

**Former Work First/JET Participant Survey
Winter 2010**

Report of Findings

Submitted to:

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth



Submitted by:

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May, 2010

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A survey was conducted by Moore & Associates, Inc., a national research and evaluation firm, on behalf of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth among former Work First/Family Independence Program recipients and Jobs, Education & Training (JET) Program recipients. This is the sixth year of Moore & Associates, Inc. involvement with this project. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the participants' progress toward self-sufficiency after participation in the program. Three populations were surveyed, as follows:

- Population VI:* Consisting of approximately 11,833 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007.
- Population VII:* Consisting of approximately 14,465 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008.
- Population VIII:* Consisting of approximately 9,765 former WF/FIP and JET recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009.

This project was conducted in previous years. Specifically, Population VI and VII have been surveyed in the previous studies. This is the first year of participation for Population VIII.

This is a report of the findings from this administration of the survey. Comparisons to the previous two years are made where relevant. Comprehensive data tables for each population which include frequency of responses are included under separate cover.

A total of 10,820 surveys were sent on February 22, 2010, with 3,550 sent to Population VI, 4,340 to Population VII, and 2,930 to Population VIII. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 49 surveys were returned as undeliverable, where respondents had moved from their last known address. The number of undeliverable surveys returned to the contractor each year has declined due to policy changes at the United States Postal Service. In recent years, U.S. Postal Service offices in certain areas have opted to not return undeliverables to the sender due to the cost implications.

Respondents were given the option of mailing the completed survey to the contractor or calling a toll-free telephone number to complete the survey by telephone. In addition, the contractor obtained telephone numbers of non-respondents, when available, and contacted them by telephone to complete the survey. Table 1 depicts the response rates for each of the populations. A total of 811 surveys were completed, specifically 214 from Population VI, 310 from Population VII, and 287 from Population VIII.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010
Response Rates

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	----- # of surveys -----		
Total population	11,833	14,465	9,765
Surveys sent	3,550	4,340	2,930
Total responses	214	310	287
Undeliverable surveys	19	14	14
Delivered surveys	3,531	4,326	2,916
Response rate (deliverable)	6.1%	7.2%	9.8%
Response rate (total)	6.0%	7.1%	9.8%

The questionnaire has remained the same as in previous years. The questionnaire is included in Appendix I of this report.

Respondents were asked to provide information regarding their employment status, job and skills training, health care coverage, other assistance received, and the impact of the Work First/JET program on their lives. Not all respondents answered all questions.

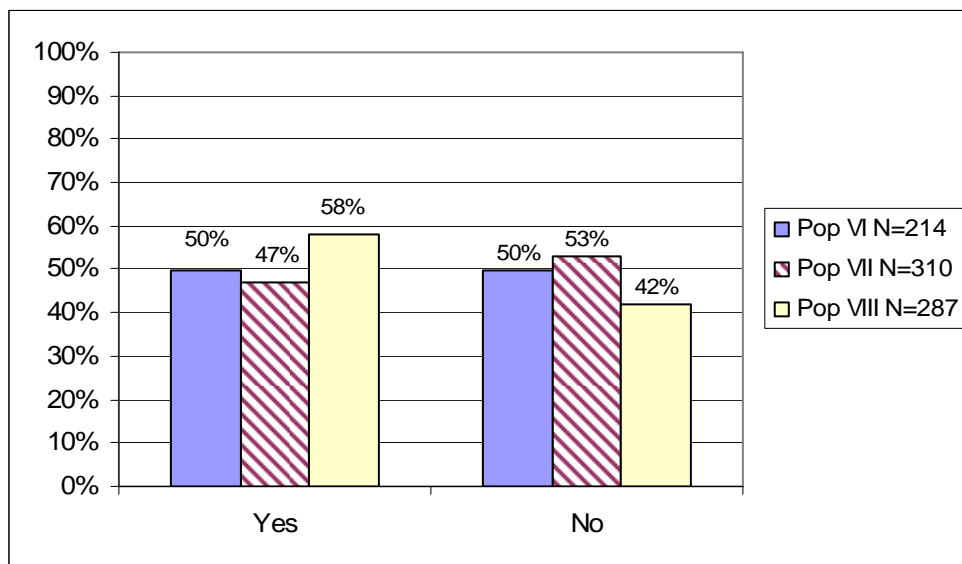
Employment Status

Respondents were asked about their employment status to determine their rate of employment, the types of employment, whether or not they were employed full- or part-time, and reasons for being unemployed. Half of the former recipients surveyed for Population VI (50%) and Population VII (48%), and more than half (58%) for Population VIII are currently working. The proportions of Populations VI and VII respondents reporting currently working has decreased in the current year as compared to the same populations last year (at 56% each in 2009) (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

Are You Currently Working?

