A Song in the Front Yard:
The 741 Collaborative Partnership's Efforts to Increase Employment and Earnings in Chicago's Quad Communities

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Economic Mobility Corporation

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M O B I L I T Y

The Economic Mobility Corporation (Mobility) identifies, develops and evaluates programs and policies that enable disadvantaged individuals to acquire the education, skills and networks needed to succeed in the labor market so that they can support themselves and their families.

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The report's title refers to a poem included in Gwendolyn Brooks' first book of poetry, *A Street in Bronzeville.* Ms. Brooks, the first African American recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, was a lifelong resident of the Bronzeville community, on Chicago's South Side.

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Introduction

Since World War II American cities have undergone significant changes as job opportunities have spread out across metropolitan areas. As central-city residents moved to follow these opportunities, poverty and unemployment became increasingly concentrated in inner-city communities through the 1980s. After a decline in the 1990s, poverty concentration increased during the economic downturn of the 2000s. These trends created particular disadvantages for African American families, as discriminatory practices in housing and employment have limited their opportunities to move to integrated neighborhoods closer to job opportunities and to earn wages that support a family (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Research has demonstrated that the greater the mismatch is between the location of jobs in a metropolitan area and the residential location of the African American population, the greater the unemployment rate is among African Americans (Stoll 2006). High-poverty neighborhoods offer few nearby job opportunities and inadequate job information networks. Additionally, studies indicate that employers hold negative perceptions of the work ethic and honesty of African American applicants from inner-city neighborhoods (Wilson 1996).

Workforce development policy, including the current Workforce Investment Act, has sought to increase the employment and income of individuals disadvantaged in the labor market by supporting a range of services, including basic employability skills training, remedial education, subsidized work experience, vocational training, and job search assistance. Evaluations of employment and training programs have yielded mixed results. While some have demonstrated modest gains in participants' employment and earnings, these gains tend to diminish over time, and many people continue to work in low-wage jobs without benefits (Holzer 2008). These findings, coupled with persistent poverty rates and increasing inequality in income and wealth, have led policymakers, funders, and practitioners to seek innovative strategies for increasing the income and financial stability of low-income individuals and families.

One strategy is encouraging collaboration among service providers. Since the 1980s, collaborations in business, government, and communities have proliferated. Federal and state employment and education policies have increasingly encouraged collaborative partnerships (Orr 2002). In 2008, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation provided seed funding to encourage several of its Chicago grantees to work together to address the problem of concentrated poverty and unemployment in that city's Quad Communities, an area with an unemployment rate significantly greater than that of Chicago as a whole. The group established the 741 Collaborative Partnership (the Collaborative) to address problems with the workforce development system serving the Quad Communities. Namely, existing workforce providers were operating independently with little collaboration, resulting in duplication of services, inefficiencies, and gaps in soft and hard skills training and employment retention services.
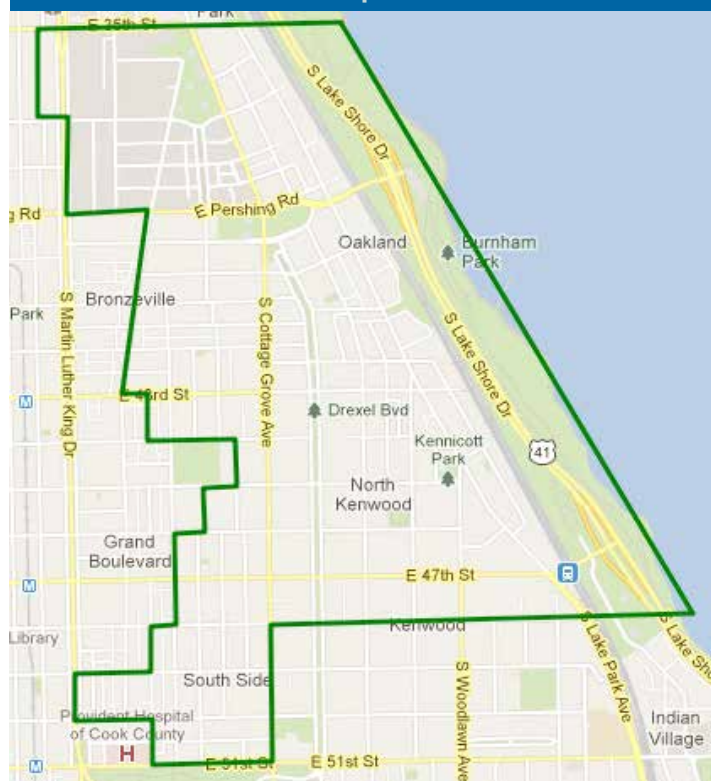
The Quad Communities

Located along Chicago's southern lakefront, just north of the University of Chicago, the Quad Communities overlaps considerably with Bronzeville, one of the storied destinations of African Americans during the Great Migration. The neighborhood became known as the Black Metropolis in the early 1900s, as thousands of African Americans left the rural South in pursuit of greater personal freedom and economic opportunity. Coined Bronzeville in 1930 by James Gentry, a local theater editor for the *Chicago Bee*, the community was home to the first African American–owned bank and insurance company. Many famous residents lived there as well, including musicians Louis Armstrong and Lou Rawls, civil rights activist Ida B. Wells, and author Gwendolyn Brooks.

Beginning in 1940, the Chicago Public Housing Authority built several massive public housing complexes in the Quad Communities, including the Robert Taylor and Ida B. Wells developments, which became infamous for drug dealing and gang violence. At the same time, many middle-class African American families began moving out as restrictive housing covenants were lifted in communities farther south. Consequently, the local population declined and poverty became more concentrated. In 1995, after considerable debate, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development permitted the demolition of the high-rise complexes, to be replaced with mixed-income communities of low-rise buildings.

The demolition took place over the past decade, resulting in further population declines, particularly among African Americans. Between 2000 and 2010, the overall population of the Quad Communities decreased 19 percent. Today, the Quad Communities is home to about 64,000 residents, of whom 82 percent are African American—a decrease from 88 percent in 2000.[1] The percentage of the population living below the federal poverty line also declined with the demolition of the high-rises, but at 30 percent it remains higher than the average for Chicago as a whole.[2] While the unemployment rate in Kenwood, one of the four areas of the Quad Communities, is similar to the rate for Chicago overall (11 percent), the unemployment rates in the three other areas range from 17 to 27 percent.[3]

There are signs of resurgence, however. As part of the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation, several new mixed-income housing developments have been built on some of the vacant land. The Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC) has leveraged resources and worked with local organizations to clean up the streets and bring services to residents. In the summer of 2012, after years of work by QCDC, Walmart announced that it would build a new 41,000-square-foot store in the community as part of a mixed residential and retail development at the intersection of 47th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue.

