MAX Study Findings and Recommendations

December 2, 2014

A roadmap of the MAX study findings

- **ABOUT** the organizations that responded

- FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

    - **Connect providers** to employers and economic developers

    - **Build awareness** of services

    - **Conduct research** to better understand gaps, capacities, and alignment with needs

    - **Explore access issues** limit connecting services with customers

Developing the Solution

Summer 2013: Leaders came together to respond to the need for a better connected workforce system and one that is aligned to meet employer needs

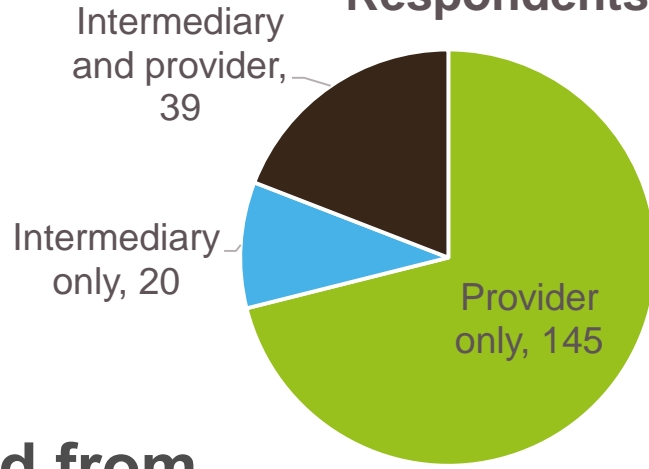**January 2014:** Launched project and assembled Steering Committee

Spring 2014: Reached out to nearly 500 potential providers to learn more about their service areas, services, customers, funding, and partnerships

Fall 2014: Built portal, analyzed data, and initiated mapping out a longer term plan for the group

December 2: Sharing what was learned

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Respondents

Intermediary and provider, 39
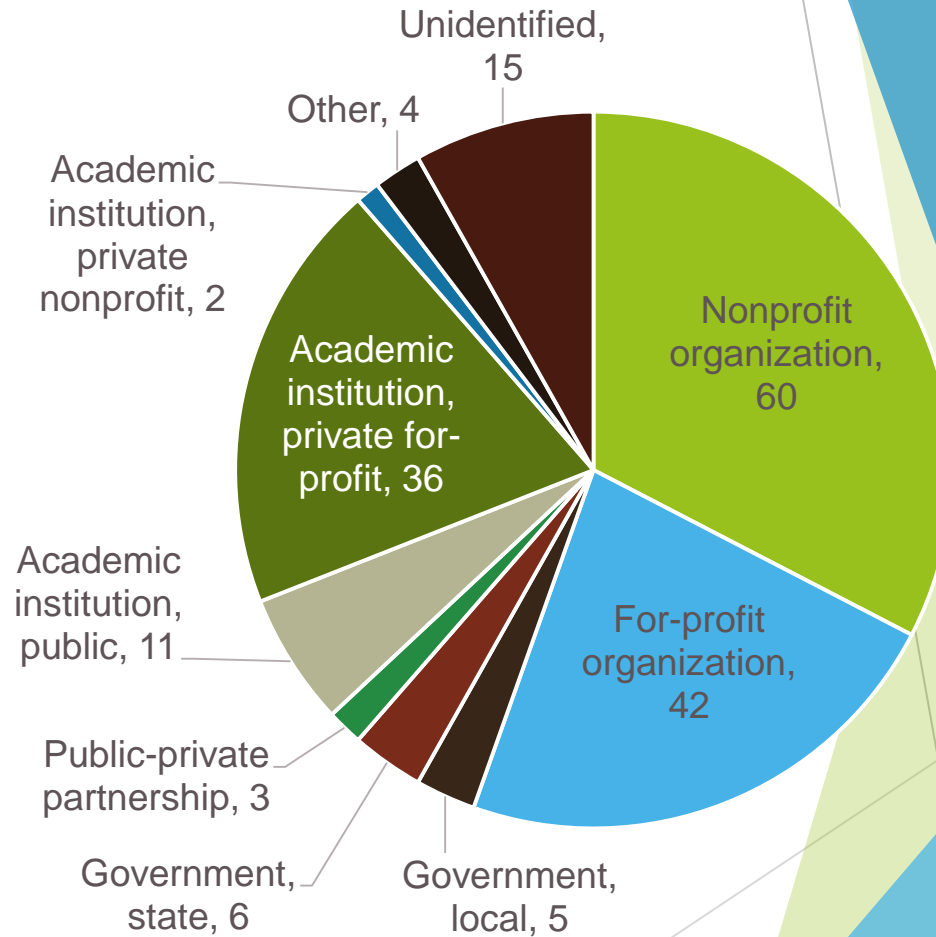
Intermediary only, 20

