

**Former Work First/JET Participant Survey
Winter 2008**

Report of Findings

Submitted to:

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth

Submitted by:

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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 and Jobs, Education & Training (JET) Program recipients. This is the fourth 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 IV:* Consisting of approximately 15,752 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005.
- Population V:* Consisting of approximately 14,421 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006.
- Population VI:* Consisting of approximately 11,856 former WF/FIP and JET recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007.

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

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 12,609 surveys were sent on November 23, 2007, with 4,726 sent to Population IV, 4,326 to Population V, and 3,557 to Population VI. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 294 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 1,061 surveys were completed, 319 from Population IV, 313 from Population V, and 429 from Population VI.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Response Rates

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	<i>----- # of surveys -----</i>		
Total population	15,752	14,421	11,856
Surveys sent	4,726	4,326	3,557
Total responses	319	313	429
Undeliverable surveys	144	104	46
Delivered surveys	4,582	4,222	3,511
Response rate (deliverable)	7.0%	7.4%	12.2%
Response rate (total)	6.7%	7.2%	12.1%

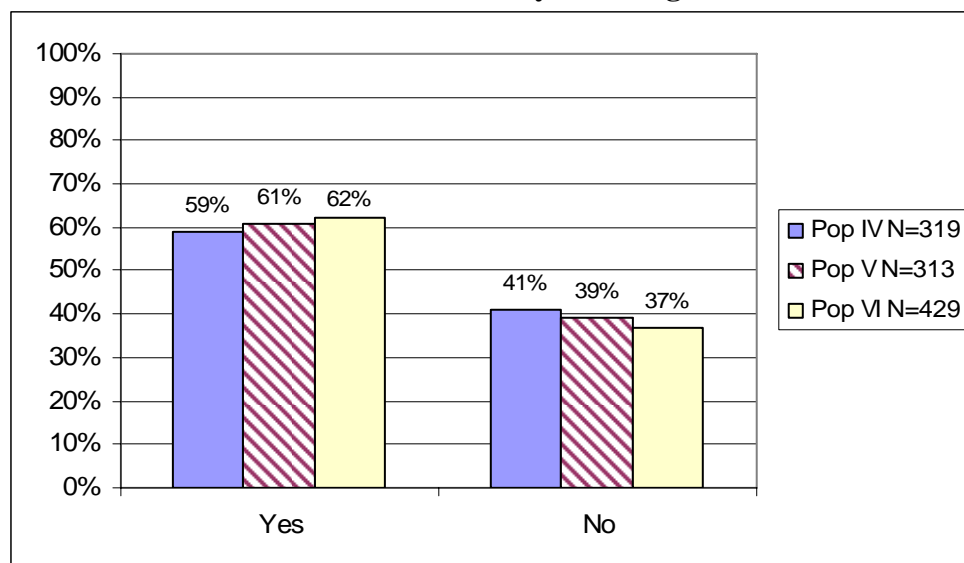
The questionnaire remained the same as in previous years. The questionnaire is included in Appendix I of this report.

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 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. Nearly two-thirds of the former recipients surveyed are currently working (59% of Population IV, 61% of Population V, and 62% of Population VI). The proportions of Population IV and V respondents currently working are essentially the same in the current year as compared to the same populations last year (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Are You Currently Working?

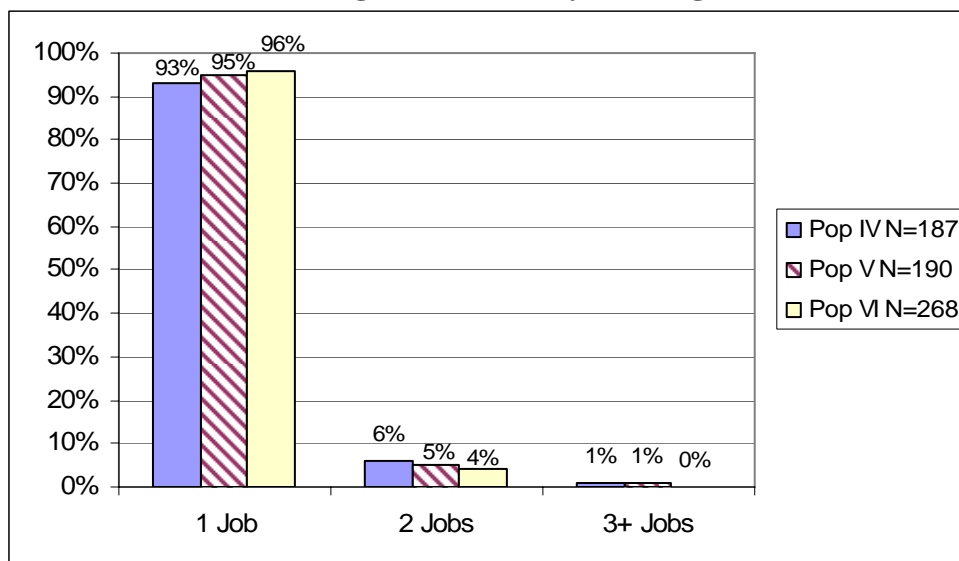


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. One to two participants from Populations IV and V reported working three or more jobs. This is similar to last year's results (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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, nearly three-fourths (72%) of the respondents reported having worked in the past year. This is a decrease from the 77% overall who indicated this last year (Table 2).

