



## **Courses to Employment: Sectoral Approaches to Community College-Nonprofit Partnerships**

**Initial Education and Employment Outcomes Findings for Students Enrolled In the Logistics/Goods-Movement Training Academy (2008-2009)**

**East Los Angeles Community College, Community Career Development, Los Angeles Valley College, Los Angeles City College  
Los Angeles, CA**

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## Introduction

This document describes initial findings from research on the education and employment outcomes of 114 participants who enrolled in the Logistics/Goods-Movement Training Academy in Los Angeles, CA between 2008 and 2009. The Academy is a six-week training program designed to introduce students to the logistics/goods-movement industry and prepare them for entry-level employment in the industry. The curriculum includes industry fundamentals and forklift operator training as well as instruction in basic math, reading, computer fundamentals and software programs, communications, customer service, and employability skills. Upon completion of the Academy, participants earn an Academy certificate, forklift operator certification, and six units of college. College credits include three credits for a computer survey course taught by Los Angeles Community College (LACC) and three credits for two classes in logistics taught by East Los Angeles Community College (ELAC). Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) provides customer service training contextualized for the logistics employment environment. College credits earned in the Academy are building blocks toward a two-tier Certificate in Logistics at ELAC, which Academy graduates are eligible to enroll in to continue their education. Community Career Development (CCD), a non-profit workforce development organization that operates a one-stop WorkSource Center in the Mid-Wilshire District in the City of Los Angeles, recruits and screens participants for the training, manages delivery of the Academy, and provides classroom and computer lab facilities. CCD also provides students with supportive services such as case management and career counseling, and financial assistance for books, fees, transportation and other expenses on an as-needed basis while in training and a range of financial supports for those who continue their education beyond the Academy.

In 2007 and 2008, when the Academy was conceptualized and launched, the Los Angeles metropolitan region was a booming hub for the distribution of goods. Economic activity had been growing steadily for years, and projections supported expectations for further employment expansion in the region. The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach were among the busiest in the nation, and a wide variety of employment opportunities (from laborers to professionals) were available in firms involved in moving goods into, out of, and within the Los Angeles region via ship, air, rail and truck. Firms were clamoring for entry-level workers with basic skills who they could advance into higher skilled positions that were difficult to fill.

Soon after the Academy was launched, the Los Angeles region was affected early and hard by the worldwide economic recession. The local economy experienced an extraordinary downturn, and the logistics industry was an early casualty. Thousands of jobs were lost in goods movement and warehousing occupations. In this environment, there were very few opportunities for new entry-level workers, who were competing with more experienced unemployed workers for jobs.

We offer this brief description of the local Los Angeles economic environment and how it changed during the time when the Academy was designed and launched because it is important for understanding the rationale for the Academy, the context for employment outcomes of Academy graduates, and subsequent suspension of the Academy. The Academy was offered in 2008 (just prior to the industry-wide recession) and 2009. It was suspended in 2009 due to lack of employment opportunity for graduates. Partners expect to resume the Academy when the logistics/goods-movement industry recovers. East Los Angeles Community College continues to offer its logistics certificate programs, and reports from the college indicate they are seeing uptake in demand for skilled logistics workers.

The 114 individuals who participated in the Logistics Academy were mostly men (median age 36), largely African-American and Latino, and unemployed. Almost a third of the students had a criminal background. This population is widely acknowledged in the workforce development community as challenging to serve with short-term programs that lead to viable employment opportunities. Even in this difficult employment environment, almost two-thirds of Academy graduates obtained jobs. And the partnership, seeing declining demand for Logistics Academy graduates, leveraged existing industry intelligence, resources, and employer relationships to develop a new short-term Academy opportunity to prepare this difficult-to-serve population for employment in security-related occupations. For additional information about the Logistics Academy and the partnership between LACC, ELAC, LAVC and CCD, please see AspenWSI profiles that are available for free download at <http://aspenssi.org/CTEprofiles/LosAngeles.pdf>.<sup>1</sup> For additional

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<sup>1</sup> For information about the partners engaged in the Logistics Academy please see: <http://www.communitycareer.org>, <http://www.elac.edu>, <http://www.lavc.edu>, and <http://www.lacc.edu>.

information about the Security Academy and a detailed examination of employment and education outcomes of Security Academy students, please see: <http://www.aspenwsi.org/WSIwork-HigherEd.asp>.

