

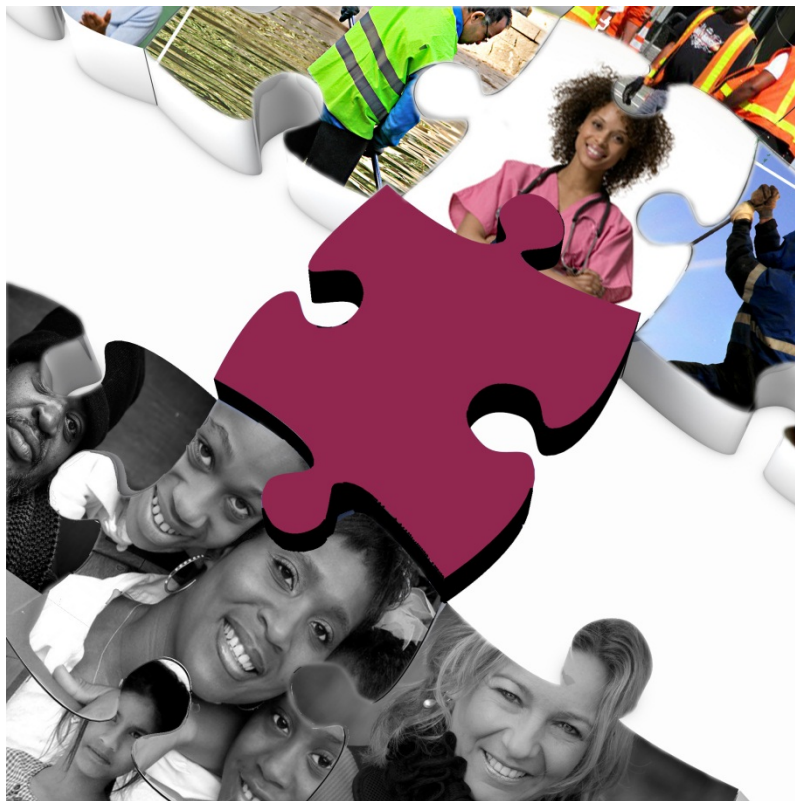
## SECURE JOBS, SECURE HOMES, SECURE FAMILIES Process Evaluation of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot

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Submitted to the Paul & Phyllis Fireman Foundation

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Tatjana Meschede, PhD, Sara Chaganti, MS, MA, Alexandra Revis



*Bridging the Gap between Homelessness and Employment*

## **About the Institute on Assets and Social Policy**

**The Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP)**, a research institute at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, is dedicated to the economic well-being and social mobility of individuals and families, particularly to those traditionally left out of the economic mainstream. Working in close partnership with constituencies, state and federal policy makers, grassroots advocates, private philanthropies, and the media, IASP bridges the worlds of academic research, organizational practice, and government policy-making. IASP works to strengthen the leadership of lawmakers, practitioners, researchers and others by linking the intellectual and program components of asset-building policies. For more information, visit <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/>.

## **Acknowledgements**

There are many individuals we owe our thanks to for supporting this research effort.

First, we are indebted to Ana and Sue from the Fireman Foundation for sharing all information regarding the Secure Jobs Initiative.

Second, we thank the five regional project leaders and their staff for their willingness to be interviewed and to talk openly about the programs they are implementing, as well as for their review of the draft report.

Finally, we are grateful to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for their partnership in data collection their commitment to this evaluation project.

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## **Executive Summary**

As public benefit programs shrink in the face of drastic government cuts, employment becomes increasingly important to low-income individuals and families facing housing insecurity. Employment can offer a key pathway out of homelessness and toward housing stability. However, housing and employment services are traditionally siloed in separate service agencies, and mainstream employment service providers are often reluctant to serve homeless people due to the widespread stigma against homeless people. In response to this challenge, the Secure Jobs Initiative, a \$1.5 million demonstration project funded by the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation, was launched in 2013 and implemented in five regions in Massachusetts.\* These regions also leveraged a total of \$635,000 in additional investments to expand the scope and reach of this Initiative. In addition, one region expanded the model to a shelter provider.

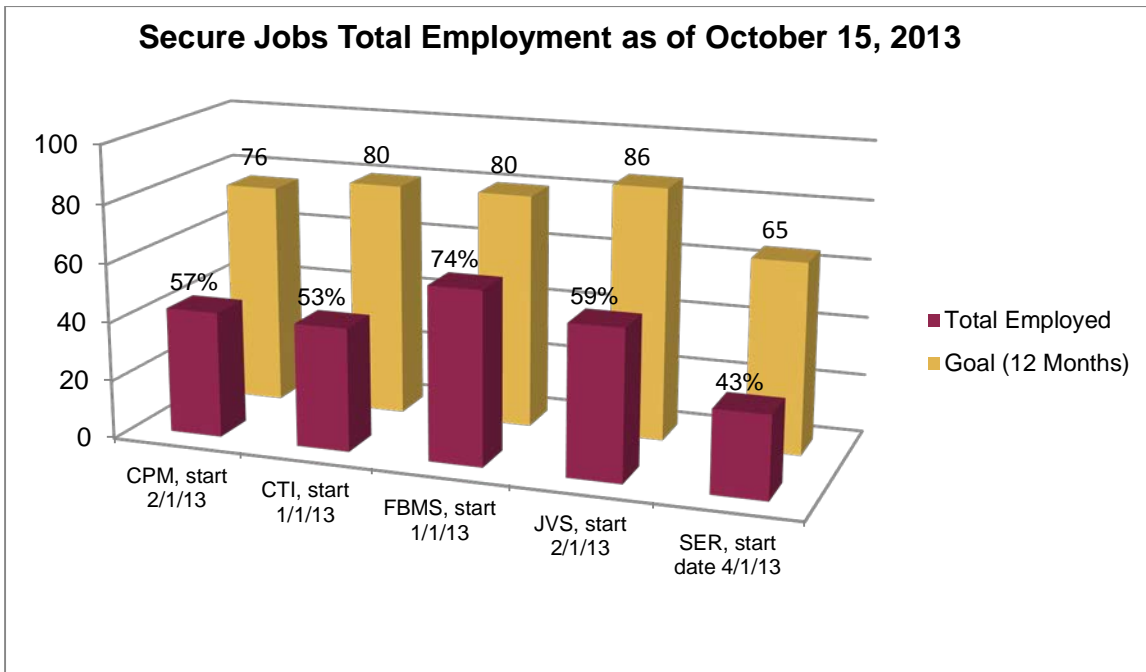
Secure Jobs promotes new partnerships between homeless and workforce development agencies, as well as state agencies. These partnerships identify employable parents residing in a short-term rapid re-housing and rental voucher program, and assess their career plans and skills, as well as the barriers they face to employment. Families are then matched to the services that will help them to overcome these barriers, and connected with suitable employers in jobs with career pathways. After job placement, partner agencies provide a year of retention services.

The families included in the Initiative are very low-income, many with TANF as their sole source of income, and many are members of historically disadvantaged minority groups. By bridging the critical gap between housing and workforce development services, Secure Jobs offers holistic support to help these families overcome the barriers they face to entering and maintaining employment. The Secure Jobs partnerships, in turn, establish the infrastructure to forge new connections with other area resources that homeless families need to transition into full-time employment.

The Fireman Foundation required that grantees set a goal of employing 80% of enrolled participants in the first year. The table below shows the employment goal for each site and their progress toward that goal. The sites did not all start on January 1, 2013 – three of the five had later start dates. Therefore, they are at different points in their year-long grant period. In addition, because many participants go through training programs prior to starting their job search, it is expected that most placements into employment will occur in the last quarter of the grant period. However, the five sites have still placed 223 homeless parents into employment as of October 15, 2013, in spite of the many barriers each family faced and a very sluggish economy.

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\* The five lead agencies: Corporation for Public Management (CPM), Western Massachusetts; Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI), Greater Lowell; Father Bills & MainSpring (FBMS), South Shore; Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), Greater Boston; SER-Jobs for Progress (SER), South Coast.



The Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, was selected to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Secure Jobs Initiative, focusing on the implementation of this pilot and short-term participant outcomes. Data sources include stakeholder interviews; program observations; program-related documents (training curricula, assessment forms, etc.); monthly survey data on program implementation; and quantitative data on the entire participant population including both demographics and detailed income and employment information. This report focuses on the findings related to program implementation during the first nine months of the pilot. A second report will focus on participant housing and employment outcomes during the first year of the Initiative.

## Program Model

- ▶ **Secure Jobs is the right fit for parents who are ready, willing, and able to work.** ◀

*Recruitment and Assessment.* Secure Jobs is open to HomeBASE participants in the regions serviced by the grantee agencies. HomeBASE Stabilization Workers choose from their caseload those whom they determine most “ready, willing, and able” to work, and refer them to Secure Jobs. Secure Jobs Employment Specialists then perform a comprehensive intake interview, including skills testing and career assessment, to determine the best path for each participant.

- ▶ **Individualized service delivery is a hallmark of Secure Jobs.** ◀

*The Three Tracks.* Once assessed, participants are entered into one of three tracks based on their individual service needs. To date, 463 families have been enrolled in Secure Jobs.

*Track 1: Job Readiness Training.* Job Readiness training is a key element of Secure Jobs at all five sites. Common elements of job readiness include resume writing, assistance with cover letters, and interview preparation, including mock interviews. Variations in approach include: 1) a workshop on labor market research to help participants understand what fields are in demand and what starting wages to expect; 2) focus on personal development and self-esteem; and 3) the integration of financial education. The forthcoming participant outcomes report will focus more in-depth on the successes of the different elements based on participant and other stakeholder feedback.

*Track 2: Skills Training.* All five sites enroll a portion of participants into skills training programs at community colleges, vocational schools and private institutions. The sites’ strategies for choosing training programs varies, with some sites designing training programs based on specific regional employers’ demand, and others targeting skills that are in demand locally based on labor market research. To date, 127 homeless parents (27% of enrolled participants) have been enrolled in one of the following training programs: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Medical Assistant, Electronics, Machine Assembly, Food Service and Customer Service.

*Track 3: Job Search.* Participants who have skills and/or experience enter the job search immediately on program entry, and those in skills training enter this track after completing their respective trainings. In this track, Employment Specialists provide one-on-one support in job search activities and navigating job search resources. Some sites refer Track 3 participants to local Career Centers for job search resources, while others have in-house access to electronic job listings. In addition, sites are able to tap into the employer connections through their training partners, such as the vocational high schools or the community colleges.

- ▶ **Secure Jobs transcends boundaries to create integrated service delivery.** ◀

*Communication between Housing and Employment Service Providers.* Regular communication between housing and employment service providers in each partnership is a key element to providing integrated services. Employment Workers and Stabilization Workers in each region meet regularly and are in constant contact by phone and email to discuss each participant’s progress and any issues that he or she may be facing.

- ▶ **Secure Jobs provides connections to employers, critical to landing a job.** ◀

*Job Development.* Each Secure Jobs site has forged relationships with area employers, either through dedicated job development staff on site or through partner organizations, such as Career Centers. These personal connections help participants to get a foot in the door with employers.

- ▶ **Getting a job is only the first step. Retention services help participants to stay employed.** ◀

*Retention Services.* Making the transition to working full-time can be challenging, especially for participants who have been unemployed for a long time. Support during this time is important to help keep participants employed and increase their chances for moving up the career ladder. Secure Jobs retention services include continued case management, monthly peer network support groups, and cash incentives to stay employed.

## **Major Barriers, and Solutions that Work**

Secure Jobs participants face many barriers to employment. Employment and housing workers work together to address these barriers and ease the pathway to work. Key barriers and innovative solutions are listed in the table below:

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Innovative Solution</b>
Child care	Work with DTA to acquire vouchers for those who are eligible; for non-DTA participants, solicit external, time-limited child care funding as stop-gap (especially over summer, until school starts)
Transportation	Provide public transportation passes or help to acquire driver’s license
Small expenses related to employment (e.g. licensing exam fees, textbooks for training courses)	Provide small grants for these expenses
CORI & lack of knowledge about it	Target trainings for CORI-friendly occupations e.g. electronics, and provide assistance in sealing CORI records, if possible
Long gap in work history	Partner with businesses that offer volunteer and internship opportunities, for participants to get experience and make connections that can lead to a job
Limited availability of training programs, especially in summer	Work with vocational school and community college partners to create summer training programs specifically for Secure Jobs cohort

## Innovative Programmatic Approaches

The Secure Jobs Initiative is a unique program model that offers support to create lasting change in homeless families' lives.

