



Final Report - May 2015

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Grant support from the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative enabled Goodwill-Easter Seals, in partnership with Workforce Solutions, to hire three full-time Connectors. These staff are trusted members of the community who provide targeted community outreach and employment support in the five communities we will serve.

The Connectors improved employment outcomes by fostering relationships in three ways:

1. Connecting Corridor residents to workforce development vendors,
2. Connecting Corridor businesses with work-ready job applicants and workforce vendors, and
3. Aligning employers, workforce development agencies and local government.

Key results

Three full time Connectors, along with a Project Coordinator, connected with hundreds of unserved job seekers along the entire Light Rail Corridor. In preparation for this project, nine workforce partners signed a Letter of Commitment for the Connectors to immerse themselves in learning about their agency programs in order to connect residents to their services and programs. The Connectors maintained ongoing relationships with those agencies that were most responsive and able to enroll job seekers into their programs. They achieved this through attending agency team meetings, connecting personally with agency staff, follow up correspondence, and various other methods. An onsite presence in various organizations proved to be most effective. In this fashion, agencies had the Connectors on-site in order to have these services at the connecting point.

Connectors also provided direct job search assistance to members of the community if they were unable to enroll into a program. This became an ongoing trend, as many agency programs have eligibility criteria set by funders that job seekers often do not qualify. Many programs have closed referral systems (MFIP, Vocational Rehabilitation Services), making it either a longer process for a job seeker to receive services through eligibility determination, or, most often, causing them to not be eligible for the referral source at all.

Job Clubs were held weekly by our Connectors at our partner sight Liberty Plaza. Job Clubs and workshops provided by other organizations were also a resource that to which Connectors referred many job seekers. Staff held C2C-specific events such as Resource Fairs, Job Fairs, and Job Clubs, created in partnership with and for the community, including local businesses. A presentation to the Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board was given to demonstrate the alignment that can be created between Ramsey County's Building our Future, Ramsey County Internal Actions, Ramsey County Strategic Plan, and C2C. Discussions with the Ramsey County WIB were held to leverage key relationships, connections, and influence within the workforce and business sectors. Staff held a Kickoff event to welcome the nine agencies who signed an LOC to work with Connectors. This generated the beginning of alignment with Workforce Providers within this project.

We attempted to connect the work of C2C 2.0 in the community to leverage other ongoing efforts, but the goal toward system alignment proved to be challenging. This is a key factor in the C2C efforts in order to move toward a sustainable model. This included meeting with:

- Jonathan Sage-Martinson, GES, and Workforce Solutions met with City of St. Paul about partnering with the City to align C2C's efforts with the City's economic development efforts.
- Bryan Lindsley from Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Workforce Innovation Network

- GES and Ramsey County (Janet Guthrie) discussed findings and recommendations from C2C 2.0 with Jeremy Hanson-Willis and Dave Niermann from DEED
- Connected with Karen Berg from Workforce Solutions to align efforts with Project Connect
- Reviewed the Mayor's Guiding Principles and City of Saint Paul's economic development policy
- Janet Guthrie, Senior Policy Analyst from Ramsey County, to align with the recommendations from the Jobs Central/first phase of C2C efforts including but not limited to:
 - Create Regional Marketing Campaign and/or Hire local campaigns
 - Increase cultural responsiveness of Workforce Services
 - Sharing information on businesses that are expanding, relocating, etc.... to create regular ongoing mechanisms to connect to Economic Development

Learnings

There continues to be a fair number of job seekers that are unconnected to formal and ongoing workforce programs, and many do not qualify for such programs based on funder eligibility. Most program eligibility is population specific (i.e., ReEntry/Criminal Background, Homeless, Youth, etc.) has a closed referral system (MFIP, Vocational Rehabilitation Services), or has skill requirements (i.e., minimum education). This creates a barrier for job seekers who do not meet these criteria to receive ongoing workforce services. A community is comprised of a multitude of populations, with differing languages, education levels, and other factors, which a model such as C2C, lacking a broader set of eligibility criteria, is not able to adequately provide for.

Connectors provided more direct job search assistance to job seekers than intended. This was a strategy to serve the unconnected job seeker while assessing and learning about their needs and program availability. In order to maintain a relationship and continue moving them along with their goals, this was a successful strategy. However, when job seekers could not or did not get into a program, as often happened, the Connector continued job placement support. The Workforce Centers are a valuable resource for such job seekers; however, the individualized support, along with comprehensive referral to community resources, is a need the WFC cannot often meet.