**The Quad Communities/
741 Collaborative Partnership Service Area**

Source: Collaborative website, www.741partners.org

At its inception, the Collaborative consisted of seven organizations that provided workforce development services and four that offered complementary services. The latter included giving technical assistance to the Collaborative, acting as a referral source for community residents and employers, and providing financial services to residents (see pages 4 to 6 for a description of the Collaborative partners). The Collaborative's stated mission was "to work collaboratively to assist Chicagoland employers in accessing and retaining qualified employees while advancing the careers and building the income of Quad Communities residents." From 2008 to 2009, the Collaborative hired an organization to manage the project, completed a market study and capacity assessment, and developed a strategic plan. In 2010 the Collaborative began to build the infrastructure needed to operate as an integrated workforce development system, including developing a client tracking system, a marketing and branding strategy, and a website. Collaborative members also met regularly to learn about the services each member agency provided, to build trust among members, and to develop policies and procedures.

In 2011, the Collaborative was positioned to transition from planning to implementation. The MacArthur Foundation asked the Economic Mobility Corporation to conduct an assessment of whether the Collaborative had been implemented as planned. We also sought to derive lessons about using collaborative efforts to improve the quality of a community's workforce development services as well as its residents' economic well-being. We conducted the assessment between June 2011 and December 2012. Our data collection activities comprised interviews with Collaborative members, including executive directors, workforce program managers, and frontline staff; observations of the Collaborative's monthly meetings, working group meetings, and events from December 2011 through December 2012; interviews with employers; focus groups with participants; a review of materials developed to implement the integrated service delivery system; and a review of data from the Collaborative's client tracking system. By observing the meetings and events, we learned how the meetings were structured, how the group interacted and made decisions, and what progress it had made.

Members of the 741 Collaborative Partnership, 2011–2012

Workforce Development Service Providers

The Centers for New Horizons (CNH) is the largest social service agency headquartered in the Quad Communities. For 40 years, CNH has worked to organize the community around housing and other issues and to provide a range of services to help families become self-sufficient. Its workforce development services included a weeklong customer service training; ABE and GED preparation classes; and career assessment, counseling, job search preparation, and placement services. CNH staff played key roles in the Collaborative, including co-chairing the data working group during the development of the client tracking system and chairing the working groups for employer strategies and best practices.

Incorporated in 1917, the **Chicago Urban League** (CUL) is committed to building strong African American communities by helping its clients find jobs, affordable housing, and educational opportunities. CUL is based in the Quad Communities. Its services included job readiness assistance and placement, Commercial Driver's License training, and skills training programs in process technology and construction. CUL also provided services to help small-business owners and individuals looking to start a business. A CUL staff member chaired the Collaborative's data working group starting in May 2012.

The Cara Program seeks to help the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless to transform their lives. It provides life skills and job readiness training, career counseling, access to internships and occupational training, job placement, and job retention services. Its main office is in downtown Chicago, and its client base is citywide. Cara is the parent organization to the Quad Communities Center for Working Families, another Collaborative member. Cara also operated Cleanslate, a social enterprise that provided paid transitional jobs in neighborhood beautification. Cara staff co-chaired the data working group during the development of the client tracking system.

The **Quad Communities Center for Working Families** (CWF), an affiliate of the Cara Program located in the Quad Communities, seeks to help individuals secure and retain quality jobs and build income and wealth. CWF's employment services included job readiness training, career counseling, and a year of post-employment support. CWF also provided financial counseling and assistance accessing income supports to help individuals achieve financial stability.

Heartland Human Care Services (HHCS), part of Heartland Alliance, is a human rights organization that helps people in poverty improve their lives by providing workforce development services, health services, housing, and homeless services. HHCS operated multiple transitional jobs programs and provided job readiness training and job placement assistance to individuals receiving public assistance and food stamps. When the Collaborative started, HHCS had an office in the Quad Communities, but this office closed in 2011 due to cuts in state funding for transitional jobs and other workforce development programs, leaving HHCS without a presence in the community.

The mission of **Jobs For Youth** (JFY) is to help young people ages 17 to 24 from low-income families become a part of the economic mainstream. JFY is located in downtown Chicago and serves young people from neighborhoods throughout Chicago and its lower-income suburbs. JFY provided GED instruction, job readiness and life skills training, job placement assistance, and supportive services.

The mission of the **New Skill Builders** (NSB) is to help city residents access and maintain employment in the construction industry. NSB is located outside of the Quad Communities. Prior to joining the Collaborative, in 2011, NSB operated a 13-week apprenticeship preparation program that provided hands-on training as well as classroom instruction to help people prepare for apprenticeship exams. However, state and city funding for the program was cut, and NSB shifted its focus to helping its clients find entry-level jobs in the construction industry.

Organizations Providing Supplementary Services

The **Chicago Jobs Council** (CJC) is a coalition of more than 100 community-based workforce development organizations, advocacy groups, businesses, and individuals that work together to ensure that people living in poverty have access to employment and career advancement opportunities. Based in downtown Chicago, CJC seeks to influence the development and reform of public policies and programs and to provide professional-development training to frontline staff in the workforce development field. CJC was the Collaborative's fiscal agent.

The mission of the **Quad Communities Development Corporation** (QCDC) is to bring local residents and institutions together to develop a sustainable, healthy, mixed-income community. QCDC seeks to develop commercial corridors in the community and to increase quality options for housing, day care, employment, shopping, education, and recreation. As the lead agency for the New Communities Program, it led the development of the community's 10-year Quality of Life Plan and provided technical assistance to local businesses and nonprofit organizations to implement the plan's community development projects. QCDC's executive director chaired the Collaborative's marketing working group.

The Community Builders (TCB) is a national organization dedicated to building strong communities where people of all incomes can obtain high-quality, affordable housing and other services. In the Quad Communities, TCB has been a leader in the development of the mixed-income community Oakwood Shores. It managed the community's rental properties and provided services to residents to help them achieve self-sufficiency. TCB referred residents to the Collaborative's service providers for employment and job training assistance.

The **Center for Economic Progress** (CEP) helps low-income families attain financial security by providing them with free tax preparation services, financial education and coaching, and assistance accessing mainstream financial products. CEP is based in downtown Chicago but partnered with a community college and workforce center in the Quad Communities to provide services to residents. Its role in the Collaborative was to provide financial services to the partner agencies' clients and to refer its own clients to the partners' workforce development services.

This report summarizes the findings from our assessment. First we review the literature on collaboration and the factors that have been found to contribute to its success. Next we discuss the context in which the 741 Collaborative Partnership was operating, namely how the economic downturn affected the Collaborative's ability to achieve its goals. We then review the Collaborative's structure, funding, operations, and accountability mechanisms. We discuss the progress the Collaborative made during the study period, the challenges it faced, and the solutions it developed. Finally, we turn to the lessons learned from the Collaborative's experience.

