



SWFI Bright Ideas: July 2018 – September 2018

This brief presents Bright Ideas that Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees have been using to deliver program and system services between July 2018 and September 2018. The topics covered in the current brief include child care; employment activities; program design, practices, and approaches; and training or education. We also provide links to example recruitment materials that grantees shared. Earlier Bright Ideas briefs explore practices between June 2016 and June 2018.¹ In addition, a Promising Practices brief discusses grantees' approaches to child care.² These briefs are designed to encourage peer grantees to share their innovative approaches with each other.

How did the TA team identify Bright Ideas?

We used the following information from grantees to identify Bright Ideas:

- **Reviewing grantees' quarterly reports.** Every quarter, Mathematica staff review grantees' reports to document practices that grantees identify as promising.
- **Regular contact between grantees and Technical Assistance (TA) coaches and the Employment and Training Administration program office and FPOs.** The TA team regularly records and categorizes new approaches, changes to existing strategies, creative partnerships, and other elements of program design that are identified through contact with grantees.

To help grantees identify practices that are relevant to them, we sort Bright Ideas into five specific topics and then subtopics (see Table 1). We use the following topics:

- **Child care**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are meeting the child care needs of their participants, such as helping parents access child care subsidies.
- **Employment activities**, which relate to activities aimed at helping SWFI participants enter and maintain employment, such as partnering with employers.
- **Program design**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are designing their programs and service delivery to meet SWFI participants' needs, such as building regular communication across programs.
- **Program practices and approach**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are implementing their program, such as how they are conducting outreach and recruitment and progressing towards systems integration.

¹ SWFI Bright Ideas: June 2016 to March 2017. Available at: https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/03/12/27/July_Bright_Ideas_Brief; SWFI Bright Ideas: April 2017 to December 2017. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/02/15/16/24/Bright-Ideas-Tip-Sheet>; SWFI Bright Ideas: January 2018 to April 2018. Available at: https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/05/25/17/04/SWFI_April_Bright_Ideas_Brief; SWFI Bright Ideas: May 2018 and June 2018. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/08/17/16/09/SWFI-Bright-Ideas-Brief-June-2018>

² SWFI Child Care Promising Practices Brief. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/12/07/14/17/Child-Care-Promising-Practices-Brief>.



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- **Training or education**, which relates to the training or educational services grantees are offering SWFI participants, such as how they are developing career pathways to middle- and high-skilled employment.

Do these ideas work?

Bright Ideas briefs provide grantees with a range of new strategies and elements of program design that are being used by other grantees; however, these features have not always been linked with positive outputs or outcomes (or indeed with any outputs or outcomes if the approaches are new).

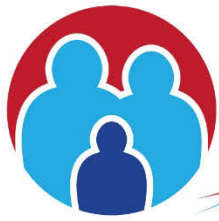
More detailed Promising Practices briefs, released separately and less often, will explore practices that have been linked with positive outcomes. Please keep reporting your Bright Ideas, along with any outcomes, so that these can support peer sharing and other TA for you and your peer grantees! Please note that Bright Ideas briefs provide only a snapshot of the work grantees are doing, and not all grantees will be highlighted in any given brief.



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Table 1. Bright Ideas for the period July 2018–September 2018

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes*
Child care			
Helping parents access affordable child care/early education	OAI, Inc.	As described in the May to June 2018 Bright Ideas brief , OAI, Inc. has SWFI staff work with Illinois Action for Children to enroll participants in child care subsidies, which has meant 141 children have received child care through SWFI, with much of this funding coming from leveraged child care subsidy funds. Discussions are under way about sustainable systems alignment between workforce and child care systems.	In process.
Helping parents access affordable child care/early education	The Workplace	The WorkPlace devoted special attention to families' summer needs this year. They developed a list of free and low-cost summer camps, partnered with area YMCAs on camps, incorporated information about camp and summer plans into child care informational sessions, and provided information to parents about summer meal options for their children.	Parents received significantly more information about summer options this year.
Employment activities			
On-the-Job Training	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board, dba CareerSource	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board, dba CareerSource (CareerSource) has gotten their On-the-Job Training (OJT) underway, with 6 approved sites and 9 sites in progress. They have developed an online Earn-and-Learn work-based learning portal to manage all their OJT. Staff and OJT employers can upload and approve paperwork, including training plans and invoices, through the portal.	The portal is live and they expect it to help facilitate smoother paperwork management.
WIOA alignment	Vermont Technical College	During planning sessions for the state's WIOA plan, Vermont Technical College has engaged with the state workforce board to discuss credentials and post-secondary education.	The state has been very supportive of including SWFI staff in the discussion of how to provide a menu of services to job seekers in the American Job Centers.



