



Wilmington Leaders Alliance

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Findings and Recommendations



PURPOSE:

The Wilmington Leaders Alliance launched in Late March of 2017 and focused on increasing the capacity of 4 key workforce development organizations established within Wilmington. Our goal was to increase their capacity to provide training, education and internship placement within the city of Wilmington and increase employment of Wilmington-based citizens within Wilmington-based employers.

Overarching Strategies:

- **Engage** Workforce Development Organizations to scale programming and double capacity for training and placement.
- **Engage** large employers, starting with WLA members to support and place graduates of the work force organizations.
- **Create** a workforce development—employer placement pipeline.
- **Identify** other key areas that can increase workforce development and placement.

WLA in partnership with these organizations wants to meet the needs of employers by providing a high quality, skilled worker who has a network of support that ensures longevity and provides the unemployed/underemployed individual a pathway to skilled training and employment within Wilmington.

3 AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Targeted Workforce

- Identify & engage workforce development organizations
- Identify & engage Wilmington's largest employers as partners
- Create a collaborative environment
- Increase pipeline for career placement

Understanding the Landscape

- Assess current Workforce Landscape in Wilmington
- Identify additional workforce development initiatives
- Identify social and environmental barriers for employee success
- Identify additional workforce needs in Wilmington landscape

Targeted Opportunity

- Scale Best Practices
- Advocate for Increased support services
- Align partnership to increase access and decrease barriers for Employment
- Support expansion of additional workforce opportunities



AREA 1: TARGETED WORKFORCE

WLA initiated this work through 4 primary workforce development organizations that currently run effective training programs with local employers through internship or sponsored placement:



Phase two of the initial workforce strategy is to engage Wilmington's largest employers to increase collaboration with targeted workforce development programs to create a higher capacity pipeline of employable workers in areas of hiring need within the city of Wilmington:

- **Connections** with 12+ Employers: WLA members and beyond are underway.
More than 50% of employers are communicating hiring needs outside Greater Wilmington workforce development resources including: HVAC, plumbing, certified mechanic, warehouse, CDL and hospitality.
Employers consistently identified increased robust soft skill training needs.
- **Employers engaged:** 5 of the targeted employers already had a relationship with one of the partner workforce organizations and are agreeing to scale and increase partner engagement.
- WLA has taken a **targeted facilitation approach** to solutions specifically requested by employers and workforce organizations.
- **Increased communication and collaboration** between targeted workforce development organizations has created new service lines and built workforce capacity within Wilmington.



AREA 2: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

This labor intensive but valuable method to approaching the work has led to employer needs were being identified on a case-by-case basis. As needs arose that our 4 workforce partners could not solve or did not have relevant programs the WLA has helped to identify or produce. The WLA can be an active change agent to improve the pipeline for both hiring employers and City of Wilmington residents. By ensuring that providers provide realistic and accessible employment opportunities that meet the skill levels and workforce needs that are evident or emerging.

The reality for Wilmington workforce landscape is:



Evident educational attainment barrier and remedial education required inhibits certification and graduation in a two-year college.



Training is limited, fragmented and not aligned to need.



Much more support needed to reach basic skill level for on-boarding.



Transportation barrier (Jobs outside city; minimal opportunity in the city).



City-centric job openings are predominantly entry level, low wage. Higher tier job opportunities require much more training and experience than accessible for most targeted city residents.

We have discovered that the Workforce development organizations are fragmented. Most of them are located outside of the City with inadequate transportation.

