

A Longitudinal Evaluation of a Community-based Worker Training Program: Demonstrating Effectiveness and Impact on Workforce Development

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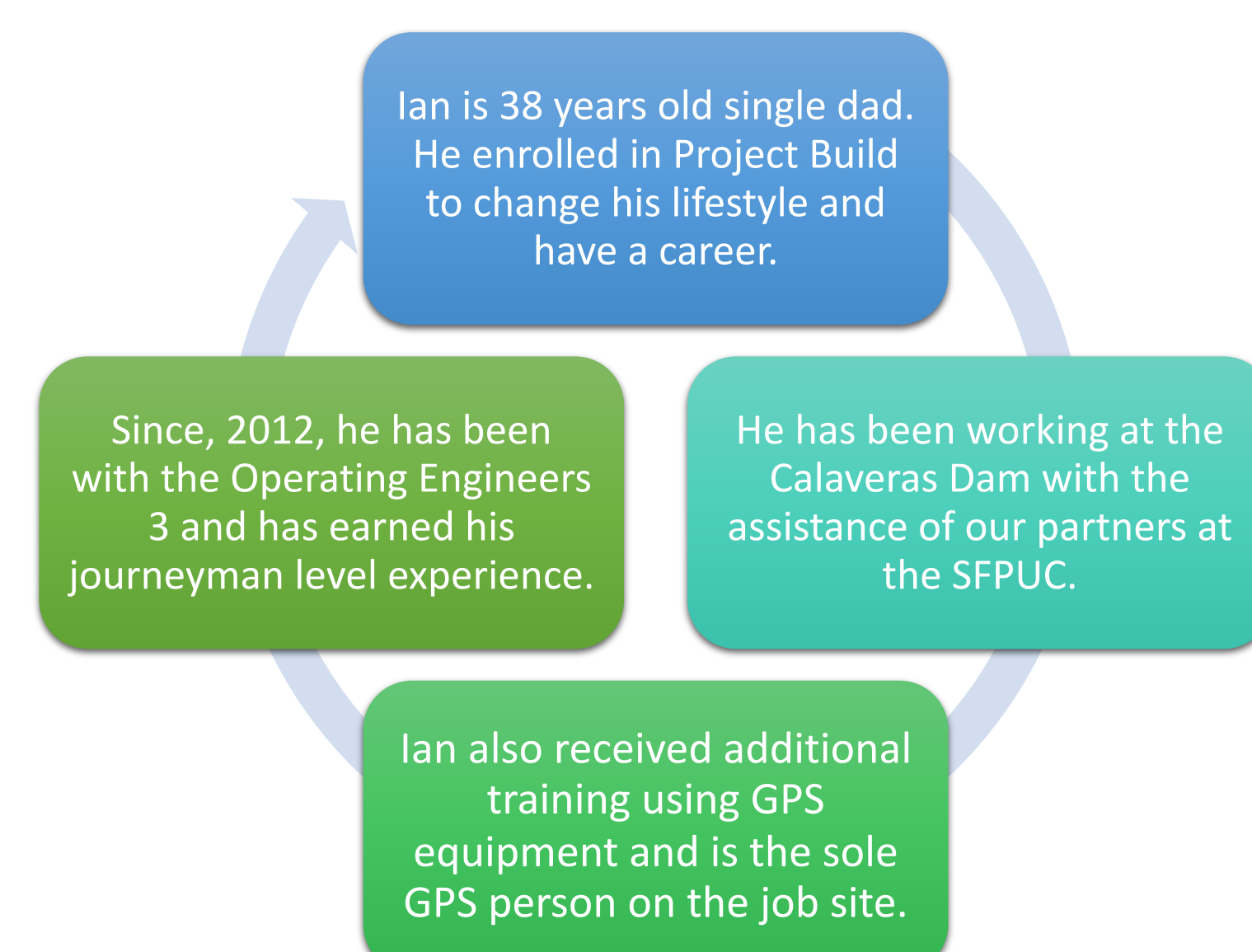
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Project Goal/Summary: Funded by the National Institutes for Environmental Health Sciences, the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP) addresses critical workforce development issues directly affecting disadvantaged worker populations. The goal of the CPWR ECWTP is to train, certify, and secure jobs for program graduates and provide opportunities for long-term and well-paid employment in the construction and environmental cleanup industries. The CPWR ECWTPs are offered through a consortium of community-based partners for workers from vulnerable populations in four urban areas including: East Palo Alto, California; New Orleans, Louisiana; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Flint, Michigan.

Introduction/Background

We designed a comprehensive utilization-focused process for evaluating program effectiveness and impact. This rigorous evaluation process meets the following objectives: (1) conduct an integrated programmatic assessment, which incorporates elements of both process and impact evaluations; (2) utilize a multi-source system that provides 360 degree feedback on the relative effectiveness of the training program from major program stakeholders (e.g., representatives from community advisory committees, program coordinators and director, instructors, current and graduated program participants); (3) incorporate multiple methods (i.e., focus groups, interviews, questionnaires) in gathering both qualitative and quantitative data from program stakeholders; (4) provide standard methods and documentation of program effectiveness with respect to the NIEHS training criteria, including overall programmatic effectiveness and impact. The evaluation is conducted across program years for 3 funding cycles (2005-2015).



