

# Construction Gateway Evaluation: Findings and Program Recommendations

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Several staff at the Ray Marshall Center also contributed to this report. Daniel Schroeder tabulated administrative data for program descriptive purposes and matched individual wage records to produce the outcome tables used in this analysis. Susie Riley prepared tables and formatted the document.

Again, thanks to all!

## Executive Summary

Researchers at the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at The University of Texas at Austin prepared this formative evaluation of Construction Gateway, a program administered by the Capital Area Training Foundation (CATF and soon to be the Skillpoint Alliance). The evaluation documents the outcomes of Construction Gateway, identifies promising practices and policies, and provides options for maintaining, expanding, and replicating the initiative in other industry sectors. The evaluation has three major components: a process evaluation, a participant telephone survey, and an outcomes analysis.

This evaluation focuses on the period from 1999 to 2004. Gateway's program design, staffing, and data collection have remained largely consistent since 1999, when CATF took over operations. It is based on data collected and interviews and conversations conducted from June through early November 2004. Analysis of labor market outcomes is based on Unemployment Insurance (UI) earnings data for Gateway participants enrolled from January 1999 through September 2003.

### Construction Gateway: Origins, Design, and Operations

**Origins.** Construction Gateway began in the summer of 1994 as a program “to prepare individuals for apprenticeships and entry-level employment in the construction industry...in the Austin area.” The program targeted the underemployed and unemployed in low-income areas, many of whom were high school dropouts. The specific goals of the first pilot program were (1) to provide 30 individuals with a ten-week program that gives them the necessary basic knowledge and skills for apprenticeships and successful entry-level employment in seven construction trades; and (2) to provide Austin-area employers with a stronger pool of individuals for apprenticeships and entry-level employment in seven construction trades. The program included 1) employability skills, 2) math and reading skills for training and employment, and 3) basic construction skills in seven trades (i.e., electrical work, plumbing and pipefitting, sheet metal work, bricklaying/masonry, carpentry, concrete, and ironwork/concrete reinforcement). The initial curriculum also included applications of mathematics to construction, instruction and practice in the proper use of hand tools, and safety training.

**Design.** Gateway staff have targeted participant *outreach* to organizations that are in direct contact with disadvantaged populations, including the Salvation Army; the Texas Youth Commission (TYC); the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC); the Del Valle Correctional Center; particularly the Community Offender Re-entry Effort (CORE), a special program operated by the Travis County Sheriff's Department with intensive activities for incarcerated youth; and *WorkSource*-Greater Capital Area Workforce Board and its One-Stop Career Centers; among others.

Employers have been recruited through two key trade associations—the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) and the Associated General Contractors (AGC)—both of which have been affiliated with the construction industry steering committee, one of several committees CATF has staffed. Some 276 firms are listed in the Gateway employer directory, and about 25 individuals are active in its Business Advisory Council.

Gateway *intake* is conducted by CATF staff at the South Austin One-Stop Career Center. Prospective participants complete an application that collects additional data that may help them qualify them for other One-Stop Center programs and services. They are also given Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading and math tests to assess their functional abilities. The only eligibility requirements are residence in Travis County, 18 or more years of age, and family income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The program also requires facility with English, since the instruction and curriculum materials are in English.

The Gateway *curriculum* is a hybrid drawing from the Core Curriculum developed by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and the standard curriculum in ACC's Building and Construction Technology program. Construction Gateway participants typically receive: education regarding site layout, construction math, blueprint reading, and other elements of functional literacy; employability workshops; a rotation of training that introduces the tools and skills necessary for carpentry, electrical, rigging, sheet metal, HV/AC, and masonry/cement trades; OSHA-recognized workplace safety training, as well as Red Cross CPR and First Aid training; a Marketable Skills Award equivalent to nine credit hours, as well as eight hours of ACC credit toward a Certificate or Associate Degree for those interested in continuing their education; and six months of credit towards an ABC apprenticeship program. The program operates 38.5 hours per week over five weeks with "hands-on" activities and emphasis on developing "soft skills" and socializing individuals to work. Students are treated as if they were in a job. The program cycles eight times each year with about a dozen students in each class.

Gateway and ACC provide the tools, materials, and other supports (e.g., gloves, goggles, bus passes) for those who need them to attend class or work. Occasionally, Home Depot gift cards are provided to those who may need additional equipment to work.

**Program Administration.** Administration is primarily a CATF responsibility, but many functions are performed jointly by CATF and ACC with input from the Business Advisory Council. Instruction is primarily ACC's responsibility with input from its Advisory Board, CATF, ABC, and the Business Advisory Council.

The Construction Gateway budget has been approximately \$160,000 annually, most of which has come from the City of Austin and Travis County. WIA referrals each bring a voucher covering up to \$2,000 in tuition, fees, and services. In 2004, the Topfer Family Foundation sponsored an entire Gateway class with a \$25,000 grant. Total cost is about \$1,200-\$1,500 per student. Gateway costs \$240-\$300 per week for each student, slightly more than the cost of typical training programs for youth but less than the roughly \$370 weekly cost of Job Corps. Gateway serves more offenders than do either mainstream youth training programs or Job Corps.

**Participants.** Construction Gateway enrolled 563 participants from 1999 through September 2003. They have overwhelmingly been men. While participants have generally been young adults, older participants have made up an increasing share of enrollees since 2000. The race/ethnic mix of participants has varied, with Hispanics being the largest group. Ex-offenders have made up roughly six of every ten in each group. In general, the population

served by Construction Gateway is one with low education and functioning levels. The source of Gateway referrals also has varied. The Community Offender Re-entry Effort (CORE) has been the single largest source of referrals. In 1999 and 2000, CORE provided well over half of all referrals, though by 2003 it provided very few, since the CORE program was eliminated by Travis County late that year. Walk-ins provided nearly one-fifth of all referrals, but the share rose sharply towards the end of the period. Nearly 85 percent of Gateway participants graduated over the 1999-2003 period.

### **Collaborator Observations**

Over the period from June through November 2004, researchers conducted in-person and telephone interviews with 28 individuals representing organizations that refer individuals to the program, sponsor the program, or employ its graduates.

**Referring Entities and Supporters.** Programs associated with the criminal justice system valued the opportunity for ex-offenders to become familiar with new tools and skills that Gateway offers. Travis County especially values Gateway's prospects for reducing recidivism. Non-profit organizations are not as deeply attached to Gateway as those agencies dealing with offenders. Most favor an intensification of skills training instruction and greater employer involvement with job placements. Some expressed hope that the City and the County would get more involved with employment opportunities as well. All agree that the model could and should be applied to other industries as well.

**Employers.** Most employers interviewed became involved in Construction Gateway through personal contacts or relationships with CATF, ABC, or AGC staff. Some have been engaged and recruiting employees since the program's inception in 1994. All agreed that Construction Gateway prepared individuals for entry-level positions only. Employers interviewed had recruited for a number of opportunities and positions, including apprenticeship training, carpenters, laborers, survey assistant, and electrician's helper. They thought that the program helped individuals keep their jobs, particularly because of the emphasis on punctuality and work ethic, and even helped them to increase their wages and obtain promotions. Their overall experience with Gateway has been positive. Some employers expressed concern that the program could improve the selection process to ensure graduates are actually willing and physically able to work in the construction industry. Employers stated that the Construction Gateway model could be applied to other areas and industries, including roofing, sheet metal work, mechanical, health care, custodial, hospitality, HVAC, truck-driving, and automotive technology.

### **Participant Observations**

During the latter half of 2004, researchers interviewed 29 individuals who had enrolled in Gateway between January 2001 and July 2004, a sample that included program graduates, "no shows," and "leavers," yielding a number of observations. Respondents generally agreed that Gateway provides sufficient skills and training for an entry-level position. They recognized the program as a "good place to start," and felt that there was more they could learn. About half of the participant respondents claimed to have worked in construction prior to participating in Gateway. Most were planning to work in construction after completing

the program, and more than half actually held jobs in the industry after graduating. About 40 percent reported that they were currently working in construction. Nearly all respondents thought Gateway had helped them find and keep jobs, but were less unified regarding whether participation had increased their wages. Participants identified many benefits unrelated to construction, including a greater sense of responsibility, more respect for punctuality, better interpersonal skills, and enhanced teamwork. Class-related benefits included improved math, appreciation for learning in a school setting, resume preparation, and interview skills. Gateway appears to have influenced the participants regarding continuing education and training as well. Most have not taken actually taken additional classes or received training, but planned to do so. A few respondents have taken further construction skills courses, computer courses, or are enrolled in ITT. Finally, participants strongly supported extending the Gateway approach to other industries, including automotive technology, culinary arts, retail sales, manufacturing, and healthcare.

### **Labor Market and Related Outcomes**

Researchers linked data for enrollees from the period January 1999 through September 2003 with employment and earnings data from UI wage records for at least three quarters before enrollment through three quarters after program exit. Results reported here likely capture the employment and retention of Gateway graduates with reasonable accuracy. Given that a substantial portion of construction employment is with employers not subject to UI coverage, it is likely that they understate their earnings-related outcomes.

**Employment Entry Rates and Earnings.** Researchers applied a broad definition of employment entry, counting individuals who reported positive earnings either in the quarter in which they left the program or in the immediately following quarter. Nearly 70 percent of graduates entered employment subsequent to completing the Gateway program, compared to 64.4 percent of leavers. Graduates averaged just under \$2,200 per quarter, while leavers only earned \$1,727. Employment entry rates were higher for 25-35 year olds, Anglos, non-offenders, and those with more education. Older participants, non-offenders and those with postsecondary education and training posted the highest quarterly earnings, but females earned considerably more than males, and Others and Hispanics out-earned Anglos and Blacks.

**Employment Retention.** Nearly one-third of Gateway graduates were employed for all three post-exit quarters, and more than half of these appear to have been working for a single employer for the entire period. Leavers had lower employment retention rates and did not stay with the same employers as much as graduates. Older participants, females, Anglos and non-offenders were more consistently employed. Less and more educated participants had greater employment retention rates.

**Pre-/Post-Program Earnings Changes.** Researchers also compared average quarterly earnings three months prior to entering with those three months after exiting the Gateway program. Neither graduates nor leavers exhibited solid earnings gains. Graduates gained on average \$156, while leavers only gained \$84. The 33 percent of graduates and the 25 percent of leavers who experienced earnings gains enjoyed average gains of \$2,440 and \$2,182, respectively. Younger participants, males, minorities, non-offenders, and those with less



than postsecondary education tended to experience larger pre-/post-program earnings gains, while older participants, females, ex-offenders, and those with postsecondary education and training actually experienced losses.

**Post-Program Earnings Changes.** Researchers also computed post-program earnings changes, computing the difference in earnings gains between the first and third post-program quarters. A larger share of participants experienced post-program gains once employed. Graduates gained more than leavers, with post-program gains of just under \$600 and \$246, respectively. The youngest and oldest participants experienced smaller gains or even losses, while males gained more than females. Blacks and Hispanics gained more than Anglos who were employed at exit. Non-offenders gained more in post-program earnings than did ex-offenders, and the pattern by education was quite mixed.

**Recidivism.** Based on program records, only 11 percent of Gateway graduates had a re-arrest from 1999 through 2003. Males, young adults, those with an 8th grade education or less and low TABE scores, as well as CORE program referrals tended to have higher recidivism rates.

### **Prospects and Recommendations**

There appears to be overwhelming community support for the Construction Gateway program. City of Austin and Travis County leadership perceive it as a wise investment of public tax dollars, and the collaborating entities that refer individuals to the program are proud of the results. The most resounding strength of the program is its ability to give dignity, self-respect, teamwork skills, and prospects for a better livelihood to marginal populations, e.g., ex-offenders. Its most obvious shortcoming is its failure to substantially engage the employer community. Despite the stated commitment to program objectives by construction industry representatives, there have been minimal job offers for those who have completed the Gateway curriculum.

Recommendations for improving the Construction Gateway program include the following, among others:

- *WorkSource* employment and training options could and should be more fully utilized, both to open an additional array of services and to better access data regarding performance outcomes.
- Applicants should be made more fully aware of other CATF/community options as well. The Community Technology Training Centers can enrich the education and employment options for those who “touch” Gateway.
- Stronger connections with Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs could provide secure training and earnings prospects for those interested in careers in the building trades.
- Employer commitment to hiring graduates could be documented and strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding that affirms their support for the Gateway program and their commitment to hiring its graduates.

- The City of Austin and Travis County could also reinforce their commitment by providing entry-level jobs to graduates.
- The Construction Gateway model could be readily applied to other fields, including health care, automotive technology, food services, and the hospitality industry.
- Improved screening of potential participants for their ability to complete the curriculum and benefit from the assistance that would support their employment in the construction industry would be appreciated by employers.
- New and better ways of recordkeeping and tracking the outcomes of Gateway participants need to be developed and implemented.

### **Concluding Observations**

As a target industry for the Gateway Program, construction offers both advantages and disadvantages. On the favorable side, entry is easy, construction work is ubiquitous, and formal education requirements are less than in many other industries. Also, construction employers facing shortages in the labor market are often willing to overlook barriers to employment such as ex-offender status. Construction provides rewarding careers for some workers, but also the worst working conditions. Although the industry offers structured training (e.g., apprenticeships), the available training is not accessible to all employees and is minimal. Also, construction work presents significant transportation challenges.

For employers, Construction Gateway offers opportunities to directly hire workers (without hefty overhead charges) who have proven themselves reliable and motivated over five unpaid weeks and who have training in safety, the use of power hand tools, and other job entry skills. Gateway is a screening tool for employers. For individuals determined to make a fresh start, Construction Gateway offers a supportive, helpful and encouraging environment, with both emotional support and tangible resources, such as bus passes and tools. In addition, Gateway provides important instruction in safety, as well as in employability and job finding skills. It also offers aspiring job seekers who have failed a new start and a chance to prove themselves. For society, Construction Gateway provides a path to rehabilitation, employment, and opportunity for those who have failed or transgressed in the past. In short, a well functioning Construction Gateway program can be viewed as one plank in building an Opportunity Economy.

## **Introduction**

Researchers at the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at The University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs prepared this report to present the results of an evaluation of the Construction Gateway Program administered by the Capital Area Training Foundation (CATF, and soon to be Skillpoint Alliance), a workforce intermediary in central Texas. The evaluation has been supported by Jobs for the Future (JFF), a workforce development and technical assistance entity located in Boston, Massachusetts. The evaluation is the initial phase of a strategic partnership between CATF and the Ray Marshall Center that is providing research on regional workforce and educational issues, offer program analysis and evaluation services, and developing standards for objective research and evaluation of CATF programs.

The Construction Gateway evaluation documents the outcomes of the Gateway Program, identifies practices and policies associated with positive results, and provides options for maintaining and expanding the initiative, as well as exploring the possibility of replicating the model in other industry sectors. The research feeds back into the larger objective of engaging civic interest and capacity in workforce development and career advancement, validating current investments, and influencing the public policy environment to promote more investment through the example of a grounded community program.

