Overview of the SSRC

- Virtual library with over 2100 items
- Designed for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers
- Includes interactive features
  - Events and Conferences
  - Make a Linkage
  - MySSRC
  - Data sets and data sources
Substantive Focus: 12 Topic Areas

- Asset-Building, Tax Policies, and Subsidies
- Child Care
- Child Support
- Community Development and Housing
- Education and Training
- Employment
- Family Structure and Family Formation
- Food Assistance
- General Research on Income and Poverty
- Health
- TANF Policy, Services, and Benefits
- Transportation

Resources must be relevant to self-sufficiency
Emerging Scholar Selection Criteria

• In graduate school or holds a graduate degree. Early career - usually 1-5 yrs experience, no more than 10.
• Currently doing research on self-sufficiency issues related to one of the 12 topic areas.
• Conducting high quality research that fills a knowledge gap or addresses a self-sufficiency issue that warrants greater visibility.
Education

• Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, Awarded with Distinction, 2009
• MSSW, Columbia University School of Social Work, Policy Practice Concentration, Law Minor 2002
• B.A., Psychology, University of Chicago, Awarded with Honors, 2000

Research interests and current research:

• Workforce development system data integration & performance measures
• Disconnected youth strategies to promote education & employment outcomes Child welfare
• Performance measurement
• Factors related to positive outcomes, including role of systems/context
• Using administrative data to promote data informed policy & practice decisions

Recent Work

• Weigensberg, E., Schlect, C., Laken, F., George, R., Stagner, M., Ballard, P., & DeCoursey, J. 2012. Inside the black box: What makes workforce development programs successful? Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago; Chicago, IL
Ask a Question!

• Participants can submit questions throughout the Webinar through the Question and Answer feature on the bottom right side of your screen.

• Questions will be collected and answered after Dr. Weigensberg’s presentation.

• If we run out of time, questions will be answered and the answers will be posted on the SSRC with other Webinar materials after the event.
Using administrative data: Quantitative and qualitative insights for workforce development programs

Elizabeth Weigensberg, PhD

Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse
Emerging Scholar Webinar
June 5, 2013
Presentation Overview

I. How can administrative data be used to make data-informed decisions about workforce development programs?

II. What are the strengths and limitations of administrative data?

III. What is inside the “black box” of how workforce programs achieve positive outcomes for participants?

IV. Future directions for research, policy & practice

V. Q&A
I. How can administrative data be used to make data-informed decisions about workforce development programs?
What is administrative data?

- **Administrative data** is …
  - data that is collected for administrative purposes
  - not collected for research purposes, but collected primarily for accounting, management, or other administrative tracking purposes

- Research with administrative data involves secondary data analysis of existing data, rather than direct data collection with respondents

**Examples:** school records, public benefit services data, Unemployment Insurance wage data
What is CWICstats?

CWICstats: Chicagoland Workforce Information Collaborative

- Workforce development research and data initiative at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, established in 2009

- Assess outcomes of Chicago’s workforce development system
  - Link & analyze individual-level administrative data

- Conduct research to help answer workforce development policy questions

Need for CWICstats:
- Chicago has a fragmented workforce development system
- Need for coordinated/linked data to assess program outcomes
- Stakeholders lacked data to make decisions
Chicago’s fragmented workforce development system
**CWICstats partners**

**CWICstats**
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- Analysis of program performance measures
- Research on workforce programs & participants
- Public website of WIA program outcomes

- **Current/Former Financial Support:**
  - Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership/Chicago Workforce Investment Council
  - The Chicago Community Trust
  - The Searle Family Funds at the Chicago Community Trust
  - The Boeing Company
  - Joyce Foundation
  - Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
  - The Ford Foundation
  - Steans Family Foundation

- **Additional Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago**
- **Chicago Public Schools**
- **Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership**
- **IL Department of Commerce & Economic Security**
- **IL Department of Employment Security**

- In development since 2009
- Evolving partners & data
- Takes time to establish data sharing agreements
How does CWICstats work?