The Literature on Collaboration

Organizations typically collaborate to solve problems that they cannot address alone and to share resources, information, and risks (Orr 2002). In the workforce development field, the emphasis on collaboration has grown as policymakers and funding agencies promote efforts to meet the needs of a region's employers and job seekers. Such efforts typically require the close collaboration of multiple entities, including community-based organizations, employers, vocational trainers, community colleges, and four-year institutions. Community colleges and community-based organizations collaborate to enhance outreach and increase access to services, to increase education and training program completion, and to expand learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom (Bragg and Russman 2007). Partnerships among local welfare, workforce development, and housing agencies; community organizations; and residents have been key components of place-based employment interventions (Kato and Riccio 2001). Community-based organizations collaborate to reach a broader segment of residents and employers and to take advantage of each agency's strengths in order to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to both (Padilla 2008).

Past efforts at collaboration have had mixed results as some collaborations have struggled to transition from planning to implementation (Bragg and Russman 2007). An extensive review of studies of collaborative efforts by Mattessich and Monsey (1992) identified six key factors that influence the success of collaborations:

- The political and social environment
- Membership
- Process and structure
- Communication
- The collaboration's purpose
- Resources

Experience demonstrates that a history of collaboration in a community helps potential partners better understand their roles and responsibilities. A study of policies promoting collaboration among community colleges found that efforts were enhanced when partnerships built on past successes due to the established rapport among members (Bragg and Russman 2007). Support for the collaborative group's mission from political leaders, funding agencies, and the community is also important (Mattessich and Monsey 1992). Bragg and Russman found that funding streams sometimes support competitive behavior among organizations, to the detriment of collaborative efforts. Economic conditions have a significant effect on collaborative efforts in workforce development. Regardless of a group's efforts, in a poor economy employers may be reluctant to hire new workers and may not be able to take advantage of the services the collaborative group offers (Erickcek, Timmeney, and Watts 2004).

Successful collaborations include representatives from each segment of the community affected by the group's activities. In the workforce development field, successful collaborations have involved residents and a core group of organizations with the capacity to implement the group's strategies (Padilla 2008). Research suggests that collaborations should reach beyond the community's leaders to promote the involvement and input of residents. This may require providing technical assistance to build residents' capacity to participate (Kato and Riccio 2001). Members must have a level of mutual respect, understanding, and trust (Mattessich and Monsey 1992). It has been difficult for collaborative efforts to implement policies and procedures when there is a sense of unequal status and inequitable resources among partners (Bragg and Russman 2007).

Mattessich and Monsey found that collaborations are successful when members feel ownership of both the process and the outcome. Collaborations must develop roles and policy guidelines while maintaining the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. A study of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration, which was an effort to increase employment among public housing residents, found that successful collaborations occurred when decisions were made by a small governing board made up of senior officials from core partners, and other partners contributed by providing staff or participating in advisory groups on day-to-day operations (Kato and Riccio 2001).

It is crucial for collaborative partners to communicate continually, both formally and informally. Partners can hold themselves accountable through formal agreements specifying the contributions and performance expected of each agency. But agreements are not enough. It is equally important to communicate regularly with senior-level staff, who have the ability to shape decision-making within their agencies, about the strategies the group develops. Collaborative initiatives need to establish and track performance measures and use the outcomes to keep members focused on the group's mission and goals (Kato and Riccio 2001; Hollenbeck and Eberts 2006).

Collaborations are more successful when they involve staff at all levels, including executives, middle management, and operations staff. Senior staff can use their authority to gain buy-in and delegate responsibilities. The Jobs-Plus study found that effective implementation involved changing standard intake procedures and restructuring the roles of frontline workers in key agencies. The groups conducted joint training for staff and built direct relationships among staff across agencies, which helped in coordinating services and monitoring client progress (Kato and Riccio 2001).

The goals of the collaboration must be clear and attainable, and members must have a shared vision of the collaboration's purpose. The group should base its strategies on members' knowledge of local needs and realities and on what residents of the community want (Padilla 2008). The objectives must be different from those of similar efforts and must also add value to the partners' own efforts (Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Hollenbeck and Eberts 2006). A study of workforce pipelines in

which groups worked together to meet employers' and job seekers' needs found that beyond offering funding, collaborative efforts must serve partner agencies' individual interests, such as improving services for their clients (Padilla 2008).

Finally, collaborations must have adequate funds to support their operations and a skilled convener to lead the group and ensure that members fill their roles. A study of the implementation of 13 regional skills alliances in Michigan found it was an asset to have a paid convener, typically a consultant, to organize the group and handle administrative functions. Collaborations also require multiple years of financial support. They typically need more funding in the planning stage and smaller amounts in subsequent years while they find sustaining funds (Hollenbeck and Eberts 2006).

Our assessment found that these six factors of successful collaboration applied to the 741 Collaborative Partnership. Resources, policy guidelines, systems of accountability, and communication influenced its work and its ability to function during a difficult economic time. Next, we describe the context in which the Collaborative was operating, before turning to its structure and the progress it made in implementing its strategies.

The Context

The Collaborative started in 2008, in the early days of the worst recession since the Great Depression. As the economy shrank, unemployment rates soared, peaking in Chicago in early 2010. That year, many of the Collaborative agencies received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to run transitional jobs programs. Though the influx of funds helped many agencies maintain their operations, the funding ran out and was not extended at the end of the year. At the same time, Illinois, like other states, faced reduced revenues and increased demand for services. After years of borrowing, shifting debt to future years, and underfunding its pension system, the state had no reserves and was unable to pay its bills.[4] In response, Illinois enacted substantial spending cuts for human services and education for the fiscal year 2010–2011. When the Collaborative implemented its integrated service delivery system, in 2011, most of its partner agencies had faced substantial cuts to funding, programs, and staff. Heartland Human Care Services lost multiple programs and closed its Quad Communities location. The Community Builders discontinued its workforce development services and became a referral source for the other agencies. New Skill Builders was unable to run its skills training program. Other partners saw significant reductions in their funding for workforce development, particularly those that relied heavily on public sources.

All of these factors hurt the Collaborative's ability to implement its strategies and achieve its goals. The funding cuts reduced the number of clients the agencies could serve, at a time when more people needed assistance. The poor economy meant employers were not hiring, making job placement more difficult. The funding cuts forced the agencies to reduce core staff, including senior managers and

frontline workers, some of who served as the agencies' primary Collaborative representatives. Other agencies shifted the focus of senior staff from the Collaborative to other programs and fundraising opportunities.

The Collaborative lost some key members, which delayed its progress. Some agencies did not participate regularly or sent different staff to each meeting. Turnover among intake staff and job developers made implementing the integrated service delivery system difficult. Collaborative members had to devote meeting time to teaching new members about the Collaborative's purpose and the capacity of the partner agencies, as well as gaining their buy-in to the group's strategies and goals. The poor economy also negatively affected the Collaborative's ability to raise money from funders beyond JPMorgan Chase to support its activities.

