

**Former Work First Participant Survey
Winter 2005**

Report of Findings

Submitted to:

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth

Submitted by:

**Moore & Associates, Inc.
21701 West Eleven Mile Road, Suite 9
Southfield, Michigan 48076
(248) 353-1717
Fax: (248) 353-3927
E-mail: moore@jpmoore.net
Website: www.jpmoore.net**

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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 II:* Consisting of approximately 13,620 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003.
- Population III:* Consisting of approximately 15,460 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004.
- Population IV:* Consisting of approximately 16,400 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005.

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

This is a report of the findings from this administration of the survey. Comparisons to last year for Populations II and III are made where relevant. Comprehensive data tables for each population which include frequency of responses are included under separate cover.

A total of 13,647 surveys were sent on November 7, 2005, with 4,087 sent to Population II, 4,638 to Population III, and 4,922 to Population IV. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 3,478 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 1,216 surveys were completed, 276 from Population II, 371 from Population III, and 569 from Population IV.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005
Response Rates

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	----- # of surveys -----		
Total population	13,620	15,460	16,400
Surveys sent	4,087	4,638	4,922
Total responses	276	371	569
Undeliverable surveys	1,407	1,324	747
Delivered surveys	2,680	3,314	4,448
Response rate (deliverable)	10.3%	11.2%	12.8%
Response rate (total)	6.7%	8.0%	11.6%

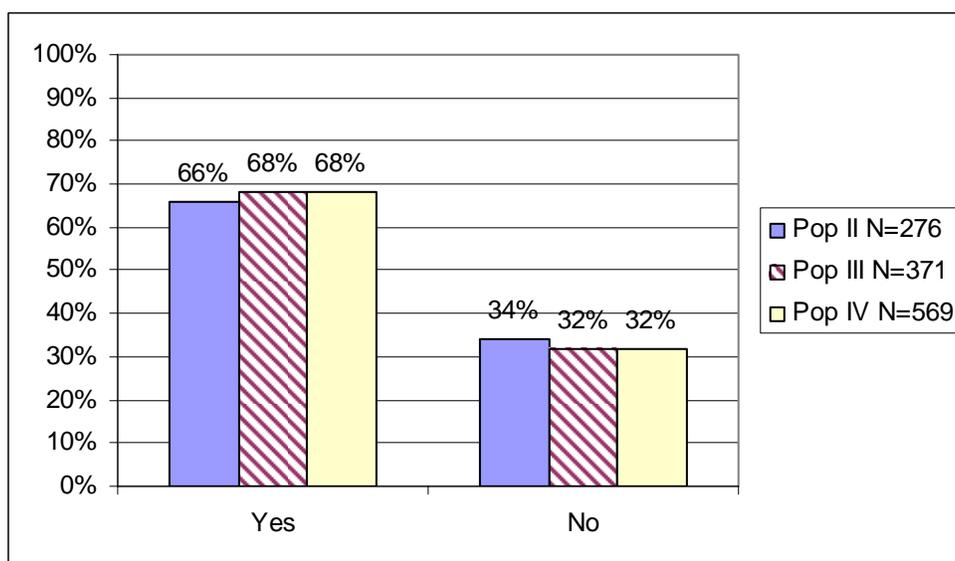
The questionnaire from the previous year was used. The questionnaire is included in Appendix I of this report.

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 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 (66% of Population II, 68% of Population III, and 68% of Population IV). Compared to last year, the proportions of Population II and III respondents currently working are similar (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005
Are You Currently Working?

