

Skills for Chicagoland's Future

Evaluation Project – Interim Report

Prepared by



July 26, 2016

Executive Summary

Introduction

Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills) creates demand-driven solutions for employers to get the un- and under-employed back to work. Skills contracted with New Growth Group, LLC (New Growth) in June 2015 to evaluate this process. New Growth is an independent, private consulting company located in Cleveland, Ohio. New Growth's expertise is in workforce development, and program evaluation is a core competency.

The evaluation activities are centered around the research question:

How do employment outcomes and use of public benefits for un- and under-employed job seekers that Skills places compare to outcomes for other similar job seekers?

This question will be answered through a comparative analysis (due in January 2017), where the outcomes of individuals that Skills placed are compared to the outcomes of a set of individuals who did not interact with Skills but are as similar as possible in other respects. Data for outcomes such as earnings and use of public benefits will come from administrative sources: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

For this report, New Growth also conducted a survey of individuals placed by Skills. The purpose of the survey is to provide preliminary evidence of Skills' impact and confirm the directionality of effect that is expected from the comparative analysis. The analysis of the survey data is the focus of this report.

Participants

Participants in this study are those individuals placed from Q1 of 2014 through Q2 of 2015. There are 1197 such individuals in the Skills database. Of those, 600 are identifiable in the state wage database at IDES (i.e., the combination of name and social security number from the Skills database matches an individual in the IDES database). Therefore, these 600 will be the focus of the comparative analysis. Comparing these 600 individuals to the 597 who are not identifiable in the state wage database finds the two groups to be similar demographically: age, race, gender, education, and location (at the zip code level). This gives a degree of confidence that results derived from the group of 600 will be generalizable to all Skills participants.

The starting point for this study was data taken from the Skills database. Although not a point of inquiry for the study, it is worth noting that based on New Growth's experience, Skills' database is organized, complete, and comprehensible to a degree infrequently seen in real world databases.

Survey

Of those participants who had contact information, 326 individuals completed the survey for a 29% response rate. The survey was conducted in Q1 of 2016, so participants were contacted between 9 months and 24 months after their interaction with Skills. In this setting a 29% response rate is excellent.

Those who responded to the survey were compared to those who did not, and the two groups were found to be very similar demographically: age, race, gender, education, and location (at the zip code level).

Pre-Skills

Prior to working with Skills, 64% of survey respondents were unemployed and the remaining 36% had a job but were considered underemployed. Among those with a job, 40% had a wage less than \$11 per hour and only 45% worked at least 40 hours per week. Rates of public benefit usage among the unemployed were 30% for unemployment insurance, 45% for SNAP, and 10% for TANF.

Post-Skills

At the time of the survey, the results showed a discernable positive change with 63% now employed and the remaining 37% unemployed. Among those with a job, only 20% had a wage less than \$11 per hour and 67% worked at least 40 hours per week. Rates of public benefit usage among those who were unemployed pre-Skills had fallen to 11% for unemployment insurance, 28% for SNAP, and 4% for TANF.

Summary of Skills' Impact

The following 3 figures show how the survey respondents' outcomes change from pre-Skills to post-Skills.

Employment outcomes were substantially improved post-Skills

There was a modest improvement in wages and hours worked per week

Those unemployed pre-Skills saw a substantial reduction in usage of public benefits

Figure 1: Percent of all survey respondents pre-Skills and post-Skills who were a) employed, and among those currently employed b) in a job with paid time off, and c) in a job with health benefits

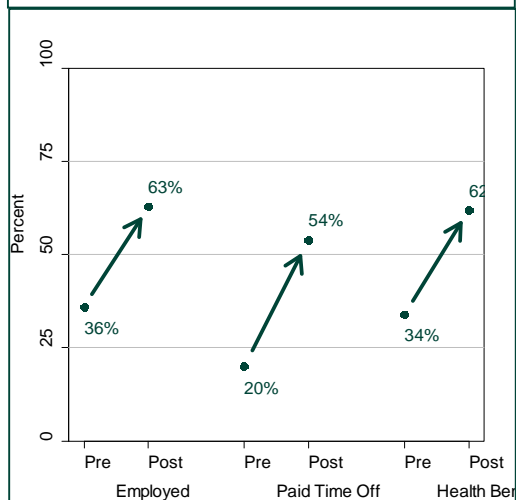


Figure 2: Average hourly wage and hours worked per week pre-Skills and post-Skills for those who are employed. The improvements correspond to an approximate \$6,500 increase in yearly income.

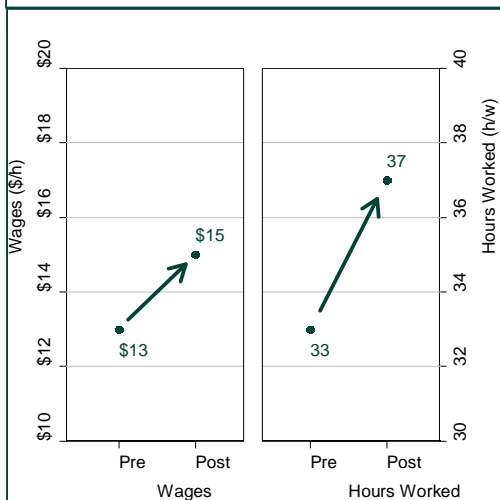
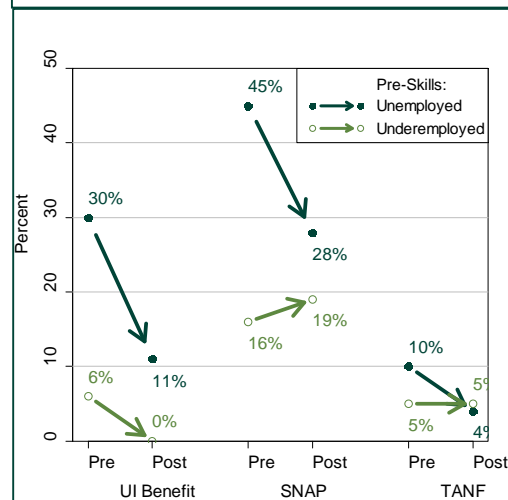