Table 2

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	58	73	83
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	19	20	9
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	13	5	2
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	9	2	4
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>159</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 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/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Reasons for Not Working (among those who are currently unemployed)

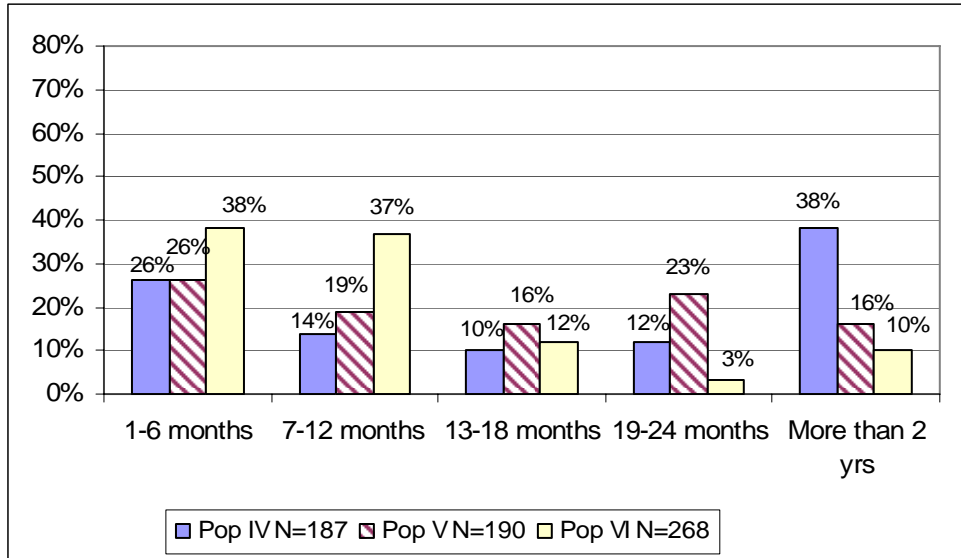
	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	38	35	33
I was sick or injured	23	23	12
I was laid off	24	18	21
I was fired	10	12	12
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	6	8	13
I had a new baby	12	15	8
My job was seasonal	6	7	11
I am going to school	8	7	12
I had an illness in the family	6	3	4
Hourly wage too low	7	3	8
I had problems with child care	8	6	6
I moved away from the area	3	2	4
No transportation/no phone	-	1	-
None of the above/other	3	5	4
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>159</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 40% of Population IV respondents, 45% of Population V respondents, and 75% of Population VI respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, over half (64%) of Population IV respondents, 69% of Population V respondents, and 82% of Population VI respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

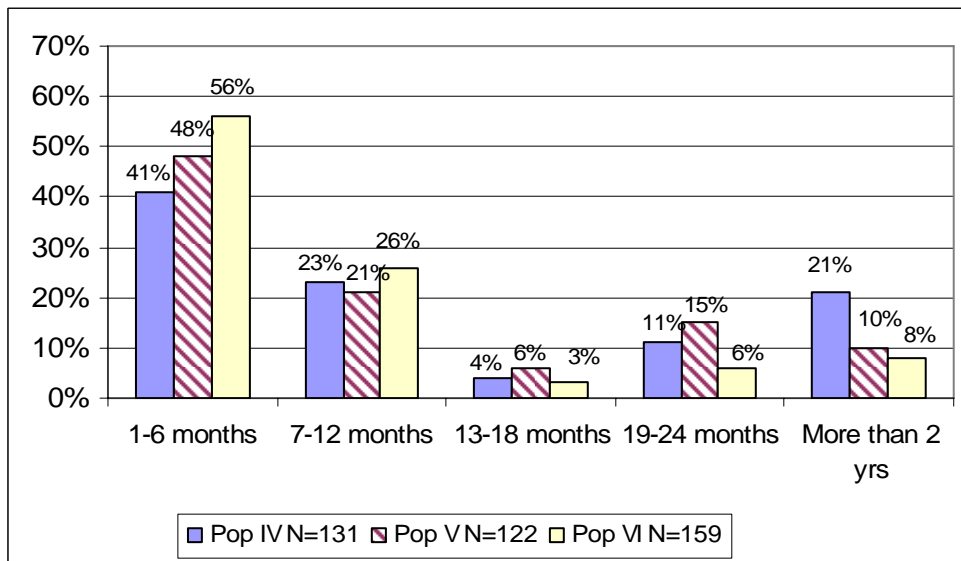
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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 32 to 34 hours per week. Those who were unemployed reported working an average of 33 to 35 hours per week in their last jobs (Table 4).

