

**Former Work First Participant Survey
Winter 2006**

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. This is the third 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 III:* Consisting of approximately 14,408 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004.
- Population IV:* Consisting of approximately 15,757 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005.
- Population V:* Consisting of approximately 14,430 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006.

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

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 13,378 surveys were sent on November 20, 2006, with 4,322 sent to Population III, 4,727 to Population IV, and 4,329 to Population V. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 485 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 1,204 surveys were completed, 269 from Population III, 326 from Population IV, and 609 from Population V.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006
Response Rates

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	----- # of surveys -----		
Total population	14,408	15,757	14,430
Surveys sent	4,322	4,727	4,329
Total responses	269	326	609
Undeliverable surveys	36	417	32
Delivered surveys	4,286	4,310	4,297
Response rate (deliverable)	6.3%	7.6%	14.2%
Response rate (total)	6.2%	6.9%	14.1%

The questionnaire from the previous years 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.

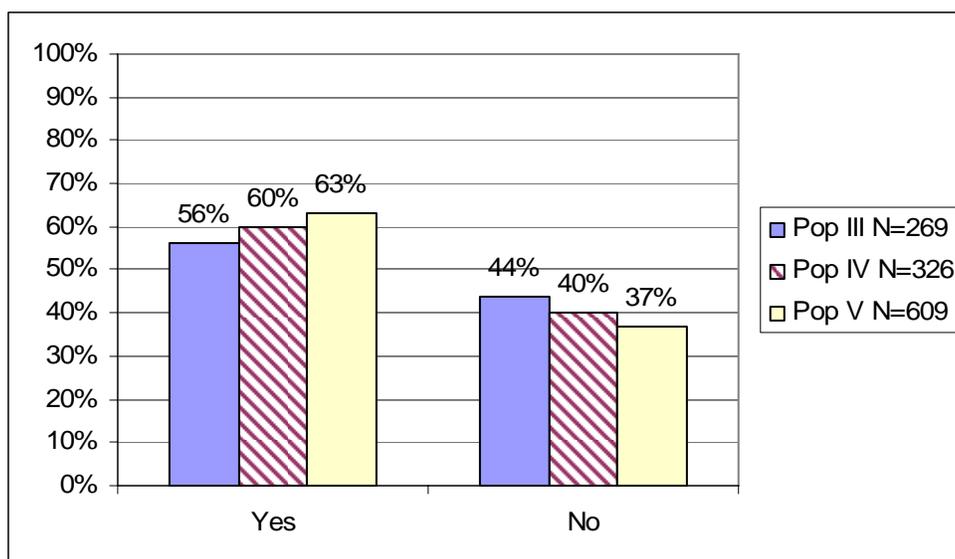
Employment Status

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. Nearly two-thirds of the former recipients surveyed are currently working (56% of Population III, 60% of Population IV, and 63% of Population V). Compared to last year, the proportions of Population III and IV respondents currently working are slightly lower this year (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

Are You Currently Working?

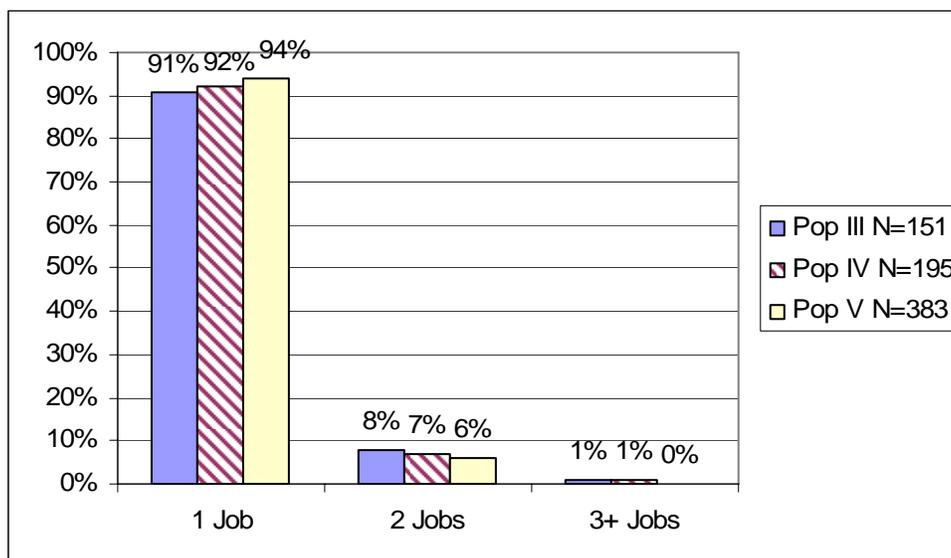


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. One to two participants from each Population reported working three or more jobs (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006

