



# Using Evaluation Results to Learn and Improve



## AmeriCorps State and National Symposium 2016



# Objectives



- Hear findings from high quality AmeriCorps evaluations across a range of focus areas and grantee types



- Learn how AmeriCorps grantees are using evaluation results to improve their programs

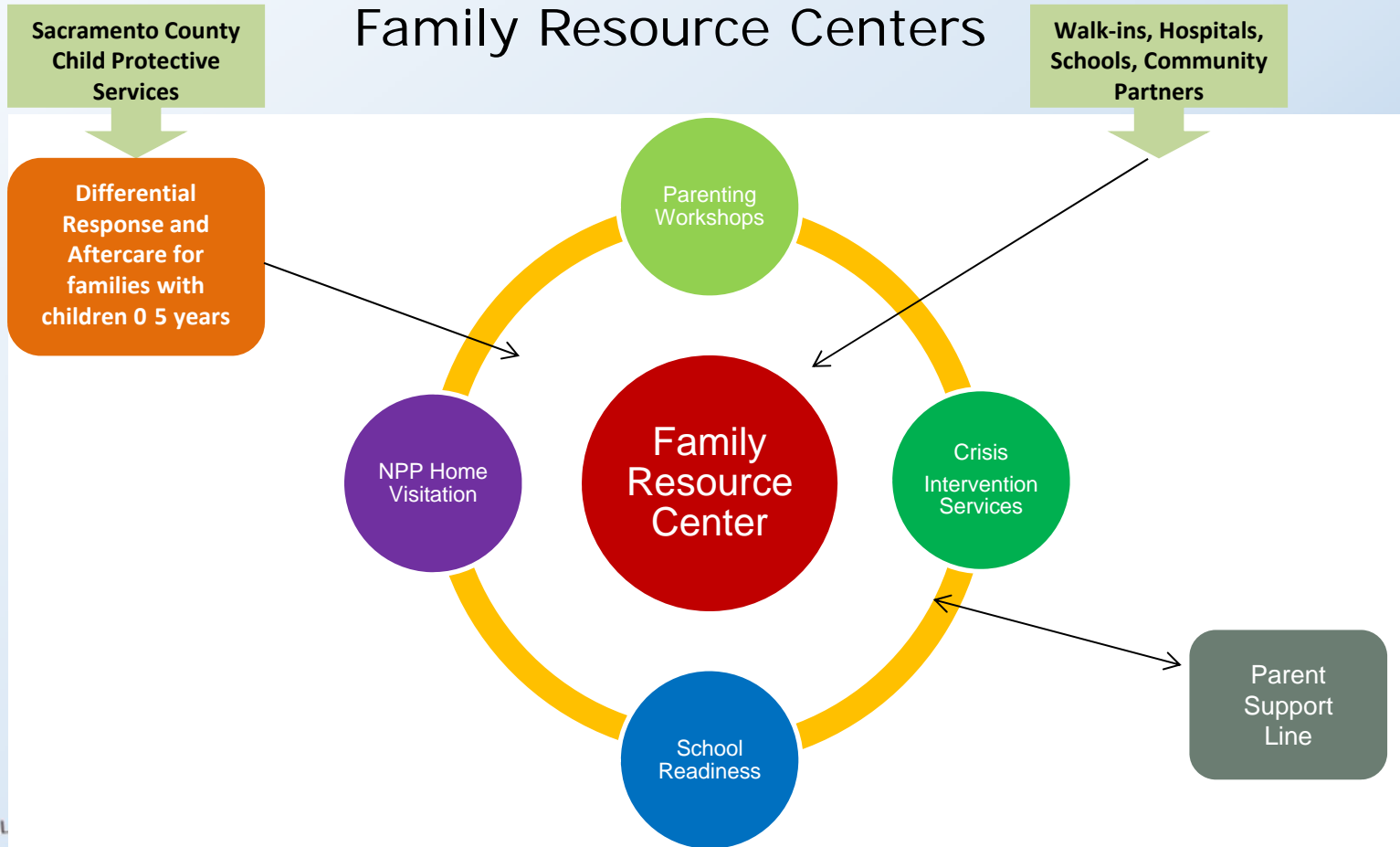


# Panelists

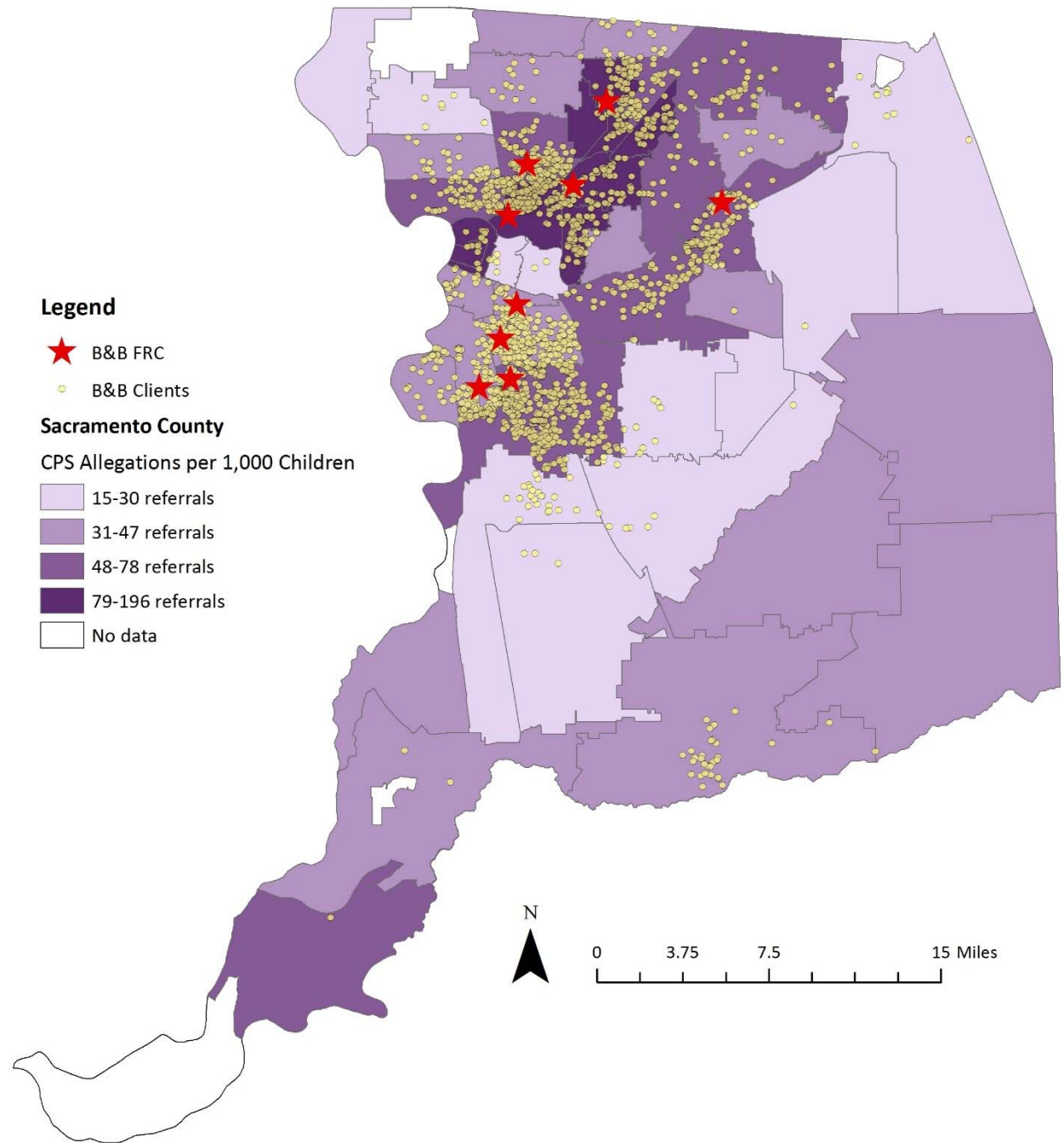


- Stephanie Biegler, Child Abuse Prevention Council
- Joel Krogstad, St. Paul Neighborhood Network
- Peter Rumsey, Habitat for Humanity, International
- Amy Hetrick, CNCS
- Allyson Augustin, City Year

# Birth & Beyond Family Resource Centers



# Sacramento County CPS Referrals by Zip Code



# Birth & Beyond | Theory of Change

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- **NEED:** Documented high rates of child abuse and neglect are attributable to deficits in parenting knowledge/practices that prevent a child's healthy emotional/physical development.
- **INTERVENTION:** Members provide at least 8 hours of parenting education through home visits and workshops to high risk parents using the Nurturing Parenting Program to teach parents child development, building empathy, parent/child roles, establishing family routines, and replacements to corporal punishment, to build parenting skills as an alternative to abuse and neglect.
- **OUTCOMES:** Parents demonstrate reduced risk for child abuse and neglect and do not enter/re-enter the child welfare system.

