

**Former Work First/JET Participant Survey
Winter 2011**

Report of Findings

Submitted to:

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth



Submitted by:

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A survey was conducted by Moore & Associates, Inc., a national research and evaluation firm, on behalf of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth among former Work First/Family Independence Program recipients and Jobs, Education & Training (JET) Program recipients. This is the seventh 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 VII: Consisting of approximately 14,432 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008.

Population VIII: Consisting of approximately 9,693 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009.

Population IX: Consisting of approximately 7,721 former WF/FIP and JET recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010.

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

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 frequencies of responses are included under separate cover.

A total of 9,554 surveys were mailed on December 17, 2010, with 4,330 sent to Population VII, 2,908 to Population VIII, and 2,316 to Population IX. A sample of 30% was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 4,571 surveys were returned as undeliverable, where respondents had moved from their last known address. Of those returned, 1,728 had forwarding addresses and Moore & Associates, Inc. sent out a second mailing to a sample of 580 questionnaires. The addresses were selected randomly from Populations VII, VIII and IX based on the number returned from each population. It should be noted that in the past, the number of undeliverable surveys could not be accurately tracked due to policy changes with the United States Postal Service. In the current year, the way the surveys were handled was modified to meet the changing policies. Therefore, more undeliverable surveys could be identified.

Respondents were given the option of mailing the completed survey to the contractor, calling a toll-free telephone number to complete the survey by telephone, or completing the survey online. In addition, the contractor obtained telephone numbers for non-respondents, when available, and contacted them by telephone to complete the survey. Table 1 depicts the response rates for each of the populations. A total of 741 surveys were completed, specifically 255 from Population VII, 226 from Population VIII, and 260 from Population IX.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

Response Rates			
	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	----- # of surveys -----		
Total population	14,432	9,693	7,721
Surveys sent	4,330	2,908	2,316
Total responses	255	226	260
Undeliverable surveys	2,251	1,354	966
Delivered surveys	2,079	1,554	1,350
Response rate (deliverable)	12.3%	14.5%	19.3%
Response rate (total)	5.9%	7.8%	11.2%

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

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

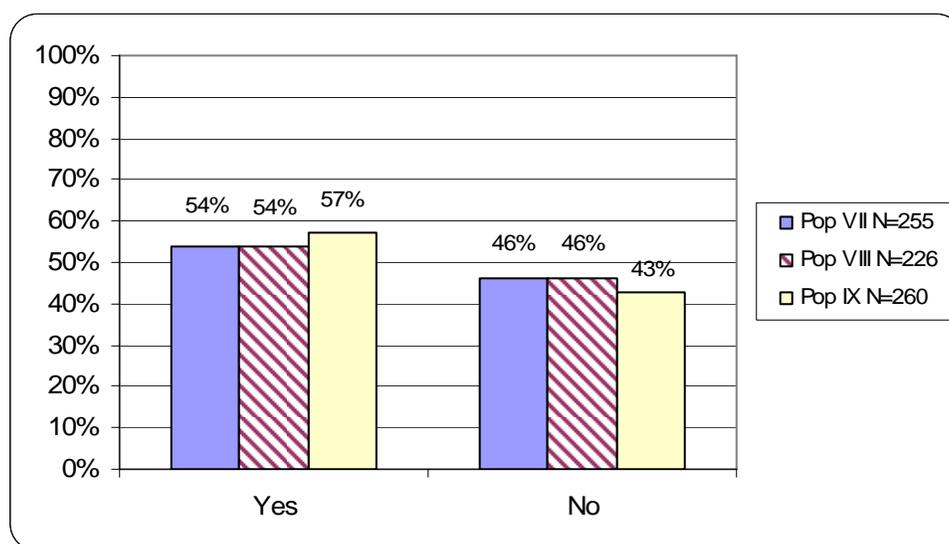
Employment Status

Respondents were asked about their employment status to determine their rate of employment, the types of employment, whether or not they were employed full- or part-time, and reasons for being unemployed. Over half of the former recipients surveyed for Population VII (54%), Population VIII (54%), and Population IX (57%) are currently working. The proportion of Population VII currently working has slightly increased compared to last year. The proportion of Population VIII respondents reporting they are currently working has decreased in the current year as compared to the same population last year (at 58% in 2010) (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

Are You Currently Working?