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, more than 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 2006

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	66	78	83
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	19	13	11
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	9	4	1
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	6	5	3
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>226</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 Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

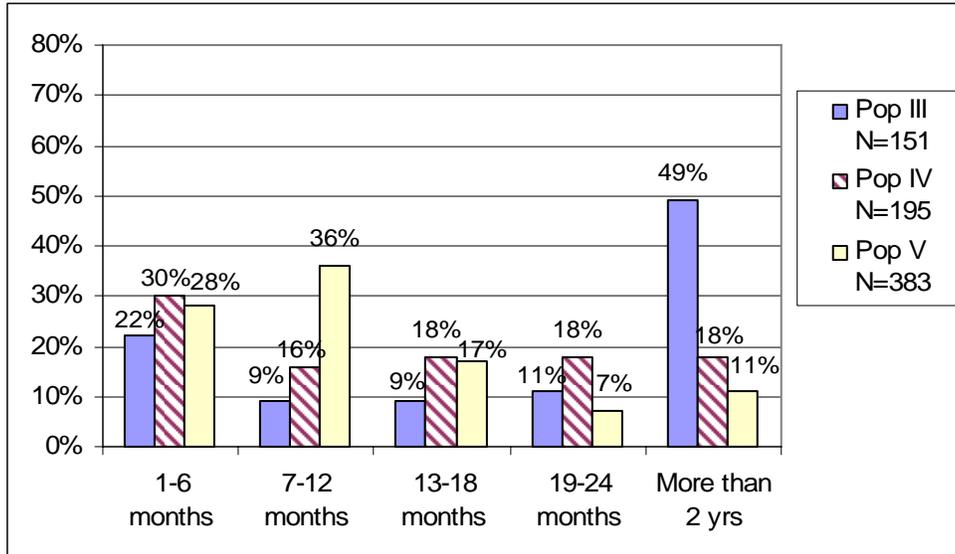
	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	30	37	38
I was sick or injured	26	24	15
I was laid off	21	25	27
I was fired	14	11	14
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	8	8	8
I had a new baby	8	8	8
My job was seasonal	8	8	8
I am going to school	8	5	7
I had an illness in the family	7	4	5
Hourly wage too low	5	4	4
I had problems with child care	3	5	2
I moved away from the area	3	1	3
No transportation/no phone	-	-	-
None of the above/other	-	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>226</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 31% of Population III respondents, 46% of Population IV respondents, and 64% of Population V respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, over half (59%) of Population III respondents, 66% of Population IV respondents, and 81% of Population V respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

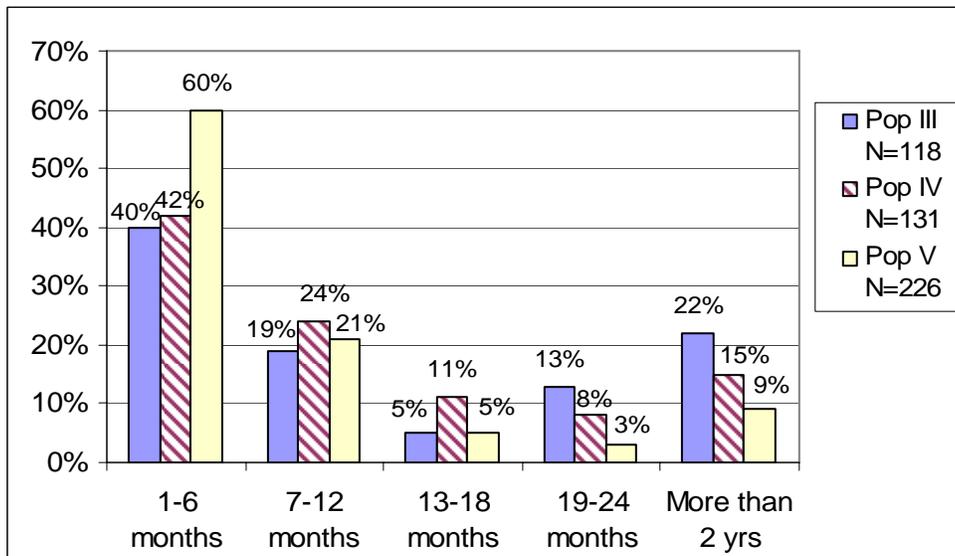
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006

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 34 to 42 hours per week in their last jobs (Table 4).