Figure 3: Percent of survey respondents who received a) unemployment insurance, b) SNAP, and c) TANF benefits pre-Skills and post-Skills



From the time before working with Skills to the time of the survey, the respondents improved markedly across the outcomes measured on the survey. In fact, 182 of 326 respondents (56%) saw improvement on at least one outcome.

Although the literature is broad, recent review articles can provide context for these results. King (2008)¹ reports on a workforce initiative of on-the-job training and job search assistance that improved earnings by \$1,200 to \$1,600 per year. Wimer and Bloom (2014)² describe an initiative of tailored training and direct connection to jobs that improved earnings by 29% (similar to the increase in the present study). Of course, these initiatives are not directly comparable to Skills' model because of the extensive training offered. Nevertheless, they give a sense of scale for the size of effects to be found in successful initiatives.

Additional key results

In addition to questions about employment and benefits, the survey included qualitative questions about stability and outlook. Among the respondents,

- 65% said they wouldn't have found a job without Skills
- 74% found Skills helpful or very helpful in getting a job
- 24% find housing more stable since working with Skills
- 45% feel their financial situation more stable since working with Skills
- 74% feel very hopeful about the future

Next Steps

The keys to the final report are to build a comparison group and to access administrative data. The comparison group strategy is being executed with IDES, and data from their database is flowing. Completing a data sharing agreement with IDHS is the next highest priority. When data arrives from all sources, the comparative analysis of outcomes will be completed. The final report is scheduled to be finished in January of 2017.

¹ Does Workforce Development Work? King, Christopher. Workforce Narrative Project. Annie E. Casey Foundation. January 2008 (p. 8).

² Boosting the Life Chances of Young Men of Color: Evidence from Promising Programs. Wimer, Christopher; Bloom, Dan. MDRC. June 2014 (p. 7).

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Background

Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills) creates demand-driven solutions for employers to get the un- and under-employed back to work. Skills has contracted with New Growth Group, LLC (New Growth) to evaluate this process.

Evaluation Plan

The design of the evaluation plan is guided by the needs of the core research question:

How do employment outcomes and use of public benefits for un- and under-employed job seekers that Skills places compare to outcomes for other similar job seekers?

The key elements of this research question are a) the outcomes that are to be measured and b) the construction of a comparison group.

Outcomes: The primary employment outcome is quarterly earnings. This data is being obtained through the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). Use of public benefits outcomes are receipt of unemployment insurance benefits (also from IDES), receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. SNAP and TANF data comes from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

Comparison Strategy: Due to the complexity of the available data, several comparison groups are being constructed, with the ultimate goal of triangulating the effect of Skills across several comparisons. For each participant in this study, a comparison individual is identified from the IDES system that most closely matches the characteristics of the participant. The closeness of the match is driven by available data, and includes demographics, location, prior earnings, and prior use of public benefits.

Therefore, the evaluation of the impact of Skills is a multifaceted endeavor. In addition to the primary evaluation strategy driven by administrative datasets, a survey was administered to augment the available information.

Interim Report Contents

The interim report defines those individuals considered to be participants. Participants fall into two groups based on whether or not they are found in the state wage database. Separately, participants fall into two groups based on whether or not they responded to the survey.

The first portion of the interim report gives early results on participants, including comparing the demographics of participants who have earnings data available to those who do not. The second, much larger, portion of the interim report focuses on the results of the survey. First is a description of the respondents and a comparison to non-respondents. Then, what can be learned about Skills' impact according to data that was collected directly from the people served by Skills.

Definition of Participants

Individuals who have been placed by Skills are the target group under study. For the purposes of this report, the sample is restricted to those who were placed by Skills between the first quarter of 2014 and the second quarter of 2015, totaling 1197 participants. Because state wage record data is a key source of outcomes data for this study, participants are categorized by who can be found in the state wage system (i.e., those who have social security numbers available in the Skills database). Based on these criteria, there are 600 participants with earnings data available and 597 participants without available earnings data.

| Quarter of Placement | Number of Participants with Earnings Data | Number of Participants without Earnings Data |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 2014 Q1 | 104 | 43 |
| 2014 Q2 | 165 | 28 |
| 2014 Q3 | 115 | 15 |
| 2014 Q4 | 142 | 47 |
| 2015 Q1 | 61 | 145 |
| 2015 Q2 | 13 | 309 |
| Total | 600 | 597 |

The number of individuals that Skills placed per quarter increased significantly over time, from less than 150 to more than 300. However, starting in 2015, Skills stopped requesting SSNs from those it placed. Therefore, the number of participants with earnings data available per quarter dwindles over time.