Provider only, 145

Who we heard from…

204 organizations responded, 145 are providers only, 39 are providers and intermediaries, and 20 are intermediaries only.

Some provider organizations have main and branch offices, therefore the results of this study reflect the services provided at 300 locations serving the 10-county metro area.

Providers by type

Unidentified, 15

Other, 4

Academic institution, private nonprofit, 2

Academic institution, private for-profit, 36

Academic institution, public, 11

Public-private partnership, 3

Government, state, 6

Government, local, 5

Nonprofit organization, 60

For-profit organization, 42

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Who are they serving?

Adults only, 86
Adults and youth, 169
Youth only, 16
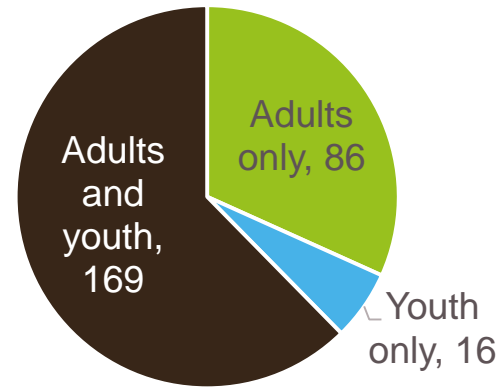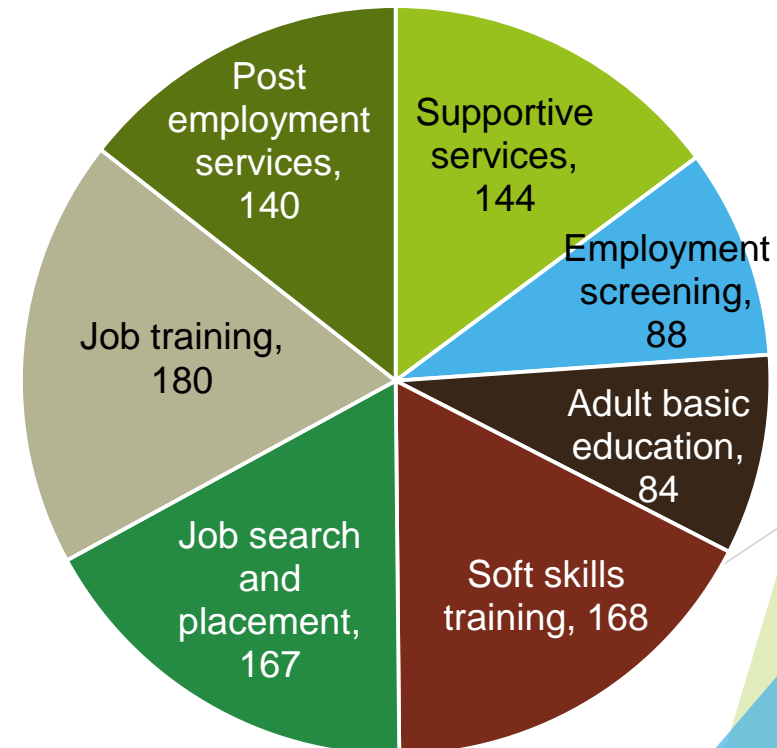
Reaching customers, providing services

A provider organization's mission, set of services, and funding sources help determine the types of populations that are served. Of the 271 provider locations that provided information about their customers, 86 provide services for adults only, 16 for youth only, and 169 provide both adult and youth services. In 2013 it is estimated that reporting providers served over 100,000 customers.