System alignment, along with support and direction from the Ramsey County WIB, needs more time. We have sought additional short term funding, without success, to continue the Connector Model while we develop stronger alignment and sustainability of the model. The C2C model is critical in supporting communities, and can be replicated in other communities outside of the Corridor. It's key features of being at the "right place at the right time with the right resources" for job seekers who don't have services is critical in meeting the vast workforce needs of a community. While there is commitment from various entities to continue the alignment efforts, without continued funding, many relationships and connections with the residents will be lost and difficult to recreate.

Recommendations

Continue the Connector Role

Outcomes and Benefits of the Connectors

- Liaison between Programs and Community
- Become a part of agencies' systems
- Build off of Current Job Readiness opportunities
- Dig Deep into culturally specific needs
- Use existing business/employer mechanisms and engagement

Create Systems Alignment Practices and Expectations

Such as:

- Create Regional, Universal Marketing Campaign
- Create Collective Impact Expectations with Vendors
- *Increase Cultural Responsiveness in WFC's*
- Business information dissemination (relocations, expansions, etc...)
- Hire Local Campaigns
- Create "Place Based" Funding Opportunities for Service Delivery for the Unconnected/Underserved Job Seeker

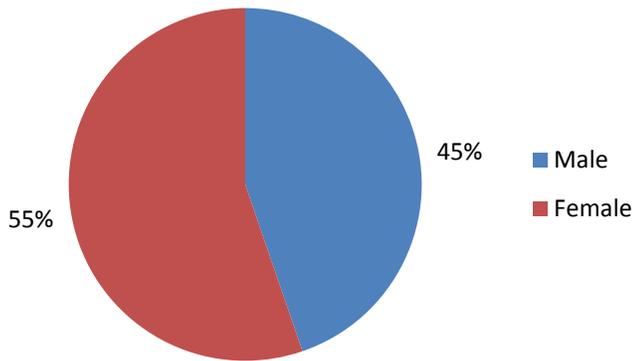
Review and align multiple local and/or State initiatives with other Strategic Plans (such as: Ramsey County Building Our Future, RC WIB Strategic Plan, Mayor's Guiding Principles, WFC Employment Readiness Profile/Triage System Pilot)

Project Success

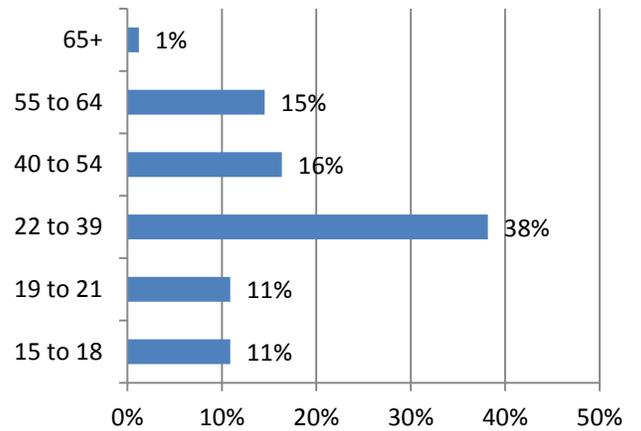
- **241 Individuals Connected**
- **158 Individuals Served**
- **19 Individuals Completed Training**
 - **71 New Jobs**
- **130% monthly income increase from new wages**
- **Job Placements in Health Care, Warehouse Food Service, Office Maintenance, and more**
- **3 Career / Resource Fairs**
 - **3 Job Clubs**
- **Kick-Off Event with 9 Employment Services Partners**
- **Added 8 Employment Services Partners**
- **Over 25 Community Partner Connections**
- **Over 34 Community Events Attended**

