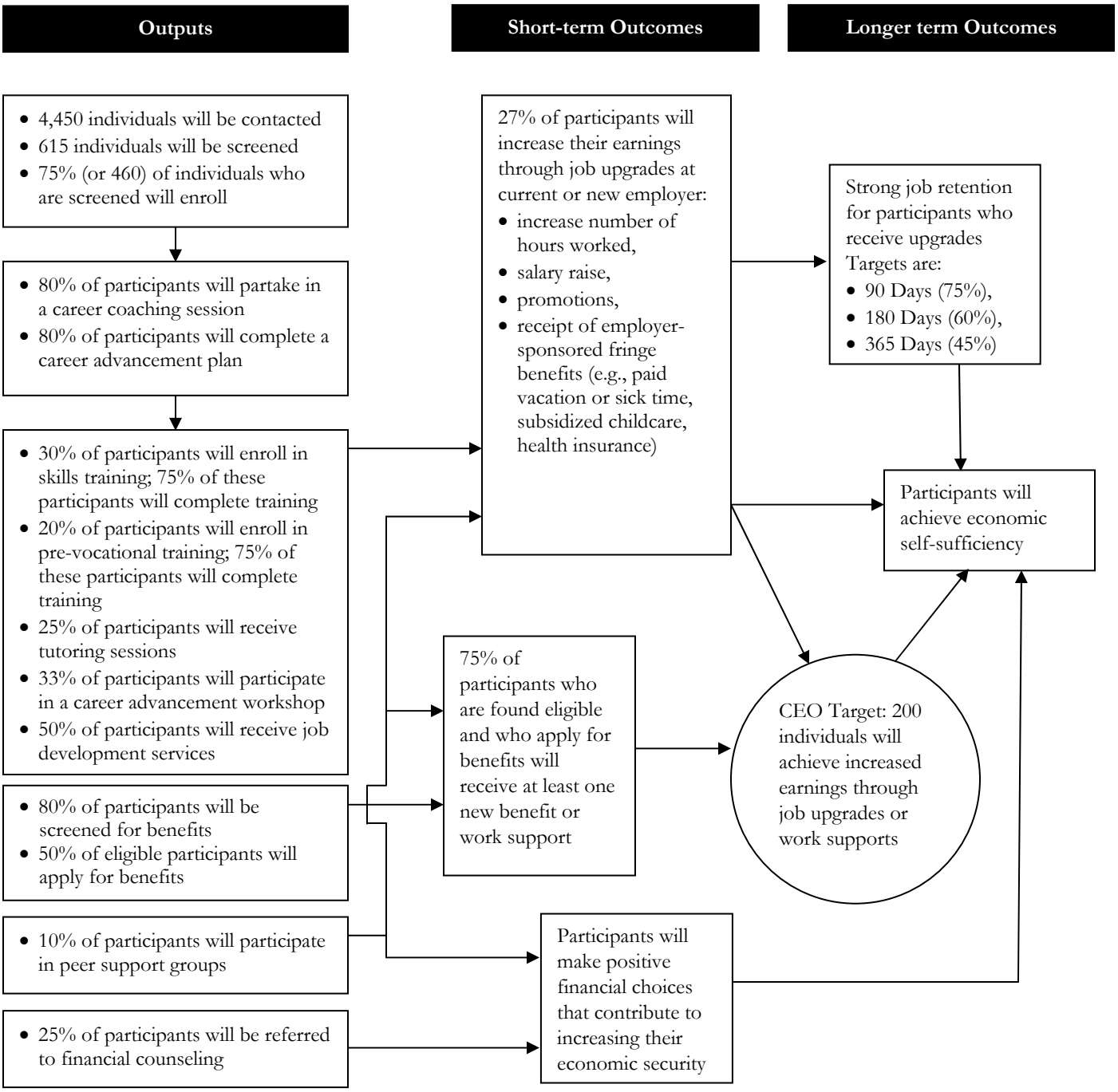
Logic Model



Context

- Over 350,000 working New York City residents live in poverty.
- Lack of skills, low educational level, and/or limited English proficiency are some of the factors that prevent them from earning more. Low-wage workers often do not have access to stable jobs with benefits and/or jobs with career growth potential. In addition, many working poor individuals do not access work supports and do not build financial assets because of lack of knowledge.

* The resources included here pertain to the *Earn*More program as implemented at the Upper Manhattan CAP in FY 08.