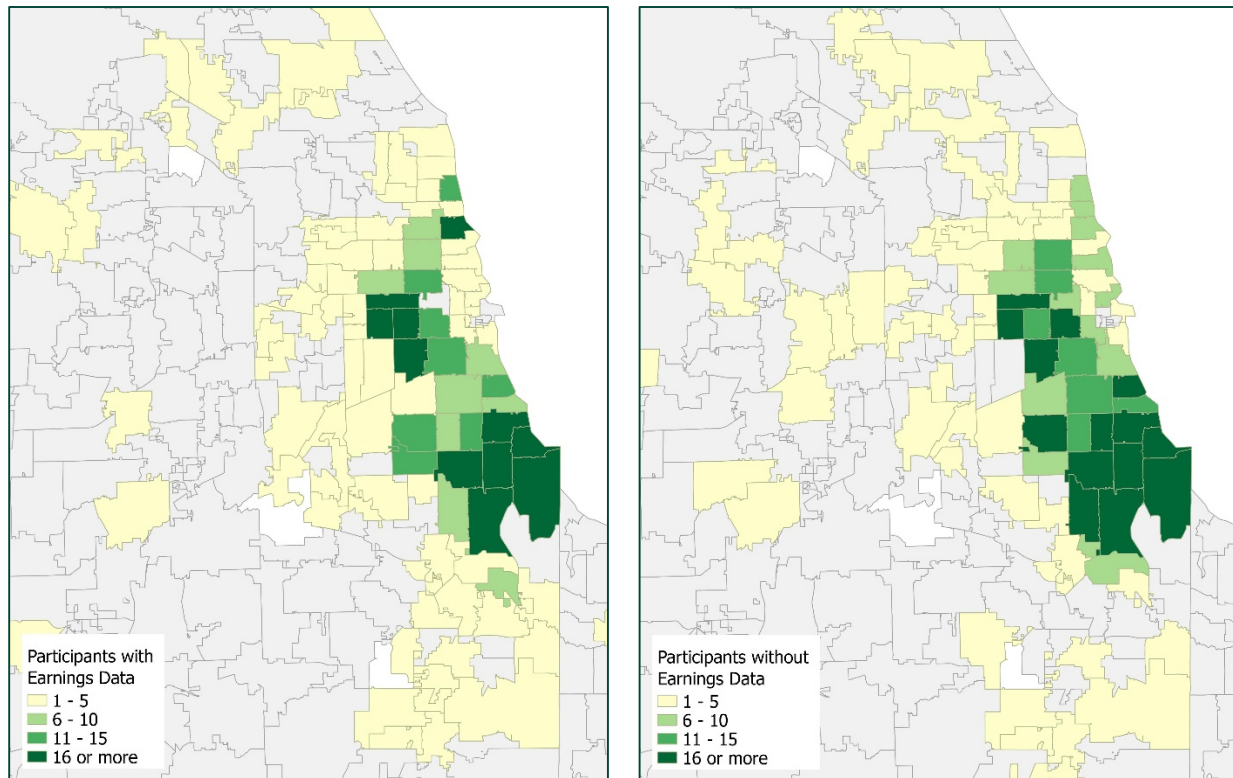
Comparison of Participant Groups

Because half of the participants will not have earnings data available, it is important to investigate group differences between the two groups.

| Demographic | Participants with Earnings Data (n=600) | Participants without Earnings Data (n=597) |
|--|---|--|
| Male gender | 38% | 41% |
| Black or African American race | 80% | 73% |
| Associate's degree or higher education | 38% | 32% |
| 24 years of age or older | 80% | 66% |
| Average age (standard deviation) | 33 (11) | 29 (10) |

The participant groups are similar, demographically. The correspondence is not perfect, but the differences are not large enough to endanger the validity of the conclusions of the final report.

Additionally, the geographic comparison of participant groups, based on the home zip-code listed in the Skills database:



Geographically, the participant groups are concentrated in the same areas.

Survey Results

The remainder of this report is devoted to analyzing the results of the survey.

Survey Administration

The survey was constructed to be administrable either electronically or over the phone. All individuals placed by Skills with contact information available were contacted for the survey. In mid-February 2016 the electronic version of the survey was sent out via email, and it remained open for completion until mid-March. Subsequently, phone surveying began for any individuals who had not completed the electronic version. Multiple attempts were made to contact each individual for the following month. Since the last quarter of placement for inclusion in this study is 2015 Q2, the survey occurred 9 months or more after individuals were placed by Skills.

Survey Respondents

All 1197 placed individuals were eligible to be contacted to participate in the survey, but only 1109 had contact information available. Of those who were contacted, 326 responded to the survey for a response rate of 29%.

The response rate was similar between the participant groups: $127/600=21\%$ for those with earnings data available compared to $199/597=33\%$ for those without earnings data available.