Residents Served and Connected

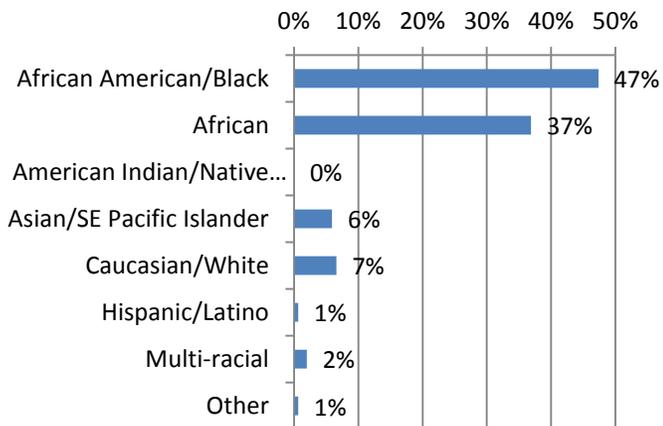
Gender



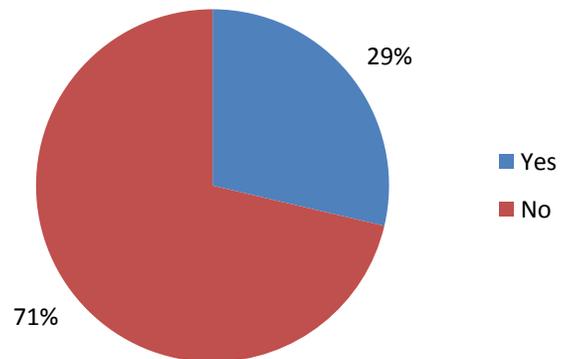
Age



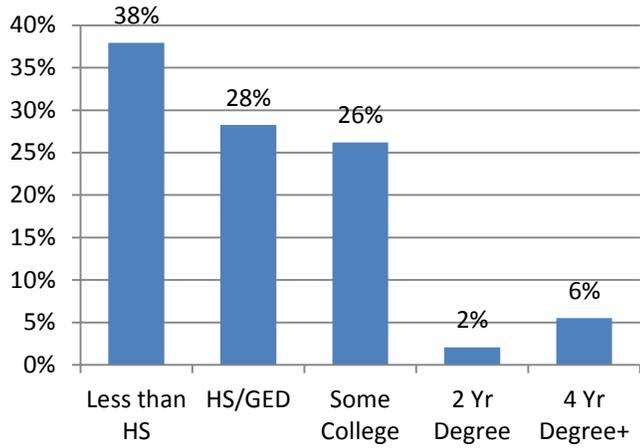
Ethnicity



Job Seekers with Children



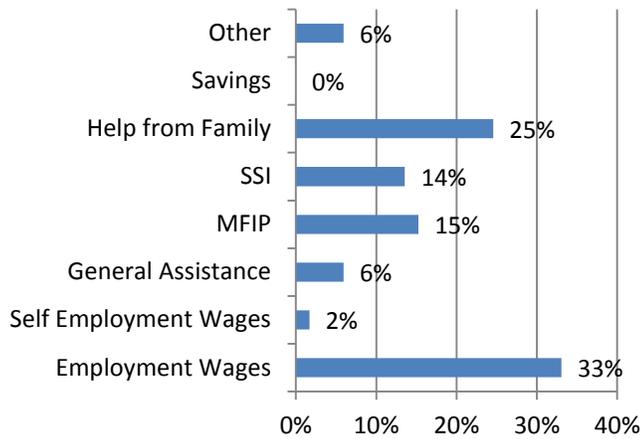
Level of Education



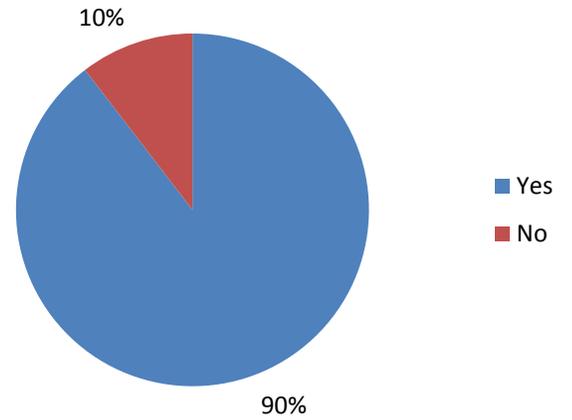
Youth Served and Education Status

In School	37%
Out of School	58%
Graduated	53%
Dropped	5%
Unknown	5%

Primary Source of Income

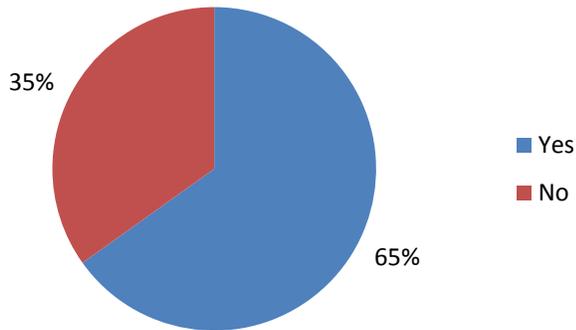


ID to Work



Barriers to Employment

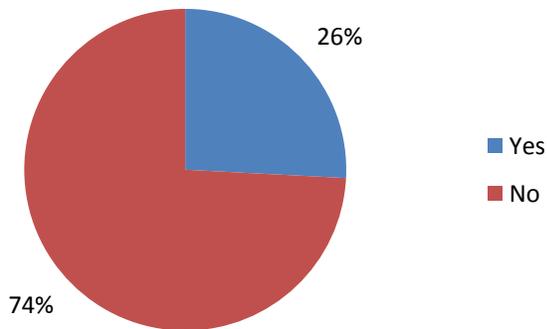
Participants with Two or More Barriers to Employment



