



The Newsletter of the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources

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## Recent Publications

### ***Local Investments in Workforce Development: 2012 Evaluation Update Report***

January 2012. By Tara C. Smith, Christopher T. King, Daniel G. Schroeder. The fifth in a series from an evaluation of seven workforce development programs funded by Travis County, TX., this report examines participants' labor

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## Center News

### **Heath Prince Named New Associate Director**

**Heath Prince** will join the Ray Marshall Center as associate director beginning mid-March 2012. Prince will take over the position previously held by **Deanna Schexnayder**, who stepped down in May 2011 to focus on her new role as assistant dean of finance at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas. As associate director, Prince is responsible for leading and contributing to several keystone research projects in education and workforce development as well as providing administrative oversight of Center operations.



Prior to joining the Center, Prince served as a senior policy analyst for workforce development at the **Center for Law and Social Policy** in Washington, D.C. where he led several research projects and authored numerous reports on workforce and economic development policy and practice. Prince's past roles also include senior researcher with **Jobs for the Future** where he worked on human capital development strategies and adjunct lecturer at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management. Prince received a BA in International Affairs from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School. Later this year, Prince will complete his research on multidimensional poverty measurement in developing countries and receive his PhD in social policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University.

### **Student Futures Project Welcomes Lake Travis ISD**

**Lake Travis Independent School District (ISD)** has joined the **Central Texas Student Futures Project**, a multi-year research



partnership between the Ray Marshall Center, area school districts, the **Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce** and others aimed at understanding the factors that influence how students transition from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce. The research utilizes a wide-ranging list of data sources - student demographic records and academic history, student surveys taken in spring before their high school graduation, and postsecondary education and employment records up to four years after graduation - to develop a comprehensive picture of where students are coming from

market outcomes and impacts of program participation for each service provider. The report summarizes the findings to date, beginning with the 2007 participants, and outlines the next steps for research.

***Evaluation of Local Workforce Demonstration Projects - Travis County's REM and GEM Projects***

January 2012. By Tara C. Smith, Christopher T. King, Daniel G. Schroeder. Findings from two workforce demonstration projects - the Rapid Employment Model and the Gainful Employment Model are presented. The report builds on four prior evaluations for the REM project (2007, 2008, 2010, and 2011) and introduces the GEM project and presents outcomes for 2009-2010 GEM participants.

**Upcoming Reports**

**Texas Workforce Data Quality Initiative**, Feb. 2012

**Central Texas Student Futures Project: 2011 Senior Survey Report**, Feb. 2012

and what they have done, what they are planning after high school, and where they actually go. Since the project's pilot in 2005, the number of participating school districts has grown from four to 12 in Central Texas with well over 10,000 high schools students participating annually.

**Laura Stelling Joins Center as New GRA**

In January, Laura Stelling came aboard as the new graduate research assistant at the Center. Stelling is working on a project with the Austin Area Research Organization to research labor market trends and identify strategies for growing and improving career preparation services. Stelling earned her MEd from Arizona State University and her BA in Sociology from the University of Mary Washington. She is currently pursuing a master of public affairs at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.



**Project Update**

**New AARO Initiative Aims to Improve Workforce Potential**



The Ray Marshall Center has begun working with the **Austin Area Research Organization (AARO)** on the **Workforce Potential Project**, which is aimed at increasing the share of Central Texas adult residents who have a postsecondary degree or professional certifications so that they may go on to earn

fair sustainable wages to support their families. As part of this project, the Center is conducting labor market research to identify promising industry sectors and associated educational and career training programs for improving employment and earnings outcomes for those without postsecondary credentials. Presentation of research findings and recommendations for next steps are planned for late spring/summer 2012. Drs. **Chris King** and **Bob Glover** will serve as co-principal investigators on the project.

**Research Highlights from 2011**

The Ray Marshall Center is dedicated to strengthening education, workforce and social policies and programs that affect current and future generations of American workers. In 2011, the Center produced critical research and worked with a range of partners to provide rigorous, timely and relevant data for policymakers, practitioners and the public. Highlights of our work this past year are shown below.