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Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes*
Program design			
Building regular communication across programs	Rochester Rehabilitation Center	Rochester Rehabilitation Center has a dedicated focus on understanding the local system and leveraging existing partnerships and their resources. For example, the grantee has been working with the community college, AJC, and local Chamber of Commerce to identify tuition assistance for participants.	In process.
Sustainability planning	Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.	Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) hopes to position itself locally and nationally as a leader in the training and education space because there has been interest in ABCD's Generations Advancing Together through Education design. They are also discussing ways to participate in evaluation and partnering with the Boston Mayor's Office new economic mobility lab.	In process.
Sustainability planning	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board, dba CareerSource	Alachua CareerSource is working with a contracted research organization to conduct a formal evaluation of their "Own your Future" program, which aims to help participants develop an entrepreneurial mindset. This will provide important information about program performance that can inform sustainability planning.	The evaluation is underway, but there are no results yet.
Sustainability planning	OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida	OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida (OIC) is conducting an evaluation with a contracted research organization to understand participants' satisfaction with their SWFI program. This can inform sustainability planning.	In process.
Systems change efforts	City of Long Beach Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network	City of Long Beach Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network (Pacific Gateway) supported a citywide Early Childhood Education plan . This aims to engage stakeholders in a comprehensive vision for early childhood for the City of Long Beach.	The citywide Early Childhood Education plan was released on October 4th in a very successful event.
Systems change efforts	Moore Community House	Moore Community House is working with WIOA stakeholders to further the conversation about child care and how to strategically use funds to support parents interested in job training. Moore Community is leveraging the opportunity created by the state WIOA plan's focus on the importance of child care as a work support.	In process.



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Program practices and approach			
Outreach and recruitment	Memphis Bioworks Foundation	Memphis Bioworks Foundation staff noticed that their WIOA partner (Dyersburg Community College) had an electronic outdoor sign that streams information. The SWFI coordinator obtained permission from the college president to place a message about SWFI, including contact information.	SWFI staff have seen an increase in inquiries from those driving past the sign.
Outreach and recruitment	Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley, Inc.	Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley, Inc. (TAP) expected a lull in recruitment over the summer so staff worked with TAP's marketing staff to think about how to use social media and local media for recruitment.	TAP saw an increase in number of contacts and did not face a summer lull in recruitment.
Outreach and recruitment	Multiple grantees	City of Long Beach shared an example recruitment poster they use within their organization, OIC shared an example of a recruitment postcard with detailed information about the program, and Moore Community House shared examples of a newspaper ad and a facebook ad they use to recruit women into construction. These recruitment resources can be found here on the CoP.	In process.
Retention	City of Long Beach Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network	Pacific Gateway has a dedicated staff member who contacts participants and their training providers regularly to determine participants' progress. Contacting training partners can be useful when participants are difficult to contact.	In process.
Retention	Community College of Aurora	Communtiy College of Aurora hosted a two-generation meet-up for SWFI participants that focused on family engagement in life-long learning. At the conclusion of the meetup, families were invited to accompany staff to Denver Art Museum's free event for Colorado residents, First Saturday.	In process.
Training or education			
Moore Community House	Career pathways	Moore Community House was recently highlighted in a brief by the National Skills Coalition for their work on apprenticeship and career pathways.	The brief is available here .
Credentialing	City of Phoenix	City of Phoenix SWFI staff developed an exam preparation bootcamp to help participants complete their A+ certification exam. As described in the May to June 2018 Bright Ideas brief , City of Phoenix also compiled a list of resources for participants to use to study for the A+ certification test.	In process.



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Short-term intensive training	OAI, Inc.	As described in the January to April 2018 Bright Ideas brief , OAI developed and implemented a mandatory 2-day foundational skills workshop that covered assessments, education and training options, career planning, and individualized services. In summer 2018, OAI added a health and wellness component to the workshop.	The first foundational skills workshop took place in January 2018, and 16 participants attended. OAI has now had 42 additional participants attend the workshop. All participants who have undergone the foundational skills workshop are still participating in SWFI.
Short-term intensive training	City of Phoenix	City of Phoenix now has training providers that can provide more flexible training. Their original training partner only offered courses on a semester basis, which did not meet participants' needs. This required identifying desirable training partners and working with the City Council process to get those providers approved.	In process.
Working with institutions of higher education	Community College of Aurora	Community College of Aurora's SWFI project manager and child care navigator met with the Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council and the community college's student life coordinator to develop a plan for implementing the "Strengthening Families" training as part of Community College of Aurora's student life programming for all student-parents. This training includes information to strengthen families, including knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence, and parental resilience.	In process.
Working with institutions of higher education	Moore Community House	As described in the May to June 2018 Bright Ideas brief , Moore Community House is partnering with local community colleges to provide training for more women. The grantee provides an on-site coach at the community college to help with case management and support services for SWFI participants who are being trained at the community colleges.	Moore Community House has helped eight women enroll in certification programs that will further them along a career pathway (welding, auto mechanics, and process technology). They receive case management from the SWFI team.

* Note: Bright Ideas that seem linked to positive outcomes may be highlighted in a forthcoming Promising Practices or Bright Ideas brief if applicable. Stay tuned for updates.