

**Former Work First Participant Survey  
Winter 2004**

**Report of Findings**

**Submitted to:**

**Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth**

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A survey was conducted by Moore & Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth among former Work First/Family Independence Program recipients. 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 I:* Consisting of approximately 19,500 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2001 to September 30, 2002.
- Population II:* Consisting of approximately 14,800 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003.
- Population III:* Consisting of approximately 16,500 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004.

This project was conducted in previous years. Specifically, Population I and II have been surveyed in the previous studies. This is the first year of participation for Population III.

This is a report of the findings from this administration of the survey. Comprehensive data tables for each population which include frequency of responses are included under separate cover.

A total of 14,450 surveys were sent on December 27, 2004, with 5,000 sent to Population I, 4,450 to Population II, and 5,000 to Population III. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 2,755 surveys were returned as undeliverable, where respondents had moved from their last known address.

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, where available, and contacted them by telephone to complete the survey. Table 1 depicts the response rates for each of the populations. A total of 1,352 surveys were completed, 289 from Population I, 323 from Population II, and 740 from Population III.

**Table 1**  
**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth**  
**Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**  
**Response Rates**

|                                    | <u>Population I</u>      | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                    | ----- # of surveys ----- |                      |                       |
| Total population                   | 19,570                   | 14,810               | 16,541                |
| Surveys sent                       | 5,000                    | 4,450                | 5,000                 |
| <b>Total responses</b>             | 289                      | 323                  | 740                   |
| Undeliverable surveys              | 1,200                    | 890                  | 665                   |
| Delivered surveys                  | 3,800                    | 3,560                | 4,335                 |
| <b>Response rate (deliverable)</b> | 7.6%                     | 9.1%                 | 17.1%                 |
| <b>Response rate (total)</b>       | 5.8%                     | 7.3%                 | 14.8%                 |

The questionnaire from the previous study was used, with some minor modifications. The questionnaire is included in Appendix II 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 program on their lives. Not all respondents answered all questions.

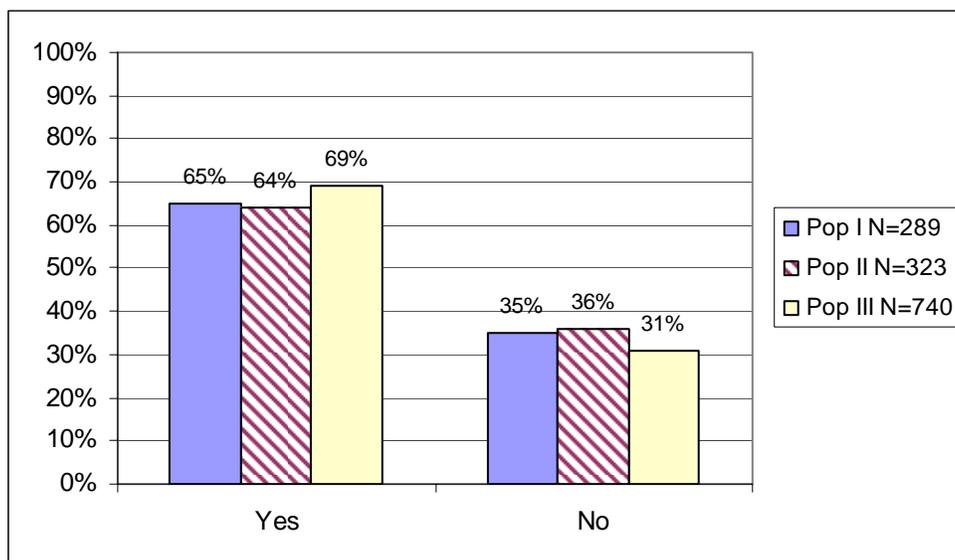
**Employment Status**

Respondents were asked about their employment status to determine their rate of employment, the types of employment, whether or not they were full- or part-time and reasons for being unemployed. Approximately two-thirds of the former recipients surveyed are currently working (65% of Population I, 64% of Population II, and 69% of Population III) (Exhibit 1).

**Exhibit 1**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Are You Currently Working?**

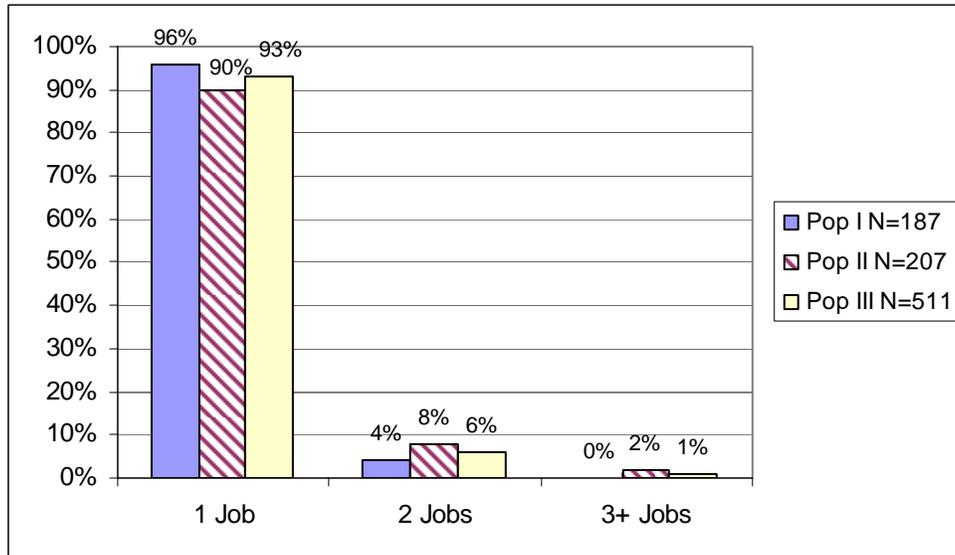


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job (Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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



Those who were not currently working reported the last time they held paying jobs. Overall, three-fourths of the respondents reported having worked in the past year (Table 2).