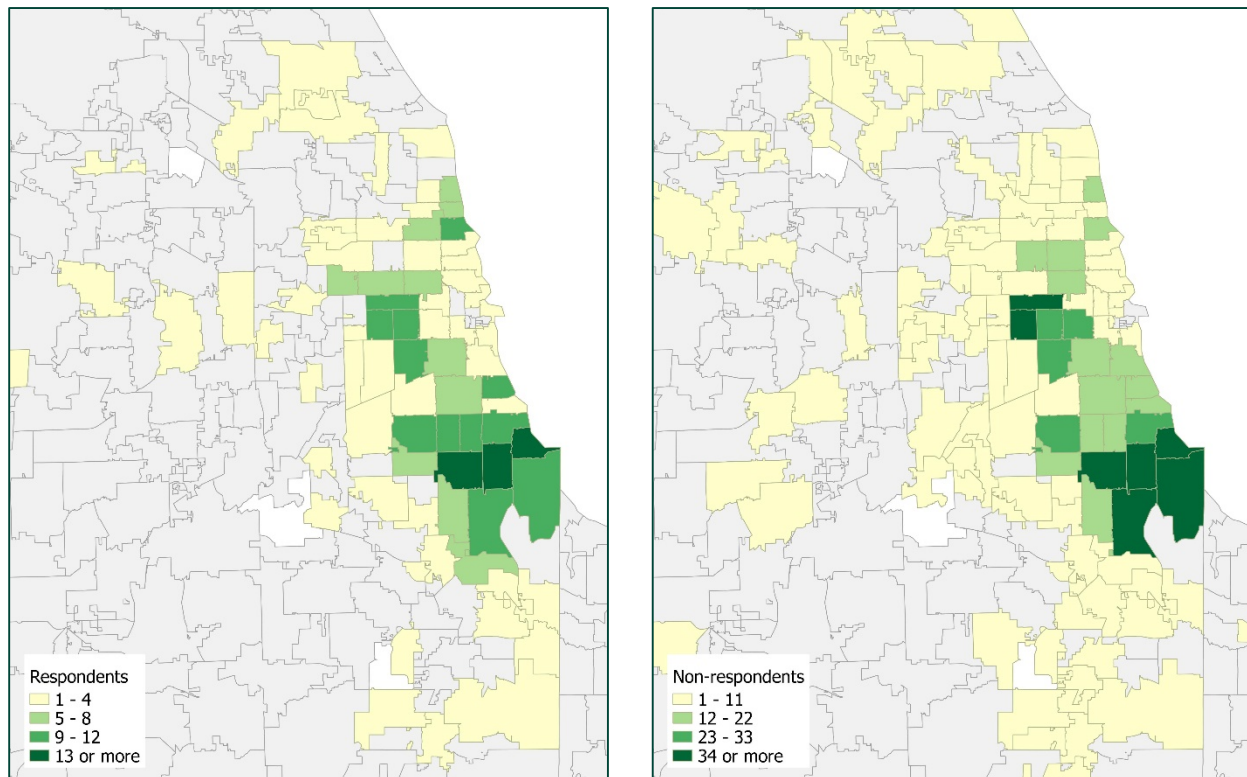
Comparison of Respondents and Non-Respondents

Although a response rate of 29% is very strong for a survey of this type, it is worthwhile to consider the differences between the respondents and non-respondents. Although 88 individuals were not contactable (1197 total minus 1109 with contact information), they are included here as non-respondents.

| Demographic | Respondents (n=326) | Non-Respondents (n=871) |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Male gender | 37% | 40% |
| Black or African American race | 74% | 78% |
| Associate's degree or higher education | 37% | 34% |
| 24 years of age or older | 80% | 71% |
| Average age (standard deviation) | 33 (11) | 31 (10) |

Demographically, those who responded to the survey are very similar to those who did not.

Additionally, the geographic comparison of respondents and non-respondents, based on home zip-code:



Geographically, respondents and non-respondents are concentrated in the same areas. Since there are more non-respondents than respondents the map for respondents is less dense and widespread.

In addition, the respondents can be compared to the non-respondents with respect to the timing of their placement by Skills. Since the survey occurred in Q1 of 2016, it is interesting to note whether or not the response rate was appreciably lower for those who worked with Skills in 2014 rather than 2015.

| Quarter of Placement | Number of Respondents | Number of Non-Respondents |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 2014 Q1 | 21 | 126 |
| 2014 Q2 | 46 | 147 |
| 2014 Q3 | 25 | 105 |
| 2014 Q4 | 27 | 172 |
| 2015 Q1 | 99 | 107 |
| 2015 Q2 | 108 | 214 |
| Total | 326 | 871 |

As expected, the response rate is lower, further removed in time (trending from 14% in Q1 of 2014 to 33% in Q2 of 2015). Overall, however, there is reasonable response from all time periods.

Survey Respondents Demographics

The first set of questions on the survey asks about demographics. Gender, race, education, and age can be found in the previous table; additional demographics in the following table:

| Demographic | Respondents (n=326) |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Military veteran | 6% |
| Disability | 4% |
| Household size | |
| 1 | 34% |
| 2 | 22% |
| 3 | 20% |
| 4 | 16% |
| 5+ | 8% |
| Marital status | |
| Single/never married | 69% |
| Married | 22% |
| Separated/divorced | 7% |
| Widowed | 1% |
| Dependents | |
| 0 | 39% |
| 1 | 29% |
| 2 | 17% |
| 3 | 10% |
| 4+ | 5% |

Survey Respondents Pre-Skills

The next set of questions on the survey asks employment questions from the period before the individual worked with Skills.

The first question assesses the state of employment before working with Skills:

| Underemployed (117 out of 326) | | Unemployed (209 out of 326) | |
|---|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Employed part time | 15% | Never been employed to that point | 9% |
| Employed in a seasonal or temporary job | 4% | Unemployed for at least 6 months | 32% |
| Employed full time | 17% | Unemployed for less than 6 months | 23% |
| Total | 36% | Total | 64% |

Employed pre-Skills is labeled as “underemployed” to emphasize the population that Skills works with.

For those who were employed, questions were asked about their employment (the average wage was \$13/hour and the average hours worked per week was 33 hours):

| Employment Variables | Underemployed (n=117) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wage (\$/hour) | |
| <\$11 | 40% |
| \$11-15 | 20% |
| \$15-20 | 33% |
| \$20+ | 7% |
| Average wage (\$/hour) | \$13/hour |
| Hours worked per week | |
| <20 | 8% |
| 20-39 | 47% |
| 40+ | 45% |
| Average hours worked per week | 33 hours/week |
| Paid time off | 20% |
| Health benefits | 34% |

For both underemployed and unemployed, questions were asked about their use of public benefits:

| Public Benefits | Underemployed (n=117) | Unemployed (n=209) |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Receive unemployment insurance benefits | 6% | 30% |
| Receive SNAP benefits | 16% | 45% |
| Receive TANF benefits | 5% | 10% |

Survey Respondents Post-Skills

The next set of questions asks about what has happened in the period after the individual was placed by Skills.