Table 4
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

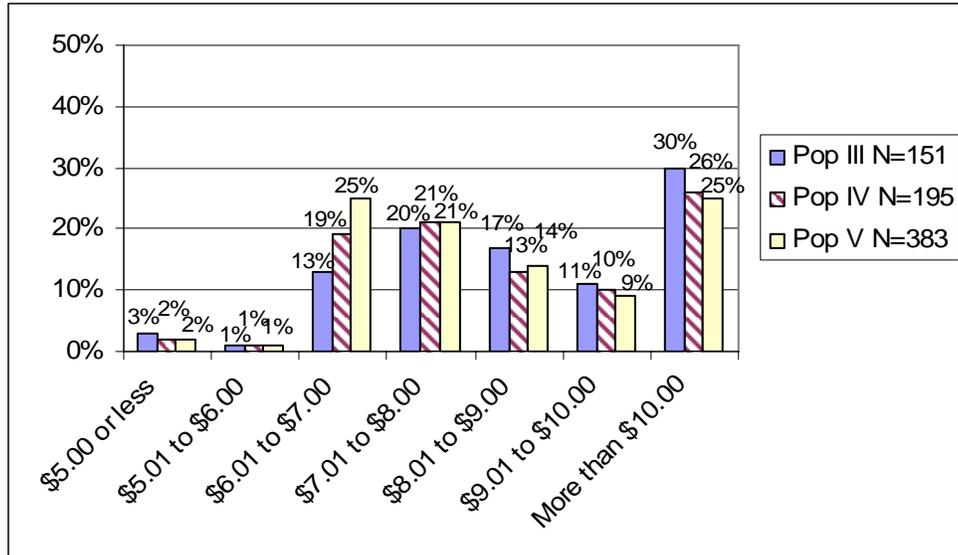
	<u>Population III</u>		<u>Population IV</u>		<u>Population V</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	34.4	34.3	32.3	42.0	31.8	34.5
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>226</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 three out of ten (30%) Population III respondents, 26% of Population IV respondents, and 25% of Population V respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$8.79 to \$9.25 per hour. This is similar to averages reported in previous years (Exhibit 4).