Assumptions

- Integrating career advancement and work support services, and providing intensive career coaching, will lead to economic stability and self-sufficiency.
- The quality, flexibility, and breadth of career advancement services will be enhanced by delivering services through a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) and the UMWF1CC.
- Services must be flexible and customized to the diverse needs of low-wage workers.
- To achieve meaningful results in a limited timeframe, the program should focus on target industries that offer realistic, quality career paths.
- Employer engagement is crucial to success.

Fidelity to the Program Model. The CAP model has made improvements to the original design developed by MDRC while maintaining fidelity to its essential structure. The SBS CAP was developed following the basic features of the Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration model developed by MDRC[3] and also incorporates best practices from other workforce development programs. Both the SBS CAP model and the MDRC WASC model share the common goal of promoting career advancement opportunities among low-wage workers and helping them increase their earnings using a variety of strategies, including intensive job coaching, education and training, and facilitating access to work supports. The MDRC WASC demonstration is being implemented in four sites, three of which offer services at one-stop career centers (similar to the City's WF1CCs[4]), while the fourth site offers services through an employer-based approach. The SBS CAP follows a career center model, and SBS is working with MDRC in the planning of another program in New York City that would follow the employer-based model. As developed by SBS and implemented by Seedco, *Earn*More has been implemented fairly consistently with its theoretical model.

The SBS CAP and the MDRC WASC demonstration target similar populations, specifically low-wage workers who are not receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF); however, MDRC sites can decide whether to include TANF as part of the work support packages. Both WASC and CAP experienced low enrollment rates and made modifications to their eligibility criteria to overcome this challenge. For example, the wage criteria for the MDRC WASC model was revised from a cap of $9 or less an hour to $15 or less an hour, while the household income criterion increased from at or below 130 percent of the poverty line to a 200 percent cap. Likewise, SBS CAP revised its wage criterion to $14 or less and eliminated the household income criterion of at or below 200 percent of the poverty line to increase the proportion of clients who would be eligible to participate. Although MDRC's WASC sites do not have a minimum length of continuous employment required, SBS CAP set this minimum at 6 months. In practice, participants in both programs tend to have job tenures much longer than 6 months at the time they enroll.

Both models employ job coaches, who are responsible for most of the client contact. Although job coaches in the MDRC demonstration were supposed to have a maximum caseload of 80 clients, in reality it was often closer to 100, sometimes more. When serving at full capacity, *Earn*More job coaches (JATCs) will have a caseload of 115 participants. Neither the SBS CAP nor the WASC demonstration has staff dedicated to the recruitment process. As a result, job coaches in both settings face a common challenge of having to balance aggressive recruitment efforts with providing high-quality, intensive, one-on-one coaching. In terms of staffing, *Earn*More has the added resource of a fully dedicated senior job developer, whereas at the MDRC sites, job coaches often need to fulfill that role or go through the one-stop career centers.

One of the major differences across the two models relates to the work support component. Specifically, since the three WASC sites that are located at one-stop career centers offer a wide range of social services, WASC demonstration participants are able to not only be screened for work support eligibility but to apply for these benefits on-site as well. This is not the case for CAP

[3] In addition to an interview with MDRC researchers, information on the demonstration was obtained from the MDRC website at www.mdrc.org.

[4] The WF1CCs provide job seekers with a full array of employment services, including job placement, career advisement, job search counseling, and skills training. WF1CCs are co-located with NYC Business Solutions Centers, which provide businesses with access to skilled labor through customized recruitment and training initiatives tailored to a company's specific needs.

participants, who can be screened for eligibility for work supports at the UMWF1CC or the three CBOs but must apply for benefits elsewhere.

According to MDRC researchers interviewed for this review, the training and education component varied greatly across the four demonstration sites and has only been utilized to its full extent at one of the sites, where a strong incentives system is offered to participants who use this feature of the program. Drawing on MDRC's WASC best practices, *Earn*More has incorporated simple incentives as well for both enrollment and completion of training and educational programs and for upgrades and retention, such as discount coupons at local stores.