- Recall that all of these individuals were placed in employment by Skills, but 9 months or more would have passed between placement and survey, so not all would necessarily be employed by the time this survey occurred (i.e., some otherwise expected values are not 100%).
- In each table to follow, the columns represent 2 separate groups: those who were a) underemployed and b) unemployed before working with Skills. The values in the table show the outcomes after working with Skills for each of those 2 separate groups.

Post-Skills employment outcomes:

Overall, for all individuals, post-Skills employment was 63%. This is an improvement relative to the 36% who were employed pre-Skills. The post-Skills average wage was \$15/hour, and the post-Skills average hours worked per week was 37 hours. These are improvements relative to pre-Skills averages of \$13/hour wage and 33 hours worked per week, respectively. These changes are graphically depicted in Figures 1 and 2 on pages 16 and 17.

In addition to the overall numbers, the table below provides information about post-Skills employment outcomes for subgroups who were *underemployed* pre-Skills and who were *unemployed* pre-Skills.

| Employment Outcomes Post-Skills | If Underemployed Pre-Skills | If Unemployed Pre-Skills | Overall |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Employed | 78% | 58% | 63% |
| Wage (\$/hour) | | | |
| <\$11 | 18% | 25% | 22% |
| \$11-15 | 39% | 36% | 38% |
| \$15-20 | 32% | 32% | 32% |
| \$20+ | 11% | 7% | 9% |
| Average wage (\$/hour) | \$15/hour | \$15/hour | \$15/hour |
| Hours worked per week | | | |
| <20 | 0% | 3% | 2% |
| 20-39 | 36% | 23% | 29% |
| 40+ | 64% | 73% | 69% |
| Average hours worked per week | 37 hours/week | 37 hours/week | 37 hours/week |

For example, of those who were employed pre-Skills, 78% were employed at the time of the survey. Of those who were unemployed pre-Skills, 58% were employed at the time of the survey. The wages and hours worked per week values are calculated based on those who are employed (post-Skills).

Post-Skills employment outcomes (continued):

In net, Skills helped individuals obtain employment with paid time off (PTO) and health benefits. Overall, for those employed post-Skills, 54% had PTO and 62% received health benefits. These are improvements over the corresponding pre-Skills rates of 20% for PTO and 34% for health benefits. These changes are graphically depicted in Figure 1 on page 16.

The set of tables below provides additional information about post-Skills outcomes among subgroups who did *not* have PTO and/or health benefits and who did have them pre-Skills. Those who did not have PTO or health benefits saw double digit increases in receipt of these benefits post-Skills. For example, among individuals who were unemployed pre-Skills, 36% obtained employment with PTO. It is noteworthy that people who were working, but underemployed pre-Skills experienced increases in receipt of benefits post-Skills. For example, among individuals who were underemployed and not receiving health benefits pre-Skills, 32% obtained employment with health benefits.

Among those who **did not** have each employment benefit pre-Skills:

| Employment Benefits Post-Skills | If Underemployed Pre-Skills | If Unemployed Pre-Skills |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Paid time off | 26% | 36% |
| Health benefits | 32% | 35% |

Among people who did already have benefits pre-Skills, there were drops in benefit receipt. For example, among employed individuals who had PTO pre-Skills, 60% had PTO post-Skills. Similarly, among employed individuals with health benefits, 74% had health benefits post-Skills.

Among those who **did** have each employment benefit pre-Skills:

| Employment Benefits Post-Skills | If Underemployed Pre-Skills | If Unemployed Pre-Skills |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Paid time off | 60% | NA |
| Health benefits | 74% | NA |

In the net calculation, the effects of the decreases among those with benefits pre-Skills are more than compensated by the effects of the increases among those without benefits pre-Skills, which results in net increases in benefit receipt (again, see Figure 1).

Post-Skills public benefit outcomes:

Overall across all respondents, receipt of unemployment insurance, SNAP, and TANF benefits dropped post-Skills. The largest changes were among individuals who were unemployed pre-Skills. Individuals who were employed pre-Skills saw little or no changes in benefit receipt. Post-Skills, among those who were employed pre-Skills, 0% received unemployment insurance benefits (compared to 6% pre-Skills), 19% received SNAP (compared to 16% pre-Skills), and 5% received TANF (compared to 5% pre-Skills). Post-Skills, among those who were unemployed pre-Skills, 11% received unemployment insurance benefits (compared to 30% pre-Skills), 28% received SNAP (compared to 45% pre-Skills), and 4% received TANF (compared to 10% pre-Skills). These changes are seen graphically in Figure 3 on page 18.

The set of tables below provides additional information about post-Skills public benefit outcomes among subgroups who were *public benefit recipients* pre-Skills and who were *not public benefit recipients* pre-Skills. Those who did not receive public benefits pre-Skills saw small increases in receipt of these benefits post-Skills. For example, among individuals who were unemployed pre-Skills and did not receive SNAP, 9% received SNAP post-Skills.

