



Build Ladders & Raise the Floor: Improving Employment Outcomes for Oklahoma's Workers

Oklahoma Works Conference

April 20, 2016

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Why do we need Build Ladders and Raise the Floor Strategies?

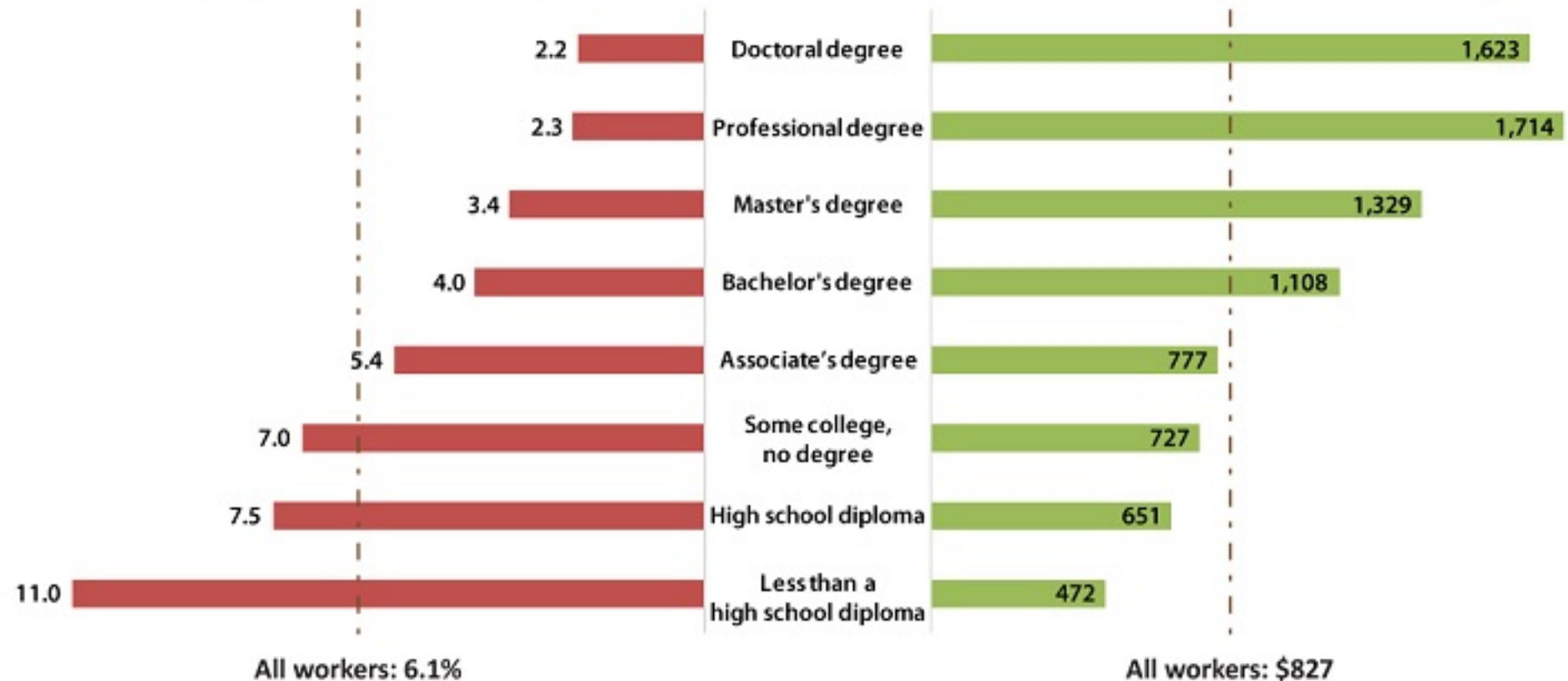
1. Education and skills are important
2. Education and training alone cannot address all our workforce challenges
3. Different industry sectors present different challenges and opportunities
4. Tools beyond training are needed to address the challenge of low-wage work

Education is important...