### **Courses to Employment**

Community Career Development, East Los Angeles Community College, Los Angeles Valley College and Los Angeles City College have participated in a range of research and learning activities as part of the *Courses to Employment (CTE)* project. *CTE* is a three-year demonstration (2008-2010), funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and conducted by The Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative (AspenWSI). *CTE* is designed to learn about how partnerships between community colleges and non-profit organizations can help low-income adults achieve greater success in post-secondary education and, ultimately, the workforce. *CTE* builds upon what has been learned through AspenWSI's research and evaluation conducted over the past decade—research that has identified the promise of sectoral approaches for improving low-income adults' employment outcomes.

A range of capacities and resources are needed for workforce development programming to effectively serve both business and low-income participants. Partnerships between community colleges and non-profit organizations are a promising approach to improving the effectiveness and scale of services for low-income populations. In many communities and for many industries, no one single education or community-based organization has all of the necessary capacities and resources in-house to implement a sectoral employment development strategy that is both effective at learning about and responding to the needs of industry and/or of sufficient scale to meet the needs of the large numbers of low-income adults who need quality workforce development services. We define a sectoral strategy as a systems approach to workforce development—typically on behalf of low-income individuals—that:

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- **Targets a specific industry or cluster of occupations**, developing a deep understanding of the interrelationships between business competitiveness and the workforce needs of the targeted industry;
- **Intervenes through a credible organization, or set of organizations**, crafting workforce solutions tailored to that industry and its region;
- **Supports workers in improving their range of employment-related skills**, improving their ability to compete for work opportunities of higher quality;
- **Meets the needs of employers**, improving their ability to compete within the marketplace; and
- **Creates lasting change in the labor market system to the benefit of both workers and employers.**

*Courses to Employment* research and learning activities have been designed to learn in-depth about how, using a sectoral approach to education and employment development, six different partnerships between community colleges and non-profit organizations, working in a range of different industries and with a diverse set of community college-based education and training approaches, meet the needs of low-income adult learners and job-seekers. The six community college-non-profit partnerships were selected competitively from a pool of 89 applicants in late 2007.<sup>2</sup> AspenWSI has been conducting formative evaluations of the six partnership's activities as well as participant outcome assessments for each site. Grantees have been engaged extensively in research activities designed to promote learning throughout the demonstration. Specifically, the *CTE* project is working to inform the following learning questions:

- What are the roles, responsibilities, tasks and services involved in collaboration to better serve low-income adults? Which are taken on by colleges and which by non-profits?
- How do policies, funding, governing and capacity issues enable (or restrict) the college or non-profit organization in serving different roles or providing specific services? What institutional variables affect flexibility, authority, efficiency or other aspects of successful collaboration?
- How are the non-academic needs of low-income adults met, and how does this relate to education and employment persistence and success? What are the costs of non-academic support services and how are these funded?
- What are the education, employment and income experiences of participants? How do these relate to outcomes of similar groups outside this demonstration?

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<sup>2</sup>Profiles of all six partnerships are available at <http://www.aspenwsi.org/WSIwork-HigherEd.asp>.

- What does a successful collaboration cost? What are the elements of these costs, and how are they financed? What financial and other benefits accrue over time, to the college, the non-profit, business, worker and other stakeholders? How are these benefits measured?
- Does this type of collaboration offer opportunities for “scaling up” to address a community-wide need in a more systemic way? Can collaboration between a college and non-profit strengthen the ability of partner organizations to address systemic problems? What types of problems? In what ways?
- Can collaboration impact how intensive and extensive relationships with businesses are managed and leveraged? How are the needs, interests, and outcomes for business balanced relative to those of low-income adult students?