Among those who **did not** have each public benefit pre-Skills:

| Public Benefits Post-Skills | If Underemployed Pre-Skills | If Unemployed Pre-Skills |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Receive unemployment insurance benefits | 0% | 3% |
| Receive SNAP benefits | 9% | 11% |
| Receive TANF benefits | 2% | 1% |

Among those who did receive public benefits pre-Skills there were large drops in benefit receipt. For example, among underemployed individuals who received SNAP pre-Skills, only 74% received SNAP post-Skills. Unemployed public benefit recipients saw the largest decreases. Only 27%, 48%, and 35% of public benefit recipients that were unemployed pre-Skills continued to receive unemployment insurance, SNAP, and TANF, respectively, post-Skills.

Among those who **did** have each public benefit pre-Skills:

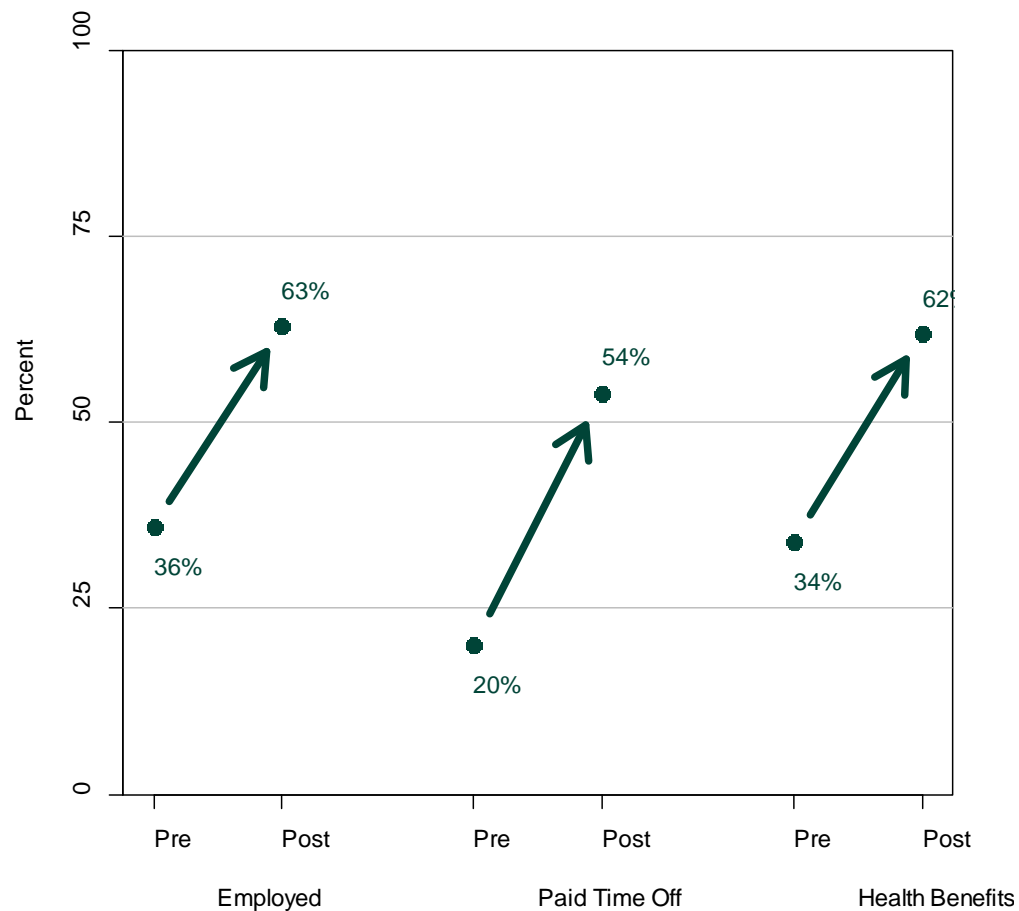
| Public Benefits Post-Skills | If Underemployed Pre-Skills | If Unemployed Pre-Skills |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Receive unemployment insurance benefits | 0% | 27% |
| Receive SNAP benefits | 74% | 48% |
| Receive TANF benefits | 80% | 35% |

In the net calculation, the effects of the increases among those without the benefits pre-Skills are more than compensated by the effects of the decreases among those with the benefits pre-Skills, which results in net decreases in benefit receipt (again, see Figure 3).