A key strategy that *Earn*More has adopted and that differentiates it from the WASC model consists of targeting its job development services to a few key industries (e.g., hospitality and health care) that offer strong growth potential. According to MDRC researchers, focusing on a few industries would have alleviated some of the challenges and frustrations that staff at the demonstration sites experienced when trying to learn about the labor market without a path or direction. It is also worth noting that *Earn*More is modifying its initial recruitment strategy to better reach potential enrollees by beginning to experiment with a cohort-based approach that involves businesses and other institutions. Although very early in implementation, this strategy is already beginning to yield significant enrollment advantages, enabling *Earn*More to double the number of enrollees at one of the partner sites within 1 month. However, a potential downside is an increased focus on the needs of specific businesses rather than individuals. For this reason, both WASC and CAP acknowledge that both approaches should be used. At the time of this review, it was not possible to determine if or to what extent these adaptations would be carried through at future CAP sites.

Target Population and Clients Served. The CAP is designed to provide services to the city's working poor. More specifically, the program targets New Yorkers age 18 years and older who have been continuously employed for the past 6 months, earn $14 or less an hour, work a minimum of 14 hours a week, do not receive cash public assistance, and are motivated to advance in their career. Most of the program's first year participants resided in Manhattan (36%), Brooklyn (29%) or Bronx (19%) with smaller numbers from Queens (9%) and Staten Island (2%).[5]

Program data indicate that the characteristics of enrollees meet the program's expectations and enrollment criteria. According to data provided by SBS, 13 percent reported wages at or below minimum wage and just over three-fourths (76%) reported an hourly wage below $12.00 at the time of enrollment.[6] The average age was 36; 19 percent were 24 years old or younger. Educational levels of enrollees varied. Although 16 percent had not graduated from high school or obtained a GED, nearly half (47%) had attended some type of postsecondary education, and 12 percent had 4 or more years of college.[7]

Outreach and Recruitment. Outreach efforts have focused primarily on targeting clients who have accessed services at the UMWF1CC or at one of the three CBOs in the recent past (i.e., within the last 3 years). In addition, *Earn*More's senior job developer has reached out directly to employers to recruit and train cohorts of employees. *Earn*More's informational sessions and advancement

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[5] Data on residence were unavailable for 4 percent of first year program participants.

[6] Pre-wage data are based on the number of individuals that officially enrolled in CAP (N=531). Another 16 percent reported a pre-wage that was between $12.00 and $15.99. Six percent of the enrollees did not report wage information.

[7] Demographic data are based on a total of 588 individuals who received a service, including 57 people who attended an orientation but never enrolled in the program.

workshops, facilitated by the job coaches at each site and open to the public, have also been used as recruitment strategies. In addition, the CBOs have developed their own recruitment strategies. The JATC at GMHC, for example, conducts persistent outreach to other nonprofits in the tri-state area to increase awareness and solicit referrals.[8]

A variety of outreach and recruitment methods have been used, including large-scale mailings, emails, phone calls, flyers, and on-site contacts. According to program staff, the success of the different recruitment strategies varies across program sites and depends on the interaction between the recruiter's personality and the characteristics of the target population. Anecdotal findings suggest that CBOs have been more successful with mailings and word-of-mouth since they have closer relationships with their clients, whereas the JATC at the UMWF1CC has been more successful with telephone calls, which allow for a personal connection to be established with potential clients. At GMHC, emails have been successful, particularly in reaching nonprofits as well as recruits who have higher education levels. Interviews with the JATCs suggested that GMHC may serve a more educated population than the other CBOS or the UMWF1CC. The GMHC JATC reported that many GMHC clients had previously enjoyed successful careers but suffered job losses as a result of health problems and were re-entering the workforce with new but lower-paying jobs. A more systematic analysis of program records may confirm these anecdotal observations and uncover important clues for more effective recruitment.

Program Services. The SBS CAP model as implemented in *Earn*More, including program services, is graphically depicted in the logic model (see above). The primary services are career coaching, education, training and employment services, screening for work supports, and the provision of peer support, financial literacy training, and asset building. The logic model displays how these program services are designed to produce specific programmatic outputs, as well as short- and long-term participant outcomes.

Career coaching. *Earn*More JATCs work with participants to develop a career advancement plan that includes their educational background and skills, employment history, career interests, anticipated obstacles, and an action plan with short-, mid-, and long-term goals. The coaches are expected to meet in person with each participant every month and maintain email or phone communication at least twice a month to check on client progress toward meeting career goals. Based on the career advancement plan, JATCs may refer participants to a variety of services and/or programs, including resume writing, workshops, specialized job development, education programs, skills training, and/or benefits screening.