Collaborate with state & local partner agencies to:

- Establish data sharing agreements
- Access and link individual-level administrative program data
  - Quarterly employment/earnings
  - Workforce program
  - Education & post-secondary education
- Conduct data analysis & research
  - Program performance measures
  - Longitudinal & cross-system research
  - Program evaluation
  - Program outcomes for consumers
- Share results with stakeholders in a variety of formats to make data-informed decisions
Audience

Audience includes a variety of stakeholders with a need to make data-informed decisions:

- Workforce Investment Boards
- Policymakers
- State & local public agency administrators
- Community-based organizations, service providers
- Foundations
- Businesses
- Workforce program participants
CWICstats research examples:
Performance measurement research

- **Performance measure/benchmarking reports**
  - Analyze administrative data for measures of program participants, services, outcomes
  - Beyond standard measures - changes over time, subpopulations, risk adjusted measures
  - Inform policymakers & program administrators of program participants & outcomes during time of economic downturn & limited resources

- **Public website of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training program outcomes:** [http://www.chicagolandWIAtraining.com](http://www.chicagolandWIAtraining.com)
  - Analyze program administrative data to produce outcome measures
  - Provide clients seeking training with information to make data-informed decisions
CWICstats research example:
Cohort analysis of Chicago Public School students

Objective: Describe characteristics, pathways/experiences, and outcomes of youth in education and workforce development system

Chicago Public School (CPS) 9th graders: 2000-01 and 2001-02 (n=47,006)

- Follow youth through high school into workforce & post-secondary education
  - Assess educational attainment & employment outcomes

- Link individual-level administrative data across systems & over time
  - CPS student transcripts, dropout & graduation data
  - Workforce Investment Act program data
  - National Student Clearinghouse post-secondary data through 2010
  - Unemployment Insurance quarterly earnings data in 2010
Selected findings from cohort analysis regarding post-secondary education & employment

Post-secondary education outcomes among graduates:

- Many students take non-traditional paths to college
  - 70% of high school graduates enrolled in college, 49% enrolled in the fall immediately after graduation
- Despite stigma of Career & Technical Education (CTE)/vocational education, students who were CTE completers enrolled in post-secondary education at similar percentage to non-CTE students

Employment & earnings among graduates & dropouts:

- Black students faced biggest struggle in the workforce.
  - Black male students, both graduates and dropouts, are much less likely to be employed and have significantly lower earnings than other racial groups

- Provided unique information to CPS officials regarding longitudinal trajectory & outcomes of students
II. What are the strengths and limitations of administrative data?
Administrative data: Strengths, limitations & gaps

Strengths
- Information on all individuals in organization/program
- Can offer more comprehensive set of information regarding services/outcomes
- Can link data across programs/over time

Limitations
- Data access: Challenging to get data permissions
- Data quality: Data are only as good as the data that is entered
- Data management & analysis: Often nuanced, complex
- Data only on those served in program/organization
- Need careful interpretation of data fields & results

What gaps exist?
- Limited understanding of how or why outcomes occur
III. What is inside the “black box” of how workforce programs achieve positive outcomes for participants?
Study of what’s inside the black box: What makes workforce programs successful?

Objectives:

1. Identify factors that may explain why workforce programs are successful
2. How these factors may be quantified/measured to improve the system

- Qualitative research with 6 community-based organizations in Chicago
- Develop better understanding of program processes & contextual influences on outcomes
- Determine what measures & data are needed

Study was funded with support from the Ford Foundation
Conceptual model: Factors related to successful workforce outcomes

External factors
- Community context
- Employer engagement
- Partnerships

Organizational factors
- Diverse funding sources
- Staff, leadership, size

Program/practice factors
- Support services
- Program flexibility
- Family involvement
- Focus on quality of job placement

Individual participant characteristics
Recommendations for workforce development program data & outcomes

Improve measures for workforce development, by…
- establishing common measures, but allow for flexibility
- using longitudinal measures
- analyzing outcomes by subpopulations

Expand what is measured to include…
- assessment data, skill development, interim measures
- use of support services, achievement of economic self-sufficiency
- contextual factors, such as organizational and community factors

Establish integrated data systems that…
- minimize redundant data entry
- collect information on all program participants
- provide programs with useful measures
- meet the diverse & changing needs of programs
IV. Future directions for research, policy & practice
Implications for Research, Policy & Practice

- Use of research & data to inform policy/practice
- Promotes culture of data-informed decision-making
- Supports efforts for improved data systems and better use of data
- Increased emphasis on understanding of contextual factors that influence workforce program outcomes
- Encourage role for both quantitative analysis of administrative data and qualitative research
Current research & suggestions for the field

Current research

- Continue research using administrative data & data linking
- Support development of integrated workforce data systems
- Promoting improved performance measurement
- Evaluation of workforce programs
- Promote data-informed decision-making

Suggestions for the field

- Improving use & quality of administrative data
- Use mixed methods, qualitative research to get inside the “black box”
- Role of context/systems important to measure
- Data-informed decision-making among policymakers, practitioners & clients
V. Questions
Thank you!

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