**Education**

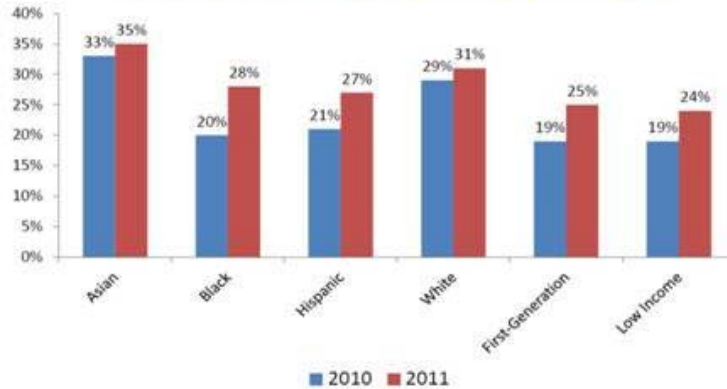
**Survey findings** from the Central Texas Student Futures Project

**Central Texas  
Student Futures  
Project: Outcomes  
Analysis Report,  
Feb. 2012**

showed that almost 90% of participating 2011 high school seniors reported taking a college entrance exam before they graduated high school. Additionally, the survey showed that more respondents are taking a college entrance exam during their junior year, with Black, Hispanic and low-income respondents posting the highest percentage-point increase. The survey also showed the 2011 class had more Black and White students applying for financial aid.



**More Respondents Take College Entrance Exams Across All Groups**



In a [literature review of adult education](#) programs and approaches, researchers presented a summary of GED, ESL and developmental education programs, highlighting best practices and identifying gaps. The report concluded with recommendations for further exploration in Tulsa.

**Workforce Development**

A [report on Capital IDEA](#), a local sectoral workforce development program, showed that program participation is associated with large gains in employment, average earnings, and eligibility for UI bene fits. Furthermore, returns to the taxpayer are estimated at 165% over the first 10 years of the program. Several other programs funded by Travis County were found to have positive labor market outcomes and impacts as well.



In another [local workforce study](#), researchers documented and assessed the effectiveness of Goodwill Industries' workforce development programs and identified strategic options for enhancing and expanding their services and programs in the future.

After the first full year of the pilot, researchers reported that [Career Advance®](#), the cutting-edge dual-generation sectoral workforce development program designed by the Ray Marshall Center, can be



Participants in CareerAdvance course.

successfully implemented, yields positive results, and is promising for both parents and children, helping them break the cycle of poverty. A **grant** from the Foundation for Child Development added further momentum to the research and expansion of dual-generation initiatives. Researchers developed a **dual-generation conceptual framework**,

identifying important program components, major opportunities and challenges for implementation, and next steps to enhance understanding and commitment from policymakers.

Center researchers, in a **joint report** with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, summarized existing employment and training research and called for the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration to increase transparency in its grant making process, enhance its collaboration with other research initiatives, and work to establish a formal workforce development institute that can coordinate activities, set priorities, administer programs and more effectively disseminate results.

#### **Family and Social Policy**

**Evaluations** of two Texas pilots to prevent non-custodial parents (NCPs) from falling behind in child support demonstrated positive impacts on the consistency of child support payments. The **NCP Choices PEER** pilot tested whether the addition of a curriculum including parenting and relationship skills and financial literacy to the standard workforce development services can measurably enhance the program's impacts on the ability of low-income NCPs to support their children. The second pilot, **NCP Choices Establishment Pilot**, focused on providing assistance to low-income NCPs earlier in their case histories, before they fall behind in child support and accumulate significant debt.

The Ray Marshall Center is a research unit of the LBJ School of Public Affairs  
at The University of Texas at Austin

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Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources | 3001 Lake Austin Blvd | Suite 3.200 | Austin | TX | 78751