This report is organized into eight major sections. The first describes the evaluation design, its approach, components, and timeframe. The second section describes the origins and early development of the Construction Gateway program. Readers who are already familiar with Gateway and its origins and who are primarily interested in the outcomes may consider skipping over this section. The following section examines the design and operations of the Construction Gateway program. The next two sections present observations from program collaborators—including referring organizations, employers and others—and the participants themselves. The following section provides data on labor market outcomes for participants to the extent they could be found. The next section examines prospects for Construction Gateway for the near future and offers a series of recommendations for program improvement. The narrative portion of the report wraps up with some concluding observations. Appendix A provides the interview guides that were used for interviews with program staff, collaborators, employers, and participants. Appendix B lists the key contacts and various staff interviewed for this research. Appendix C defines the key performance measures used in the report to assess the Construction Gateway program.

## Evaluation Design

This section discusses the evaluation approach and describes its three major components and related data sources, success measures, and the timeframe for analysis.

**Formative Outcomes Evaluation.** The Construction Gateway evaluation has been conceived and implemented as a *formative evaluation*, one intended for use by program administrators and staff, as well as the broader group of stakeholders, to improve the design, delivery, and outcomes of the program. A formative approach contrasts sharply with evaluations that are devised as *summative* in nature and mainly tell policymaker and funders whether the program should be continued or not. As explained below, it is also an *outcomes evaluation* rather than an experimental or quasi-experimental impact evaluation.

**Evaluation Components.** The Construction Gateway evaluation has three major components: a process evaluation, a participant telephone survey, and an outcomes analysis. The *process evaluation* addresses program design and service delivery features and practices including resources, recruitment/enrollment, participant characteristics, client flow, skills training, completion rates, job development/placement rates, and post-program services, as well as staff and peer support/mentoring. Members of the community collaboration—comprised of funding entities, training providers and referring institutions, and employers—were interviewed to capture their roles and relationships to the Gateway program, assess their experiences, probe their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and explore prospects for sustaining and expanding the effort in the future. The interview guides used with program staff, funding sources, collaborators and employers are provided in Appendix A. Key contacts as well as individuals interviewed for the evaluation are listed in Appendix B.

To support the process evaluation component, CATF and Gateway Construction program staff provided Ray Marshall Center researchers with the following information:

- Detailed budget and expenditure reports for three full Fiscal Years, from January 2001 through December 2003.
- Participant rosters and contact information by class from January 2001 to the present.
- Administrative data from the program and a codebook with defined data fields.
- Program management and planning reports, as well as organizational and participant flow charts.
- Contact information for key program staff, collaborators, and supporters.

The *participant survey* attempted to contact nearly 300 former participants and solicit their participation in a short telephone conversation in order to document and explore their pre- and post-Gateway experiences. Ray Marshall Center researchers had intended to talk with up to 100 individuals who had been through the Gateway program in the last three or more years. Unfortunately, this proved far too ambitious with such a highly transitory population, many of whom are disadvantaged ex-offenders. Most of their contact information contained in the program files was very outdated and inaccurate. Major topics of the 29 participant conversations that were completed successfully included employment entry, retention, and wage gains; career/skills advancement; social/familial well-being; corrections experience;

and Gateway's strengths and limitations. With such a low response rate, capturing comprehensive survey data on labor market outcomes and other topics of interest was problematical.

The *outcomes analysis* documents actual pre- and post-program participant labor market experiences using linked administrative data, including Gateway program records and Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records. UI wage records now serve as the primary data source for tracking labor market outcomes for most federal and state workforce programs, including the Workforce Investment Act. These records provide quarterly information on employment and earnings for more than 95 percent of all wage and salary employment in most states and encompass a wide array of industries, with some notable exceptions such as self-employment and employment with railroads and religious organizations.<sup>1</sup> The coverage limitations of UI wage records are particularly relevant for this analysis, since many construction workers tend to be employed as contract workers on a temporary basis with small contractors and subcontractors and may often work for cash. Searching the available UI wage files for former Gateway participants did yield a respectable number of "hits:" just under 92 percent of all participants had any UI-reported earnings in any quarter in the period of study. Because of low UI coverage in the construction industry, we expect that the reported quarterly employment entry and retention rates may be reasonably accurate, but that the average quarterly earnings and earnings gain numbers may be biased downward. The results presented in the labor market outcomes discussion of the report thus should be viewed as partial rather than complete, particularly in terms of earnings levels and earnings gains.

This analysis focuses largely on comparisons of post and pre/post employment and earnings for Gateway participants. The preferred approach would be either an experimental or quasi-experimental design.<sup>2</sup> In the former, program applicants would have been randomly assigned to participant or control group status and differences in their post-program employment and earnings experiences computed as the actual net impacts from program participation. In the latter, a similar process would be used substituting comparison groups of similar non-participants. Neither an experimental nor quasi-experimental were feasible for the Gateway evaluation, so researchers have instead used a more basic gross outcomes design. Results reported here accurately reflect the *outcomes* from Construction Gateway, but they are not true program *impacts*.

**Success Measures.** Key measures of program success, which have been addressed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, include the following:

- Training Completion or Graduation Rate
- Employment Entry Rate
- Average Quarterly Earnings Post-Program

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<sup>1</sup> For an extended discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of UI wage records for performance measurement, see: Bryan Wilson, *Integrated Performance Information for Workforce Development: A Blueprint for States*, Olympia, Washington: Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, February 2005; and Charles E. Trott and John Baj, *Developing a Common Performance Management Framework for a State Workforce Development System: A Guidebook for States*, Dekalb, IL: Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University, January 1996.

<sup>2</sup> For more on evaluation design issues, see: Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Research*, Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1966.

- Employment Retention
- Pre-/Post-Program Earnings Gains
- Post-Program Earnings Gains
- Recidivism or Reincarceration

While this evaluation had also hoped to address a broader group of success measures, data were not readily available to do so. In particular, measures of skills acquisition, continuing education and training, career advancement, employer satisfaction, and receipt of public assistance were only partly addressed, if at all. Further research remains to be done on whether Construction Gateway was successful according to these measures.

**Timeframe.** This evaluation focuses on the period from 1999 to 2004. Gateway's program design, staffing, and data collection have remained largely consistent since 1999, when CATF took over operations of the Construction Gateway. This report is based on data collected and interviews and conversations conducted from June through early November 2004. The analysis of labor market outcomes is based on UI earnings data for Gateway participants from January 1999 through September 2003.

## Construction Gateway Origins and Early Development

**Origins of the Construction Gateway Program.** From its inception in 1994, CATF took a sectoral approach to working with industry.<sup>3</sup> The general strategy was to use the influence of the mayor to convene a group of key executives in the industry. Mayor Bruce Todd would then make a pitch to them emphasizing the importance of youth, followed by presentations on the value of industry steering committees and school-to-career initiatives. The first sectors organized were health care and high tech. Industry steering committees, staffed by CATF, were formed in each sector and began meeting regularly.

The mayor similarly motivated the origin of the construction committee. Mayor Todd had been working with Professor Walt Rostow of the Austin Project and was becoming increasingly concerned about the high rates of unemployment suffered by minorities in East Austin. Data compiled by the Austin Project had made clear that minorities in East Austin lacked jobs and that employment was a key remedy to poverty. The mayor was especially alarmed about reports of youth unemployment rates ranging as high as 60 percent in some East Austin neighborhoods. In 1994, Mayor Todd noted that the City was about to begin construction of the largest public works project in its history—conversion of Bergstrom Air Force base into Austin’s new civilian airport. Furthermore, this project was located in Southeast Austin, near the neighborhoods of concern. Through prospects of massive construction at the airport, the mayor foresaw opportunities to alleviate this unemployment.

Mayor Todd invited representatives from the major construction associations to a meeting held at Bergstrom Air Force Base. The invitation list included the Associated General Contractors (AGC) Heavy-Highway Division, Associated General Contractors (AGC) Building Division, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), the Capital Area Homebuilders, coordinators from the local joint apprenticeship programs, and other representatives from the local construction industry. The discussion in that meeting revealed that the Heavy-Highway Contractors had little interest in such an initiative. But the building contractors evidenced real interest, in large part because they were experiencing severe labor shortages at the time. This was the impetus for starting Austin’s Construction Steering Committee.

At the initial meetings of the Construction Steering Committee, industry officials discussed possible activities to alleviate their workforce problems. Shortages of skilled labor have long been a concern in the construction industry nationally.<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that construction remains the only growing goods-producing sector of the economy, the industry has serious difficulties attracting, training, and retaining skilled workers. The shortage situation appears to be caused by several factors, including a working environment that many consider to be undesirable, relatively low pay and benefits, the transient nature of the work, unclear career

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<sup>3</sup> For an evaluation of the early Construction Gateway pilot effort, see the following unpublished report: Brian Rungeling, *Evaluation of the Construction Gateway Training Program (The Pilot Program/Gateway I)*, Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Central Florida, December 14, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: Business Roundtable, *Training Problems in Open Shop Construction*. Washington, D.C.: Business Roundtable, 1982; Business Roundtable, *Confronting the Skilled Construction Work Force Shortage*, Washington, D.C.: Construction Cost Effectiveness Task Force, the Business Roundtable, 1997; Construction Industry Institute, *The Shortage of Skilled Craft Workers in the U.S.*, Research Summary 182-1, Austin: Construction Industry Institute, 2003. Also, see numerous articles over the past two decades in *Engineering News Record*, a major construction industry periodical.

paths, and the generally poor image of the construction industry and its workers.<sup>5</sup> In an occupational preference survey given to junior and senior high school students, construction ranked 248<sup>th</sup> out of 250 occupations. Only custodial and migrant farm work were ranked lower.<sup>6</sup>

The industry was urged to establish some form of school-to-career program (e.g., an academy), but construction industry representatives were reluctant to get involved at the high school level. Industry representatives had a generally unfavorable image of high schools as a good source of workers. An initial reconnaissance demonstrated that their mistrust of high schools was not misplaced. A review of high school vocational education programs in construction within the Austin Independent School District revealed that two-thirds of the students participating were labeled “learning disabled.” The construction high school vocational programs were clearly perceived by teachers and counselors as dumping grounds for the least able students. There were notable exceptions, however. The local electricians apprenticeship program co-sponsored by the National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers had successfully apprenticed several excellent high school graduates from classes taught by a vocational teacher in agricultural implement technology in a rural school near Austin. Several of these graduates were found to be among the program’s best performing apprentices. As a result, the electrical apprenticeship program had developed a close working relationship with the teacher and sought students he recommended to them.

In any case, industry officials strongly argued that working with high schools was an approach that was “too long run.” Shortage conditions in Austin were so immediate and so critical that the industry needed an approach that would produce entry-level workers right away. Faced with construction employment growing at 20 percent annually in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the committee decided that it needed to find ways to get qualified applicants into the industry quickly. They contended that apprenticeship programs were already in place in the industry to provide skill training to individuals once in the industry. What was most needed was a program to produce entry-level workers. Thus, a program was devised that would become a “gateway” to working in the construction industry. The name “Construction Gateway” was adopted as a natural title for this program.

Industry and political leaders were rightfully concerned about immediate shortages in the local construction industry. As Figure 1 shows, construction employment in the Austin MSA continued to grow rapidly throughout the 1990s, peaking at almost 42,000 jobs in mid-2001. Construction employment fell by nearly 5,000 jobs from mid-2001 to 2004, which is an important factor in understanding Construction Gateway’s labor market outcomes.

**Evolution of Construction Gateway.** Construction Gateway began in the summer of 1994 as a program “to prepare individuals for apprenticeships and entry-level employment in the construction industry...in the Austin area. The target population was the underemployed and unemployed in low-income area, many of whom were high school dropouts. The specific goals of the first pilot program were (1) to provide 30 individuals with a ten-week program

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<sup>5</sup> Richard L. Tucker, et al., *Key Workforce Challenges Facing the American Construction Industry: An Interim Assessment*, Report No. 3, Austin: Center for Construction Industry Studies, the University of Texas at Austin, 1999.

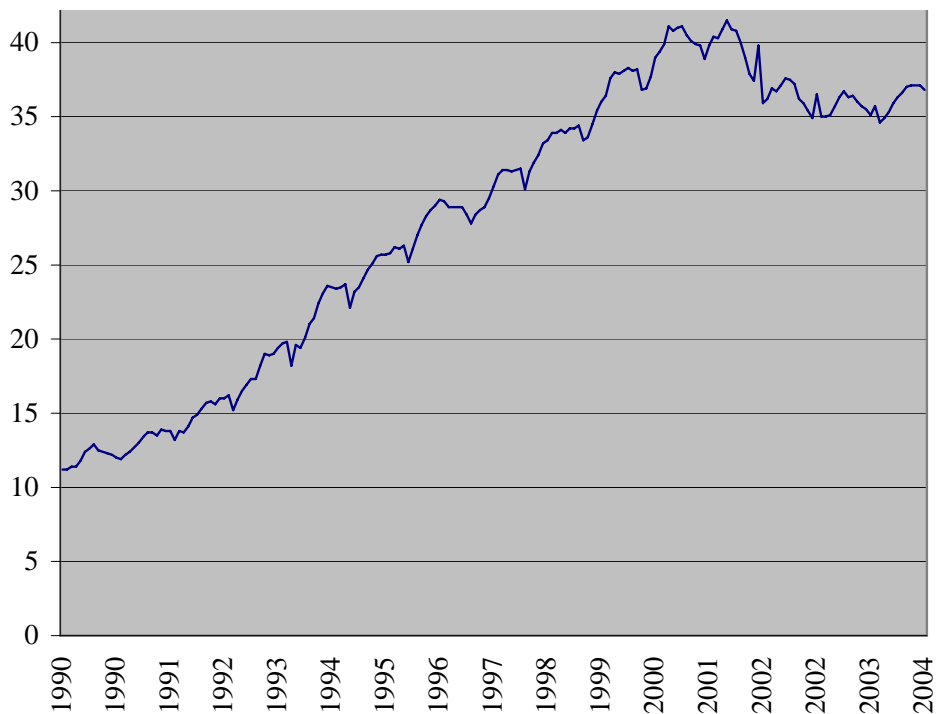
<sup>6</sup> J. Reid, “Challenges for the Construction Industry,” *Construction Business Review*, 1997, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp.30-31.



that gives them the necessary basic knowledge and skills for apprenticeships and successful entry-level employment in seven construction trades; and (2) to provide Austin-area employers with a stronger pool of individuals for apprenticeships and entry-level employment in seven construction trades.”<sup>7</sup> The program ran for 300 hours over ten weeks and included 1) employability skills, 2) math and reading skills for training and employment, 3) basic construction skills. From its inception, the program was never envisioned to provide craft training; rather, it was to offer an introduction to the industry and to seven basic construction trades (i.e., electrical work, plumbing and pipefitting, sheet metal work, bricklaying/masonry, carpentry, concrete, and ironwork/concrete reinforcement) and to acquaint learners with existing apprenticeship programs offering skill training. Visits to each of the existing apprenticeship training facilities were contemplated as part of the program. However, this idea subsequently was judged to be impractical and dropped.