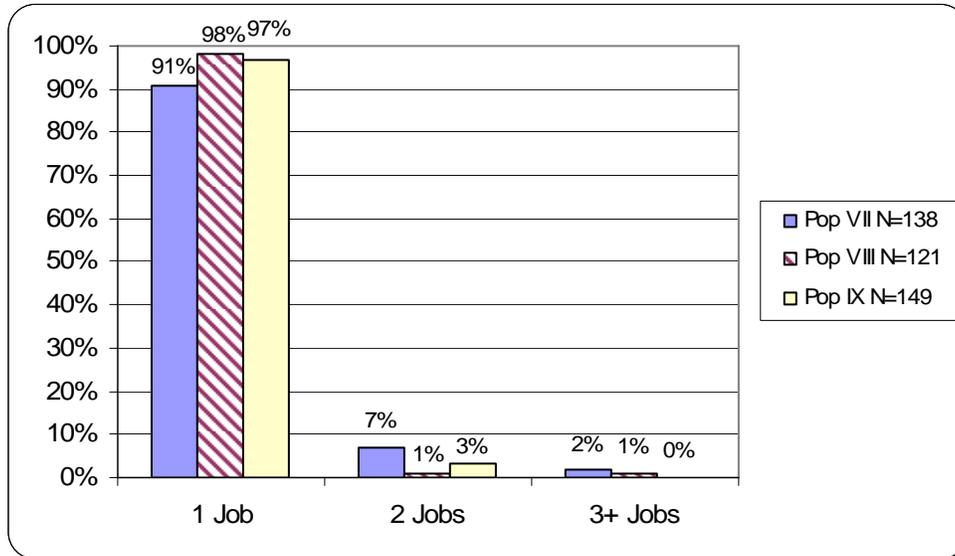


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. This is similar to last year's results (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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



Those who were not currently working reported the last time they held paying jobs. More than half each of Populations VII (51%) and VIII (58%) respondents reported having worked in the past year. This is similar to the 55% overall who indicated this last year. Nearly three-fourths of Population IX (73%) respondents reported having worked in the past year (Table 2).

Table 2

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	51	58	73
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	16	22	12
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	16	9	6
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	11	9	6
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>111</i>

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

Table 3
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Reasons for Not Working (*among those who are currently unemployed*)

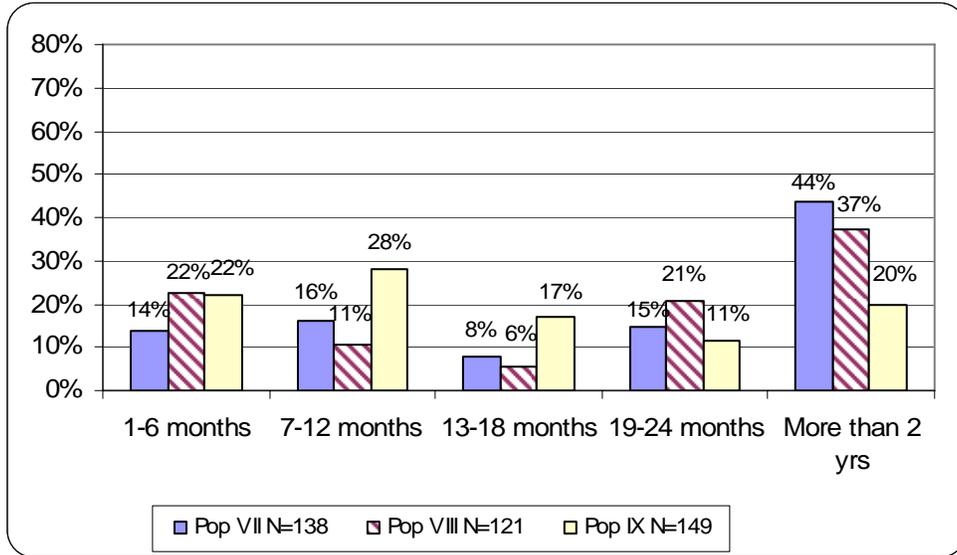
	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	37	38	44
I was sick or injured	21	19	22
I was laid off	27	32	25
I was fired	18	11	14
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	11	11	7
I had a new baby	6	5	7
My job was seasonal	6	9	6
I am going to school	6	14	10
I had an illness in the family	9	3	8
Hourly wage too low	7	6	4
I had problems with child care	4	7	10
I moved away from the area	3	-	1
No transportation/no phone	-	1	-
None of the above/other	-	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>111</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employers. Among those who were currently employed, 30% of Population VII respondents, 33% of Population VIII respondents, and 50% of Population IX respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, 45% of Population VII respondents, half of Population VIII (51%) respondents, and two-thirds of Population IX (66%) respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

