

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

REAL JOBS RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDY:

Man Up 2 Careers Partnership

Prepared for:

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Man Up 2 Careers Partnership

Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)

In 2015, The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) awarded funding to workforce development collaborations throughout the state. Funding was provided through development grants to create sector-based partnerships and create a plan to provide workforce training aimed at sector needs. Implementation funding was then provided for these partnerships to develop training materials and train workers in Rhode Island in targeted industries including healthcare, technology, marine trades, and the arts. Sector partnerships were developed through public private partnerships including that included industry, workforce intermediaries and educational institutions to address the economic needs of the state.

I. Sector Need

The Man Up 2 Careers Partnership (MU2CP), with main applicant Man Up, Inc., was designed to prepare low income, incarcerated men and women of color for high-growth jobs in the manufacturing and marine trades sectors. Man Up, Inc. was founded with a mission to address the lack of opportunity for men of color in Rhode Island. This organization specifically targets both youth (ages 17-19) and adult (18+) men of color who are currently incarcerated. Man Up, Inc. works with these individuals because these men face a wide range of barriers to career-track employment upon leaving incarceration, such as:

- Having a criminal background
- Mental illness
- History of substance abuse
- Long history of unemployment/unstable employment history
- Low literacy/numeracy skills
- Unstable housing

By training Man Up, Inc.'s target population and expanding to include formerly incarcerated women, MU2CP sought to address critical workforce and skills gaps in the manufacturing and marine trades industries. Specifically, MU2CP sought to address several issues within this sector including:

- Manufacturing companies often find it difficult to identify qualified employees (i.e., candidates are often underqualified, not workforce-ready, lack necessary basic skills, and lack any hands-on experience).¹

¹ The Manufacturing Workforce: A Developing Crisis. Frost & Sullivan. 2013.
<http://mlc.frost.com/forms/TheManufacturingWorkforce>

- Manufacturing jobs often go unfilled due to a lack of skilled professionals, even during times of high unemployment.²
- The manufacturing industry is facing an aging workforce, and impending retirements will increase the number of vacant positions.
- Few educational programs exist to support manufacturing industries.
- Manufacturing companies need more employees with welding and mechanics skills.
- In Rhode Island, the marine trades and manufacturing industries have significant current and projected employment needs, and as a result, require a substantial number of properly trained individuals.

MU2CP's primary objective was to train employees to meet industry-specific demands by providing workforce development services that equip incarcerated individuals of color with the skills and credentials necessary to attain high wages, diverse and viable employment options, and further educational opportunities.

II. Grant History

Man Up, Inc. began program design and planning in 2011 and started providing services to its target population in 2013. By 2014, Man Up, Inc. was registered as an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The organization has been financed through a variety of public and private sources, including grants through the state legislature, Delta Dental of Rhode Island, the cities of Pawtucket and Providence, and United Way. In 2014, Man Up, Inc. received a 2014 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant from the city of Pawtucket, and in 2015, received funding from the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB).

Man Up, Inc. did not apply for a planning grant because they did not learn about RJRI until after the deadline, but its implementation grant was successful. Man Up, Inc. became connected to the various business and educational partners (i.e., New England Institute of Technology/SAMI, RI Marine Trades Association, RI Manufacturers Association, Building Futures, RI Construction Training Academy, Electric Boat, Craftmasters Construction and Amos House) on the RJRI grant through the GWB, and the director of DLT encouraged formalized partnerships, such as the use of memoranda of understanding (MOUs), which helped to sustain these partnerships.

III. Goals and Objectives

MU2CP was developed to address the insufficient capacity in the region to meet the current and projected workforce needs in the manufacturing and marine trades industries by training low-income, incarcerated individuals of color to succeed in available positions with the employer partners upon their release. A long-term goal of MU2CP was to reduce the overall rate of recidivism. By participating in this program and receiving training linked to a good middle-

² Workforce Imperative: A Manufacturing Education Strategy. Society of Manufacturing Engineers. 2012. www.sme.org/workforceimperative

class job, Man Up, Inc. believed the individuals would be less likely to return to the corrections system. MU2CP worked to meet the following goal:

1. Recruit, support, train, and identify employment for low-income, incarcerated individuals of color in the highly-skilled manufacturing and marine trades industries.
 - As part of MU2CP, Man Up, Inc. provided participants with intensive case management and support services, and implemented and executed a workforce training plan that consisted of the development of individual employment plans, individual counseling, career planning, workforce readiness training, remedial education, vocational training, financial literacy services, and job placement assistance. Participants also received college readiness training.