In addition to providing an orientation to the construction industry, the initial curriculum included applications of mathematics to construction, instruction and practice in the proper use of hand tools, and most of all, safety training. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety certification, certification in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid certification were all available in the program nearly from the beginning.

**Figure 1: Construction Industry Employment in the Austin MSA, 1990-2004 (in 000s)**



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Rungeling, “Evaluation of the Construction Gateway Training Program: The Pilot Program/Gateway I. December 14, 1994.

The second cycle of Gateway (Gateway II) was an 11-week, intensive work-study course instruction, with two days per week spent in classroom instruction and three days per week spent on the job working as a paid intern. This model aimed to provide learner classroom instruction as well as practical on-the-job learning. The paid internship offered an additional advantage—an income to maintain the trainees during their training. However, employers found the logistics of this model too difficult to accommodate on their worksites. So, the internship portion was eliminated, and eventually the program was compressed into a five-week period of classroom instruction. An important part of the rationale for the shorter course was the recognition that trainees could not live without income for any lengthy period of training.<sup>8</sup>

The curriculum was developed and revised with considerable input from industry representatives. Learning elements were devised with input from all representatives, including those from union as well as open-shop segments of the industry. A very capable curriculum development expert from Austin Community College (ACC) facilitated the process. But when it came to choosing curricular materials, “Wheels of Learning” commonly identified as a nonunion curriculum was chosen. This selection upset some of the union participants and diminished their subsequent involvement in the program.

Extensive discussion was held among industry officials early on about the appropriate entry standards for Construction Gateway. Industry representatives set the initial student standards as follows: eligibility for employment in the United States, and minimum scores of 6.6 (6<sup>th</sup> grade level) in reading and mathematics as determined by the TABE assessment instrument; at least 18 years of age; and drug-free. The reading and mathematics scores were compromised in very first class, as four of the 18 graduates did not meet the minimum tested levels. Thus, this level of reading and mathematics proficiency became a guide rather than a rigid requirement for program admission. As Construction Gateway began to recruit ex-offenders, the Construction Steering Committee also recommended that no class include more than 40 percent ex-offenders, both to avoid stigmatizing the program in the eyes of employers and to maintain the character of the learning environment in the classroom.

The first classes were conducted in training facilities at Bergstrom Air Force Base, which had been vacated by the Air Force. ACC was invited to operate the program. Although the college wanted to conduct the instruction, ACC had no interest in providing the needed “wrap-around” services, including outreach and intake, case management, and follow-up placement services. So, SER-Jobs for Progress, a community organization with close ties to Austin’s minority communities, was enlisted to provide these services. As construction on the new airport progressed, the Air Force training facilities were demolished, and the Construction Gateway program was moved to ACC’s nearby Riverside Campus. Despite the intentions of Mayor Todd and Gateway’s initial location at the airport site, only a handful of placements were made in jobs related to construction of the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

Construction Gateway underwent considerable experimentation and revision before settling on its current model. Numerous modifications were made in the curriculum. The length of the course was varied. The program was offered evenings rather than during the day. A

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<sup>8</sup> Economists estimate that 75-80 percent of the cost of training is in the form of trainees’ foregone earnings.

version of Construction Gateway was also conducted in Spanish. Neither of these later approaches attracted sufficient enrollment to sustain the program.

Throughout its early history, industry representatives on the Construction Steering Committee closely monitored the Construction Gateway program through regular monthly meetings, held at 7:00 AM in the Board Room at the offices of the Associated General Contractors. During the next four years, the performance of SER-Jobs for Progress was generally good, but problems began to occur due to considerable staff turnover. In 1999, SER-Jobs for Progress encountered severe performance problems on another project to run Austin's One-Stop Centers, which eventually resulted in the demise of the organization in Austin. CATF decided to pull Construction Gateway program operations in-house, maintaining a contract with ACC for the instructional component and directly hiring staff for administration and the requisite "wrap-around" services. The program model has remained fairly consistent since that time.

## **Construction Gateway Design and Operations**

This section provides an overview of the current design and operations of the Construction Gateway program, based both upon interviews with key program staff and collaborators, as well as information drawn from program files.

**Service Delivery Design.** The following subsections describe the Construction Gateway service design as it has been operated by CATF and ACC since 1999. The Gateway program design was awarded a competitive 2003 Career Advancement Strategy Award from Jobs for the Future and the Workforce Innovation Networks (WINs).

*Outreach.* Gateway staff have targeted outreach to numerous organizations that are in direct contact with disadvantaged populations. Among others, these include the Salvation Army; the Texas Youth Commission (TYC)—both its Workforce Development/Parole unit and Turman House, a residential facility for youth preparing to re-enter society; the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC); the Del Valle Correctional Center; particularly the Community Offender Re-entry Effort (CORE), a special program operated by the Travis County Sheriff's Department with more intensive activities for incarcerated youth; the Travis County Criminal Justice Center (TCCJC); Goodwill Industries: *WorkSource*-the Greater Capital Area Workforce Board and its One-Stop Career Centers; and the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH). Gateway program and CATF staff regularly visit these organizations to discuss recruitment opportunities. Additionally, Gateway has distributed flyers and brochures in numerous public locations, placed ads in community-based newspapers, provided notice on local public access television, and recruited through African-American churches.

Employers have been recruited for Construction Gateway through two key trade associations—the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) and the Associated General Contractors (AGC). Both associations have long been affiliated with the Construction Steering Committee, one of several industry sector committees CATF has staffed over the years. The industry cluster currently serves as the Business Advisory Council for Gateway and is co-chaired by the training director of the Austin Electrical Joint

Apprenticeship Training Committee, a union-affiliated apprenticeship program, and the director of Business Development at a local construction firm. Some 276 firms are listed in the Gateway employer directory, and about 25 individuals are active in the Council.

*Intake.* Construction Gateway intake is conducted by CATF staff at the South Austin One-Stop Career Center, which is funded by the *WorkSource* Board. Prospective participants complete a lengthy application form, which collects additional data that may help the program qualify them for (and simplify) enrollment in other programs and services available at the One-Stop Center. As part of the intake process, applicants are also given the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading and math tests to assess their functional abilities. However, no one is turned away for low performance on these TABE tests. The only eligibility requirements are residence in Travis County, 18 or more years of age, and family income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Although not a formal eligibility requirement, the program also requires facility with English, since the instruction and curriculum materials are in English.

Those selected for the program are invited to an orientation the week before class starts. Showing up on time for this session is the last screen for enrollment. An ACC application is completed at this time. Staff usually admit 18 individuals to the program, based on their historical experience that only about a dozen will actually show-up. Demand for admission reportedly is directly related to the unemployment rate: the number of program applicants rises in poor labor markets.

*Education and Training Activities.* The Gateway curriculum is a hybrid. It draws from the Core Curriculum developed by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). The same curriculum is used in apprenticeships of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). In addition, some Gateway instructional elements are drawn from the standard curriculum in ACC's Building and Construction Technology program that is approved by its own advisory group. Gateway's Business Advisory Council is presently revisiting its curriculum and has employer engagement in curriculum development as one of its three priority objectives, along with better engagement in job development and targeted industry marketing.

Construction Gateway participants typically receive:

- Education regarding site layout, construction math, blueprint reading, and other elements of functional literacy in the first week.
- Employability workshops including resume preparation, job search skills, and a job fair (at the end of the third week with employers in attendance).
- A rotation of training that introduces the tools and skills necessary for carpentry, electrical, rigging, sheet metal, HV/AC, and masonry/cement trades.
- OSHA recognized workplace safety training, as well as Red Cross CPR and First Aid training.
- A Marketable Skills Award equivalent to nine credit hours. Participants also received eight hours of ACC credit toward a Certificate or Associate Degree for those interested in continuing their education. In 2003, its accrediting agency

raised instructor certification issues that could have limited its ability to grant such credits, but ACC has continued the practice.

- Six months of credit towards an ABC apprenticeship program.

The program is intensive, operating 38.5 hours per week over five weeks. The program contains a lot of “hands-on” activities. There is a heavy emphasis on developing “soft skills” and on socializing these individuals to work. Students are treated as if they were in a job. Punctuality and reliability are heavily emphasized. Three unnecessary absences disqualify a person from continuing in the program. The five-week Construction Gateway program cycles eight times each year, with each class containing approximately a dozen students.

Near the end of the program, each student has an exit interview with the ACC Building Construction Technology director, who reviews ten areas of instruction with the student prior to determining their advancement to candidacy for graduation.

Students successfully completing the course participate in a graduation ceremony, complete with caps and gowns and a motivational graduation speaker, such as an elected official, a construction industry leader, college official, or a former participant who has his own successful firm. Each of the students is asked to talk about his or her experiences at the ceremony as well. Family members often add their testimonials, noting how much the graduate has changed or sharing their feelings for the graduate. The ceremony is usually well attended by friends and families of the graduates, local government officials, ABC and AGC representatives, and local employers, as well as staff from CATF and *WorkSource*, and ACC instructors. Lunch is prepared and served on site, which contributes to the informal bonding that occurs across a range of stakeholders. The graduation ceremonies offer Construction Gateway a splendid vehicle for community engagement.

*Supportive Services.* Gateway and ACC provide the tools and materials for the class. Other supports include gloves, goggles, and bus passes for those who need them to attend class or get to work. Occasionally, Home Depot gift cards are provided to those who may need additional equipment to work.

*Employment Services.* Job readiness and employability workshops are an integral part of the curriculum. In addition, participants are offered several opportunities to meet with prospective employers. On Friday of the third week of class, employers are invited for an informal lunch with students. Students and staff also meet employers at the job fair and at graduation. CATF provides post-graduation job placement activities on the Monday following graduation at the One-Stop Career Center, where the graduates can fax and e-mail their resumes to prospective employers. Participants also can access labor market information and career resources at the One-Stop Center.

*Follow-up.* Because of the transitory nature of the Gateway population and limited resources, CATF staff have had difficulty conducting follow-up for employment entry and job retention. The new contract performance report required by the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department is encouraging better data collection.

**Program Administration.** Administration of Construction Gateway is primarily a CATF responsibility, but many functions are performed jointly by CATF and ACC with input from the Business Advisory Council. CATF has primary responsibility for fiscal management of

City/County and other funds; intake/eligibility determination; data collection and reporting; and job placement, with increasing input from the Business Advisory Council and access to *WorkSource* placement services at the One-Stop Career Centers. CATF also provides most follow-up services, which are limited. ACC instructors maintain informal contact with students and report that they regularly receive requests for employment recommendations. As more participants link with programs at the One-Stop Career Center, follow-up may become more systematic and comprehensive due to more stringent performance requirements.

Shared administrative functions include program planning, which is jointly conducted by CATF and ACC with input from the Business Advisory Council; human resources decisions are made independently by ACC (3 instructors and the director of Building and Construction Technology) and CATF (1.5 FTEs); marketing which is done primarily by the CATF staff and the Business Advisory Council, though ACC staff routinely provide information to potential participants; testing, which consists of initial TABE screens given by CATF and a final take-home examination and a ten-question exit interview by ACC staff, both of which must be passed to qualify for graduation; and performance management and oversight, which is shared by CATF staff and the contract administrators at the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, which is the primary funding sponsor.

Finally, instruction is primarily the responsibility of ACC with input from its Advisory Board, CATF, ABC, and the Business Advisory Council.

*Budget and Expenditures.* As indicated in Table 1, the Construction Gateway budget has been approximately \$160,000 annually. Most of the funding has come from the City of Austin and Travis County, which co-fund several workforce development efforts through the Community Action Network (CAN) with a split of approximately 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively. Construction Gateway receives a few participant referrals from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as well; these students each bring a voucher which covers up to \$2,000 in tuition, fees, and services. In 2004, the Topfer Family Foundation sponsored an entire Gateway class with a \$25,000 grant.

Major cost centers include ACC tuition, materials, and CATF salaries. ACC tuition is \$558 for in-district students and \$998 for out-of-district students, plus about \$125 per student for materials. From the tuition paid (shown as professional contracts in the table), ACC hires adjunct instructors to teach the Construction Gateway course. Total cost is about \$1,200-\$1,500 per student for the five-week Construction Gateway program (based on 2002 and 2003 figures), a moderately expensive treatment when compared to typical employment and training interventions. Gateway costs \$240-\$300 per week, slightly more than the cost of typical training programs for youth but less than the roughly \$370 weekly cost of Job Corps.<sup>9</sup> Gateway serves more offenders than do either mainstream youth training programs or Job Corps.

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the costs and impacts of U.S. employment and training programs, see: Christopher T. King, "The Effectiveness of Publicly Financed Training in the United States: Implications for WIA and Related Programs," In Christopher J. O'Leary, Robert A. Straits, and Stephen A. Wandner, Eds., *Job Training Policy in the United States*, Kalamazoo, Michigan: W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2004.

**Table 1: Construction Gateway Revenues and Expenditures, FYs 2002-2004**

	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	\$85,260.02	\$95,122.83	\$72,860.58
Professional Contracts	\$52,547.69	\$56,123.19	\$39,917.46
Occupancy	\$1,058.00	\$1,531.38	\$498.77
Communications	\$2,194.64	\$3,183.76	\$1,064.70
Insurance	\$383.00	\$285.71	\$356.48
Supplies	\$9,176.86	\$2,601.18	\$2,829.26
Other	\$11,329.81	\$4,017.50	\$1,391.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$161,950.02</b>	<b>\$162,865.55</b>	<b>\$118,918.46</b>
<b>Revenues</b>			
City of Austin	\$94,027.00	\$94,027.00	\$89,174.00
Travis County	\$61,905.00	\$61,905.00	\$61,905.00
Workforce Investment Act	\$4,000.00	\$5,600.00	\$7,600.00
Topfer Family Foundation	-	-	\$25,000.00
Other	\$2,000.00	-\$158.36	\$30,321.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$161,932.00</b>	<b>\$161,373.64</b>	<b>\$189,000.19</b>

*Source:* CATF program records. Note that the program's fiscal year is the calendar year.

*Note:* FY 2004 expenditures cover the period January through July 2004 only.

**Performance Measures.** Construction Gateway uses a series of formal performance measures established by the City of Austin and Travis County, as well as a number of informal measures, to gauge program performance.

Of the *formal measures*, employment entry at a livable wage is the overriding goal of the Gateway Construction program. Staff are quick to emphasize that they nurture employability training for entry-level jobs, not advanced skills training, and that many of their participants are learning about workplace soft skills like communication, punctuality, teamwork, and listening. As such, a living-wage target is challenging for many participants, given their employment and personal histories. Nonetheless, the City of Austin and Travis County have established 19 formal measures and performance targets to gauge the progress and the return on their public investment. For 2004, these formal measures and standards included the following:

- Percent of clients successfully completing job readiness training (*Goal:* 76.5 percent of enrollees);
- Percent of clients obtaining employment (*Goal:* 75.8 percent of completers);
- Percent of clients obtaining employment at a livable wage, defined as \$9.00/hour (*Goal:* 74.5 percent of completers employed at or above \$9.00/hour);
- Percent of clients obtaining employment with increased wages (*Goal:* 83 percent of completers employed); and

- Percent of clients retaining employment six months after employment entry (*Goal: 74.5 percent of completers who enter employment*).