**Table 2**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|                                 | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u> | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Job Ended in the Past 12 months | 63                  | 70                   | 88                    |
| Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago      | 21                  | 15                   | 7                     |
| Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago      | 4                   | 3                    | 1                     |
| Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago | 8                   | 4                    | 2                     |
| <i>Number responding</i>        | <i>102</i>          | <i>116</i>           | <i>229</i>            |

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

**Table 3**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

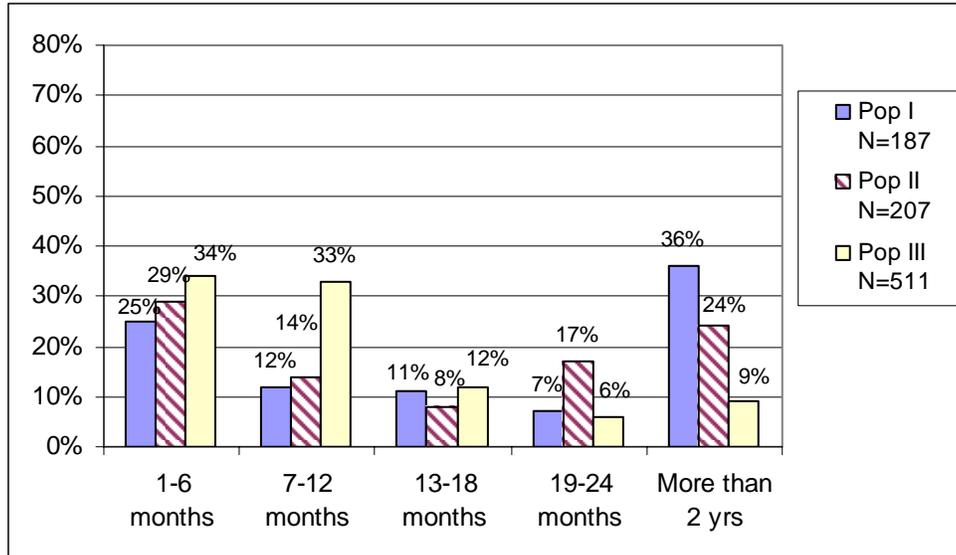
|   | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Reasons for not working</u>                              | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| I cannot find work  | 38                  | 30                   | 33                    |
| I was sick or injured                                       | 26                  | 21                   | 18                    |
| I was laid off  | 20                  | 19                   | 21                    |
| I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work | 13                  | 15                   | 11                    |
| I was fired   | 11                  | 19                   | 14                    |
| I had problems with child care                              | 11                  | 9                    | 8                     |
| I had an illness in the family                              | 11                  | 7                    | 7                     |
| Hourly wage too low   | 10                  | 19                   | 8                     |
| I had a new baby  | 10                  | 16                   | 11                    |
| My job was seasonal   | 10                  | 8                    | 9                     |
| I am going to school  | 6                   | 10                   | 7                     |
| I moved away from the area                                  | -                   | 3                    | 4                     |
| <i>Number responding</i>                                    | <i>102</i>          | <i>116</i>           | <i>229</i>            |

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 37% of Population I respondents, 43% of Population II respondents, and 67% of Population III respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, over half (54%) of Population I respondents, 55% of Population II respondents, and 76% of Population III respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

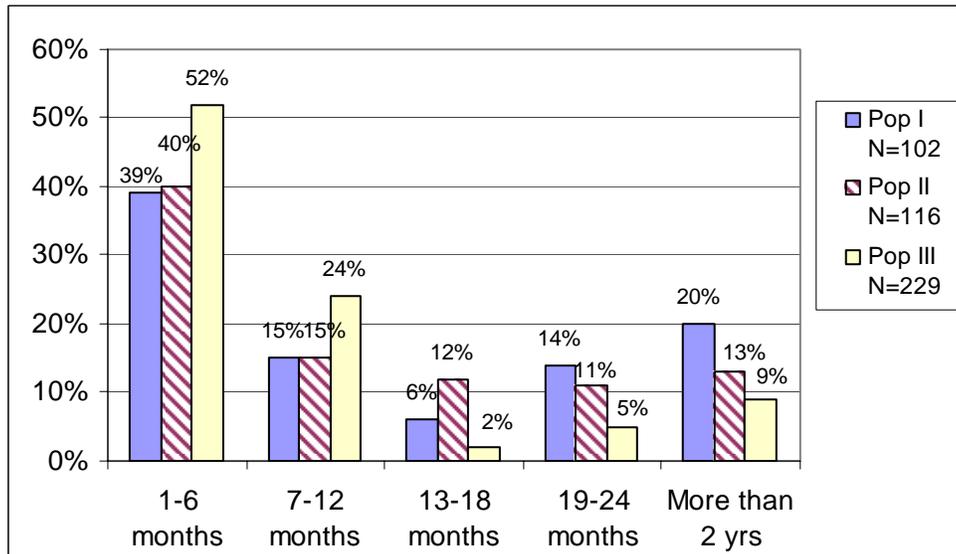
### Exhibit 3

#### Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004

#### 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 33 to 35 hours per week. Those who were unemployed reported working an average of 33 to 36 hours per week in their last jobs (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth**  
**Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**  
**Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked**