The turmoil the Collaborative agencies experienced contributed to delays in implementing its strategies and in achieving its service delivery goals. Yet the group continued to meet regularly and to develop the infrastructure needed to function as an integrated workforce system. A core group of members remained dedicated to the Collaborative's purpose and goals, seeing the potential benefits to both the Quad Communities residents and to their own agencies. The dedication of these core members and the efficacy of the administrative infrastructure were key to the Collaborative's survival.

Collaborative Structure

Staffing and Funding the Collaborative

The JPMorgan Chase Foundation provided funding to support the Collaborative's infrastructure as well as the partner agencies serving the Quad Communities. Table 1 presents the investment Chase made from 2009 to 2012. The group's infrastructure costs included contracting with two agencies to provide management and fiscal support. Starting in 2008, the Collaborative engaged O-H Community Partners, a consulting firm familiar with the Quad Communities and several of the Collaborative partners, to manage the initiative. OHcp's role was to facilitate the strategic planning process and monthly meetings, compile and distribute information and task lists, and monitor the agencies' progress. In 2010, the Collaborative engaged the Chicago Jobs Council to be its fiscal agent and to provide oversight, fundraising, and management support.

At the end of 2011, the Collaborative hired a part-time data-support/customer service specialist. This administrator was employed directly by the Collaborative and worked out of the Heartland Human Care Services office. Initially, the administrator worked with the agencies to resolve data entry issues and followed up with them to ensure that the system was kept up-to-date. In 2012, once the Collaborative's website was live and partners began using the marketing materials, the administrator handled inquiries received through the website and toll-free number. Infrastructure

costs also included the marketing materials and contracting with a vendor to develop the client tracking system. The Collaborative received pro bono technical assistance through the Taproot Foundation in developing its website and marketing materials.

Table 1	Investment by JPMorgan Chase in the 741 Collaborative Partnership	
	Funds for Collaborative Infrastructure*	**Grants to Collaborative Partners+**
2009	$100,000	$325,000
2010	$150,000	$425,000
2011	$175,000	$420,000
2012	$200,000	$415,000

* *Infrastructure included funding for the project manager, fiscal agent, database/website administrator, database vendor, and marketing materials.*

+ *Grants to the Collaborative partners from JPMorgan Chase included support both for the agencies' programs and for their work in the Collaborative.*

In 2008, when Chase first convened agencies to discuss collaboration in providing workforce development services to Quad Communities residents, it selected agencies it was already funding. After the first year, Chase provided additional funding to the partner agencies for their work in the Collaborative. The grant amounts varied with the agencies' roles in the Collaborative, and the partners had flexibility in how they could use the funds. As a new grantee to JPMorgan Chase, the Centers for New Horizons used the funding to support a full-time employee to work with Quad Communities residents and participate in Collaborative meetings and events. However, the agencies that had already been receiving support from JPMorgan Chase continued to use the funding to support their existing programs and staff, dedicating a portion of staff time to Collaborative activities.

Opinions varied among the partner agencies as to whether the additional funding from Chase covered the added costs of participating in the Collaborative. Members noted the need to involve multiple staff members in the Collaborative's work, which included attending meetings, participating in working groups and events, and training staff on Collaborative procedures. In particular, entering data into the client tracking system required more staff time than some members had anticipated.

The partner agencies had expected that the group would be able to raise additional funds from sources other than Chase to support the partners' work in the Collaborative. When the Collaborative was not successful in doing so, some members began to rethink their priorities. They limited staff time devoted to the Collaborative, or sent lower-level staff to meetings. However, by the end of 2012, only one agency, Heartland Human Care Services, had decided to discontinue its

participation in the Collaborative; its offices in the Quad Communities had closed in 2011. Others remained committed to the Collaborative and its potential for helping their agencies better meet their clients' and employers' needs.

Doing the Work: Full Team Meetings and Working Groups

To develop and implement its strategies, the Collaborative established working groups. These consisted of a subset of members who often had expertise in the group's area of focus. Each working group had a chairperson who was responsible for setting the agenda, leading meetings, and giving progress reports at the full team meetings.

In 2010, the Collaborative formed three working groups to build its infrastructure. The data working group was charged with developing and implementing the client tracking system. The marketing and branding working group developed the website and marketing materials. The integrated services/best practices group developed the service-delivery process and protocols for creating an integrated workforce development system. In 2011, the Collaborative formed an employer strategies working group. This group focused on establishing relationships with employers to whom the Collaborative could provide recruiting services.

The Collaborative also held monthly meetings that all partner agencies were expected to attend. OHcp facilitated these meetings and set the agenda. At first the meetings were a forum for the partners to share information and get to know the services each agency provided. The group also brought in external agencies to present services that might be useful to the partners and their clients. In 2012, the focus of the meetings shifted to progress reports from the working groups, developing action plans, and discussing other issues at the request of the partner agencies.

Leadership and Accountability

Members reported that leadership in the Collaborative came from multiple sources. Some viewed the Chicago Jobs Council as the lead agency, since its role was to distribute funds for infrastructure costs, to make decisions about the client tracking system, and to speak with potential funders and policymakers about the Collaborative's work. Many also pointed to OHcp as the facilitator, as it brought the members together and monitored their progress. OHcp staff often attended working group meetings and meetings with outside stakeholders to help develop strategies and move the work forward. Members did not identify any one person or agency as the leader in making substantive decisions about policies or actions. Some saw the heads of the working groups as leaders, as they were the most heavily involved in designing and implementing the integrated service delivery system.

Despite the leadership roles of some individual agencies, generally speaking members felt that substantive decisions were made through consensus building in working groups and in monthly meetings. Our observations confirmed this. Discussions

at the meetings were inclusive and open and rarely included formal voting. If a topic required further research or discussion, OHcp delegated the tasks to the appropriate working group. In the words of one member, when asked who was in charge:

OH[cp] is the driver, Chase is the funder…otherwise it is a collaborative effort. When we need to troubleshoot, that's where the monthly meetings come into play. OH[cp] asks what the group thinks, and we come to a decision that way.

Collaborative members noted that accountability started with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which laid out the responsibilities and benefits of Collaborative membership and was signed by the agencies' executive directors. The MOU stated that agencies were required to participate in the monthly meetings, provide information for marketing materials, promote the Collaborative within their agency by training staff and monitoring staff use of the service delivery model and data tracking system, provide information for joint fundraising activities, agree to be monitored by the fiscal agent, and track data on their clients. Members said that the monthly meetings also helped to promote accountability by bringing the members together to focus on the work of the Collaborative and report on what progress the working groups had made between the monthly meetings.