Specifically, MU2CP sought to meet the following objective:

- Refer 15 participants from ex-offender populations to training programs.

IV. Partnerships

MU2CP brought together industry employers, vocational training providers, a remedial education provider, a workforce-readiness training provider, and support service providers. Man Up, Inc. also participated in broader initiatives such as the White House's My Brother's Keeper initiative. The employer partners provided key input into the design of all elements of the proposed Workforce Training Plan, including input on training gaps and jobs anticipated to have significant openings in the coming years, selection of the training programs offered, input into specific skills taught through the training programs, participant selection criteria, and the services to be offered to support ongoing participant success. Each of these partners were included because they had the expertise necessary to meet the specific needs of the target population. The chart below details the partners and their specific responsibilities

Table 1: Partnership Members and Responsibilities

<p>Man Up, Inc.</p>	<p>Responsible for fiscal management; intensive case management oversight; recruitment and screening of individuals into the training program; access to supportive services (including mental health care, stable housing, substance abuse treatment and mentoring); job placement activities; collaboration with training providers and employers; developing workforce training plans tailored to each participant's needs.</p>
<p>Alternative Educational Programming Inc.</p>	<p>Responsible for offering remedial education to participants with low literacy/ numeracy scores to improve their skills in critical areas within the target industries, such as mathematics; offering college readiness training to select participants if it is part of the individual employment plan; provided access to the Community College of RI CNC Machinist Boot Camp, Machinist Certification Program, and Engineering Technology Associate's Degree Program; facilitated information sessions to ManUp, Inc. clients regarding their college entrance.</p>
<p>Shipbuilding/ Marine Trades and Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) at the New England Institute of Technology</p>	<p>Responsible for working with staff from Man Up, Inc. to identify, screen, and provide training services to eligible participants referred to the SAMI program; offering 10-week training programs in machining and welding; providing job placement opportunities to these individuals through the provision of high quality occupational training activities.</p>
<p>Rhode Island Marine Trades Association, Rhode Island Manufacturer's Association, Providence Plan Building Futures, Amos House</p>	<p>Available to provide training programs for participants depending on individual needs and career aspirations.</p>
<p>Craftmaster's Professional Contractors, Pezzuco Construction , RI Carbide Tool Company, Office Recycling Solutions, General Dynamic/Electric Boat</p>	<p>Responsible for providing internships and employment opportunities for those who complete the training programs.</p>
<p>Rhode Island Training School, Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution</p>	<p>Responsible for providing social workers who refer potential candidates to MU2CP.</p>

V. Implementation Activities and Processes

Goal # 1: Recruit, support, train, and place low-income, incarcerated individuals of color into the manufacturing and marine trades industries.

Provide participants with intensive case management and support services.

Man Up, Inc. recruited potential participants for this program through the Rhode Island Correctional system. Specifically, the Rhode Island Training School (youth detention center) and the Adult Correctional Institution referred individuals to the program, and some participants learned about Man Up, Inc., through the judiciary system, word-of-mouth, probation offices, and re-entry coordinators. Man Up, Inc. provided case management services, which began at intake with an initial in-depth interview that gathered details regarding the participant's work history, skills, barriers, and career aspirations. Information from the interview was used to help each participant develop a Workforce Training Plan that outlined the training and support services that would help the participant achieve his career goals.

Participants met with case managers weekly for 12-15 months, both while they were incarcerated and after they exited the correctional system. Case management sessions included a review of progress and goals, as well as life skills training on topics including punctuality, anger management, workplace communication, teamwork, and problem solving. The individuals in the program were expected to meet goals, objectives, and benchmarks from their Workforce Training Plan while in the program, and their case managers talked with them every week to help with completion. Case Managers also supported participants after placement into employment, providing ongoing support for both the participant and the employer to further the participant's opportunities for success.

Because a majority of the individuals in the target population face mental health challenges that can impact their ability to succeed in training and employment, Man Up, Inc. coordinated with a licensed mental health counselor to provide mental health counseling for participants who needed services. In addition, because these individuals often face additional barriers to employment success, Man Up, Inc. helped with or organized referrals to community providers for other supportive services, including housing (sober living houses, Section 8/subsidized housing, transitional living programs), substance abuse treatment (outpatient treatment, AA/NA meetings), food resources (food banks), legal services, transportation (bus passes, assistance with obtain driver's licenses and car registrations), and other resources as needed. Case managers maintained small caseloads, allowing them to work intensively with each participant to address their individual needs.