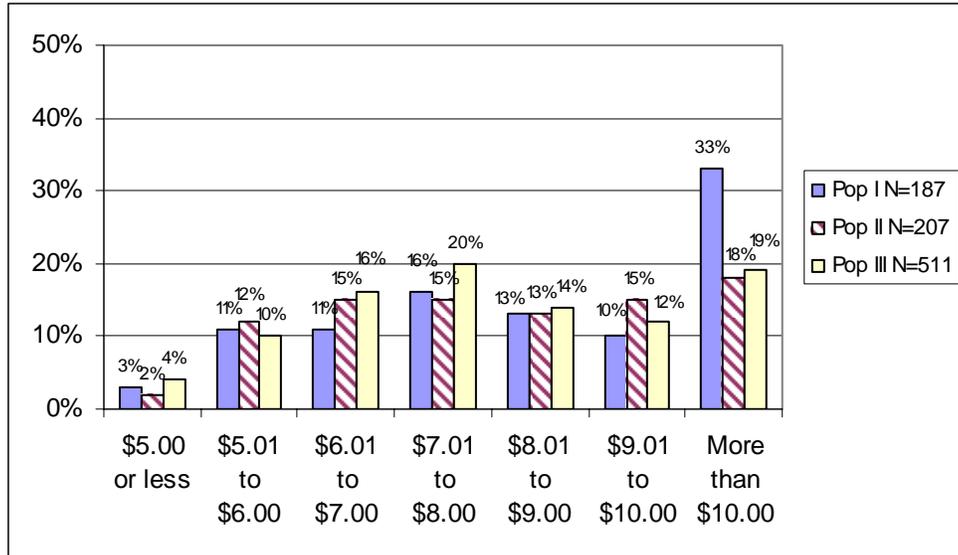
|                          | <u>Population I</u>                                 |                    | <u>Population II</u>     |                    | <u>Population III</u>    |                    |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                          | <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          | 35.0  | 33.2               | 33.1                     | 34.5               | 34.5                     | 35.7               |
| <i>Number responding</i> | <i>187</i>  | <i>102</i>         | <i>207</i>               | <i>116</i>         | <i>511</i>               | <i>229</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. Over one-fourth of Population I respondents, 17% of Population II respondents, and 17% of Population III respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants was between \$8.00 to \$9.00 per hour (Exhibit 4).

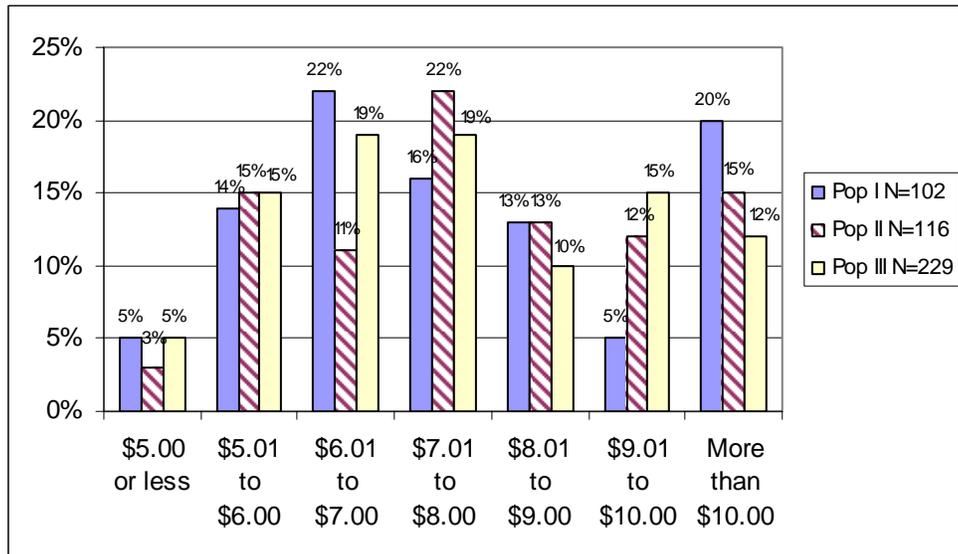
### Exhibit 4

#### Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004

##### 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. Occupations in the customer service, health care, and food service industries were mentioned most often (Table 5).