Table 4
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

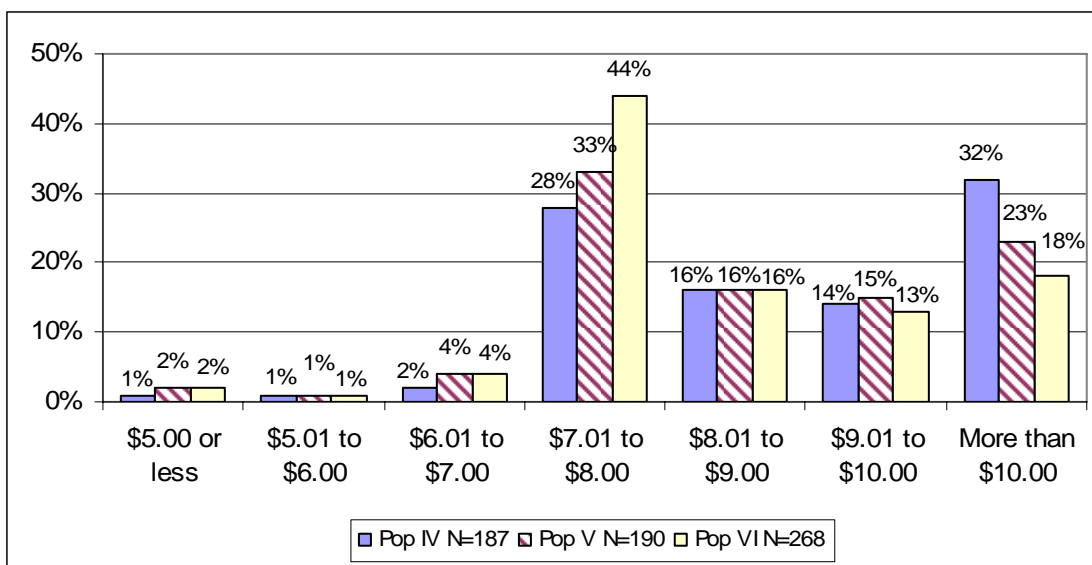
	<u>Population IV</u>		<u>Population V</u>		<u>Population VI</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	33.7	32.9	32.7	34.5	31.9	33.7
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>159</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. Nearly one-third (32%) of Population IV respondents, 23% of Population V respondents, and 18% of Population VI respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$8.75 to \$10.31 per hour. This is slightly higher than averages reported in previous years (Exhibit 4).

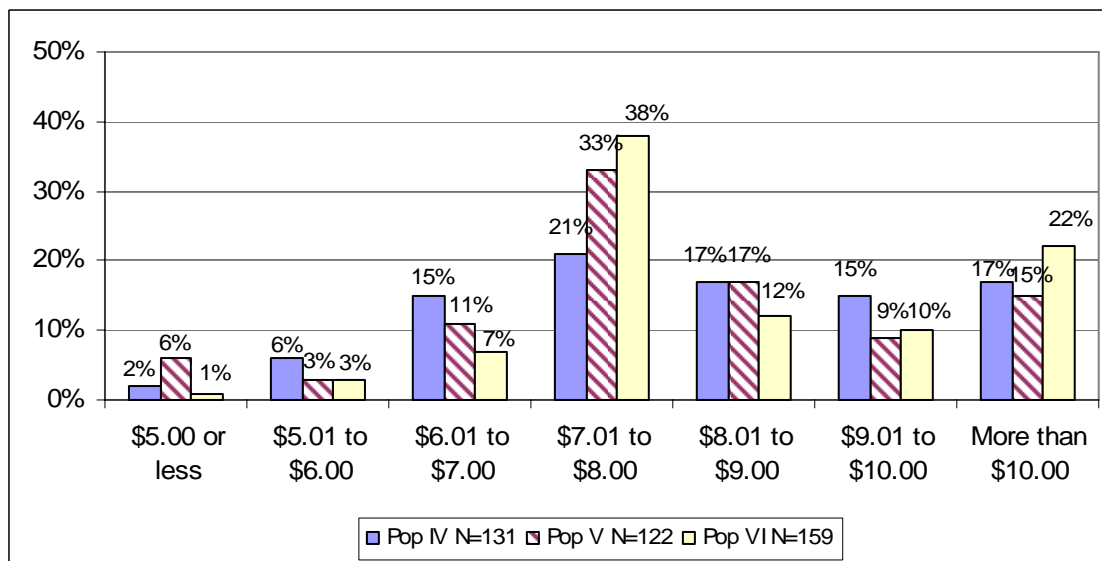
Exhibit 4

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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 customer service and health care were mentioned most often (Table 5).

