

## **Chrysalis validates job retention outcomes with new approach**

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Long-term employment retention is a key measure of alternative staffing organizations' (ASOs') effectiveness in enabling disadvantaged job seekers to achieve economic stability. Tracking this outcome, though, is resource intensive and a challenge for many operators, even as they recognize the immense value of this data to inform service delivery and strengthen the case made to prospective employer partners and social investors.

Using a new approach, Alliance member [Chrysalis](#) in Los Angeles has doubled its response rate, consistently reaching over 60% of candidates who leave for external jobs and confirming that 71% of these individuals remain employed at six months.

### **Who Chrysalis Employs**

In 2016, Chrysalis employed 2,350 homeless and low-income job seekers, including 724 in its three social enterprises – staffing, street maintenance and highway maintenance. Of the job seekers Chrysalis serves, 55% have a criminal record and 27% have a history of substance abuse.

### **What Chrysalis Measures**

After candidates at Chrysalis get an external job, staff contact them at 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12 months to track their hourly wage, part-time or full-time status, industry of employment and employer. Full-time is defined as 30 hours or more per week.

Besides tracking outcomes, this follow-up is an opportunity to offer coaching and counseling when someone mentions a work or life issue or identifies a challenge. Individuals found to be unemployed are invited back to Chrysalis.

### **Process to Track Outcomes**

Chrysalis solicits multiple contacts from individuals at the point of intake – their phone number, an emergency contact, their email and physical mailing address – and updates this information while people are receiving services.

After candidates get an external job, staff first follow up by email (which has a low response rate), then by phone and voicemail, and then by text. Besides the original email, they make 3 attempts at different times of day.

Chrysalis employs 4 remote staff (3 FTEs) to do follow-up, using a web-based text messaging and IP phone system that gives them flexibility to call at hours when they are more likely to reach people. This approach has doubled Chrysalis' response rate, compared with their former practice of calling during the conventional workday (8 am to 5 pm). The results are recorded and analyzed in ServicePoint, Chrysalis' case management software.

## **Impact**

Chrysalis consistently reaches over 60% of candidates who leave for external jobs and finds that 71% of them remain employed at 6 months. The top three industries of employment are food service, construction and retail, and in 2016, the average hourly wage was \$12.90, 99% of the living wage for a single adult in Los Angeles County.

## **How Results Inform Practice**

Previously, Chrysalis' retention staff was able to contact just over 30% of candidates who land external employment and found a 71% retention rate. While this was encouraging, Chrysalis wanted to know if it was inflated given the large percentage of individuals who were not reached. Interestingly, now that they reach over 60% of participants, the retention rate of 71% is unchanged. This has led them to wonder if they can substitute random sampling to reduce the cost of their outcomes tracking.

In reporting its retention outcomes, Chrysalis uses the 6-month result because research indicates that retention at 6 months leads to increased levels of self-sufficiency. (See Evidence Scan of Workforce Experience Programs, Samina Sattar, Mathematica Policy Research, 2010. This review of transitional employment studies finds that 6 months of employment improved wages, long-term job retention, and labor force attachment for people with employment barriers).

In the past, Chrysalis experimented with cash incentives at various milestones, but these did not affect the response rate. Currently, the Chrysalis team is discussing various alternative methods of contact, including social media, to continue to improve the number of people reached.