- ❖ Secure Jobs is **voluntary, flexible, and individualized**, but consistent attendance is essential—it is the primary determinant of enrollment and success in the program.
- ❖ **Integrated service delivery** is essential to addressing all barriers and moving people into jobs.
- ❖ Effective service delivery depends on having a **system in place for communication between housing and employment** service providers, especially during the *recruitment* process.
- ❖ Each site created a **curriculum for Job Readiness Training** that best suited its participants. It is worth noting that while Job Readiness Training is seen as important across the board, there is little shared understanding of what this term means, or a standardized Job Readiness curriculum.
- ❖ **Career counseling** with the Employment Specialist is a key element of Secure Jobs; without it, homeless parents may choose careers without knowing much about them and that might not be good options for them.
- ❖ **Flexible funds** meet unanticipated needs such as the cost of a licensure exam or scrubs for a new job as a home health aide.
- ❖ **Quality data are** essential for program planning, implementation and evaluation. They require a shared understanding among all program partners of what data elements are needed and a common database structure in which to enter participant-level data. Integrating data collection practices into service delivery promotes the collection of quality data, as does dedicated data management staff.
- ❖ **Strong leadership** by the Fireman Foundation has been critical to establishing this Initiative, convening service provider agencies together with local and state government partners, and sharing model elements nationally, including a presentation at the annual meeting of the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

*Juliet, a single mom with a four-year-old daughter, had worked at Dunkin' Donuts for three years before getting laid off. She desperately wanted to work again in an administrative position where she could sit down at her job. With only nine months left on her HomeBASE Rental Assistance, she was worried about how she would keep a stable home for her daughter. She tried using the services available through her local Career Center and TANF to find a new job, but the self-directed model that these resources offer did not give her enough support. These programs did not help her to strategize her job search to find a position that she really wanted. Secure Jobs gave her that individualized attention that she needed. With the help of her Secure Jobs Employment Specialist, Juliet found a job listing for a full-time administrative job at a catering company, applied and got the job, and has been very happily employed ever since. She says that the Secure Jobs staff "stayed on top of me" throughout the process. This intensive support is what she needed to succeed, and what no other program had offered her before.*





# **SECURE JOBS, SECURE HOMES, SECURE FAMILIES**

## Process Evaluation of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot

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Tatjana Meschede, PhD  
Sara Chaganti, MS, MA  
Alexandra Revis

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## Introduction

The Secure Jobs Initiative, a \$1.5 million demonstration project funded by The Fireman Foundation, is designed to link homeless families participating in Massachusetts' HomeBASE program to the resources and services they need to enter and sustain employment. Starting in January 2013, this Initiative has made possible the creation of an innovative service delivery approach and test of its success in the pilot year of funding. In five regions across the state, workforce development and homeless services are linked to offer a comprehensive and individualized set of services that addresses these families' barriers to employment and gives them both the tools they need to enter the workforce and the critical connections to employers that will help them get jobs. Grantees are lead agencies for each partnership, and can be either workforce development or homeless service provider agencies (see [Appendix 1](#) for more information on the five lead agencies.) Each site offers a different model, but all subscribe to the same core principles that include offering three tracks to employment: job readiness, skills training, and job search.

In addition, the Fireman Foundation's active leadership has facilitated the formation and development of intra-regional partnerships and inter-regional learning about best practices. And the Fireman Foundation and several program sites have solicited additional funding from regional partners to expand their caseloads, services offered and the length of service delivery. Supplementary funders include state agencies, municipal governments and private businesses, and to date, supplementary funds total \$635,000. One partner agency has used its own funds to reproduce the Secure Jobs model for shelter residents (See [Appendix 2](#) for more information on these leveraged funds.) Overall, Secure Jobs has been met with enthusiastic support by stakeholders ranging from participants to private industry employers and state agency administrators. This report describes the implementation phase over the first nine months of the Initiative.

Selected by The Fireman Foundation, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at Brandeis University is evaluating the implementation and early outcomes of this Secure Jobs Initiative. To document the process of implementing this new approach to workforce development for homeless families, IASP draws on a number of different data sources including: 1) monthly data from all five sites on successes and challenges in administering the Initiative; 2) interviews with frontline and administrative staff in both housing and workforce development at all five sites as well as key program administrators and state partners; 3) attendance at orientations and advisory committee meetings; 4) observations of job readiness training both in-house and at Career Centers; and 5) participation in Fireman's monthly phone calls and quarterly meetings. Based on this plethora of information, we analyze and summarize below emerging key implementation findings of the Initiative in all five sites.

## **Background**

Rapid re-housing with short-term housing subsidies has recently emerged as a solution to family homelessness that is both better for family stability and less costly for the state than the traditional family shelter model.<sup>6, 20</sup> HomeBASE, a state-administered program for families facing homelessness, offers short-term housing subsidies in two ways: two years of rental assistance or a lump sum of up to \$4,000 in household assistance. HomeBASE was launched in the fall of 2011, with most families entering the program at that time opting for the two-year rental subsidy.<sup>8</sup> In 2012, enrollment into the short-term rental subsidy program was ended, but the household assistance program continues to enroll new participants.

To remain stably housed, it is critical for homeless families in HomeBASE to find a way to increase their household income before their subsidy ends.<sup>29</sup> However, families on short-term subsidies often face many barriers to employment, including lack of safe, reliable child care, transportation options, education and training, and expertise in resume design and interviewing skills. Targeted interventions are needed to help these families navigate the many hurdles they face towards a path of employment and financial stability for their families.

## **Housing and Employment: Two Separate Worlds**

Housing and employment services are traditionally siloed.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, families in housing subsidy programs do not receive employment services with their housing vouchers and case management, and mainstream employment services often are not able to meet their needs. What these families mostly need are specialized services to help them to overcome barriers to employment so that they can make ends meet once their housing subsidy ends. Homeless people have access to traditional Career Center services, but research has shown that they are underserved by these resources.<sup>27</sup> And, because homeless people are considered hard to employ, Career Centers, which are funded according to performance-based measures, have little incentive to dedicate their limited resources to this population.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, high rates of unemployment persist among homeless individuals and families.<sup>12, 17, 22</sup>

*Secure Jobs [is] a way of bringing [together] entities that were pretty much siloed. Before, you know, [it was each agency saying] we're the 'housers', we're the shelter-providers, we're the daycare people, and basically saying 'Ok, we're really all together and we're going to try to find a way of ensuring all the pieces that a family needs in order to be successful and stay out of the homeless system are threaded together'...And the learning is, what's the best practice to ensure that as we move forward? I think that would be the ideal thing that we're looking to come out of Secure Jobs.*

*-Staff Member, State Agency Partner*

In addition to siloed services, mainstream employment service agencies are often reluctant to offer services to homeless people because they are considered “hard-to-employ.” Research shows that the majority of homeless people want to work, but that employment services are not accessible to them.<sup>24</sup> The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) does not collect data on homeless usage of WIA services, but researchers suggest that given their performance-based contracts, they are less likely to try to serve homeless people, who are harder to employ and, therefore, will require more services.<sup>27</sup> In other words, Career Centers which were created under WIA often don’t meet the need of homeless people.

*And I think the challenge is [that] no one wants to own homelessness... [Many] will say it’s not my thing, but it really is everybody’s thing because it impacts every agency out there.*

-Staff Member, State Agency Partner

Studies have shown that integrating housing and employment services can have very positive effects for homeless individuals. Specifically, studies on a number of government and privately funded programs which provide integrated housing and employment services for homeless *individuals* indicate positive results.<sup>9, 16-18, 21, 25-27, 29</sup> While considerably less research exists on employment programs for homeless *families*, studies do show that integrated service delivery is recommended for this population as well.<sup>12, 17, 27</sup> Notably, in a review of three sites implementing bundled, integrated services, participants were three to four times more likely to achieve a major economic outcome, such as gainful employment, than those receiving only one kind of service.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Secure Jobs Initiative**

The Fireman Foundation designed the Secure Jobs Initiative with input from seven of the state's Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing (ICHH) Regional Networks to End Homelessness on how best to move homeless families towards self-sufficiency. The input that Secure Jobs received spoke to the need for employment services targeted specifically at homeless families, and for communication between housing and employment service providers to offer streamlined service delivery.

In September, 2012, the Fireman Foundation issued an RFP for two sites to receive grants in the amount of between \$200,000 and \$400,000 to implement programs focusing on these two needs.<sup>†</sup> Fireman required the following of applicants:

- Accurate assessment of families in HomeBASE to identify and enroll those most “ready, willing and able” to work
- Development of individual, strategic employment plans for each family including skills training, if necessary, plus job readiness training, motivational interviewing or other motivational work, and targeted search for jobs with career advancement possibilities
- Case management to address barriers to employment
- Continued support for job retention and advancement up a career ladder
- Signed contracts between staff and participants outlining roles and responsibilities in implementing the employment action plan
- Systems change within the service provider agency to integrate employment and housing services for holistic family support
- Development and regular meeting of an Advisory Committee composed of community partners including service providers, employers, state and local advocates, and Regional Network representative

Fireman required the following outcomes of grantees:

- 80% of enrolled families enter employment
- 80% of employed families retain employment for one year
- Increased systems coordination between service providers (housing, employment, child care, etc.)

By March, 2013, Fireman had increased its funding level to \$1.5 million, to support five Secure Jobs partnerships across the state. The five sites have many similar program elements, as well as some important differences (see [Appendix 1](#) for more detailed information on the five sites).

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<sup>†</sup> Fireman had already agreed to fund a third site, which had committed to offering a unique program model partnering with local vocational high schools to provide skills training; funds for the three sites totaled \$1 million.

## The Evaluation

The Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, was selected to conduct a mixed-methods process and outcome evaluation of the Secure Jobs Initiative. Guiding the research are the following four evaluation questions, of which the first three are addressed in this report. The fourth question will be addressed in a forthcoming report on participant outcomes during the pilot year (see [Appendix 3](#) for further elaboration of these questions and the research methods.)

1. What are the components in each of the five sites, and how do they differ?
2. How is each project being implemented in its respective region?
3. What level and types of support/training are needed to improve employment outcomes for participants? Are there differences between the five regional projects?
4. What are the impacts and income growth outcomes for project participants?

The research team is conducting a mixed methods evaluation, using several data sources including:

- Documents: recruitment tools, assessment forms, meeting minutes, job descriptions for new positions under this grant; training curricula (all 5 sites)
- Interviews and focus groups with Site Coordinators, housing and workforce development staff at different levels (34 respondents total, all 5 sites)
- Observations of intake, assessment, job readiness training (6 total, all 5 sites)
- Observations of Advisory Board meetings (9 total, 4 sites)
- Interviews with state agencies (3 total, 2 agencies)
- Monthly reports on implementation, collected from each site every month, including monthly enrollment numbers (all 5 sites)
- Quarterly participant tracking and outcome data to be merged with state agency data on housing and homeless history

These data sources are all combined to provide an integrated picture of the Secure Jobs Initiative. The mixed methods research design is particularly effective for evaluation research.<sup>2</sup> The data are analyzed using qualitative data analysis software to track emergent themes<sup>5</sup> and statistical software to analyze the quantitative participant level data. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval has been granted for this research.

## The Secure Jobs Model: Individualized, Integrated Service Delivery

The five Secure Jobs sites share basic program elements, as laid out by The Fireman Foundation. However, how each element was designed and is implemented varies between sites and has changed over time. These elements, and their evolution over the first nine months of the Initiative, are described below. Table 1 summarizes key program elements and differences in their implementation across the sites.

### **Transcending Boundaries: Communication between Housing and Employment**

In order to build a successful Initiative, it was critical that each site connect housing and employment services effectively from the start. As each site started with different resources in-house, this process differed across program sites. After some initial challenges with communication between new housing and workforce development partners, all five sites have created and institutionalized these partnerships effectively.