Table 5

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	21	18	20
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	21	18	16
Restaurant/food services	8	9	8
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	5	6	6
Administrative/support services/clerk	6	4	6
Industrial worker	7	5	8
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	5	6	7
Construction/general labor	3	5	4
Automotive repair/automotive care	1	4	1
Education/teacher/training	3	3	3
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	1	1	1
Driver/transportation/courier	3	3	3
Child care	1	2	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	1	3	5
Technical	1	3	*
Advertising/marketing/public relations	*	-	*
Stock/inventory	1	1	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	1	1	1
Cosmetology	1	*	-
Maintenance	*	-	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	1	1	1
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	-
Social work	-	-	1
Temporary services	-	*	1
Homemaker	2	1	1
Skilled trade	5	3	3
Job coach/employment consulting	*	*	-
Disabled	*	-	*
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</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, one-fourth of Population IV (27%), three out of ten (30%) for Population V and approximately four out of ten (41%) for Population VI indicated they had worked for other employers during the year. This is similar to the previous year (Table 6).

Table 6
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year

	<u>Population IV</u>		<u>Population V</u>		<u>Population VI</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	27	18	30	20	41	35
No	68	79	66	79	55	64
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>159</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 (Table 7).

Table 7

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

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

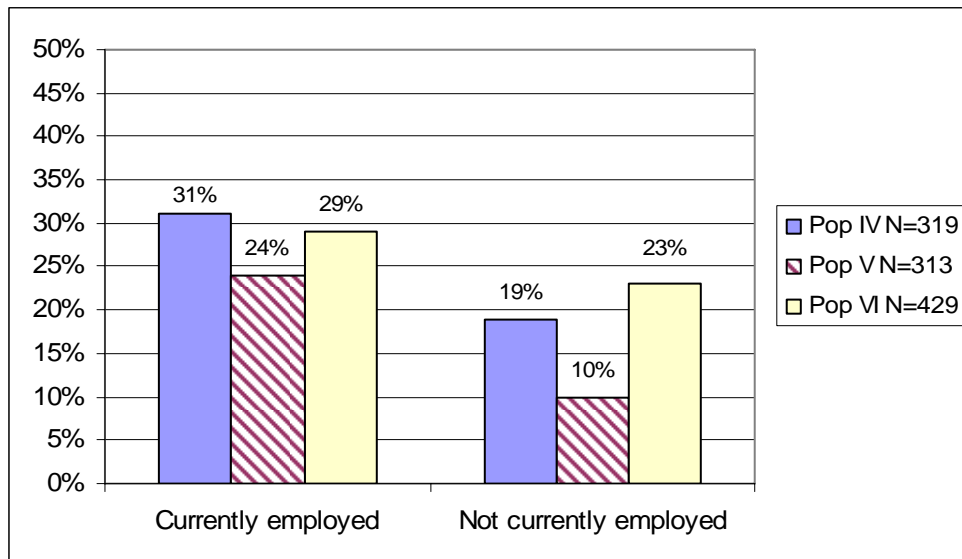
	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	15	20	14
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	16	23	21
Restaurant/food services	14	11	14
Administrative/support services/clerk	4	8	3
Driver/transportation/courier	5	1	1
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	5	5	9
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	1	1	5
Industrial worker	5	9	7
Education/teacher/training	3	-	1
Construction/general labor	4	6	1
Child care	-	1	2
Skilled trade	5	-	4
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	3	4	4
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	1	-	1
Technical	3	1	1
Stock/inventory	1	-	2
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	3	-	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	-	4	-
Homemaker	3	-	-
Automotive repair/automotive care	4	5	4
Maintenance	1	1	1
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	-	1
Temporary services	1	-	2
Pet groomer/animal care	1	-	-
Cosmetology	1	1	-
Job coach/employment consulting	-	-	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>74</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. Approximately three out of ten currently employed participants from Populations IV (31%) and VI (29%), and 24% from Population V indicated their employers offered training programs. Overall, this is slightly lower than the previous study in which approximately one-third of the currently employed respondents indicated training was offered (Exhibit 5).