Summary of Skills' Impact

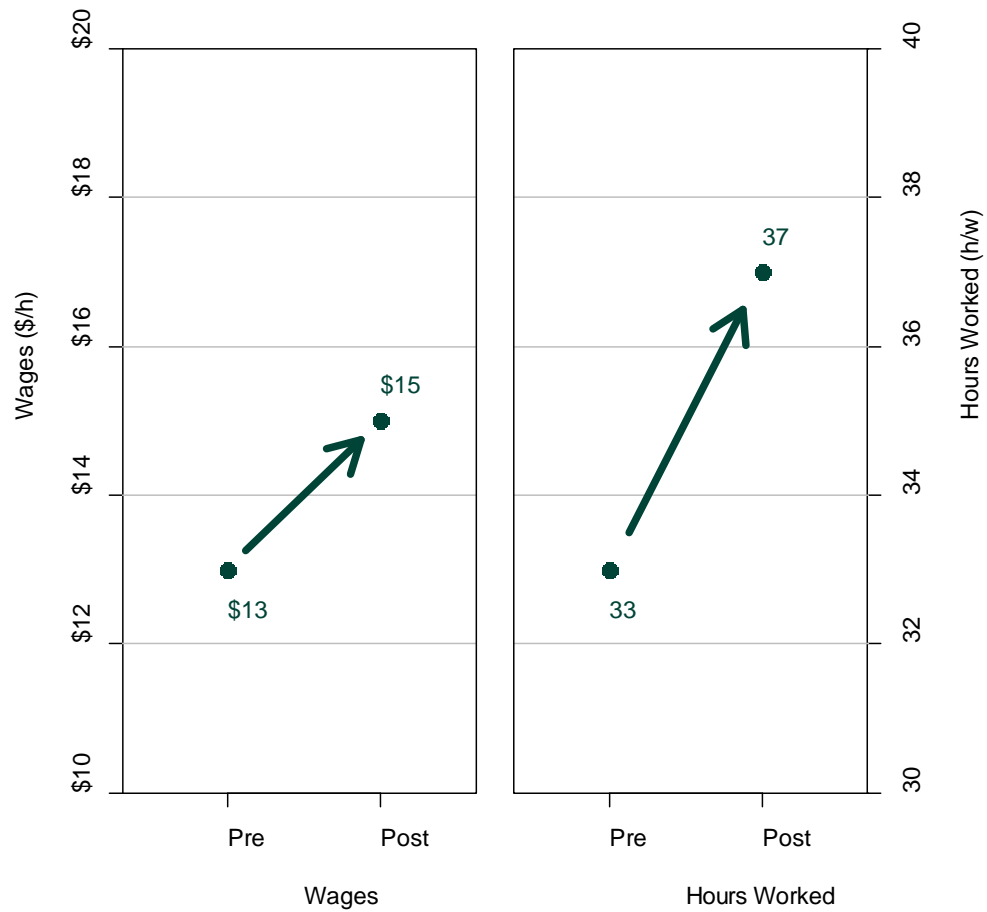
The following sequence of figures highlights the impact that Skills is having on the individuals it serves.

Figure 1: Percent of all survey respondents pre-Skills and post-Skills who were a) employed, and among those currently employed b) in a job with paid time off, and c) in a job with health benefits



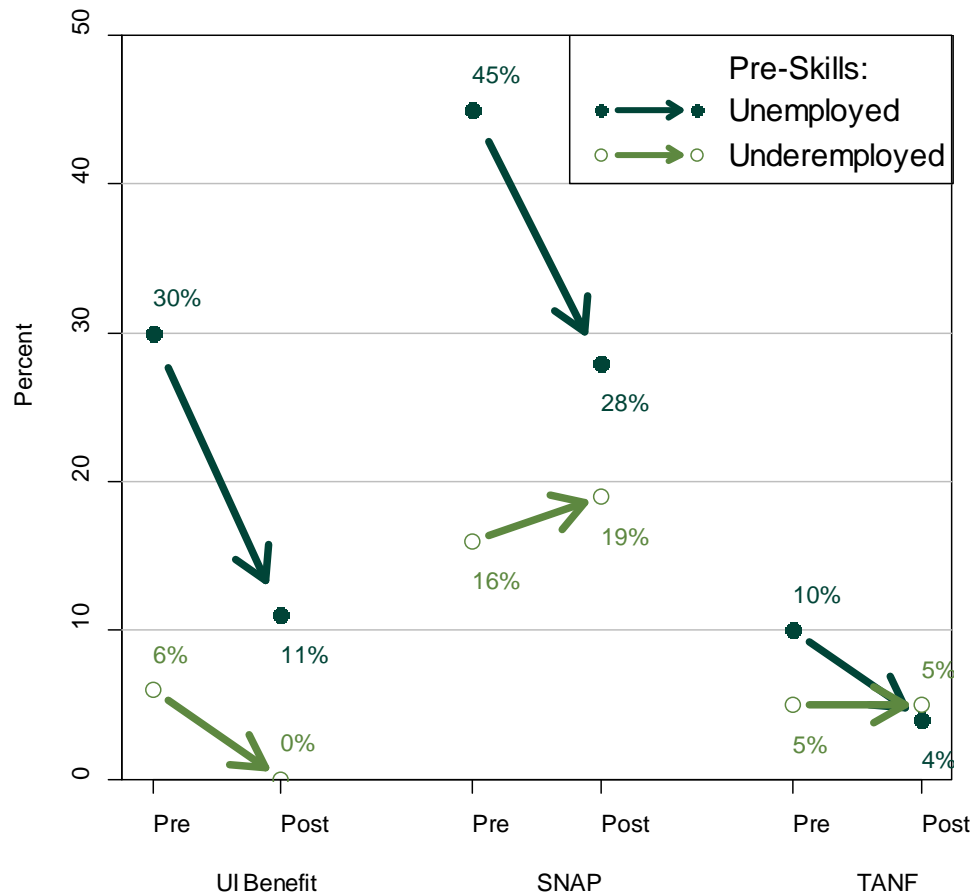
Employment outcomes were substantially improved post-Skills relative to pre-Skills.

Figure 2: Average hourly wage and hours worked per week pre-Skills and post-Skills for those who are employed



There was modest improvement in wages (from \$13/hour to \$15/hour on average) and in hours worked per week (from 33 to 37) post-Skills relative to pre-Skills. Combining these improvements implies an increase in yearly earnings of approximately \$6,500, on average. (Calculation: $(\$15/\text{hour} * 37 \text{ hours/week} * 52 \text{ weeks/year}) - (\$13/\text{hour} * 33 \text{ hours/week} * 52 \text{ weeks/year}) = \$6,500/\text{year}$)

Figure 3: Percent of survey respondents who received a) unemployment insurance, b) SNAP, and c) TANF benefits pre-Skills and post-Skills



Among those who were employed pre-Skills, there was a modest reduction in those who were receiving unemployment insurance benefits post-Skills, but the rates of SNAP and TANF usage remained similar to pre-Skills levels. On the other hand, among those who were unemployed pre-Skills, there was a substantial reduction in the usage of public benefits.