Services offered

Post employment services, 140
Supportive services, 144
Employment screening, 88
Job training, 180
Adult basic education, 84
Job search and placement, 167
Soft skills training, 168

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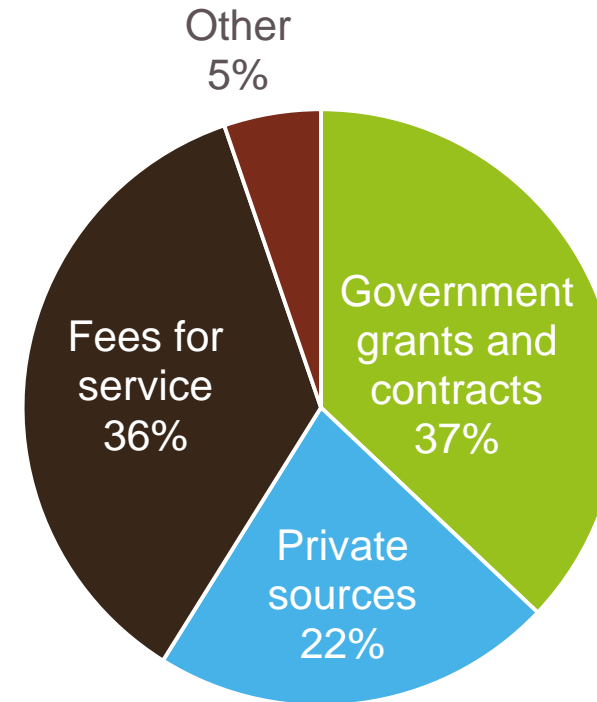## Government dollars and fees, nearly three quarters of all funding

Government funding is composed of nearly 70% from federal and state sources (relatively evenly split).

More than half of the **fees** are paid by individual participants (53%). Employers cover about a quarter, insurance companies and other sources cover the rest.

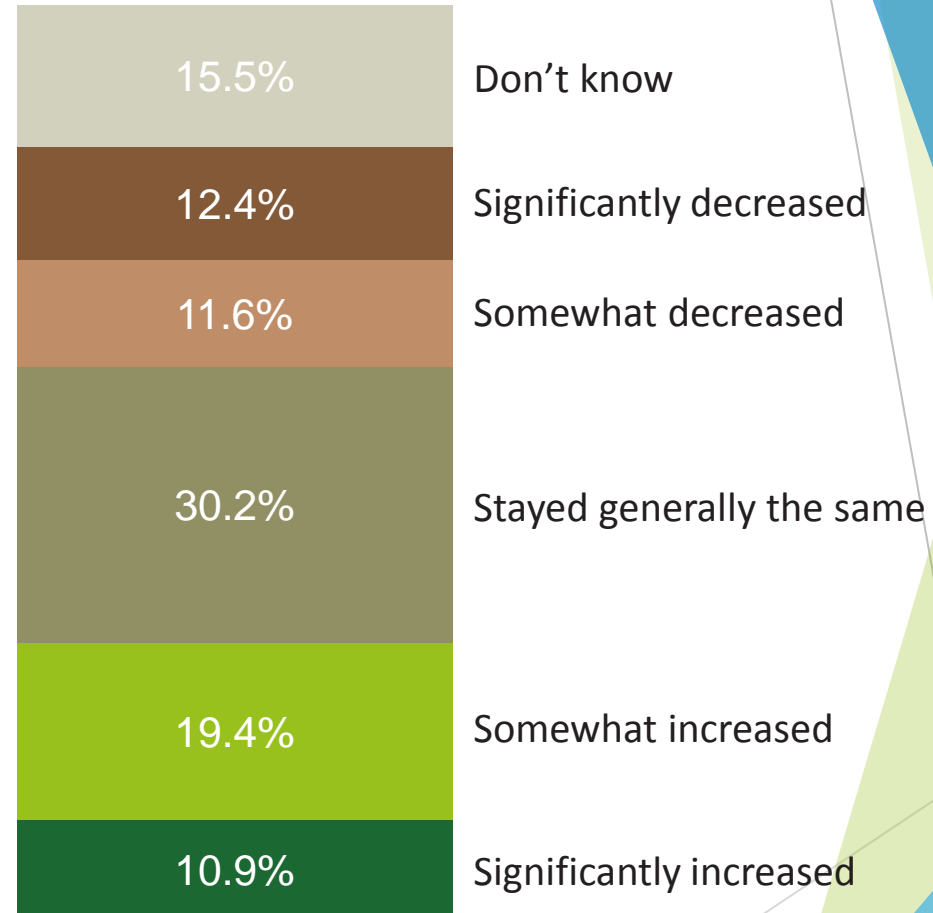**Private sources** include individual donors, corporate sponsorships, and foundations.