At three of the sites, the lead agency is an employment service provider, with no prior experience in housing services. These sites partnered with their local HomeBASE provider agencies. They conducted information sessions with the HomeBASE providers' stabilization staff to introduce them to Secure Jobs and explain the referral criteria and process. They then set up regular weekly or monthly meetings of

*Sometimes I feel like we've enlightened [the employment staff] about all the other stuff that the clients are bringing with them: The baggage from being in a homeless shelter, like trauma, anxiety depression, what have you.*  
-HomeBASE Stabilization Worker

*Secure Jobs is a partnership by design, not just a service or program we've heard about and are referring people to... It's easier to refer people when you know you can follow up in the next meeting... In other programs we feel like we send a referral into the abyss and just hope for the best. [Also, with dedicated employment staff,] I can focus on other important issues with them like housing, because I don't have to focus on the job search.*

-HomeBASE Stabilization Worker

housing and employment staff, as well as constant informal communication by email and phone. This sharing of participant information is critical to effective service provision.

The other two sites are homeless service providers that have some experience with workforce development as well. Both of these sites are the largest HomeBASE providers in their respective regions, so the majority of their Secure

Jobs caseload comes from their own HomeBASE participants. One of these sites is doing all the Secure Jobs work in-house, with a new staff hired specifically for Secure Jobs. The other site has contracted its employment services out to the local Career Center, and dedicated a portion of its stabilization staff to work exclusively with Secure Jobs participants, in conjunction with the Career Center staff.



Some sites have regular meetings of Secure Jobs staff and *all* Stabilization Workers working with Secure Jobs participants. Others have asked each housing agency to identify one point person who works with all the Secure Jobs participants in the agency's caseload. Both of these models have worked well.

### **Recruitment and Referral: Ready, Willing and Able**

*There are times when a stabilization worker [refers someone with] no work experience, no GED, [they say to us,] "I don't know what the hell you're going to do with them but, here you go!" And we kind of laugh about it but still do an intake [and even accept them if they are ready, willing and able.] Then we have others who have a 4 year degree, great candidate, but struggle finding work because of childcare issues, can't get to work, things like that.*

-Employment Specialist

At all sites, HomeBASE Stabilization Workers select from their caseloads those most appropriate for Secure Jobs and refer them to the Secure Jobs coordinator. The grant proposed that each site's HomeBASE referring agency identify HomeBASE participants who are "ready, willing and able" to work. Each had the discretion to define "ready, willing and able" as it saw fit, and to advise the referring agency accordingly.

In fact, Stabilization Workers are referring a broad spectrum of potential participants, ranging from those with no high school diploma or work history to those with a four-year college degree. Some face language barriers, others have psychiatric challenges, and many want to work but are also very nervous about making the transition. Stabilization Workers state that they struggle with knowing who would be an appropriate referral, and at times rely on intuition.

Ultimately, all sites report that the most important criterion for enrollment is consistent attendance. Site Coordinators state that they call all the referrals for an appointment and enroll those who show up for the intake sessions or are in touch when they cannot keep the appointment. In other words, *willingness*, or a referred client's ability to follow through with an appointment, is the most important piece of the "ready, willing and able" determination.

*I have to admit, I've enrolled people who have so many barriers, [but I] saw something in them, like vulnerability and desire [that made me think they would succeed.]*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

Referral criteria changed in the first few months of program implementation. As the summer approached, Stabilization Workers began to prioritize those HomeBASE Rental Assistance participants whose rental subsidy was due to expire soon, hoping that Secure Jobs could help them find a job that would allow them to stay in their apartments. Because of this development,

#### **CHANGE IN PLANS**

The criteria for referrals changed as HomeBASE Rental Assistance drew to an end for many participants.

the definition of “ready, willing and able” was relaxed to some degree. For example, one site had initially asked Stabilization Workers only to refer those with a high school diploma or GED, but later they withdrew that requirement.

## **Intake & Assessment**

The intake and assessment process is central to creating an employment plan that works for the participant. This process varied between sites and also changed over time within sites.

The key elements of the intake and assessment process across the five sites are as follows:

*Initial Interview.* All five sites started with the plan to interview each referral individually.

However, several sites reported participants not showing up for scheduled interviews. In response to this issue, two sites switched to a *group intake session* in which many referred participants (as many as 50-75) receive letters in the mail inviting them to an orientation for this new program.

Those who come to the session or call to express interest but inability to attend this session are enrolled. This model has proven quite effective.

*On the first intake, I always say, “This is a privilege to be referred.” I always start with “congratulations,” because we told the case managers to only send the best of the best and you’re demonstrating that you’re the best of the best right now and that you’re investing in yourself...*

*-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator*

At group intakes, the Initiative is described to the group as a whole, and then each participant meets with an Employment Specialist to discuss her particular situation and to schedule a follow-up interview. Employment Specialists then follow up with invited participants who did not show up or call, to offer them a second chance. Because of the Employment Specialists’ connection to Stabilization Workers, they are able to find out what is keeping participants from attending, and address any barriers in order to make program participation possible.

### **CHANGE IN PLANS**

Some sites moved from individual to group assessments in response to missed assessment appointments.

*A Voluntary Program for the Best of the Best.* Site Coordinators make a point of emphasizing at the intake session that Secure Jobs is not like other programs. Stabilization Workers only refer the “best of the best” to Secure Jobs, so it is an honor to be chosen. And it is a strictly voluntary program in which staff are flexible to meet participants’ individual needs. Once participants are enrolled, they sign a contract with the Secure Jobs staff stating a commitment to work together and to follow through (see [Appendix 4](#) for an example of a contract).

*Setting Goals.* Employment Specialists work with participants to set short- and long- term goals. In order to form realistic goals, Employment Specialists need to have information not only about participants’ interests and work history, but also about their family situations, time left on HomeBASE, and any income supports they may be receiving (e.g. TAFDC), as well as availability of child care, social supports, transportation options, and any other issues such as health problems or CORI records. This holistic view of participants is essential to helping them to consider goals that they can achieve and that will put them on a path towards self-sufficiency.

*[Secure Jobs] is customized to the client’s needs... [It] does not follow the old model of requiring people to be there at 9am and sanctioning them if they are not. Instead, [Secure Jobs staff] wants to support people who want to work and reward them for their effort.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

- Several sites report that a majority of their participants express an interest in CNA training, not realizing the challenges this job poses. In fact, CNAs have to work off-hours, which makes finding child care difficult; heavy lifting is required; and anyone with a CORI record cannot work in a health care facility. Employment Specialists use the intake session to explain the realities of this and other jobs.

*Testing.* Most sites engage in some kind of assessment testing during the intake. Several sites use the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE.) These are both commonly used to assess adult learners’ grade level in reading, math and language, and to decide if a GED course would be appropriate. In addition, several career assessment tools are used to find the careers for which the participant is best suited.

- One site uses the Wide Range Interest and Occupation Test (WRIOT). This computer-based test offers the participant a series of drawings depicting people in various jobs: working at a construction site, wearing scrubs and standing next to a patient in a hospital bed, sitting at a desk with a computer in a cubicle, washing windows, wearing a lab coat and goggles and standing at a lab bench with a test tube, delivering a sermon, etc. Clients click on the images of workplaces that they like, or in which they can see themselves. The test tabulates the data and, based on the expressed preferences, delivers clusters of occupations and potential jobs that would satisfy the participant. Because there are no words, this test is particularly good for people with limited English skills.

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At the conclusion of the intake and assessment process, participants are entered into one of three tracks.

### Summary: The Five Sites

While basic program elements are the same across all sites, there are some important differences in the program model between the sites. The table below summarizes these differences.

Program Element	Corporation for Public Management	Community Teamwork, Inc.	Father Bill's & MainSpring	Jewish Vocational Services	SER-Jobs for Progress
Type of Agency	Employment	Housing	Housing & Employment	Employment	Employment
Intake	Group	Individual	Group	Group	Individual
New Staff	Site Coordinator, Employment Specialist (FT), Job Developer (PT)	Site Coordinator, Employment Specialist (FT), Job Developer (PT)	Site Coordinator (FT), Employment Specialist (3 FT)	Site Coordinator, VELT Instructor (PT), Employment Specialist (1 FT), Job Readiness Instructor (2 PT)	Site Coordinator, Employment Specialist (PT), Job Developer (PT)
Job Readiness	One-on-one	Class at Career Center	One-on-One	Class	Class
Training Vendors	Private	Vocational Schools	Private, Community College	Private, In-House Career Center	Private, Community College
Job Development	Employment Specialists	Use Career Center & Vocational Schools	In-House Dedicated (FT)	Employment Specialist, In-House Career Center	Employment Specialists
Retention Services	One-on-One with Job Navigator, Monthly Support Group	One-on-One with Retention Specialist	One-on-One with Employment Specialist	One-on-One with Stabilization Worker, Monthly Support Group	One-on-one with Coordinator or Job Developer/ Job Coach

## The Three Tracks

The Fireman Foundation designed the Initiative with three tracks in order that each site have a system for providing an appropriate level of service to each individual participant based on his or her need. The sites, however, had the discretion to define the services offered and how they are delivered in track. The three tracks are described below, as well as variation between the sites in implementation of each track.

### Track 1: Job Readiness Training

All five sites require that all Secure Jobs participants engage in some form of job readiness training. Job readiness training is a term that encompasses a range of activities, with no standard definition. It is generally understood to include some combination of career assessment and counseling, help with interviews, resumes and job search, instruction in workplace social skills and behaviors (soft skills,) and counseling on retention and advancement.<sup>15</sup>

In keeping with the lack of standardization in job readiness training generally, the five sites' job readiness programs vary in content and structure. Two sites offer classroom instruction in job readiness for cohorts of Secure Jobs participants. One site contracted with the local Career Center to offer a similar course just for Secure Jobs participants at the Career Center. And the last two sites do job readiness training through a participant's one-on-one work with Employment Specialists.

*In-House Job Readiness Class.* The two in-house programs both have attendance requirements and dress codes for all participants. One program meets one half-day a week for four weeks and the other meets every day for half a day for one week. Characteristics of these programs include:

- Flexibility with rules, based on participant's individual situation
- Professional attire on hand if a participant showed up inappropriately dressed
- Classrooms with computers, which participants can use for job search and to work on resumes and cover letters; one program provides participants with flash drives on which they can save their documents
- Curricula developed in-house by instructors, and focused on:
  - identifying the participants' strengths and talents so that she can "sell herself" to potential employers
  - accountability—e.g. answering the phone promptly, returning phone calls and emails from employers
  - confidence in self-presentation
- Interactive classes in which participants have the opportunity to present their individual situations to the group; staff helps them to frame issues such as long gaps in employment and lack of a college degree so that these issues will not work against them

(See [Appendix 5](#) for a case study of a job readiness class.)

*Job Readiness at the Career Center: Labor Market Research.* The Career Center job readiness course runs for four full weeks. Four days a week are spent on job search activities in a computer lab, with staff present whose primary commitment is to Secure Jobs

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participants. Friday mornings are reserved for classroom job readiness training. These classes also cover interviews, resumes and cover letters, but the first class is dedicated to labor market research. In this class, the instructor gives participants the tools to research what industries are growing in their geographic area, average wages in various occupational sectors, and the skills required for potential careers. Participants, therefore, are shown how to plan their job search strategically, focusing on careers that can offer them the wage and job stability they need to support their families in the long term.

*Individual Job Readiness.* Individual job readiness is much less structured, and occurs intertwined with case management to address barriers to employment. Participants meet with their Employment Specialists anywhere from several times a week to once every two or three weeks, depending on their needs. In these meetings, they might discuss progress on job applications, complete paperwork for child care vouchers, strategize how to stretch a limited budget for the rest of the month, search online job databases together, go over cover letters and discuss how to get a driver's license reinstated. One Employment Specialist reports having played with a participant's children in the office while the participant completed a lengthy online job application on the Employment Specialist's computer. Because the participant did not have a computer at home or child care, this was the only way to get this application submitted. At another site, as the Employment Specialist listened to a participant's story about losing her phlebotomy certification documents, she corrected the participant's grammar to demonstrate how the participant should present herself on a job interview. This method of job readiness instruction is more tailored to the individual's situation on any give day, and is less formal.