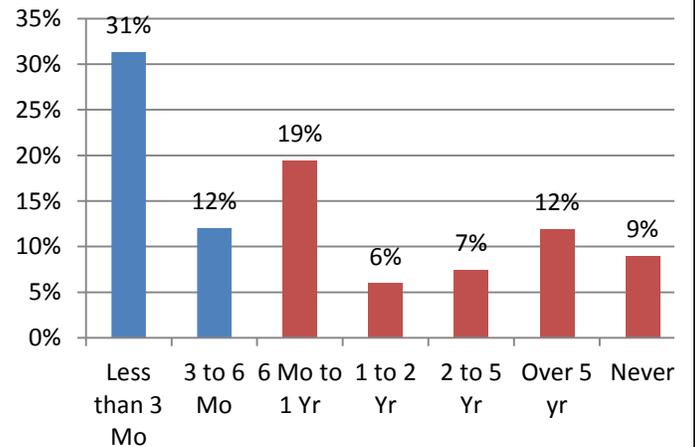
Barriers to Work

Barriers to Work	
Participants with Two or More Barriers to Work	65%
Criminal Background	23%
Risk of Homelessness – Housing Instability	26%
Health Problems	13%
English Language Learners	Over 50%
Less than High School/GED	38%
Six Months or Longer Since Last Job	57%