Another way to measure impact is by counting the number of individuals who have improved an outcome from pre-Skills to post-Skills. Some individuals will see their outcome get worse, so the metric of interest is the net number of individuals who benefited.

| Outcome | Number who improved | Number who worsened | Net Number Benefited |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Employment | 121 | 24 | 97 |
| Paid time off | 41 | 5 | 36 |
| Health benefits | 23 | 4 | 17 |
| Wages | 142 | 38 | 104 |
| Hours worked per week | 120 | 107 | 13 |
| UI benefits | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| SNAP | 53 | 20 | 33 |
| TANF | 14 | 3 | 11 |

As expected, not all individuals saw improvements in their outcomes from pre-Skills to post-Skills. But as this table shows, a substantial number of the 326 survey respondents saw improvement. In fact, 182 or 56% of respondents improved on at least one outcome.

Note: the table does not include the individuals who stayed the same from pre-Skills to post-Skills.

Note: for some individuals, a reduction in hours worked per week may not be considered “worse”, so the net number benefited may be undercounted for that outcome.

Other Survey Responses

Several questions on the survey were intended to give a qualitative assessment of the impact of Skills by measuring respondent opinions on 3 or 5 point Likert scales. Note that the intermediate categories for the 5 point Likert scales were implied rather specified on the survey (hence the lack of headers below).

Helpfulness of Skills:

| | Very helpful | | | | Not helpful |
|--|--------------|-----|-----|----|-------------|
| How helpful was Skills in getting you a job? | 64% | 10% | 13% | 5% | 9% |

| | No | Yes |
|--|-----|-----|
| Do you think you would have found that job or a similar job without working with Skills? | 65% | 35% |

Housing:

| | Very stable | | | | Very unstable |
|---|-------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|
| How do you feel about your current housing situation? | 43% | 19% | 23% | 12% | 4% |

| | More stable | About the same | Less stable |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Compared to your housing situation before you worked with Skills, how would you say your housing situation is now? | 24% | 66% | 10% |

Finances:

| | Very stable | | | | Very unstable |
|---|-------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|
| How do you feel about your current financial situation? | 28% | 17% | 33% | 14% | 8% |

| | More stable | About the same | Less stable |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Compared to your financial situation before you worked with Skills, how would you say your financial situation is now? | 28% | 59% | 13% |

Outlook:

| | Very hopeful | | | | Very unhopeful |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----|-----|----|----------------|
| How do you feel about the future? | 57% | 17% | 18% | 5% | 4% |

| | More hopeful | About the same | Less hopeful |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Compared to before you worked with Skills, how would you say you feel about the future? | 35% | 58% | 7% |

In summary, the survey respondents generally felt that Skills was helpful in getting them a job, their stability and outlook was overall positive, and more felt their stability and outlook were improved rather than worsened compared to before working with Skills.

Missing Response Values

Throughout a survey, it is expected that individuals will skip or choose not to answer some items resulting in a missing value in the data. This survey was no exception. Overall the rate of missing values was low for each survey item. Almost all rates were less than 10% and the majority were less than 5%. With missing value rates this low, it is expected that there would be no appreciable change in the results shown throughout the report, even if these missing values were somehow recoverable.

Next Steps

The focus of the interim report is on the survey results. The focus of the final report will be on the participants, the comparison groups, and the administrative data. It is expected that the interim report will be subsumed into the final report, and the survey results will validate, strengthen, and perhaps deepen the understanding gained from the administrative data results.

Over the next six months, several lines of effort will come together to enable the completion of the final report:

- Comparison groups: The construction of comparison groups with IDHS is the highest priority. New Growth is working with IDHS to complete this task.
- Unemployment insurance benefits: During construction of comparison groups, IDHS will send UI benefits data for comparison group individuals as well as participants.
- Earnings data: IDHS has already transmitted quarterly earnings data for participants. Next will be to send data for the comparison individuals.
- SNAP and TANF data: A data sharing agreement with IDHS is being pursued via two methods. One is as a signatory to a large agreement between IDHS and DCEO (Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity), and the other is a direct agreement between IDHS and New Growth.

When these agreements and processes are complete, a full set of administrative data for participants and comparison group individuals will be in hand. By January of 2017 the data will be analyzed and the final report written.

About New Growth

New Growth is a consulting firm headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, which specializes in workforce development and talent management. A veteran-owned business, New Growth was founded in 2010 on the principle that *people* are the most important parts of business success and regional growth. With a staff of eight, New Growth enables public and private sector clients to solve their workforce challenges through three types of service:

- 1) Strategic process facilitation such as organizational or regional strategic planning and grant research, development, and writing.
- 2) Evaluation and analytics such as statistical analyses, quasi-experimental or experimental impact evaluation, return-on-investment and cost-benefit analyses, labor market analytics, geographic information systems analysis, and surveys.
- 3) Scalable project support such as project leadership, project staffing, coaching and technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, and database and technology implementation.

Current and former clients include philanthropies, community-based organizations, education and training institutions, workforce agencies, economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, and corporations.

Staff members of New Growth who contributed to this report are:

| Staff Member | Title | Responsibility |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Chris Spence | Principal | Overall project management |
| Brian Schmotzer | Director of Evaluation | Research design, data analysis, writing |
| Emma Billmyer | Summer on the Cuyahoga Intern | Data analysis |
| Nikki Glazer Stoicoiu | Data Manager and Analyst | GIS mapping, survey administrator |