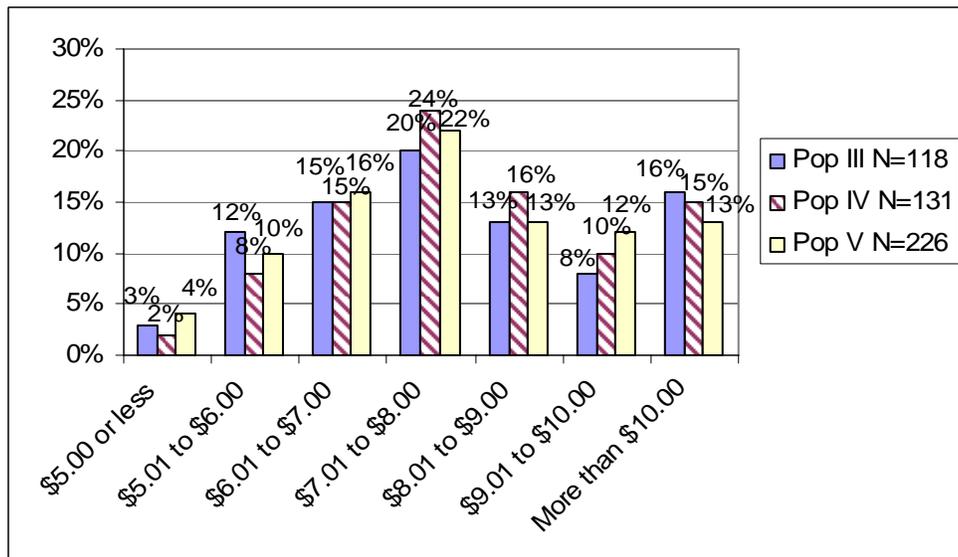
Exhibit 4

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

Table 5

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	18	21	18
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	17	14	16
Restaurant/food services	6	10	7
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	6	5	7
Administrative/support services/clerk	8	10	8
Industrial worker	5	7	6
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	7	5	5
Construction/general labor	4	5	5
Automotive repair/automotive care	2	3	4
Education/teacher/training	2	2	3
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	3	3	1
Driver/transportation/courier	3	3	3
Child care	3	2	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	2	2	2
Technical	1	1	2
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	-	*
Stock/inventory	3	*	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	*	1	1
Cosmetology	*	*	-
Maintenance	2	1	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	1	*	1
Pet groomer/animal care	*	*	-
Social work	*	-	*
Temporary services	-	*	-
Homemaker	*	-	2
Skilled trade	5	3	3
Disabled	-	*	*
Military work	-	*	-
<i>Number responding</i>	269	326	609

* 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 Populations III (25%) and IV (28%) and approximately four out of ten (42%) for Population V indicated they had worked for other employers during the year. This is a slight decrease from the previous year (Table 6).

Table 6
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006
Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year

	<u>Population III</u>		<u>Population IV</u>		<u>Population V</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	25	22	28	22	42	34
No	72	75	69	77	53	64
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>226</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 2006**

**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	19	20	14
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	16	16	22
Restaurant/food services	10	11	13
Administrative/support services/clerk	6	12	12
Driver/transportation/courier	-	2	*
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	8	5	8
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	3	6	4
Industrial worker	5	5	5
Education/teacher/training	5	5	*
Construction/general labor	5	10	5
Child care	2	-	3
Skilled trade	3	1	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	2	1	4
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	3	2	1
Technical	-	1	-
Stock/inventory	2	-	3
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	2	5	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	-	-	2
Homemaker	-	-	4
Automotive repair/automotive care	3	2	4
Maintenance	-	-	2
Advertising/marketing/public relations	2	1	1
Temporary services	-	-	-
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>238</i>

* *Less than one-half of one percent*

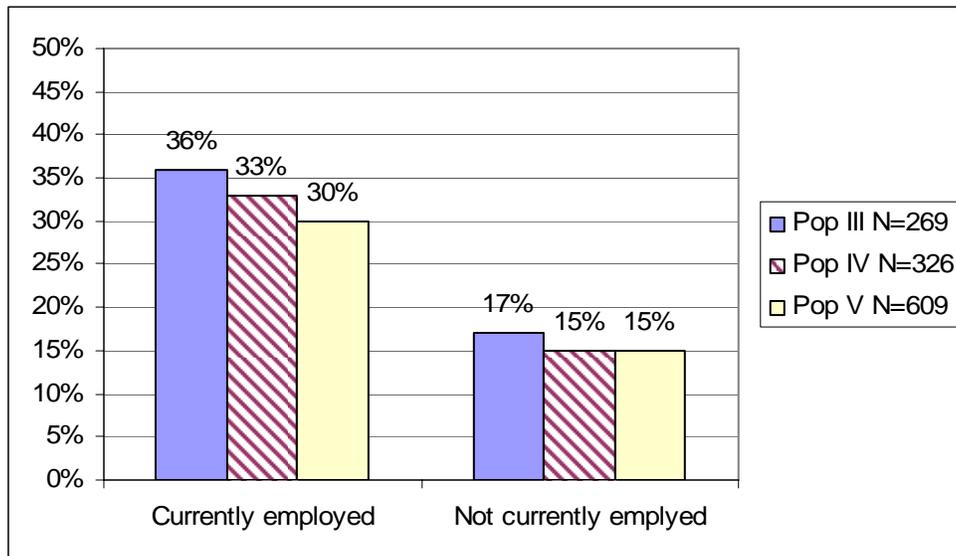
Job and Skills Training

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 indicated their employers offered training programs. This is similar to the previous study in which three 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 2006