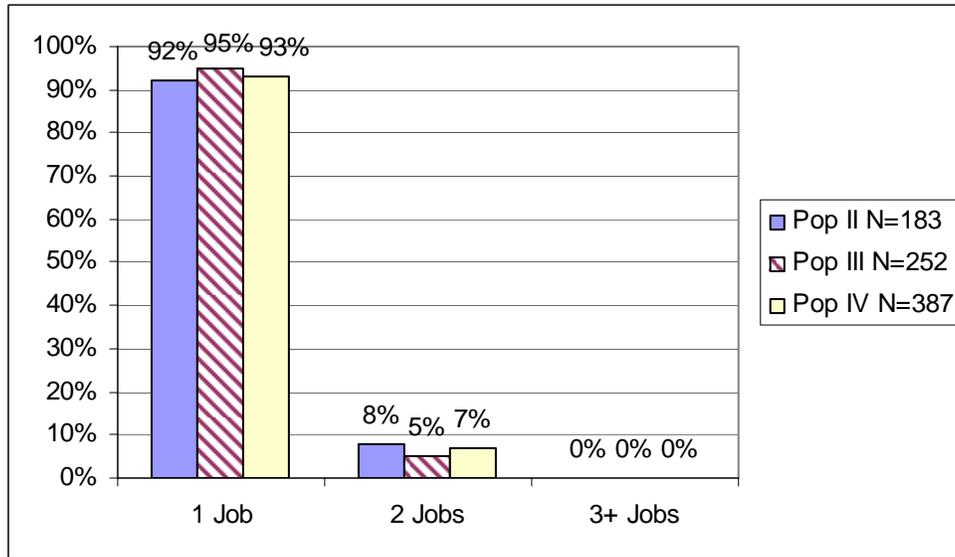


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. No one reported working three or more jobs (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

**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 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	72	86	73
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	10	6	17
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	12	1	2
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	6	6	4
<i>Number responding</i>	93	181	119

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 sick or injured, being laid off from work, having problems with child care, or being fired from the job (Table 3).

Table 3

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

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

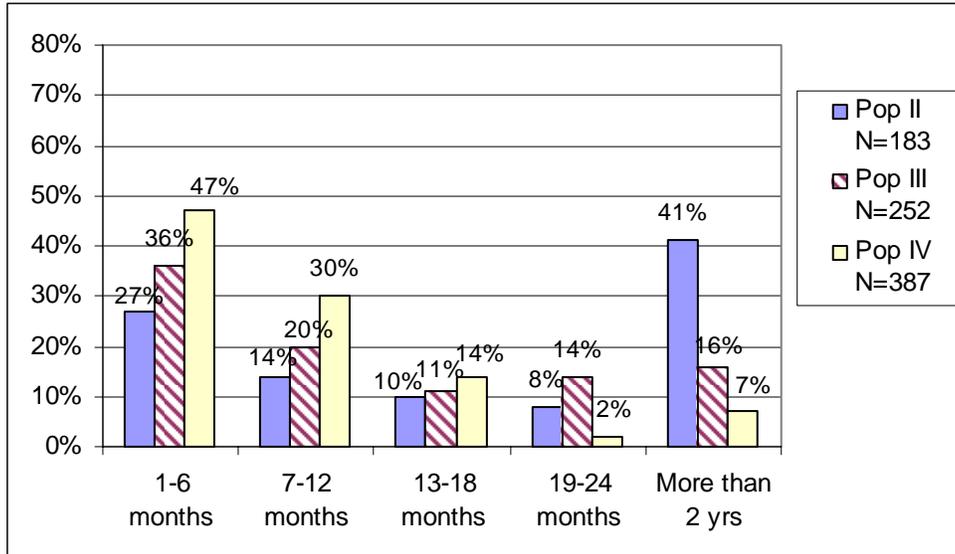
	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	37	31	33
I was sick or injured	22	18	21
I was laid off	19	13	22
I had problems with child care	15	11	6
I was fired	12	18	15
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	11	12	8
I am going to school	11	16	8
My job was seasonal	11	8	9
I had an illness in the family	5	4	3
Hourly wage too low	5	18	7
I had a new baby	4	13	11
I moved away from the area	1	3	3
No transportation/no phone	-	-	1
None of the above/other	-	1	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>119</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 41% of Population II respondents, 56% of Population III respondents, and 77% of Population IV respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, over two-thirds (68%) of Population II respondents, 67% of Population III respondents, and 79% of Population IV respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