Members stated that OHcp played an important role in maintaining accountability. After each monthly meeting OHcp sent out lists of action items detailing the agencies responsible for each task as well as deadlines. At the end of 2011, OHcp distributed a scorecard summarizing each agency's participation in the Collaborative's meetings and events. In 2012, it distributed periodic scorecards on the data the agencies had entered into the client tracking system, noting items that were missing or otherwise needed attention. The scorecard included information on the number of clients each agency had served and placed in jobs, the number of employers served, and whether client demographic information had been entered into the data system, as required. Collaborative members stated that the scorecards promoted accountability. When partner agencies were not meeting their obligations, there was a process for holding them accountable, as described by one member:

The MOU is what binds us to each other. OH[cp] keeps the groups on task. OH[cp] is a facilitator but also the police. If we don't do what we're supposed to do, then we get a call from CJC. If we still don't, then we get a call from Chase.

Members noted that agencies were given multiple chances to comply with the MOU, particularly in light of staff turnover and the need to reeducate new staff members about the goals and obligations of the Collaborative.

Progress Made on the Collaborative's Strategies and Goals

The Collaborative's goals in the spring of 2011 were to implement the integrated system it had developed for serving Quad Communities residents, to finalize marketing materials and implement a communications and outreach plan, to develop relationships with employers who might use the Collaborative for recruiting, and

to raise funds from additional sources. The group also wanted to develop a career pathways model in which partners would work together to provide skills training to help residents of all skill levels advance in their careers. However, the Collaborative had not pursued this goal by the end of 2012. Next we discuss the strategies the Collaborative pursued, the challenges it faced, and the solutions it developed.

Implementing an Integrated Service Delivery System for Quad Communities Residents

From 2010 to early 2011, the Collaborative worked to develop the integrated referral, service delivery, and tracking system that would provide Quad Communities residents with comprehensive services to help them obtain employment and increase their income. The tracking system was also intended to help the Collaborative monitor and assess its progress and performance. The data and best practices working groups, headed by staff from Cara and Centers for New Horizons, led the effort to develop the service delivery and tracking systems.

Each partner agency was expected to train its staff about the Collaborative. To aid in that process, the marketing working group produced a two-page fact sheet detailing the Collaborative's mission, member agencies, service area, and goals. In addition, the best practices working group created a 13-page reference booklet for frontline staff that summarized each partner agency's mission, services, and contact information.

When the system was implemented, in the spring of 2011, staff members were expected to screen potential clients from the Quad Communities to determine their eligibility for services across the partner agencies. Staff were asked to inform clients of all services for which they qualified and provide referrals if requested. Members anticipated that the workforce development providers would refer clients to other agencies for services that they did not provide themselves, such as occupational training, job opportunities for youth, supportive services, or tax preparation and other financial services. Members also expected staff to refer clients to other agencies if the clients did not qualify for their own programs, if the programs were at capacity, or if scheduling or other needs did not align. Non-workforce agencies were expected to refer their clients to the partners for workforce development services. And all of the agencies were expected to refer clients to other agencies' events, such as job fairs or financial workshops.

The data working group led the development of the client tracking system, which was designed to conduct eligibility screenings, make referrals, and track clients' participation and employment outcomes. When Quad Communities residents sought services from the agencies, staff members were expected to ask them a series of questions about their demographic characteristics and enter their responses into the system. The client tracking system compared this information to program requirements and displayed the programs at each agency for which the clients were eligible. Staff could also use the system to make appointments for their clients at other agencies.

After the first year, members recognized that the system was not working as anticipated. Members attributed this to the turnover among the frontline staff and the need to train or retrain staff on the services offered by other Collaborative members and on use of the tracking system. Members also said the system was not intuitive. Data entry errors led to problems tracking goals and outcomes. The scheduler function did not work. In addition, rather than ensuring that staff were using the system as expected, at the beginning of 2012 the group focused on cleaning up the 2011 data so that it could finalize the report on its outcomes. To resolve these issues, and to promote more referral activity, in the summer of 2012 the data and best practices working groups held a one-day staff training on how to use the system and on the services available at each of the partner agencies.

Another problem was that at most agencies staff entered data into the system and ran the eligibility screener only after clients were enrolled in one of the agency's programs. The system was too cumbersome and time-consuming to be used for everyone who called or walked in. Most agencies already had client tracking systems for their own programs, and many of their contracts required that they enter data into other systems as well. In some cases, the Collaborative's system was the third or fourth database that staff had to use. Even without the inconveniences of using the tracking system, members were not sure that frontline staff could be expected to refer clients to another agency if they did not qualify for their own agency's programs. The agencies would have had to dedicate training time to this purpose, and most had not done so. At the end of this period, the group decided that agency staff could choose to use the eligibility screener to supplement their own services but that it was not mandatory.

During this early implementation period, the Collaborative developed a better understanding of the most common types of referrals that the agencies would make and that needed to be tracked. As one member noted:

> *We had to ask ourselves what can we do beyond staff deciding whether to send clients elsewhere or keep them for themselves?*

The group determined that the most common types of referrals between workforce agencies were likely to be for job fairs or to fill job openings, and the Collaborative needed to develop protocols for tracking this activity. Additionally, the non-workforce agencies were more likely than the workforce agencies to refer clients to services at the other workforce agencies, but since they did not enter data into the system, a process had to be developed for tracking these referrals. The Collaborative also discussed ways to increase referrals for tax preparation and other financial services from the workforce development agencies to the Center for Economic Progress. Near the end of 2012, CEP held financial workshops for Quad Communities residents at two of the workforce development agencies.

Despite the problems using the data system to make and track referrals, members felt that with some changes the system had the potential to be useful for reporting on outcomes. One member explained:

The system became too complicated. It had too many details about things not pertinent to the Collaborative. It's partly because we operate in a performance-based environment. We got away from the referral process, focused on getting the data in, but the data didn't tell the story. It wasn't showing what the collaborative was doing. We're trying to get back to the basics.

In order to increase the utility of the tracking system, the data working group developed recommendations to reduce the number of fields and to make other changes to better capture the Collaborative's work. The group decided that the essential elements were limited client demographics, program enrollment and completion, placement in employment, one-year retention, and referrals made. At the end of the study period, in late 2012, the group was just beginning to plan and implement these changes; therefore, we could not assess their impact.

Marketing and Branding

At the start of the study period, in mid-2011, the marketing and branding working group, headed by staff from the Quad Communities Development Corporation, had created the Collaborative's website and drafted marketing materials for residents and employers. Members expected the website to help market the Collaborative's services to both residents and employers, though some felt that it would be most useful in reaching employers. Before launching the website, members wanted to develop protocols for handling phone or email inquiries, to finalize the marketing materials, and to hire an administrator responsible for routing messages to the appropriate partner. This administrator was hired at the end of 2011. The group also wanted to hold a launch party to introduce the Collaborative to the public, but it was postponed, as the event-planning was delaying the launch. The website went live in early 2012.

The working group then turned to finalizing the marketing materials for residents and employers, including fact sheets and postcards. While the group received technical assistance on website design and marketing materials, it was solely responsible for developing the text. Members were concerned about setting the right tone and avoiding "a social service feel," while using language appropriate for both job seekers and employers. The group made several rounds of revisions based on comments received at the monthly and working group meetings, and finalized and distributed the materials to partner agency staff in late summer 2012. This process contributed to the delay in starting the employer outreach activities.