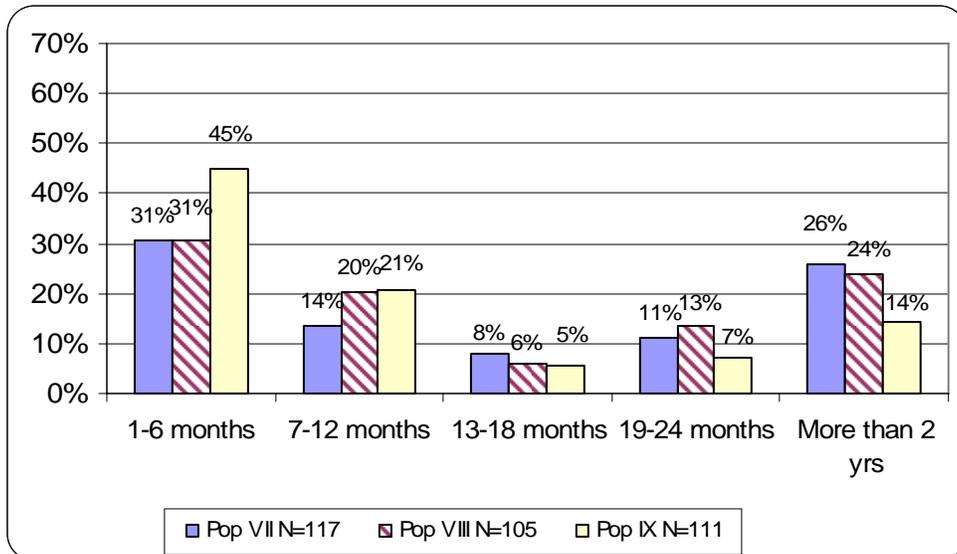
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

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



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



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

Table 4
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

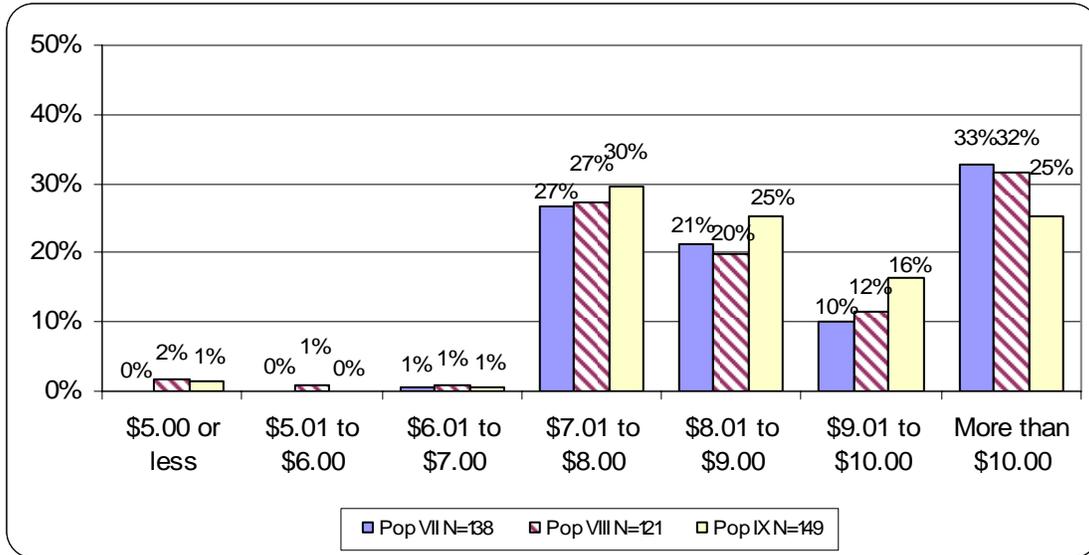
	<u>Population VII</u>		<u>Population VIII</u>		<u>Population IX</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	33.2	32.4	30.8	32.4	31.2	32.0
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>111</i>

Hourly wages were reported for all respondents. Currently employed individuals were asked to indicate their current wage, while those who were unemployed reported their most recent wage. For those who held more than one job, individuals were asked to report their highest wage. One-third each of Populations VII (33%) and VIII (32%) respondents and 25% of Population IX respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$9.69 to \$10.06 per hour. Both the average minimum pay and the average maximum pay are increased from the minimum (\$9.19) and maximum (\$9.35) reported last year (Exhibit 4).