**Table 5**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Current/Most Recent Job Held**

|   | <u>Population<br/>I</u> | <u>Population<br/>II</u> | <u>Population<br/>III</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
|   | (%)                     | (%)                      | (%)                       |
| Cashier/customer service/retail/sales                 | 15                      | 17                       | 18                        |
| Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care | 15                      | 16                       | 14                        |
| Restaurant/food services                              | 10                      | 8                        | 10                        |
| Administrative/support services/clerk                 | 9                       | 7                        | 7                         |
| Supervisor/manager/crew leader                        | 9                       | 6                        | 5                         |
| Industrial worker                                     | 6                       | 5                        | 3                         |
| Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial             | 5                       | 9                        | 7                         |
| Driver/transportation/courier                         | 4                       | 5                        | 4                         |
| Construction/general labor                            | 4                       | 4                        | 7                         |
| Automotive repair/automotive care                     | 3                       | 1                        | 3                         |
| Skilled trade   | 2                       | 1                        | 3                         |
| Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging                | 2                       | 3                        | 2                         |
| Security guard/prison guard/corrections               | 2                       | 1                        | 1                         |
| Homemaker   | 2                       | 2                        | *                         |
| Education/teacher/training                            | 2                       | 2                        | 3                         |
| Child care  | 2                       | 5                        | 4                         |
| Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance     | 2                       | 2                        | 2                         |
| Technical   | 1                       | 1                        | 1                         |
| Maintenance   | 1                       | 1                        | 1                         |
| Stock/inventory                                       | 1                       | 1                        | 1                         |
| Grounds work/agriculture/ranger                       | *                       | 1                        | 1                         |
| Advertising/marketing/public relations                | *                       | *                        | 1                         |
| Social work   | 1                       | *                        | *                         |
| Temporary services                                    | -                       | -                        | *                         |
| Pet groomer/animal care                               | -                       | *                        | *                         |
| Cosmetology   | -                       | -                        | *                         |
| <i>Number responding</i>                              | 289                     | 323                      | 740                       |

\* *Less than one-half of one percent*

Over three out of ten respondents reported working for other employers during the past year. Among those currently working, approximately three out of ten indicated they had worked for other employers during the year (Table 6).

**Table 6**  
**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth**  
**Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**  
**Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year**

|                          | <u>Population I</u>      |                    | <u>Population II</u>     |                    | <u>Population III</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                      | 30                       | 25                 | 38                       | 34                 | 45                       | 37                 |
| No                       | 61                       | 74                 | 55                       | 65                 | 48                       | 59                 |
| <i>Number responding</i> | <i>187</i>               | <i>102</i>         | <i>207</i>               | <i>116</i>         | <i>511</i>               | <i>229</i>         |

Respondents who indicated having worked for other employers during the past year, described their jobs. Similar to respondents' current jobs, health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often (Table 7).

**Table 7**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|   | <u>Population<br/>I</u> | <u>Population<br/>II</u> | <u>Population<br/>III</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
|   | (%)                     | (%)                      | (%)                       |
| Cashier/customer service/retail/sales                 | 19                      | 15                       | 21                        |
| Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care | 12                      | 14                       | 11                        |
| Restaurant/food services                              | 11                      | 20                       | 18                        |
| Administrative/support services/clerk                 | 10                      | 3                        | 7                         |
| Industrial worker                                     | 9                       | 6                        | 3                         |
| Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial             | 7                       | 10                       | 7                         |
| Construction/general labor                            | 5                       | 3                        | 5                         |
| Skilled trade   | 5                       | 1                        | 2                         |
| Supervisor/manager/crew leader                        | 4                       | 2                        | 4                         |
| Driver/transportation/courier                         | 3                       | 4                        | 5                         |
| Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance     | 3                       | 2                        | 1                         |
| Automotive repair/automotive care                     | 1                       | 3                        | 2                         |
| Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging                | 1                       | 3                        | 4                         |
| Homemaker   | 1                       | -                        | *                         |
| Education/teacher/training                            | 1                       | 2                        | 3                         |
| Child care  | 1                       | -                        | 2                         |
| Grounds work/agriculture/ranger                       | 1                       | 2                        | *                         |
| Security guard/prison guard/corrections               | -                       | -                        | 1                         |
| Technical   | -                       | 3                        | *                         |
| Maintenance   | -                       | 1                        | 2                         |
| Stock/inventory                                       | -                       | 2                        | 2                         |
| Advertising/marketing/public relations                | -                       | -                        | 1                         |
| Temporary services                                    | -                       | -                        | 1                         |
| <i>Number responding</i>                              | <i>81</i>               | <i>118</i>               | <i>313</i>                |