- One site's Employment Specialists work out of an office at the local Career Center. The lead agency rents this space so that participants can have access to all the Career Center's resources when they meet with their Employment Specialists. This partnership has been very effective in introducing participants to all that Career Centers have to offer, but still giving them the one-on-one guidance that they need. And, while children are not allowed in Career Centers, they are permitted in the Employment Specialists' office in this Career Center, so this site's participants do not need to find child care in order to meet with their Employment Specialists.

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### **Track 2: Skills Training**

With Secure Jobs funding, 127 participants have been able to enter training programs across several industries that strengthen their skills and may place them into jobs with wages above their previous work opportunities. The following table displays types of training programs that Secure Jobs participants have completed.

Medical Training	Technical Training	Services Training	Other
Caring for Seniors	Computer Numerical	Automotive	Early Learning Teacher Training
Blood Borne Pathogens	Control Machinist	Clerical Training	Social Media
Certified Nurse's Assistant	Electronic Assembly, Soldering and Inspection	Cosmetology	
CPR and First Aid	Precision Machinist	CVS Customer Service Training	
Emergency Medical Technician/Service	Welding	Notary Public	
Home Health Aide		Serv-Safe Food Prep	
Licensed Practical Nurse		Traffic Flagger	
Medical Administration			
Pharmacy Tech			
Phlebotomy			

The five sites chose skills training programs differently. One site was specifically focused on making use of the local vocational schools, and entered participants into the classes that these schools were running. Another sought out training programs for careers that are CORI-friendly for all their participants with CORI records.

- One site designed a short-term medical administration course for participants. The usual medical administration sequence can take a year full-time, or two years part-time. But HomeBASE recipients do not have that much time. And prerequisites and lengthy lists of requirements can be off-putting to unemployed low-income adults trying to make a career change.<sup>13</sup> So the Site Coordinator surveyed local employers in medical fields to find out what skills were most in demand. She then put together a subset of courses from the medical administration curriculum that taught these particular skills. This subset can be completed part-time in one year. A Secure Jobs cohort is starting this sequence this fall with tutoring support in place, if needed.

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**Track 3: Job Search**

Those participants who do not need skills training, and participants who completed such training, go straight into the job search. Employment Specialists instruct them in using online job databases such as indeed.com and websites such as craigslist.com to find jobs. Participants are coached in writing cover letters, editing a resume to make it cohesive and, if necessary, address gaps in employment, and filling out online job applications. The job search process is intensive: participants generally engage in job search and applications five days a week, and are in constant email and phone contact with Employment Specialists to go over cover letters and resumes. All five sites have computers on site that participants can use, or they can go to the local Career Center. When they are offered interviews, Employment Specialists conduct mock interviews, help them to choose appropriate clothes, and in some cases drive participants to the interview, if transportation is not otherwise available. This hands-on approach is critical to a successful job

search. And the support that Employment Specialists provide is as important as the instruction they offer. The job search process can be long, stressful and discouraging, and participants need someone to keep them engaged in it when they are ready to give up.

Site	Track 1: Job Readiness	Track 2: Skills Training	Track 3: Ready to Work	Total Enrolled*
Corporation for Public Management (Western MA, started 2/1/13)	38	11	20	69
Father Bill's & MainSpring (South Shore, started 1/1/13)	96	42	52	96
SER-Jobs for Progress (South Coast, started 4/1/13)	40	12	42	72
Community Teamwork, Inc. (Greater Lowell, started 1/1/13)	36	40	63	99
Jewish Vocational Services (Greater Boston, started 2/1/13)	50	22	17	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>463</b>

### Vocational English: A Fourth Track

**CHANGE IN PLANS**  
 In response to receiving many clients with limited English skills, one site started a Vocational English Language Training track.

Several sites reported receiving referrals that were ready, willing and able to work, and even had child care, but whose English language skills were insufficient to get through a job interview successfully. At first, those with insufficient English language skills were not accepted into the program. Later, the sites

with non-English speaking referrals began to look for community resources that could help. But they found that the beginning conversational ESOL classes did not offer a high enough level of language skills to get through a job application or interview. One site reported that the local Career Center offered a vocational English class, with more technical vocabulary related to various workplaces, but this class was too advanced, and had a very long waiting list. There was no intermediate-level class available.

*After going through the beginner ESOL class several times, people are not getting the level of English that they need [for the job interview].*  
 -Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

- In response, and with additional funding from the Fireman Foundation, one site designed a fourth track, Vocational English Language Training (VELT). This site had previous experience in vocational English training for refugee populations, so staff was able to make slight adaptations to their existing curriculum to create a class for Secure Jobs participants. The site then hired a part-time instructor just for Secure Jobs

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VELT participants. The VELT course covers conversational English as well as technical vocabulary related to specific occupations that participants might target. In class, participants practice their interviewing skills and get trained in customer service skills. And the VELT instructor has connections with employers who have positions open that do not require fluency in English. The VELT track has been very successful. To date, 15 Secure Jobs participants have been referred to the program, and four VELT graduates are currently employed.

## Job Development

Job development is perhaps the most critical piece of the Secure Jobs model. Research has shown that people with connections to employers are much more likely to get jobs; however people in low-income neighborhoods, such as Secure Jobs participants, are less likely to have these connections.<sup>10, 31</sup> For Secure Jobs participants who are ready to work, a personal connection to an employer can give them the edge they need to get an interview and possibly a job. But many Secure Jobs participants have not worked in many years, and are entering fields in which they have not worked previously, so they do not have recent managers or co-workers who can help them out.

All five sites were required to enter the Secure Jobs Initiative with employer partners in place who are committed to supporting the Secure Jobs mission by considering Secure Jobs participants for employment at their respective organizations. In the first nine months of project implementation, all five sites have built on these connections and considerably expanded their pool of potential employers.

*[The Job Developer] literally walks around with a bag full of [Secure Jobs participants'] resumes. And as she's out meeting with people, she does all of the career fairs, she meets with local employers, and if they're hiring for a specific thing, she can go in and say "I have this person, I have this person and I have this person."*

*-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator*

According to staff at all five sites, the most important elements of job development are *making connections to employers* and *following up with employers*. These personal connections are critical to placing participants. Once a connection is made, most employers are willing to give Secure Jobs participants a chance.

The job development model varies, however, between sites.

***Full-Time Job Development.*** One site had a full-time Job Developer on its staff before the start of Secure Jobs, and she now allocates a portion of her time to Secure Jobs participants. This Job Developer meets weekly with the Employment Specialists to learn about job ready participants and hear who is looking for a job and what kinds of jobs they seek. She then does research to locate the best openings for these participants. On

*We have the job developer that helps us, she has contacts with hiring managers and local businesses, but we really had to dig in too, and meet people ourselves, because we found that if we know the employer, if we've met somebody at a job fair, and they remember our face, they know that we were going to give them a resume that was good for the position they had, so being in contact with the employers helps us employ people.*

-Employment Specialist

occasion, she takes Secure Jobs Employment Specialists with her to meet employers. Employment Specialists find making a personal connection with the employer very helpful for potential future communication. For example, once the employer can attach a face to a name, if she hires a Secure Jobs participant and issues should arise, the employer is more likely to contact the Employment

Specialist so that they can work together to resolve the issues to make the job placement a success.

*Job Development and Employment Case Management.* At three other sites, the Secure Jobs staff combines job development activities with its regular work with participants. Employment Specialists who do job development work state that being able to advocate for participants whom they know personally helps to make a convincing case to employers.

- One site hired an Employment Specialist who had previous experience doing job development work, to capitalize on her expertise and existing connections.

*Contracting Out Job Development.* The site that has contracted out its job readiness training to the Career Center has also contracted out its job development services. Participants at this site are using the connections that the Career Center has and, for those in training programs, the connections that the training programs have already established. Using existing connections, rather than forging new ones, has proven to be an efficient way to allocate resources.

*Career fairs.* All five sites have participated in career fairs hosted by their local Career Centers or local businesses. One site organized its own career fair. In addition to inviting over thirty employers, this site provided on-site child care. The Employment Specialists and stabilization staff attended as well, to provide extra support to participants as they met with employers, and to meet any last-minute needs such as printing out resumes or rehearsing introductions with employers. Several participants found employment as a result of attending this career fair.

## Trusting Relationships

*For so many of them, they're bounced around from agency to agency, "here's a number, do this, do this," and when someone comes to me and they're like "you actually care!" And it's like "yeah I do." Once they realize that, then they know that they're letting you down if they're not doing their part of it, versus you're just another number, like you're gonna call someone else on your list and move on.*

-Employment Specialist

Employment Specialists state that the relationship with the participant is the most important element of their job. At all five sites, they agreed that if they could forge a trusting relationship with the participant then they could work together very effectively. Mainstream services for homeless people rarely offer any kind of long-term individualized support with a reliable case manager who knows all the barriers that the person faces. When Secure Jobs Employment Specialists make it clear that they will listen to the participants' aspirations for the future and understand the barriers to getting there, and will work with them to realize their dreams, participants respond with relief and enthusiasm. Employment Specialists report that trust and respect are key elements of these relationships.

*But again, it all comes down to the respect piece of it. We can be their mentor, their friend, their mother, their father, their workshop facilitator and it's important to us that they open up and they feel comfortable working with us no matter what walk of life they come from. And they know that. It usually takes a couple of days but then they just, they feel safe. It's safe, they feel comfortable, and especially with certain things that we help them work through, stuff like that at home, because it's coming into the workplace.*

-Employment Specialist

*We [Employment Specialists] give them options. We don't necessarily say "you can't do this." We never want to shut someone's dream out. But we give them other options in other things as well. I usually ask them "what do you ultimately want to do?" or "what's your ultimate passion?" Because a lot of them are used to just burning out fires and don't really dream anymore. ... A lot of them didn't have that one-on-one with anyone, to actually talk about what they want to do. They didn't have that support. So we're here to listen.*

-Employment Specialist

## Flexible Funds: Big Impacts at a Small Price

The flexible nature of the Secure Jobs grants allowed all five sites to allocate small amounts of money to meet unexpected costs related to entry into employment that are not covered by any benefits program, but add up to more than a family living on a very limited budget can afford. For example, after participants finish a training course to be a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), they have to take the state's licensing exam. The fee for this exam is \$93—a prohibitively high price for many. And once this hurdle is passed, new CNAs need to purchase their own scrubs and closed-toed shoes to wear on the job. Also, new employees do not get paid until they have been on the job a few weeks, and often they need some money to tide them over during this

time, especially for costs related to getting to work. Because the Secure Jobs grant was not stipulated for specific purposes, staff could fill in these gaps with grant money. Below are some of the most frequently noted uses of flexible funds:

Expense	\$ Amount
CNA, CMA, LPM, EMT etc. Licensure Exam	\$93-\$300
Scrubs, shoes and watch for health care job	\$50
Steel-toed boots for warehouse job	\$47
Textbooks for Home Health Aide training course	\$117-\$197
RMV fee to reinstate driver's license	\$50-\$95
Gas card to get to work for first 2 weeks	\$40
Driving lessons	\$125-\$160
Massachusetts ID	\$40
Hair styling for interview	\$25
MBTA pass (up to 1 month)	\$18-\$70
TB test to enroll in CNA course	\$25

*Revolving Loan Fund.* One site used its flexible funds to set up a revolving loan fund that participants can use to address barriers to employment. For example, when participants need larger amounts of money to buy a new car or pay off parking tickets that prevent a driver's license being reinstated, they can apply to borrow the money from the site. The terms are set ahead of time, with low interest and a payment plan that is manageable. The site requires that the participant go through a financial education course prior to being approved for the loan. So far, this program has allowed a participant to buy a used car that she can use to get to her new job.

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### Follow-up Case Management

The Fireman Foundation grant requires all sites to offer one year of retention services post-placement. All sites maintain contact with families post-employment to assist with retention and advancement. Because the grant is one year, two sites are planning for HomeBASE Stabilization Workers to perform retention services in 2014. Another two sites received additional funding to cover the costs of Year 2 retention. And one site hired a full-time retention specialist onto their staff. One site has also recently set up a post-placement support group that meets monthly in the evening.