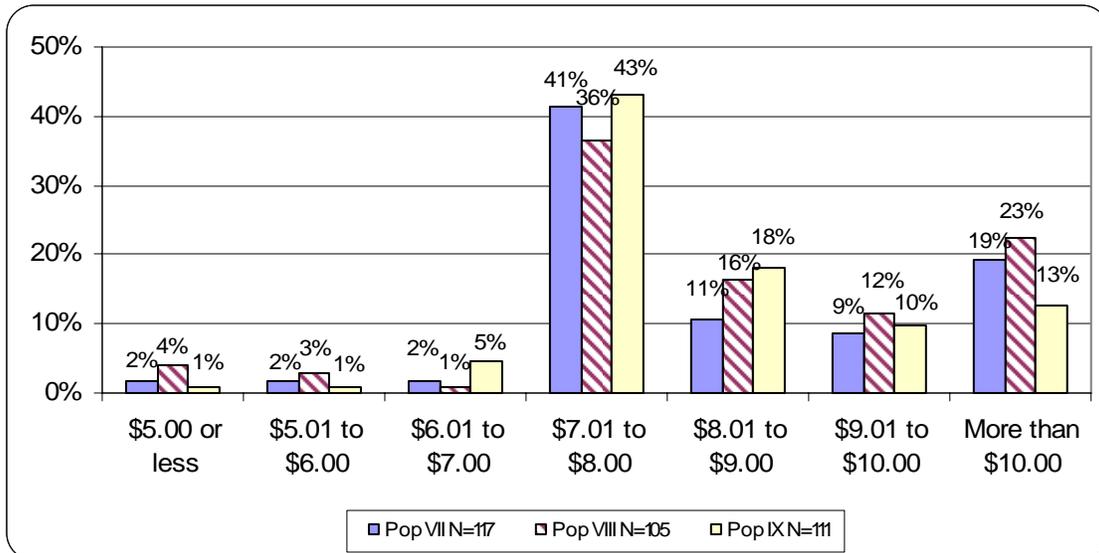
Exhibit 4

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

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



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



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

Table 5
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	19	20	18
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	18	17	20
Restaurant/food services	8	9	10
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	6	8	9
Administrative/support services/clerk	6	7	6
Industrial worker	5	5	6
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	8	6	4
Construction/general labor	3	3	4
Driver/transportation/courier	4	3	4
Skilled trade	4	3	2
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	1	1	*
Child care	4	4	2
Automotive repair/automotive care	*	1	2
Education/teacher/training	2	2	2
Stock/inventory	3	3	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	4	2	1
Technical	1	*	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	1	2	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	2	1	1
Maintenance	1	*	*
Social work	1	1	1
Cosmetology	1	-	-
Pet groomer/animal care	*	-	*
Disabled	-	*	*
Homemaker/chore services	-	1	*
Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations	-	-	-
Military	-	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

* Fewer than one-half of one percent

Among those currently working, more than one-fourth each of respondents from Population VII (28%), Population VIII (27%), and Population IX (29%) indicated they had worked for other employers during the year. This is an increase from the previous year. Among those not working, the proportions of individuals from Population VII (15%) and Population VIII (15%) who reported having worked for other employers during the year have increased in comparison to these same groups last year. Nearly one-fourth of Population IX (24%) respondents, who were not currently working, reported having worked for other employers during the year (Table 6).

Table 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year

	<u>Population VII</u>		<u>Population VIII</u>		<u>Population IX</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	28	15	27	15	29	24
No	69	84	69	84	67	76
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>111</i>

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

Table 7

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	21	10	17
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	16	37	27
Restaurant/food services	5	20	13
Administrative/support services/clerk	14	12	10
Driver/transportation/courier	5	4	3
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	9	10	6
Industrial worker	9	8	3
Stock/inventory	-	2	3
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	5	2	6
Education/teacher/training	-	2	-
Construction/general labor	4	2	1
Child care	4	-	-
Automotive repair/automotive care	2	2	1
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	4	-	4
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	-	2	-
Homemaker/chore services	5	2	4
Skilled trade	4	-	3
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	2	-	3
Technical	-	-	1
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	2	-	3
Maintenance	2	-	-
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	-	-
Social work	-	4	-
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	1
<i>Number responding</i>	56	49	73