Employer Provides Training Programs



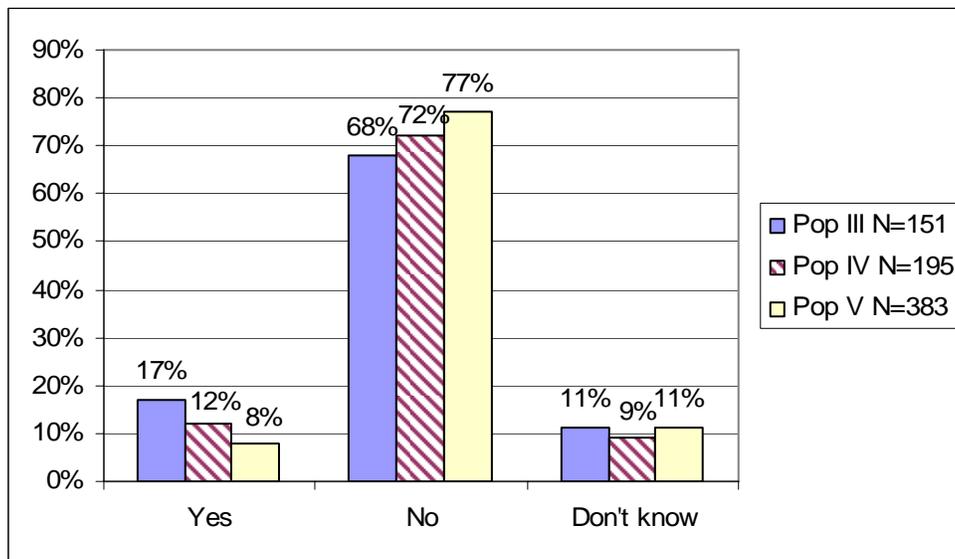
Among those currently employed and indicating their employer offered training, 35% of Population III participants, 36% of Population IV participants, and 29% of Population V participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer. In the current year, it appears a slightly higher proportion of participants are taking advantage of the training programs offered by their employers compared to previous years.

Currently employed respondents answered questions on tuition reimbursement. Almost two out of ten recipients (17%) for Population III, 12% of Population IV recipients, and 8% of Population V recipients who are currently employed indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills. This is comparable to last year (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 12% of Population III participants, 22% of Population IV participants, and 3% of Population V participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses. Again, compared to last year it appears more participants are taking advantage of these additional 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 one-third of respondents. These results are comparable to those from previous years (Table 8).

Table 8

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	29	33	27
Off-site training	12	9	6
Computer training	6	5	7
Help with reading or math	1	3	3
Tuition reimbursement	1	2	1
None	59	57	63
<i>Number responding</i>	269	326	609

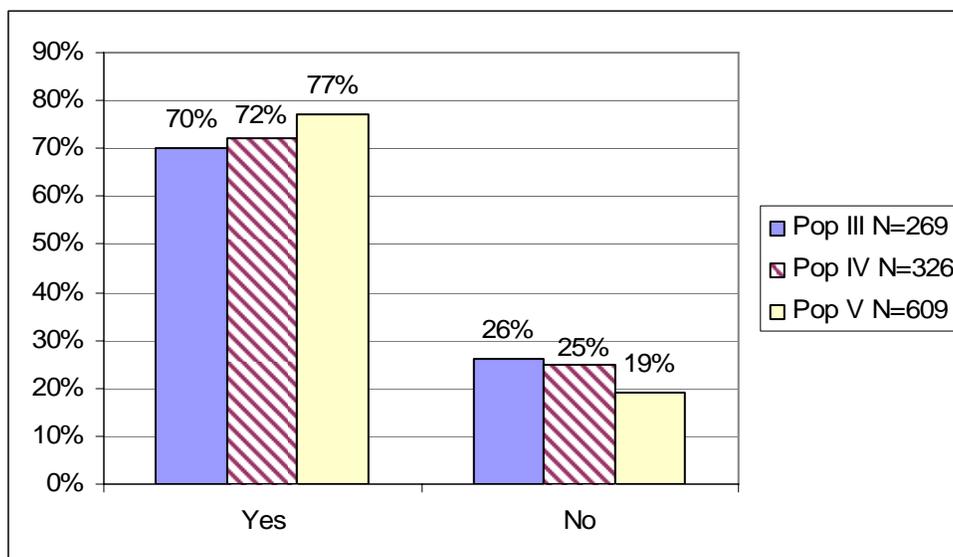
Health Care Coverage

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 Participant Survey – Winter 2006

Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?