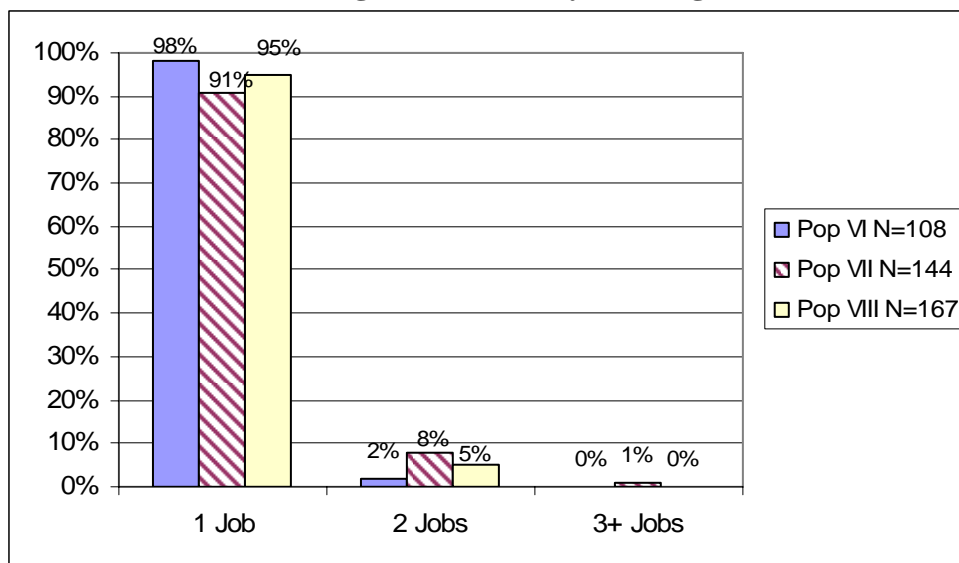


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. This is similar to last year's results (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

How Many Jobs Do You Have? (among those currently working)



Those who were not currently working reported the last time they held paying jobs. One-half of Population VI (50%) and Population VII (51%) respondents reported having worked in the past year. This is a decrease from the 72% overall who indicated this last year. Nearly two-thirds of Population VIII respondents reported having worked in the past year (Table 2).

Table 2

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

Last Time Held a Paying Job (among those currently unemployed)

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	50	51	65
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	25	28	22
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	14	6	3
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	4	5	5
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>120</i>

Respondents offered various reasons for not working. Similar to last year, the top reason for not working was being unable to find work. This was followed by being laid off from work, being sick or injured, or being fired from the job (Table 3).

Table 3

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Reasons for Not Working (among those who are currently unemployed)

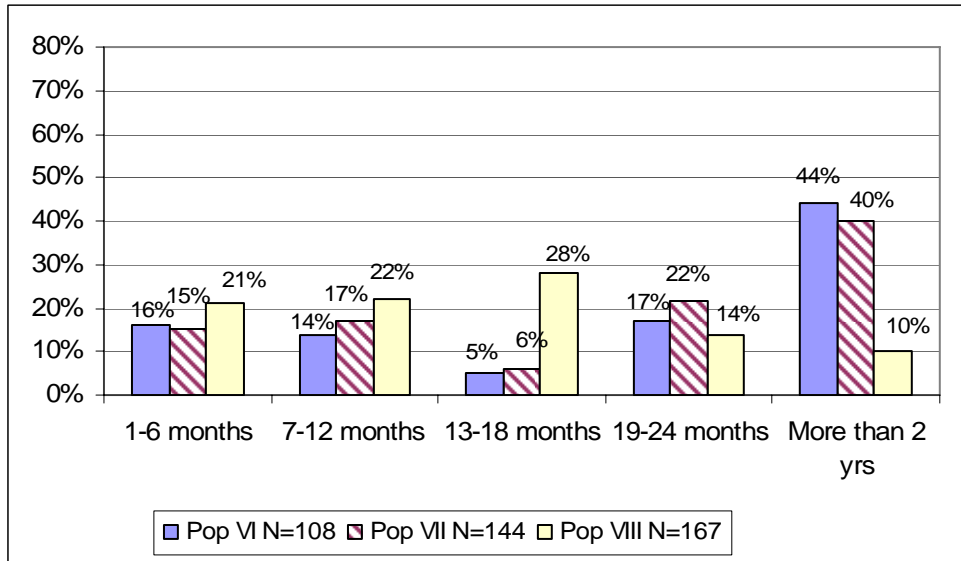
	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	47	57	50
I was sick or injured	18	21	14
I was laid off	23	21	23
I was fired	17	14	13
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	7	8	7
I had a new baby	3	5	7
My job was seasonal	9	10	7
I am going to school	13	13	10
I had an illness in the family	3	4	8
Hourly wage too low	7	4	4
I had problems with child care	8	7	8
I moved away from the area	1	1	2
No transportation/no phone	-	-	-
None of the above/other	-	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>120</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 30% of Population VI respondents, 32% of Population VII respondents, and 43% of Population VIII respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, half of Populations VI (50%) and VII (52%) respondents and 67% of Population VIII respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

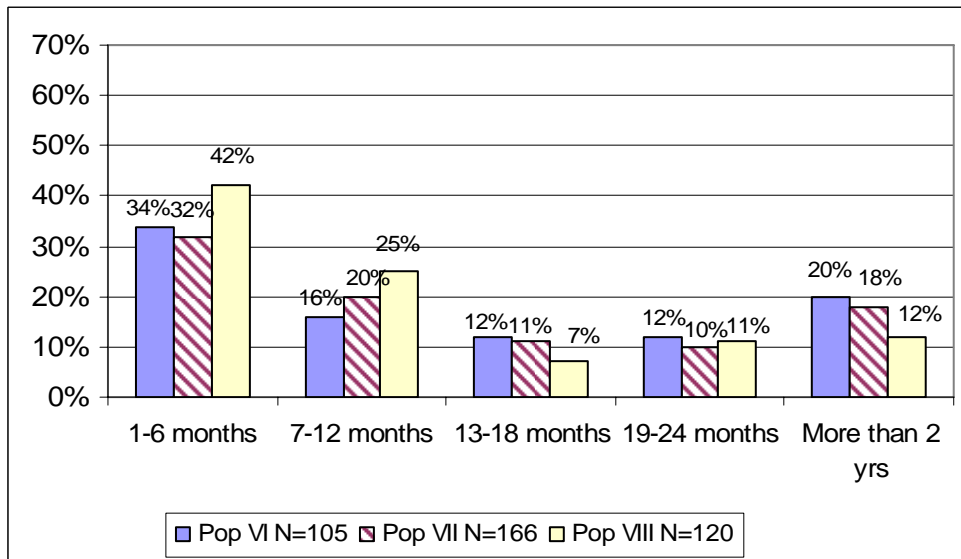
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