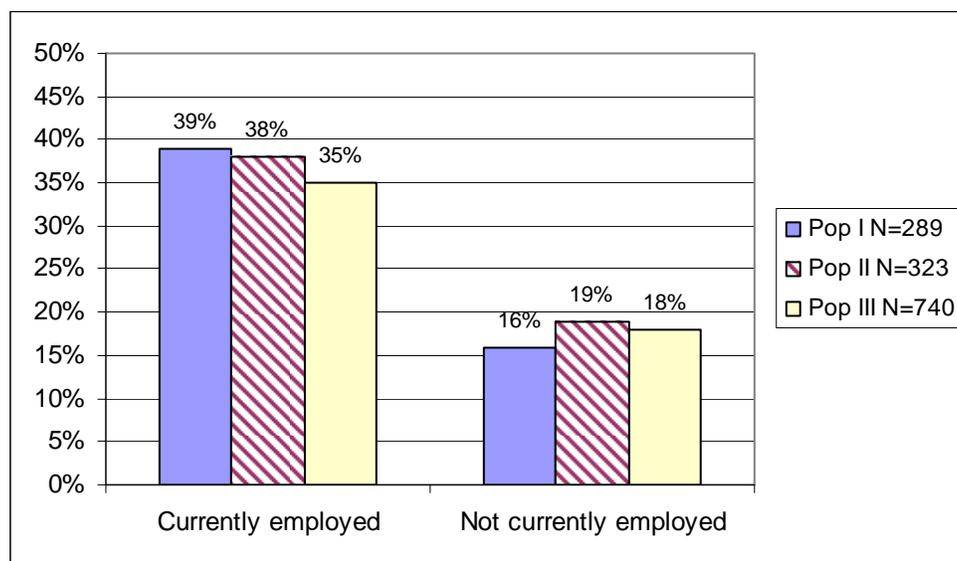
## Job and Skills Training

Respondents were asked if their current or most recent employer provided training programs to update their skills. Approximately four out of ten currently employed participants indicated their employers offered training programs (Exhibit 5).

### Exhibit 5

#### Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004

#### Employer Provides Training Programs



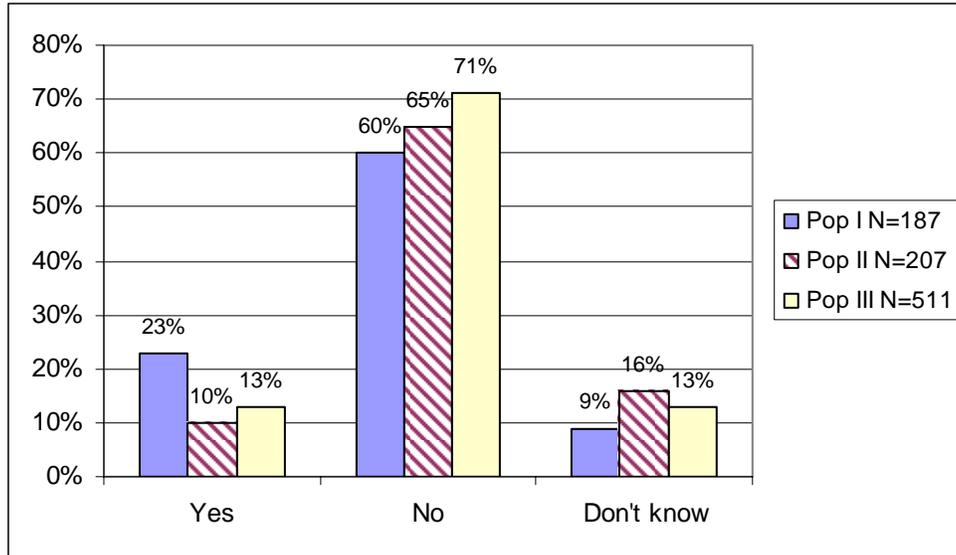
Among those currently employed and indicating their employer offered training, 36% of Population I participants, 32% of Population II participants, and 27% of Population III participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer.

Currently employed respondents answered questions on tuition reimbursement. Nearly one-fourth (23%) of Population I recipients, 11% of Population II recipients, and 13% of Population III recipients who are currently employed indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills (Exhibit 6).

### Exhibit 6

#### Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004

##### Employer Provides Tuition Reimbursement (among those currently employed)



Among those who indicated their employer offered tuition reimbursement, 2% of Population I participants, 18% of Population II participants, and 6% of Population III participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses.

All respondents were asked about the types of training programs they have participated in since leaving the Work First Program. More than half indicated they had not participated in any training since leaving the program. On-the-job training was reported by approximately one-third of respondents (Table 8).

**Table 8**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First**

|                           | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                           | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| On-the job training       | 37                  | 33                   | 36                    |
| Off-site training         | 10                  | 12                   | 9                     |
| Computer training         | 9                   | 9                    | 7                     |
| Help with reading or math | 2                   | 2                    | 2                     |
| Tuition reimbursement     | 2                   | 1                    | 1                     |
| None                      | 54                  | 55                   | 55                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>  | 289                 | 323                  | 740                   |