** Less than one-half of one percent*

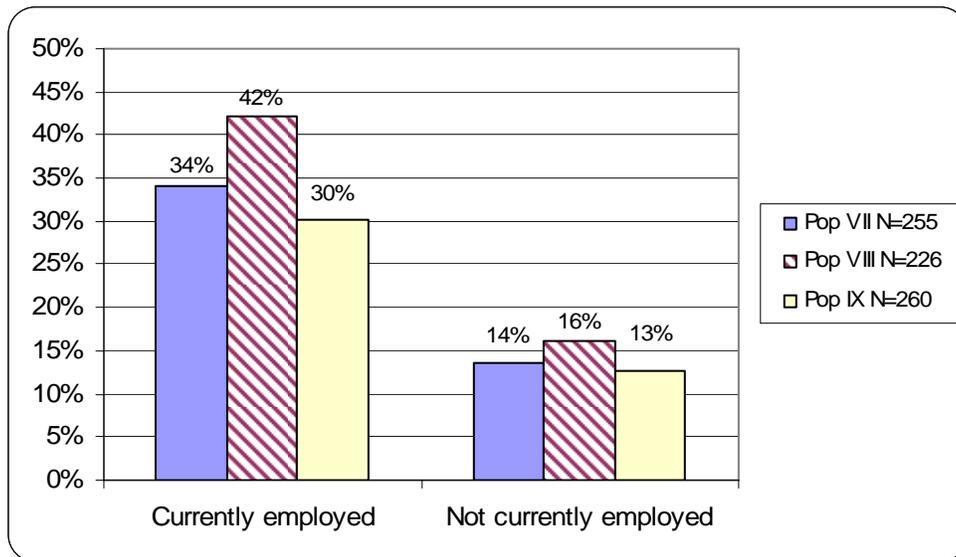
Job and Skills Training

Respondents were asked if their current or most recent employer provided training programs to update their skills. Over one-third of currently employed participants from Populations VII (34%), VIII (42%), and IX (30%) indicated their employers offered training programs. Compared to last year's results for this same group who indicated training was offered, Population VII responses are slightly lower while Population VIII responses are increased (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

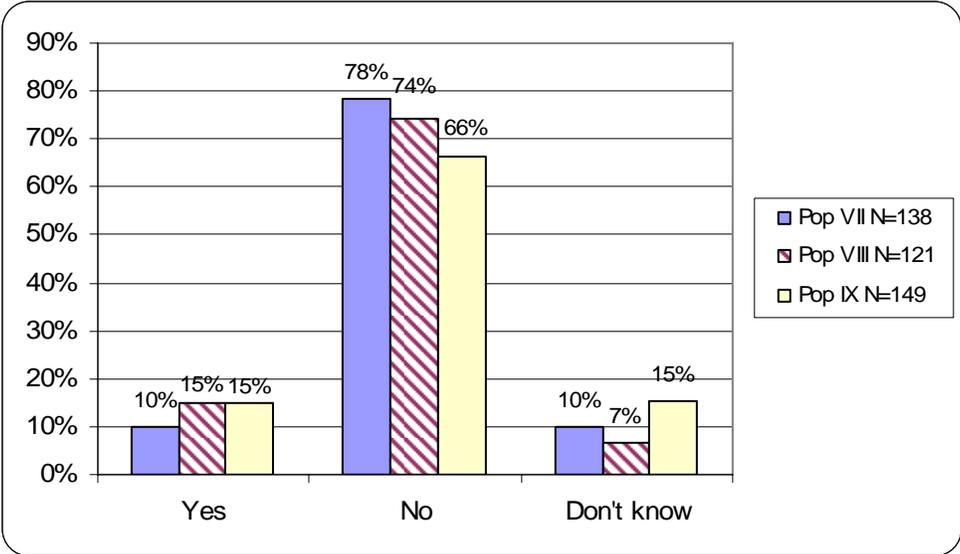
Employer Provides Training Programs



Among those currently employed who indicated their employers offered training, 36% of Population VII participants, 41% of Population VIII participants, and 22% of Population IX participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer. When compared to last year, it appears a lower proportion of participants from Population VII are taking advantage of the training programs, while a higher proportion of Population VIII participants are involved in training programs offered by their employers.

Currently employed respondents answered questions regarding tuition reimbursement. Among these individuals, 10% of Population VII, 15% of Population VIII, and 15% of Population IX respondents indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills. This represents an increase in Population VII respondents and a slight decrease for Population VIII respondents compared to last year's results (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Employer Provides Tuition Reimbursement
(among those currently employed)



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 7% of Population VII participants, 11% of Population VIII participants, and 18% of Population IX participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses. Compared to last year, it appears more Population VII participants are taking advantage of these additional benefits, while far less Population VIII 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. Over half indicated they had not participated in any training since leaving the program. On-the-job training was reported by over one-third of the respondents. These results are higher than those from previous years (Table 8).