How Long Have You Worked For Your Current Employer? (among those currently employed)



How Long Did You Work For Your Most Recent Employer? (among those not currently employed)



On average, among those currently working, respondents worked an average of 31 to 32 hours per week. Those who were unemployed reported working an average of 33 to 34 hours per week in their last jobs (Table 4).

Table 4
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

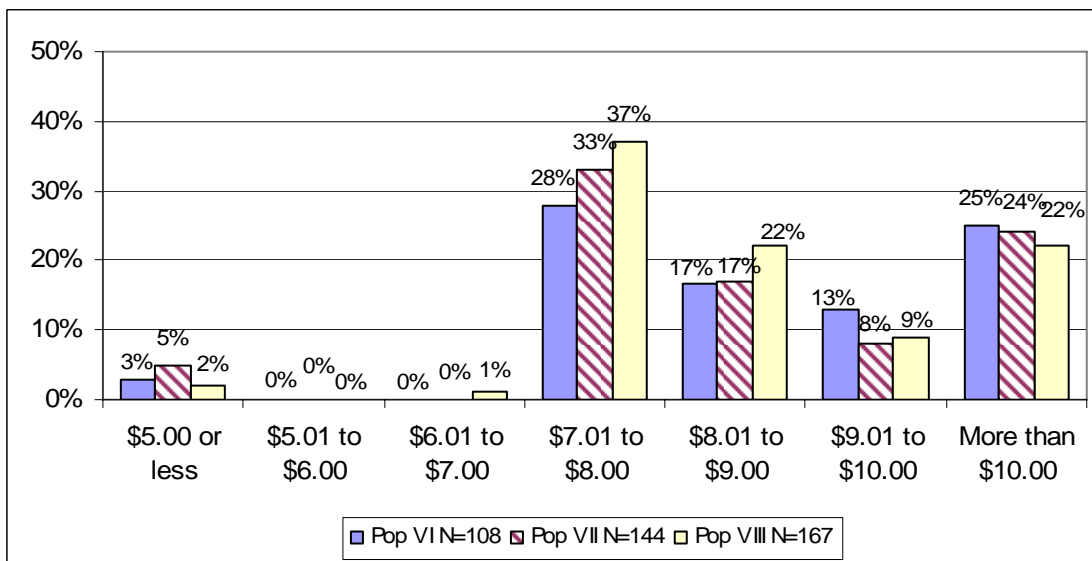
	<u>Population VI</u>		<u>Population VII</u>		<u>Population VIII</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	31.7	33.0	32.1	34.0	31.2	33.2
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>120</i>

Hourly wages were reported for all respondents. Currently employed individuals were asked to indicate their current wage, while those who were unemployed reported their most recent wage. For those who held more than one job, individuals were asked to report their highest wage. One-quarter of Populations VI (25%) and VII (24%) respondents and 22% of Population VIII respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$9.19 to \$9.35 per hour. The average minimum pay is slightly higher than the minimum of \$9.09 per hour reported last year, but the average maximum pay remains lower than the reported maximum of \$9.78 per hour last year (Exhibit 4).

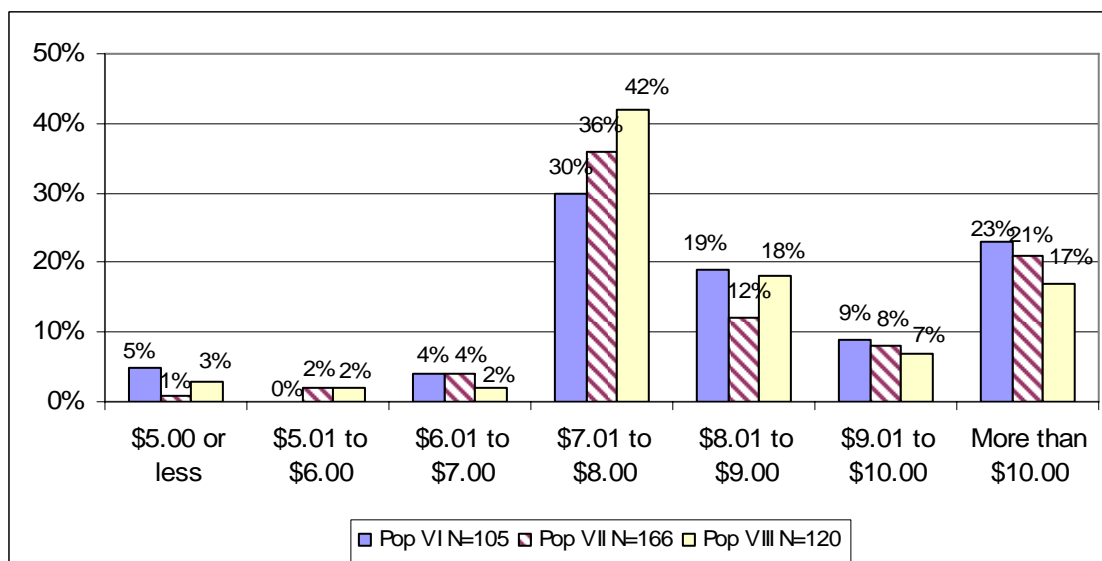
Exhibit 4

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

What Is Your Regular Hourly Pay? (among those currently employed)



What Was Your Regular Hourly Pay? (among those not currently employed)



Respondents indicated working in various jobs. Similar to previous years, occupations in customer service and health care were mentioned most often, followed by jobs in food services (Table 5).