# Prior Annual Evaluation | Did Birth & Beyond Parents Have a Reduced Rate of Child Welfare Referrals?

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- Child welfare 'look up' study annually since 2001
- Consistently positive results for child welfare outcomes
- Half of B&B parents had a prior history of child welfare referral (including as victim)
- All B&B parents with at least 8 hours of Home Visitation had a reduced rate of child welfare contact one year after their case closure

## Quasi-experimental Study |

Will any parent participating in Birth & Beyond have a reduced rate of CPS referrals?

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- Quasi-experimental study includes all Home Visitation parents, with child welfare history, who were served by an AmeriCorps member in the 2013-2015 program years
- Impact evaluation allows for the direct attribution of positive changes to Home Visitation program (i.e., provides 'higher-level of evidence' of program effectiveness)



# Quasi- Experimental Study

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- **Compares HV parents** (n=496) with previous child welfare history to non-HV parents (n=985) with similar child welfare history
- **Controls for bias** that some individuals are more willing/likely to participate in HV program
- **Accounts for rolling program entries and exits**
- **Holds all demographic factors constant** to compare child welfare recidivism over time

# Evaluation | Findings

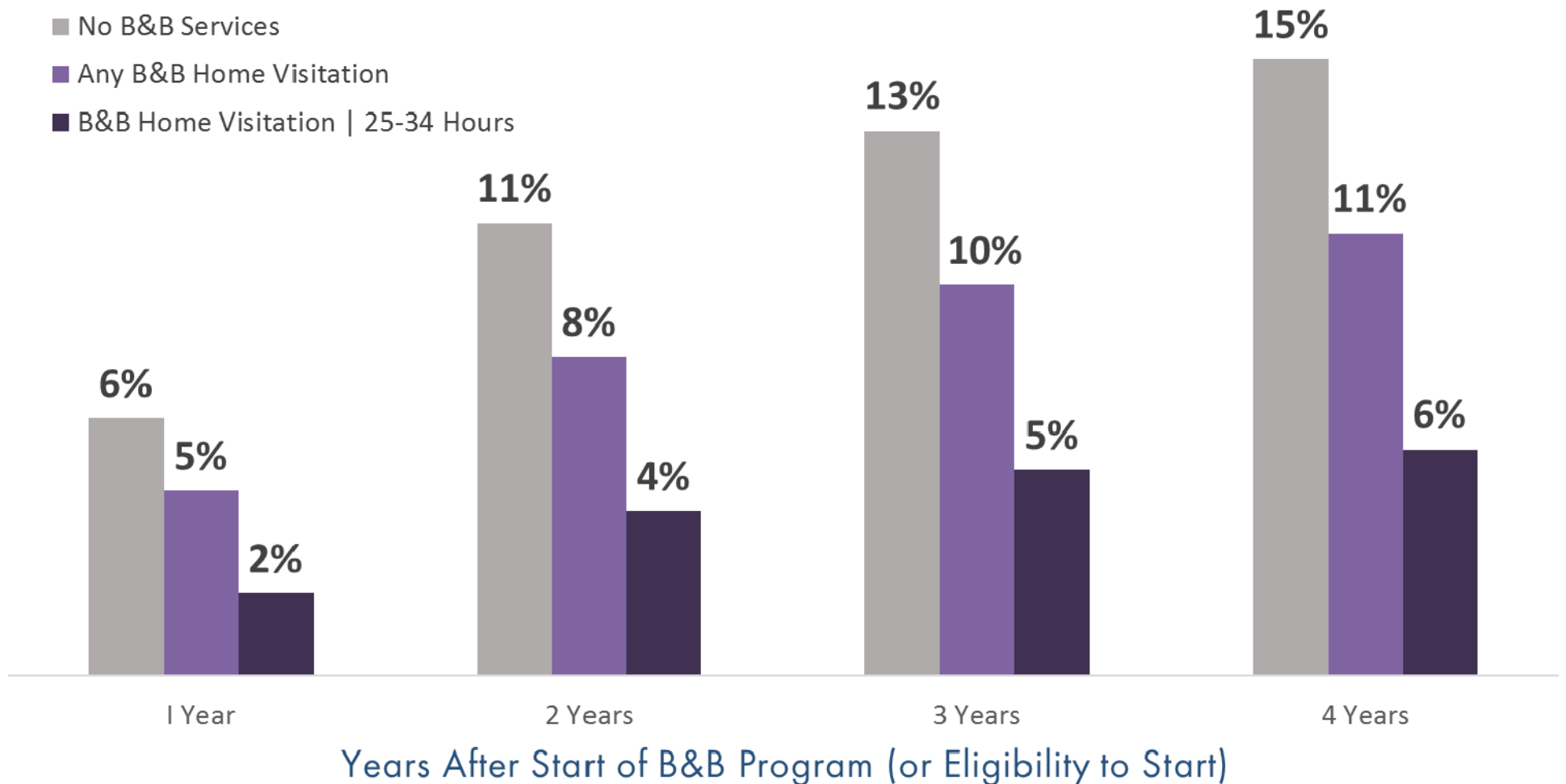
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- All parents participating in HV were **41% less likely to have a substantiated child welfare referral** over a 4-year period than non-HV parents.
- Parents with 25-36 hours of HV were **173% less likely to have a substantiated child welfare referral** over a four-year period than non-HV parents.  
(statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ )
- Parents with at least 8 hours of HV showed an **average decrease in risk/increase in parenting skills** as measured by the AAPI (statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ )

# Birth & Beyond (B&B) Home Visitation Services

## Likelihood of Parent Having a Substantiated Referral

Identifying Decreased Risk of Child Welfare System Referral  
through Quasi-Experimental Comparison



B&B Home Visitation Participants, n = 496 | Parents with No B&B Services, n = 985

All differences in the likelihood of recidivism are significant at  $p < 0.05$

# Current Evaluation | Summary

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- **CPS Recidivism** | All parents participating in HV have a reduced likelihood of new child welfare referrals.
- **Optimal Hours** | Those parents receiving 25-34 hours of HV have the greatest reduction in the likelihood new child welfare referrals.

*The findings of this study provide strong evidence that Birth & Beyond home visitation supports Sacramento County parents and their families by reducing the risk of child welfare referrals after participating in the program.*

# Evaluation | Recommendations

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- Consider aligning home visitation dosage towards the optimal 25-34 hour range.
- Explore strategies to address program attrition to ensure parents are receiving optimal level of home visitation program dosage.
- Consider additional research to explore remaining and emergent questions from this study about effectiveness and impact.



# Evaluation Tips from Community Technology Empowerment Project

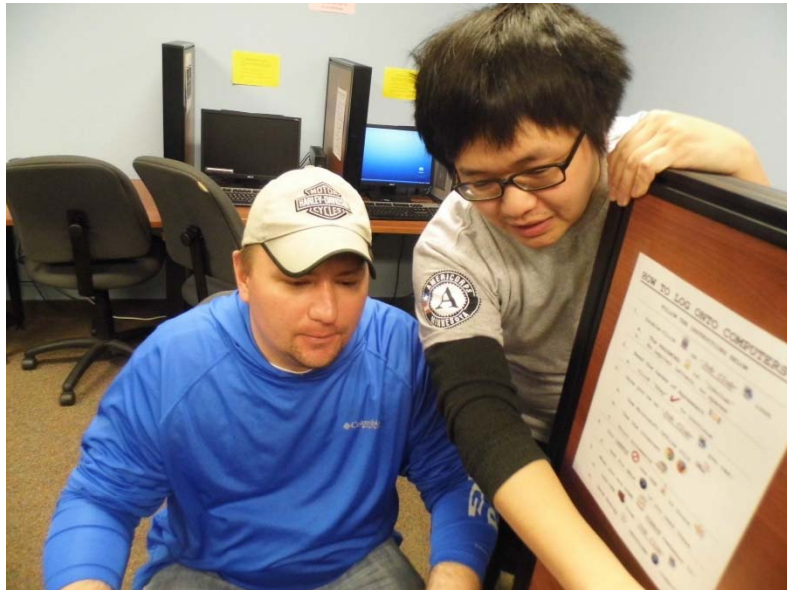
AmeriCorps Symposium  
Sept 22, 2016



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[www.spnn.org/ctep](http://www.spnn.org/ctep)

35 AmeriCorps members  
Teaching technology  
skills for economic, social  
and civic empowerment  
at 28 community-based  
partner agencies  
in Twin Cities, Minnesota