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment

Unemployment rate in 2013 (%)

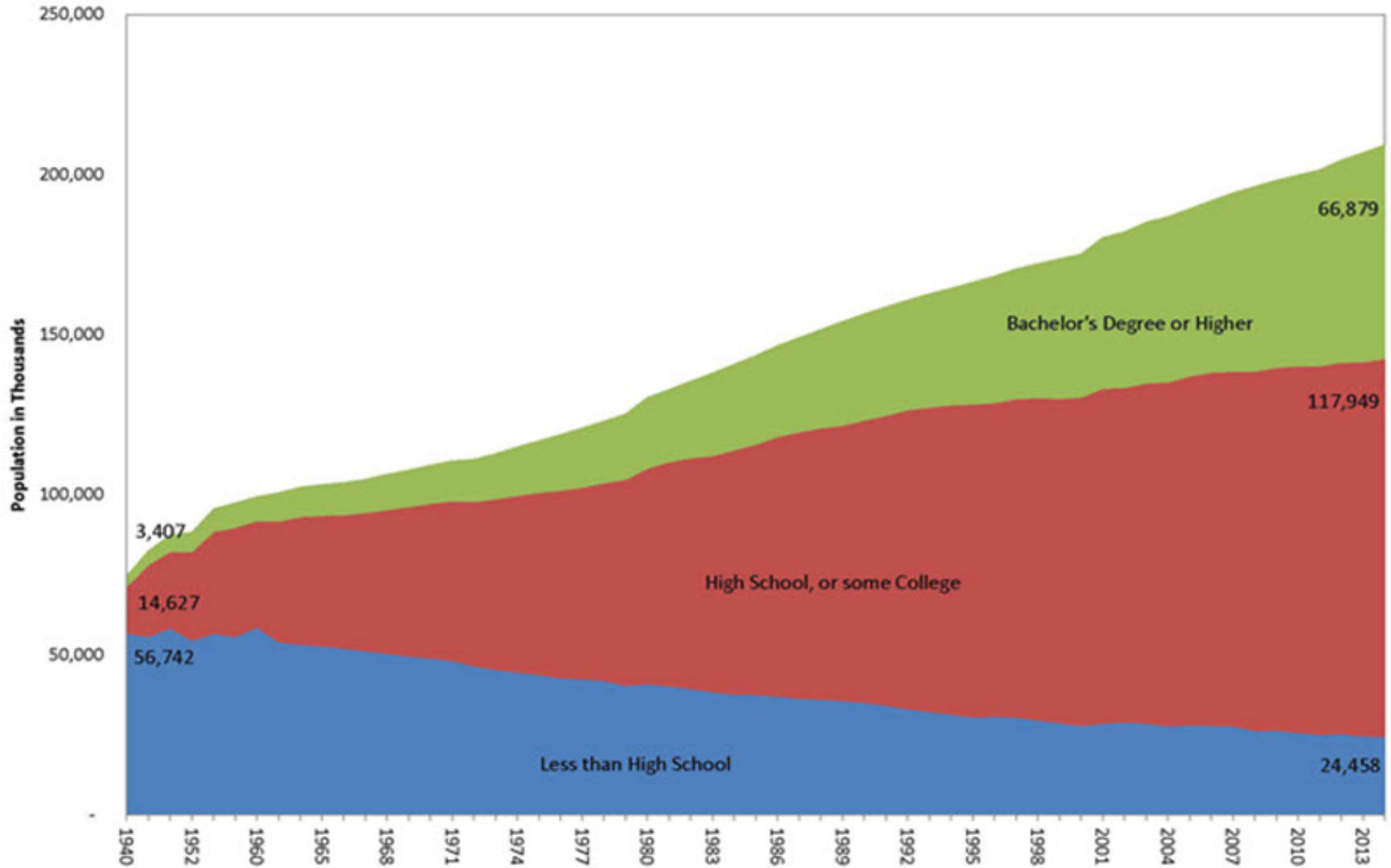
Median weekly earnings in 2013 (\$)