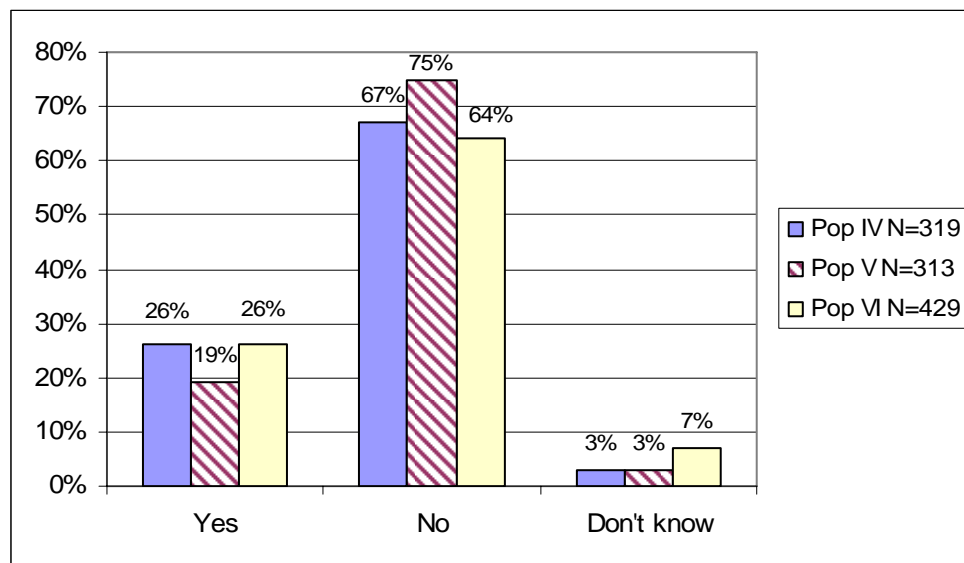
Exhibit 5
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Employer Provides Training Programs



Among those currently employed and indicating their employer offered training, 33% of Population IV participants, 50% of Population V participants, and 35% of Population VI participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer. In the current year, it appears a much higher proportion of participants from Population V are taking advantage of the training programs, while a slightly lower proportion of Population IV participants are involved in training programs offered by their employers when compared to previous years.

Currently employed respondents answered questions regarding tuition reimbursement. Among those currently employed, one-fourth each (26%) of Population IV and Population VI recipients, and 19% of Population V recipients indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills. This is somewhat higher than last year's results (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Employer Provides Tuition Reimbursement
(among those currently employed)



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 15% of Population IV participants, 11% of Population V participants, and 6% of Population VI participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses. Compared to last year it appears many more Population V participants are taking advantage of these additional benefits, while fewer Population IV 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 half indicated they had not participated in any training

since leaving the program. On-the-job training was reported by approximately three out of ten respondents. These results are comparable to those from previous years (Table 8).

Table 8
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	30	27	30
Off-site training	7	7	11
Computer training	8	7	5
Help with reading or math	2	2	2
Tuition reimbursement	1	1	1
None	60	65	59
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</i>

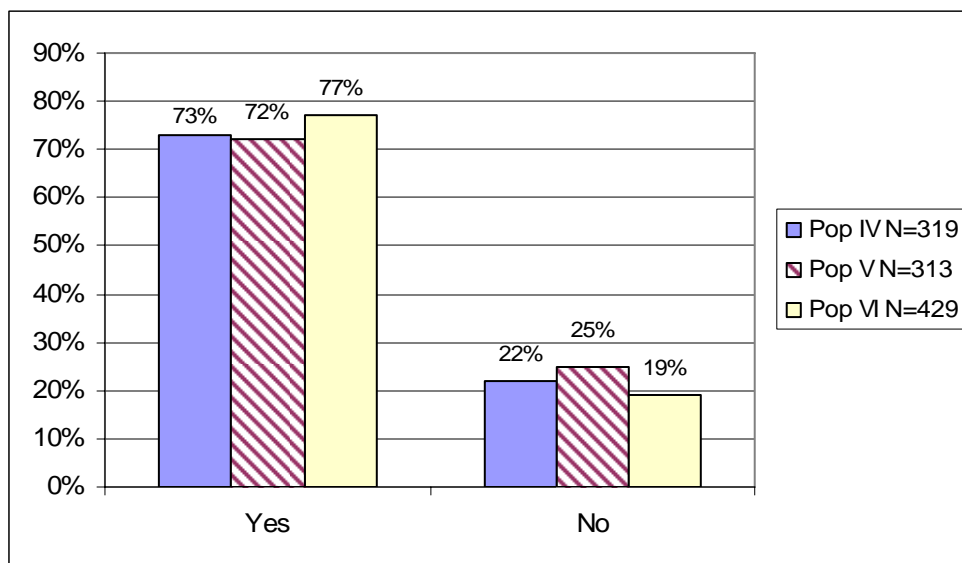
Health Care Coverage

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Similar to results from the last two studies, 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/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?