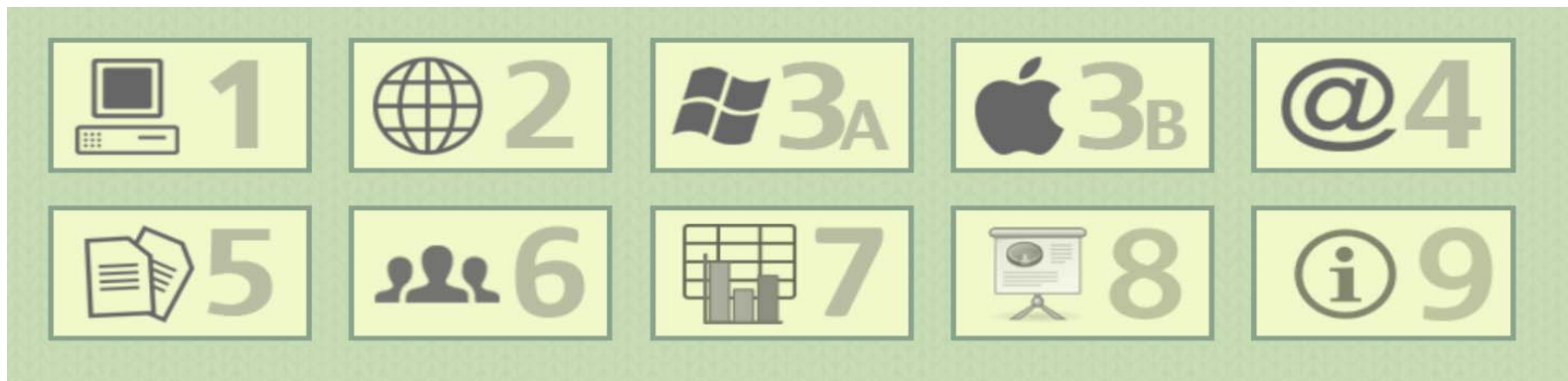
### Target Population:

- Low-income
- Unemployed or Underemployed
- Have low technology skills



# MEMBER ACTIVITIES/ THEORY OF CHANGE

- Teach classes with NorthStar Digital Literacy Standards
- Proctor Assessments to gain basic tech skill certifications for 1500 community members
- Assisting community members to use acquired tech skills for job placement: 600 to gain employment





**Evaluation Report: Impact of  
Northstar Assessment and Related  
Computer Skills Programming on  
Employment in CTEP Programs**



A CONSULTING GROUP OF THE MINNESOTA LITERACY COUNCIL

11/23/2015

Prepared by Daniel Backman, MDP  
Minnesota Literacy Council



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

FROM A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF ADULT LEARNERS IN CTEP PROGRAMS,  
WE SOUGHT TO DETERMINE....

- the employment rate change after attending at least four hours of computer skills programming in a CTEP program.
- the employers and job types of those who received employment
- how the CTEP employment result compares to a metro wide employment comparison group (DEED).
- the Return on Investment for the value of all new jobs received.



## STUDY DESIGN AND COST

- Quasi-experimental study with a comparison group (DEED)
- CTEP members did data collection over course of one program year with evaluator doing study design, instrument creation, training, quality control, analysis, and report write up.
- 208 surveys administered in 28 of 30 CTEP sites, confidence level 95%
- Evaluation cost \$7000, for time of the lead evaluator.