Composition of funding sources

- Other 5%
- Government grants and contracts 37%
- Private sources 22%
- Fees for service 36%

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Budget stable or growing for many providers

Nearly 60% of providers said that their budget has been stable or growing over the last five years.

Change in budget over last five years

15.5%	Don't know
12.4%	Significantly decreased
11.6%	Somewhat decreased
30.2%	Stayed generally the same
19.4%	Somewhat increased
10.9%	Significantly increased

PROVIDERS (129)

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CONNECTING

FINDING:
Connecting workforce development to employers and economic developers is an aspiration, not a reality.

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Who are providers partnering with today?

The local workforce investment boards topped the list in terms of most mentions. The second most prominent type of partnership is with the K-12 school system.

Notably, there's also a strong referral network between workforce development providers and health care related organizations.

Organization Types	Mentions
Local Workforce Investment Board	26
Local K-12 School System (including specific schools)	19
Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	16
Georgia Department of Labor	15
Technical College System of Georgia (including specific colleges)	13

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Partnerships today and in the future

Given the importance of employer-driven strategies in workforce development, providers were asked a number of questions about their relationships with employers.

TODAY: Less than one-third (30%) indicated at least one type of engagement with an employer.

FUTURE: Employers top the list of new partnerships that providers want to foster.

FUTURE: Desire New Partnerships with...	Responses
Employers	122
City or County Economic Development Organizations	108
State and Regional Economic Development Partners	108
Job Training Providers Other Than Academic Institutions	104
Local Workforce Investment Boards	103
Chambers of Commerce	102
Support Service Providers	92
Technical Colleges	84
Four-Year Colleges and Universities	80
K-12 Schools	67
Other	5

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RECOMMENDATION:
Strategically work to build, nurture and maintain connections between the workforce community, employers, and economic development.

MAX can facilitate a stronger link between employers, trade associations, chambers, and state and local economic development entities to bring about more coordinated forward-looking strategies for regional growth. Across sectors and occupations, communication about the supply and demand for talent needs to be regular, efficient, and agile, not left to serendipitous contacts between individuals.

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FINDING:
Providers need help **promoting awareness** of their services.

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What's stopping people from utilizing services?

Awareness topped the list identified by the organizations serving job seekers and people wanting to improve their career readiness as the main barrier to utilizing training and other workforce development services.

Rank	Barrier	Score
1	**Do not know about the services available**	**8.92**
2	Lack transportation options to reasonably access services	8.67
3	Cannot afford services	8.25
4	Do not have adequate support (e.g. child or adult care) to utilize services	7.81
5	Do not have confidence that utilizing the services will ensure better employment outcomes	7.24
6	Do not have available time to utilize services	7.17
7	Are not interested in the services	6.15
8	No barriers limit participation in our services and/or programs	5.23
9	Do not trust providers	5.19

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RECOMMENDATION:
Continue to improve the MAX Provider Portal in completeness, quality and credibility.

The MAX Provider Portal at www.maxworkforce.org is a searchable repository of information on the workforce development providers and intermediaries that shared information about their services and activities. It is a first step to enhance visibility of workforce services, but will need beta testing, additional development and refinement, and quality control. Outreach needs to be conducted to increase provider participation, ensure that information is accurate and complete, and to continually improve the portal usability and visibility in the community.