Health care coverage was provided through various sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. More than half indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program, similar to last year. Seventeen percent of Population IV respondents, 11% of Population V, and 9% of Population VI respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. One-fourth of Population V and approximately two out of ten individuals from Populations IV (22%) and Population VI (19%) did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	54	59	65
Have health insurance through my employer	17	10	9
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	2	3	3
Have no health insurance at all	22	25	19
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</i>

Among those currently working, 51% of Population IV, 45% of Population V, and 41% of Population VI respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. This is a slight increase in the proportion of employers offering health insurance compared to previous years. More than one-third (35%) reported their employer pays for part of the monthly cost, while another one-third indicated their employer did not cover any of the monthly cost. Only six percent overall of those whose employer offered health insurance indicated their employer covered all health insurance costs. Interestingly, one-fourth of the respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs. Compared to last year, although overall a slightly higher proportion of employers offer health insurance in the current year, there is a decrease (41% overall in the current year compared to half last year) in the proportion of employers paying for some or all health insurance costs (Table 10).

Table 10
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	51	45	41
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>190</i>	<i>268</i>
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	9	6	4
Part of the monthly cost	40	33	32
None of the monthly cost	31	35	33
Don't know	20	26	30
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>110</i>

Similar to the past two years, nearly all of the respondents, 93% of Population IV respondents, 92% of Population V respondents, and 96% of Population VI 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/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	93	92	96
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</i>
<u>Children Attend</u> (among those with children)			
Childcare	14	16	25
Pre-school	8	7	11
Head Start	8	10	8
Elementary school	50	45	48
Middle school	30	29	23
High school	30	29	26
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>296</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>412</i>

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Three-quarters of respondents from Population IV (75%), Population V (77%), and Population VI (80%) reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid, a slight increase from the previous two years (Table 12).

Table 12

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

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

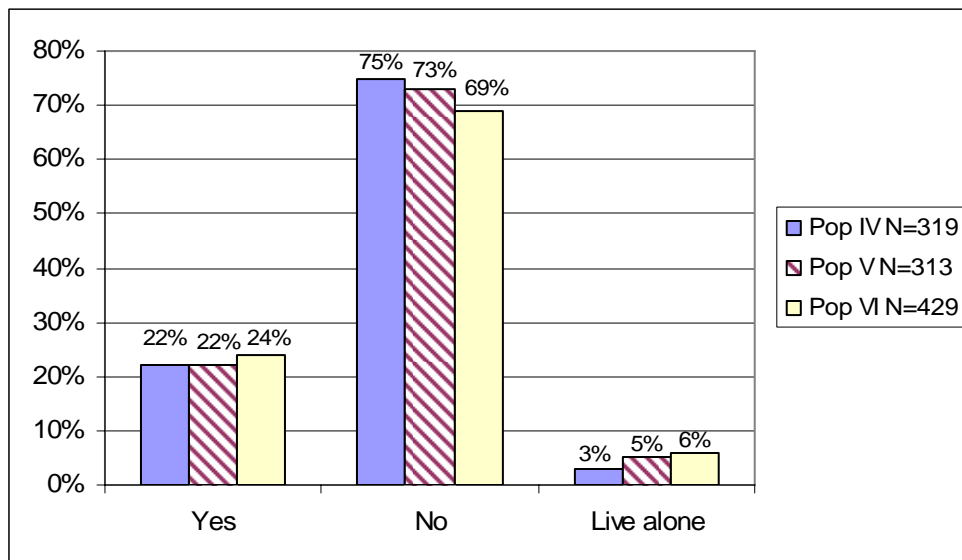
	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	75	77	80
MIChild	11	14	13
Through my/my spouse's employer	13	10	9
No health insurance	5	4	3
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>296</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>412</i>

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, over two out of ten reported “yes”. Specifically, 22% of Population IV, 22% of Population V, and 24% of Population VI indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008
Does Anyone Else In Your Household Have a Paying Job?**



Over 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 (63% of Population IV, 68% of Population V, and 73% of Population VI). On average, respondents reported approximately \$375 in welfare payments, almost \$308 in food stamps, and over \$600 in SSI payments in the last month. The average dollar amount of outside assistance received by participants for food stamps and SSI payments are similar to last year, while welfare payments are slightly lower (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	5	6	8
\$201 to \$300	5	2	1
\$301 to \$400	5	2	3
\$401 to \$500	6	11	8
Over \$500	5	4	5
No answer/do not receive	75	75	75
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$355.20	\$434.70	\$340.20
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	11	11	6
\$101 to \$200	13	18	17
\$201 to \$300	28	28	27
\$301 to \$400	13	13	17
\$401 to \$500	15	15	16
Over \$500	13	8	9
No answer/do not receive	7	7	8
Average food stamp \$\$	\$314.90	\$290.60	\$317.00
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	1	1	2
\$201 to \$300	1	1	*
\$301 to \$400	1	1	-
\$401 to \$500	1	2	-
\$501 to \$600	1	1	2
Over \$600	7	6	6
No answer/do not receive	87	88	90
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$589.70	\$659.8	\$569.00
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>314</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, two-thirds of the respondents from Population IV (64%), Population V (67%), and Population VI (67%) 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 years' results (Table 14).