Table 5
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010
Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	15	17	20
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	14	17	22
Restaurant/food services	11	10	11
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	6	8	8
Administrative/support services/clerk	7	6	6
Industrial worker	8	7	6
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	8	6	2
Construction/general labor	3	5	4
Driver/transportation/courier	2	4	2
Skilled trade	5	1	1
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	1	1	1
Child care	3	4	4
Automotive repair/automotive care	1	1	1
Education/teacher/training	2	2	2
Stock/inventory	1	2	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	1	2	2
Technical	1	1	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	1	1	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	1	1	2
Maintenance	-	-	*
Social work	1	1	1
Cosmetology	1	-	-
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	-
Disabled	-	*	*
Homemaker/chore services	3	*	-
Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations	1	-	-
Military	1	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

* *Less than one-half of one percent*

Among those currently working, nearly one-fourth of respondents from Population VI (24%), Population VII (18%), and Population VIII (27%) indicated they had worked for other employers during the year. This is similar to the previous year. Among those not working, the proportion of individuals from Population VI (12%) and Population VII (9%) who reported having worked for other employers during the year has decreased in comparison to these same groups last year. Nearly one-fourth of Population VIII respondents, who were not currently working, reported having worked for other employers during the year (Table 6).

Table 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010
Worked for Other Employers during the Past Year

	<u>Population VI</u>		<u>Population VII</u>		<u>Population VIII</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Yes	24	12	18	9	27	23
No	71	87	81	87	68	76
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>120</i>

Respondents, who indicated having worked for other employers during the past year, described their jobs. Similar to the respondents' current jobs, health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. There also were frequent mentions of support service, cleaning service, and construction/general labor occupations this year (Table 7).

Table 7

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

**Other Jobs Held During the Past Year
(among those who worked for other employers during the past year)**

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	10	17	19
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	31	37	18
Restaurant/food services	10	10	12
Administrative/support services/clerk	3	10	6
Driver/transportation/courier	-	2	3
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	10	12	6
Industrial worker	5	2	6
Stock/inventory	-	2	1
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	3	2	3
Education/teacher/training	-	-	3
Construction/general labor	3	7	4
Child care	3	2	3
Automotive repair/automotive care	3	-	3
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	3	-	-
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	-	-	3
Homemaker/chore services	-	5	1
Skilled trade	-	-	3
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	3	-	-
Technical	3	-	-
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	3	-	1
Maintenance	-	-	-
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	-	-
Social work	-	-	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>73</i>

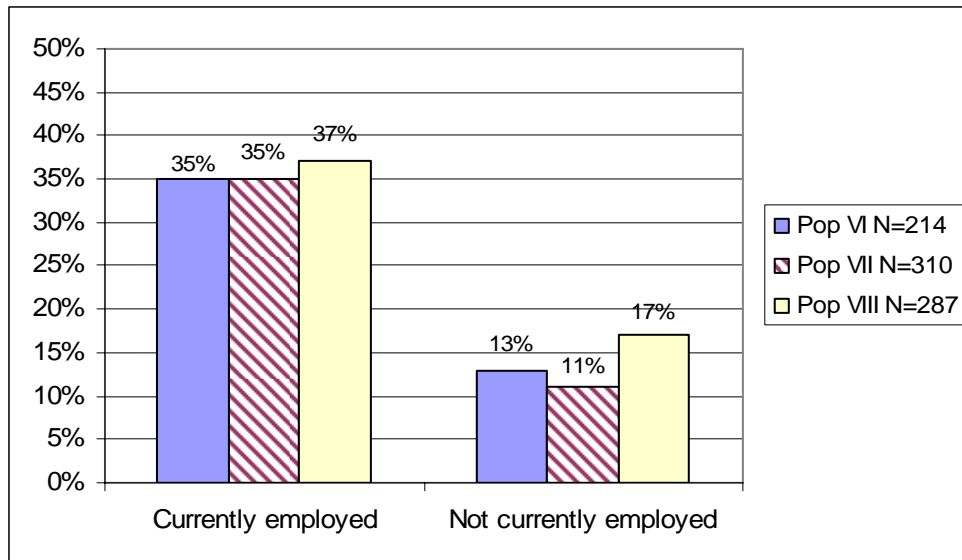
** Less than one-half of one percent*

Job and Skills Training

Respondents were asked if their current or most recent employer provided training programs to update their skills. Over one-third currently employed participants from Populations VI (35%), VII (35%), and VIII (37%) indicated their employers offered training programs. This is similar to the results reported last year for this same group who indicated training was offered (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5