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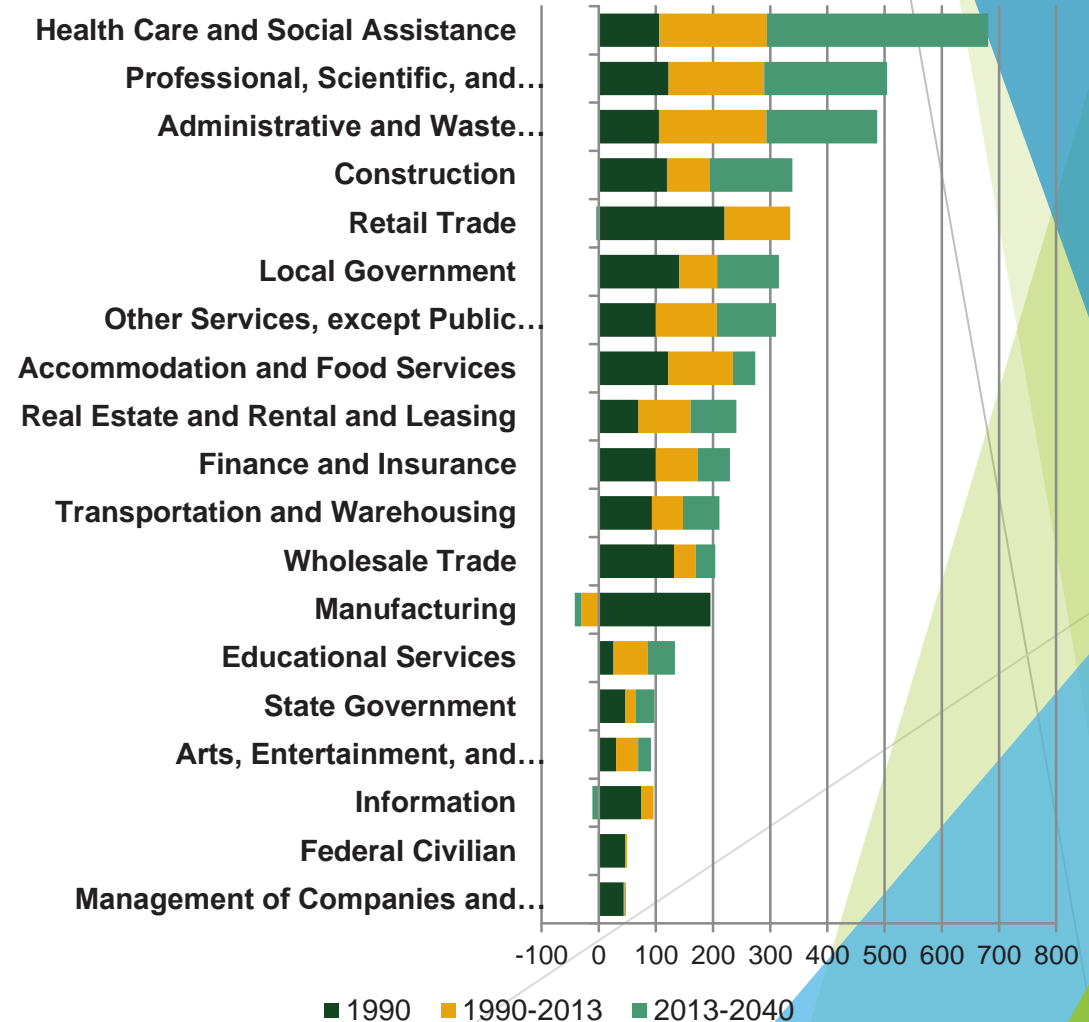Metro Atlanta eXchange for Workforce Solutions

FINDING:
More **research** is needed to better understand gaps, capacities, and alignment with regional labor needs.

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Are services aligned to future job demand?