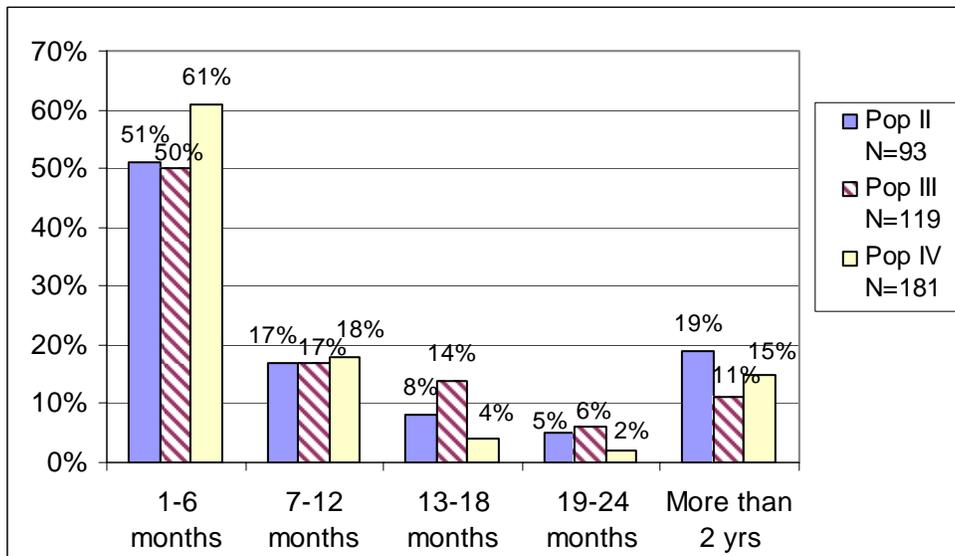
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005

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 34 to 35 hours per week. Those who were unemployed reported working an average of 35 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 2005
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

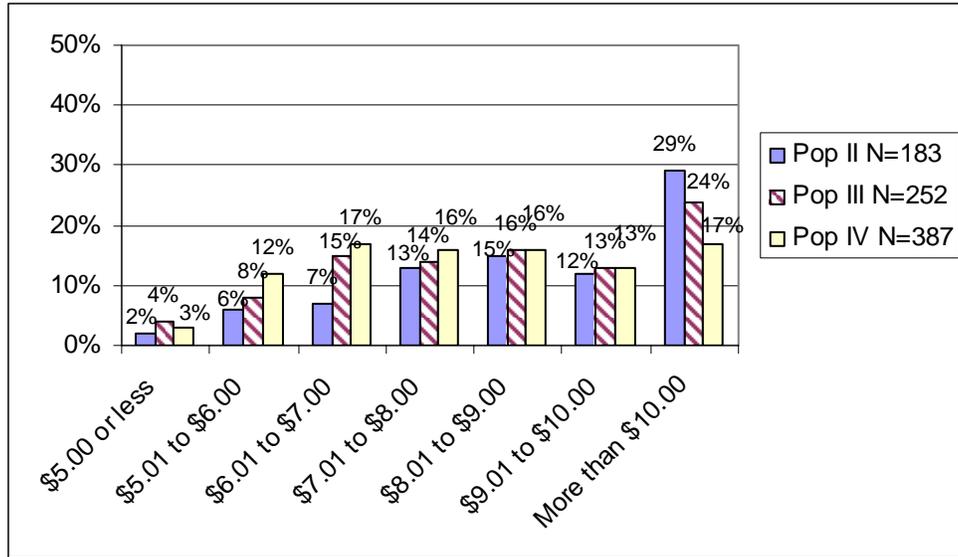
	<u>Population II</u>		<u>Population III</u>		<u>Population IV</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	35.0	36.5	34.4	34.7	33.7	35.5
<i>Number responding</i>	183	93	252	119	387	181

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. Nearly three out of ten (29%) Population II respondents, 24% of Population III respondents, and 17% of Population IV respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$8.50 to \$9.50 per hour. This is slightly higher than averages reported last year (Exhibit 4).