### **Participant Outcomes Study Methodology**

An important goal of *CTE* research activities is to not only inform key learning questions about the partnerships' activities and outcomes but also to help build capacity within each partnership for ongoing learning independent of AspenWSI. Toward this end, each of the six participant outcomes studies was designed based on the existing data management systems in use by the six partnerships. Having said this, each site received substantial technical assistance from AspenWSI researchers in assessing their existing systems, and all made significant modifications in response to specific input. In most cases, outside data sources were needed to inform key learning questions. In particular, gathering information about education progress and employment outcomes proved to be particularly challenging at each site. Each site implemented different processes and used a variety of different data sources to obtain the data needed to inform questions about outcomes. In no case did either the non-profit organization or the community college partner have all of the information needed to answer relevant questions about outcomes. Thus on a case-by-case basis, AspenWSI researchers worked with the different partners and outside data providers to build the datasets needed to answer questions both about education and employment outcomes.

In Los Angeles, data on participants in the Logistics/Goods-Movement Academy came from a few sources. Community Career Development staff collected participants' demographic information and employment histories during registration for the Academy and worked with Academy faculty to track program completion. Participants' post-training employment data, including employer, job title, and hourly wage,

were obtained after participants completed the Academy by CCD and ELAC staff in follow-up interviews with students. While CCD was able to successfully obtain most students' job placement status immediately following Academy graduation, it was more challenging to find and interview students for the one-year employment status follow-up. To augment data provided by students and to obtain data for students who could not be contacted after training, CCD obtained access to California State Unemployment Insurance (UI) records. UI data, which is collected quarterly, was obtained for Academy participants for the quarter they enrolled, for the quarter they finished the Academy, and for the quarter one year after they finished the Academy (for the limited number of participants for whom enough time had elapsed after training). UI data includes an employer's name and the sum of an individual's quarterly earnings. During data cleaning and verification, AspenWSI researchers noticed inconsistencies in the UI data and became concerned that participants' California UI earnings data might not be complete or up-to-date. As a result, AspenWSI researchers decided to use the UI data only to verify employment status (and not use earnings data). CCD staff compiled demographic, employment and UI data in an Access database and Excel spreadsheets. Data were forwarded to AspenWSI researchers in the form of Excel spreadsheets. AspenWSI researchers worked closely with CCD staff to clean and verify the data.

As designed, the Logistics Academy was intended to be a first step for students toward earning college certificates and degrees in Logistics. East Los Angeles Community College developed a new two-tier program leading to certificates in Logistics/Goods-Movement, and the credits earned by Logistics Academy graduates are for courses required for these certificates. Thus, the Logistics Academy had not only short-term employment outcomes goals for participants, but also longer-term continuing education goals. To collect data for this part of the investigation, AspenWSI worked with institutional researchers at ELAC and with CCD staff. After receiving signed release agreements from Academy participants, ELAC was able to provide academic transcripts for Academy participants, which were used by AspenWSI researchers to obtain course enrollment and completion data for participants who continued their education at ELAC after the Academy. CCD staff attempted to contact participants who did not continue at ELAC to learn whether they continued their education at another education or training facility. Data from both this direct contact and from transcripts provided by ELAC were forwarded to AspenWSI researchers in Excel spreadsheets



and compiled by AspenWSI with demographic, employment and UI data. The resulting dataset formed the basis for analysis and findings reported in this document.

The following charts and tables offer a detailed examination of the demographic characteristics and pre- and post-training employment and education experiences of Academy participants. This report summarizes information in charts and tables, and provides a wide range of summary highlights, but we also present information in more raw formats. Our hope is that by providing as much information as possible in different formats, this document will serve as a helpful resource for policymakers, college and research communities, and practitioners.