Table 14
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	64	67	67
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	3.6 times	4.1 times	3.8 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>289</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 indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. One-third 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 and their access to health insurance. Comparing this year to previous years, current respondents were less likely to say they were better off in the areas of household income, housing condition, and food and nutrition. Respondents were similar or slightly more favorable in terms of where they were in areas of healthcare for children and access to health insurance (Table 15).

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008**

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	38	39	38
The same	31	28	31
A lot/a little worse off	27	29	29
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	29	29	29
The same	50	51	51
A lot/a little worse off	17	15	18
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	36	34	34
The same	42	40	45
A lot/a little worse off	17	21	18
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	34	34
The same	55	52	54
A lot/a little worse off	9	8	9
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	28	28	29
The same	52	49	51
A lot/a little worse off	15	18	16
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</i>

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, approximately four out of ten Population IV (44%), Population V (46%), and Population VI (40%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. This is similar to results from previous studies. Twenty-eight percent of Population IV individuals, 32% of Population V individuals, and 26% of Population VI 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 job skills is similar to last year (Table 16).

Table 16
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	44	46	40
Improving job skills	28	32	26
Keeping a job	15	16	14
Getting a higher paying job	14	12	8
None	12	17	23
No answer	25	21	18
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</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 Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2008

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

	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	21	24	19
Getting health insurance	12	12	13
Paying your bills on time	16	16	13
Getting better health care	7	7	6
Getting better dental care	7	5	4
Getting better housing	6	4	4
None	17	23	33
No answer	45	40	32
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>429</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. Comparable to comments made in the past, 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 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 think that Work First is real good. Keep up the good work.

It is a really great program. It helped me gain self confidence and helped me gain employment. I learned skills I didn't have before to be successful!

They are a lot of help to families who are unable to do some things for themselves. They helped with auto insurance and fees for my vehicles and clothing for my job.

It is an excellent program. I am a single parent of two children and have been struggling for years with no word from my ex husband in over 7 to 8 years – \$0 child support. Work First helped me tremendously. Thank you!

Work First really helped me with getting a job and helped me with managing my time and money. And the staff was really friendly and very helpful.

It is a good place to go to get started in finding a good job with good job opportunities.

The program paid for me to go to school. Graduated 4.0 G.P.A and working towards certification for Patient Care Technician. Thanks Work First!

I like how they offer the Career Scope to see what jobs would be best to apply for and the help you need.

It is a great program. The staff is willing to help those who want to help themselves.

They helped me enroll in Davenport University and helped with obstacles such as, transportation and childcare. I graduated 12/17/07 and I am very thankful for their help.

The help that helped me the most was that I did not have to use my own car and gas and the resume they helped me write.

By having the assistance from Work First, I was able to start a new career that will bring many opportunities.

It's good opportunity for low income families.

Work First is a very good program for anyone who needs to improve their skills.

I personally feel as though it's an excellent program to assist participants in gaining their own independence. I especially take my hat off to the fact that Work First covers everything that hindered people from gaining employment and independence.

The computer training and customer service classes they provided are what are keeping my family off the street.

I think it's a great program. Hope to see it continue for a while.

Keep on helping the program because it motivates people.

Work First helped me make it to my job everyday to find work. Job searching became a 9-5 job. Thank you Work First

I wish that I could still go there for schooling without a referral because even though they don't give me assistance I should still have the option to take classes.

Work First is a great place to get job training and job skills!

Work First helped me get back up on my feet, to have faith in myself for my kids, and I thank everyone that works there.

Good program. Clothes voucher and car vouchers can help. I've been working; hopefully I'll get a car voucher in 2008

Definitely helped with my resume, interview skills, job search, confidence, transportation, and the courage to attend school full-time on top of being a single mother of three kids under six years old!!

It is a good program, I just wish to see more people looking and keeping their jobs.

They are always there when you need anything

It's a real good program.

Teaches people to be more independent.

I really appreciate everything that I get from this program.

Negative Comments

Was not really helpful to me because for the short time I was there, less than a month, I was trying to get my GED and was not able to get the help to pass the test. So I got a full time job and gave up.

