



# Findings at a Glance

Highlights from the Report

“Encouraging Evidence on a Sector-Focused Strategy”

## WorkAdvance Boosts Earnings for Low-Income Workers

“Encouraging Evidence on a Sector-Focused Strategy,” a report from CEO’s research and evaluation partner MDRC, discusses the impacts of WorkAdvance. MDRC conducted a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) evaluation of the impacts of WorkAdvance on participants’ earnings, employment, and other economic outcomes. These findings are particularly important as policymakers seek to find better ways to improve economic outcomes for low-income workers.

### Key Evaluation Findings

MDRC’s evaluation shows that **WorkAdvance improved earnings for participants** when compared to a control group that did not receive WorkAdvance services. In particular:

- WorkAdvance **significantly increased employment in the target sector** at all providers.
- By the second year after entering the program, participants at three out of four sites saw **annual earnings increase significantly**.
- At two sites that were newer to this approach, the program had **much larger impacts on earnings and employment for those who began the study later in the study period**, showing that WorkAdvance takes time to fully implement.
- WorkAdvance was able to **increase earnings and employment rates for the long-term unemployed**.

The chart on the right shows the difference in annual earnings (in dollars) in the second year after entering the program for all participants (the “WA group”) compared to the control group and then breaks it down by labor market attachment. Statistical significance is signified by an asterisk (\*).

### What is WorkAdvance?

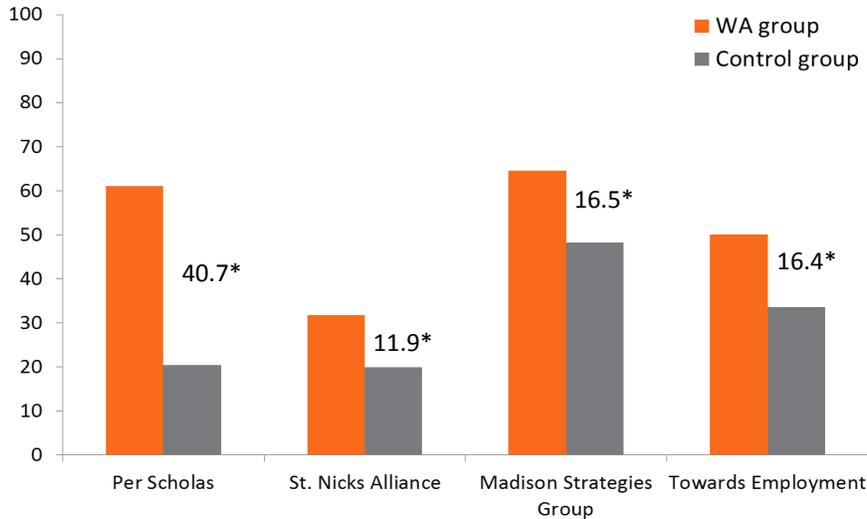
**WorkAdvance** seeks to boost the earnings of unemployed and low-wage working adults by helping them obtain quality jobs in targeted sectors with opportunities for career growth. WorkAdvance prepares, trains, and places unemployed and low-wage workers in quality jobs with established career tracks. After placement, the program continues to assist participants to help them advance in their chosen careers. WorkAdvance was implemented under the auspices of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a public-private partnership administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. WorkAdvance was implemented in NYC, northeast Ohio, and Tulsa, Oklahoma. WorkAdvance is part of CEO and the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City’s SIF portfolio, which also includes five other programs.

### Annual Earnings Impacts in Year 2 by Employment Status



## WorkAdvance Increased Percent Employed in the Target Sector at all Providers

Percentage of respondents employed in target sector in current or most recent job. The numbers indicate the percentage point difference in employment rates between program and control groups. All differences are statistically significant.



### Affecting Policy

The US Department of Labor, implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed in 2014, directs states and cities using federal workforce funds to utilize sector-based strategies and a career pathways approach. The impacts of WorkAdvance show the potential of this strategy, but also that this requires strong implementation on the part of workforce providers. Results suggest that it takes time to get a strong sector program up and running and for impacts to emerge.

### Looking Ahead

The WorkAdvance research provides critical data on what works in successful sector-based programs, and the workforce development field is poised for additional learning over the next few years.

- MDRC is hoping to continue to follow the WorkAdvance participants and look at impacts at the 3 and 5-year marks. This research would also include a cost-benefit analysis of the program.
- All of the WorkAdvance providers continue to implement sector-based, advancement-focused workforce development programs that have been informed by the WorkAdvance experience.
- WorkAdvance will continue to inform implementation of career pathways and sector strategies locally and nationally.

#### WorkAdvance Partners and Additional Information:

Providers: New York City — Per Scholas, St. Nicks Alliance; Northeast Ohio — Towards Employment; Tulsa — Madison Strategies Group.

Link to Report: <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/encouraging-evidence-sector-focused-advancement-strategy>

WorkAdvance Implementation Report: [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/WorkAdvance\\_CEO\\_SIF\\_2014\\_FR.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/WorkAdvance_CEO_SIF_2014_FR.pdf)

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