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

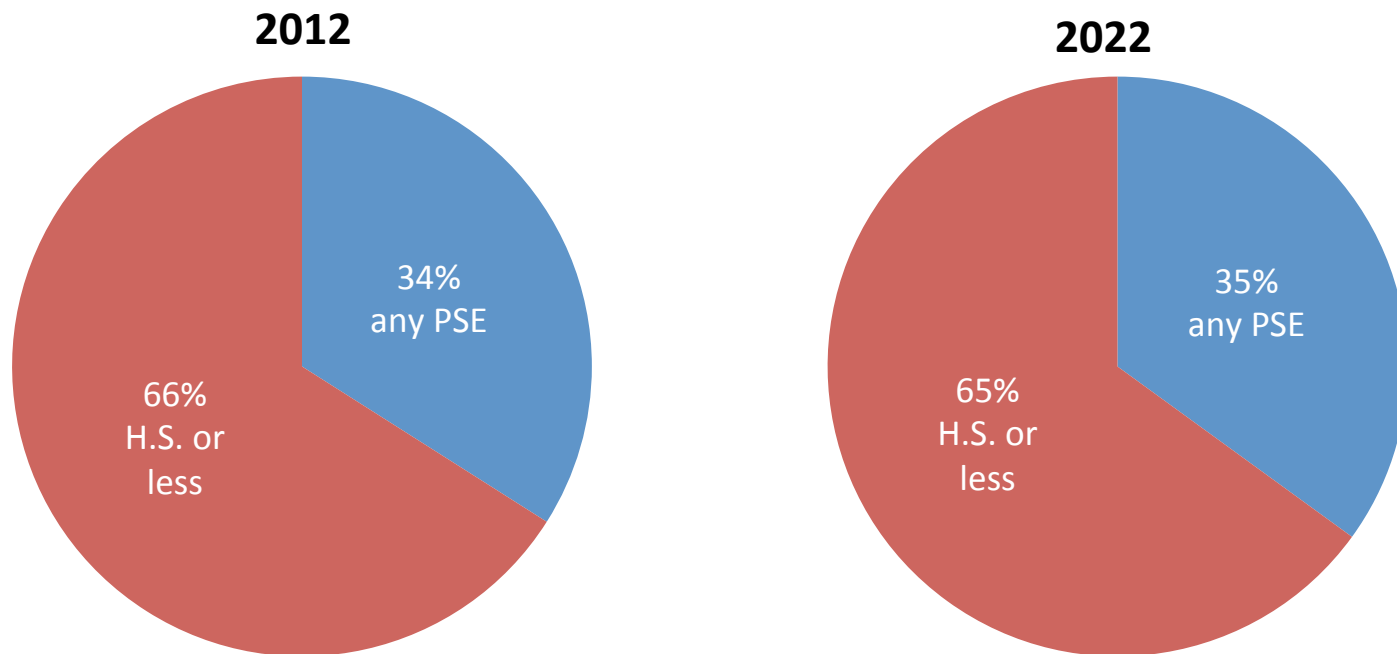
... and we're making progress

Figure 1: Population Age 25 and over by Educational Attainment: 1940-2014



But education, alone, will not meet all our workforce needs

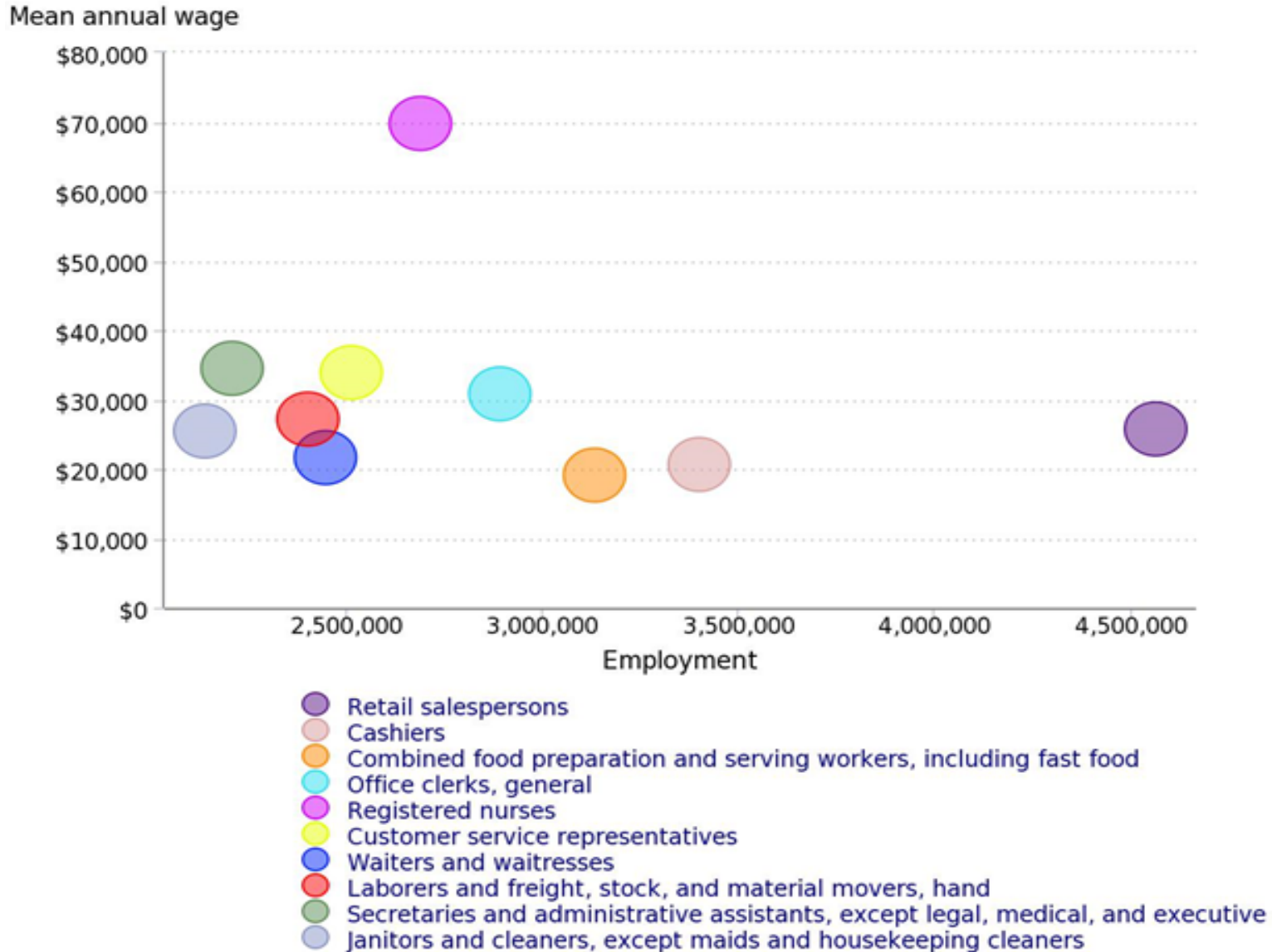
The proportion of jobs that require any post-secondary education relative to those that require only H.S. or less remain the same in the future:



Source: U.S. BLS Employment Projections: 2012-2022 Summary, December 2013

Demand for low-wage workers remains substantial

Employment and mean annual wages for the largest occupations in the United States, May 2014