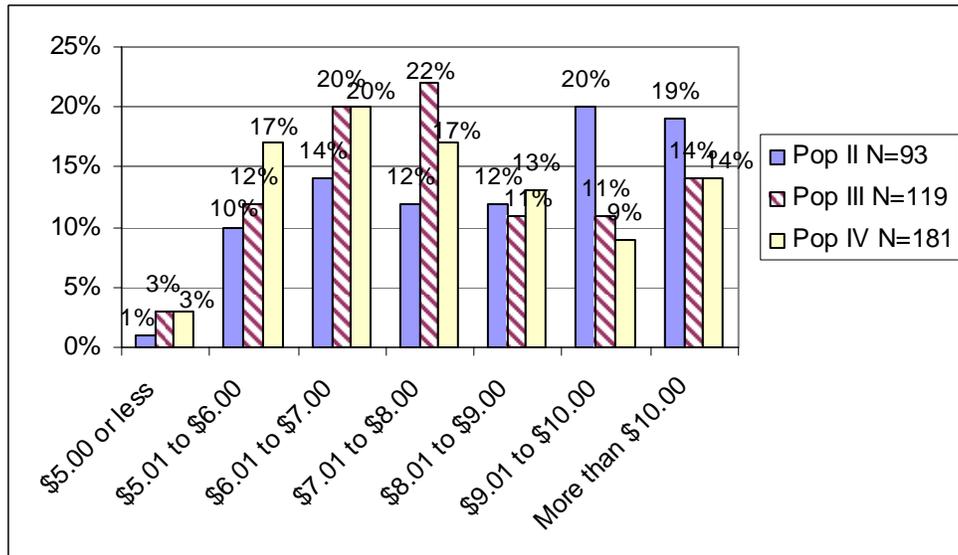
Exhibit 4

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

**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 last year, 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 2005**

Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	17	18	21
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	17	14	14
Restaurant/food services	7	9	10
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	7	3	5
Administrative/support services/clerk	7	9	7
Industrial worker	6	7	6
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	5	5	4
Construction/general labor	5	4	4
Automotive repair/automotive care	5	1	3
Education/teacher/training	4	2	2
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	4	1	3
Driver/transportation/courier	3	5	3
Child care	3	4	3
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	3	4	3
Technical	1	2	1
Advertising/marketing/public relations	1	*	1
Stock/inventory	1	2	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	1	1	1
Cosmetology	1	*	*
Maintenance	1	1	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	*	*	1
Pet groomer/animal care	*	-	-
Social work	-	-	1
Temporary services	-	-	-
Homemaker	-	-	-
Skilled trade	-	4	3
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>569</i>

* *Less than one-half of one percent*

Approximately one-third of respondents reported working for other employers during the past year. Among those currently working, upwards of three out of ten for Populations II (33%) and III (35%) and nearly one-half (48%) for Population IV 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 2005
Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year

	<u>Population II</u>		<u>Population III</u>		<u>Population IV</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	33	27	35	23	48	36
No	65	70	60	77	48	62
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>252</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>387</i>	<i>181</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 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	22	17	10
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	19	24	25
Restaurant/food services	10	10	10
Administrative/support services/clerk	8	4	7
Driver/transportation/courier	8	5	2
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	6	3	10
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	5	6	2
Industrial worker	5	6	10
Education/teacher/training	5	3	2
Construction/general labor	3	3	5
Child care	2	2	2
Skilled trade	1	3	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	1	1	2
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	1	1	1
Technical	1	2	
Stock/inventory	1	3	1
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	-	5	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	-	2	2
Homemaker	-	-	
Automotive repair/automotive care	-	-	3
Maintenance	-	-	
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	2	1
Temporary services	-	-	
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	*
<i>Number responding</i>	86	114	249

* *Less than one-half of one percent*

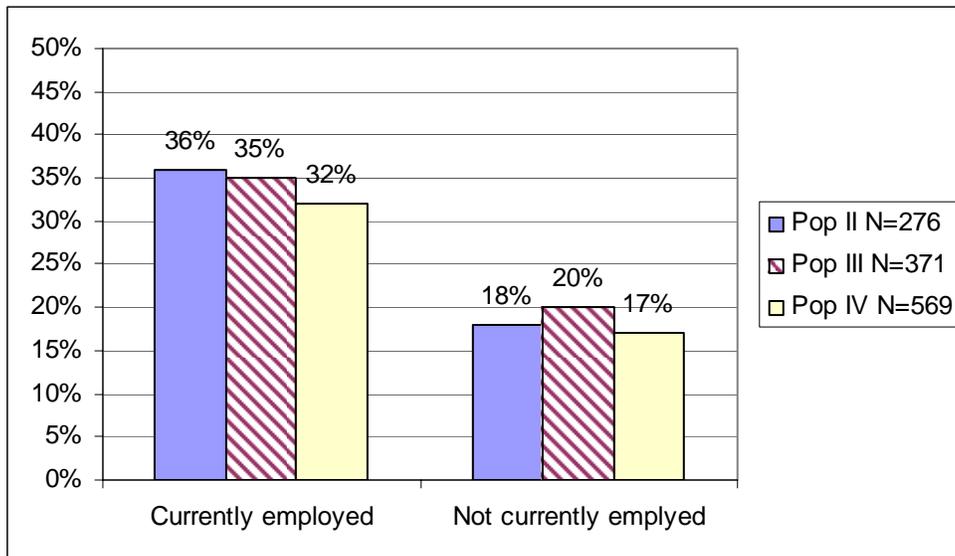
Job and Skills Training

Respondents were asked if their current or most recent employer provided training programs to update their skills. Approximately three out of ten currently employed participants indicated their employers offered training programs. This is a slight decrease from the previous study in which four out of ten currently employed respondents indicated training was offered. (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005

Employer Provides Training Programs



Among those currently employed and indicating their employer offered training, 22% of Population II participants, 33% of Population III participants, and 31% of Population IV participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer.