Construction Gateway has had mixed results meeting these targets given the target population served and fluctuations in the labor market prospects in key industries emphasized, such as construction.<sup>10</sup> Particular problem measures include employment entry rates and the livable-wage standard. Performance on completion rates, wage gains, and retention has been stronger.

CATF staff also use other more *informal measures* or indices that suggest the program is working. At times it may be challenging to fill the slots in the class, given the changing circumstances of the clients served. For some of the clients, staff feel that any job is a success, especially for those who are destitute, homeless, or re-entering society from prison and have little or no work history. The large number of employers present graduation day that are prepared to hire signals that Gateway is serving both industry and individuals well.

CATF staff take pride in the program's ability to serve those referred from entities such as the Texas Youth Commission or the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, knowing that they can provide an opportunity for someone to get a new direction or second chance in their life and livelihood prospects. Staff observed that some individuals had closer family ties to the construction industry, which helped to motivate them toward graduation and success. As expected, there have been a few "hard cases," individuals who appeared to mostly be "going through the motions." Nonetheless, CATF staff and ACC instructors try to personally engage all participants through mentoring and an emphasis on teamwork.

**Gateway Participants, 1999-2004.** As Table 2 shows, Construction Gateway enrolled 563 participants from 1999 (when CATF took over program operations) through September 2003.<sup>11</sup> Table 2 presents the numbers and characteristics of program participants, annually and for the 1999-2003 period. Data for 2004 are presented as well, primarily for comparative purposes only. None of the 2004 participants and only about three-quarters of the 2003 participants were used for the labor market analysis that is reported later in the report.

A number of points are clear from the data presented in Table 2. The number of Gateway participants has varied considerably from year to year, reaching peaks in 2001 and 2003 at 126 and 134 respectively. The pace of enrollment through the middle of 2004 was not substantially different from earlier years. Annual enrollment variations likely reflect changes in project funding, referring organizations (e.g., the loss of CORE), and the local economy, among other factors.

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<sup>10</sup> CATF prepares and submits a quarterly *Human Services Contract Performance Report* to the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department. The City of Austin and Travis County have generally accepted the reported data at face value. Funding is not explicitly based on reported performance.

<sup>11</sup> Note that these figures are somewhat lower than those found in the Construction Gateway program files maintained by CATF. As mentioned in later sections, Ray Marshall Center researchers spent considerable time and effort working with these files to develop a relatively consistent set of data for analysis. A number of participants were excluded from our sample due to conflicting (or even missing) program start, enrollment and graduation dates, indications in counselor notes that the individual never showed up for classes after enrolling, or appeared to have been detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service before enrolling.



**Table 2: Characteristics of Construction Gateway Program Participants, 1999-2004**

<b>Year(s)</b>	<b>1999-2003</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Total Number	563	87	109	126	107	134	43
Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	11.9%	6.9%	10.1%	16.7%	13.1%	11.4%	14.3%
Male	88.1%	93.1%	89.9%	83.3%	86.9%	88.6%	85.7%
<b>Age</b>							
24 and under	58.6%	63.2%	73.4%	60.8%	46.7%	50.8%	34.1%
25-35	18.9%	17.2%	14.7%	19.2%	18.7%	23.5%	25.3%
36-45	14.1%	12.6%	8.3%	12.0%	21.5%	15.9%	23.1%
46 and over	8.4%	6.9%	3.7%	8.0%	13.1%	9.8%	17.6%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>							
Anglo	27.4%	29.9%	22.0%	25.4%	29.0%	31.0%	41.6%
Black	29.7%	26.4%	33.0%	31.0%	31.8%	26.4%	21.3%
Hispanic	40.1%	41.4%	43.1%	42.1%	34.6%	39.5%	37.1%
Other	2.7%	2.3%	1.8%	1.6%	4.7%	3.1%	
<b>Education</b>							
8th grade or less	4.1%	2.3%	5.5%	5.6%	3.7%	3.0%	2.2%
9th to 11th	27.4%	26.4%	26.6%	40.5%	23.4%	19.4%	33.0%
HS Grad/GED	46.5%	47.1%	55.0%	40.5%	42.1%	48.5%	29.7%
Postsecondary E&T	14.2%	10.3%	7.3%	10.3%	23.4%	18.7%	33.0%
Not coded	7.8%	13.8%	5.5%	3.2%	7.5%	10.4%	2.2%
<b>Ex-offender</b>							
Yes	59.7%	60.9%	81.7%	61.1%	52.3%	45.5%	62.6%
No	40.3%	39.1%	18.3%	38.9%	47.7%	54.5%	37.4%
<b>TABE Reading Score</b>							
0 to 3.9	19.2%	14.9%	6.4%	18.3%	18.7%	33.6%	36.3%
4.0 to 6.9	11.2%	12.6%	11.0%	15.9%	12.1%	5.2%	8.8%
7.0 to 9.9	14.0%	14.9%	15.6%	14.3%	11.2%	14.2%	8.8%
10.0 to 12.9	55.6%	57.5%	67.0%	51.6%	57.9%	47.0%	46.2%
<b>TABE Math Score</b>							
0 to 3.9	19.4%	13.8%	6.5%	19.8%	19.8%	32.8%	35.2%
4.0 to 6.9	16.2%	17.2%	21.3%	19.0%	13.2%	11.2%	11.0%
7.0 to 9.9	32.8%	37.9%	37.0%	35.7%	28.3%	26.9%	9.9%
10.0 to 12.9	31.6%	31.0%	35.2%	25.4%	38.7%	29.1%	44.0%
<b>Referral Source</b>							
CORE	41.3%	51.9%	59.2%	44.5%	32.3%	21.7%	2.2%
RIO	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%	1.8%	5.2%	0.9%	15.4%
Salvation Army	5.3%	6.3%	8.2%	7.3%	4.2%	0.9%	1.1%
TYC	8.2%	5.1%	13.3%	6.4%	9.4%	6.6%	16.5%
Walk-ins*	19.8%	27.8%	9.2%	10.9%	25.0%	28.3%	19.8%
Other **	23.3%	8.9%	8.2%	29.1%	24.0%	41.5%	45.1%
<b>Graduation Status</b>							
Leavers	15.5%	20.7%	17.4%	8.7%	23.4%	10.4%	52.7%
Graduates	84.5%	79.3%	82.6%	91.3%	76.6%	89.6%	47.3%

Source: Construction Gateway Program Records, CATF. Data for 2004 cover only to July.

\*Walk-ins include individuals entering on their own from ACC, friends and family, fliers, or TV ads.

\*\*Other includes ARCH, Bootstrap, Casey Family, SMART, TRC, TWC, WIA, and several others.

Program participants have overwhelmingly been men, accounting for almost nine of every ten enrollees each year. While participants have generally been young adults, older participants have made up an increasing share of enrollees since 2000. The race/ethnic mix of participants has varied each year as well. Hispanics have been the largest participant group of the entire period, but the share of Anglo enrollees jumped sharply in 2004. Minorities still made up more than half of the enrollees that year as well. Ex-offenders have made up a very substantial share of the participants—roughly six of every ten—with some notable year-to-year variation. This is not surprising given the emphasis and intent of the program from the outset.

Most participants have had less than a high school education, though the share with at least some college has increased sharply since 2002. In 2001, more than 46 percent of participants reported having less than a high school education. A substantial share of enrollees have posted low reading and math scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as well, again with considerable variation from year to year. Over the period, the functional literacy on the TABE reading test has been below the tenth grade level for nearly 45 percent of enrollees, while nearly 60 percent of enrollees were functioning below that level on the math test. In general, the population served by Construction Gateway is one with low education and functioning levels, even though some have had college diplomas.

The source of referrals for the Construction Gateway program also has varied over the period. The Community Offender Re-entry Effort (CORE), the Travis County Sheriff's Department program for incarcerated youth, has been the single largest source of referrals. In 1999 and 2000, CORE provided well over half of all referrals, though by 2003, it provided very few, since the CORE program was eliminated by Travis County late that year due to a severe budget crunch. Walk-ins—who may include individuals coming over from other parts of the ACC campus, TV ads, fliers, or even family and friends—provided nearly one-fifth of all referrals, but the share rose sharply towards the end of the period, accounting for more than one-quarter after 2001. Other programs—including WIA One-Stops, TYC, TRC, etc.—also served as a key source of participant referrals, accounting for just under 24 percent for the 1999-2003 period as a whole but nearly 42 percent in 2003.

Nearly 85 percent of Gateway participants graduated over the 1999-2003 period. The graduation rate hit a low of about 77 percent in 2002 but was as high as 91.3 percent in 2001. The graduation rate was only 47 percent through mid-2004, though a substantial number of individuals were still enrolled at the end of the period of study.

## Collaborator Observations

Over the period from June through November 2004, researchers from the Ray Marshall Center conducted a series of both in-person and telephone interviews with some 28 individuals representing organizations that either refer individuals to the Gateway Construction program, sponsor the program, or employ its graduates. (Appendix A contains copies of the guides used for these interviews, while Appendix B lists those interviewed.) This section reports on the results of these interviews. In general, there is widespread support for the Gateway Construction program among these collaborators. Several offered specific recommendations for how it might be improved over time as well.

**Referring Entities and Supporters.** Programs associated with the criminal justice system noted some of the difficulties involved in serving their population, particularly the burden of felony arrests on entering employment, but valued the opportunity for formerly incarcerated individuals to become familiar with new tools and skills that Gateway offers. Travis County especially values the prospects of Gateway for reducing recidivism.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, they mentioned the benefit of self-esteem and public recognition that hard-to-serve participants receive. They credit Gateway staff for these accomplishments, as good role models and instructors who not only teach, but promote accountability as well. They also recognize the difficulty of conducting follow-up for younger participants who usually settle elsewhere upon release. Non-profit organizations in the community are not as deeply attached to Gateway as those dealing with offenders.

Most referring entities realize the importance of careful screening for students, but also want to “keep the playing field level.” While some would like to be able to make more referrals, others purposefully limit themselves at two to four referrals per class, fearing that members of the youth offender group may get mischievous. Opinion is mixed as to whether the length of the program should be extended beyond five weeks, but most favor an intensification of skills training instruction and greater employer involvement with job placements. Some expressed hope that the City and the County would get more involved with employment opportunities as well. All agree that the model could and should be applied to other industries as well, including automotive technology, health care, hospitality, and retail sales, among others.

**Employers.** Most employers interviewed became involved in Construction Gateway through personal contacts or relationships with CATF, ABC, or AGC staff. Some have been engaged and recruiting employees since the program’s inception in 1994. All of the employers interviewed agreed that Construction Gateway prepared individuals for entry-level (e.g., general laborer) positions only. They echoed others’ observations regarding the skills and characteristics that are important in graduates, including punctuality and attendance, commitment, and social skills such as tolerance (regarding gender, race, ethnic status, and culture), and teamwork. Employers are also impressed with the interviewing skills and the follow-up efforts that applicants have developed. They appreciate their familiarity with a broad array of tools, their ability to read blueprints, and their safety training that results in OSHA and First Aid certifications.

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<sup>12</sup> The CORE Program at the Del Valle Correctional Center—once a source of multiple referrals to Gateway—was discontinued by Travis County in October 2003 due to funding constraints.

The sample of employers interviewed had recruited for a number of opportunities and positions, including apprenticeship training, carpenters, laborers, survey assistant, and electrician's helper. The lowest starting hourly wage that employers reported for former Gateway participants was \$9.00 and ranged up to \$11.45. Employers thought that the program helped individuals keep their job, particularly because of the emphasis on punctuality and work ethic, and even helped them to increase their wages and obtain promotions. Other than additional safety classes, these employers required or offered no additional training for those hired. Their overall experience with Gateway has been positive, though a few were concerned about individuals who had not fully committed to construction as a career path. They agreed that the program is successful at teaching basic skills and preparing individuals for the workforce.

Some employers expressed concern that the program could improve the selection process to ensure graduates are actually willing and physically able to work in the construction industry; a few indicated that Gateway was more interested in maintaining full class enrollments than providing quality job candidates.<sup>13</sup> They also suggested that the program could be lengthened, expanded to more fields, and intensified. They emphasized the importance of encouraging more employers to participate. One employer suggested that the program could reach out to high school students, giving them early exposure to the construction industry.<sup>14</sup> The employers interviewed made several specific recommendations for how Gateway could better serve employers. These included:

- Encouraging more graduate applications;
- Better marketing of Gateway services and improving name recognition among area employers;
- Recruiting more employers to participate in the program;
- Better pre-selection of students; and
- Addressing the transportation problems of graduates and the disconnect between construction locations and their residences.

Almost unanimously, the employers which were interviewed stated that the Construction Gateway model could be applied to other areas and industries, including roofing, sheet metal work, mechanical, health care, custodial, hospitality, HVAC, truck-driving, and automotive technology. One employer was uncertain whether this population would be as welcome in another industry besides construction. Overall, employers indicated that Gateway is a good program that provides a valued community service. Meeting program goals and objectives is challenging, but the program appears largely to be on the right track. It is important for employers to know that the graduates are capable of performing the hard work required in the construction industry.

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<sup>13</sup> It is surprising that employers with significant engagement may have not understood Gateway's target population.

<sup>14</sup> In earlier years, the regional School-to-Career Partnership tried to work through the Construction Industry Sector Steering Committee to obtain summer jobs and internships for students in Career Pathways at local high schools, but found this difficult because of safety and liability concerns.

## Participant Observations

During the latter half of 2004, researchers from the Ray Marshall Center also attempted to contact nearly 300 individuals who had enrolled in the Gateway Construction program between January 2001 and July 2004. This participant sample included program graduates, as well as individuals who had registered but failed to attend classes (“no shows”) and those who left before completing the program (“leavers”). The vast majority of the participant contact information available to the researchers was outdated and inaccurate. As a result, researchers were only able to contact and interview 29 individuals from the larger group to learn about their experiences with Gateway. Thus, the observations reported below should be viewed as illustrative rather than definitive.