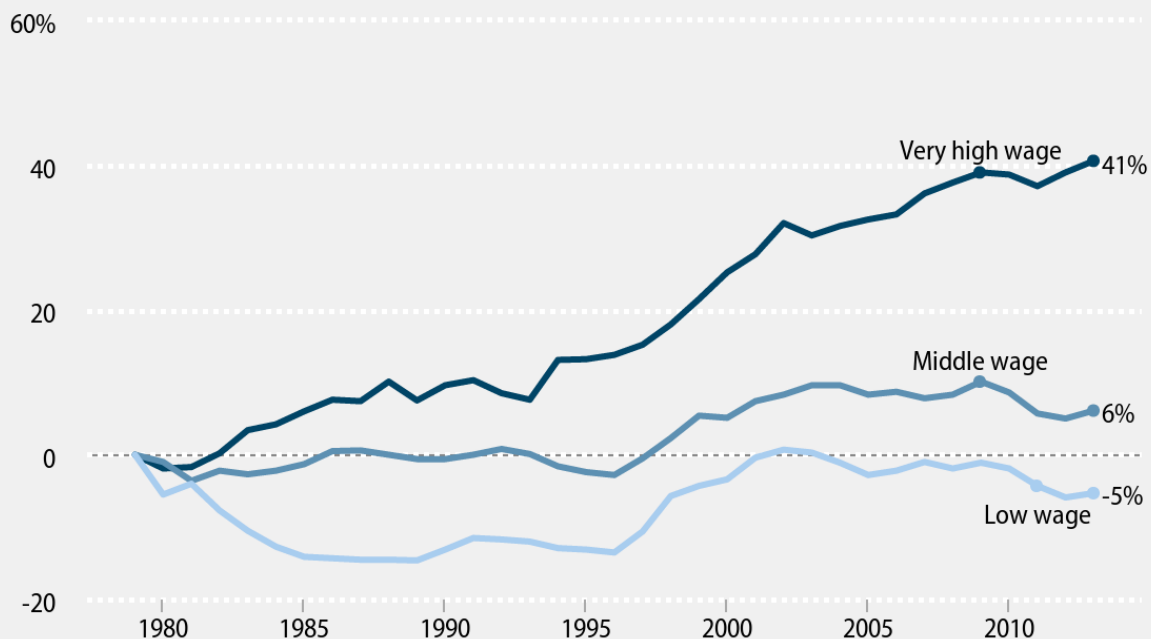


Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Middle-class wages are stagnant—Middle-wage workers' hourly wage is up 6% since 1979, low-wage workers' wages are down 5%, while those with very high wages saw a 41% increase

Cumulative change in real hourly wages of all workers, by wage percentile, 1979–2013*



* Low wage is 10th percentile, middle wage is 50th percentile, very high wage is 95th percentile.

Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata

Reproduced from Figure F in *Why America's Workers Need Faster Wage Growth—And What We Can Do About It*

Additional factors

- Employer-provided benefits are offered to fewer workers, esp lower-wage workers
- Long-term unemployment and involuntary part-time work have remained stubbornly high since the recession
- The structure of jobs and employment is fundamentally changing
- Low-wage workers struggling to make ends meet and to juggle work and life

**Raise the Floor
and
Build the Ladder**

Career Advancement



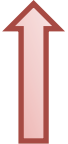
Skill Building

Job Experience

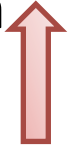
Economic

Stability

Wages



Transportation



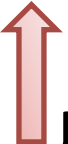
Benefits

Communication



Legal

Safety



Job Design

Respect

Job Quality

Schedule

Supervision

What does it mean to “raise the floor”?

- Improve low-wage jobs sufficiently—in terms of compensation, benefits, job-design, training standards, etc.—so that workers can secure a meaningful degree of stability and dignity in their work
- *People cannot climb ladders from shaky floors*



Raise the Floor Strategies

Strategy	Approach	Examples
Persuade	Appeal to biz self interest to improve design of jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SOURCE• Manufacturing Works
Advocate / Regulate/ Educate	Appeal to policy makers and general public to support laws and policies that encourage job quality; educate workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industrial Areas Foundation• Restaurant Opportunities Center• Worker rights training
Create	Develop model business that highlights job quality issues and shows viability of better jobs; use as platform to influence public and private decision making, i.e., coops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperative Home Care Associates/PHI• Primavera Works

WIOA Framework: Sample Indicators of Effectiveness (Service to Employers)

Transactional relationship  Transformational relationship

Transactions with an Individual Employer	Transformation with an Individual Employer	Transformation with a Group of Employers as in a sector strategy
Place individuals in jobs	Place individual from excluded group into job	Place indiv.s from excluded group w/ many employers -> chg industry norm
Provide OJT	Co-invest in credentialed learning	Employers create earn & learn models that facilitate cross-industry career advancement
Provide post-placement retention supports	Engage company in problem-solving for worker transportation issues	Employers provide economic stabilization and retention services as a group to workers
Encourage cross-training, better scheduling practices, etc. with individual employer to address workforce challenge	Employer redesigns entry-level job position	Many employers re-design entry-level position to support stability and success

Reflections

- Some performance measures will be hard to meet if the demand side of the labor market is not improved
 - Wage, wealth, and skill gains measures require adequate “floors”
- One organization doesn’t have to do everything
 - Partnerships / relationships essential
- No one model
 - Variety of factors influence strategy
- Leadership and innovation critical
 - Nascent field—experimentation needed
- Can’t make change unless we’re willing to change
 - Courage required to question conventional wisdom, pose tough questions & try something new

What Can WE Do?

- Continue to provide career advancement opportunities, but also...
- Talk to employers about what is really required for the job and about job quality. **ASK QUESTIONS.**
- Support “high road” employers
 - Place your participants with them
 - Give them your business – personally and professionally
- Partner with and support others who are raising the floor
- Educate yourself...be part of the drumbeat...elevate this to a national conversation



Build Ladders & Raise the Floor

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High Plains Community Health Center
 - **Matthew Bruce**
Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance
 - **Mindy Ysasi**
The SOURCE
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