Table 8

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	36	36	36
Off-site training	10	12	10
Computer training	9	10	7
Help with reading or math	2	2	3
Tuition reimbursement	1	2	1
None	57	52	54
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

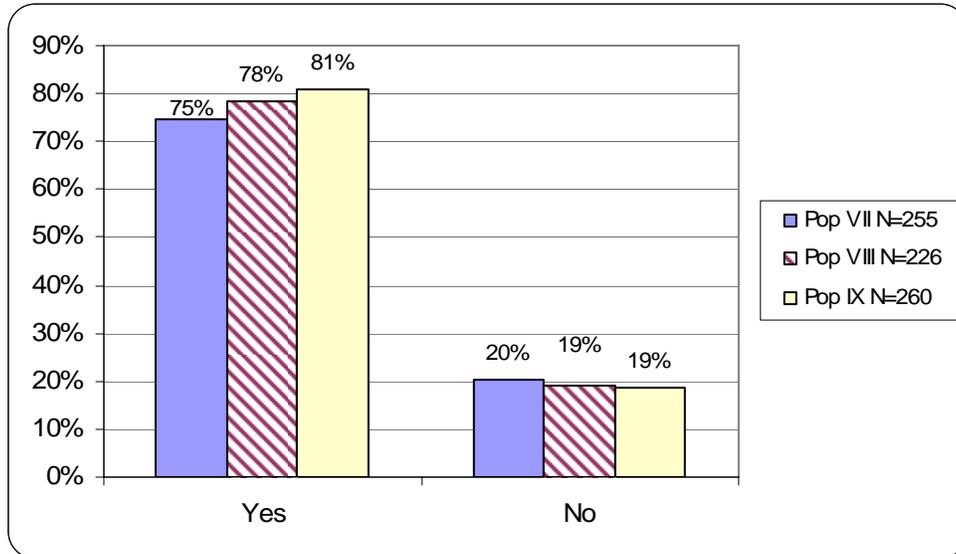
Health Care Coverage

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Approximately eight out of ten of the respondents have health insurance coverage through some source. This is an increase from last year (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?



Health care coverage was provided through various sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. Two-thirds each of Populations VII (63%) and VIII (64%) and half of Population IX (70%) indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program, slightly higher than last year. Eleven percent of Population VII respondents, 12% of Population VIII, and 10% of Population IX respondents indicated having health insurance through their employers. Twenty percent Population VII individuals and 19% each of Populations VIII and IX indicated they did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	63	64	70
Have health insurance through my employer	11	12	10
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	1	2	2
Have no health insurance at all	20	19	19
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

Among those currently working, nearly half of respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. This is similar to the proportion of employers offering health insurance in previous years. More than one-third of Population VII (36%), one-quarter of Population VIII (26%), and 30% of Population IX reported their employers pay for part of the monthly cost, while 28% of Population VII, 37% of Population VIII, and 32% of Population IX indicated their employers did not cover any of the monthly cost. Three percent of Population VII, 4% of Population VIII, and 9% of Population IX whose employers offered health insurance indicated their employers covered all health insurance costs. Interestingly, 34% of Population VII, 33% of Population VIII, and 28% of Population IX respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs. The proportion of employers paying for some or all health insurance costs has decreased since last year (Table 10).

Table 10

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	45	45	48
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>149</i>
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	3	4	9
Part of the monthly cost	36	26	30
None of the monthly cost	27	37	32
Don't know	34	33	28
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>71</i>

Similar to the past two years, nearly all of the respondents (93% of Population VII respondents, 93% of Population VIII respondents, and 98% of Population IX respondents) have children living at home. Approximately four out of ten, similar to last year, indicated they had children who attended elementary school (Table 11).

Table 11

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	93	93	98
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>260</i>
<u>Children Attend</u> (among those with children)			
Childcare	14	14	17
Pre-school	10	10	7
Head Start	12	15	8
Elementary school	47	47	45
Middle school	25	27	22
High school	29	23	26
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>236</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>255</i>

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

Table 12

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	74	83	72
MiChild	24	15	26
Through my/my spouse's employer	7	7	6
No health insurance	2	4	1
<i>Number responding</i>	236	211	255