All five sites are offering retention bonuses for maintaining employment for an extended period of time. These bonuses are issued at set intervals ranging from 30 to 90 days, depending on the site. Bonuses are \$100 to \$600, and this money is coming out of the flexible funding that the grant allows. One site that offers a revolving loan program to help participants meet small expenses that are creating barriers for them includes these bonuses in the repayment plan for those who took a small loan. At another site, staff reports that participants are asking that the bonus be paid directly to their landlords, to pay some rent up front and ease financial stress later.

## **Solutions that Work: Innovative Solutions to Stubborn Barriers**

The goal of Secure Jobs is to move people who are ready, willing and able into jobs. However, myriad barriers stand between these participants and employment—some of which were anticipated, and some that came as surprises. Secure Jobs staff worked closely with HomeBASE stabilization workers and community partners to find creative solutions to eliminate these barriers, one by one. The three most important barriers that participants face to entering employment are child care, transportation, and the end of short-term rental subsidies. Without addressing these needs, participants cannot attend trainings, engage in job readiness classes or meetings, or conduct a strategic job search.

### **Child care**

Safe, reliable child care is critical for participants to be able to attend job readiness classes, meet with the Employment Specialists, fill out online job applications, go on job interviews and, finally, work. However, child care is very expensive, and finding a provider who is trustworthy and dependable can be a challenge. In the summer, when school is out, child care becomes an even greater barrier.

Child care has been a struggle for all five sites. At the outset of Secure Jobs, Site Coordinators planned to access Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) child care vouchers for those participants on TAFDC who did not already have them. However, Employment Specialists soon discovered that this plan would not work for a sizable sub-section of the participants. First, some of those who did receive TAFDC vouchers could not find a placement for their children. Second, several clients did not receive TAFDC, because they received SSI or had some other source of income that made them ineligible.

*[Many participants] receive child support and a lot of them are opting to take the child support because it's more than what they would get if they were to take cash assistance from DTA. So it makes sense, because they can get their child support and food stamps and it's more, but when it comes to child care they're ineligible, because they're not receiving cash assistance. So then it becomes a barrier for us.*

-Employment Specialist

Both DTA and The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) have been active partners with Secure Jobs, and were able to offer some assistance. DTA administrators in Boston contacted the Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) for each Secure Jobs site, and identified staff person at each office who would manage Secure Jobs participants. So, when a Secure Jobs participant on TAFDC needs child care, her Employment Specialist can call this direct contact at the CCR&R, and her application will be expedited to ensure a child care voucher and placement quickly.

EEC informed the site administrators that those participants who are not on TAFDC can access EEC income-eligible child care slots and DHCD homeless child care slots. EEC contracts these slots directly with child care centers (i.e. only center-based child care, not family-based.) These

slots are limited in number, and there are waiting lists for them. An EEC administrator agreed to let Secure Jobs Site Coordinators know when any slots became available in areas near the Secure Jobs sites. So far, several Secure Jobs sites have been able to access these slots.

Child care in evenings, weekends and school vacations is an even harder barrier to overcome. Many of the jobs that Secure Jobs participants are accessing are in the health care and retail industries and require that employees work in the evenings and on weekends. Three sites looked to external sources to help with summer child care.

- One site negotiated with a local camp to get a deeply reduced rate for two children, and paid for it out of flexible Secure Jobs funds. Another worked with the local HomeBASE agency and the Girl Scouts to get camp placements for six families. The third site, along with their

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HomeBASE provider partner, applied for external funding to purchase child care over the summer, as a stop-gap measure to get families through until school started again. They were awarded \$20,000, which they used to purchase full-time child care for 7 children in 5 families. With child care established, three of these families were able to enter full-time training and two to start working.

*Jenna is a single mother with a 9-year-old son who is autistic. She has been living on SSI (which she gets for her son) and SNAP. Through Secure Jobs, Jenna got a full-time job working as a cashier at CVS. While her son is taken care of during school hours, Jenna has to work some evening and weekend hours. However, because she gets SSI and not TAFDC, she cannot access a DTA child care voucher. Jenna's employment specialist reached out to a local child care provider who was a DHCD Homeless Child Care contractor, but at first they did not have any spots open. Eventually a slot opened up, and they were willing to take a disabled child. Her Secure Jobs Site Coordinator then contacted the Secure Jobs partner at EEC, who expedited a referral to get the child placed there. Jenna is able to maintain her position at CVS and know that her child is well-cared for.*

## Transportation

*We have people who are not able to take jobs that are offered to them because of limits of bus service, and getting a car is a huge expense... One woman was offered a good job but had to turn it down because the workday goes till 9:30pm and the bus she needed to take to get home only runs until 7:30pm.*

-Employment Specialist

Transportation is also a major barrier for many families. In cities with public transportation systems, such as Boston, the cost of riding buses and trains every day can be prohibitive. In more suburban and rural areas, where public transportation is limited or nonexistent, families have to struggle to meet the expense of maintaining a car or limit their job search to their immediate areas. Some families lost their drivers' licenses years ago and cannot afford the fees to reinstate them.

The flexible funds in the Secure Jobs grant allows Secure Jobs sites to meet some of these challenges. Funds are allocated for public transportation passes, particularly for those participants in Boston. These passes allow participants to get to the Secure Jobs site every day and, once they are employed, to get to work. In more rural areas, Secure Jobs Site Coordinators have to be more creative. One site started a revolving loan program to help a participant to buy a used car.<sup>‡</sup> Another is using flexible funds to pay for a participant's driving lessons.

At one site, a participant was placed in a job that is a long commute from her home. She has a car, but gas is quite expensive. And, she does not start getting paid until she has worked for at least two weeks. Her Employment Specialist used some of the flexible funds to buy her gas cards to help her get to and from work for the first few weeks, until she has access to her earned income. This stopgap measure was essential to getting her through the transition into the new job.

### **HomeBASE Rental Subsidy Ending**

The HomeBASE Rental Assistance (RA) program offered families two years of rental subsidy plus Stabilization Workers. Most RA participants entered the program in August-October 2011. In the summer of 2013, these participants had to start planning how to stay housed when their

*Our biggest challenge continues to be working with and around the schedules and complicated transient lifestyles of clients transitioning off of HomeBASE. While many clients are fortunate enough to transition to Household Assistance, this experience still results in heightened stress levels for clients... [and] creates delays in the job search and job readiness process. Additionally childcare is often interrupted as clients move to a new, cheaper apartment or find a roommate.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

subsidies ended. Because Secure Jobs had only started a few months earlier, most had not yet found full-time employment that would allow them to sustain their housing at the full market rent. The sudden and immediate threat of losing their housing was a major interruption to the job search and training process.

Staff at all five sites speak of the stress of “the clock” that they face in trying to get participants employed before their HomeBASE ends. As fall approached, they had to prioritize getting those who faced the end of their HomeBASE into jobs, sometimes abandoning long-term goals for training

programs that could lead to more stable careers. Better coordination of the HomeBASE and Secure Jobs time frames would have worked better for many participants.

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<sup>‡</sup> The only local program helping low-income people to purchase cars is More than Wheels (Boston and Manchester, NH,) <http://www.morethanwheels.org/>. However, because of its focus on environmental sustainability as well as social justice, this program only provides access to new, fuel-efficient cars. Secure Jobs participants are not in a position to take on a debt large enough to finance a new car.

*I think [Secure Jobs is] now being used mostly as an emergency service instead of a stabilization service, because people are ending [HomeBASE] and they need jobs to be able to sustain themselves and they only have a couple of months to do that. And that to me is an emergency...as opposed to if they had the option two years ago and could work with someone for two years to work with someone and build a resume and make connections. That would be more of long term stabilization to me.*

-Employment Specialist

On August 1, 2013, DHCD announced that RA participants could receive another twelve months of assistance by transferring to the Household Assistance program, which offers \$4,000 to use as the participant sees best to stabilize housing. Many Secure Jobs participants on RA are making use of this. However, because this option was not made available publicly till August 1, much of the work in May, June and July in Secure Jobs was focused on planning for the end of the RA subsidy. Participants made plans that included moving to a less expensive apartment, doubling up with friends or family, moving out of state to live with a family member, and returning to shelter. Two families applied for shelter and are currently working with Secure Jobs from scattered site units. Another two families moved to another part of the state with lower rents and were transferred to the Secure Jobs site at their new home.

*[Employment Specialists are] providing more flexibility for clients whose main priority transferred from employment, training and job search into a more concentrated housing search [as they face the end of their RA]. While normally job readiness and training are connected to a stringent attendance demand, Employment Specialists have been more lenient with attendance, allowing clients to spend more time processing housing applications, visiting apartments and meeting with Stabilization Workers. Unfortunately, this delays the focus on job search, but meets the immediate demands of our clients.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator



## Additional Barriers

In addition to these three barriers, Secure Jobs participants face a variety of challenges to making the transition to work. Employment Specialists have come up with creative and innovative solutions to these barriers to help these families to get employed. These barriers include:

*CORI Records.* Participants who have been charged with a crime in the past will have a Criminal Offender Record Identification (CORI) record. The record exists no matter what the trial outcome—even if they were acquitted. CORI results are public information, and many employers run CORI checks on job applicants. According to state regulations, people with CORIs cannot work in many human services occupations, including in hospitals. Employment Specialists direct participants who have criminal records to occupations that are “CORI-friendly,” i.e. do not check or do not require a clean CORI record, such as machining and assembly. And they help participants through the paperwork to get their CORI information sealed, if possible.

*Carla is a single mother who has CORI issues. She wanted to do the CNA class but would not be able to pass the CORI scan to do the clinical requirements. Carla is pregnant and due one week after her HomeBASE is set to end. Carla is testing for an Electronics training program. The training program has a Job Developer that works with participants and relationships with employers that will hire them. The training will end two weeks before Carla’s HomeBASE ends and three weeks before the baby is due.*  
-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

*Lack of Work History/Experience.* Some participants come to Secure Jobs eager to work but with little or no experience. Others have experience working in low-wage retail jobs, but want to move into a sector that will offer higher wages and more job security. Employment Specialists face the challenge of marketing job applicants with little or no relevant experience. Internships and volunteer work are one creative solution to this problem. Employment Specialists find time-limited positions with little or no pay that give participants the job experience and skills they will need in their new careers (see page 30 for more on this.)

*Debt/Bad Credit.* Many participants come to Secure Jobs with bad credit and a great deal of debt. In particular, many have accrued student loan debt from training programs with proprietary schools. Employers run credit checks increasingly often as part of routine job applicant screening, especially for work in the financial industry. Three sites include financial education services, one in-house as part of their job readiness curriculum and two with partner agencies. Financial education classes provide assistance with budgeting and credit repair.

*Nearly half of our enrollees... have attended for-profit training schools and now have large student loan debts; many did not finish the program or receive certification, and they did not find work in the field in which they trained.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

The table below provides a summary of the barriers faced by Secure Jobs participants and the innovative solutions employed to overcome these barriers.

	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Innovative Solution</b>
<b>Participant Barriers to Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible funds for public transportation passes</li> <li>• Flexible funds to pay off small fees to reinstate driver’s license</li> <li>• Flexible funds for driving lessons</li> <li>• Revolving loan program to purchase used car or pay off larger RMV fees</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small expenses related to employment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Textbooks for training courses</li> <li>○ Licensing exam fees</li> <li>○ Work-appropriate clothing (scrubs, steel-toe boots, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible funds are critical for these small expenses that act as major barriers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional attire for interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect to Dress for Success, Suitability and other programs that provide professional clothing free of charge</li> <li>• Clothing retail employer partner gives steep discount on professional attire</li> <li>• Flexible funds to purchase additional items</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair styling for interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with cosmetology school to provide free styling services</li> <li>• Flexible funds to get hair styled</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CORI &amp; lack of knowledge about it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target trainings for CORI-friendly occupations e.g. electronics</li> <li>• Assistance in sealing CORI record if possible</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of entering job and losing supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued intensive case management</li> <li>• Post-employment peer support groups</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge of English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational English Language Training programs for Secure Jobs participants</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debt and/or bad credit score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire and review credit score with participant</li> <li>• Financial education in-house or with partner agency</li> <li>• Work with local landlords to find those who will take a chance on tenants with bad credit</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long gap in work history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with businesses that offer volunteer and internship opportunities for participants, to get experience and make connections that can lead to a job</li> </ul>
	<b>Program Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited child care voucher availability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited availability of training programs, especially in summer</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with vocational school and community college partners to create summer training programs specifically for Secure Jobs cohort</li> </ul>

## Community Partnerships: Working Together to Find Work

Community partnerships are a strong ingredient to Secure Jobs' effectiveness. The partnership model is what makes Secure Jobs unique, as well as effective. All five sites forged important bonds with partners that provided training, employment, child care and other resources critical to participants' successful entry in to work. Because unemployment is a complex issue, partnerships can be an effective tool to prepare people for work and help them make the transition into the workforce.<sup>4</sup>

### **Training Partners**

Establishing partnerships with external Career Centers and training programs has been challenging. Organizations' changes in staff have delayed partnership progress. Partnerships with vocational schools and training programs have been challenged by the traditional school-year schedule, making it difficult to find programs offered during the summer months.