CPWR ECWTP Training Evaluation

- Assess effectiveness in meeting the five NIEHS worker training program criteria for success
- Assess impact on students, community, and field of environmental work
- Provide Best Principles/Lessons Learned and General Recommendations for continuous quality improvement
- Provide evidence of ECWTP impact on workers from vulnerable populations

Figure. Percentage Training Goal Attained Across Program Years.

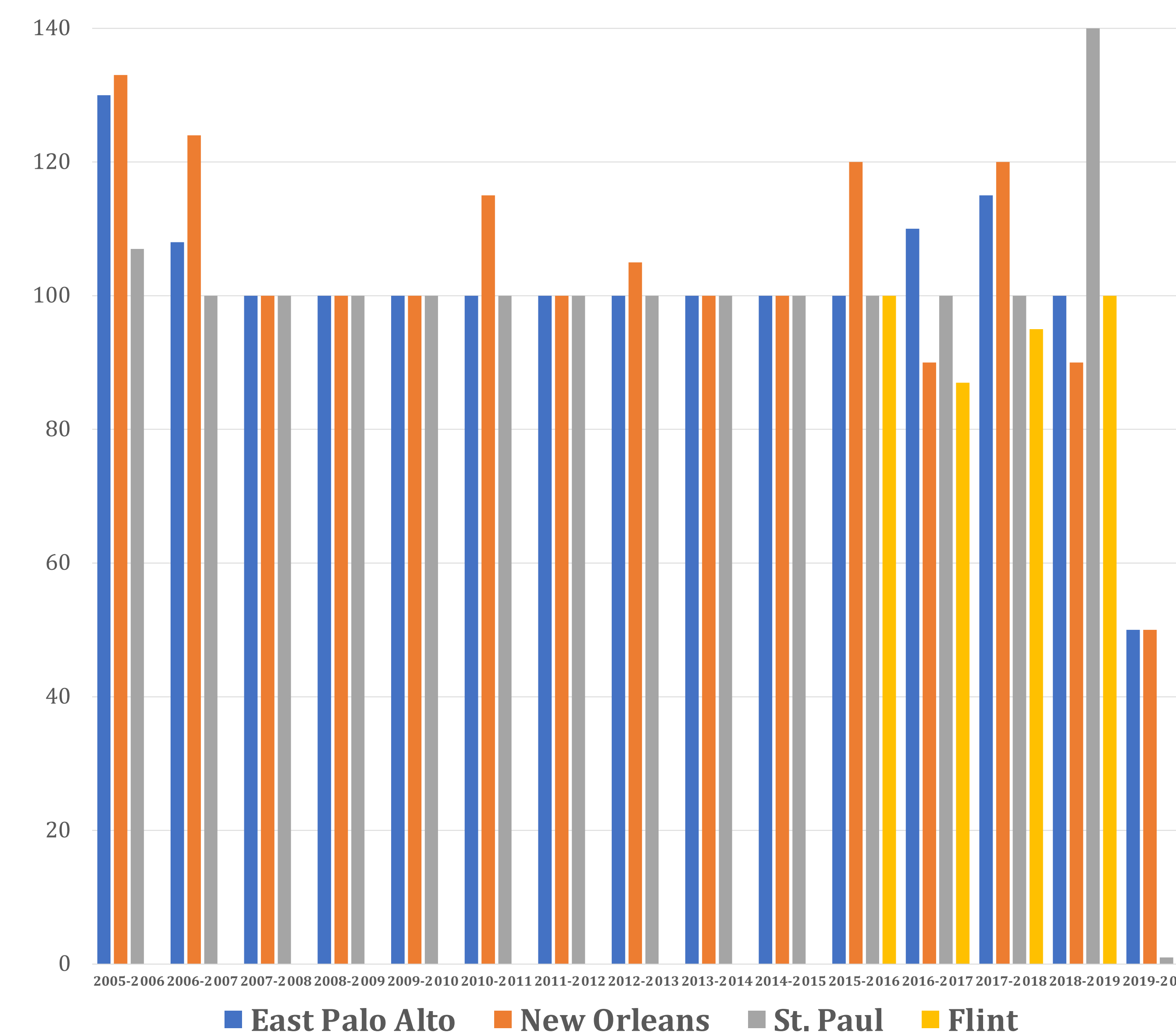


Table. Best Principles Identified Across Programs

Strategy Identified	Why Effective?	Source
Life Skills/Essential Skills: Training related to general life skills	Develops coping skills and promotes effective performance in training, on the job and in the home	Dir. ECWTP; Prog. Coord.; Adv. Comm.; Instructors; Students
Hands-on: Training involving work simulation and ability to “do” rather than simply reading about a topic	Allows students to learn by doing, which increases and maintains interest; typically involves observation and feedback of results	Dir. ECWTP; Program Coord.; Adv. Comm.; Instructors; Students
Student Support: Support from program staff, students, and instructors	Helps students overcome various personal and work-related obstacles and learn to work well with others	Dir. ECWTP; Program Coord.; Adv. Comm.; Instructors; Students

Conclusions

The results of the CPWR ECWTP evaluation provide longitudinal evidence of program impact on vulnerable workers from underserved and disadvantaged communities. It also provides information regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and preliminary information to address challenges brought on by the pandemic. More generally, these findings can be used to strengthen worker health and safety programs, make better use of available resources and strategies, and guide related policy development for vulnerable workers from underserved and disadvantaged communities.