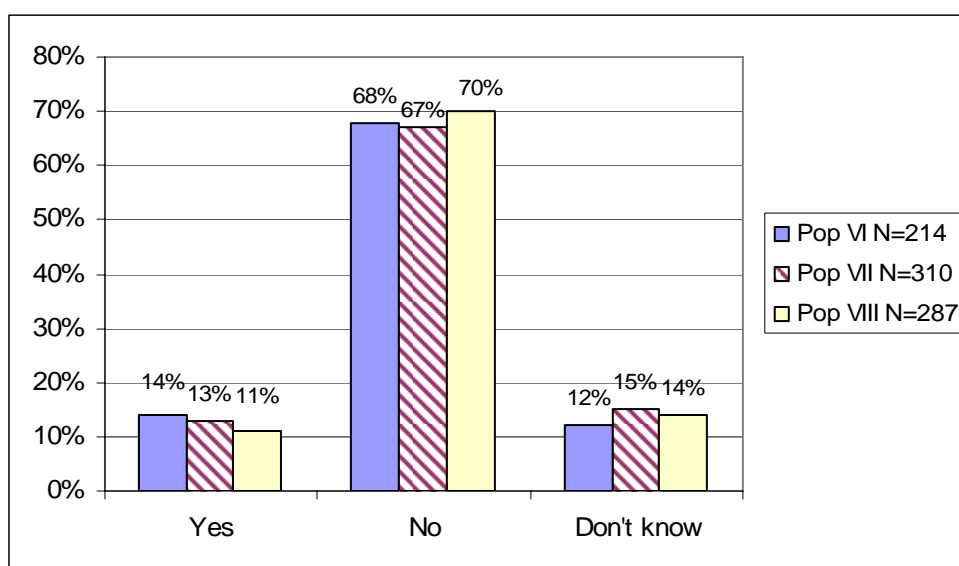
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010 Employer Provides Training Programs



Among those currently employed who indicated their employer offered training, 47% of Population VI participants, 26% of Population VII participants, and 24% of Population VIII participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer. When compared to last year, it appears a higher proportion of participants from Population VI are taking advantage of the training programs, while a much lower proportion of Population VII participants are involved in training programs offered by their employers.

Currently employed respondents answered questions regarding tuition reimbursement. Among these individuals, 14% for Population VI, 13% of Population VII recipients, and 11% of Population VIII recipients indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills. This is similar to last year's results (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010
Employer Provides Tuition Reimbursement
(among those currently employed)



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 20% of Population VI participants, 5% of Population VII participants, and 17% of Population VIII participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses. Compared to last year, it appears more Population VI participants are taking advantage of these additional benefits, while far less Population VII participants are accessing these benefits.

All respondents were asked about the types of training programs they have participated in since leaving the Work First Program. More than two-thirds indicated they had not participated in any training since leaving the program. On-the-job training was reported by approximately one-quarter of the respondents. These results are lower than those from previous years (Table 8).

Table 8

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	25	20	25
Off-site training	10	7	11
Computer training	6	6	8
Help with reading or math	2	2	2
Tuition reimbursement	2	1	1
None	63	68	63
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

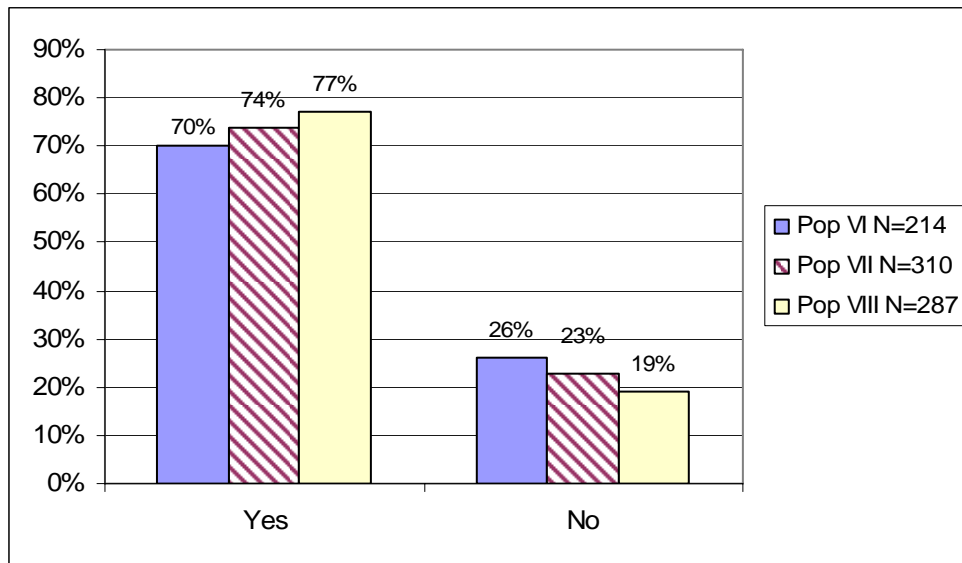
Health Care Coverage

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Similar to the results from last year, approximately three-fourths of the respondents have health insurance coverage through some source (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?