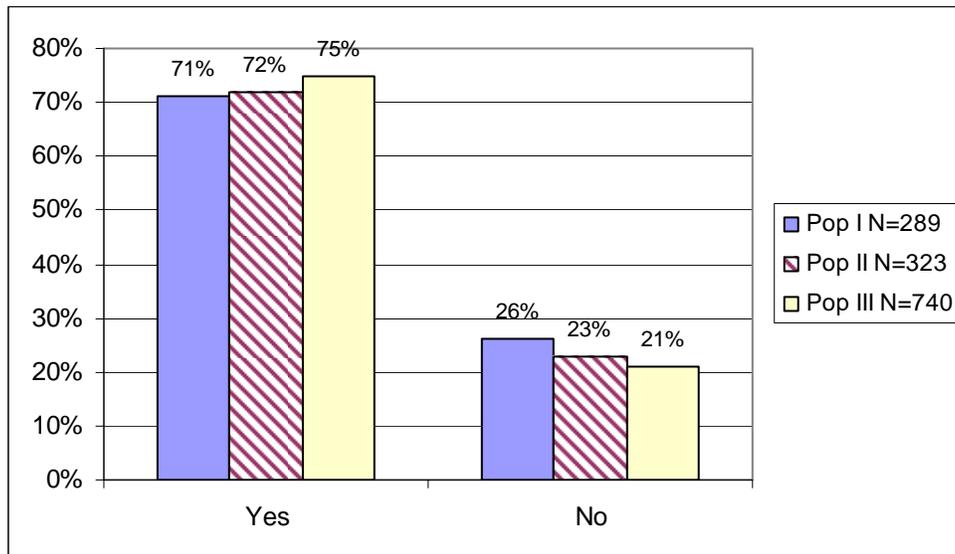
**Health Care Coverage**

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Three-fourths of the respondents have health insurance coverage through some source. (Exhibit 7)

**Exhibit 7**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?**



Health care coverage was provided through several sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. Four out of ten or more indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program. One-fourth of Population I respondents and 13% each of Population II and III respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. About one-fourth did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

**Table 9**  
**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth**  
**Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**  
**Source of Health Care Coverage**

|   | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|   | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Have health insurance through another state or county program | 42                  | 55                   | 59                    |
| Have health insurance through my employer                     | 24                  | 13                   | 13                    |
| Have health insurance through my spouses' employer            | 5                   | 4                    | 3                     |
| Have no health insurance at all                               | 26                  | 23                   | 21                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                                      | 289                 | 323                  | 740                   |

Among those currently working, 58% of Population I, 44% of Population II, and 46% of Population III respondents reported their current employer offers health insurance. Nearly four out of ten reported their employer pays for part of the monthly cost, while about one-fourth indicated their employer did not cover any of the monthly cost. Only one out of ten indicated their employer covered all the health insurance cost. Interestingly, one-fifth of the respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs (Table 10).

**Table 10**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Employer Offers Health Insurance**

|  | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Current Employer Offers Health Insurance | 58                  | 44                   | 46                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                 | <i>187</i>          | <i>207</i>           | <i>511</i>            |
| <u>Employer Pays For:</u>                |                     |                      |                       |
| All of the monthly cost                  | 13                  | 11                   | 9                     |
| Part of the monthly cost                 | 45                  | 37                   | 37                    |
| None of the monthly cost                 | 20                  | 26                   | 29                    |
| Don't know                               | 19                  | 24                   | 25                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                 | <i>108</i>          | <i>91</i>            | <i>234</i>            |

Nearly all of the respondents, 95% of Population I respondents, 87% of Population II respondents, and 96% of Population II respondents, have children living at home. Approximately half indicated they had children who attended elementary school (Table 11).

**Table 11**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

**Children Living At Home (among those with children)**

|  | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Children Living At Home                            | 95                  | 87                   | 96                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                           | <i>289</i>          | <i>323</i>           | <i>740</i>            |
| <u>Children Attend (among those with children)</u> |                     |                      |                       |
| Childcare  | 22                  | 29                   | 28                    |
| Pre-school   | 10                  | 7                    | 8                     |
| Head Start   | 10                  | 11                   | 11                    |
| Elementary school                                  | 53                  | 54                   | 45                    |
| Middle school                                      | 30                  | 29                   | 21                    |
| High school  | 28                  | 23                   | 24                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                           | <i>274</i>          | <i>284</i>           | <i>711</i>            |

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Most (seven out of ten) reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid (Table 12).

**Table 12**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|                                 | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                 | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Healthy Kids/Medicaid           | 70                  | 76                   | 74                    |
| MIChild                         | 16                  | 16                   | 14                    |
| Through my/my spouse’s employer | 15                  | 13                   | 10                    |
| No health insurance             | 4                   | 3                    | 5                     |
| <i>Number responding</i>        | <i>274</i>          | <i>284</i>           | <i>711</i>            |

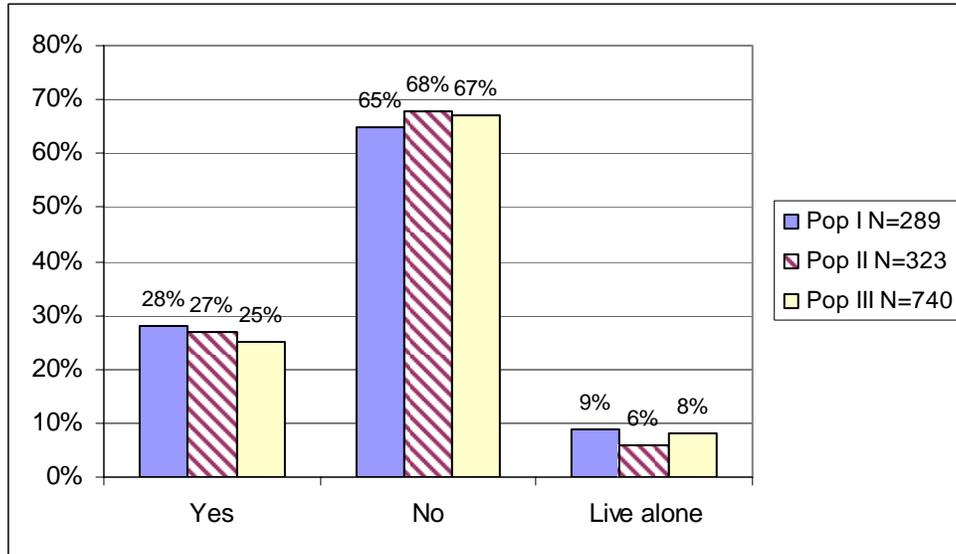
**Other Assistance**

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, one-fourth reported “yes”. Specifically, 28% Population I, 27% Population II, and 25% Population III indicated this (Exhibit 8).