Conversations with former participants yielded the following observations:

- Most respondents indicated that they enrolled in Gateway because they were looking to acquire new skills or wanted to “better” themselves by obtaining a good job or starting a new career. Looking for a “fresh start” or a “new direction” was a common theme in their responses. One respondent was a construction technology instructor at a local school and wanted more hands-on experience.
- The vast majority of the participant respondents found the program helpful, but a few offered qualified responses. The latter felt that the program would be more effective with greater focus on specific trades rather than the “immersion” approach to the construction industry.
- There was an outlier in the group of participant respondents. One woman was very upset with the program, the way it was run, and the people who ran it. She quit by the end of the third day because the instructors were not helpful in her quest to become a general contractor.
- Another “leaver” (i.e., non-graduate) said he had changed his plans about going into construction and did not want to take up someone else’s place in the Gateway program.
- The respondents generally agreed that Gateway provides sufficient skills and training for an entry-level position. They recognized the program as a “good place to start,” and felt that there was more they could learn.
- About half of the participant respondents claimed to have worked in construction prior to participating in Gateway. Most were planning to work in construction after completing the program, and more than half actually held jobs in the industry after graduating. About 40 percent reported that they were currently working in construction.
- When asked how long it took for them to secure their first post-program job, respondents were evenly spread between four categories: 1-2 weeks, 3-4 weeks, 4-8 weeks, and 8 or more weeks.
- Half of the respondents indicated that they had worked continuously since leaving Gateway; the rest worked only intermittently.

- Nearly all participant respondents thought that Gateway had helped them find and keep jobs, but were less unified regarding whether participation had increased their wages. None thought it had led to a promotion.
- Participants identified many benefits unrelated to construction, including a greater sense of responsibility, more respect for punctuality, better interpersonal skills, and enhanced teamwork. Class-related benefits included improved math, appreciation for learning in a school setting, resume preparation, and interview skills.
- Gateway appears to have influenced the participants regarding continuing education and training as well. Most have not actually taken additional classes or received training, but planned to do so. Although they remain vague regarding what this might be, this is an accomplishment for a group with generally reduced levels of academic achievement. A few respondents have taken further construction skills courses, computer courses, or are enrolled in ITT, a proprietary trade school.
- Only three respondents were ex-offenders, none of whom has had further encounters with the criminal justice system or been re-incarcerated.
- Gateway does not appear to have had a dramatic affect on receipt of public assistance. A handful of respondents were on Food Stamps or receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits before Gateway, and a few continued to receive these benefits at the time they were interviewed.
- Most have had post-program contact with CATF and ACC staff, usually revolving around job search assistance. Participants appreciated the help of staff who called with appropriate employment opportunities. Alternatively, graduates called CATF and ACC staff for job leads, recommendations, and occasionally even technical assistance.
- The respondents almost unanimously spoke with high regard for the program and the array of social, occupational, academic, safety, and job search skills that they acquired. The prominent shortcoming identified was the short duration of the course, although a few mentioned tension with instructors, lax classroom discipline, and the unanticipated challenges of working construction, including the continuous hard work and the central Texas heat.
- Participants strongly supported the extension of the Gateway approach to other industries. Automotive technology, culinary arts, retail sale, manufacturing, and healthcare were among the industry sectors that they recommended.

## Labor Market and Related Outcomes

After “scrubbing” the administrative data from the Construction Gateway program for conflicting start and end dates, questionable Social Security numbers, and other data problems, Ray Marshall Center researchers linked data for enrollees from the period January 1999 through September 2003 with associated employment and earnings data drawn from federal/state Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records available from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Wage records data were available from at least three quarters before enrollment in the program through three quarters after program exit,<sup>15</sup> where exit was defined as graduation day for those who completed the program (graduates) and date of enrollment or drop-out date for those who did not (“leavers”). Enrollees in the last two Construction Gateway classes of 2003—as well as those in all 2004 classes—were dropped from this analysis due to the unavoidable lag time in accessing the UI wage records data.<sup>16</sup> Also, it should be noted that, while these UI data are traditionally referred to as “wage” records, in fact, hourly wages are not part of these files; the records contain quarterly *earnings* for all covered employers an individual employee may have worked for during a particular quarter.

Researchers encountered limitations in both the Construction Gateway program files and the UI wage records for analyzing the labor market outcomes of participants. On the program side, some Gateway participants lacked valid SSNs that could be used for linking to the UI wage records. A number of individuals were excluded from the sample used to assess Gateway’s labor market performance for the following reasons:

- *Limited or no program participation*: 20 individuals either participated for less than a week or, based on program records and counselors’ notes, never really attended classes;
- *Temporary or bad SSNs*: 3 individuals were reported as having only a temporary SSN or one that was judged to be bad; and
- *INS ‘hold’ status*: 3 individuals were placed in ‘hold’ status by the Immigration and Naturalization Services according to program records and thus could not effectively participate in the program or secure employment.

There were also some employment coverage issues with the UI wage data. Fully 91.8 percent of the 563 Construction Gateway participants from the period January 1999 to September 2003 for whom researchers attempted to obtain employment and earnings information could be found in the UI wage files at some point during the period. It is very likely that many of the “missing” individuals were employed at some point during the post-program period, just not in employment covered by the federal/state UI program. Some also may have been employed out of state, while still others—a small number—may well have been unemployed for the entire period in question.

These limitations constrain the analysis of labor market outcomes somewhat and may lead to some bias. It is likely that the results reported here capture the employment rates and

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<sup>15</sup> A longer span of UI wage data was available for early Gateway participants. The focus in this analysis is on pre- and post-program period shared by all participants.

<sup>16</sup> There is typically a 5-6 month lag before complete UI wage data can be accessed for someone working in UI-covered employment.

retention of Gateway graduates with reasonable accuracy. Given that a substantial portion of construction employment is with employers not subject to UI coverage, it is likely that they *understate* their average quarterly earnings and possibly their earnings gains as well. We do not know the extent of the bias that may be present in the reported earnings outcomes. The results presented in this section should be viewed with these limitations and possible biases in mind.

Measures computed based on these UI wage records data include:

- Employment Entry Rate
- Average Quarterly Post-Program Earnings
- Employment Retention
- Pre-/Post-Program Earnings Changes
- Post-Program Earnings Changes

Technical definitions for each of these performance measures are provided in Appendix C.

Researchers also computed the number of employers in the first quarter of employment and the number of individuals who appear to have worked for a single employer for three consecutive quarters after exiting the Construction Gateway program.

**Employment Entry.** Researchers applied a relatively broad definition of employment entry to these data, counting individuals who reported positive UI-covered earnings either in the quarter in which they left the program or in the immediately following quarter. These computations are made for all participants exiting the program. This broad definition of employment entry is appropriate in part due to the fact that the earnings data are only available on a quarterly basis and individuals' classes often overlap into two quarters.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that nearly 70 percent of graduates entered employment subsequent to completing the Gateway program, compared to 64.4 of leavers, i.e., those who enrolled but did not graduate. Overall quarterly earnings remain low for both graduates and leavers: graduates averaged just under \$2,200 per quarter, while leavers only earned \$1,727 on average. Figure 2 illustrates this pattern.

Employment entry rates were higher for 25-35 year olds, Anglos, non-offenders, and those with more education, none of which is very surprising. Average quarterly earnings for those entering employment contrasted with expectations to some extent. Older participants, non-offenders and those with postsecondary education and training posted the highest quarterly earnings—the last group having the highest at more than \$3,200 per quarter—but females (\$2,540) earned considerably more than males (\$2,063), and Others and Hispanics out-earned Anglos and Blacks. The earnings patterns by race/ethnicity and by offender status are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

All subgroups exhibited mobility among employers after taking jobs: both graduates and leavers worked for around 1.2 employers during the quarter in which they became employed. Younger participants worked for fewer employers than did older ones.

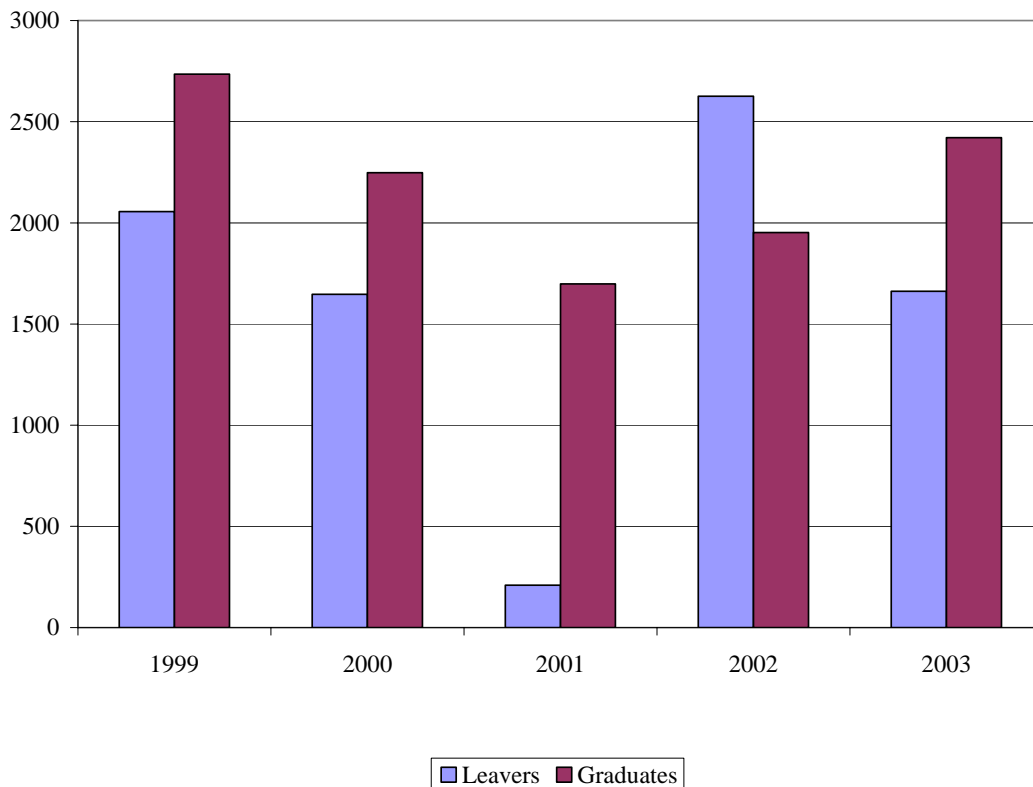


**Table 3: Employment Entries and Average Quarterly Post-Program Earnings for Construction Gateway Participants, 1999-2003**

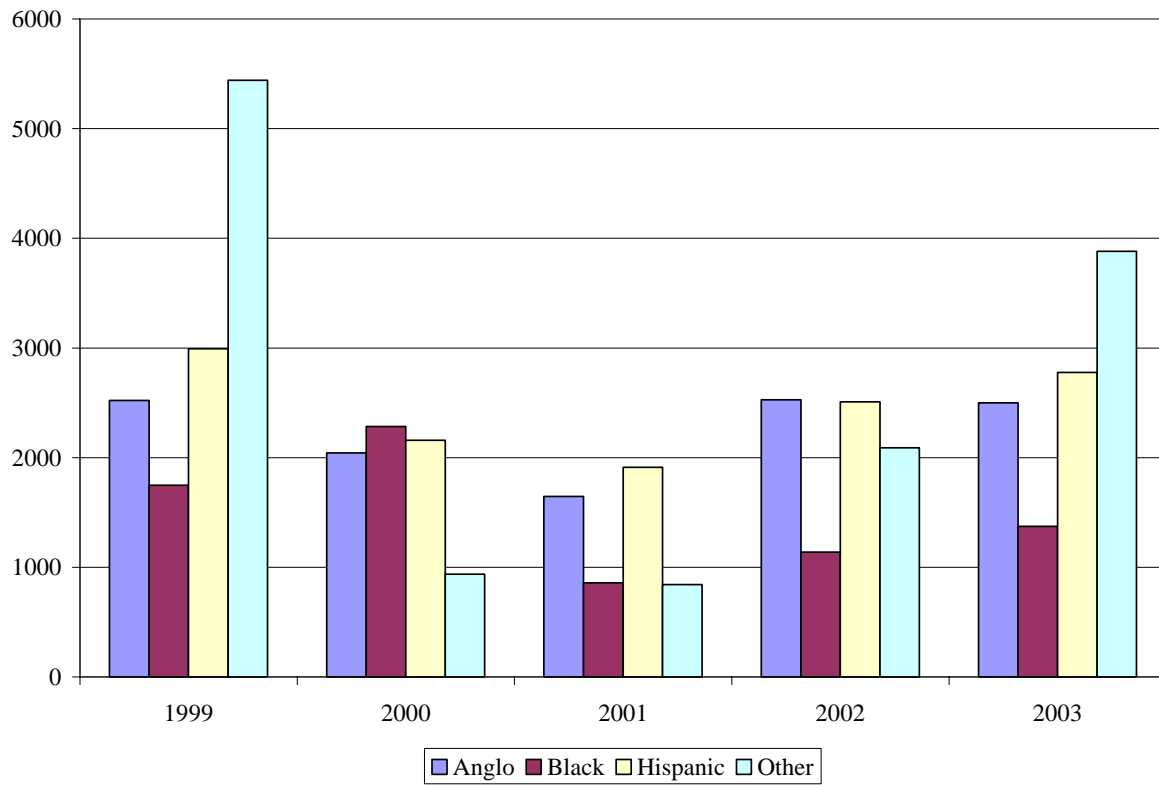
Population	Number	Percentage	Average Earnings in Entry Q	Average Number of Employers in Entry Q
<b>All Years</b>				
Graduates	331	69.5%	\$2,193	1.20
Leavers	56	64.4%	\$1,727	1.16
<b>Graduates</b>				
24 and under	215	65.5%	\$1,822	1.11
25-35	88	83.0%	\$2,371	1.33
36-45	55	69.6%	\$2,506	1.39
46 and over	27	57.4%	\$2,838	1.07
Male	340	68.8%	\$2,063	1.20
Female	45	67.2%	\$2,540	1.16
Anglo	114	74.5%	\$2,239	1.27
Black	105	63.3%	\$1,510	1.09
Hispanic	155	69.2%	\$2,421	1.22
Other	9	60.0%	\$2,880	1.00
Ex-offender	220	65.5%	\$1,864	1.15
Non-offender	167	73.6%	\$2,470	1.25
8th grade or less	13	56.5%	\$1,402	1.08
9th to 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	89	57.8%	\$1,790	1.14
HS Graduate/GED	195	74.4%	\$1,993	1.21
Postsecondary E&T	54	67.5%	\$3,212	1.21

*Source:* Construction Gateway program files, UI wage records. Note that numbers for particular categories may not add due to incomplete reporting.