## Key Findings and Highlights

### *Demographics, Enrollment and Completion*

- 114 students participated in the Logistics Academy between 2008 and 2009.
- 111 (97.4%) completed the Academy.
- 94% of students were men; 48% Hispanic, 33% African American, 10% Asian, 5% White.
- Median age at enrollment was 36. 24% were married, and 38% had dependent children.
- 29% reported having a criminal record at enrollment.
- 91% had earned a high school diploma or GED prior to enrollment.

### *Employment and Earnings Following the Logistics Academy*

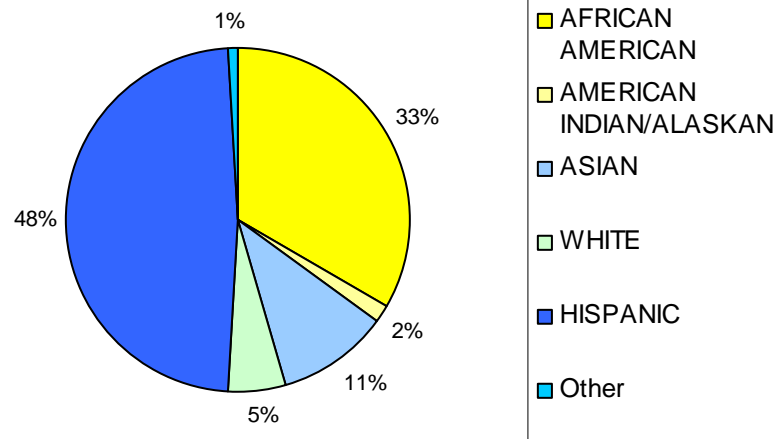
- At the time they enrolled in the Academy, only six participants were employed (0.5%).
- In the quarter following graduation from the Academy, 74 (64.9%) of the 114 participants were employed (based on CCD staff follow-up with students and UI Quarterly Wage Data). It is important to note that many participants graduated during a period when the industry was experiencing extraordinary job losses.
  - In this initial job after the Academy, students earned a median of \$10.00 per hour.
  - The most common job titles for participants in their initial job following graduation were related to driving positions (9 participants), warehouse positions (9 participants), and security (5 participants).
- One year after exiting the Academy, 84 or 73.7% of the 114 Academy participants were employed (based on CCD staff follow-up with students and UI quarterly wage data from the quarter one year after students graduated). Limited wage data is available for these 84 participants.

### *Continuing Education and Training*

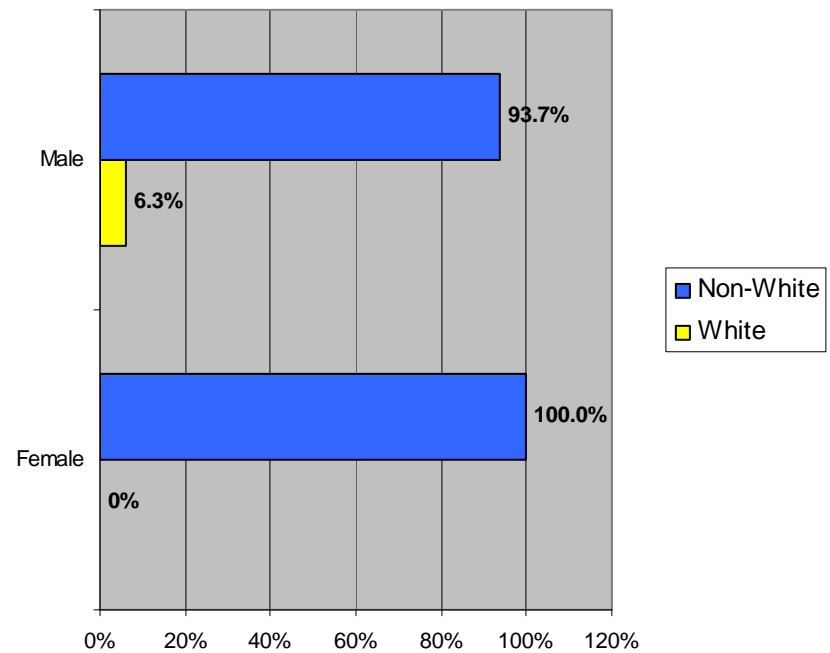
- Twenty-two or 19.3% of the 114 participants are known to have continued their education beyond the Logistics Academy.
  - Nine participants took additional coursework at East Los Angeles Community College.
- 15 students earned a median of 20 college credits after the Logistics Academy
  - Three students participated in not-for-credit training programs. Three students, two of whom earned Bachelor's Degrees after the Logistics Academy, earned an unknown number of college credits and were

therefore not included in the previous bullet showing median number of credits earned. One participant did who enrolled in credit courses had yet to earn any credits at the time the study concluded.