- One site has forged a close partnership with the local community college. Knowing that the community college had the staff and infrastructure to offer a variety of training courses for careers in health care, they approached the president of the college about creating a short summer course in home health aide training. The college agreed, and a cohort of Secure Jobs participants went through an intensive course in July and August. The course was very successful, and graduates were able to start looking for jobs at the end of summer.

#### **INNOVATIVE APPROACH**

Career Centers have also been important partners in Secure Jobs. Career Centers offer many resources to help job seekers find jobs, go through the application process, and make the transition to work (see [Appendix 6](#) for more information on Career Centers.) However, Career Centers face certain limitations to assisting homeless families.

- Government furloughs and funding cuts have diminished training opportunities and the services available through Career Centers.
- Career Center resources are self-directed. They do not have staff on hand to help people to navigate their job search process or to do any career counseling. Staff at all five sites agree that one-on-one work is essential to

*The main issue that I see is that [many] career centers don't get all that much funding to do one-on-one case management... So a lot of times the first time they come into a career center, it's really very self-directed. They get told about what the services are in general, and then somebody says "what do you need to do? What's your next step? What services would you like to take advantage of?" And if that person isn't terribly active in what they want to do next, they're going to not take advantage of the other services that could be available for them. So the case management is more crucial with folks that are homeless. Because they tend to be a little bit more tentative about taking part in some of the services that are out there.*

-Job Developer

the Secure Jobs population, as the self-directed approach can be confusing and overwhelming for people who are already trying to manage the stresses of unstable housing and lack of child care.

*I don't think they're [many One-Stop Career Centers are] hands on enough. I mean they do offer job leads, hot job leads, that's great, but we're the ones that help them with resume writing, looking over your resume, interviewing techniques, all those really important things for them to actually do the interview that we hold their hand with until they get there. So the career center wouldn't be able to offer the hand to hand help that we do.*

–Employment Specialist

- Career Centers receive performance-based contracts from federal and state governments. Therefore, research suggests that they have little incentive to serve those who might be perceived as harder to employ, such as homeless people. They are more likely to target assistance towards those who have fewer barriers, can get jobs quickly and keep them.<sup>27</sup>

*I think we can provide more of that one on one support, coaching and guidance that participants need. Modeling and handholding and encouragement and I don't think you can necessarily get that at the career center.*

–Employment Specialist

## Employer Partners

Those agencies that already had an established network of employers have been able to more easily leverage these connections to find placements for Secure Jobs participants. Several regions have had successful employer engagement at events such as job fairs or through employer presentations and mock-interview sessions. Other agencies have had to focus more on establishing new employer relationships, which has taken more time. This has been done through personal staff connections or by leveraging employer relationships held by other partners, like vocational schools. Some challenges have been reported in finding jobs in the regional labor market that meet the interests and skills of participants.

- One site has a longstanding partnership with CVS Pharmacy; their Secure Jobs participants were able to leverage this partnership to great advantage. Several years ago, CVS agreed to put their training site in the agency building. They built a small model of a CVS store, including merchandise and cash registers, where participants can get trained in cashiering and pharmacy tech jobs. When this site realized that they had many Secure Jobs participants who had limited English skills, they employed a Vocational English Language Training (VELT) instructor to help this group move

INNOVATIVE  
APPROACH

towards employment. This instructor uses the CVS training center to help the VELT participants to learn the phrases and vocabulary they will need to work in customer service, and the names of the products that CVS sells. These participants will then be able to work at a CVS store, having already been familiarized with the store inventory and cashiering system. This is a great entry-level job for this group, which can then continue to work on their English in order to advance to a higher position.

## **Child Care Partners**

All five Secure Jobs sites had child care partners established at the start of the grant period, as the grant required. However, several sites reported having unclear expectations about what child care partners could offer to participants. Child care is very expensive, so child care agencies have limited capacity to offer free or significantly reduced child care to Secure Jobs participants.

- In spite of this challenge, lead agencies did find creative ways to leverage child care partners' resources. One site negotiated a reduced summer camp rate for several Secure Jobs families with school-age children, enabling those parents to work during the summer, when school was not in session. Another site worked with its child care partner to create an internship program in child care that gave a Secure Jobs participant some work experience in a field that interested her.

Overall, child care partners have proven to be less active participants in the Secure Jobs partnerships, playing a limited part in most Secure Jobs advisory boards.

## **Communication**

Getting the word out about Secure Jobs has been important in recruiting and maintaining partners, and soliciting additional funds from other sources. The five sites used several methods for communication.

*Advisory Boards.* The five lead agencies were required to establish advisory boards with representatives from partner agencies. Some sites included local legislators as well. These boards meet regularly, anywhere from monthly to semi-annually, to update partner agencies on Secure Jobs activities and strategize community involvement. Advisory board meetings are a critical forum for sharing the work of Secure Jobs and generating community support as well as legislative commitment to work to address homeless families' barriers to employment.

*Website.* One site added a page to their website dedicated to Secure Jobs, with information about the program and meeting minutes. Another created a Facebook page to share information about the program and communicate with participants.

*Launch Events.* Four sites held launch events for their Secure Jobs programs. They invited local legislators and government officials, key area employers, and other stakeholders to these events, as well as the news media, and had presentations by Secure Jobs participants. These events were all successful at bringing stakeholders together and reinforcing their support.

*Media Coverage.* Several sites have been featured in local newspapers. This coverage has helped to get the attention of local businesses, who might later be employer partners.

*Career Fairs.* Employment Specialists at all five sites have attended career fairs in their communities. This is an effective way to introduce employers to Secure Jobs and to advocate for individual participants who might be good candidates for the jobs advertised at the fair. In addition, one site hosted its own career fair, and had over thirty employers in attendance.

## **Employment**

Secure Jobs participants are getting jobs! As of September 1, 2013, 185 have entered employment, with most earning between \$8.00 and \$12.00 an hour, and a few earning more – up to \$25.00 an hour. Table 6 below provides a summary of the types of jobs Secure Jobs participants secured.

<b>Medical</b>	<b>Technical</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Other</b>
Certified Nurse’s Assistant	Electronics Assembly	Panera Server	Security Personnel
Home Health Aide	Control Machinist	Kitchen Assistant	Sewer
Medical Administration	Construction	Administrative Staff	
	Driver	Whole Foods Staff	

### **INNOVATIVE APPROACH**

- One site has taken an innovative approach to encouraging employer engagement by offering Supported Employment and On-The-Job Training options. Through Supported Employment, Secure Jobs participants work for at least 20 hours a week for up to 8 weeks, during which time they are paid by the Secure Jobs site in exchange for regular feedback on their progress in the workplace from the employer. After a successful conclusion of the Supported Employment time period, the employer will hire the participant.<sup>§</sup> This option is particularly helpful when a participant may need additional training time to improve their on-the-job skills. The On-The-Job Training option follows a similar model, but the Secure Jobs site reimburses the employer for 50% of the hourly wage incurred by the business. When employment service agencies and businesses can partner in this way, it creates an opportunity for extended job training with regular employer feedback, effectively extending additional support for participants who face a higher number of barriers in entering work.

## **Internships and Volunteer Work**

Many Secure Jobs participants face the common quandary that they are trying to return to work after a long hiatus, but employers will not hire them because of this gap. Three Secure Jobs sites addressed this issue by setting up volunteer and internship programs with program partners.

One site partnered with Panera Cares, a volunteer-run branch of the Panera Bread chain that offers meals for whatever customers can pay. Secure Jobs participants work at Panera Cares for a few weeks, gaining skills in restaurant work and making connections with Panera management

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<sup>§</sup> DTA offers a program with a similar model through DTA’s Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program for TAFDC recipients. Some Secure Jobs sites are also CIES approved vendors. However, funding for CIES is limited, and families who do not receive TAFDC are not eligible for this program.

staff. They then have recent experience that they can put on their resumes. This partnership has been extremely effective.

At another site, Secure Jobs participants are doing internships at a nearby child care center run by a program partner, at the local DTA office and at the Secure Jobs office itself. These participants are all gaining valuable experience in office administration that will make them more marketable in their job search. And they are making connections that could lead to paid jobs. Research has shown that volunteer work can serve as a highly effective conduit to paid work, particularly for people with low levels of education,<sup>30</sup> and is a great way to make the transition to work while families are still receiving housing subsidies.

*Susan, after not having worked for nine years, began volunteering [at Panera Cares], where she learned how much she liked food preparation. After several weeks of volunteering, Susan was notified that a position was opening at a Panera Bread location elsewhere in the city, and she was encouraged by the team at Panera Cares to apply. After several sessions of interview prep and a trip to Dress for Success for interview apparel Susan ultimately excelled during a series of three interviews and was hired for a full-time position with Panera Bread.*



## Using Data to Inform Policy and Practice

Collecting consistent and quality data on Secure Jobs is essential for program planning, implementation and evaluation.

- *Data to Inform Program Planning.* Without data of participants to enroll in Secure Jobs, planned programs may not address the need nor establish realistic benchmarks. For example, one of the sites had a general notion of the educational attainment and past employment of potential Secure Jobs participants at the program planning stage. However, when staff planning the project reviewed actual data of HomeBASE families, they were surprised to find that the HomeBASE population had higher levels of education than they expected. In fact, many had a high school diploma or GEDs. Based on this information, staff went back to the proposed project and changed some of the benchmarks of success.
- *Data to Inform Program Implementation.* As reported earlier, the end of rental subsidies posed a big challenge for many Secure Jobs families. When this end came closer for the first round of HomeBASE rental subsidy recipients, it was critical to report back to the State Agency how many families in Secure Jobs would face losing rental support to help plan for transitions off this support. Data collected by each site helped to provide this information.
- *Data Documenting Participant Outcomes.* Required data elements and expectation for sharing have been determined at the beginning of this pilot. All sites share required participant level data on a quarterly basis with varying degrees of quality. The evaluation research team continues to work closely with each site to achieve the best quality data possible. These data are critical to assess overall participant outcomes and will be depicted in the forthcoming report on short-term participant employment and housing outcomes.
- *Data to Secure Additional Funding and Reinforce Staff Commitment by Documenting Success.* Outcomes data are critical to securing additional funds for program continuation and expansion. Both state agencies and private funders require demonstrated program effects to consider additional funding, and quality data are needed to document improvement in participants' lives. Therefore, a complete and accurate dataset is essential to preserving the future of Secure Jobs.

To reduce the burden for site to collect data on their Secure Jobs participants, data sharing agreements have been established with one state agency who will be sharing their data on participant housing histories and access of housing services. These quantitative data will be shared in the forthcoming report on participant outcomes.

## Strong Leadership to Achieve Ambitious Goals

The key to an effective partnership model is strong leadership.<sup>3,4</sup> The Fireman Foundation's active leadership has facilitated communication between the five sites and with state agencies; this communication has allowed for sharing of best practices, streamlined service delivery, and state agencies' quick response to issues as they arise. Monthly conference calls with the five sites, evaluation team and state agencies provide a regular opportunity for public-private coordination around some of Secure Jobs' greatest challenges, such a childcare. Monthly reports from the Fireman Foundation not only share up-to-date placement numbers for all five sites, but also participant stories that reflect effective cross-organizational cooperation and streamlining of services.