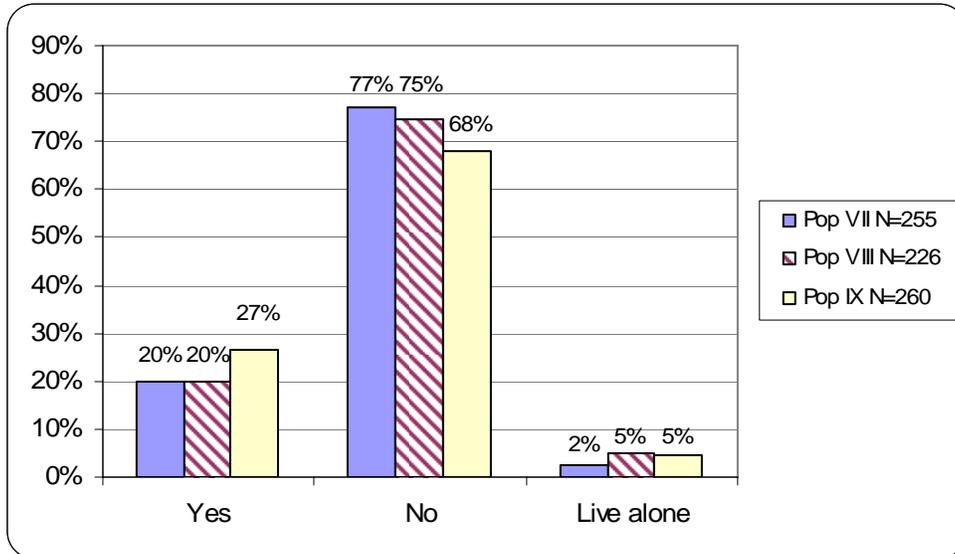
Other Assistance

Respondents were asked about their households and whether or not they received assistance through other sources. When asked if someone else in their household held a paying job, approximately two out of ten reported another household member worked. Specifically, 20% of Population VII, 20% of Population VIII, and 27% of Population IX indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011

Does Anyone Else In Your Household Have a Paying Job?



Over three-fourths overall reported they or someone else in their household receives public assistance, welfare payments, food stamps, vouchers, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or emergency help from Department of Human Services (DHS) or other government agencies (77% of Population VII, 79% of Population VIII, and 79% of Population IX). On average, respondents reported receiving approximately \$364 in welfare payments, almost \$403 in food stamps, and approximately \$600 in SSI payments in the last month. The average dollar amount of outside assistance received by participants for welfare payments and SSI payments has decreased from previous years. There has been a slight increase from last year in the average food stamp payments in the current year (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	4	5	7
\$201 to \$300	2	2	1
\$301 to \$400	4	0	3
\$401 to \$500	4	7	5
Over \$500	2	6	6
No answer/do not receive	84	80	78
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$344.20	\$384.9	\$364.30
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	5	5	6
\$101 to \$200	14	11	13
\$201 to \$300	17	14	12
\$301 to \$400	19	23	22
\$401 to \$500	11	9	16
Over \$500	26	35	29
No answer/do not receive	5	3	2
Average food stamp \$\$	\$391.20	\$414.70	\$402.40
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	1	2	3
\$201 to \$300	1	1	1
\$301 to \$400	1	1	0
\$401 to \$500	1	1	0
\$501 to \$600	2	0	1
Over \$600	10	7	5
No answer/do not receive	85	89	90
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$652.40	\$624.50	\$524.40
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>179</i>	

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Respondents were asked to recall if in the past 12 months there was ever a time when they were not able to pay their mortgage, rent, or utility bills. Approximately seven out of ten respondents from Population VII (70%), Population VIII (70%), and Population IX (71%) reported there had been a time during the past year in which they were unable to pay these bills. Respondents who indicated they had difficulty paying their mortgage, rent, or utility bills reported not being able to pay an average of four

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

Table 14

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	70	70	71
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	3.9 times	4.3 times	4.1 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>157</i>	<i>184</i>

Impact of the Work First Program

Respondents were asked in general how they felt regarding where they were in terms of their household income, their housing condition, their food and nutrition, and their health insurance since not receiving assistance. Respondents most often felt the program left them better off in the area of household income, with approximately four out of ten individuals from Populations VII (40%), VIII (46%) and IX (43%) indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. Three out of ten felt they were better off in terms of their housing conditions and food and nutrition. Approximately three out of ten respondents indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of health care for their children. Approximately three out of ten respondents indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their access to health insurance. Comparing this year to previous years, current respondents were more likely overall, to say they were better off in the areas of household

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

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	40	46	43
The same	29	23	24
A lot/a little worse off	26	28	28
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	35	39	29
The same	45	45	48
A lot/a little worse off	17	12	18
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	33	36	32
The same	49	43	46
A lot/a little worse off	13	16	18
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	33	30
The same	55	54	59
A lot/a little worse off	7	7	5
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	26	30	27
The same	50	49	52
A lot/a little worse off	19	17	16
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, more than one-third of Population VII (36%), Population VIII (37%), and Population IX (40%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find

a job. This is an increase when compared to results from previous studies. Thirty-one percent of Population VII individuals, 34% of Population VIII individuals, and 36% of Population IX individuals indicated the program helped improve their job skills. In the current year, the overall proportion of participants who indicated the program helped to improve their job skills has also increased slightly in comparison to last year (Table 16).