The website received very few inquiries until Collaborative members began distributing the marketing materials in their outreach efforts and at agency events. In the fall of 2012, the administrator began to receive about 10 to 15 inquiries per week,

the majority from individuals looking for work. For resident inquiries, the administrator ran the eligibility screener to determine which programs the clients qualified for, presented the options, and referred the clients to the partner agency of their choice. There was no formal process for handling employer inquiries during the study period. At the end of 2012, the Collaborative adopted a protocol for this purpose (discussed below in the employer outreach section).

Members said directing more employers to the Collaborative's website was a challenge. They had expected staff to use the materials in their outreach to employers as well as residents. They realized they needed to train staff on how to use the marketing materials effectively. The group planned to hold a launch event for employers and industry groups in 2013. Another goal was developing different materials to market the Collaborative to potential funders.

Employer Outreach and Job Sharing

The employer strategies working group was launched in 2011, led by staff from the Centers for New Horizons. The group's first goal was to implement strategies for marketing the Collaborative's recruiting services to employers. The second was to develop procedures for sharing and filling job leads across the partner agencies. The group expected that the partner agencies' job developers and other Collaborative members would market the benefits of the Collaborative to their employer contacts, namely, that employers could recruit workers from a single group with access to seven agencies' job candidates rather than working with multiple individual agencies. The agencies were also expected to share job opportunities with the group and to refer qualified candidates to openings identified by other agencies.

The group faced a number of challenges in implementing a Collaborative-wide employer outreach and job placement strategy. The primary challenge was gaining the buy-in of the agencies' job developers, the staff primarily responsible for cultivating employer relationships and referring candidates to job openings. The Collaborative expected job developers to market the Collaborative to the employers they worked with, to participate in joint employer events, and to share job leads. However, some staff were reluctant to share employer contacts and job leads. One member explained:

The issue is getting people to accept that it's OK to share information, that it's an opportunity to get access to other employers. One manager was worried about others stealing employers. The executive directors may have agreed through the MOU, but the managers may not be letting the frontline staff share.

Another concern was ensuring that clients referred from other agencies were qualified and job-ready:

I'm very confident in [my agency's own] job readiness program. I'm familiar with the process the others use, but I'm not 100 percent confident they meet the same standards. If the clients referred by the other organizations are unprepared, it's a problem.

A third concern was that sharing employer contacts and filling positions with another agency's clients might affect their agency's ability to meet its own job placement goals.

Members who supported sharing job openings contended that agencies would benefit from gaining connections to new employers. Having access to a larger pool of candidates would also help them better meet the needs of employers they worked with, thereby strengthening those relationships. To address concerns about the quality of candidates, the employer working group developed criteria that clients across the agencies had to meet to be referred for a job, including having an updated resume, basic soft skills and grammar skills, the ability to research a potential employer, and appropriate attire. The group also discussed the idea of creating a certificate indicating that a candidate met these criteria. However, the group did not implement a process for ensuring the quality of candidates, and job developers continued to express concerns about the preparedness of candidates from other agencies.

From mid-2011 through 2012, some agencies' job developers shared large job orders that they were not able to fill with their own clients. While a formal process for sharing job leads was in development, agencies sent job leads to OHcp, which distributed them to all of the Collaborative members. In a few instances initially, these efforts led to employers hiring workers who had been recruited by multiple agencies. However, job developers indicated that in most cases sharing job leads had not led to successful job placement. They attributed this to other members not referring candidates or to candidates not meeting job developers' standards. Job developers did not refer candidates to shared job openings if they had no candidates who met the qualifications or if they were concerned that the agency sharing the lead did not have a relationship with the employer.

Some partners marketed the Collaborative in their regular outreach efforts to employers. During the study period, the Centers for New Horizons held two breakfast events intended to provide employers with useful business information, such as qualifications for unemployment compensation, employer tax credits, and how to partner with community colleges. At these breakfasts, partner agency staff presented information about the Collaborative and how it could help meet the employers' staffing needs. As part of its community development activities, the Quad Communities Development Corporation promoted the Collaborative's recruiting services to small and new businesses in the community.

The employer strategies working group organized a hiring fair, held in September 2012. All of the Collaborative agencies were expected to recruit employers and job seekers for the event; five did so. To make sure that clients across the agencies were job-ready before meeting employers, the group held a prescreening event the week before the hiring fair. Job seekers were asked to dress professionally for the prescreening event, and they interviewed with a member of a different agency than the one that had referred them. Those who were deemed qualified were given a

ticket to the hiring event. From the prescreening, 104 Quad Communities clients were selected to attend the fair. The partners also invited some additional clients to ensure attendance would meet employers' expectations. Representatives from 34 employers attended the fair. By the end of December 2012, 21 clients had obtained jobs through the fair. Collaborative members viewed hiring fairs as an important service they could offer to the community and to employers. The Collaborative planned to hold additional fairs in 2013, both on their own and in partnership with local alderman's offices.

Just before the end of the study period, in December 2012, the Collaborative approved a process for sharing job orders. The expectation was that job developers from each agency would use a standard job order form to share job orders once a week with other members of the employer strategies working group. The job developers would recruit clients for the positions, ensuring that candidates met the minimum criteria the working group had developed. The lead job developer for the job order would have the opportunity to prescreen candidates. Additionally, when an employer made an inquiry through the Collaborative's website or toll-free number, the administrator would speak with the employer to complete a job order form. She would then send this form to a designated member of the employer strategies working group, who would assign the employer to a partner agency for follow-up based on the agency's experience with the employer or with the job sector. The group expected to implement this process in 2013.

Fundraising

Throughout the study period, members spoke to potential funders about the Collaborative but were not successful in raising funds to supplement those from JPMorgan Chase. Members cited a number of challenges. The first was the recession and the general reduction in funding available for workforce development and other social service programs. There were also changes taking place in Chicago at this time, and potential funders were postponing their decisions on which initiatives they would fund. These changes included the formation, in July 2012, of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, which consolidated three Local Workforce Investment Areas to reduce administrative costs and improve services. Another development was the formation of the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance, which brought together several foundations in the city to support workforce initiatives. The city was also focused on efforts to increase occupational skills training through the city's community colleges—an effort that some members feared would diminish funding for programs run by community-based organizations.

Members also felt funders did not want to support an effort that was relatively new and unproven and that had already received start-up support from JPMorgan Chase. Some funders were already supporting individual agencies in the Collaborative and were not willing to provide additional support. Finally, members did not have the time to write grant proposals for the Collaborative in addition to

those for their own agencies. At the end of this period, the Collaborative contracted with a consultant who had been a key member of the Collaborative to work on fundraising and proposals.