*Sharing best practices and hearing how others prioritized program structure was beneficial. It was nice to know there was constant support from the Fireman Foundation as well.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

In addition, Fireman-facilitated quarterly learning labs. Led by well-known social entrepreneur Alan Khazei, these events bring together Secure Jobs staff from all five sites with state department partners to share successes, challenges and work together towards solutions to the barriers experienced by Secure Jobs participants. Secure Jobs participants have also attended these meetings, sharing their experience with the program and the success they have achieved through the support of a Secure Jobs site. At the most recent quarterly meeting, attendees looked at the future of Secure Jobs, discussing how to best continue the Initiative's successful, innovative practices. Feedback from the five sites about these activities has been positive, reaffirming in particular that these facilitated opportunities allowed for quick identification of those barriers that have been most prevalent and challenging, leading to focused efforts on public-private coordination around these challenges.

Finally, Fireman's Acting Executive Director Sue Beaton was invited to present the Secure Jobs model at the National Alliance to End Homelessness' annual meeting, thus garnering national attention for this innovative Initiative. In sum, Fireman has formed a public-private partnership that functions efficiently and effectively, and is at the table to inform policy debates on issues related to homelessness.

## Summary and Recommendations

This report provides a summary of investments and activities that help link homeless families to employment opportunities during the pilot phase of the Secure Jobs Initiative across five project sites, informing the field of critical elements necessary to help homeless families make the transition to work. The pilot phase of Secure Jobs has yielded several important lessons about continuing its successful operation and integrating employment and housing services for homeless families. Below we offer a number of specific recommendations based on the wealth of data collected for this project.

- *Maintain strong leadership.* Continue weekly calls with all stakeholders, and quarterly meetings which can start to be more focused on specific issues emerging from the work, for example: best assessment practices, best retention practices.
- *Expand recruitment.* With well over 3000 families homeless in the state, in addition to the 6400 in HomeBASE,<sup>19</sup> it is especially important to provide homeless families access to employment so that they work towards supporting their families in stable housing. The pilot phase purposefully focused on linking families in the state's HomeBASE program to work. The model should now be tested by including families in shelter and motels who are ready, willing, and able to work or engage in skills training.
- *Improve timing.* Include workforce assessment at the front door, and inform the family about Secure Jobs right at entry to shelter or motel.
- *Deepen and expand partnership models.* Institutionalize communication and cooperation between housing and workforce development in the regions that are participating in the pilot, establish such models in other regions not covered by the pilot, and promote communication between housing and workforce at the state level to provide better services for homeless families.
- *Provide critical flexible resources.* Flexible funds have proven critical to meeting unanticipated costs that provide the bridge to employment and support families when they first enter employment.
- *Continue engagement with state agencies.* Participation of state agencies in the pilot has been critical to its success. DHCD takes the lead with housing subsidies and Stabilization Workers, DTA supports families who receive TAFDC with cash assistance and child care vouchers, and EEC helps with child care vouchers for those who do not receive DTA assistance. The partnership should now reach out to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL) to join Secure Jobs and fund employment programs specifically for homeless people that include the one-on-one services that this population needs, and to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to expand community college programming to include certificate programs that meet the specific needs of homeless families.

- *Include retention as a goal.* While entry into the workforce is important, retention is critical to moving up a career ladder. Dedicated retention staff (which some sites have begun to include) can facilitate this process.
- *Integrate quality data collection into daily practice.* Without consistent and high quality data, the success of Secure Jobs cannot be demonstrated. Additional data elements will need to be included as the Initiative moves forward, including more specific information on jobs, job quality, retention services, tenure at employment, housing stability, and issues related to families' budgets (for example cliff effects and savings)
- *Expand financial education to include asset-building.* Financial education programs should be expanded beyond credit score counseling and debt reduction. It is critical that families learn how to budget in order to begin to save, and learn to access asset-building programs such as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) in which low-income families' savings are matched, and the money is put into a restricted savings account for use only on education, to purchase a home or to start a business. Assets can give a family the boost they need to move out of poverty. Partnering with programs that offer IDAs can provide Secure Jobs participants with a valuable resource.

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## Appendix 1: The Five Sites

The five Secure Jobs sites are distributed throughout the state and have long roots in their communities. Each site brings its own strengths to the Initiative. More detail on each of the sites follows.

Partnership Name	Start Date	Geographic Region	Lead Partner(s)
Partners for Secure Jobs Initiative (The Initiative)	4/1/13	South Coast (Fall River, Taunton, New Bedford)	Southeastern Massachusetts SER-Jobs For Progress
Secure Jobs/Work Ready Family	1/1/13	South Shore (Plymouth County, Greater Brockton Area)	Father Bill's & Mainspring (FBMS)
Secure Jobs Connect	2/1/13	Western Massachusetts (Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties)	Corporation for Public Management (CPM) The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (The Network)
Secure Jobs	2/1/13	Greater Boston	Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP)
CommCET (Community Connection to Employment & Training)	1/1/13	Greater Lowell	Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)

### **Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)**

CTI is a community action agency that has been serving low-income populations in the Merrimack Valley since 1965. It offers time-limited housing and other supports to the homeless, including workforce development resources. According to their grant proposal, CTI's Secure Jobs program intends to "vocalize" their approach to housing by developing relationships with local technical schools to provide routes to sustainable jobs for homeless families. In addition to leveraging the strengths of local technical school programs, CTI will focus participant training on specific entry-level occupations that are in demand by regional employers, including Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), machinist, property manager and service technician. To implement this Initiative, CTI will partner with regional employers in key occupations, vocational/technical schools, (Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School, Nashoba Valley Technical High School and Shawsheen Valley Technical High School), the Greater Lawrence WIB and the One-Stop Career Center, The Lowell Career Center. CTI's goal is to place 80% of Secure Jobs participants in jobs with 70% retaining their job one year later. The Secure Jobs project at CTI is run by a part-time project supervisor, a full-time Site Coordinator and three Secure Jobs-only Stabilization Workers, in collaboration with staff from the local Career Center who conduct Job Readiness and Job Search Training.



## **Corporation for Public Management (CPM)**

CPM is a non-profit organization with programs in Puerto Rico, Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. Since 2004, CPM's Employment and Training program has placed 1,189 DTA clients into permanent, full-time, unsubsidized employment. In addition, it has helped 331 teen parents obtain their GED or high school diploma. CPM also has a DTA Supported Work Program (SWP) and is a Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) vendor, and runs a Young Parent's Program that provides parenting and life skills programs for young parents, in addition to running a distance learning program that provides access to GED instruction, TABE instruction and job readiness activities. CPM co-leads the Secure Jobs Initiative with The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (The Network). They work with several HomeBASE providers, including HAP Housing, Center for Human Development, New England Farm Workers Council, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority. CPM has contracted with two Career Centers to provide services to Secure Jobs participants: Berkshire Vocational Services (ServiceNet) provides Employment Specialist services in Berkshire and Franklin Counties, and the Job Developer at CPM is also an employee of CareerPoint, the local One-Stop Career Center. CPM also collaborates with other vocational service providers, including FutureWorks, Berkshire Works and the Franklin/Hampshire Career Center. In addition, CPM works with various local community colleges (Springfield Technical, Holyoke, Greenfield, and Berkshire Community Colleges), the American Red Cross and local child care providers (Square One, Valley Opportunity Council, New England Farm Workers Council) to help provide the necessary services to participants. Target occupations in this region are in food service, construction, janitorial/cleaning and health care. CPM's model is performance based and will reward participants with mini-grants of up to \$300 per participant as they meet pre-determined milestones in their skills training, job readiness training and employment. In addition, their program is guided by Motivational Interviewing and Family Critical Time Intervention practices. CPM aims to enroll 96 participants, place 76 in employment, with 61 remaining in employment after 1 year. Day-to-day, Secure Jobs at this site is run by a full-time Site Coordinator, a part-time Job Developer/Employment Specialist (shared with Career Point, a local Career Center) and an Employment Specialist who was hired in August after the position was unable to be filled for several months.

## **Father Bill's and Main Spring (FBMS)**

In 2007, Father Bill's Place of Quincy and Mainspring Coalition for the Homeless of Brockton merged to form Father Bill's and Main Spring, combining decades of experience serving the South Shore area. Father Bill's Place was one of Massachusetts' first homeless organizations to promote the Housing First approach and FBMS continues to be guided by this philosophy today. FBMS is a HomeBASE stabilization provider, having served 850 families to date. It is the largest Emergency Assistance (EA) shelter provider in the region (82 family units) and is a permanent supportive housing provider (300 units, 20% for families). For the Secure Jobs Initiative, FBMS is partnering with the United Way (co-lead), South Shore Housing (SSH), the

Old Colony YMCA (OCY) and the One Stop Career Center Brockton/CareerWorks (CW). Like the other organizations, FBMS Secure Jobs participants enter into one of three tracks once enrolled in the program, providing job search assistance, job readiness training or longer-term local skills training programs. FBMS Employment Specialists are located at CareerWorks/Brockton, not at one of the FBMS buildings. This strategic arrangement gives participants immediate access to Career Center resources. FMBS has identified the following key occupations for Secure Jobs participants in the South Shore region: Medical Support (Medical Assistant, Home Health Aide, Certified Nursing Assistant), retail associate (retail clerk), customer service specialist (customer service representative), culinary professional (cook), administrative support (administrative assistant), transportation provider (driver) and warehouse/stock personnel. FMBS aims to assist 100 participants a year, with 80 participants placed into jobs, and 64 retaining those jobs one year later. FBMS's Secure Jobs program funds several key staff. The Site Coordinator works full-time on the program, with the additional support of three Employment Specialists and an agency-wide Job Developer who devotes a portion of her time to Secure Jobs participants.

### **Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)**

JVS is Boston's largest adult education and workforce development provider. It offers skills training and refugee services to homeless families and individuals. For Secure Jobs, JVS will partner with the HomeBASE provider Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP), the childcare provider College Bound Dorchester (CBD), and employment service providers Job Training Alliance (JTA), The Work Place (JVS run one-stop Career Center), the Asian American Civic Organization, Just-A-Start Corporation and YMCA/Training, Inc. In addition, JVS is partnering with several key community stakeholders, including The City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). The partnership will be led by JVS and MBHP, Boston's largest HomeBASE administrator. Key entry-level sectors identified for this region include: hospitality/food service, health care (direct and administration), customer service, construction and automotive. JVS and its partners developed a new assessment tool to be used at the stabilization level to initially screen candidates for work readiness and refer those candidates to one or more of the three work development tracks (rapid employment, short-term job readiness training, and longer-term occupational skills training). JVS aims to place 100 participants in full-time jobs, with 80 remaining in their jobs one year later. The Secure Jobs program at JVS is run day-to-day by a full-time Site Coordinator and several part-time Employment Specialists. In addition, a part-time Vocational English Language Training (VELT) Job Readiness trainer has been added to the Secure Jobs team.

## **SER-Jobs for Progress**

Located in Southeastern Massachusetts, SER-Jobs has been providing adult education and workforce training for 34 years to the Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton areas. SER-Jobs is a Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) vendor and also offers in-house training in hospitality, insurance customer service, ESOL, computer skills and help in citizen acquisition. As a long-term provider in the region, SER-Jobs has been partnering with local institutions since the 1980s, including businesses, hospitals, high schools and Bristol Community College. SER-Jobs joined the Secure Jobs project in March 2013. For this Initiative, SER-Jobs is partnering with HomeBASE providers Community Care Services, Inc. (CCS), the South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness (SOCO), and Catholic Social Services (CSS). SER-Jobs' employment service providers include the local Bristol Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Career Centers of Bristol County (CCBC). According to their grant proposal, SER-Jobs' Secure Jobs program is guided by the "saturation approach," to provide as many services as necessary to address academic, personal, societal, environmental and professional challenges. Targeted regional entry-level occupations include healthcare (Home Health Aide, CNA), customer service representatives, hospitality and jobs in local small businesses. As part of the effort to eliminate barriers to employment, they provide services to help clients secure child care vouchers and subsidize public transportation in the first few weeks as clients attend interviews, workshops and work. SER-Jobs aims to enroll 85 people into the Secure Jobs program, place 65 into jobs and increase family income by 20%. SER-Jobs hired a full-time Coordinator/Case Manager at the beginning of the project in March for 18 months. The Secure Jobs program at this site is staffed by a full-time Site Coordinator, a part-time Employment Specialist and a part-time Job Developer/Employment Specialist.