Education, training, and employment services. Education and training are crucial components of the program, designed to help participants improve their skills and become better qualified for advanced positions. Pre-vocational or "bridge" training services include basic education, referrals to GED, specialized English as a second language programs, and tutoring. Through a diverse set of subcontracts with for-profit, nonprofit, trade associations, and educational institutions,[9] *Earn*More is

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[8] While it is GMHC's practice to recruit residents from the tri-state area for all of its programs, the great majority of participants served in the CAP by GMHC were New York City residents. The GMHC JATC reported that only five or six CAP participants were from New Jersey and none resided in Connecticut.

[9] These subcontracting organizations include: Red Hook on the Road; Kingsborough Community College; the Chinese American Planning Council in collaboration with the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association; St. Nicholas Preservation Corporation; LaGuardia Community College in collaboration with the Jewish Home and Hospital; and the Borough of

providing skills training in a variety of areas identified as growth industries, such as handling hazardous materials, health/home care, and hospitality/retail.

Each month, the JATCs facilitate a workshop at their site using curricula specifically developed for *Earn*More. These workshops cover four rotating topics: earning promotions and negotiating a pay raise, changing careers, long-term career planning, and gaining transferable skills. The workshops are open to the public and therefore also serve as a recruitment strategy.

*Earn*More works with employers and institutions to provide training and educational opportunities to entire cohorts of individuals. For example, *Earn*More will provide training in Commercial Drivers Licensing through a subcontractor to employees of FreshDirect's transportation division. *Earn*More has established a partnership with Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) to provide semester-long scholarships to *Earn*More-eligible students who are at risk of dropping out because of work, child care, or other types of commitments.

The *Earn*More staff is augmented with a senior job developer who is responsible for providing job development services, including job referrals, to individual participants and identifying and contacting employers who would benefit from cohort-based training.

Work supports. Aligned with the goal of helping workers gain economic security, a core component of SBS CAP is to screen participants for work supports, including tax credits (e.g., Earned Income Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit), subsidized child care, housing vouchers, food stamps, Medicaid, Child Health Plus, NYS Home Energy Assistance, School Lunch Program, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), free checking accounts, free tax preparation, and community resources on homeownership, credit, and legal help.[10] However, benefits screening has not occurred consistently. Low take-up of work supports among those who are eligible is one of the concerns discovered through this review. The JATCs reported that many clients were reluctant to be screened for work supports, believing that such benefits were stigmatized as "welfare," which they did not want since they were employed. In addition, at three program sites the screening for work supports was handled by a designated staffer other than the JATC and clients did not always make the appointment for the screening. To address this shortcoming, Seedco and SBS staff discussed transferring responsibility for screening back to the JATCs to provide greater continuity and opportunity for followup. However, it was acknowledged that this strategy would increase the burden on the JATCs who, at the time of the review, were focused on meeting recruitment targets. The *Earn*More program director noted that fewer clients qualified for core work supports than Seedco and SBS originally anticipated as most participants were adults with no dependents. In addition, some participants were already receiving work supports, such as food stamps, at time of their enrollment in the program. Through a data match with information from the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) database, SBS determined that 84 *Earn*More participants were already receiving food stamps when they enrolled in *Earn*More.

Peer support and financial literacy and asset building. Finally, the program design includes two additional components—peer support groups and financial counseling designed to enhance financial

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Manhattan Community College. The *Earn*More July 2008 Cohort Training Report submitted by SBS focuses on the structure and results of these subcontracted training partnerships.

[10] Seedco's *Earn*Benefits software program was used by all four sites to determine workers' eligibility for public and private benefits. Many of CEO's projects promote the use of ACCESS NYC, the City's online benefits screening tool. Because the EarnMore was already using EarnBenefits, ACCESS NYC was not pushed.

literacy and asset management. However, these components had not yet been implemented, again due to the limited capacity of the JATCs and an emphasis on meeting enrollment targets. Both components are considered important by the program provider and JATCs alike and are planned for implementation in the near future. Peer support groups were originally included in the program model as an additional venue for participants to share their experiences and receive informal support. Through financial counseling, participants are expected to gain knowledge of, and engage in, healthy financial behaviors (e.g., opening checking and/or savings accounts, repairing credit). As reflected in the program's logic model, it is assumed that financial literacy contributes to economic self-sufficiency.