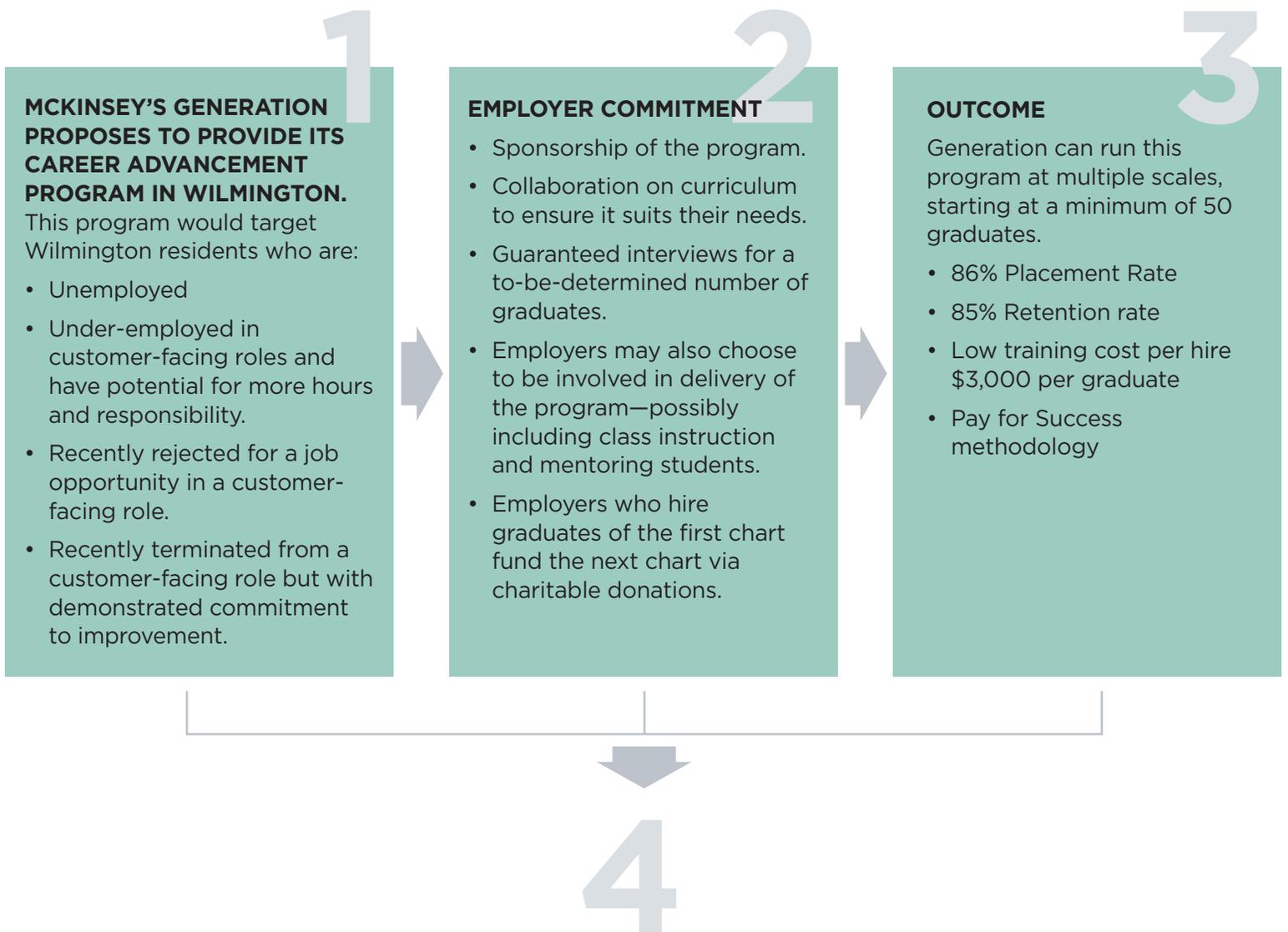
WLA is advocating for:

1. Solutions for city residents without a car: Existing and emerging resources that target inner city residents led by sustainable and best practice workforce organizations.
2. A City-centric HUB: One Stop Shop initiative that provides ongoing connection between targeted workforce infrastructure in Wilmington and employers needs. The hub would act as a triage and referral mechanism for those who truly want to be gainfully employed.
3. The City's Mobile Job Center to operate as the outreach arm of the Hub and integrate with operating Community Center initiatives across the city giving equal access to job opportunities and minimizing transportation barriers.
4. A strong focus on Soft Skill training as required by employers.
5. A best practice remedial education component in the local High Schools that allow for graduates to be academically ready to enter college, a certification program or the workforce directly.



AREA 3: TARGETED OPPORTUNITY

After meeting with Wilmington’s large employers and assembling findings, the WLA recommends creating more workforce training support for entry and mid-level staff that provide soft skills and customer service training.



WLA will monitor the effectiveness of this Program, advocate for employer engagement and for a more unified approach to workforce development and job placement for the City of Wilmington and its residents.