

July 20, 2010

**Contact:**

Chelsea Farley  
212-822-2407  
[cfarley@ppv.org](mailto:cfarley@ppv.org)

## **NEW STUDY SHOWS SECTOR-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS SIGNIFICANTLY BOOST EMPLOYMENT, EARNINGS, ACCESS TO BENEFITS**

### **Public/Private Ventures Generates Evidence, Identifies Key Elements of Success**

PHILADELPHIA, PA, July 20, 2010 – The recession has eliminated many jobs, disproportionately impacting people with less education and fewer skills. A rigorous new two-year study by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) finds that sector-based employment programs, in which experienced nonprofit organizations provide job training that is closely aligned with the needs of local employers, successfully connect disadvantaged job seekers to steadier employment with increased earnings and better access to benefits. Further, the study finds that these programs may have a key role to play in preparing our workforce for the higher-skills jobs that are expected to be central in the nation’s economic recovery.

“Over the last two decades, the ranks of the working poor have swelled, and the general consensus has been that workforce programs don’t make much of a difference for them,” says **P/PV President Nadya K. Shmavonian**. “Sector-focused programs do – and we have learned this just at the moment when these workers are struggling more than ever. More importantly, this study sheds light on why these programs work, pointing to specific elements that appear to make them effective.”

The P/PV report, “Tuning In to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study” finds that those who had participated in sector-based programs were **more likely to get work, earned more money** and had better access to **benefits** than the control group. Specifically, in the second year of P/PV’s random-assignment study, after all training had been completed, program participants:

- Earned an average of \$4,000 – or 29 percent – more per year,
- Worked an average of 20 hours more per month, and
- Worked 1.4 more months per year in jobs that offered benefits, such as health insurance, paid vacation, paid sick leave and tuition reimbursement.

The study focused on three organizations – Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), Jewish Vocational Service-Boston (JVS) and Per Scholas in New York City. In addition to demonstrating significant impacts for participants, the study identified five common elements that likely contributed to the programs’ success:

- *Adaptability.* They are able to meet the ever-changing needs of employers and job seekers.
- *A strong link to employers.* They understand the unique needs of a target industry and its local employers.
- *Industry-specific training.* They create the training curriculum – consisting of basic skills, hands-on technical skills and job readiness – through the lens of a specific occupation or sector.
- *A keen recruitment and screening process.* They work to make an appropriate match between the applicant and the program; and then between the applicant and the job.
- *Key supports.* They provide support to ensure training completion and success on the job, such as help with childcare, transportation, or housing.

“This study represents a major advance in our understanding of what works to create opportunities for disadvantaged people,” says Harvard University Professor and P/PV Board Member **William Julius Wilson**. “In a field where very little has been proven effective, this report outlines the key ingredients for successful job training that may also further our nation's economic recovery. It's not just the job training or connections to jobs or support services that make this approach work, but all of these ingredients put together.”

P/PV is working to share the findings of the study with policymakers, funders and workforce practitioners around the country.

“Our hope is that policymakers and funders will understand the effectiveness of sector-based programs and invest in them, so that we can better meet the needs of our nation’s disadvantaged job seekers and their families,” adds **Jack Litzenberg**, program director and senior program officer at the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**, which funded the study. “There couldn’t be a better time to reconsider our nation’s workforce policies—and to make sure we’re supporting the approaches that are most effective for job seekers and employers alike.”

###

For 30 years, P/PV has been a national leader in creating, testing and strengthening programs that improve lives in low-income communities. We do this in three ways:

- **Innovation:** We work with leaders in the field to identify promising existing programs or develop new ones;
- **Research:** We rigorously evaluate these programs to determine what is effective and what is not; and
- **Action:** We reproduce proven programs in new locations, provide technical assistance where needed and inform policymakers and practitioners about what works.

P/PV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with offices in Philadelphia, New York City and Oakland. For more information, please visit [www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org).