Implement and execute a workforce training plan that consists of workforce readiness training, remedial education, vocational training, and job placement.

Remedial Education

Remedial education was provided by Alternative Educational Programming (AEP) to address basic skills gaps amongst the target population, such as to help them prepare for

successful manufacturing careers by providing remedial math that is required to succeed in the machining and welding trainings. The training covered the following topics:

- Remedial English, including academic and conversational English to prepare students for post-secondary education and teach the skills required for workplace communication;
- Remedial Math to prepare students for entrance into post-secondary education and vocational training programs that require math skills;
- Financial aid education to help students identify and apply for appropriate financial aid for post-secondary education; and
- Post-secondary education options, including a review of local colleges and the programs offered and assistance with completing applications.

Work Readiness Training

Man Up, Inc. was responsible for coordinating the work readiness training for program participants. Training was conducted by John Gomes, a certified National Workforce Readiness Certificate trainer with extensive training experience. Training was provided to participants while they were incarcerated, preparing them for success once they exited their facility. The Workforce Readiness Program provided training based on the ACT KeyTrain Suite for WorkKeys Skills – a workforce readiness preparation program designed to prepare individuals to sit for and pass the exam to secure a National Workforce Readiness Certificate. Topics covered included:

- Applied mathematics, including basic mathematical operations relevant to the workplace, and setting up and solving complex work-related math problems;
- Locating information, including, how to find information presented in common workplace graphics, as well as where to look for commonly needed workplace information, and;
- Reading for information, including techniques for reading and understanding documents commonly found in the workplace, and determining the relevance of written information to work-related tasks.

Vocational Training

The Shipbuilding and Marine Trades and Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) in partnership with the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) offered 10-week training programs in welding, shipfitting, and machining to participants affiliated with Man Up, Inc. The SAMI programs provided both classroom and hands-on training that led to industry-recognized credentials in careers (i.e., machinist, welding, shipfitting certificates of completion; OSHA 10 certification) identified as in high-demand by the employer partners. This program turned out to be the best training option for many of the participants because it started a new program every eight weeks, and after finishing the training, the individuals could be hired right away. Because many other training programs only hold trainings once a year, which is not ideal for this target

population (which ideally needs to start training and gain a job soon after they finish work readiness training), the SAMI/NEIT program worked well to help participants meet their goals.

Participants also had access to training provided by four other training providers with whom Man Up, Inc. maintained referral relationships through their participation in the GWB. Participants were referred to these providers based on their individual needs and career aspirations. These training providers were Amos House (culinary training), Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (marine trades training), Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (manufacturing training), and Providence Plan Building Futures (construction training). Some participants took part in the training through Amos House, but not at other training providers during the first year of implementation.

If the participants completed the training program they started and met their various goals and objectives on their Workforce Training Plan, they became eligible to receive a stipend given out once a year (usually towards the end of December). While many of the participants already had a job by this point, this stipend was welcomed to help pay for various bills, such as car registrations and down payments, which are often critical for job retention.

Job Placement

Job placement was provided jointly by Man Up, Inc. and SAMI. Man Up, Inc. and SAMI both had strong relationships with the employer partners included in MU2CP, and both maintained job placement relationships with additional employers outside of the partnership. SAMI facilitated the execution of job placement services for all individuals who completed their training programs, and extended those services to RJRI participants. Man Up, Inc. supported SAMI in their job placement efforts, and worked to connect participants with additional employers through their own networking efforts. One participant did not require training, and he was placed for employment in a construction company due to previous work experience and also began taking classes at CCRI. Man Up, Inc. remains connected to former participants and involves them in its continuing efforts. For example, the organization has former trainees who serve as board members for Man Up, Inc., asks former trainees to serve as mentors for current participants, and posts success stories of former trainees (with permission) on its website to help inspire current and future trainees.

VI. Achievements

Partnerships

Training Timing

Working with SAMI provided training opportunities that ensured the individuals in the program secured employment. SAMI's schedule of offering courses every eight weeks was critical to ensuring participants could start a training program quickly once they were ready to start.

Widespread Interest

MU2CP was able to attract a wide variety and number of partners from different sectors of the economy. By working with sectors that were actively looking for employees, MU2CP attracted partners who were interested in working with them and hiring trainees.