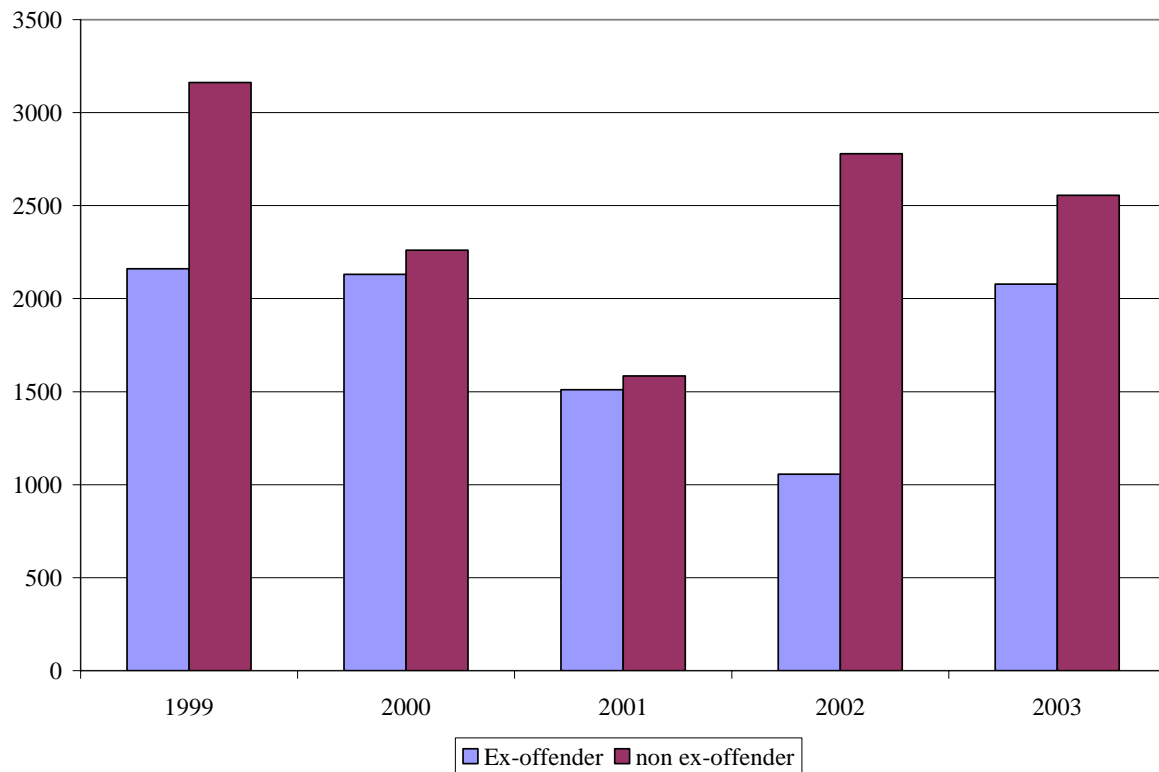
**Figure 2: Average Quarterly Earnings at Employment Entry, by Graduation Status**



**Figure 3: Average Quarterly Earnings at Employment Entry, by Race/Ethnicity**



**Figure 4: Average Quarterly Earnings at Employment Entry, by Offender Status**



**Employment Retention.** Employment retention has been defined as individuals with earnings in the first post-program quarter who were employed in the second and third post-program quarters as well. That is, individuals must have taken a job and remained employed with that employer or other employers over all three post-program quarters used for the analysis. Table 4 indicates that nearly one-third (32.4 percent) of Gateway graduates were employed for all three post-exit quarters and that more than half of these appear to have been working for a single employer for the entire period. Additionally, approximately 14 percent of graduates had earnings in the first post-program quarter, but not the following two quarters. Leavers had lower employment retention rates and did not stay with the same employers as much.

Older participants, females, Anglos and non-offenders appear to be the more consistently employed over the period. On the other hand, the relationship between education and retention does not appear to be straightforward: less and more educated participants had greater employment retention rates than those in the middle.

**Table 4: Employment Retention for Construction Gateway Participants, 1999-2003**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Number with Earnings Q1-Q3</b>	<b>Percent with Earnings Q1-Q3</b>	<b>Number with Earnings in Q1 but not Q2-Q3</b>	<b>Percent with Earnings in Q1 but not Q2-Q3</b>	<b>Number Employed with Single Employer/Q, Q1-Q3</b>
<b>All Years</b>					
Graduates	154	32.4%	68	14.3%	82
Leavers	24	27.6%	5	5.7%	10
<b>Graduates</b>					
24 and under	98	29.9%	44	13.4%	48
25-35	35	33.0%	17	16.0%	18
36-45	27	34.2%	11	13.9%	13
46 and over	17	36.2%	1	2.1%	12
Male	151	30.6%	68	13.8%	73
Female	26	38.8%	5	7.5%	18
Anglo	55	35.9%	22	14.4%	24
Black	43	25.9%	17	10.2%	24
Hispanic	75	33.5%	30	13.4%	41
Other	4	26.7%	3	20.0%	2
Ex-offender	96	28.6%	45	13.4%	48
Non-offender	82	36.1%	28	12.3%	44
8th grade or less	8	34.8%	4	17.4%	7
9th to 11th	41	26.6%	16	10.4%	15
HS Graduate/GED	85	32.4%	38	14.5%	45
Postsecondary E&T	28	35.0%	7	8.8%	18

*Source:* Construction Gateway program files, UI wage records. Note that numbers for particular categories may not add due to incomplete reporting.

**Pre-/Post-Program Earnings Changes.** Researchers computed pre-/post-program earnings changes based on the available UI wage records data, comparing average quarterly earnings three months prior to entering the Gateway program with those three

months after exiting the program. Table 5 indicates that only about one-quarter of Gateway participants had positive UI-based earnings in both relevant quarters for this analysis. Neither graduates nor leavers exhibited solid earnings gains based on these data. According to the table, and as shown in Figure 5, graduates gained on average \$156, while leavers only gained \$84. On the other hand, the 33 percent of graduates and the 25 percent of leavers who experienced earnings gains enjoyed average gains of \$2,440 and \$2,182, respectively. Clearly, program successes were unevenly distributed.

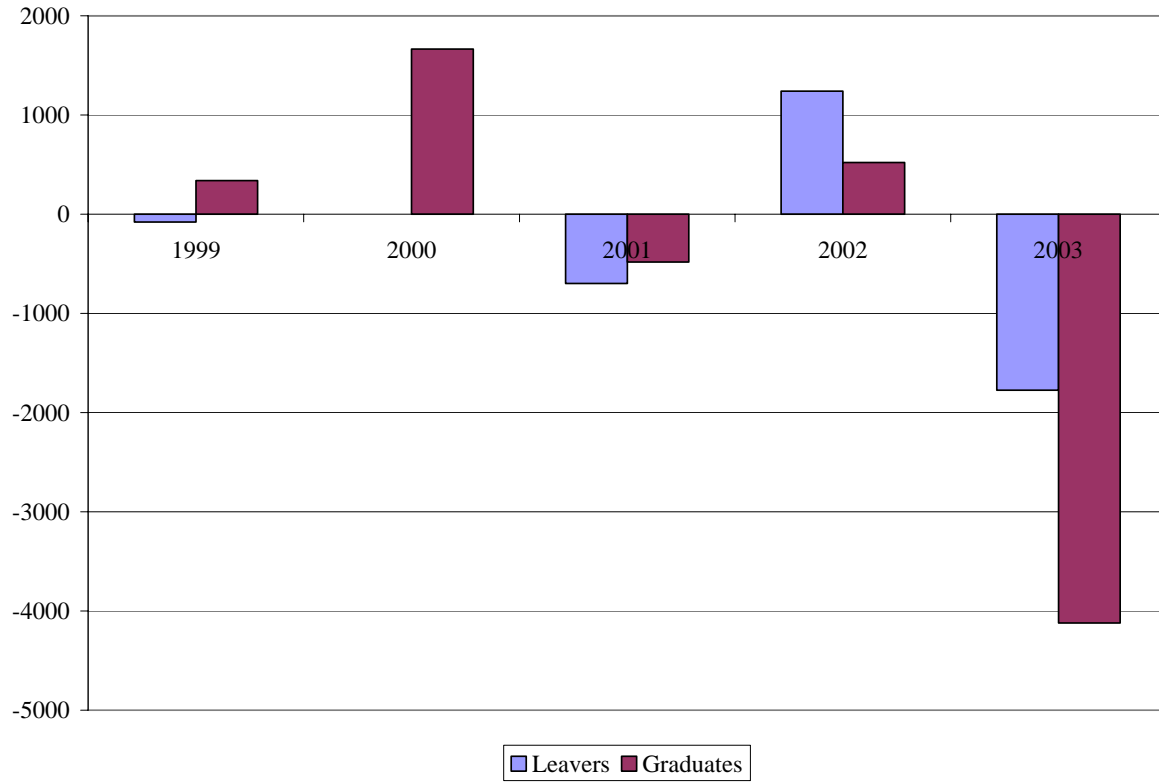
**Table 5: Pre-/Post-program Earnings Changes for Construction Gateway Participants, 1999-2003**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Total Population in Measure Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3</b>	<b>Percent with Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3 Earnings</b>	<b>Average Earnings Change Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3</b>	<b>Percent with Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3 Earnings Gains</b>	<b>Average Earnings Gain Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3, of those with Gains</b>
<b>All Years</b>					
Graduates	476	25.6%	\$189	32.8%	\$2,440
Leavers	87	26.4%	\$84	25.3%	\$2,182
<b>Graduates</b>					
24 and under	328	21.6%	\$1,412	35.4%	\$2,203
25-35	106	29.2%	\$952	32.1%	\$3,299
36-45	79	32.9%	-\$1,825	21.5%	\$2,332
46 and over	47	31.9%	-\$3,580	21.3%	\$2,102
Male	494	24.5%	\$485	32.0%	\$2,425
Female	67	32.8%	-\$1,369	28.4%	\$2,381
Anglo	153	27.5%	-\$23	34.0%	\$2,304
Black	166	21.7%	\$752	28.3%	\$2,163
Hispanic	224	27.7%	\$460	32.6%	\$2,698
Other	15	20.0%	-\$8,683	26.7%	\$2,404
Ex-offender	336	18.5%	\$964	34.5%	\$2,163
Non-offender	227	36.6%	-\$418	27.3%	\$2,868
8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	23	26.1%	\$854	30.4%	\$1,156
9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	154	19.5%	\$1,494	31.8%	\$2,481
HS Graduate/GED	262	26.7%	\$893	34.4%	\$2,393
Postsecondary E&T	80	30.0%	-\$4,148	20.0%	\$3,018

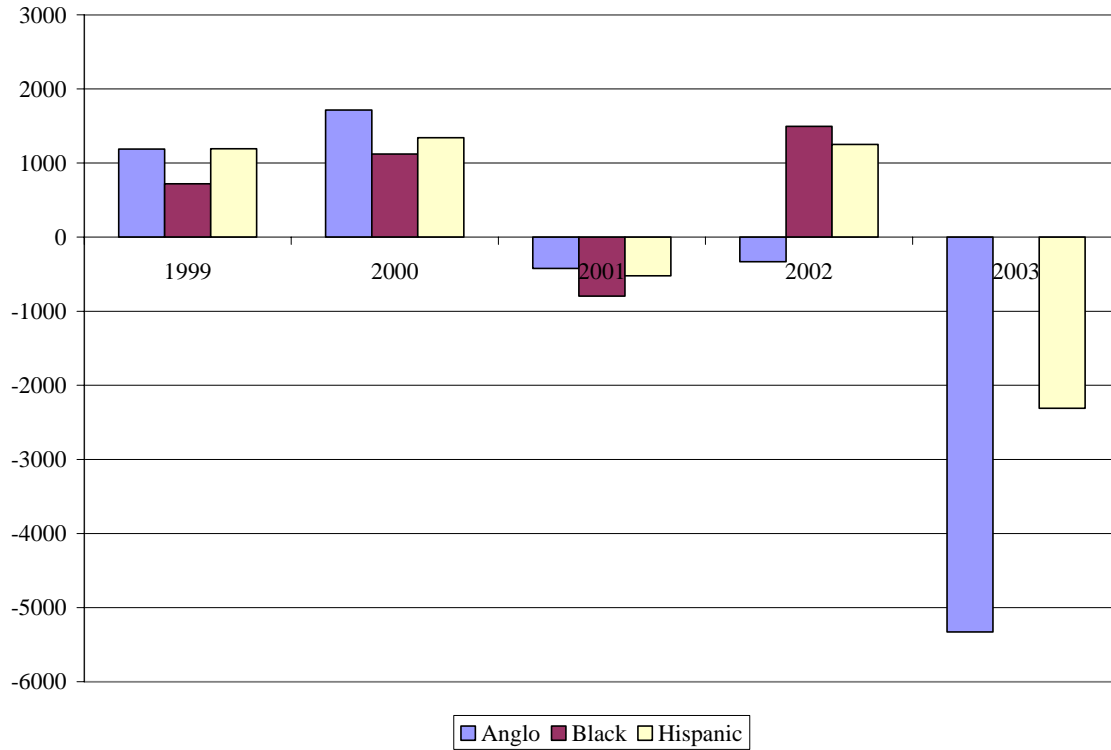
*Source:* Construction Gateway program files, UI wage records. Note that numbers for particular categories may not add due to incomplete reporting.

Younger participants, males, minorities, non-offenders, and those with less than postsecondary education tended to experience larger pre-/post-program earnings gains, while older participants, females, ex-offenders, and those with postsecondary education and training actually experienced losses. Note that in some cases (e.g., other race/ethnicity) the number of participants is quite small such that a few negative results can skew the results considerably. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the results by race/ethnicity and offender status.

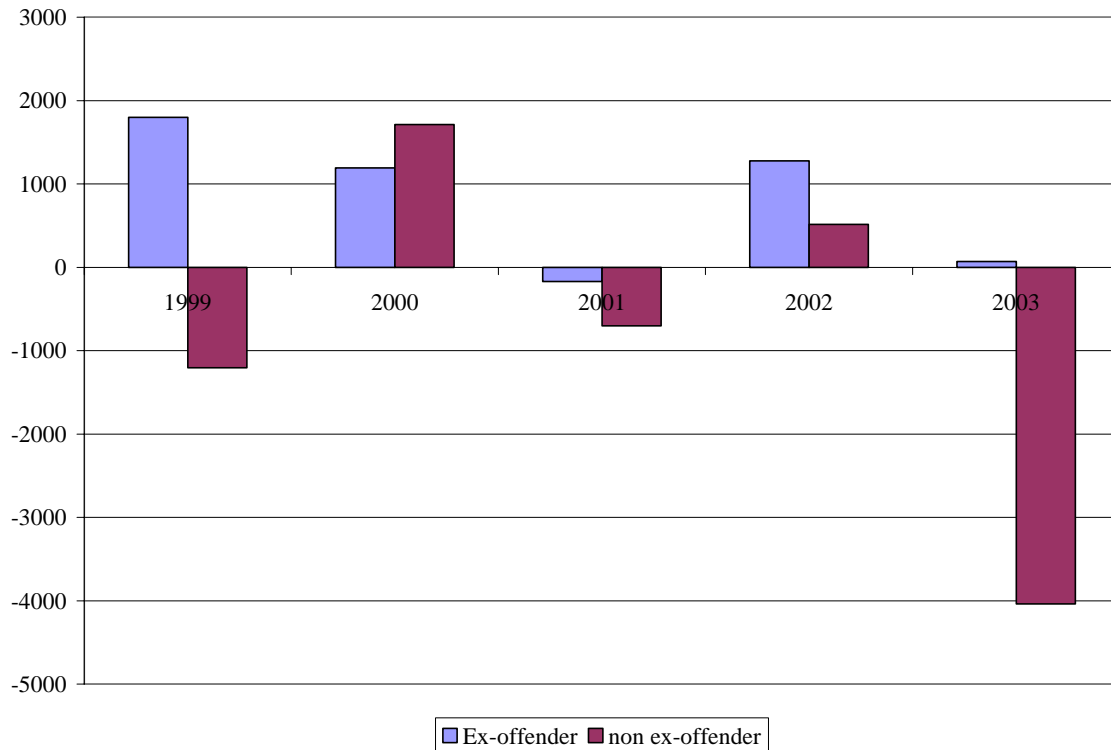
**Figure 5: Average Earnings Change between Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3, for those with earnings in both quarters, By Graduation Status.**



**Figure 6: Average Earnings Change between Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3, for those with earnings in both quarters, By Race/Ethnicity.**



**Figure 7: Average Earnings Change between Pre-Q3 and Post-Q3, for those with earnings in both quarters, By Offender Status**



**Post-Program Earnings Changes.** Researchers also computed *post-program* earnings changes for Construction Gateway participants, computing the difference in earnings gains between the first and third post-program quarters as indicated in Table 6. A larger share of participants experienced post-program gains once employed. Graduates gained more than leavers on average, with post-program gains of just under \$600 and \$246, respectively. The pattern by subgroup is a bit more varied than with pre-/post- gains. The youngest and oldest participants experienced smaller gains or even losses, while males gained more than females. Ignoring the very small number of Others, Blacks and Hispanics gained more than Anglos who were employed at exit. Non-offenders gained more in post-program earnings than did ex-offenders, and the pattern by education was quite mixed, though participants with the least education fared the worst.