Working at least some at Intake Yet Underemployed

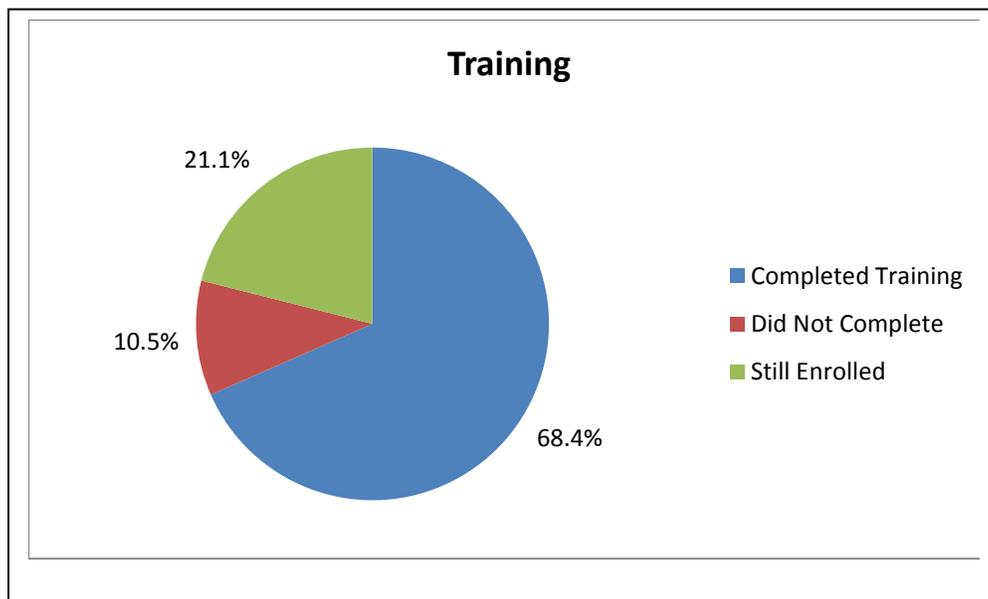


Time Since Last Job



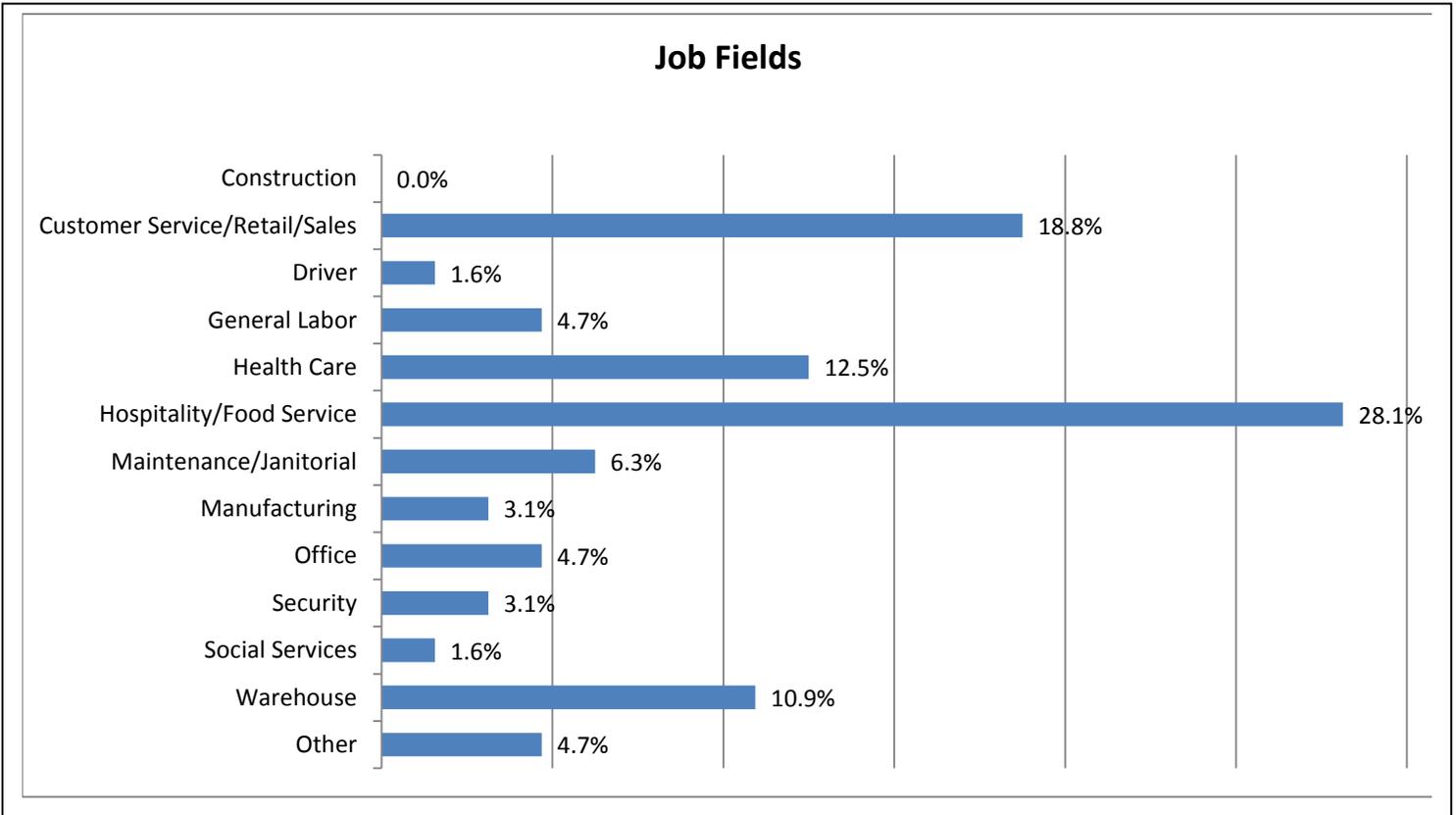
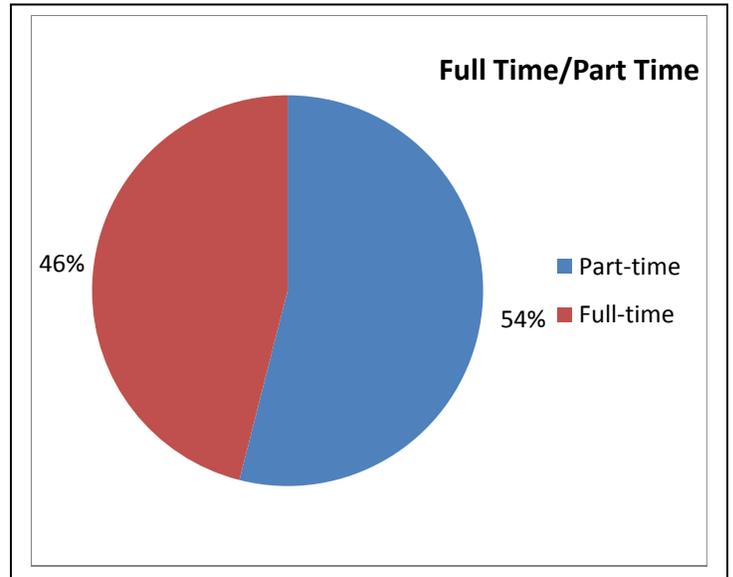
Specific Trainings Attended by Residents