Health care coverage was provided through various sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. Two-thirds of Populations VII (62%) and VIII (66%) and half of Population VI (52%) indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program, slightly higher than last year. Fifteen percent of Population VI respondents and 10% each of Population VII and VIII respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. Approximately one-fourth of Populations VI and VII individuals, and 19% of Population VIII indicated they did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	53	62	66
Have health insurance through my employer	15	10	10
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	3	1	1
Have no health insurance at all	26	23	19
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

Among those currently working, nearly half of respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. This is similar to the proportion of employers offering health insurance in previous years. Nearly four out of ten for Populations VI (42%) and VII (42%), and approximately one-third (35%) of Population VIII reported their employers pay for part of the monthly cost, while one-third of Populations VI (30%) and VIII (31%) and 39% of Population VII indicated their employer did not cover any of the monthly cost. Ten percent of Population VI and 5% of both Populations VII and VIII whose employers offered health insurance indicated their employers covered all health insurance costs. Interestingly, 16% of Population VI, 14% of Population VII, and 28% of Population VIII respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs. The proportion of employers paying for some or all health insurance costs has remained the same since last year (Table 10).

Table 10

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	46	46	45
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>167</i>
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	10	5	5
Part of the monthly cost	42	42	35
None of the monthly cost	30	39	31
Don't know	16	14	28
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>75</i>

Similar to the past two years, nearly all of the respondents, 93% of Population VI respondents, 93% of Population VII respondents, and 92% of Population VIII respondents, have children living at home. Approximately four out of ten, slightly lower than last year, indicated they had children who attended elementary school (Table 11).

Table 11

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	93	93	92
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>
<u>Children Attend</u> (among those with children)			
Childcare	10	16	20
Pre-school	12	7	8
Head Start	10	6	5
Elementary school	43	46	46
Middle school	30	27	25
High school	36	33	29
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>263</i>

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Approximately two-thirds or more of the respondents reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid, slightly lower than last year's responses (Table 12).

Table 12

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Types of Health Insurance Children Have (among those with children)

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	66	70	70
MIChild	23	24	25
Through my/my spouse's employer	9	9	5
No health insurance	6	2	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>263</i>

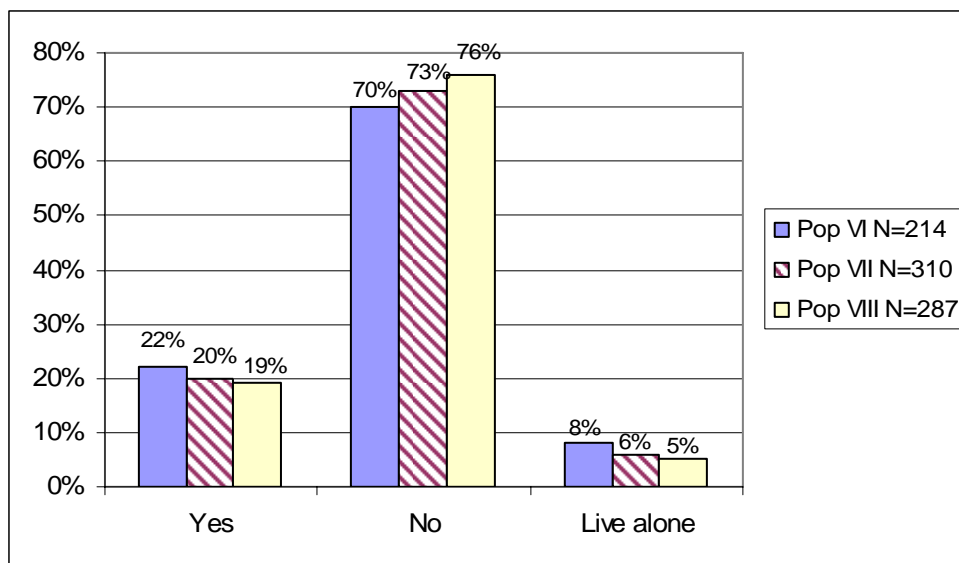
Other Assistance

Respondents were asked about their households and whether or not they received assistance through other sources. When asked if someone else in their household held a paying job, approximately two out of ten reported "yes". Specifically, 22% of Population VI, 20% of Population VII, and 19% of Population VIII indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010

Does Anyone Else In Your Household Have a Paying Job?



Over three-fourths overall reported they or someone else in their household receives public assistance, welfare payments, food stamps, vouchers, SSI, or emergency help from FIA or other government agencies (77% of Population VI, 76% of Population VII, and 79% of Population VIII). On average, respondents reported receiving approximately \$402 in welfare payments, almost \$400 in food stamps, and approximately \$656 in SSI payments in the last month. The average dollar amount of outside assistance received by participants for welfare payments and food stamps continue to increase from previous years. There has been an increase in SSI payments in the current year as well (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

How Much \$\$ Assistance Received from Other Source During the Last Month

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	4	3	3
\$201 to \$300	2	1	2
\$301 to \$400	2	3	*
\$401 to \$500	7	9	5
Over \$500	3	4	5
No answer/do not receive	82	79	85
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$381.90	\$417.70	\$405.90
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	8	7	7
\$101 to \$200	13	12	12
\$201 to \$300	14	13	14
\$301 to \$400	15	18	20
\$401 to \$500	15	14	12
Over \$500	25	27	31
No answer/do not receive	9	8	4
Average food stamp \$\$	\$397.20	\$404.10	\$399.50
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	-	2	*
\$201 to \$300	1	1	-
\$301 to \$400	1	-	1
\$401 to \$500	2	1	1
\$501 to \$600	1	1	*
Over \$600	7	8	6
No answer/do not receive	88	87	92
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$602.40	\$623.40	\$743.00
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>164</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>228</i>

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Respondents were asked to recall if in the past 12 months there was ever a time when they were not able to pay their mortgage, rent, or utility bills. Approximately seven out of ten respondents from Population VI (75%), Population VII (69%), and Population VIII (72%) reported there had been a time during the past year in which they were unable to pay these bills. Respondents who indicated they had difficulty paying their mortgage, rent, or utility bills reported not being able to pay an average of four

mortgage, rent, or utility payments during the year. The number of respondents indicating an inability to pay their bills in the past 12 months has increased compared to previous years. The average number of times respondents were unable to pay during the year remains similar to last year (Table 14).