Recruitment

Met Recruitment Goals

MU2CP was able to meet its target for recruitment. One strength it cited was that the program received referrals through the correctional system, the judiciary system, word-of-mouth, probation officers, and re-entry coordinators. The program had a strong reputation and was therefore able to use a large community to find eligible trainees.

Trainee Barriers

Effective Case Management Services

Every participant in this program encountered many personal and social barriers. However, case managers had small caseloads and were able to provide extensive services to ensure that participants completed training programs and found a job. The case managers also conducted frequent and extensive assessments, which worked well in placing participants in the right type of training programs for their skills and personalities.

MU2CP found that identifying placements for some participants in residential facilities was helpful to ensure participants were thriving. Having case management and being in a focused environment was beneficial for ensuring success because participants in these environments did not have to worry about “putting a roof over their heads or putting food on the table,” and the participants were better able to focus on their personal development, workforce training, and careers rather than basic survival.

Training

Participant Interest in Continuing Education

Individuals in the program had a strong desire to take part in higher educational opportunities. For example, one of the men was interested in a job in the welding industry. Man Up, Inc. worked to connect him with an engineering program within higher education, and this helped him get credits toward an engineering degree while he was completing the training program.

Transition from Training to Employment

Met employment goals

Nearly every participant who completed the training program found employment.

Ability to provide additional support services

MU2CP was able to support trainees by providing them with additional services that helped them become more employable. Specifically, it provided trainees with services and tools

that would help them obtain jobs, such as clothes for a job interview. These services helped trainees obtain training-related employment after the end of the training program, and helped remove barriers that would have prevented otherwise skilled and prepared candidates from obtaining employment. The DLT's funding was instrumental to providing these services, as it covered the cost of these usual support services.

Other

Connections to legal services

Man Up, Inc. had effective connections with the federal courts system in Rhode Island and with the Roger Williams University Legal Defense Clinic. These connections were critical for helping participants to restore driver's licenses and getting criminal offenses expunged, which can be major barriers to obtaining employment.

Support from multiple funding streams

Man Up, Inc. found that it worked well to have both United Way and RJRI funding at the same time because both organizations were supportive of their endeavors. Man Up, Inc. was also able to braid funds from both organizations to cover all aspects of its training program, and use the funds to complement each other by covering gaps created by funding restrictions.

Table 2: Performance Metrics for All Training Programs

IG-10 Man Up 2 Careers Partnership (MU2CP)	Start Date of First Cohort	Proposed End Date	Target Enrollment	Enrolled	Target Completed	Completed
Recruitment, Training, and Employment						
Referred to Training (Job Seekers)	3/15/16	12/31/16	15	32	15	14
Total Participants placed in training-related employment					10	14
Total Participants retained in training-related employment					15	Ongoing
Total Participants that receive life skills training					15	47
Total Participants that receive College Readiness training					TBD	0
Other Objectives						
Total Participants that earn college credits					TBD	7
Total Participants that earn OSHA 10 credential					TBD	8
Total Participants that earn NCRC					TBD	0
Reduce Recidivism among Recruits					TBD	Ongoing

VII. Challenges

Partnerships

Confusion over target population

Some of the training and employer partners were difficult to work with due to continued lack of knowledge and understanding of the target population.

Recruitment

MU2CP did not discuss any challenges with recruitment.

Trainee Barriers

Reluctance to hire trainees with criminal backgrounds

Another challenge identified by MU2CP was that some of the employer partners on the grant would not employ individuals with a criminal background. For example, Electric Boat, as well as other regional entities with defense contracts, could not offer participants from the program a position due to government regulations regarding the hiring process. In general, MU2CP found that many employers were reluctant to hire someone who had been incarcerated despite their training and qualification simply due to social stigma surrounding people with convictions and criminal records.

Transportation

Finding adequate transportation was particularly challenging for many of the individuals in the program. Some of the participants had lost their driver's licenses for various reasons, and some of them needed help navigating the legal and financial issues to get them back. For example, one man was unable to get his driver's license because he owed thousands of dollars in unpaid parking tickets. Staff at Man Up, Inc. were able to utilize their connections with the judicial and legal systems to help this man work with judges from multiple cities to forgive or reduce the parking tickets.

Training

Long time between offered trainings

Many partners only held their training programs once per year, which was difficult for individuals who were ready to begin a training program based on their identified abilities and interests, but had to wait or select another training program that started sooner.