**Table 6: Post-Program Earnings Changes for Construction Gateway Participants, 1999-2003**

Population	Total Population in Measure Post-Q1 and Q3	Percent with Post-Q1 and Q3 Earnings	Average Earnings Change with Post-Q1 and Q3 Earnings	Percent with Post-Q1 and Q3 Earning Gains	Average Earnings Gain with Post-Q1 and Q3 Gains
<b>All Years</b>					
Graduates	476	35.1%	\$599	29.0%	\$1,885
Leavers	87	31.0%	\$246	29.9%	\$1,162
<b>Graduates</b>					
24 and under	328	32.9%	\$213	27.7%	\$1,425
25-35	106	37.7%	\$1,496	31.1%	\$2,529
36-45	79	35.4%	\$1,022	32.9%	\$2,004
46 and over	47	36.2%	-\$17	27.7%	\$1,907
Male	494	33.6%	\$627	28.7%	\$1,793
Female	67	40.3%	\$262	31.3%	\$1,691
Anglo	153	38.6%	\$477	30.7%	\$1,911
Black	166	28.3%	\$777	27.7%	\$1,507
Hispanic	224	36.6%	\$522	29.0%	\$1,866
Other	15	26.7%	\$966	33.3%	\$1,940
Ex-offender	336	31.8%	\$255	26.8%	\$1,497
Non-offender	227	38.3%	\$912	32.6%	\$2,104
8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	23	34.8%	-\$10	26.1%	\$598
9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	154	29.2%	\$822	27.3%	\$1,807
HS Graduate/GED	262	36.3%	\$526	30.9%	\$1,575
Postsecondary E&T	80	36.3%	\$685	30.0%	\$2,605

*Source:* Construction Gateway program files, UI wage records. Note that numbers for particular categories may not add due to incomplete reporting.

**Recidivism.** An important factor motivating Travis County to fund Construction Gateway in the mid-1990s was the hope that offenders participating in such a program would experience reduced involvement in the criminal justice system as a result. While researchers were unable to access to comprehensive administrative records from criminal justice entities for the various federal, state and local levels, we were able to use Gateway program records to conduct an initial analysis of re-incarceration results for those entering the program as ex-offenders. These data are reported in Table 7. Note that there are many missing cells in this table; missing cells indicate that none of the ex-offenders in the Gateway program had those particular characteristics (e.g., females in 1999).

Overall, only 11 percent of Gateway graduates were reported as having a re-arrest according to program records for participants from 1999 through 2003; none of the leavers were ex-offenders at entry, which explains the absence of a recidivism rate for this group. Males, young adults, those with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education or less and low TABE scores, as well as referrals from the CORE program tended to have higher recidivism rates. The recidivism rate for CORE referrals across all years was 15.7 percent. The

rates reported for any given year were higher and showed wide variation, in part reflecting much smaller participant numbers.

**Table 7: Recidivism Rates of Construction Gateway Ex-offender Participants, 1999-2003.**

<b>Year(s)</b>	1999-2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Number	32	6	5	15	5	1
Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	5.0%	—	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Male	9.8%	11.3%	4.9%	22.1%	9.3%	1.7%
<b>Age</b>						
24 and under	11.1%	11.1%	5.7%	25.0%	9.3%	2.3%
25-35	5.5%	16.7%	6.7%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
36-45	—	—	—	—	—	—
46 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Anglo	—	—	—	—	—	—
Black	10.6%	6.3%	10.0%	22.2%	8.7%	0.0%
Hispanic	10.9%	16.7%	5.3%	16.1%	15.0%	4.2%
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Education</b>						
8th grade or less	11.8%	0.0%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9th to 11th	10.7%	12.5%	3.8%	17.6%	15.8%	0.0%
HS Graduate/GED	9.8%	16.7%	4.1%	22.9%	6.9%	2.8%
Postsecondary E&T	6.3%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Ex-offender</b>						
Yes	9.5%	11.3%	5.6%	19.5%	8.9%	1.6%
<b>TABE Reading Score</b>						
0 to 3.9	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
4.0 to 6.9	12.2%	12.5%	14.3%	14.3%	12.5%	0.0%
7.0 to 9.9	7.3%	14.3%	0.0%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%
10.0 to 12.9	10.3%	11.1%	6.3%	23.8%	6.3%	3.3%
<b>TABE Math Score</b>						
0 to 3.9	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	20.0%	0.0%
4.0 to 6.9	11.3%	12.5%	5.9%	22.2%	12.5%	0.0%
7.0 to 9.9	10.3%	15.4%	3.2%	24.1%	4.2%	3.8%
10.0 to 12.9	8.1%	5.9%	8.6%	14.3%	7.1%	0.0%
<b>Referral Source</b>						
CORE	15.7%	12.8%	8.8%	30.6%	16.1%	4.5%
RIO	—	—	—	—	—	—
Salvation Army	—	—	—	—	—	—
TYC	—	—	—	—	—	—
Walk-ins*	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other **	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Graduation Status</b>						
Leavers	—	—	—	—	—	—
Graduates	11.0%	12.8%	6.6%	20.8%	11.1%	1.9%

Source: Construction Gateway Program Records, CATF.

\*Walk-ins include individuals entering on their own from ACC, friends and family, fliers, or TV ads.

\*\*Other includes ARCH, Bootstrap, Casey Family, SMART, TRC, TWC, WIA, and several others.



## Prospects and Recommendations

There appears to be overwhelming community support for the Construction Gateway program. The City of Austin and the Travis County leadership perceive this effort as a wise investment of public tax dollars and the collaborating entities that refer individuals to the program are proud of the results that they have observed. During the course of this research, we have encountered many observations and recommendations drawn from the individuals, firms, educators, and project staff that volunteered their insights regarding the Construction Gateway. The most resounding strength of the program is its ability to give dignity, self-respect, teamwork skills, and prospects for a better livelihood to marginal populations. Its most obvious shortcoming is its failure to substantially engage the employer community. Despite the stated commitment to program objectives by construction industry representatives, there have been minimal offers of real jobs for those who have completed the curriculum.

From the perspective of *community collaboration*, it is clear that:

- Construction Gateway is a community project, not a proprietary program of CATF, per se. All partners should be fully recognized, particularly the ongoing contributions of ACC personnel, who provide the direct education and training services, and the City and County support.
- *WorkSource* employment and training options could and should be more fully utilized, both to open an additional array of services and to better access data regarding performance outcomes.
- Applicants should be made more fully aware of other CATF/community options as well. The Community Technology Training Centers can enrich the education and employment options for those who “touch” Gateway.
- Stronger connections with the Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs could provide secure training and earnings prospects for all of those interested in careers in the building trades.
- Employer commitment to hiring graduates could be documented and strengthened by a Memorandum of Understanding that affirms their support for the Gateway program and their commitment to hiring its graduates.
- The City of Austin and Travis County could also reinforce their commitment by providing entry-level jobs to graduates. Why they support training, but do not provide employment to its graduates remains an enigma to many associated with the program.

From a more *programmatic perspective*, it is also clear that:

- Gateway is not job skills training, but rather an introduction to the building trades that teaches participants a basic tool kit and necessary social skills.
- The Construction Gateway model could be readily applied to other fields as well, including health care, automotive technology, food services, and the hospitality industry.

- Improved screening of potential participants for their ability to complete the curriculum and benefit from the assistance that would support their employment in the construction industry would be appreciated by employers.
- Construction Gateway provides a window of hope for individuals that gives them a sense of self-respect and options that they may have foreclosed.
- CATF and ACC staff serve as mentors and role models. The commitment of CATF staff is palpable. ACC instructors are truly engaged with sharing their skills, knowledge, and the importance of continuous lifelong learning,
- Although program outcomes based on the available data are not impressive by standards applied to the general population, Construction Gateway's target population of economically disadvantaged, ex-offenders and others has revealed a real capacity for working and earning in the local labor market.
- New and better ways of recordkeeping and tracking the outcomes of Gateway participants need to be developed and implemented as well. In part, this will entail much more thorough and complete data collection for participants, including updated contact information. Gateway staff should institute basic data-quality checks for participant records to ensure greater accuracy and consistency of these data. UI wage records work well in documenting the employment and earnings of many other groups and programs, but are unlikely to perform as well with this highly mobile and wary population seeking work in the construction industry. The main concern as indicated is that earnings of program participants will be underreported.

Construction Gateway might consider "triaging" participants into skills groups and offering advanced training in cooperation with AGC, ABC, and JATC for those more ready to advance their career prospects. This may entice employers to assure employment prospects for more of its graduates.

## Concluding Observations

As a target industry for the Gateway Program, construction offers both advantages and disadvantages. On the favorable side, entry is easy, construction work is ubiquitous, and formal education requirements are less than in many other industries. Also, construction employers facing shortages in the labor market are often willing to overlook barriers to employment such as ex-offender status. Construction does provide rewarding careers for some workers, but the worst working conditions also are found in construction. Although the industry does offer structured training through apprenticeships and other forms, the available training is not accessible to all employees, and surveys of construction workers have demonstrated that the training actually provided is minimal, especially in comparison with training levels in other industries. Also, because construction work is transient and worksites ever changing, it raises significant transportation challenges, especially for individuals who often do not have access to reliable private transportation in a region such as Travis County, Texas where public transportation coverage is minimal.

What does the Construction Gateway program offer beyond what is provided by an honest, private, for-profit, staffing agency for day laborers? For employers, Construction Gateway offers opportunities to directly hire workers (without hefty overhead charges) who have proven themselves reliable and motivated over five unpaid weeks and who have training in safety, the use of power hand tools, and other job entry skills. Gateway is a screening tool for employers, though employers may prefer the program to be more selective. For individuals determined to make a fresh start, Construction Gateway offers a supportive, helpful and encouraging environment. Gateway offers both emotional support and tangible resources, such as bus passes and tools. In addition, Gateway provides important instruction in safety (in preparation for work in one of the country's most dangerous industries), as well as in employability skills, and job finding skills (in an industry where jobs are transient, and worksites are ever changing, and workers must become adept at negotiating the transition to the next job to work steadily). Construction Gateway offers aspiring job seekers who have failed a new start and a chance to prove themselves by attending reliably for five weeks and participating without pay. For society, Construction Gateway provides a path to rehabilitation, employment, and opportunity for those who have failed or transgressed in the past. In short, a well functioning Construction Gateway program can be viewed as one plank in building an Opportunity Economy.

Approaching its tenth anniversary, Construction Gateway has become a fixture in the array of employment and training options in the Austin/Travis County area. Almost all of the participants that we have observed at graduation ceremonies or interviewed as part of this study expressed their gratitude for the experience that was made available to them. The potential of this effort has only begun to show.

## **Appendix A: Interview/Conversation Guides**

### **Construction Gateway Evaluation: CATF/Gateway/ACC Conversation Guide**

#### **I. Introduction**

(Either telephone or face-to-face.) My name is . . . from the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas, and we are conducting an evaluation of the Construction Gateway Program. I am calling/here on behalf of the program and its sponsors, including Jobs for the Future, an applied research and technical assistance organization based in Boston that is funding the evaluation in behalf of the Capital Area Training Foundation. We are also trying to lay a foundation for long-term research and evaluation capacity. I'd like to talk to for a few minutes if possible about the design, delivery, outcomes and other aspects of Gateway based on your knowledge and experience as an administrator, staff, or instructor. This conversation is completely voluntary and confidential. It will take about 30-45 minutes. Your comments may affect the continuation, expansion, or modification of the program in the near future.

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Institutional Affiliation:**

What is your principal function or role in the Gateway Construction Program?

When did the program begin and has it changed over the years? Explain.

When did you and your organization become involved in the Construction Gateway Program and why?

#### **II. Service Delivery Design (CATF/Gateway/ACC)**

**Outreach:** How do different populations (TYC, Salvation Army, etc.) hear about the Gateway Program?

What are the target populations?

How do employers in the construction industry become aware of the program?

**Intake:** Briefly describe the client intake procedures: the where, who and the what.

What are the eligibility requirements?

How would you characterize demand for and supply of training slots? Does this vary considerably? Explain.

Is Gateway a stand-alone program at ACC operated by CATF/Gateway staff and ACC instructors or can students register through regular channels as well?

Are there enrollment fees for students?

**Education and Training Activities:** Briefly describe the sequence and content of education and training components.

How is the curriculum developed or selected? Does industry play a role in this?

Curriculum based on nationally recognized “Wheels of Learning.” Newly formed Business Advisory Panel has employer engagement in curriculum development as one of its three priority objectives (along with better engagement job development and industry targeted marketing.) (TS)

Are tools and materials provided?

**Supportive Service:** What supportive services are available to participants in the program?

**Graduation:** What are the graduation requirements?

What certification, credits, or other recognition do graduates receive?

ABC and AGC Certificate of Achievement, OSHA Safety, Red Cross CPR/First Aid, ACC Certificate for 8hrs credit.

**Employment Services.** What kinds of job development activities do staff conduct?

What job search and job placement activities are available to graduates?

How is employment entry tracked?

**Follow-up Service:** What other services are available after graduation or employment entry? Does this vary by population group, employment status, or other factors? Explain.

Do you have any recommendations for improving the design and delivery of Gateway activities and services?