### Exhibit 8

#### Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004

#### Does Anyone Else In Your Household Have a Paying Job?



Approximately two-thirds 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 (64% of Population I, 70% of Population II, and 68% of Population III). On average, respondents reported receiving over \$300 in welfare payments, over \$200 in food stamps, and over \$500 in SSI payments in the last month (Table 13).

**Table 13**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|                              | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                              | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| <u>Welfare Payments</u>      |                     |                      |                       |
| \$1 to \$200                 | 3                   | 7                    | 7                     |
| \$201 to \$300               | 4                   | 3                    | 1                     |
| \$301 to \$400               | 2                   | 4                    | 4                     |
| \$401 to \$500               | 7                   | 3                    | 4                     |
| Over \$500                   | 4                   | 4                    | 3                     |
| No answer/do not receive     | 82                  | 79                   | 77                    |
| Average welfare payment \$\$ | \$383.20            | \$330.50             | \$341.20              |
| <u>Food Stamps</u>           |                     |                      |                       |
| \$1 to \$100                 | 10                  | 8                    | 14                    |
| \$101 to \$200               | 17                  | 21                   | 23                    |
| \$201 to \$300               | 26                  | 22                   | 28                    |
| \$301 to \$400               | 22                  | 17                   | 15                    |
| \$401 to \$500               | 8                   | 11                   | 8                     |
| Over \$500                   | 4                   | 6                    | 2                     |
| No answer/do not receive     | 13                  | 14                   | 8                     |
| Average food stamp \$\$      | \$276.80            | \$282.90             | \$243.00              |
| <u>SSI Payments</u>          |                     |                      |                       |
| \$1 to \$200                 | 1                   | 1                    | 2                     |
| \$201 to \$300               | 1                   | 3                    | 2                     |
| \$201 to \$400               | 1                   | 1                    | -                     |
| \$401 to \$500               | 2                   | 2                    | *                     |
| \$501 to \$600               | 8                   | 7                    | 6                     |
| Over \$600                   | 4                   | 1                    | 1                     |
| No answer/do not receive     | 84                  | 85                   | 85                    |
| Average SSI payment \$\$     | \$616.00            | \$507.60             | \$500.20              |
| <i>Number responding</i>     | <i>184</i>          | <i>225</i>           | <i>504</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. Nearly seven out of ten (67% of Population I respondents, 71% of Population II respondents, and 68% of Population III respondents) reported there had been a time during the past year in which they were unable to pay these bills. Among those who indicated they had difficulty paying their mortgage, rent, or utility bills, respondents from all three

populations reported not being able to pay an average of four mortgage, rent, or utility payments during the year (Table 14).

**Table 14**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|  | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months                     | 68                  | 71                   | 68                    |
| <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            | 4.0 times             |
| <i>Number responding</i>   | <i>289</i>          | <i>323</i>           | <i>740</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 half indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. Four out of ten felt they were better off in terms of their housing conditions and food and nutrition. A little over one-third indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of health care for their children and their access to health insurance (Table 15).

**Table 15**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|  | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| <u>Household Income</u>                    |                     |                      |                       |
| A lot/a little better off                  | 50                  | 49                   | 50                    |
| The same                                   | 25                  | 26                   | 25                    |
| A lot/a little worse off                   | 23                  | 24                   | 23                    |
| <u>Housing Condition</u>                   |                     |                      |                       |
| A lot/a little better off                  | 39                  | 35                   | 40                    |
| The same                                   | 40                  | 51                   | 45                    |
| A lot/a little worse off                   | 18                  | 14                   | 13                    |
| <u>Food and Nutrition</u>                  |                     |                      |                       |
| A lot/a little better off                  | 42                  | 38                   | 39                    |
| The same                                   | 38                  | 40                   | 42                    |
| A lot/a little worse off                   | 17                  | 21                   | 17                    |
| <u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>          |                     |                      |                       |
| A lot/a little better off                  | 41                  | 38                   | 35                    |
| The same                                   | 45                  | 49                   | 54                    |
| A lot/a little worse off                   | 11                  | 9                    | 9                     |
| <u>Access to health insurance coverage</u> |                     |                      |                       |
| A lot/a little better off                  | 33                  | 36                   | 34                    |
| The same                                   | 39                  | 39                   | 46                    |
| A lot/a little worse off                   | 26                  | 24                   | 17                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>                   | 289                 | 323                  | 740                   |

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, 38% of Population I respondents, 38% of Population II respondents, and 44% of Population III respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. Three out of ten Population I individuals, 23% of Population II individuals, and 31% of Population III individuals indicated the program helped improve their job skills (Table 16).