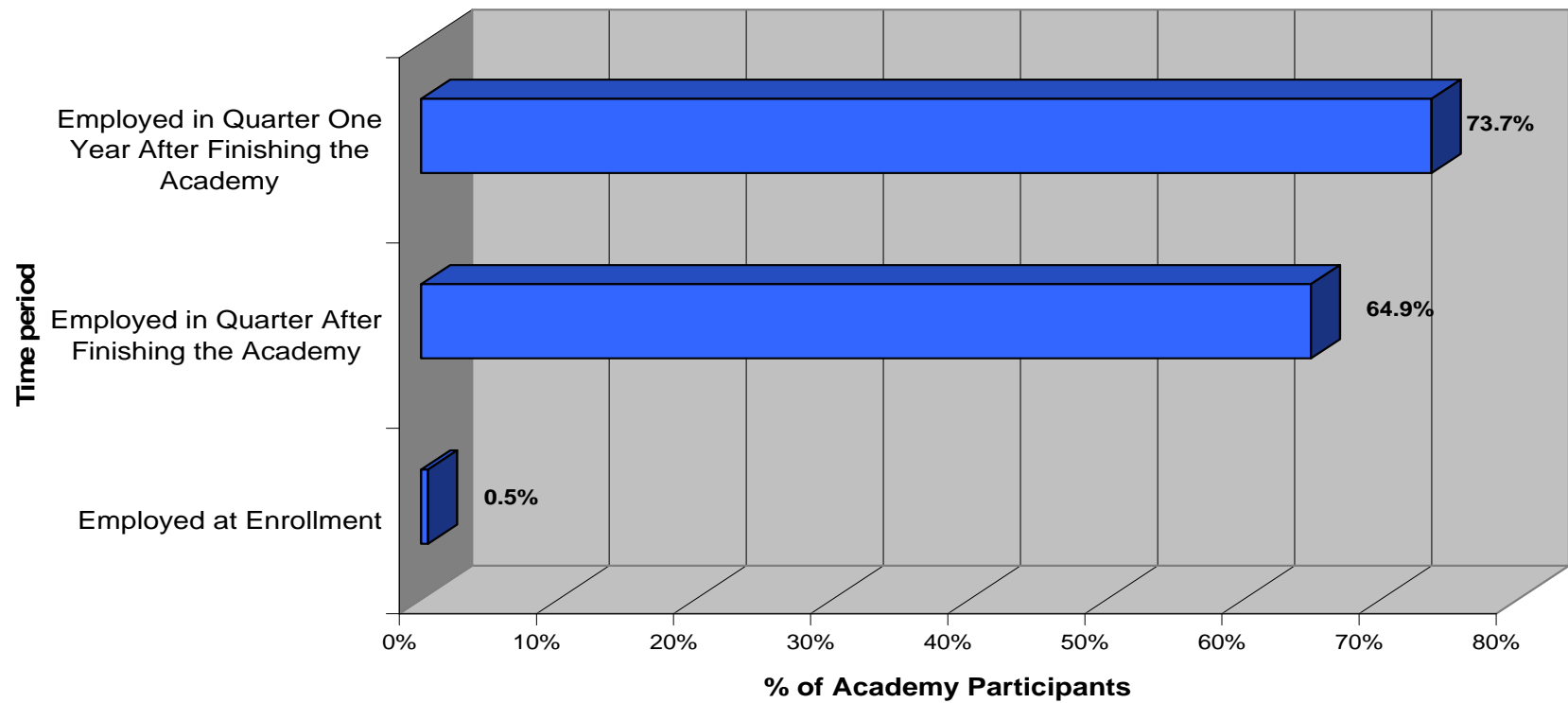
**Ethnicity of Logistics Academy Participants 2008-2009**



