



Highlights of *The Evaluation of Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana's Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce Project*

Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana
- **Intervention Focus Area:** Career Pathways
- **Target Population:** Tribal members from the areas served who are unemployed /underemployed, low-income, youth or living with disabilities
- **Area Served:** South-central Region Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas
- **Congressional Districts:** LA, MS, AR, TX
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types** Process Study – Type A
- **Evaluator Organization:** Pierite Group
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation Report Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana WIF Grant*

Evaluation Period

- 2015-2019

This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports,¹ summarizes information from the study conducted by the Pierite Group (and the Q Marketing Group) on the Workforce Innovation Grant of the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana.

The Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) in partnership with a consortium of WIOA Section 166 programs – the Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas (UITCT), Alabama Couthatta Workforce (ACW), the American Indian Center of Arkansas (AICA), and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw (MBC) – to implement the Southcentral Region Free Flowing Workforce project, an effort to address the structural unemployment facing Native Americans. Through the partnership, the aim of the project is to enable job-seekers access to employment opportunities in various job markets across WIOA Section 166 service providers and geographic areas in several states (South-central Region Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas). Using a Career Pathways model, the project was designed to provide wrap around, education based, industry focused job training services with multiple entry/exit points that align with regional employer needs. Enhanced support services were intended to provide participants with information about relocation to different regions with viable employment opportunities and to support participants in the transition to new areas so that they can pursue training and placement into employment in those areas. A key aspect of the project was to design and build an integrated workforce development tool that would enable the various Councils involved to enter and track participant information. The project intended to serve 955 participants through the 3-year project period, with a total of 394 finding employment.

The evaluation was intended to be a process study, to use data from project documents, observations, surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders. However, the final report includes only a series of tabulations from responses to a survey conducted with the staff from the partner organizations, with a short discussion of these descriptive statistics. There is no information about the number of participants in the program. From the survey results, the evaluator reports:

- Related to the topic of how the Councils were able to target and engage participants, the survey shows that the program infrastructure was put in place, but the program experienced a lack of participants.
- Regarding the types of programs and services provided to participants, the survey shows that very few participants were opting to relocate to other areas.
- With regard to the centralized data system, only one Council fully implemented the system.

The evaluator offered the following recommendations: 1) for similar projects, the development of a fully functional database that all partners can use is necessary; 2) case workers need sufficient training and knowledge in order to assist participants effectively; and 3) Each sub grantee, partner Council organization should develop a one-day program to showcase and offer services.

¹ Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a “tiered evidence” model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.