Health care coverage was provided through several sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. More than half indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program, a slight increase from previous years. Thirteen percent of Population III respondents, 17% of Population IV and 8% of Population V respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. One-fourth of Population III and IV and approximately two out of ten of Population V did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006
Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	53	54	67
Have health insurance through my employer	13	17	8
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	4	2	3
Have no health insurance at all	26	25	19
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>609</i>

Among those currently working, 49% of Population III, 41% of Population IV, and 39% of Population V respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. There has been a slight downward trend in the proportion of employers offering health insurance in the past few years. 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 is a similar proportion of employers paying for health insurance costs (Table 10).

Table 10

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	49	41	39
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>383</i>
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	15	10	6
Part of the monthly cost	42	46	38
None of the monthly cost	23	31	31
Don't know	20	13	22
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>151</i>

Similar to the past two years, nearly all of the respondents, 90% of Population III respondents, 94% of Population IV respondents, and 95% of Population V respondents, have children living at home. Four out of ten 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 2006**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	90	94	95
<i>Number responding</i>	269	326	609
<u>Children Attend</u> (among those with children)			
Childcare	19	18	27
Pre-school	10	7	7
Head Start	9	7	10
Elementary school	50	41	45
Middle school	29	26	25
High school	32	34	28
<i>Number responding</i>	242	305	580

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Two-thirds or more of respondents for Population III (77%), Population IV (69%), and Population V (79%) reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid, similar to the last two years (Table 12).

Table 12

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

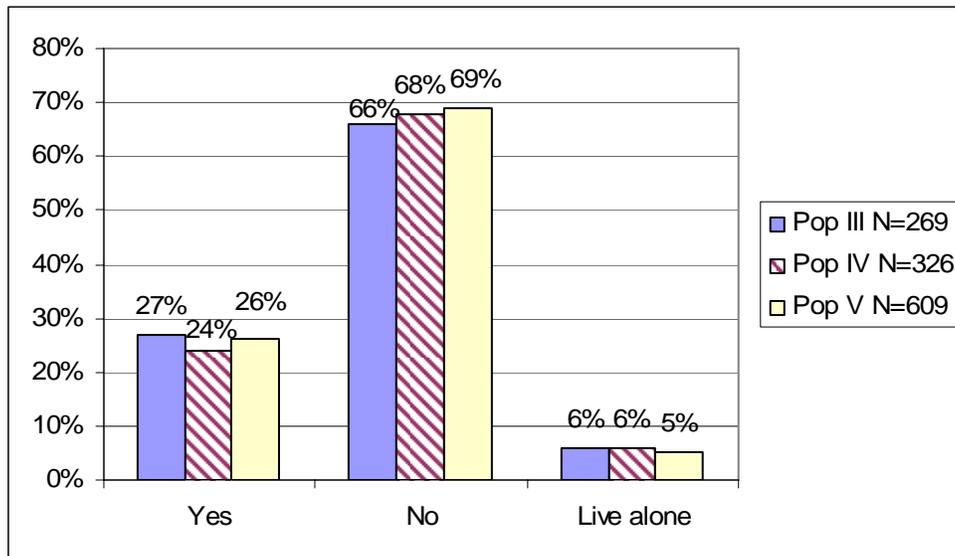
	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	77	69	79
MiChild	15	19	15
Through my/my spouse's employer	12	12	6
No health insurance	4	4	3
<i>Number responding</i>	242	305	580

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, 27% of Population III, 24% of Population IV, and 26% of Population V indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006
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 (68% of Population III, 62% of Population IV, and 69% of Population V). On average, respondents reported receiving close to \$400 in welfare payments, almost \$300 in food stamps, and over \$600 in SSI payments in the last month. The average dollar amount of outside assistance received by participants has increased over the years (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	3	6	3
\$201 to \$300	3	4	2
\$301 to \$400	4	1	4
\$401 to \$500	5	8	7
Over \$500	4	6	3
No answer/do not receive	81	76	81
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$398.20	\$375.60	\$402.30
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	9	16	8
\$101 to \$200	19	21	19
\$201 to \$300	27	20	28
\$301 to \$400	14	14	15
\$401 to \$500	13	11	11
Over \$500	7	8	7
No answer/do not receive	11	10	11
Average food stamp \$\$	\$284.00	\$268.80	\$283.70
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	1	1	*
\$201 to \$300	1	*	-
\$301 to \$400	1	1	*
\$401 to \$500	1	1	0
\$501 to \$600	3	3	2
Over \$600	8	6	4
No answer/do not receive	85	87	93
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$619.50	\$565.30	\$635.10
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>421</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. Two-thirds of the respondents for Population III (66%), Population IV (67%), and Population V (69%) 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 Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	66	67	69
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	4.2 times	3.8 times	3.9 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>609</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 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 slightly less likely to say they were better off in the areas of housing conditions, healthcare for children, and access to health insurance coverage. Respondents were similar in terms of where they were in areas of household income and food and nutrition (Table 15).