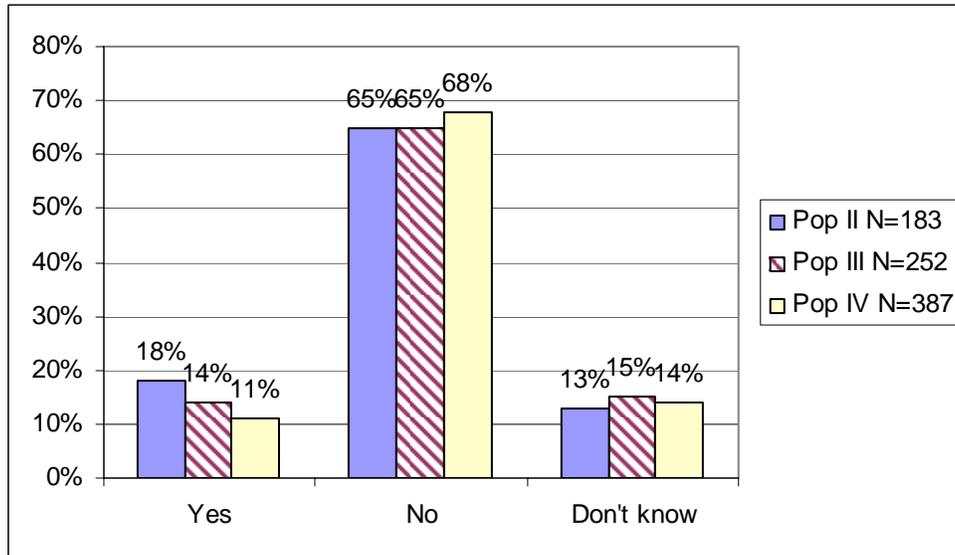
Currently employed respondents answered questions on tuition reimbursement. Almost two out of ten (18%) Population II recipients, 14% of Population III recipients, and 11% of Population IV recipients

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 2005**

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



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 3% of Population II participants, 11% of Population III participants, and 7% of Population IV 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. These results are comparable to those from last year. (Table 8).

Table 8

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	33	39	33
Off-site training	10	10	12
Computer training	8	7	6
Help with reading or math	3	2	2
Tuition reimbursement	1	1	1
None	53	52	55
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>569</i>

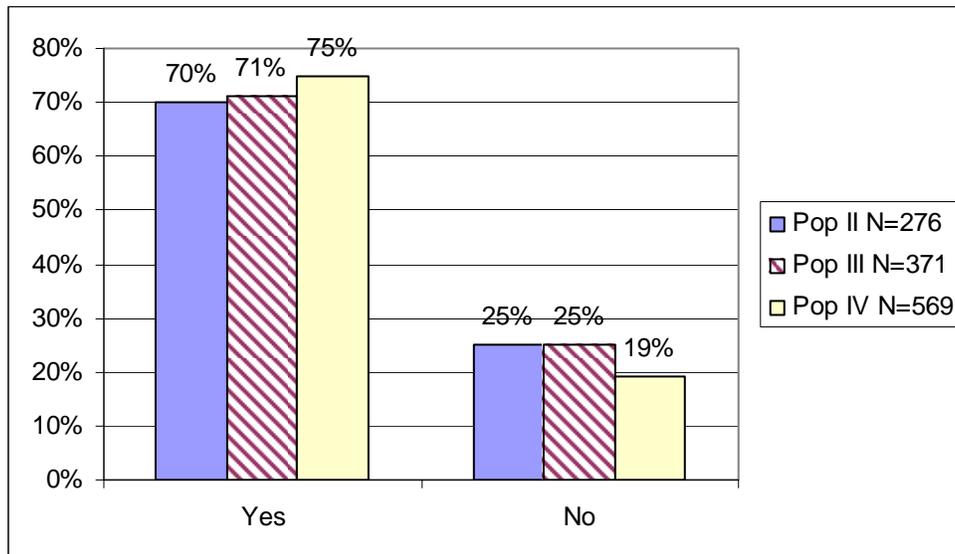
Health Care Coverage

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Similar to results from the last study, approximately 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 2005**