**Table 16**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|                             | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Finding a job               | 38                  | 38                   | 44                    |
| Improving job skills        | 30                  | 23                   | 31                    |
| Keeping a job               | 16                  | 20                   | 18                    |
| Getting a higher paying job | 11                  | 12                   | 13                    |
| None                        | 13                  | 12                   | 19                    |
| No answer                   | 24                  | 26                   | 18                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>    | 289                 | 323                  | 740                   |

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

**Table 17**

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth  
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2004**

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

|                                | <u>Population I</u> | <u>Population II</u> | <u>Population III</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                | (%)                 | (%)                  | (%)                   |
| Money management and budgeting | 24                  | 19                   | 24                    |
| Paying your bills on time      | 19                  | 15                   | 18                    |
| Getting health insurance       | 16                  | 14                   | 16                    |
| Getting better housing         | 9                   | 5                    | 8                     |
| Getting better health care     | 9                   | 6                    | 9                     |
| Getting better dental care     | 7                   | 5                    | 6                     |
| None                           | 11                  | 13                   | 23                    |
| No answer                      | 43                  | 46                   | 35                    |
| <i>Number responding</i>       | 289                 | 323                  | 740                   |

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. They commented 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 was not very supportive. Others commented on the great amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved in participating in the program. Following is a sample of some of the respondents' comments:

### *Positive Comments*

- The staff and instructors were very personable and helpful to the best of their abilities.
- Work First is a great program, it makes you want to stay off the welfare system and be self sufficient.
- I moved to Michigan with nothing. Work First helped me get daycare and although I got a job the first week, they didn't abandon me. I got help until I got completely on my feet.
- I would like to thank Work First for getting me started with a car and clothing to start my job.
- Without Work First I would not have anything. Thank you Work First for the chance to improve my household with an income.
- I would like for Work First to help me to get health insurance and dental insurance for me and my kids.
- I needed new job skills. I was a licensed nail tech and got carpal tunnel syndrome with neck pain. I used Work First to learn computer and office skills. It helped a lot.
- I just thank God that they were there when I needed them most, even though I was there for a short time.
- Great Program!
- When I was laid off I felt abandoned and I didn't know where to turn. The people at Work First made me very comfortable and really seemed to care about the well being of me and my family. I was inspired and very thankful.
- It is a wonderful program.
- Excellent program. I feel it gives people more of an incentive to seek employment instead of living on public assistance.

- It was a little embarrassing asking for help, but they were genuinely caring and helping people with the Work First program.
- Work First is a great service to help open your eyes, give you hope, and kick you in the butt to get you started on your way to success.
- Work First is a good program. It makes you feel like you are helping yourself provide a better life.
- I would like to say the Work First is the best thing they came up with because it helps people find better jobs and helps with management and budgeting money.
- They helped me with better interview skills and resume skills.
- Work First can really benefit those who allow them to. I'm glad it is around and I am really thankful for the help they gave for me to get employed.
- I think the program is excellent. It kept me motivated to want more for my family.
- I feel the program is extremely helpful in helping people become self-sufficient.
- Helping me when I was in need.
- They helped me get clothes for work/interviews and they also helped me fix my car so I could get to work.
- They paid for me to go to school, earn a certificate in nursing, and helped me get a job to start my career.
- I would like to thank the Work First program for working with me closely.
- They are a great team of people who are very helpful willing and knowledgeable not to mention friendly and personable.
- Work First helped me get certified in my field (CAN) and I was really grateful for that.
- They do a good job helping people out in many different ways.
- Work First is an excellent program and the only reason I have the job I have now. More people should utilize this program.
- A lot of people think Work First isn't worth their time. But as for me they help out a lot. I probably wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for Work First.
- I improved my computer skills using Work First. The information given to me was beneficial.

### *Negative Comments*

- Not much help at all. Anything I have done for me and my family I did on my own.
- I didn't find my job through Work First. I went out on my own while in Work First.
- The Work First program didn't do anything to help me and my family.
- I feel they should make sure they have trained instructors.
- It did nothing for me. I couldn't even find a job last time I was in the program. I found my own job without their help.
- I was in the program twice and my husband was in it twice also. When it came time to help us with getting transportation there was a lot of "red tape" and we didn't get any help.
- Some of the employees at Work First are very rude. They made me feel as if I wasn't important enough to get help with looking for a job.
- I don't believe the program truly helps anyone that has been displaced or down sized. If you have any real job skill; a better program should be set up. Real training should be done.
- Some of the Work First people in my area were rude, especially my instructor, she was rather rude to me many times.
- They did not help me or my family with getting a job. I could have done better without their help. They don't know how it feels to be jobless.
- They need to help you look for jobs more instead of sitting in a classroom.
- They really didn't help me in any way. I never was able to receive cash assistance.
- Work First was depressing and stressful – over crowded, demeaning, unrealistic demands, no access to computers, useless 1-hour "seminars" – non-productive and unhelpful.
- Work First needs to help people find and get jobs but they don't.
- I think that they need to employ better-trained caseworkers.
- They need to work and communicate better with FIA office.
- I feel there is a lack of organization in the Work First program. Setting someone up at a computer doesn't get them a job.
- The workers there did not care about your situation. They did not listen to you at all.
- It did not help me. A waste of my time.

Questionnaire