

Chapin Hall

CWICstats

Policy research that
benefits children, families,
and their communities

Workforce Research and Data Initiative

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In partnership with policymakers and program stakeholders of Chicago's workforce development system, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago formed *CWICstats*; a research and data initiative that collects, analyzes, and disseminates information on the performance of Chicago area workforce development programs.

CWICstats emerged from Chicago LEADS (Leading Economic Advancement, Development, and Sustainability), a multiyear initiative led by Mayor Richard M. Daley to align workforce development, education, and economic development to better meet the needs of Chicago businesses, residents, and communities. The goals of Chicago LEADS are to significantly increase the pipeline of skilled labor, improve the skills and earning potential of working residents, build the wealth of Chicago communities by supporting local businesses in finding qualified workers, and enhance the attractiveness of Chicago as a business destination.

CWICstats is designed to support these goals by providing policymakers and funders with reliable data and analysis on the workforce development system and its outcomes. Information provided by *CWICstats* helps stakeholders make better investment decisions and ultimately gives residents the information they need to find appropriate programs and services. *CWICstats* aims to identify areas of innovation, and in partnership with the Chicago Workforce Investment Council (CWIC), cultivate a sector-level

understanding of trends and skills shortages, thereby helping workforce development policymakers and providers respond to the needs of businesses.

Data and Analysis

CWICstats matches administrative program data from partner agencies to wage data in order to understand individual residents' work experiences before, during, and after participating in workforce programs. Reports and studies are packaged in ways that are accessible and useful to multiple audiences. Ongoing structured and informal contact between *CWICstats* staff and stakeholders guides data collection and analysis and facilitates the development of shared goals for the workforce system. *CWICstats* maintains data sharing agreements that enable researchers to analyze individual-level program information on all students or clients served by workforce programs provided by the Chicago Department of Community Development, the City Colleges of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools, and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services.

Key Activities and Products

CWICstats engages in three key activities: (1) developing a regular program "report card" using standard performance measures that policymakers and managers within the workforce system can use, including background measures on program participants (e.g., secondary school experiences), process-oriented measures (e.g., participation in

workforce programs), and outcome measures (e.g., wages after program completion); (2) developing and executing a research agenda, with input from an advisory council that includes researchers, funders, and representatives from business and the workforce training provider community; and (3) developing a dashboard of key workforce indicators for policymakers and program managers.

The *CWICstats* research agenda is developed through program report card activities. Examples of research questions that may be addressed include the following:

- How do different combinations of programs interact to influence success?
- What returns do both individuals and society reap—in terms of employment, wages, postsecondary outcomes, etc.—from different public investments?
- What are the critical factors that lead to premature exit from the workforce development system?
- What factors contribute to the achievement of successful employment outcomes?

In conjunction with these efforts, *CWICstats* also serves as the lead evaluator for the Jobs group of the Chicago Recovery Partnership. In this role *CWICstats* assists with the evaluation of programs supported by

federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds as it relates to workforce development in Chicago. *CWICstats* is able to leverage their work with performance measures and incorporate evaluation activities into their research agenda to provide valuable information about many of the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of stimulus-funded workforce development programs.

Key Personnel and Financial Support

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago houses and operates *CWICstats*. Chapin Hall combines experience with linking administrative records, access to collaborating labor economists, and a long history of successful collaboration with public agencies to advance knowledge and improve policy. Matthew Stagner, executive director of Chapin Hall, and Robert Goerge, Chapin Hall research fellow, provide oversight of *CWICstats*. Dan Black, professor and deputy dean at the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago and senior fellow at NORC at the University of Chicago, serves as senior faculty researcher. Chapin Hall researcher Elizabeth Weigensberg is the *CWICstats* coordinator. Funding to support *CWICstats* is provided by the Chicago Workforce Investment Council, the Boeing Company, the Chicago Community Trust, the Joyce Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, and the Steans Family Foundation.

Established in 1985, Chapin Hall is an independent policy research center whose mission is to build knowledge that improves policies and programs for children and youth, families, and their communities.

Chapin Hall's areas of research include child maltreatment prevention, child welfare systems and foster care, youth justice, schools and their connections with social services and community organizations, early childhood initiatives, community change initiatives, workforce development, out-of-school time initiatives, economic supports for families, and child well-being indicators.

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