

JumpStart: Meeting the Needs of Workers and Employers

A Fresh Start on a Career with JumpStart

Sean Morris was looking for a fresh start when he heard about JumpStart. The 34-year-old resident of East Baltimore had worked in a series of jobs, but had been unemployed for two years when he got word of the pre-apprenticeship training program.



JumpStart participants learn the skills they need to join Baltimore's construction workforce.

The training gave him a refresher in basic construction skills and reinforced the critical importance of being on time and ready to work every day. JumpStart also helped Morris sort out problems related to his child-support obligations and driver's license.

After graduating from the three-month program, Morris took advantage of help from JumpStart and landed a job with American Infrastructure, a local construction firm, within only a few weeks. The job provides a good set of benefits, including health insurance and a retirement plan, and pays nearly \$15 an hour, the most Morris has ever earned.

Morris is pleased to have landed a stable job that allows him to support his children, and he wants to finish the college degree he began years ago.

"JumpStart is an excellent springboard to propel someone who is interested in the construction field. It gives them the tools they need, mentally and physically, to be prepared to step in and do well the first day on the job," Morris says.

JumpStart is supported by the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative. The Collaborative brings together funders from the private and public sectors to increase the earnings and assets of low-income Baltimore City residents while meeting the workforce needs of employers. The Collaborative provides support to workforce partnerships that deliver training and job placement services in several growing employment sectors: biotechnology, healthcare, construction, food service and green jobs.

The **Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative**
Partnering to Build a Stronger Workforce

Building a Better Baltimore

JumpStart is a construction training program with two key goals: helping low-income Baltimore City residents to become licensed construction craft workers and obtain family-sustaining incomes and improving the area's construction workforce.

The program recognizes that lower-skilled Baltimoreans often struggle to gain access to building trades jobs while employers in the construction field sometimes have difficulty hiring well-prepared workers.

JumpStart prepares participants to move into employment and apprenticeships that can lead to well-paying construction careers.

The initiative is overseen by the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF), a nonprofit workforce intermediary that develops and advocates for policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities and incomes of low-skill, low-income workers and job seekers.

Partnering with JOTF is the Associated Builders and Contractors Inc. of Metropolitan Baltimore, which provides hands-on electrical, carpentry and plumbing training, as well as placement services and connections with employers. Training takes place twice a week over a three-month period, with a focus on math skills, basic construction skills and "soft" workplace skills such as punctuality.

Catholic Charities Industries, a local nonprofit, provides referrals into JumpStart and handles case management services for participants.

A Range of Support Services

Recognizing that JumpStart participants must often overcome obstacles to succeeding in the program and later in the workplace, the program provides supportive services to participants, such as referrals for legal services and financial coaching, help with child-support issues, and assistance getting driver's licenses. JumpStart also helped 40 participants obtain a car through the Vehicles for Change program, allowing them to have reliable transportation to the workplace.



Hands-on learning allows JumpStart students to succeed in the program and in the workforce.

Through 2013, JumpStart achieved these results:

- 415 people have graduated from the program—an 84 percent completion rate.
- 71 percent of graduates were placed in jobs.
- 149 employers hired JumpStart graduates or received screening services.
- Graduates earned significant wage gains in the first year after completing training.
- More than 50 graduates went onto become certified construction apprentices.

Preparing Workers Well

Legacy Builders and Constructions Services Inc., a small Baltimore firm, has struggled to find workers with the right skills and attitude. Working with JumpStart has helped solve that problem.

Two JumpStart graduates have worked steadily for the company for more than 18 months and have taken on more responsibility as they prove themselves.

“Wanting to work and having the right work ethic are two different things,” says Jimmy Stewart, who is in charge of business development for the company. “It’s been a big issue we’ve had in hiring people in this market—finding people who get to work on time and solve problems, rather than creating them.

“Working with JumpStart has been a phenomenal experience. The two we’ve hired have done a great job out in the field. Their work ethic has shown through and we’ve been very pleased.”

Key Funders

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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