Outputs and Outcomes. Outputs and outcomes for the *Earn*More CAP program were mixed as of the end of the year. Table 1 presents *Earn*More's target and actual numbers for key participant status categories, ranging from enrollment through new benefits or work supports and job upgrades, as well as the percentage of each target obtained. Targets were negotiated by Seedco in collaboration with SBS, based primarily on prior experience with serving this target population. In addition, these targets, which are set on a monthly and quarterly basis, were also informed by the WASC demonstration project and experience with program start-ups. Thus, program targets are also set to increase over time based on the assumption that the program will become more effective in recruiting and serving clients as it matures.

Table 1. *Earn*More Outputs and Outcomes as of June 2008

Category	Target Numbers	Actual Numbers	Percent of Target Met
Enrolled	460	531	115%
Career Plans Established	370	372	101%
Benefits Screening	369	101	27%
New Benefit/Work Support	138	55	40%
Training Enrollment	230	140	61%
Training Completion	173	100	58%
Job Upgrades	124	189	152%
90 Day Retention Post-Upgrade	75% (56)*	56	100%
180 Day Retention Post-Upgrade	60% (14)**	9	64%

*The target number for the 90 day retention post-upgrade was 75% of the 75 participants who had received an upgrade at least 90 days before the end of the first program year and so whose status at this milestone could be measured as of June 2008.

**The target number for the 180 day retention post-upgrade was 60% of the 23 participants who had received an upgrade at least 180 days before the end of the first program year.

The data in Table 1 are reported as cumulative through June 2008. As shown in Table 1, *Earn*More has exceeded its annual targets for enrollment, career plans, and job upgrades. Enrollment in training and training completion, which could be expected to lag, was at 61 percent and 58 percent, respectively, of meeting the FY 2008 target. SBS has indicated that their target of enrolling 50 percent of all participants in training was ambitious, compared to what other programs around the country have typically accomplished. Consequently, SBS is reducing their training target for FY 2009 to 32 percent (10% in pre-vocational training and 22% in occupational training).

Seedco and SBS set targets for the percentage of participants who received an upgrade who would reach job retention milestones at 90 days (75%), 180 days (60%) and 360 days (45%) post-upgrade.

As the program was first implemented in July 2007, it was impossible for any participant to meet the 360-day retention milestone as of the end of June 2008, thus this target is not included in Table 1. A total of 189 participants received an upgrade during the first program year and of these, 75 participants were eligible to reach the 90-day milestone by June 30, 2008 (as their upgrade occurred prior to April 2, 2008), and 23 were eligible to reach the 180-day milestone by June 30 (as their upgrade occurred prior to January 3, 2008). Seedco was able to confirm that 56 participants met the 90-day retention milestone (100% of the target) and nine participants met the 180-day retention milestone (64% of the target). It is important to note that the actual retention rates may be higher than what was reported as Seedco was not able to reach all program participants to confirm their employment status. Of the 75 participants eligible to meet the 90-day milestone by June 30, just two were confirmed as failing to reach the milestone while the employment status of 17 participants could not be confirmed. For the 180-day milestone, Seedco was unable to confirm the employment status of 14 and none were confirmed as failing to reach this milestone.

The percentages of benefits screening and new benefits/work supports achieved were low–27 percent and 40 percent, respectively. As noted above in the section on Work Supports, eligibility for benefits/work supports was lower than expected and some individuals already received benefits. Some participants were reluctant to be screened for benefits due to perceived stigma or a misconception that receiving food stamps would hurt eligibility for citizenship. In addition, it is often inconvenient for working adults to apply for food stamps. Nevertheless, because obtaining work supports is an important part of the program model, the program should establish a consistent process for conducting the benefits screening and effective communication strategies to help overcome any stigma associated with the pursuit of these benefits by participants who might consider them to be public assistance or welfare. This screening should include participants who enter the program already on some form of work support as they may also be eligible to receive another form. SBS has been working with Seedco to help the JATCs more effectively communicate the benefits of work supports to participants. In addition, SBS has established a relationship with HRA to make the food stamp application process easier for CAP participants.

Provider Capacity. Seedco has a long history of successful collaboration with local partners to provide services to disadvantaged populations. The three CBOs selected to become partners in the *Earn*More program (CAB, GMHC, and HSS) are part of Seedco's EarnFair Alliance. The Alliance is a network of 16 faith- and community-based organizations (FBCO) that was created to enhance workforce development programs and support FBCO's work in this area. All three CBOs are familiar with and regularly use Seedco's EarnBenefits software to screen individuals for work supports. These CBOs were also chosen because of their well-developed employment programs and their interest in expanding their retention services to include an advancement component.