Table 14

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Could Not Pay At Least One Mortgage, Rent, or Utility Payment During the Last 12 Months

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	62	68	70
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	4.3 times	4.0 times	4.2 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>133</i>	<i>212</i>	<i>200</i>

Impact of the Work First Program

Respondents were asked in general how they felt regarding where they were in terms of their household income, their housing condition, their food and nutrition, and their health insurance since not receiving assistance. Respondents most often felt the program left them better off in the area of household income, with approximately four out of ten individuals from Populations VI (38%), VII (43%) and VIII (43%) indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. Three out of ten felt they were better off in terms of their housing conditions and food and nutrition. Approximately three out of ten respondents indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of health care for their children. Approximately three out of ten respondents for Population VI (30%) and Population VII (29%), and one-fourth of Population VIII (24%) indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their access to health insurance. Comparing this year to previous years,

income, housing condition, food and nutrition, healthcare for children, and access to health insurance (Table 15).

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Do You Feel Better Off, the Same, or Worse Off Than When Received Assistance?

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	38	43	43
The same	22	24	26
A lot/a little worse off	28	27	29
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	34	31
The same	48	48	53
A lot/a little worse off	10	12	14
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	39	35	35
The same	37	44	51
A lot/a little worse off	13	15	13
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	32	30	28
The same	47	56	60
A lot/a little worse off	7	6	8
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	30	29	24
The same	39	47	50
A lot/a little worse off	21	18	23
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, approximately one-third of Population VI (36%), Population VII (30%), and Population VIII (37%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. This is a decrease when compared to results from previous studies. Thirty-two

individuals indicated the program helped improve their job skills. In the current year, the overall proportion of participants who indicated the program helped to improve their job skills has declined slightly in comparison to last year (Table 16).

Table 16

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Did Being in Work First Help You With . . . ?

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	36	30	37
Improving job skills	32	25	37
Keeping a job	15	11	12
Getting a higher paying job	11	6	8
None	44	54	41
No answer	1	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

Respondents were asked if Work First helped their family with various money management, health management, and housing issues. Comparable to previous years, help with money management issues (budgeting and paying bills on time) was mentioned most often (Table 17).

Table 17

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2010**

Did Being in Work First Help Your Family With . . . ?

	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	19	18	18
Getting health insurance	10	9	11
Paying your bills on time	13	13	14
Getting better health care	6	5	6
Getting better dental care	5	3	4
Getting better housing	5	4	6
None	69	71	67
No answer	4	1	2
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>214</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>287</i>

Respondents made comments regarding their experience with the Work First Program. A similar number of positive and negative comments were made. Respondents who made positive comments appreciated the assistance the program offered. Similar to comments made in the past, respondents remarked on the helpfulness of the staff and the benefits of the services provided by the program. Respondents who made negative comments felt the program did not assist them in finding employment. Some of these individuals felt staff were not very supportive. Others commented on the great amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved in participating in the program. These negative remarks were similar to those made previously. Following is a sample of some of the respondents' comments:

Positive Comments

I really am thankful for the Work First program! I definitely learned things I didn't know about finding a job.

I am thankful for Work First. They found the job that I currently have 3yrs ago.

I appreciate how helpful the staff was. Everyone was very encouraging and eager to help. Thank you!

The workers try very hard to try to help you with what you need to get done.

It helped me a lot in resume and not being scared to do interviews.

It's a good place to help with looking for a job and resume, etc...

It's a really good program to help and encourage people to get and keep a job.

It's a really great program, if you put your mind, knowledge and effort into it. It really pays off.

Work first is a very resourceful place for single parents to get back into the Work first and manage your family.

I feel Work first is a huge help to the people who want to help themselves.

I liked the training on how to properly interview for a job!

I really appreciate that they had a job shop the first week I was there. I've had and have kept the same job for three years. I thank God for this or I wouldn't be able to provide for my family.

The staff was always helpful, pleasant, and courteous. The program I took at a community college definitely got me on my feet. I wouldn't have been able to pay for it on my own.

Work First helped me to keep my car running while in school and after so I could work. It helped to get my first uniforms and to pay for gas. I maybe could have done it without, but I appreciate the fact that I did not have to and so do my children. It would have been very, very difficult.

Work First helped me obtain Nurse's Aide Certification, keep gas in my vehicle, remove other barriers in my life.

Help with transportation and clothing vouchers for work uniforms were a huge help for me.

It is a good place to go get help because they help you out a lot with everything.

My situation was different then most of the people there. I have felonies that make things real hard for me. The staff at the JET program did try to help me. Leena Z. was real good to me. She was stern when I needed it and supportive all the time.

It is a great program for those with no education.

I think Work First is a very good program. I think they need to filter out/test people and help them accordingly. I've had a job for 15 years . . . so I know how to fill out an application and create a resume. But, you do have people that do not have a clue.

Those ladies in the Albion branch were awesome. They helped me fix my vehicle.

I am very grateful that Work First helped me find a job and boosted my self confidence.

I received an award for Habitat for Humanity (Volunteer of the Year)

Work First gave me the motivation to find a better job – more hours and more money – plus full-time.