**Ethnicity by Gender for Logistics Academy Participants 2008-2009**



### Employment Rates Pre- and Post-Training Logistics Academy Participants 2008-2009



*\*Employment indicates a report of employment from CCD staff or evidence of earnings from UI quarterly records.*

## Data Tables

### *Demographics at Enrollment*

<b>GENDER</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	18	15.8%
Male	96	84.2%
Total	114	100%

<b>ETHNICITY</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
African-American	38	33.3%
American Indian / Alaskan	2	1.8%
Asian	12	10.5%
White	6	5.3%
Hispanic	55	48.2%
Other	1	0.9%
Total	114	100%

<b>AGE AT ENROLLMENT</b>	
Mean	37.7
Median	36

<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Married	27	23.7%
Single	82	71.9%
Single Parent	3	2.6%
Missing	2	1.8%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT HAD DEPENDENT CHILDREN AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	62	54.4%
Yes	43	37.7%
Missing	9	7.9%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT HAD CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	78	68.4%
Yes	33	28.9%
Missing	3	2.6%
Total	114	100%

<b>MILITARY VETERAN STATUS</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	93	81.6%
Yes	12	10.5%
Missing	9	7.9%
Total	114	100%

<b>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED PRIOR TO ACADEMY</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Some high school	2	1.7%
GED	15	13.2%
H.S. Diploma	71	62.3%
Some College	2	1.8%
AA DEGREE	7	6.1%
BA/BS DEGREE	9	7.9%
Missing	8	7.0%
Total	114	100%

<b>Disability</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	110	96.5%
Yes	1	0.9%
Missing	3	2.6%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT REPORTED LIMITED ENGLISH SKILLS AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	102	89.5%
Yes	7	6.1%
Missing	5	4.4%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT WAS RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	91	79.8%
Yes	18	15.8%
Missing	5	4.4%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT WAS RECEIVING TANF AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	99	86.8%
Yes	10	8.8%
Missing	5	4.4%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT WAS RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AT ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	79	69.3%
Yes	30	26.3%
Missing	5	4.4%
Total	114	100%

<b>PARTICIPANT EXHAUSTED UI BENEFITS BEFORE ACADEMY ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	100	87.7%
Yes	9	7.9%
Missing	5	4.4%
Total	114	100%



*Employment and Hourly Wage at Academy Enrollment*

<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT ACADEMY ENROLLMENT</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Employed	6	5.3%
Unemployed	107	93.9%
Missing	1	0.9%
Total	114	100%

<b>HOURLY WAGE AT ACADEMY ENROLLMENT FOR THOSE EMPLOYED</b>	
	Hourly Wage at Enrollment Obtained from Student by CCD Staff
Valid	4
Missing	2
Mean	\$10.02
Median	\$9.13

*Logistics Academy Enrollment and Completion*

<b>Year Enrolled</b>	<b>Number of Participants Enrolled</b>	<b>Number and Percent of Participants Completing Logistics Academy</b>
2008	69	68 (98.6%)
2009	45	43 (95.6%)
Total	114	111 (97.4%)

### **Initial Job Placement and Hourly Wage Following Logistics Academy**

The table below shows the number and percentage of Logistics Academy participants who were employed in the quarter immediately following the Logistics Academy. Employment indicates a report of employment from either UI records or from staff follow-up with the student.