CDL	YWCA
Computer Training	Goodwill Easter Seals
Computer Training	Goodwill Easter Seals
Contact Center	Goodwill
Employment Internship	Experience Works
Forklift	Twin Cities Rise
Forklift	Fork Lifts of MN
Health Care	Eastside Financial Center
Health Care	Eastside Financial Center
high school/basic education	High School for Recording Arts
Men's programming	Ujamaa Place
ServeSafe Food Safety Manager	HUBB Center
Tax Preparer	H&R Block Seasonal Tax Preparer Training
Tax Preparer	Jackson Hewitt
Youth Employment Internship	Right Track



Job Placements	
New Job	71

Placement Wage, Hours, New Monthly Income		
Average Wage		\$10.26
Range	\$8.00	\$29.00
Average Hours	31	
Average Monthly Income from Wages – post job placement	\$1,378	
Average Income at Intake – pre job placement	\$599	
Increased Monthly Income	\$779 per month	
	130% increase	



C2C Resource Fairs @ Rondo Library-Fall 2014 and January, 2015

9/30/14 - **Employment and Resource Providers Fair**- 43 attendees

Partner Agencies and service providers

11/24/14 – **Job Fair**- 118 attendees

16 employers & 3 service providers

- New French Bakery
- Lunds
- Community Action of St. Paul
- Menards
- Fed Ex-Mahtomedi complex
- Fed Ex-Energy Park Drive
- Goodwill Easter Seals (stores)
- Goodwill Easter Seals (skills training programs)
- Volt
- Montu Staffing
- Ramsey County/Job Connect
- Project for Pride in Living (PPL)
- Episcopal Church Homes
- Super Valu
- Personnel Resources
- DA World Travel
- Tallgrass Talent Group
- EMS Academy
- Rakhma

1/21/15 – **Career Resource Fair**- 80 attendees

Vocational training providers and community workforce providers

C2C Job Club Meetings-Fall, 2014

1) 9/24/14—**Job Search Strategies**- 17 attendees

Overview: Content included resume writing, various job search strategies, interviewing skills, skills training options, networking with other job seekers and connecting with workforce service providers

2) 10/22/14 – **Mastering the Job Application**- 8 attendees

Overview: How to prepare for on-line applications and developing a master application

3) 11/5/14 – **Resume Preparation**- 10 attendees (5 from Liberty Plaza)

Overview: Guest presenter- Eric Bestrom from Hmong American Partnership

Partner Employment Services Agencies

Name	Address	Phone
DEED/St. Paul Workforce Center	540 Fairview Ave N, St. Paul	651-642-0363
Experience Works	1821 University Ave W Ste S132, St. Paul	651-493-6833
Goodwill Easter Seals	553 Fairview Ave N, St. Paul	651-379-5808
Hmong American Partnership	1075 Arcade St, St. Paul	651-495-9160
HIRED	540 Fairview Ave N, St. Paul	651-642-0363
Lifetrack	709 University Avenue West, St. Paul	651-227-8471
Project for Pride in Living	1035 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis	612-455-5100
Resource Inc/Employment Action Ctr	900 20th Ave. S, Minneapolis	612-752-8800
Southeast Asian Refugee Community Home	1113 E Franklin Ave, Suite 212, Mpls	612-673-9388

Additional Partners - Employment Services Agencies

American Indian OIC	1845 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis	612-341-3358
CLUES Minneapolis	720 East Lake Street, Mpls	612-746-3500
CLUES St. Paul	797 East 7th Street, St. Paul	651-379-4200
Community Action Partnership	450 Syndicate St N, St. Paul	651-645-6445
Confederation of Somali Community	Coyle Ctr, 420 15th Avenue South, Mpls	612-338-5282
Frogtown Neighborhood Association	West Minnehaha Rec Ctr, 685 West Minnehaha Ave	
MERRICK Community Services	965 Payne Avenue, Suite 300, St. Paul	651-771-9339
Ujamaa Place	1885 University Avenue, Suite 355, St. Paul	651-528-8006
Emerge	420 15 th Av. S., Minneapolis, MN	612-338-5282

Community Partners Connections

- Andy Barnett, Coordinator at Frogtown Rondo Home Fund
- Council Member Dai Thao's legislative aide, Mai Chong Xiong
- Ujamaa Place
- Lifetrack
- CAP of Ramsey and Washington Counties- various programs
- Frogtown Neighborhood Association
- Community Neighborhood Housing Services
- MYA-Mentoring Young Adults
- Jackson Elementary
- CSP-Community Stabilization Project
- High School for Recording Arts
- Breaking Free
- My Home Inc.
- Brotherhood, Inc
- Rizek Place
- SMRLS-legal aid
- District Council 7
- District Council 8
- Tacoma Institute
- Summit Academy
- YWCA
- St Paul Workforce Center
- People Serving People
- Wilder
- ASANDC various meetings regarding the FRAN initiative-FRAN-Frogtown Rondo Action Network