Table 16

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011**

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

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	36	37	40
Improving job skills	31	34	36
Keeping a job	13	14	13
Getting a higher paying job	7	11	10
None	48	44	45
No answer	*	-	-
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

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

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

Table 17

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2011
Did Being in Work First Help Your Family With . . . ?**

	<u>Population VII</u>	<u>Population VIII</u>	<u>Population IX</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	20	17	19
Getting health insurance	7	8	12
Paying your bills on time	15	16	13
Getting better health care	7	4	7
Getting better dental care	5	3	5
Getting better housing	6	6	6
None	69	67	67
No answer	2	2	*
<i>Number responding</i>	255	226	260

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

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

Positive Comments

Work First helped me (network) job seek in places I wasn't aware of.

Very helpful in rides to work and back home and in getting my job.

Good to have their resources to help find a job (computers, people to help you).

Work First is a good program for people who need help finding a job or need experience.

I loved Work First. They helped me get my GED and the staff was wonderful.

Work First has many, many benefits with great opportunities for life skills improvements.

Work First was instrumental in helping me find work – driver's license and payment on car insurance. Thank you.

I think it is very beneficial and the resources were great and helped a lot for my family and myself to move forward in becoming more financially stable.

I was impressed with the people at Work First. I was helped with making a resume. They were a help in getting job interviews.

It is a good program for beginners and parents who do not have high school diplomas or GEDs or work experience.

Thank you for the opportunity for taking the CNA class at no charge. I plan on going for more schooling in the fall of 2011 to become an LPN or RN.

Work First helped me achieve my G.E.D. certificate. I start college classes in 30 days for Heating and Cooling.

It made me become a more responsible person and not to depend on DHS so much. I would agree to keep Work First in effect so they can help more people just like me.

It taught me a lot about looking for work, for instance how to dress, and act in interviews, and that you can always be better than your best.

I would like to thank Work First for getting me started in college classes. That was an awesome step to make a better life for my family.

They helped my family to get a vehicle which made it so helpful to get back and forth to work and appointments.

I got my G.E.D. through Work First. I am planning on attending GRCC in the spring. They helped me with that. It is a great program. Thank you.

Negative Comments

I sat at a computer all day, put in applications and applied on my own. It was run down and over crowded.

Work First expects too much and it is hard for me because I do not have a car or computer to get everything they want done.

The Work First program in my area does not help with anything that has to do with finding, keeping, or improving job skills.

The forced programs did me no good. They were a waste of my time. I am an older woman who has already raised her children. The 40 hours per week job search is almost impossible to do if you have no car.

I wish your Agency would help employ seniors more. A lot of age discrimination.

Work First is a waste of time other than the computers. I do not understand why Word (Microsoft) is not on the computers. That is what is needed to apply for jobs online.

They did not help me. They made me have great depression. They belittle you and treat you like you are retarded.

Mostly I think it is a joke. I was in college and because it went a quarter over, I was taken out. I could have had a good job in computer repair.

It was a waste of time, energy, and gas. A lot of programs I had to take had nothing to do with my situation. I could have got a job quicker without wasting time in "classes".

Work First did not do much. I found my job outside of the Jet Program.

To me personally, it seems like a waste of time. I have gone through Work First four times and I never see any results.

Disrespectful to participants. At most times unhelpful.

The program is a joke. What money that we get is not worth doing the Work First program. (I spent more money in gas and day care and had no money to use for bills. So, we complete the program and up in the same boat we started in, no money to pay bills.)

It makes peoples' life a lot harder when you are already having hardships. It is stressful to jump through hoops or make sure every piece of paper is perfect. They do not even help with job searches. They just require you to do 30 to 40 a week.

They need better communication skills with customers looking for a job.

They could be better at sending people to jobs that they can do instead of jobs they can not do.

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 2011 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, telephone, or online.

In the current year, more than half of the former respondents are currently employed. A majority of these individuals are working at one job. These respondents reported working an average of 32 hours per week. Their average minimum pay of \$9.69 per hour reported for the current year is higher than the minimum of \$9.19 per hour reported last year, as is the average maximum pay reported for the current year of \$10.06 per hour compared to the reported maximum of \$9.35 per hour from last year. Health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. Among those currently not employed, more than one-half each of Populations VII (51%) and VIII (58%) respondents and seven out of ten Population IX (73%) respondents indicated they had worked in the past year. The top reason for being unemployed was not being able to find work.

Approximately one-third of Populations VII (34%), VIII (42%), and IX (30%) participants indicated their current employers offered training programs and ten percent for Population VII, 15% for Population VIII, and 15% for Population IX respondents indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement. This is similar when compared to the previous year of the proportion of participants taking advantage of these employer offered benefits.

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

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

Similar to previous years, over three-quarters of respondents reported they received outside assistance from other organizations and agencies. The dollar amount of the assistance received has decreased when compared to that received in previous years for welfare payments and SSI payments, while food stamp payments have increased slightly.

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

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

Questionnaire