<b>Year Enrolled in Academy</b>	<b>Number of Participants Enrolled</b>	<b>Number and Percent Employed in Quarter after Academy*</b>	<b>Median Hourly Wage in Initial Job**</b>	<b>Mean Hourly Wage in Initial Job</b>
2008	69	42 (60.9%)	\$11.00	\$11.58
2009	45	32 (71.1%)	\$10.00	\$10.84
Total	114	74 (64.9%)	\$10.00	\$11.26

*\*Employed indicates a report of employment from either UI records or from staff follow-up with the student.*

*\*\*CCD obtained an hourly wage for 54 of the 72 participants who were employed after the Academy.*

### **Employment One Year after Logistics Academy**

The table below shows the number and percentage of Logistics Academy participants who were employed in the quarter one year after the Academy. Employment indicates a report of employment from either UI records or from staff follow-up with the student. CCD staff attempted to contact participants via phone calls, mailed letters, and email. However, most of the participants could not be contacted. Employment status was mainly determined by examination of UI records, which do not include hourly wages. Thus, hourly wage was obtained for only 14 of the 87 participants who were employed. We do not report hourly wage data due to this small sample size.

<b>Year Enrolled</b>	<b>Number of Participants Enrolled</b>	<b>Number and Percent Employed One Year After Academy*</b>
2008	69	49 (71.0%)
2009	45	35 (77.8%)
Total	114	84 (73.7%)

*\*Employed indicates a report of employment from either UI records or from staff follow-up with the student.*

### ***Students Continuing Education after the Logistics Academy***

The tables below describe participants' education experiences after the Logistics Academy. Twenty-two participants continued on for additional training based on academic transcripts from East Los Angeles Community College and from follow-up interviews of students conducted by CCD staff.

<b>CONTINUED EDUCATION OR TRAINING AFTER LOGISTICS ACADEMY</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
No	92	80.7%
Yes	22	19.3%
Total	114	100%

<b>SCHOOL OR COLLEGE ATTENDED AFTER LOGISTICS ACADEMY</b>		
	Number of Students Attending	Percent
California Polytechnic University, Pomona	2	9.1%
California State University, Dominguez Hills	1	4.6%
California State University, LA	1	4.6%
ELAC	8	36.4%
ELAC, Real Estate School	1	4.6%
Excelsior College, Regents University, New York (on-line degree)	1	4.6%
Foreign Trade Association	1	4.6%
L.A. Trade Technical College	1	4.6%
LACC	2	9.1%
Long Beach City College	1	4.6%
Los Angeles Unified School District Adult School	1	4.6%
Oxford Technical Institute	1	4.6%
Southwest Community College	1	4.6%
Total	22	100.00%

<b>MAJOR OR COURSE OF STUDY AFTER LOGISTICS ACADEMY</b>		
	Number of Students with this Major or Focus	Percent
Business	1	4.5%
Business and Accounting	1	4.5%
Civil Engineering	2	9.1%
Construction We Build Program	1	4.5%
Custom's Broker	1	4.5%
Electrical Apprenticeship	2	9.1%
General Education/General Studies	5	22.7%
Logistics / Global Logistics	5	22.7%
Information Technology	2	9.1%
International Business	1	4.5%
Manufacturing	1	4.5%
Total	22	99.7%

<b>COLLEGE CREDITS EARNED AFTER LOGISTICS ACADEMY</b>	
Number of Students Earning College Credits	15*
Mean Credits Earned	31.5
Median Credits Earned	20

*\*Three additional students earned college credits after the Logistics Academy, but the exact number of credits could not be determined for these students.*

*\* Of the four students who did not earn college credits, three took not-for-credit training and one student who continued did not yet earn any credits prior to the end of data collection.*

<b>CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES EARNED AFTER LOGISTICS ACADEMY</b>		
	Number of Students Receiving This Combination of Degrees and Certificates	Percent
Microsoft Certified Network Engineer and HAZWOPER*	1	4.5%
Bachelor's of Science in Business and Accounting	1	4.5%
Bachelor's Degree in Information Technology	1	4.5%
HAZWOPER*	1	4.5%
Real Estate	1	4.5%
We Build It Construction Certificate	1	4.5%
Logistics Certificate	1	4.5%
None	15	68.2%
Total	22	99.7%

\* *Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard Certificate*