Outreach and Events

- Rondo Job Fair
- Career Club
- Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotan's
- HAMAA
- Asian Community Engagement Team
- Brian Coyle Center and Riverside Plaza
- West Bank Community Coalition
- MCTC's Bringing Community Together
- Representative Rena Moran
- Karen Organization of MN
- Frogtown Neighborhood Association's annual fundraiser at Minnehaha Rec Center
- Hmong Cultural Center
- HmongTown MarketPlace
- Hmong Village
- Galore: Professional Hmong Women's Network
- Job Connect
- Wilder Foundation
- Little Mekong Market
- Rondo Festival
- Community Peace Meals in Frogtown
- National Night Out
- Frogtown Parade
- Frogtown Football Preview at Minnehaha Rec Center
- Frogtown Football games Saturday mornings various locations
- Open Streets
- ASANDC Peace Celebrations throughout Frogtown various dates
- Liberty Plaza Job Fair C2C
- Employment Services and Resource Fair
- Light Rail Kick Off Event Victoria and University
- Workforce Solutions Healthcare and IT Industry Panels
- Goodwill Easter Seals Power of Work Job Fair
- RENEW Job Fair in Minneapolis
- Merriam Park Job Fair
- Economic Mobility conference at St. Kate's

Job Seeker Successes

AT

Staff met AT at a Mt. Airy Homes residents' meeting where she was picking up free school supplies for her family that they were giving away. She approached the GES staff member, asking why they were attending their meeting. They shared with her C2C's purpose, chatting for 30 minutes about employment services and the job searching process in America. AT's family arrived in America about 10 years ago as Karen refugees from Thailand. She quickly finished high school and decided to pursue medical assisting after her mother's health scare. She had just completed her Medical Assisting program at Century College when we met (a rare and great accomplishment for this young refugee community), had never worked before, and had no one to assist her with job searching. She was eager to sign up for C2C, and became one of the most inspiring individuals served through the program. She came to every C2C job club and every other event she was invited to. In early November, she was offered a medical assisting position at Bethesda Clinic (conveniently located near the Green Line and close to home) at \$15 an hour, much more than she had anticipated. She was ecstatic and most grateful for everything C2C was able to help her with. As one of the few and first to complete a college level degree in the Karen Community, her success will make a profound impact in her community.

In her own words: *"Thank you so much for helping me through the process of getting a job. As you know, I'm so grateful to get to know you and Goodwill Easter programs. As you know, this will be my first job ever, so do you have any advice? It could be anything I should know. You can see that I trust you, count on you, and ask you for advices.:) I'll keep in touch with you. Thank you so much."*

KB

In January 2014, KB moved to St. Paul from Chicago, IL, hoping to escape the dangerous, poverty-stricken neighborhood where she had been living. The home she owned had been targeted and eventually burned down. She currently resides in Frogtown and working short-term temporary jobs. Prior to starting the C2C program, KB was unemployed and distressed after the temp agency she had been employed through had just informed her that they did not have a position for her anymore. In a matter of two weeks, staff helped her put together a resume, apply to two positions, and prepare for two job interviews. Soon after the C2C program, KB was working part time earning \$13 per hour. After this initial job fell through, she quickly started applying to other places, and eventually obtained part-time work at Family Dollar then was quickly promoted to full-time status. Her pay is minimum wage but she is earning more now than she has in the past year.

Stevie

Stevie had been living in the Union Gospel Mission for two and a half years when he was told that he would need to move out within the next few months. After having saved enough money to live in a low rent apartment situation, C2C staff helped Stevie explore housing options,, eventually connecting him with an affordable housing site in the subsidized housing community. However, issues in Stevie's criminal record proved a challenge. After some searching, staff helped him find a suitable, inexpensive, studio apartment, helping Stevie gain access to Bridging for a bed and other essential household items to furniture.

Stevie now had an apartment and a car to financially maintain. C2C was able to get Stevie on the waiting list for their partner agency, Experience Works (55+ Program). By mid-summer of 2014, Stevie had secured work for the first time in eight years, working 21 hours per week at a non-profit site as a food service worker. Money is still tight (part-time wages combined with his disability income), but Stevie is more stable and optimistic about his future than he has been in a long time.