Transition from Training to Employment

Overcoming social challenges

The most pressing challenge conveyed by MU2CP dealt with the physical/social/environmental challenges encountered by participants that made it difficult for this population to establish successful careers. After leaving incarceration these participants entered physical

environments that were not conducive to a normal work schedule, and those in the participant's familial and social networks were often not in support of the training program requirements and the trainee's decision to become a career employee. For example, contrary to traditional workforce participants, some participants have been on a career path, but then recidivate and/or lose a job by engaging in illegal activities.

Other

Connection to state scandals

Throughout its planning and implementation processes, MU2CP worked with Alternative Educational Programming Inc., an organization where former state representative Raymond E. Gallison Jr. worked prior to his departure from the organization in May of 2016. At the time of his departure, Mr. Gallison was under federal investigation for numerous financial crimes that resulted in his resignation from the General Assembly and his later arrest and conviction. As a result of its connection to Mr. Gallison, MU2CP underwent a period of strict scrutiny from the DLT, the press, and the public to ensure that none of the MU2CP RJRI grant money was improperly managed by Mr. Gallison. A 2016 investigation by the DLT found that no grant money was improperly managed by MU2CP as a result of its connection to Mr. Gallison. However, MU2CP did experience delays in implementing its program due to these issues.

VIII. Sustainability

Man Up, Inc. believes the MU2CP training program is highly sustainable and strongly desires to take its program model nationwide because it believes it has found a system that works for helping individuals of color secure employment. Man Up, Inc. continues to apply for various state and foundation grants to fund its organization in the short-term. Man Up, Inc. has several long-term strategies in place to ensure the sustainability of its services in the absence of State funding. For example, Man Up, Inc. developed a business plan for a social enterprise business that provides contract manufacturing services, which would provide employment opportunities for people of color in machinist and welding positions while generating revenue to support case management and supportive service endeavors. When writing the initial RJRI implementation grant proposal, Man Up, Inc. was speaking with several local and national employers to discuss subcontracting components of this social enterprise business. The idea was that this business could generate reliable, unrestricted income to support the activities of Man Up, Inc. including those that are part of the Real Jobs Partnership.

Further, due to the aforementioned barriers facing the target population for this program, Man Up, Inc. would like to seek funding to start a Residential Training Academy. This would help alleviate the potential impacts of negative social and physical environments while in the training program. Man Up, Inc. believes this would help the individuals better succeed in finding and sustaining employment.

IX. Lessons Learned

The following includes lessons learned by this partnership:

- Provide extensive case management, assessment, and support services to training participants who are formerly incarcerated.
- Identify training programs that accept and train participants throughout the year.
- Develop connections in the judicial and legal systems to overcome barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face in securing employment. The issues that individuals previously in the criminal justice system may face upon re-entry to the community can be quite complicated, and they often require assistance navigating the complicated state and local systems to ensure they will be successful in completing training programs and holding employment.
- Address issues related to social and physical environments (for example, housing programs) of training participants who are formerly incarcerated.
- Provide transportation to training and to employment while formerly incarcerated individuals establish credit and savings that can allow them to have stable self-funded transportation.
- Identify barriers to employment in the training sector prior to beginning training, such as the need for criminal background checks, to ensure program participants have the ability to be employed in the sector upon completion of the training program.

X. Best Practices

These best practices were utilized by MU2CP:

- Provide highly qualified case managers with low caseloads to provide wrap around services that meet the complicated, diverse needs of the target population.
- Provide ongoing case management that follow individuals while incarcerated and after they exit the system.
- Work with the court system and legal support services to aid trainees with legal issues that continue to be a barrier to employment and to help identify potential participants.
- Provide support for transportation issues, including offering bus passes and helping to reinstate driver's licenses.
- Continuously improve assessments to ensure trainees are placed in the right type of training.
- Utilize former trainees as board members, to serve as role mentors for participants, and interns for Man Up, Inc. to gain professional skill.
- Provide mental health counseling as part of services.

XI. Recommendations

Based on the successes and challenges of MU2CP, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Institute pre-screening for employment that includes all requirements for working in the field (such as background or credit checks) to ensure the requirements can be met upon completion of training.
- Provide some type of training on the barriers and needs of marginalized populations, such as people of color, who have been a part of the criminal justice system, to training and employer partners who are less familiar with these challenges.
- Provide support and training program services to trainees' support networks would help ensure successful training completion and job retention for people of color who were formerly incarcerated.