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	48	45	47
The same	24	24	28
A lot/a little worse off	27	28	24
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	34	32	35
The same	48	50	50
A lot/a little worse off	16	14	14
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	42	30	36
The same	37	49	45
A lot/a little worse off	19	18	18
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	39	29	31
The same	47	56	59
A lot/a little worse off	10	11	7
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	36	28	25
The same	39	46	57
A lot/a little worse off	22	23	16
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>609</i>

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, approximately four out of ten Population III (37%), Population IV (44%), and Population V (44%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. This is a slight decrease from last year, but at par with results from two years ago. Twenty-five percent of Population III individuals, 28% of Population IV individuals, and 33% of Population V 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 also declined from the previous study. However, the proportion remains similar to those from two years ago (Table 16).

Table 16

**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	37	44	44
Improving job skills	25	28	33
Keeping a job	17	19	16
Getting a higher paying job	10	12	10
None	26	25	20
No answer	18	11	13
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>609</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 Participant Survey – Winter 2006**

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

	<u>Population III</u>	<u>Population IV</u>	<u>Population V</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	17	22	21
Getting health insurance	10	13	12
Paying your bills on time	12	16	15
Getting better health care	6	7	8
Getting better dental care	4	7	8
Getting better housing	5	6	6
None	39	39	36
No answer	29	22	26
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>609</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 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 previously. Following is a sample of some of the respondents' comments:

Positive Comments

Being in the Work First Program made me strive even harder to find work. At one point I was working 3 jobs. Also Work First made me realize that I had achieved enough credits to have an Associates Degree from Delta.

It's a good program because it makes some people become independent and not rely on assistance.

Work First is a good program that will assist an individual with training, job assistance, and support to get on their feet.

They helped me a great deal! God Bless them. I couldn't ever repay how they should be repaid. They've helped me with hundreds of things these are only a few of them. Gas car fuel, heat, transportation, vehicle, child day care and getting my life back together

They allowed me to get a car through the program called Workers on Wheels at Goodwill Industries. That was great. It helped a lot.

I found it very beneficial and helpful as a resource for me in gaining more independence. The personnel I worked with at Work First were very helpful encouraging and were there to support me as I utilized their center for the computer and job searching.

I think Work First is a great program to help people that do not already have job skills.

Work First was very helpful to me they help me get interview, clothes, bus tokens, computer use and I have told anyone who needs help to go there.

I would like to say Work First helps me and my family a whole lot. Yes, it's a very good program for mothers working toward goals or setting goals. To set good examples for our families. Also to help us financially in today's society.

Work First is there if you want to better yourself and increase your families income showing you job skills, how to complete job application, etc.

When I went through the Work First program I was working. They help with a vehicle, clothes, tools. So they bent over backwards to help me.

Helped with postage stamps and faxes to send off resumes.

They helped me get a mini van and that was unexpected and much appreciated. Thank you.

We appreciate help with car repairs.

I was thankful for the program. I had a job for 19 years because it was sold, lost job – but I was able to go to college and get associates degree.

My career advisor was very helpful and encouraged me a lot.

Thanks for helping w/daycare so I could focus on getting a job.

The part that helped me the most was the car repair/ins. \$ & gas \$ to get me on my feet.

It is a good program to assist you in finding work & also support of transportation (bus tickets).

I really enjoyed working with Work First. They helped met get a career started. Right now I am financially not settled, but I am going to college full time and making ends meet.

It helped give me the motivation to seek employment.

Its helpful in getting a job and w/gas & bus fair to get to and from work.

I feel strongly that this program was a major stepping stone in the field I am currently in. I can't express the gratitude I have for such a program

They really helped me get equipment and clothing I needed for my saw mill job. I was very grateful.