Outcomes

The Collaborative established performance goals and produced progress reports. As shown in Table 2, the primary goals the group tracked during the study period included the number of Quad Communities residents served, the number placed in jobs, the placement rate, and the average hourly wage. In 2010, OHcp gathered aggregate information from the partner agencies. The 2011 and 2012 figures are based on the data the agencies entered into the client tracking system.

As noted at the start of this report, the Collaborative began operations during the economic downturn, when many agencies were facing significant cuts in budgets, programming, and staff due to reduced funding for social service programs. While funding for transitional jobs programs from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act boosted the number of clients the agencies served in 2010, this funding expired at the end of that year and there was no other funding source to take its place. In light of these cutbacks, the Collaborative reduced its goals for 2012 from those set for 2010. The number of Quad Communities residents served declined substantially in 2011 and 2012, and the Collaborative did not meet its goal for the number of employers served. However, the job placement rate improved in 2012 over the previous two years among the clients the Collaborative was able to serve, and the group exceeded its goal for average hourly wages. We cannot know if the figures for 2011 and 2012 would have differed if the member agencies had been working on their own and the Collaborative did not exist. The group's efforts to track referrals and placements resulting from shared job orders and hiring fairs will help to assess the Collaborative's success in the future.

Table 2	The 741 Collaborative Partnership's Performance Goals and Outcomes			
	2010 Outcomes-Actual	2011 Outcomes-Actual	2012 Outcomes-Goals	2012 Outcomes-Actual
Clients served	1,218	891	838	597
Placed in permanent jobs	299	207	365	260
Placement rate for permanent jobs	25%	23%	44%	44%
Employers served	NA	158	276	114
Average hourly wage for permanent jobs	$10.18	$10.76	$10.47	$11.04

At the beginning of the study period, in the summer of 2011, members cited additional measures of the Collaborative's success beyond the numbers served and placed in jobs. These included increasing the diversity of the clients served, increasing the number and diversity of services received, increasing the number of residents receiving services from more than one agency, and increasing the number of residents receiving the best services for their needs. Based on the data available from the client tracking system, the demographics of the clients served in 2012 were nearly identical to those in 2011. In 2012, 62 percent of the clients were female, 99 percent were African American, 85 percent had at least a high-school diploma or GED, and 13 percent had a criminal conviction. The average age of the clients was 36. The system could not yet track the level and types of services that clients received or referrals between agencies. The group was working to develop these capabilities for 2013.

Qualitatively, members thought that Quad Communities residents would not only benefit from being referred to needed services at other Collaborative agencies but would feel that they were being better served by the coordination between agencies. We completed two focus groups comprising 18 residents who had attended the prescreening event for the fall 2012 hiring fair. This sample represents only a small portion of the people served by the Collaborative. Because they were referred to an event hosted jointly by the members, these people may have been more likely to perceive benefits from the Collaborative. However, only one of the participants had heard of the Collaborative prior to attending the prescreening event. This was also the only participant who had been referred from one partner agency to another (from the Community Builders to the Centers for New Horizons). The others said that their agency had not told them about services available at other agencies. Some believed that this was because the agencies were competing with one another.

Participants voiced varying levels of satisfaction with the services they had received from their agency. When asked what the agencies could do to better help them meet their goals, they said the agencies could provide child care and transportation assistance, job training, and a wider variety of job opportunities.

The top of my wish list, I have two children and completing this program was diffi-cult. My kids bounce around from family member to family member.

And also maybe some type of transportation. Because if you're receiving unemploy-ment and trying to take care of your financial responsibilities, transportation to look for a job and go to job training is expensive.

They should have jobs like what you're interested in. It's always like, we have these seven jobs, are you interested, but it's like, OK, if I've received training…and you only have things like retail. I don't want that.

The Collaborative asked job seekers who attended the hiring fair to complete a sur-vey. Of the 109 who responded, 91 percent said they would attend a future hiring fair and 88 percent would recommend the hiring fairs to others. Some said that at the next fair they would like to see more employers with a wider variety of jobs.

Members expected that employers would recognize the benefits of working with the Collaborative to recruit employees from the community. Given that members began distributing marketing materials near the end of the study period, in the fall of 2012, we could not assess to what extent employers saw the value of working with the Collaborative rather than with individual agencies or other sources of employees.

The Collaborative asked the 34 employers that attended the hiring fair to com-plete a survey. Of the 33 who responded, all said they would attend a future event and 97 percent said they would recommend the hiring fairs to other employers. The Collaborative provided us with a list of 19 of the 34 employers, and seven of them responded to a telephone survey. Of these seven employers, most attended job fairs as part of their regular recruiting efforts. None had been familiar with the Collaborative prior to the event. Two said they understood after the event that multiple agencies were working together to help people find work. The others said they were not familiar with the Collaborative even after attending the event. This suggests that members need to do more to promote the Collaborative and commu-nicate its benefits to employers. Some employers said that the job seekers at the Collaborative event were well prepared and qualified, while others did not find quali-fied candidates. The Collaborative reported that four employers who attended the fair hired a total of 21 clients.

Conclusion

The experience of the 741 Collaborative Partnership during its initial implementation offers some valuable lessons for the field about what is needed to implement collaborative efforts to improve community-based workforce development systems.

● **The commitment of a core group of partners who were able to adapt to changing circumstances was key to the Collaborative's survival.**

Partners in collaborative efforts need to be able and willing to adapt to changing circumstances. The 741 Collaborative had a strong vision at the start, but when it transitioned from planning to implementation, many of the original members were no longer with the agencies or involved in the Collaborative. The economic downturn and broad cuts in funding for the agencies' workforce development programs posed additional challenges not only to the Collaborative's success but also to its survival. Despite this, a core group of partners remained committed to advancing the Collaborative's work. These partners adjusted the Collaborative's goals and strategies in response to members' changing capacities, priorities, and roles.

● **Establishing a management structure was critical for keeping the Collaborative on task and holding members accountable.**

A key factor in the Collaborative's ability to stay together and continue to make progress in implementing its strategies was the infrastructure the group put in place at its inception, supported by funding from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. Nearly all of the members felt that hiring O-H Community Partners as a third-party facilitator and project manager was crucial. OHcp not only provided staff dedicated to the administrative tasks of the Collaborative—including scheduling meetings, creating task lists, and assigning tasks—but also ensured objectivity and maintained equality in how the partner agencies engaged in the Collaborative. OHcp fostered trust and helped promote a sense of shared purpose.

OHcp and the Chicago Jobs Council also played important roles in maintaining accountability. Having external agencies serve this function prevented ill feelings between the partners and addressed reservations the direct service providers had about being policed by their peers. However, members felt it was important not to rely entirely on external agencies to serve this role: the agencies needed to hold themselves and each other accountable as well. For the Collaborative to be successful, partner agency leaders needed to ensure that managers and frontline staff complied with the group's policies and procedures. This proved difficult due to the turnover among the agency staff and the need to build relationships and trust with new staff.

