

# MHALA's Jump Start Fellowship Program recognized as a WORKFORCE INNOVATOR

Jump Start is a 12-week, full-time fellowship program for individuals who are interested in working in the adult community mental health field. The program combines recovery-focused classroom instruction with applied internships to prepare participants for employment. The Jump Start Fellowship is made possible through the support of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health utilizing funding from the Mental Health Services Act Workforce Education and Training dollars.

Mental Health America of Los Angeles County (MHALA) engaged the Annapolis Coalition on the Behavioral Health Workforce ([www.annapoliscoalition.org](http://www.annapoliscoalition.org)) to review its Jump Start Training Program as a possible Workforce Innovator. Jump Start is a training program designed to give both classroom and real-world training about recovery-based interventions for adult individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses. ([www.mhajumpstart.org](http://www.mhajumpstart.org))

## THE REVIEW

The Coalition, which has conducted a series of national searches for innovative programs over the past decade, agreed to complete the external review, with complete independence. The analysis was designed around several components:

- 1 **An expert review of documents provided by MHALA staff detailing the program's elements designed to reflect the modified Kennedy School criteria of Significance, Effectiveness and Novelty, along with Transferability**
- 2 **Anonymous third-party surveys of providers who provided placements for participants and/or employed graduates**
- 3 **Anonymous third-party surveys of Jump Start alumni**

The Coalition assembled a team of eight (8) workforce experts with extensive behavioral health workforce expertise, and they independently conducted reviews using a standard scoring grid and prescribed definitions of the criteria. Simultaneously, The Coalition created two survey instruments (with input from MHALA to ensure that the questions would be relevant to the Jump Start staff when completed): one for providers, the second for alumni. Draft communications inviting participation in the surveys were prepared for MHALA, which were modified in collaboration with the Coalition, and then distributed by MHALA through its social networks and communication links. It was felt that responses would be more likely if MHALA used its social networks and other contacts to reach out to survey targets. The survey instruments were left open for an extended period, allowing for maximum response, and were managed by Intrinsic Marketing of Cincinnati, OH, to ensure that all responses would be anonymous.

Finally, the results of the expert scoring and the survey responses were compiled for review by the expert panel. The results indicated that the Jump Start Fellowship was viewed by experts, workplace partners, and alumni as a beneficial, valuable resource—and one that clearly qualifies as a Workforce Innovator.



**“The Annapolis Coalition is pleased to recognize the Jump Start Fellowship as a Workforce Innovator.”**

-John Morris  
Coalition Executive Director

## REVIEW RESULTS

CRITERIA	AVERAGE SCORE
Significance	4.5
Effectiveness	4.0
Novelty	3.9
Transferability	3.7
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>4.12</b>

## WORKFORCE INNOVATOR

## DETAILS FROM THE EXPERT REVIEW

The expert reviewers scored Jump Start on a 5-point scale on each criterion, with 5 representing "VERY HIGH" concordance with the criterion. These scores were then aggregated and averaged to yield summary scores. It should be noted that the relatively low score on the Transferability criterion was driven by the fact that the program has not been formally replicated. Comments from the reviewers indicated that the program was sufficiently well described, and the curricular materials well documented, that it would probably be easily replicated. This over-all score reflects an extremely positive review of the program, which was supported by the comments of reviewers.

## WHAT THE ALUMNI THOUGHT

Response rates from alumni of the Jump Start Fellowship were robust, with 217 completing the anonymous survey. On all tested dimensions (Do you feel better prepared to do your job? Did you find the teaching materials useful and user friendly? Were instructors knowledgeable and helpful? Do you think your employer valued your experience?), scores were solidly in the 4-5 ("Very Much") range, which reflects very strong endorsement of the experience. Typical of the comments were observations such as these two:

*"We received top notch instruction in class by our regular instructors and then visiting speakers, and also had the opportunity to intern at many of the premier agencies in LA County. The opportunity to digest and discuss the concepts we were learning and experiences we were having in small groups was particularly helpful to me."*

*"I was also given great resources. These resources were organized as well. Every day I was able to focus on specific learning objectives. I enjoyed the support of staff during the process."*

## WHAT EMPLOYERS AND PROVIDERS THOUGHT

Responses from employers of Jump Start Fellowship graduates were similarly positive across all issues, as shown in the graphic. Responses to an open-ended question about Jump Start Fellowship graduates as employees yielded compelling results:

*"They [the graduates] understand recovery, mental illness, and how to help people achieve recovery."*

*"Graduates have a very positive and enthusiastic attitude."*

*"I would recommend that other employers take advantage of the Jump Start Fellowship for their staff."*

For more information contact Joe Ruiz at [JRUIZ@mhala.org](mailto:JRUIZ@mhala.org).

**"This program clearly offers a learning experience that has direct relevance to improved supports and services for people with mental illnesses."**

-Expert Reviewer

## ALUMNI RESULTS

QUESTIONS	AVERAGE SCORE
Do you feel the program prepared you to more effectively do your job?	4.40
Did you find the teaching materials useful and user-friendly?	4.52
Were instructors knowledgeable and helpful?	4.74
Do you think your employer valued the fact that you are a graduate of JUMP START?	4.08

## EMPLOYER RESULTS

QUESTIONS	AVERAGE SCORE
Graduates of JUMP START bring new skills to their work that enhances our program effectiveness.	4.24
Graduates of JUMP START demonstrate consistent investment in recovery based approaches to treatment and supports.	4.24
Our program gives priority to job applicants with JUMP START experience.	4.05
JUMP START experience is viewed positively in our decisions about retention and promotion for our employees.	4.29
MHALA has been consistently responsive to our requests for information or suggestions about JUMP START.	4.29
I would recommend that other employers take advantage of the Jump Start Fellowship for their staff.	4.57