Seedco maintains regular and ongoing communication with its CBO partners. The JATC Coordinator, who is based at Seedco's offices, meets with each JATC on a weekly basis and organizes periodic meetings with all JATCs to share best practices and brainstorm ideas for program improvement. *Earn*More's Program Manager meets biweekly with SBS staff to review program data and discuss the program's implementation and progress toward meeting targets.

Seedco has developed a broad array of program protocols, guides, brochures, and other materials designed to build program awareness, encourage client enrollment, and build the capacity of program staff. Though too numerous to list in their entirety, these documents include: fliers and brochures; standardized recruitment letters; PowerPoint presentations; QuickScreen eligibility intake

forms; Tips and Tools for Successful Outreach and Recruitment; Long-Term Career Planning Steps; Career Advancement Plans; Job Tracker Tools; Training Request Forms; numerous workshops; and workshop survey forms.

During its first year, *Earn*More was expected to enroll 460 individuals. At full capacity, each JATC would manage a caseload of 115 participants, which is considered manageable on the assumption that participants require more intensive services in the early phase of the program and less intensive services later on. Assuming enrollment occurs on a steady and rolling basis, the JATCs are confident that they will be able to support the projected caseload with the full complement of services outlined in the logic model.

Both SBS and Seedco have demonstrated the capacity to collect and report CEO performance monitoring data. However, because the city's Worksource1 data system does not capture all of the needed data elements, Seedco established a supplemental data system and both systems are used to produce data for CEO.[11] The program review identified discrepancies in monthly data reporting between these two systems, possibly a result of the need for separate data entry as well as lags in data entry and verification. Given these differences, continued professional development with respect to data management should be provided to staff in order to minimize record-keeping errors and improve data management controls.

Agency Management. SBS is taking an active approach to managing this program. It has a well-designed monitoring system in place and provides technical assistance through site visits, telephone, and electronic and written feedback. SBS requires biweekly reports on recruitment and monthly reports on outputs and outcomes. SBS prepared and delivered to Seedco at least two critical review memos in October of 2007 and January of 2008 outlining concerns with outreach, recruitment, and enrollment. These memos offered recommendations and revised monthly targets. The recommendations presented in the January memo included greater emphasis on follow-up of individuals already contacted, creation of recruitment protocols, and follow-up with non-enrollees. During the program review site visit (which occurred shortly after the January memo was received by Seedco), Seedco asked Westat/Metis to conduct a survey of non-enrollees, reflecting a quick response to at least one of the recommendations in the SBS memo. SBS also indicated an interest in seeing Westat/Metis conduct a survey of non-enrollees. Findings from the non-enrollee survey are presented below.

In addition, SBS is in regular contact with Seedco leadership. The career center CAP model has strong prospects for stability and replicability, and SBS is replicating the model at three additional WF1CCs, although they will not provide services at CBO sites. To support the replication, SBS developed a comprehensive *Operating Manual and Resource Guide* for the new contractors, which includes lessons from the *Earn*More pilot.

Findings from Non-Enrollee Survey

As noted above, SBS and Seedco were concerned that a substantial proportion of eligible clients who completed QuickScreens[12] did not enroll in the *Earn*More program. Although most cited

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[11] Worksource1 is the data management system used by SBS to track enrollment and participation in all of its Workforce programs at the WF1CCs.

[12] QuickScreens enable CAP staff to determine program eligibility using a simple one page form.

personal reasons for not enrolling, about half of the respondents cited programmatic factors that would have increased their likelihood of enrolling. SBS can use these data to improve enrollment in *Earn*More and other CAP programs.

Shortly after the site visit, with approval and support from CEO, the Westat/Metis team undertook a survey of non-enrollees to understand why individuals who indicated an interest in the *Earn*More program and were determined to be eligible by a QuickScreen did not enroll. Seedco provided Westat with copies of 65 completed QuickScreen forms completed during July 2007 through January 2008 by eligible but non-enrolling individuals. Of the 65, seven had no phone number recorded so could not be included in telephone survey.

A total of 58 cases were fielded by interviewers at the Westat Telephone Research Center during the period of April 18 through May 19, 2008. Nineteen of the QuickScreen forms came from HSS, 16 from UMWF1CC, 12 from GMHC, and 11 from CAB. Interviews were completed with 25 respondents for a response rate of 43 percent.