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. Nearly one-fourth of Population II respondents, 16% of Population III and 11% of Population IV respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. One-fourth of Population II and III and approximately two out of ten of Population IV did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005
Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	46	52	63
Have health insurance through my employer	22	16	11
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	3	4	3
Have no health insurance at all	25	24	19
<i>Number responding</i>	276	371	569

Among those currently working, 55% of Population II, 47% of Population III, and 39% of Population IV respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. More than one-third reported their employer pays for part of the monthly cost, while roughly another one-third indicated their employer did not cover any of the monthly cost. Only one out of ten indicated their employer covered all health insurance costs. Interestingly, one-fifth of the respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs. Comparing to last year, there are slightly fewer employers paying for health insurance costs. (Table 10).

Table 10

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	55	47	39
<i>Number responding</i>	183	252	387
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	10	10	9
Part of the monthly cost	34	41	35
None of the monthly cost	41	28	34
Don't know	15	20	22
<i>Number responding</i>	100	119	152

Nearly all of the respondents, 88% of Population II respondents, 93% of Population III respondents, and 92% of Population IV respondents, have children living at home. Half or more indicated they had children who attended elementary school (Table 11).

Table 11

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	88	93	92
<i>Number responding</i>	276	371	569
<u>Children Attend</u> (among those with children)			
Childcare	23	28	27
Pre-school	6	10	6
Head Start	6	10	12
Elementary school	58	50	50
Middle school	26	22	23
High school	28	24	23
<i>Number responding</i>	244	343	525

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Two-thirds or more of respondents for Population II (68%), Population III (74%), and Population IV (81%) reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid, similar to last year (Table 12).

Table 12

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	68	74	81
MiChild	13	15	15
Through my/my spouse's employer	17	11	8
No health insurance	5	5	2
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>525</i>

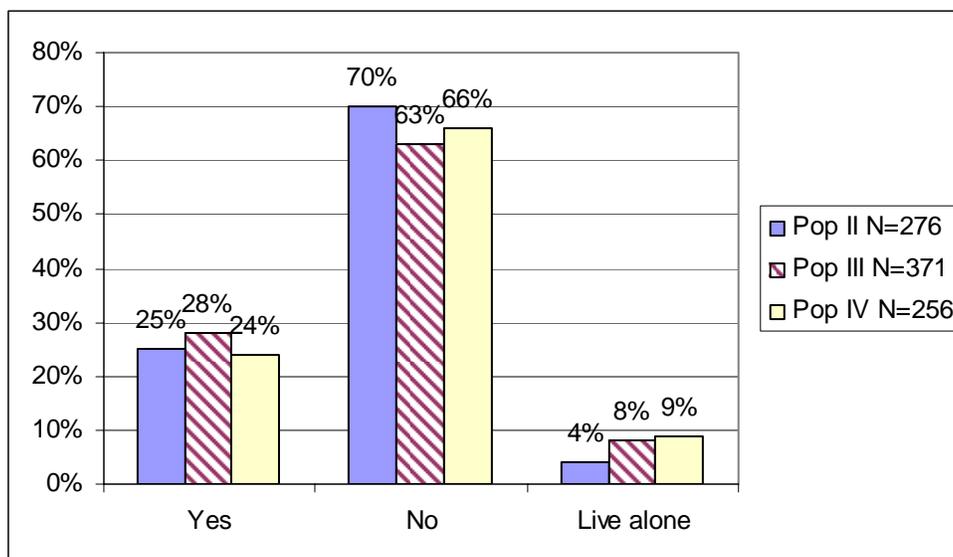
Other Assistance

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, 25% of Population II, 28% of Population III, and 24% of Population IV indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005