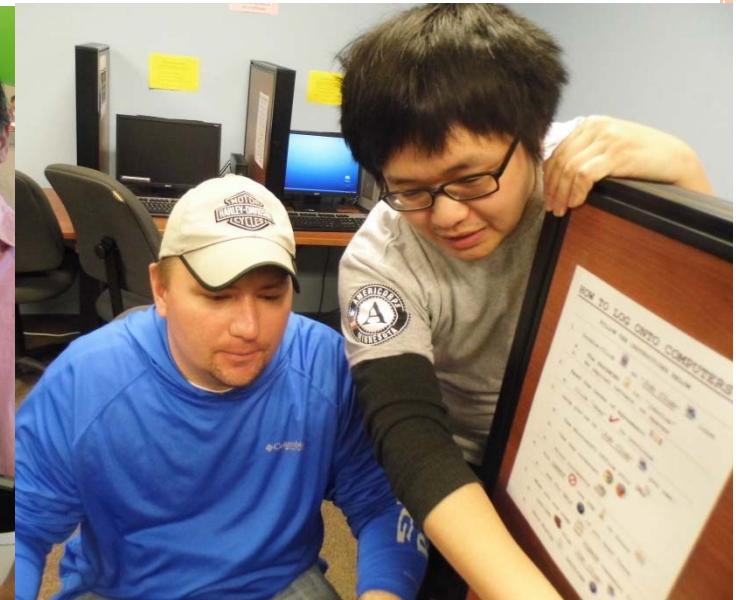
# KEY FINDINGS

- 80% reported computer class helped look for employment.
- 71% reported attending computer class helped in getting offered job.
- \$31,266: average salary, mostly office/admin, sales, personal care
- 50% found a job within 4 months after class
- Beat Employment Result from Comparison Group (DEED): 41% (339/818)
- \$5.7 million total estimated economic impact of (value of new jobs created)





**Learn More! Study posted at  
[www.spnn.org/ctep](http://www.spnn.org/ctep)**





# Grantee Evaluation Panel

AmeriCorps Symposium  
September 22, 2016





What's the story  
you want to tell?

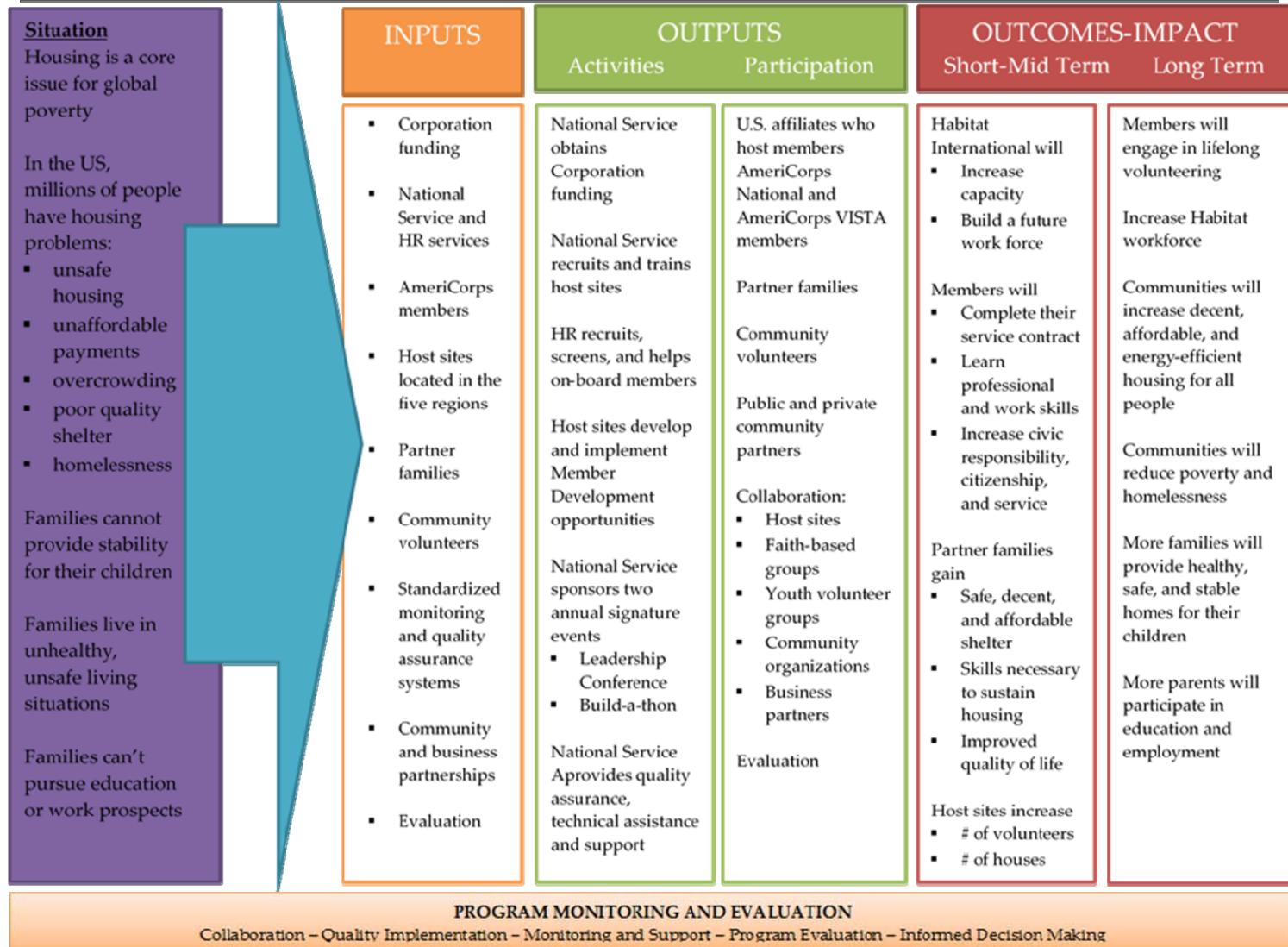
Can you prove it?