Although the total number of refusals was small (7%), the major reason for noncompletion was the fact that many telephone numbers on the QuickScreens were no longer valid. This reflects the transient nature of the target population. The second most common reason was non-contact, although up to 27 attempts to reach the respondents were made.

All of the respondents but one said that they had not enrolled in the *Earn*More program. One respondent said that she *had* enrolled in the program and had last spoken with the job coach more than two months ago. The remaining 24 respondents who indicated that they had not enrolled provided a response to the open-ended question "Can you please tell me why you did not enroll?" The evaluation team classified the reasons as personal (something about the respondent personally that caused them not to enroll), structural (the respondent did not meet the qualifications), or programmatic (something about *Earn*More specifically).

Most of the respondents gave a personal reason for not enrolling—typically that they were too busy. One indicated that he did not enroll because he had a job, which indicates he may have misunderstood the purpose of the program. Several respondents gave programmatic reasons for not enrolling, citing lack of follow-up by the program or an inability to meet with the job coach due to conflicts with their work schedule.

Following the open-ended question about non-enrollment, respondents were asked whether a list of specific reasons for non-enrollment applied to their situation. The number and percentage who responded affirmatively to each reason is listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons for Eligible Participants Non-enrollment

Reason	Number Responding "Yes"	Percent Responding "Yes"
Personal		
You are satisfied with your current job	11	46%
You just didn't follow up	11	46%
You were too busy to participate because of your current job	8	33%
Changing jobs doesn't make sense at this point in time	7	29%
A family member was ill	4	17%

Reason	Number Responding "Yes"	Percent Responding "Yes"
You had a personal illness	1	4%
You were too busy to participate because of your kids	0	0%
Structural		
Something else came up	13	54%
You expect to get an advancement on your own	12	50%
You got an advancement or promotion on your own	5	21%
You lost your job	5	21%
You got involved in another program	1	4%
Programmatic		
You didn't understand what the program was all about	12	50%
You did not know you were eligible	9	38%
You found the times to meet with the job coach were inconvenient	6	25%
You didn't think the program would be able to help you	6	25%
You thought program was something different	6	25%
You were put off by screening process	6	25%
The program staff made you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome	4	17%
You did not have good previous relationship with [SPECIFIC AGENCY]	1	4%

Respondents indicated that the most common reasons for non-enrollment were: (1) that "something else came up" (54%), (2) they expected to receive a job advancement on their own (50%), or (3) they didn't understand what the program was all about (50%). A sizable number of respondents also indicated that they were satisfied with their current job (46%) and that they just failed to follow-up with the program (46%). None of the respondents indicated that child-rearing responsibilities were an issue in their inability to enroll.

More than half the respondents (*n*=14, 58%) said "yes" to the question, "Is there anything that would have made you more interested in enrolling in the *Earn*More program?" Following are some illustrative responses:

- *If I could have met with someone on my off day to tell me more about the program.*
- *If someone would have talked to me more about it.*
- *If they would call me back.* (This was a frequent response.)
- *If I had more information as to where to go or who to talk to; the ball was dropped, and I was left hanging.*
- *If I would have received more info about the program.*
- *If the information would have been in Spanish so that she could have understood it. She wants to do the program but doesn't understand English well at all. Speaks it but doesn't read it.*
- *Being more specific and clear, more to the point. Not beating around the bushes and get to the point.*

In summary, several respondents indicated that they wanted more follow-up from the program and wished to understand it better. Notably, the majority of respondents (83%) said that they would be interested in enrolling if they were still eligible for the program. Interviewers gave respondents who indicated they were still interested the phone number of the job coach at the site where the QuickScreen was completed.

Survey Conclusions

Although the sample for the survey is small and the findings may not be representative of those non-enrollees who could not be reached by telephone, the findings indicate that the *Earn*More program is of interest to working adults. However, with work obligations and other commitments, potential enrollees may lack sufficient time and motivation to follow-up with the program on their own after the QuickScreen. A number of participants indicated that they were waiting for additional follow-up from the program that they never received and half indicated that they really did not understand what the program was all about. Additional follow-up from the job coach after the initial QuickScreen is clearly needed to make sure that potential enrollees fully understand what the program is about and how they can fit it into their schedule without taking undue time away from other responsibilities.