Myra

Myra is a very responsible, older adult who has been taking care of her much younger cousin who is 40-years young and now a junior in high school. Myra has provided in-home health care for many years to an elderly woman who passed away a little over a year ago. Myra and her young cousin had to find a new place to live, which was difficult on her limited income. She still had a job providing extensive Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services to a developmentally disabled young man, and was eventually able to find a new home and make ends meet.

The PCA job fell through mid-summer 2014, at about the same time that her apartment was determined to be unlivable due to black mold and inattention by her landlord. A C2C staff person made the connection that one of our collaborators, Lutheran Social Services/Financial Center on Payne and Case, was lacking front office/receptionist services, especially in the morning and early afternoon hours. He orchestrated a meeting between a partner agency called Experience Works (employer of persons 55+), the director of LSS, and Myra, and shortly thereafter Myra was hired to provide front office services for twenty-one hours per week. The C2C program will continue to work closely with Myra to ensure additional employment and safe, secure housing for Myra and her cousin.

Darius

Darius had some barriers in securing employment, including a criminal background, physical and mental disabilities, and a family of six to take care of. He only had a high school education, but was interested in working as a commercial truck driver and learning more about computers. Staff had him apply to the YWCA in order to take their commercial driving program. After graduating from their program, the YWCA said he was their best student they have had so far! Darius also took forklift training at Forklifts of MN, receiving a certificate of completion from

them. Since he wanted to have more formal training on computers, staff helped him enroll in computer classes at Goodwill-Easter Seals, which he just recently completed. He is now actively working on getting his some of his background cleaned up through an expungement program with Legal Aide at the Rondo Library, which will aide him in getting employed. He is actively volunteering with his children's school until he gets a good job offer, is busy cleaning up his record, and is completing a paid internship with Prevent Child Abuse MN (PCAM) for which staff made a referral for him in winter of 2014)

Isaiah

Isaiah is currently a student at the High School for Recording Arts after his parents sent him to Minnesota to live a better life. Coming from Chicago, he had been involved in gangs, and had been shot 16 times in the recent past. He had become homeless after having to leave his aunt's house and was living couch to couch, in a shelter, or on the streets when he initially met C2C staff. He was recently placed in Rezek, a transitional housing program, and moved in to his first apartment April 1st with the help of some community assistance grants. Isaiah had never had an official job before, and was looking to work at Goodwill after opening across from his school. He participated in some mock interviews, and was able to give gain some techniques for interviews. With the aid of a script provided by staff, he was calling to check on status of his various job applications, as well as working on his networking skills. He started to apply at various places and recently got a position with Taco Bell. He will be working 25-30 hours per week at \$11.50 an hour.

Tasha

Tasha, a mother of 5 (ages 5-17,) has had various employment opportunities, but nothing that was permanent with good benefits. She had been involved in a lot of volunteer community work and wanted some kind of employment within this field. She came to C2C to get help with her resume and learn some interview techniques. Staff assisted her in creating a resume that gave her credit for the community work and highlighted the experiences that she gained. Tasha also took advantage of mock interviews, taking the chance to practice until she felt comfortable. She was able to get a job with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) -Project Hope, helping people that are evicted, or under the threat of eviction, to find or keep housing, that she has been very passionate about. Her rate of pay is \$15 per hour at 40 hours a week. Tasha was also in need of a car repairs to be able to retain her position since it does require her to do community outreach. Staff was able to secure a Micro Grant and approve her for car repairs that would have cost her \$1000. If this would not have happened, she may have lost her job and her children could not have been as active as they are in the community. After her success, Tasha requested if C2C could also work with her daughter. After talking to her 17-year-old, staff made a list of different places she could apply to, talking about what to include on her application and say in an interview. Her daughter was eventually hired at Lunds making \$8.50 per hour working approximately 20 hours a week.

JH

When JH first made contact with staff, she had not held a stable job in over 7 years while raising 3 young children. Working with staff intensively for over half a year, she was finally offered a part-time position at FedEx with potential to go full-time. JH's starting pay was \$11.66 per hour, and her schedule allowed her to be home in time to care for her children after school.

TW & MM

TW and MM immigrated to the U.S. in the fall of 2014 and were eager to start earning their way in America but didn't know where to start. When staff made the first connection with them in October 2014, they had been in the country less than 3 months. They were eager to get started but unsure of what to expect. They met with staff every week at the Hubbs Center, even after they had obtained part-time work. After attending a hiring event at the Sons of Norway building, they were hired on the spot, starting full-time jobs in early April. Their pay is \$8.10 per hour and they will be eligible for benefits.