Work First helped me realize that I needed to get up and start taking responsibility. I am glad that they made me go there and also helped me to the way I am today. Thank you!!

Yes, Mrs. Ruth is very special to me. She helped me with a lot. She's the reason I'm taking nursing classes at Baker College.

It was excellent to have help with the vehicle.

Negative Comments

Need to help people get the GED or help the ones that want to go to college, not tell them they don't read good enough, so you can not go to college

I never found a job due to Work First. I never received any schooling. It was something I had to do to get help. Now I'm waiting to get my child support back.

Yes, you're told to Work first and they will assist you but what they meant was work so they can cut you off. I haven't received anything since Work first.

If Work first has all these programs then why don't all JET employers know. The worker doesn't give you any trainee explanation.

It is only useful for the very lowest education level people.

Work first needs to hold job fairs at the location like they use to way back when.

Work first for me was a big disappointment and very stressful. I eventually left the program at the cost of my benefits, found a CAN program with LCC and passed. I did what I wanted to do. Not what Work first wanted me to do.

Work first didn't help me at all because I've been going for two years and I am still not working. The program needs to be reconstructed.

They helped us with nothing. We were treated like a 2nd class citizens. They still owe me for incentives that I qualified for (gas cards/dinner vouchers).

Trained for a job that is now being phased out of the hospitals. I was unable to get computer training for a job offer because Work first refused to train me on PowerPoint and Excel.

If they are going to make you go, they ought to help you do something! We just read newspapers for eight hours.

After seven months I'm still looking for a job. Michigan Works was unhelpful with finding a job, fixing my car, and work clothes.

I found my job I wanted, to go to take a trade in court reporting school. Work First did not approve me for that. So, I went back in the field I came from – housekeeping.

They did not help me with anything! I was homeless and spoke to someone on the Redford campus about receiving some help and didn't receive any help! It's hard to keep a job if you have no where too live. My three children have to live with my mother.

I felt very discriminated against in the Work First program as an educated person. Moreover, I felt that the employees were not open to discuss different ways for me to try to find employment in my field. In addition, some of the instruction provided was really geared toward people who have never had a job, and was a waste of resources for the rest of us.

They don't help you find a job because you are there all day and don't have time to look.

It is very difficult or nearly impossible to attend classes and/or keep requirement when in a single-parent household, keeping a part-time job, and attending classes for college credit.

Work First needs to handle each person separately. Not all participants need GED classes or resume tips. There should be more advanced classes for experience or displaced workers.

I did not really feel that it was necessary to have to sit at Work First for eight hours a day in order to get or look for a job when I could have been doing that offsite.

While in Work First my children and I had insurance. Since working we have been without insurance. My children just got insurance, I still have none.

There are some advantages, but I was removed from food benefits. So, now I am spending more money to eat and less on paying bills.

I was approved two times for a car loan and never received it.

The goal of Work First was to find a full-time job paying \$7.50/hour job. We cannot support ourselves or our family at that rate. The goal should be to secure full-time jobs with higher wages.

I didn't like the fact that they wanted me to quit the piece of job that I had to continue to receive assistance and stay in the program. Why couldn't I continue to work and participate? Why teach someone to quit a job before they have another one.

The Work First Survey was conducted to gauge participants' progress toward self-sufficiency after participation in the program. The survey was conducted during the late winter and early spring of 2010 by Moore & Associates, Inc., a national research and evaluation company. Surveys were mailed to participants and they were given the opportunity to respond via mail or by telephone.

In the current year, approximately half of the former respondents are currently employed. A majority of these individuals are working at one job. These respondents reported working an average of 31 to 32 hours per week. Their average minimum pay of \$9.19 per hour reported for the current year is slightly higher than the minimum of \$9.09 per hour reported last year, but the average maximum pay reported for the current year of \$9.35 per hour remains lower than the reported maximum of \$9.78 per hour from last year. Health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. Among those currently not employed, approximately one-half of Populations VI (50%) and VII (51%) respondents and six out of ten Population VIII (65%) respondents indicated they had worked in the past year. The top reason for being unemployed was not being able to find work.

Approximately one-third of Populations VI (35%), VII (35%), and VIII (37%) participants indicated their current employers offered training programs and fourteen percent for Population VI, 13% for Population VII, and 11% for Population VIII recipients indicated their employer offered tuition reimbursement. This is similar when compared to the previous years of participants taking advantage of these employer offered benefits.

In terms of health care coverage, more individuals in the current year reported receiving health insurance through an outside program rather than through their employer or spouse's employer. Employers appear to be somewhat more likely than in previous years to offer health insurance

coverage. Also, compared to last year, employers are slightly more likely to help pay for either all or part of the health insurance.

Slightly higher than previous years, over three-quarters of respondents reported they received outside assistance from other organizations and agencies. The dollar amount of the assistance received has increased when compared to that received in previous years for welfare payments, food stamps, and SSI payments.

When asked about the impact of the Work First Program, respondents were most likely to indicate they were better off as a result of the program in the areas of household income, followed by food and nutrition, and housing conditions. However, access to health insurance coverage continues to be an issue for many, along with the issue of health care for child(ren).

Overall, respondents who felt the program was beneficial indicated they appreciated the helpful staff and the services provided. Respondents who were not enamored of the program did not feel the program assisted them in finding employment. They did not find staff very supportive and complained about the amount of paperwork and time involved to participate.

Questionnaire