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 (58% of Population II, 62% of Population III, and 67% of Population IV). On average, respondents reported receiving over \$300 in welfare payments, over \$200 in food stamps, and over \$400 in SSI payments in the last month (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	2	2	6
\$201 to \$300	2	3	2
\$301 to \$400	4	2	5
\$401 to \$500	6	5	5
Over \$500	4	2	5
No answer/do not receive	82	86	79
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$420.10	\$380.00	\$379.00
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	10	11	14
\$101 to \$200	18	19	18
\$201 to \$300	24	19	26
\$301 to \$400	20	20	18
\$401 to \$500	7	11	8
Over \$500	5	4	6
No answer/do not receive	13	12	9
Average food stamp \$\$	\$275.90	\$280.20	\$267.90
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	1	2	1
\$201 to \$300	0	*	1
\$301 to \$400	2	*	1
\$401 to \$500	2	1	1
\$501 to \$600	7	6	5
Over \$600	2	1	2
No answer/do not receive	86	89	89
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$602.70	\$462.00	\$553.60
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>228</i>	<i>383</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. Sixty-four percent of Population II respondents and seven out of ten Population III (70%) and Population IV (73%) 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. These results are comparable to the previous year's results. (Table 14).

Table 14

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	64	70	73
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	4.1 times	4.2 times	3.8 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>569</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 almost half indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. More than one-third felt they were better off in terms of their housing conditions and food and nutrition. Approximately one-third of Population II and Population III respondents and four out of ten Population IV respondents indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of health care for their children and their access to health insurance. Comparing year to year, current respondents were slightly less likely to say they were better off in the areas of household income, housing conditions, and food and nutrition. However, they were slightly more likely to say they have stayed the same in these areas since receiving assistance. (Table 15).

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005**

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	46	45	50
The same	28	27	24
A lot/a little worse off	24	25	23
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	39	33	37
The same	43	50	44
A lot/a little worse off	15	14	15
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	36	35	37
The same	44	38	39
A lot/a little worse off	17	25	20
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	34	33	41
The same	51	51	49
A lot/a little worse off	10	11	5
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	31	37
The same	46	44	44
A lot/a little worse off	20	21	15
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>569</i>

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, over four out of ten Population II (41%), Population III (43%), and Population IV (47%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. Three out of ten Population II individuals, 28% of Population III individuals, and 38% of Population IV individuals indicated the program helped improve their job skills. Compared to last

year, a slightly higher proportion of this year's respondents overall felt the Work First program helped them to find a job and/or improved their job skills. (Table 16).

Table 16
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2005

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	41	43	47
Improving job skills	33	28	38
Keeping a job	15	19	18
Getting a higher paying job	12	14	13
None	16	18	11
No answer	20	21	19
<i>Number responding</i>	276	371	569

Respondents were asked if Work First helped their family with various money management, health management, and housing issues. Comparable to last year, 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 2005

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

	<u>Population II</u>	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	19	19	29
Getting health insurance	16	14	15
Paying your bills on time	14	14	19
Getting better health care	11	10	10
Getting better dental care	9	9	7
Getting better housing	8	5	6
None	22	25	14
No answer	38	38	39
<i>Number responding</i>	276	371	569

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. Comparable to comments made last year, they 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 was 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 last year. Following is a sample of some of the respondents' comments:

Positive Comments

- Very helpful staff treated me with respect.
- I appreciate everything that Work First did for me.
- Work First was the greatest thing I could have went through. I loved the program they offer.
- People there are so friendly and helpful. It gives you encouragement.
- Very good program. My wife is working with this program right now. They are helping with college expenses.
- The people were very helpful to me and became like a second family.
- Thank you for the motivation, knowledge, etc.
- The staff is what helped the most!! They were so supportive, understanding and helpful. They guided me to resources, got my résumé together and gave me confidence when I needed it most.
- It is very nice. They helped her with her résumé to get a job. Also gave her a wardrobe of clothes for her job.
- Thank you for the help you provided with getting a reliable vehicle.
- Work First helped me and my family in ways that I didn't think was possible.
- Work First helped us by giving us a gas allowance and paid for tires for our vehicle.