MAX Study, providers serving each industry
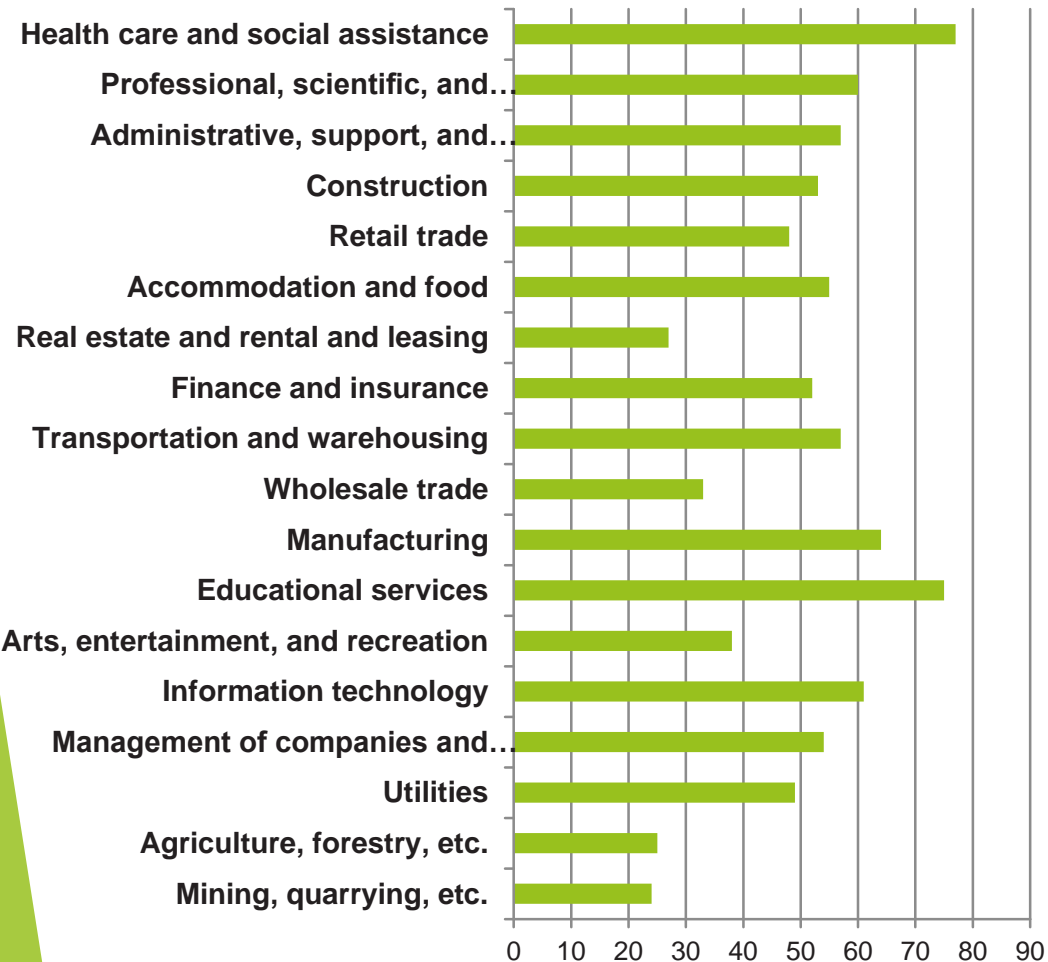
ARC, forecasted job change by sector

■ 1990   ■ 1990-2013   ■ 2013-2040

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a consistent and aligned research agenda to address questions about the regional workforce system.

The MAX data suggests key questions the region should answer to improve the connectedness and practices of its workforce system, and for the first time provides a mechanism to begin to answer those questions. MAX should take a lead in working with civic leaders, policy makers, and other investors to ensure that the next iteration of data collection and analysis results in impact-oriented research to inform policy and investment and to improve outcomes.

FINDING:
Access issues limit connecting services with customers.

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What prevents people from getting to services?

Over half of the responding providers offer their services to the entire 10-county region. Traveling within the region is costly in time and money, especially for individuals who are income constrained and/or transit dependent. More research is needed to better understand the geographic reach of providers and the ways individuals want to access services to remove barriers that prevent people all over the region from moving ahead.

Rank	Barrier	Score
1	Do not know about the services available	8.92
2	**Lack transportation options to reasonably access services**	**8.67**
3	Cannot afford services	8.25
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RECOMMENDATION: Convene stakeholders to develop strategies to mitigate access issues.

If the lack of transportation options to reasonably access services is as significant a barrier as suggested, then considerations about the physical location of services, more transportation alternatives, and/or more utilization of services delivery online (recognizing that customer access to technology will also have to be addressed) are needed. More research with the stakeholders is needed to carefully define the root cause of the access issue in order to craft the workable interim and permanent solutions.

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