- **Stronger leadership was needed to monitor performance, namely, whether the group was meeting its goals for serving job seekers and employers.**

  Beyond the facilitation and monitoring that OHcp and CJC provided, the Collaborative needed leadership on substantive issues. The partner agencies needed to develop a leadership team to evaluate the Collaborative's progress and whether it was doing what it intended to do. During the early implementation period, considerable time and effort were put into entering data into the client tracking system so that the group could report on key indicators, such as clients served and placed in jobs. However, no one took the lead in comparing the data to the Collaborative's goals and using it to improve performance. As the system was unable to track referrals and program participation, it was difficult to use the data to understand how the Collaborative's efforts had affected outcomes. The Collaborative needed leaders to help the group use the tracking system to assess its progress on an ongoing basis and to hold members accountable not just for entering the data but also for contributing to the group's goals.

- **The Collaborative needed greater commitment from partner agency staff— from frontline workers to executive directors—to successfully implement the Collaborative's strategies.**

  As previous studies of collaborations have found, the 741 Collaborative's experience demonstrates the importance of getting buy-in from agency staff, including the executive director, program managers, and frontline staff. Having multiple staff at each agency committed to the group's goals could have helped mitigate the effects of staff turnover by retaining institutional knowledge. Staff at all levels needed to develop trust and respect to ensure comfortable working relationships. It was not enough for higher-level staff to agree in principle to work together. To be willing to promote the benefits of the Collaborative to clients, intake staff members needed to understand what services other agencies provided and to trust that their clients would be served well by other partner agencies. Job developers needed to understand how other agencies prepared clients for work and how they developed relationships with employers in order to be comfortable sharing job leads and referring clients to job opportunities shared by other agencies.

  Executive directors and other senior managers needed to ensure that both mid-level managers and frontline staff understood that their agency supported the Collaborative and that they were expected to incorporate the group's activities into their work. Because senior managers at some agencies were not setting these expectations or promoting the Collaborative's benefits for their own agency's clients, some frontline staff did not implement the Collaborative strategies. In some cases, this was due to turnover among the senior staff who had been involved with the Collaborative. In addition, some agencies pulled senior staff away from Collaborative activities and meetings and instead sent lower-level staff who did not have the authority to implement new procedures at their agencies.

● **The Collaborative needed to continually communicate expectations to partner agencies as the group's strategies evolved.**

As past studies have suggested, the Collaborative's experience shows the importance of ongoing communication about expectations and tracking of partner agencies' compliance. During the early implementation period, there was high turnover among agency staff, and some senior staff did not regularly attend working group meetings. As a result, some agencies did not comply with the group's procedures. This led the Collaborative to update the Memorandum of Understanding to reflect changing responsibilities and benefits. The group added the expectations that member agency staff would participate in one of the working groups, relay information to other staff at their agency, participate in hiring fairs and special events, refer clients to direct service providers or accept and track referrals from other agencies, and share and respond to large job orders. The Collaborative's facilitator, OHcp, planned to distribute a monthly scorecard on whether each member agency was meeting these expectations.

● **The Collaborative needed to find a better balance between creating a sophisticated system for integrating services and one that agencies had the capacity to implement.**

One challenge the Collaborative faced was developing procedures that were not too cumbersome, especially as the agencies faced budget reductions and staff time was stretched thin. In a different economic and funding climate, implementing the Collaborative's strategies might have proceeded more smoothly. Initially, members believed the Collaborative would attract additional funding sources. When this did not happen and members realized the amount of work required to implement the Collaborative's strategies, some became less enthusiastic. The group scaled back some of its expectations but remained committed to developing systems to meaningfully integrate the agencies' delivery of services. The challenge was finding the right balance between sophistication and ease of use.

The group developed a sophisticated data system and process for integrating services across the partner agencies. However, most of the agencies were not able to use the system as anticipated because of the amount of staff time it required. When developing the system, members had requested that it track a wide variety of data, including extensive demographic information and outcomes beyond employment. By the end of the study period, however, the group was working to reduce the amount of information staff were required to enter. Members wanted to ensure the system was also capturing the Collaborative's activities beyond the work of each individual agency, such as referrals between partners and the results of hiring events and shared job orders. Members were also concerned about creating a process for sharing and responding to job orders that ensured that clients were prepared but was not so cumbersome that staff did not participate or were unable to respond to employers' needs in a timely manner.

- **The Collaborative's funder needed not only to provide adequate resources to support its goals but also to require that the funds be used for that purpose.**

  The Collaborative's experience shows that funders need to provide adequate funding to support the group's proposed activities and also require that the funds be used for these purposes. How partner agencies used the funds they received influenced their contribution to the Collaborative. The workforce development agencies that had been Chase grantees prior to the formation of the Collaborative continued to use the funding to support their existing programs, for which many Quad Communities residents who needed assistance did not qualify. One agency that was not already a Chase grantee used the funding to support an employee dedicated to working with Quad Communities residents. As a result, the agency was able to serve people from the community even if they did not meet the eligibility requirements of the agency's other contracts. This agency accounted for just under half of the community residents the Collaborative agencies served in 2011 and 2012, and it recruited 75 percent of the job seekers who attended the hiring fair in the fall of 2012. This agency's staff used the database and eligibility screener for all Quad Communities residents who sought services, unlike staff at other agencies, who either did not use it at all or used it only for residents enrolled in one of their programs. The Collaborative might have made more progress if agencies had been required to use funds for certain purposes, such as dedicating a portion of staff time to serving residents who did not qualify for the agency's other funding streams or programs, or to referring these residents to other agencies in the community.

In sum, the experience of the 741 Collaborative Partnership demonstrates the importance of partner agency commitment, leadership, communication, and resources to the success of collaborative efforts to improve workforce development systems. Members' commitment to the Collaborative's goals in principle helped sustain the group through a period of economic turmoil, and the initial funding from Chase enabled the group to develop an infrastructure for implementing its strategies. Achieving the expected scale for serving job seekers and employers requires leadership, communication, and enforcement of expectations—both from collaborative leaders to partner agency members and from agency leaders to managers and frontline staff.

Endnotes

1. Figures are based on 2010 Census data compiled for the Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, and Oakland community areas. Sources: http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Zoning_Main_Page/Publications/Census_2010_Community_Area_Profiles/Census_2010_and_2000_CA_Populations.pdf and http://iafc.convio.net/site/DocServer/2010_Census_Data_Fact_Sheet_by_Chicago_Community_Area.pdf?docID=1741.

2. The poverty rate is the five-year estimate for 2007–2011. Source: http://wire.cjc.net/wiki/Poverty#Chicago__Community_Area_Poverty

3. The unemployment rates are five-year estimates for 2006–2010. Source: https://data.cityofchicago.org/browse?tags=unemployment

4. Report of the State Budget Crisis Taskforce. Illinois Report. October 2012.

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