Work First didn't help me. I helped myself. I found my own job because I am a go getter.

It's not fair that Work First takes your child support payment. I only got \$436 a month and \$400 month child support. So basically they helped me with cash of \$36.

What I needed from Work First was job training in a different field and I wasn't given that. My field is obsolete unless you have a degree, which I don't have.

The JET program I thought was going to be better and helpful since it stands for job, education, and training. I was told they just help find me a job and if I want to go to school I have to pay and find my own training.

I think it's a waste of time. Especially if you have already been in the program once. It's repetitious and I didn't get anything out of it. I needed car repairs and I was told I had to have a job to receive those types of services. Didn't make sense to me. I need my car to job search.

I didn't learn anything new. It was a waste of my time, because it didn't help me get my job.

They should have daycare there and we shouldn't have to be there eight hours a day. We should be out looking for a job.

Work First in West Branch refused to help repair my car- so I lost my job. My workers said she wouldn't help anyone who does home health care!

Every county should be the same and they are not.

They did not help me with finding a job. I was told I had to be looking for work 30 hrs a week even if I had to walk with my children.

The Work First or the Jet programs are not very helpful and efficient for the woman who really wants to benefit from it and STAY OFF of the aid of the state.

Work First is limited in what they do for clients, most of the time that I was there, I felt like the workers looked down on us, treated us as if we were stupid at times.

It did nothing for me but made me find a way to be there everyday. They were no help finding a job. I found my own job and no help with my car.

I think Work First was the biggest waste of time and money I have ever seen. It was no help to me at all and did nothing but waste my time and gas.

I found the jobs myself! My "coordinator" only found me jobs where I was marginal in fulfilling the job requirements, or where there was no bus line. I don't have transportation. Work First is a huge waste of money. Should be set up like Michigan Works! resume writing, etc. Not enough resources

allotted for transportation after getting the job, employers know that so you're not hired for first 60 to 90 days (or so) it should be provided, then after "employed" pays a small fee, if situation is feasible.

They should have different programs for different people. All they did was show people how to fill out applications, and she already had six years management experience when she went.

The Work First program I went to was not helpful much. It did not allow me to go to school without a job. Isn't it about bettering yourself?

Helped finding job but tried to stick me in a job that was not for me. Can't talk to them. All they are worried about is getting their case load smaller!

Work First did not help me do anything. All I know how to do that I didn't before is look on the Internet to find a job

Job search takes gas money I didn't have. Made me cry when I signed up for college. The man said I was avoiding work. Too pushy!

You need more caring staff and more computers . . . a bigger office. More one-on-one consultation. When I was there I felt like a lost foreigner. It was very frustrating because I would love to be able to have a career to support my family. I felt like I was rushed out of the office when I desperately needed help.

Work First was going to help me to get a car but never did.

The Work First program I went to only helped African Americans, not someone that is white. Then they just lie to you all the time.

Did not help in any way! All we did was report weekly, no class of any kind. It's not enough room to state the nonsense we went through and no help.

Work First is NOT a good program. They should focus more on job training or furthering your education

I wasn't really happy with the program because it didn't help me with finding a job and most of the jobs were too far out or they didn't last very long.

I found my own job. Going to Work First everyday paying \$5.00 per day for parking did not help me in any type of way at all. It hindered me.

They don't find us a job we have to do it ourselves on the computer or outside but how can we do that when they only give us three times Monday-Wednesday-Friday.

I wish they could help me find a better job or help me to go to school make me improve myself with my children, but they don't. It isn't about any jobs.

Work First was very frustrated for me because they did not do anything different (workshops, training) that I didn't already have.

The Work First Survey was conducted to gauge participants' progress toward self-sufficiency after participation in the program. The survey was conducted during the winter of 2008 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 six out of ten former recipients are currently employed. A majority of these individuals are working at one job. These respondents reported working an average of 32 to 34 hours per week. Their average hourly pay was slightly higher this year compared to previous years (at \$8.75 to \$10.31 per hour in the current year). Health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. Among those not currently employed, approximately 75% indicated they had worked in the past year. The top reason for being unemployed was not being able to find work.

Approximately three out of ten participants indicated their current employers offered training programs and two out of ten indicated their employer offered tuition reimbursement. There appears to be a slight trend over the past several years of more 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. However, compared to last year, employers are less likely to help pay for either all or part of the health insurance.

Similar to previous years, over two-thirds of respondents reported they received outside assistance from other organizations and agencies. The dollar amount of the assistance received is similar to that received last year.

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 health care for children. However, access to health insurance coverage continues to be an issue with many, along with the issue of housing conditions.

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 involved to participate.

Questionnaire