It is important to be mindful that these non-enrollees come from the early days of program implementation (July 2007 to January 2008). As of the end of February, two of the four sites stopped active recruitment as they had reached their target enrollment numbers, and in the other two sites the program began to focus on more targeted recruitment of those who had already been contacted and expressed an interest in the program. Therefore, as of mid-May, there had been no additional potential enrollees designated as non-enrollees (nine had completed QuickScreens in April but it was too early to determine if they would or would not enroll). With the maturation of the program (and full staffing of the job coaches), more systematic follow-up by the job coaches is likely in place now, resulting in higher enrollment rates than experienced in the earlier days of the program.

Program Review Conclusions. As implemented in the case of *Earn*More, the SBS CAP is in alignment with the CEO mission and is meeting key CEO criteria. Although overall results were mixed, several critical targets have been exceeded.

- The *Earn*More model was implemented with substantial fidelity to the WASC demonstration model but has made adaptations in response to local conditions designed to increase enrollment.
- As intended, the program is serving an underserved and underemployed population.
- The program is providing innovative programming, as few programs exist to help with career advancement.
- The program appears to have good infrastructure, management, and agency oversight in place, enabling it to remain stable, make improvements, and be replicable in other sites.
- Specific and measurable outcomes have been articulated. These targets are shared by the sponsoring agency and the service provider. Strong agency management and responsive measures on the part of the program resulted in success in overcoming early shortcomings, especially with respect to outreach and enrollment.
- Findings from the non-enrollee survey indicate that most eligible non-enrollees are driven more by personal rather than programmatic factors. However, survey results do offer suggestions for improving contact and follow-up actions with potential enrollees.
- Data from the SBS year-end report reflects success in meeting targets for enrollment, career plans, and, significantly, job upgrades and job retention, while targets for benefits screening and enrollment, as well as training enrollment and completion, have not been met.

- Not all service components have been fully implemented. These include benefits screening and financial literacy training and asset building. A more effective benefits screening process may lead to increased take-up rates.
- Given strong program management and oversight, and once the *Earn*More staff are through the pilot implementation phase (which inevitably has a steep learning curve), the program should be able to demonstrate effectiveness in all areas.
- Beyond producing demonstrated outcomes through *Earn*More specifically, the *Earn*More program provider has a strong interest in contributing to the base of knowledge about anti-poverty programs in general, which may contribute to other CEO initiatives. Moreover, Seedco has demonstrated an ability to leverage additional resources beyond those provided by CEO, thereby maximizing the city's investment in this innovative initiative.

3. Programmatic Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and data collected during the site visit, the Westat/Metis team is able to offer several observations on how the program might be improved in the short term.

- Because JATCs spent an inordinate amount of their time during the first few months of implementation on outreach and recruitment, continue to explore options for delegating these responsibilities to other center staff and experiment with new recruitment strategies. Initial recruitment strategies relied most heavily on the existing client base of the WF1CC and the three CBOs. This suggests the potential value of exploring alternative recruitment strategies that look beyond the existing client base. The MDRC demonstrations experienced similar recruitment difficulties and as a result implemented a wide variety of recruitment strategies, with most of them reaching out to new clients rather than prior clients.
- Through continued attention to strong communication, ensure that all staff share the same vision and possess a clear understanding of program goals and targets. This is especially critical should the program experience staff turnover. Through interviews, the program review team identified the need to ensure that target goals are communicated effectively to all program staff. For example, one JATC expressed lack of awareness concerning targets for upgrades, when in fact Seedco had set specific monthly goals in that area.
- One of the major intended program outcomes is to increase the number of participants successfully accessing work supports. However, only a fraction of enrollees were screened for these benefits. This suggests the need to establish a consistent process for conducting the benefits screen as a standard component of participation and effective communication strategies to help enrollees overcome any stigma associated with pursuit of work support benefits that they inadvertently associate with public assistance or welfare.
- Minor discrepancies in data reporting and misplacement of screening data suggest the need for continued professional development with respect to data management in addition to tighter record-keeping and data management controls. Discrepancies were observed between the monthly verified data provided by Seedco in the *Earn*More Monthly Management Report and the monthly report provided by SBS based on WorkSource1.
- Use program records to continue tracking the effects of programmatic changes on outputs and outcomes. For example, pay particular attention to the effects of using a cohort strategy as opposed to the standard recruitment strategy.