- The computer assistance was good. My teachers/helpers were very positive.
- Work First made me feel better about myself and made me want to get my GED.
- I enjoyed being in the program. It taught me about how to keep a job, be better off, feel good about myself and be a better parent to my kids.
- They helped a person become responsible and self-sufficient. Thank you.
- I think it's a great program!
- It is an excellent program and I would recommend it to anyone.
- Being a Work First participant helped me realize that I did not need a crutch to make my family's life easier and better. I am grateful for the opportunities I got when I participated in Work First.
- They helped me with so many things, so I could be more self-sufficient.
- The people there are very helpful and always available when you need them.
- Work First is a great program with wonderful staff. They helped repair my vehicle and paid for my schooling and kept in touch after I ended the program. They're great!
- They are doing a good job and are very helpful and my worker was very considerate and understanding.
- Work First helped me find a job that lead me to gain the skills needed to find and qualify for a better paying and satisfying job.
- I really enjoyed the people there. They were really helpful. I would refer them to others.
- Very nice people, they do whatever they can within their limitations to help people that are willing to be helped. I was very impressed with the program.
- This is a wonderful program. Hopefully all of the staff knows that they do make a huge impact on the lives of clients.
- I have a better life. Because I'm working I can buy things needed for my children, to pay bills, have insurance, a car.
- Work First helped me keep my job by helping me with a truck and insurance.
- Work First was the best thing to happen to me after I experienced unsuccessful attempts to obtain employment. I learned how to update my résumé from unemployed time, job interviews, skills, and maintain employment. The staff was wonderful.

Negative Comments

- Did not help me at all.
- I think it is a big waste of time for you to be in a room for 8 hours a day.
- They don't help you find a job, especially if you are educated.
- Work First really didn't help, it took a lot of time from me. I could have been looking for a job.
- The counselors were limited on what they can do. They wouldn't help me because of my level of education.
- Work First is a waste of time for the people who want to be there. There are so many negative people there. The workers are not consistent with the clients.
- Work First really does not help people because they do not have jobs. Also the staff has really bad attitudes just like they are giving you something out of their pockets.
- I was discriminated against by all the women that ran Work First because I am a man not working. The women in my group were offered college and other programs, I was not.
- Work First made us feel like we were "low lifes" with no opinions.
- Their hours are not helpful because you get there at 8:00 a.m. and you can't look for a job until after 2:00 p.m.
- The women at the site were rude and not very helpful. Work First is a waste of time and State money. I found a job through my own merit. They would like to see your failures, not your achievements.
- I feel the Work First program does nothing to help members to utilize skills they may have, but forces them to accept jobs that are low paying with no future of advancement or future to start the process over again.
- It's a failure and a waste of taxpayer's money.
- Inflexible. A waste of my time. Program treats all clients the same. It would be better if there were different programs for individual situations. Seemed to be geared to kids needing help getting their first job.
- Most of the classes were not helpful, they provided minimal information. Most of which I already knew.
- Some of the Work First case workers need to treat people with a little compassion – they don't know what it is like not to have nice clothes or they don't know what it's like to be without.
- Work First did nothing for me. It was totally pointless.

- The equipment, such as computers are too old. Staff was friendly, but not particularly helpful, especially if looking for an above minimum wage position. In general, the system is very inefficient and I was able to accomplish more at home on my own computer, printer, fax, phone, etc. But instead had to waste my time at the Work First office and mostly conduct my job search after I returned home.
- It is not helpful to someone who has worked several jobs with higher wages, etc. I have been told I am over qualified – I don't need to spend 8 hours a day looking for jobs that I will not be hired for because my experience and wage history is too high.
- The system needs to be revised to help people according to their needs.
- Not everybody falls into the same category for this Work First program. I don't feel everybody should have to do the same thing. I went to the classes, etc., but I didn't fit in. I already knew most of what was discussed. Even though I did the requirements, DHS was very slow at getting me the money I needed.
- Useless. Said they helped people and did nothing to help me. Offered work material, vehicle repair, schooling and more, and I received nothing.
- Didn't help me find a job, get a job, or even look for a job. I have no computer skills to work on a computer and no one helped to use computer. Didn't care.
- To me the information was too basic (how to fill out an application) or did not pertain to me (army recruiters coming in to talk with our group). I did not get anything out of this program – to me it wasted my time.
- Work First did not help me find a job. I found my jobs on my own. I personally do not find it a useful program.
- It was a waste of my time, there was no real structure or help from this program.
- More one on one time, better ways for needs to be met to get a job, car, gas, transportation, and repairs.
- Work First only forces people to get a job. I don't believe that they give people skills to better themselves in a job.
- Work First was a waste of time. I found my job on my own. I still can't pay bills and feed my children with the little money I get. And I now do not get any help from the State but health care.
- They made me rush into getting any job that came along. The two workers at the front desk are very unhelpful. Went back to learn Excel, but nobody helped me.

Questionnaire