I attended Midwest Career Institute and they are in my opinion, the best program of its kind. They are helpful both in job search and in continuing employment.

Work First has helped me with proper clothing to work in a professional setting. Also with car repair to keep me self sufficient.

I feel that the program is a good thing for people in need. It gives everyone an equal chance for employment. Thank you to the Work First program.

Negative Comments

To many classes not enough real time spent on job search. You can't look for a job if you have to be in class all the time and the classes were common sense.

They need to talk to the instructors about their attitudes.

It does not assist professionals out of work.

Work First didn't help me at all. They talk to you like you're a child and I feel like they just wasn't any help at all. To me it's a waste of time!

I think that Work First should try harder to place people in jobs. Both times I found jobs on my own w/out assistance from Work First or their staff.

The demands they put on people with no income and the embarrassment they cause to prospective employers is terrible & humiliating.

Need to set up some type of on the job training programs. I need a job!

Work First is degrading and very discouraging. Why, because some of the case managers enjoy putting you down and also belittling you

I have been in Work First 3 times and it still has not helped me get a job. There is to many rules and things to do and if we mess up we lose our assistance.

Work First just didn't do it for me. The resources were valuable, but it lacked job leads (sufficient) for educated adults.

Work First has caused me so much stress in the days, to the point that I felt my life wasn't worth living any more.

Nothing. Work First is a waste of time. They don't find you a job.

It's not W/F problem, but classes are over filled and not enough jobs that pay more than minimum wages.

A waste of time! If they want to help improve skills make it more like a school where they teach all skills.

Work First did not assist me in finding a job. I found one on my own. They provided me with a fax machine, that's it.

Work First was a waste of time, being on welfare I feel we need some type of training that would help us keep a decent job just not push us to get any low paying job.

The people at Work First do not help you find a job, they also are rude to people and they do not try to help you do any thing that is listed above.

Work First helps financially finding a job, but once you do FIA cuts off medical benefits and you can pay your bills, but you can't afford health care.

Need to cut how many jobs a week especially when people don't have money or gas.

I can do the same thing at the library by using the computer to look for a job.

None. They cut me off (FIA) then because of getting cut off I lost my job. Now I am without a job again.

Work First need better employees working. They need to actually help you find a job instead of trying to send you anywhere doing anything and need better attitudes.

Need more transportation for jobs that is out of town. More job with Flint and good pay rate.

I feel that Work First is not worth my time. It has not benefited me in any way. I got nothing from the program.

Didn't help me at all – I found a job on my own with no resources from Work First.

I've been on welfare 4 months and in the program and they have not helped me. I've been finding leads on my own.

For me the Work First program was a complete waste of my time. It bothered me that I had to go everyday, the time wasted there I could have found a job a lot sooner.

Work First doesn't find good or long pay jobs.

The program did not help at all. All it did is force me to take a job that I could not live off of, as in paying my rent and utilities.

Not letting me find a full-time job, only forcing me into a temp job.

Work First was unable to help you w/ gas & other reimbursements after you were in the program for a certain period of time. Was made to keep looking for job but couldn't get help with gas.

Work First needs to help train or offer schooling instead of a minimum wage job. They don't even encourage school.

The Work First program really didn't help me at all. I found my own jobs when I went there and they were rude.

A waste of time. Need to have a training class or on the job training help with computer and have knowledge of how they operate.

I feel that I have more sense than the people that were there because it made you feel belittled and ranked in a category where you are dumb.

CONCLUSIONS

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 2006 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 has remained similar across years (at \$8.79 to \$9.25 per hour in the current year). Health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. Among those not currently employed, over 75% indicated they had worked in the past year. The top reason for being unemployed was not being able to find work.

Three out of ten participants indicated their current employers offered training programs and one out of ten indicated their employer offered tuition reimbursement. There appears to be a slight trend over the past three 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 less likely than in previous years to offer health insurance coverage.

Similar to previous years, approximately two-thirds of respondents reported they received outside assistance from other organizations and agencies. However, the dollar amount of the assistance received has increased over the past three years.

When asked about the impact of the Work First Program, respondents were most likely to indicate they were better off as a result of the program in the areas of household income, followed by food and

nutrition, and housing conditions. However, health care for their children and access to health insurance coverage continues to be an issue with many.

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