We build *strength, stability* and *self-reliance* through *shelter*.

# Start with...

Habitat for Humanity International National Service Programs Logic Model





# Add some ph.D's...



## Research Questions: added value?

- Do host affiliates (through members) increase capacity compared to similar, non-hosting affiliates?
  - Serve more families?
  - Engage more volunteers?
  - Increase new builds and rehabs?
- Do members benefit?:
  - Obtain full workforce development training and mentorship?
  - Learn new and transferrable skills?
  - Increase new and lasting civic engagement interests?



# Surveys and Data Sources

- **Affiliate and Host Affiliate (Pre-Post)**
  - Completed by leadership
  - Matched comparison
  - Impact and added capacity of members on affiliate outcomes.
- **Member (Pre-Post)**
  - Fall of 2014 to Fall of 2015
  - Member perceptions
- **Alumni (Post-only)**
  - Long-term perceptions



# Be courageous!

Assumptions should be tested.  
The data will set you free!



- **Do host affiliates experience increased capacity compared to similar, non-hosting affiliates?**
  - Serve more families? **YES**
  - Engage more volunteers? **YES**
  - Increase new builds and rehabs? **YES**
- **Do members benefit?**
  - Value workforce development training and mentorship? **YES**
  - Learn new and transferrable skills? **YES**
  - Increase new and lasting civic engagement interests? **YES**

Phew...



# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Overview



- A partnership between the U.S. Department of Education and CNCS
- 13 programs funded in 2013
- Programs operate in School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools and Priority schools
- Programs coordinate with school leaders and use student data to target interventions
- More than 600 AmeriCorps members were approved to provide interventions that are aligned with school turnaround plans in more than 70 schools in 15 states.

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Overview



- Members focus on one or more of the following:
  - Family and Community Engagement
  - Addressing Non-Academic Factors that Impact Student Achievement (attendance, discipline, school safety, social and emotional needs, etc.)
  - Reading and Math knowledge and skill acquisition
  - Increase Graduation Rates
  - Increase College Enrollment Rates
  - Increase Learning Time



# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Overview



- Austin Independent School District
- Berea College
- Blackfoot Community Center
- City Year, Inc.
- Communities in Schools of Miami
- Denver Public Schools
- Detroit Parent Network
- Duluth Area Family YMCA
- Learning Works
- MN Alliance With Youth
- ReNEW-Reinventing Education (ReNEW Schools)
- Springfield College
- Teach For America

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Study Design



- Evaluation Design(s): Comparative Case Study, Implementation Study.
- Study Population: School leaders and staff, grantee staff, AmeriCorps members, and parents.
- Evaluator: Abt Associates.

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Research Questions



- How was the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program implemented in schools?
- How did school leaders perceive the impact of AmeriCorps services?
- What about the program model and AmeriCorps service contributed to or hindered these results?

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Findings

Findings: How was the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program implemented in schools?

- Overall, AmeriCorps members and program partners implemented program interventions as intended.
- Program start-up and grant administration challenges typically associated with launching a new program became less prevalent.
- Other common challenges to the AmeriCorps program model persisted, including member recruitment, retention, and role definition.

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Findings

Findings: How did stakeholders perceive the impact of AmeriCorps services?