### **III. Program Administration (CATF/Gateway, some ACC)**

**Operational Planning:** What procedures are followed to determine when, how, and who to serve in the Gateway Program?

**Staffing:** How many FTE staff are assigned to the program?

What are the key functions of staff? (Obtain organization chart, if available.)

Who is responsible for:

- Program planning?
- Fiscal management?
- Human resource decisions?
- Marketing?
- Intake/eligibility determination?
- Data collection and reporting?

- Performance management?
- Instruction?
- Testing?
- Job placement?
- Follow-up services?

**Marketing:** To what extent and through what mechanisms is Gateway marketed to:

- General public?
- Target populations?
- Public officials?
- Employers?
- Community leaders?
- Other service providers (Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.)?

#### **IV. Measuring and Managing for Success (ALL)**

**Formal Measures.** What are the formally articulated goals and objectives of the program? Have these changed over time? Explain.

How do you measure progress toward achieving these goals and objectives?

Are there formal performance targets for the Gateway program?

What are they and how have they been determined?

In what areas has Gateway been more successful? Why?

In what areas has Gateway been less successful? Why?

**Informal Measures.** What personal or informal measures indicate to you that you are doing your job well?

What personal or informal measures indicate to you that you Gateway is improving the livelihood prospects of the participants?

Are there observable characteristics or circumstances that might be associated with individual success in the Gateway Program? Explain.

Alternatively, are there observable characteristics or circumstances that might be associated with individuals who are less likely to succeed in the Gateway Program? Explain.

What formal or informal measures indicate to you that you Gateway is operating efficiently?

**Comprehensive Measures.** (This could be constructed as a matrix and shared with stakeholders to capture their perception of important processes and outcomes.)

As a sign of success is it very important, (simply) important, or not important at all to track as a measure of success:

- Number of students enrolled?
- Number of students who graduate?
- Number of students who drop out?
- Participant satisfaction?
- Employment entry after graduation?
- Occupation and industry of employment entry?
- Entry wages?
- Pre-post program wage gains?
- Employment retention?
- Post-program wage gains?
- Per participant, per graduate, or per job placement costs?
- Availability and types of employment benefits associated with job placements (e.g., health insurance, sick leave, vacation pay, etc.)?
- Continuation in education and training in general?
- Continuation by institute/program and type of education and training?
- Number of employers who recruit from Gateway?
- Number and type of positions filled by employers who recruit from Gateway?
- Employer satisfaction?
- Recidivism?
- Patterns of individual and family receipt of public assistance?

What other measures would you recommend for assessing Gateway outcomes?

## **V. Partnerships/ Collaborative Configurations**

Who would you identify as the key entities or groups involved in the Gateway Program?

Which individuals, employers, and/or agencies do you work most closely with?

Why are these relationships important? What are the benefits of bringing together an array of stakeholders to provide training and employment opportunities to disadvantaged or challenged populations?

Which individuals, employers, and agencies would you like to be working more closely with? Why?

What options are available to build a stronger working relationship with prospective or current collaborators?

**To what extent has Gateway helped to forge relationships between:**

- CATF and ACC
- Employers and career/technology educators at ACC?
- WorkSource-Capital Area Workforce Board and the program?
- Youth corrections and the program?
- Adult corrections and the program?
- Apprenticeship opportunities (JATP and non-union) and the program?
- Builders, building trades associations (AGC, ABC) and the program?
- CATF as a labor market intermediary and employers?
- Other beneficial relationships?

What opportunities exist for increasing articulation from Gateway to the regular ACC curriculum?

What opportunities exist for strengthening relations between the *WorkSource* and Gateway?

## **VI. Budget and Expenditures**

What is the usual annual budget for Gateway?

What metrics drive the budget?

What are the sources of revenue to operate Gateway?

Are these revenue flows stable? Increasing? Decreasing?

What in-kind supports are regularly available to Gateway?

What opportunities exist for stabilizing or enhancing revenues and in-kind resources at Gateway?

What is the total per student cost estimate for the Gateway Program? What is the tuition charge? What are the grant and/or indirect contributions of:

- ACC?
- WorkSource?
- City of Austin?
- Travis County?



- State of Texas?
- Texas Youth Commission?
- Foundations?
- Other sources?

What are the principal cost centers (payroll, benefits, overhead, etc.) for administering and operating the program?

How are indirect costs for administering Gateway calculated at CATF?

## **VII. Prospects**

What conditions exist (e.g., collaborative environment, key sources of support-political corporate or otherwise, etc.) that will sustain Gateway in the future?

Is there intent to expand or replicate Gateway in the future? If so, who is fostering this effort? Do you support this? If so, why?

What would you do to improve Gateway? Can you name 2 or 3 steps you would take?

Would you recommend adapting the Gateway model for other industries such as automotive technology or skills sets required for other industries (e.g., electrical rigging in the film industry)?

Thank you for your time, information, and observations.

## **Construction Gateway Evaluation: Collaborators Conversation Guide**

**Introduction:** (Either telephone or face-to-face.) My name is . . . from the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas and we are conducting an evaluation of the Construction Gateway Program. I am calling/here on behalf of the program and its sponsors, including Jobs for the Future, an applied research and technical assistance organization based in Boston that is funding the evaluation in behalf of the Capital Area Training Foundation. I'd like to talk to for a few minutes if possible about your relationship to and experiences with the Construction Gateway. This conversation is completely voluntary and confidential. It will take about 20-30 minutes. Your comments may affect the continuation, expansion, or modification of the program in the near future.

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Institutional Affiliation:**

What are the key features of your organization/office/agency's relationship with the program (e.g., source of funding/in-kind donations/referrals, other)?

What is the scale of your relationship (i.e., level of funding, in-kind donations, number of referrals, other)?

When did this begin? Could you tell me how it emerged and/or has evolved? Why did you become involved with the program?

What value does Gateway bring to the Central Texas community?

What outcomes do you expect from the program?

Are these being achieved?

How are you measuring these?

Do you have any evidence that the participants are finding employment? Keeping employment? Reducing recidivism? Less dependent on public assistance?

Do you think that the Gateway program gives people enough skills training for an entry-level position in the construction industry?

Are there any other skills that the program imparts that you value? Explain.

Overall, how would you characterize your experience with the Gateway program (e.g., exceeded expectations, satisfactory, disappointing)?

In your opinion, what are the strengths of the program?

What are the primary challenges faced by Gateway?

What specific policies or practices might be modified or implemented to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of the program?

Do you think the program should be sustained? Expanded?

Would you recommend adapting the Gateway model for other industries such as automotive technology or skills sets required for other industries (e.g., electrical rigging in the film industry)?

How could the Construction Gateway Program better serve your organization/office/agency?

Thank you for your cooperation. Your responses will help to improve and sustain the Gateway Construction Program.

## **Construction Gateway Evaluation: Employer Conversation Guide**

**Introduction:** (Either telephone or face-to-face.) My name is . . . from the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas and we are conducting an evaluation of the Construction Gateway Program. I am calling/here on behalf of the program and its sponsors, including Jobs for the Future, an applied research and technical assistance organization based in Boston that is funding the evaluation in behalf of the Capital Area Training Foundation. I'd like to talk to for a few minutes if possible about your experiences as an employer in relation to Construction Gateway. This conversation is completely voluntary and confidential. It will take about 20-30 minutes. Your comments may affect the continuation, expansion, or modification of the program in the near future.

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Institutional Affiliation:**

(For Business Advisory Panel members) What is your principal function or role in Gateway Construction Program?

How and when did you hear about the Construction Gateway Program?

When and why did you first begin hiring/recruiting participants in the program?

Do you think that the Gateway program gives people enough skills training for an entry-level position in the construction industry?

Are there any other skills that the program imparts that you as an employer value? Explain?

What characteristics do you look for in a Gateway graduate?

Do any of the certifications that Gateway participants obtain influence your hiring decisions? (ABC/AGC Certificate of Achievement, OSHA Safety, Red Cross CPR/First Aid, ACC Certificate for 8hrs. credit.

What kind of jobs do you hire them for?

What is the hourly wage range for Gateway graduates that you hire?

Have the skills and experiences provided at Gateway helped them to keep their jobs?

Have they helped these workers to increase their wages, earn more money?

Is occupational or career advancement among this population common at your firm?

Do you encourage or provide additional skill training either on-the-job or elsewhere? (If so) do Gateway graduates seek out these opportunities? Is there any noticeable difference between them and other entry-level hires?

Overall, how would you characterize your experience with Gateway graduates (e.g., exceeded expectations, satisfactory, disappointing)? Explain.

In your opinion, what are the strengths of the current skills training in the program?

In what areas do you think improvements could be made?

Do you think the program should be sustained? Expanded?

How could the Construction Gateway better serve you as an employer?

Would you recommend adapting the Gateway model for other industries such as automotive technology or skills sets required for other industries (e.g., electrical rigging in the film industry)?

Is there anything else you'd like to say about your experiences with recruits/new hires from the program or the program itself?

Thank you for your cooperation. Your responses will help to improve and sustain the Gateway Construction Program.

## **Construction Gateway Evaluation: Participant Conversation Guide**

### **Introduction**

My name is . . . of the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas. I am calling on behalf of the Construction Gateway Program and its sponsors for whom we are conducting an evaluation of the program. I'd like to talk to you for a few minutes if possible about your experiences during and after your participation in Construction Gateway. This conversation is completely voluntary and confidential. It will take about 15 minutes. Your comments may affect the continuation, expansion, or modification of the program in the near future. Would you like to share your insights? If this is not a good time, I or one of my colleagues could call you back at a different time or you could call me at xxx-xxxx.

Note: Gateway records contain several characteristics of the participants including start/finish date, referral source, employment, entry wage (for some), employer information, offender status, demographics (education, age, race, sex), residency/contact information, and some notes on participants. Callers will have this individual information available to them at the time of the call. Additionally, callers will be prepared to ask for the former participant in Spanish. (All of the participants speak English, but some may reside in Spanish speaking households.)

Do you recall participating in the Gateway program?

Why did you enroll in the program?

Did you personally find the program helpful? Explain.

Do you think that the Gateway program gives people enough skills training for an entry level position in the construction industry?

(If the individual is a "leaver") Gateway records indicate that you did not finish Gateway. Why were you unable to complete the program?

Had you ever worked construction prior to Gateway?

Did you plan on working construction after the program? (If not career choice) Have you worked construction since leaving the program?

(If appropriate) Did you find a construction job after you graduated? How many weeks after you finished the Gateway training?

Have you stayed in construction since then? (Continuously/Intermittently/Chose different Occupation)

Have the skills and experiences provided at Gateway helped you to find and keep jobs? Explain.

Have they helped you to increase your wages, earn more money?

Can you recall how much you were earning per hour before you attended Gateway? How much?

Can you recall how much you were earning per hour in your first job after Gateway?  
How much?

How much do you get paid per hour now?

Beyond construction skills, were there things that you learned or experienced at Gateway that you have found useful? Explain. (Anticipating responses like: more punctual; able to work with people from different backgrounds; more safety conscious; etc.)

Have you participated in additional education or training since your Gateway days? (If not) do you plan to do so? (If yes to either) did Gateway influence your decision/plan to do so? Explain.

Only for those identified as previously incarcerated in our data set. Have you had any difficulties with the police or criminal justice system since leaving Gateway? Did Gateway influence your relationship with law enforcement in any way? Explain.

Did you receive any kind of public assistance (food stamps, cash, housing, etc.) prior to Gateway? Have you received any public assistance since Gateway? Have the skills and experiences at Gateway affected you or your families need for public assistance? Explain.

What would you do to make the Gateway program better?

What did you like most about the program?

What did you like least about the program?

Would you recommend adapting the Gateway model for other industries such as automotive technology or skills sets required for other industries (e.g., electrical rigging in the film industry)?

Is there anything else you'd like to say about your experiences with the program?

Thank you for your cooperation. Your responses will help to improve and sustain the Gateway Construction Program.

## **Appendix B: Contacts and Individuals Interviewed**

### **Capital Area Training Foundation**

John Fitzgerald, Director

Hannah Gourgey, Managing Director, CTTC Program

Tom Serafin, Managing Director, Construction Gateway/FOCUS

Sylvestre Villareal, Assistant Program Manager, Gateway/FOCUS

Ana Hernandez, Financial Officer

### **Austin Community College**

Warren Heatwole, Director, Building Construction Technology

Joey Case, Instructor, Building Construction Technology

Elizabeth Doughty, Technical Lab Assistant, Building Construction Technology

### **Community Support/Collaborators**

Gay Owens, Human Services Coordinator, Turman House, Texas Youth Commission

Elena Rodriguez, Community Liaison, Workforce Development/Parole, Texas Youth Commission

Annette Gula, *WorkSource*-Capital Area Workforce Board

Mary Moran, Project Re-Integration of Offenders (RIO), *WorkSource*

Ric Boyd, One-Stop Specialist, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas

Melanie Ridings, Program Officer, Topfer Foundation

Rip Rowan, President/CEO, Productive Works

Vince Cobalis, Assistant Director of Human Services, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

Susan Gering, Manager, Community-based Resources, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

### **Employers**

Greg Taylor, Human Resource Director, Titus Electrical Contracting

Phillip Burks, DBE/HUB Manager, Lone Star Infrastructure

Britanie Olivera, Skilled Services, Branch Manager

Phil Thoden, Associated General Contractors of America-Austin, President and CEO

Laura Culin, Austin Lumber Company, Inc.

Bill Imhoff, President, InterTech Flooring

Kevin Hilbig, Manager of Construction and Support Services, Lower Colorado River Authority



Jim McElroy, Human Resource Manager, the University of Texas at Austin

John Braun, President, Braun & Butler Construction, Inc.

**Labor**

Sherwin Wissen, Austin Electrical JATC

Bruce Gibson, Business Agent, Sheet Metal Workers Local #67

## **Appendix C: Technical Definitions of the Performance Measures for Construction Gateway Used in this Report**

### **Employment Entry Rate**

The Employment Entry Rate is the percent of program participants who entered employment either the quarter they started the program if they had earnings in that quarter, or the quarter after they started, if they did not have earnings in the quarter they started but did the quarter after. Throughout these definitions, this will be known as the entry quarter.

### **Average Quarterly Post-Program Earnings**

Employment Entry Earnings are the average quarterly earnings of program participants in the entry quarter as defined in the Employment Entry Rate.

### **Employment Retention**

If participants have earnings in the quarter they entered employment (the entry quarter) as well as the next two quarters, they are considered retained in employment.

### **Pre-/Post-Program Earnings Change**

This measure is computed as the difference between participants' average quarterly earnings in the third quarter *after* they entered the program and their average quarterly earnings three quarters *before* they entered the program for participants with reported earnings in both of the relevant pre- and post-program quarters. Note that a subset of this measure reports earnings *gains* for all participants whose pre-post change in earnings was positive.

### **Post-Program Earnings Change**

This measure is computed as the difference between participants' average quarterly earnings three quarters after they entered employment and their average quarterly earnings the quarter after exiting the program. Note that a subset of this measure reports earnings *gains* for all participants whose post-program change in earnings was positive.