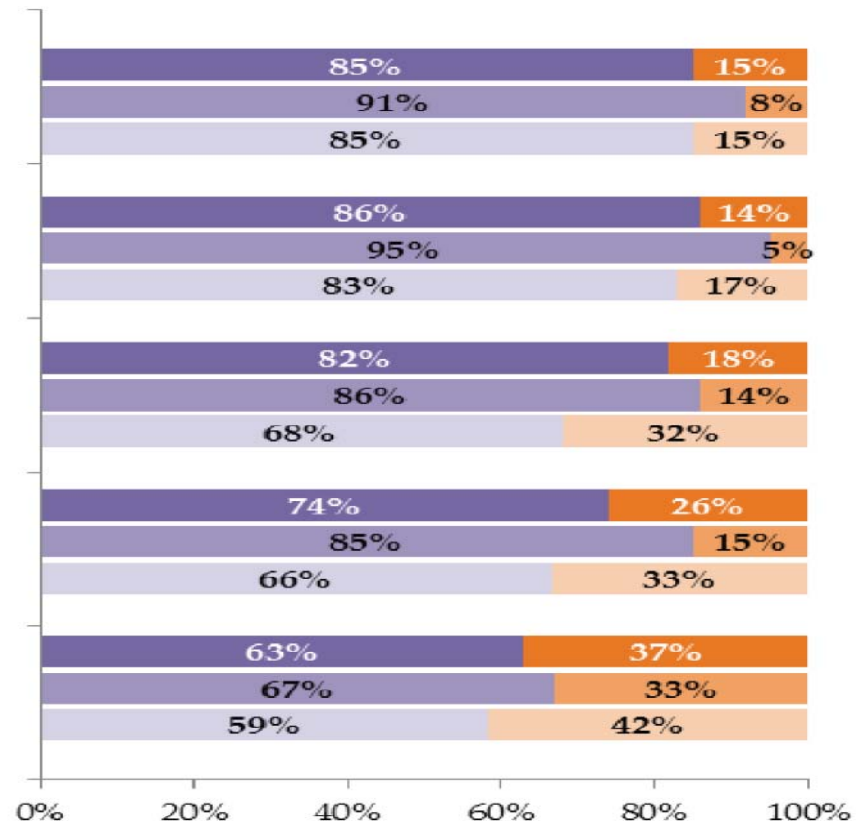
Improving academic performance in ELA and/or math

Establishing a school culture and environment that fosters school safety, attendance, and discipline

Increasing college readiness and enrollment rates

Increasing rates of high school graduation

Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement



**Year 1**

Some influence or Substantial influence  
Minimal influence or No influence

**Year 2-Fall**

Some influence or Substantial influence  
Minimal influence or No influence

**Year 2-Spring**

Some influence or Substantial influence  
Minimal influence or No influence

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Findings

Findings: What about the program model and AmeriCorps service contributed to or hindered these results?

- The quality of communication and relationship building with school stakeholders
- The quality of member training and consistency of services
- The quality of the school-based service delivery

# PREPARATION FOR IMPACT STUDY

- Having strong performance measures that can be easily collected, have methods in place of following up with participants months after intervention
- Have your AmeriCorps staff undergo training on evaluation fundamentals



# FIVE TAKE-AWAYS FOR AFFORDABLE, STRONG AMERICORPS EVALUATION

#1 Choose Quasi-Experimental Design!

#2 Evaluator does not need a lot of  
extravagant credentials.





# FIVE TAKE-AWAYS FOR AFFORDABLE, STRONG AMERICORPS EVALUATION

## #3 Two Year Eval Process

Year 1: study designed and tested

Year 2: study carried out, with  
leadership from returning members



## FIVE TAKE-AWAYS FOR AFFORDABLE, STRONG AMERICORPS EVALUATION

#4 Have Members do Data Collection. Find a Comparison Group that already collects the data you need

#5 Buy-in from members from beginning of service year, not something thrown on the members mid-year



# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Key Learnings - CNCS

- **Planning year** allowed the evaluation to be redesigned in order to provide meaningful information.
- Clarified member roles and rolled out new expectation to update written partnership agreement annually were included in 2016 **NOFO**.
- **Portfolio calls** were held on year 1 evaluation findings; discussion also held at **Symposium**.
- Clarifying **GPR instructions to grantees**, including expectations for when goals are exceeded and the need to report on School Turnaround AmeriCorps programming discretely.

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Key Learnings – City Year

*What learnings did City Year take away from being part of the School Turnaround evaluation, and what changes have we made as a result?*

- Reduce data burden for members and standardize in-school trainings
- Continue investing in on-site staff coordinator per school
- Focus on youth development training for our members

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Key Opportunities – City Year

*What opportunities did participation in the School Turnaround evaluation represent for City Year?*

- Learning from and share with the STA community of practice
- Using findings to validate and promote our program model

# School Turnaround AmeriCorps Evaluation Planning



- Strategies for managing cost
- Tips for hiring and managing an external evaluator
- Using STA evaluation as part of body of evidence