## **Appendix 2: Supplementary Funds**

Several sites leveraged their success with Secure Jobs to solicit additional funds. The following table summarizes the sources and amounts of these funds. These supplementary funds total \$635,000, and will be used to increase the caseload, provide additional services (such as VELT training and child care), and extend the Initiative for another year.

<b>Site Receiving Funds</b>	<b>Grantmaking Organization</b>	<b>Total Grant</b>
Father Bill's & MainSpring (FBMS)	South Shore Housing	\$300,000
SER-Jobs for Progress (SER)	South Shore Housing	\$150,000
Secure Jobs Initiative (All Sites)	DHCD	\$100,000
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)	City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development	\$50,000
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)	United Way Boston	\$20,000
Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI)	Eastern Bank	\$10,000
Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI)	City of Lowell	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$635,000</b>

In addition, two counties have worked with local shelter providers to offer the same service model to shelter residents. The following table summarizes the organizations, the funds allocated to the new initiative and the impact in terms of number of people employed.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Total Funds Expended</b>	<b>Individuals Employed</b>
Western MA (CPM)	HAP Housing, Springfield MA	\$200,000	118
Norfolk, Middlesex & Worcester Counties	United Way of Tri-County	\$10,000	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$210,000</b>	<b>134</b>

## Appendix 3: Evaluation Questions and Research Methods

### **Evaluation Questions**

1. What are the components in each of the three new projects, and how do they differ across projects?
  - Plan for partnership development and engagement: Who are the partners and what are their respective roles? What are the communication mechanisms among the different partners, and how is the overall management of the partnership organized? What are the relationships with employers?
  - Types of new staff positions created: What types of new staff positions are created, and what are the roles with respect to participants and project partners? How are they expected to establish the critical link between housing/homeless services and the workforce development system? What are new types of services provided, if any, in addition to pre-employment training?
  - Embeddedness of new strategies in institutional practices: How are the new employment strategies for homeless families embedded into key partners' institutional practices and missions?
  - Regional entry level employment prospects: What are the regional entry level employment prospects for participants, and in what fields? What are the associated wage prospects in each field? What are the skills needed for these positions?
2. How is each project being implemented in its respective region?
  - Participant recruitment strategies: How are HomeBASE participants contacted and recruited? What is the information shared with potential participants? What is the yield in interest in program participation?
  - Partnership building processes: How are the new partnerships' collaborative efforts strengthened? How do the new partnerships increase participants' access to and use of supportive and employment services? How often do partners communicate, and what is the focus of these exchanges?
  - Creation of new systems and monitoring practices: What are new practices of case monitoring and case management, and what is the extent of 'high/low' touch services required based on the range of issues managed and participants' needs? How is direct service staff prepared for the new employment focus for HomeBASE families? How is staff trained for new positions?
  - Project Investments: To further project replication, it is necessary to document startup investments and ongoing time and resource commitments for project. What are the levels

of effort expended to manage, coordinate, train, supervise, and monitor the collaborative Initiative? What are new resource /assets created or leveraged for the project and/or participants?

3. What level and types of support/training are needed to improve employment outcomes for participants? Are there differences between the regional projects?
  - Participant and staff assessments: What employment assessment tools are used/developed to assess participants' training needs? How are the barriers to employment reduced? What support mechanisms are put in place to support participants post program participation and to ensure continued employment when faced with family crises?
  - Job readiness training: What is the focus of the job readiness training developed as part of the WDI? What curriculums are used/developed to address the realities of homeless families? Are there regional differences in training focus? How many participants complete the job readiness training, what are the major areas of improvement, and how job ready are they given this training?
  - Job skills training: What types of skills training are implemented? What curriculums are used/developed to address the realities of homeless families? Are there regional differences in training focus? Are these training programs provided by the lead agencies or outsourced?
  - Job search and placement: How many job interviews are conducted (overall per region, per participant)? How many job placements are secured and retained? What are the coaching strategies in supporting participant's continued employment? What types of jobs are they interviewing for?
4. What are the impacts and income growth outcomes for project participants?
  - Participant assessment of new employment services: How do program participants view the services provided in the WDI? What do they identify as facilitators toward increasing and sustaining their employment and wages? What are barriers to accessing training and employment?
  - Direct service staff assessment of the project: How does front-line housing staff view the integration and associated outcomes of the new employment focus? What are the short-term employment trajectories and outcomes for participants from the staff perspective? What remaining barriers does staff identify?
  - Participants outcomes: What are the short-term increases in hours worked and income gains? What is the quality of new employment (set number of weekly hours, paid time off, etc.)?

## Research Methods

This evaluation employs a mixed methods research design, using both quantitative and qualitative data from various sources to examine project implementation and participants' early outcomes. Evaluation research requires considering complex relationships between many factors both within and external to the program under consideration. As such, many indicators are required to make a judgment about the effectiveness of the program. Rallis and Rossman.<sup>23</sup>

Write that there are three activities involved in evaluation research: "description, comparison, and prediction."<sup>23</sup> And different types of data speak to each of these activities. Furthermore, with evaluation research, it is rarely possible to collect all the data one would need to make an unequivocal judgment about the program, simply because of practical and logistic reasons. Combining multiple sources of data can help to offset this shortcoming.<sup>23</sup>

Using Caracelli and Green's<sup>2</sup> typology of mixed methods research designs; this evaluation is a *holistic integrated* design for both data collection and analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used throughout the evaluation, and analysis combines interpretive (qualitative) and deductive (quantitative) methods. Caracelli and Green write, "The intention [of this design] is to be sensitive to human agency and the social processes, as well as structural processes. The approach is holistic, so the cases themselves are not lost, and the approach is analytic, so some generalization is possible."<sup>2</sup> The holistic integrated design allows the research team to consider the implementation process and the many external factors that might influence it, as well as the impacts of both these elements on participants' employment situations. In other words, this evaluation will show both the actual impact of Secure Jobs on clients, and the mechanisms through which it operated to change people's lives.

The evaluation team is collecting four types of data:

- Documents: recruitment tools, assessment forms, meeting minutes, job descriptions for new positions under this grant; training curricula; monthly reports on implementation, collected from each site every month, including monthly enrollment numbers
- Interviews: Interviews and focus groups with Site Coordinators, housing and workforce development staff at different levels (34 total, all 5 sites); interviews with state agencies (3 total, 2 agencies.) A sample of participants will also be interviewed, and these data will be analyzed for the second report, in February 2014.
- Observations: Observations of intake, assessment, job readiness training (6 total, all 5 sites); observations of Advisory Board meetings (9 total, 4 sites)
- Quantitative Data: Data are being collected on the entire universe of Secure Jobs participants, including demographics as well as detailed income employment information. These data will be analyzed for the second report, in February 2014.

Interviews have been conducted in a semi-structured format, with interview guides designed ahead of time to probe for key information. For each group interviewed (Stabilization Workers, Employment Specialists, etc.) the same interview guide is used across sites, with some minor editing to account for regional and program differences. Brandeis' Institutional Review Board approved this research.

Interviews are all transcribed, and observations described in detailed field notes. Documents, interview transcripts and field notes are all entered into qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 9.2). These data sources are all coded for emergent themes using a system of tree and free codes.<sup>5</sup> This inductive method of data analysis allows the researchers to see patterns across the five sites and to assess what issues have been particularly important in the first seven months of implementation. Monthly quantitative data on enrollment in the three tracks and employment works with these qualitative data to show the actual impacts of the program. Debra Rog and her colleagues used a very similar research design in their award-winning evaluation of the Homeless Families Program, a comparison of a supportive housing program across several sites.<sup>28</sup>



## Appendix 4: Secure Jobs Contract



### **SECURE JOBS PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS SHEET**

*As a participant in this agency's services, I agree to the following rules:*

- 1. I will be on time for all classes and case management meetings; failure to do so may result in a Corrective Action Notice.*
- 2. I understand that attendance and punctuality issues may result in my dismissal from services at SJP with the possibility of notice of non-compliance being forwarded by my referral source.*
- 3. I will not willfully damage or steal the property of SJP staff or other program participants*
- 4. I will not be in any possession of any weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or paraphernalia while attending SJP programming.*
- 5. I agree not to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while at SJP*
- 6. I understand that SJP has a zero-tolerance policy for physical, verbal or sexual threats or assaults.*
- 7. Romantic relationships between SJP/The Workplace/JVS staff are strictly prohibited. SJP encourages participants to maintain strictly professional relationships with one another.*
- 8. I agree to dress business casual when attending the SJP programming the following items are not permitted(tank tops, shorts, stretch yoga pants, doo rags, flip flops)*
- 9. I agree to respect the confidentiality of other participants and SJP staff.*
  
- 10. I will be committed to achieving success through this program, arriving each day with a positive attitude, motivation and willingness to learn and share knowledge.*
  
- 11. No cell phone use during class, cell phones should be off or on vibrate*

***Participant Signature***

***Date:***

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***SJP Employment Specialist Signature***

***Date:***

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***SJP Program Manager Signature***

***Date:***

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## **Appendix 5: Case Study of a Job Readiness Class**

The job readiness class is scheduled to start at 10am. At 10, two instructors and two participants sit in the classroom, chatting. The two participants are eating breakfast out of Dunkin' Donuts bags, and both have out their smartphones and are looking at them at the same time. One of the instructors states that we will wait a few more minutes for others to arrive before starting, because they may have been delayed on the bus. She then hands out thick booklets to the two participants who are present, and tells them she can get started on their homework. They open the booklets and begin to look through them.

The room is brightly lit by fluorescent lights, with desks around the perimeter with desktop computers on them, and chairs at each computer. In the middle, four tables are set up together to make a large square. Chairs surround this table. The walls are bare of decoration, but have a few signs with instructions on how to use log onto the computers and use the printers in the room.

Another instructor enters a few minutes later, as one of the participants is talking about how hard it was to get her kids out of bed in the morning to get to the bus for camp on time. At about 10:10, two more women trickle in, followed by a man and woman together, and we begin. One of the instructors asks everyone to put out their name plates, and the participants all take out folded pieces of paper with their names printed on them, and set them up on the table.

One of the instructors then introduces the class. She starts out by saying that it is important for everyone to put their best foot forward this week and practice having a positive attitude by smiling and being positive, courteous and respectful while in class. Even if you aren't feeling positive, she advises everyone to "fake it till you make it" because practicing being positive during class will be good practice for being positive in life. She reminds everybody of the adage "no time is a good time to complain."

The class then moves on to the first activity in the book, a quiz that can help you determine if you have a negative attitude. There is a list of 29 statements that ask questions about your level of trust, perceived bad luck and your general feelings towards other people and work. All of them are negative statements. The instructor tells everyone to read through the list and check-off the statements that are true for each of them. She says that the test is self-scoring, and that she is taking it too. The quiz ends with the statement "If you checked more than 6 statements, you may have some negative attitudes that affect both your job search and your job performance." Everyone continues through the packet to a page that says that according to studies, employers value attitude at 40%, as opposed to job skills at 10% (along with 25% image and appearance, and 25% communication skills).

Next in the packet is a list of attitudes that employers value in their employees. The list includes integrity, rationality, taking initiative, and adventurousness. Each word has a brief definition next to it, e.g. "integrity: fair, honest, loyal and straight forward." The instructor asks everyone

in the class to go around the room, read off the word and definition and talk about what this word means for them in the workplace. Everyone participates in the activity, except the one Latina woman who laughs nervously and explains that her English isn't very good, especially when she is nervous. The instructor is gracious and asks for others' input, taking the pressure off this woman.

One of the terms towards the end is "reaction to co-workers," which is defined as "working in harmony." A participant asks what to do when the person you are having trouble with is your boss: should she confront her boss about this behavior or not. A discussion ensues about this issue. The instructor says that the first thing to do in a situation like this is understand how unhappy the boss must be, and that the participant should have empathy for her. She then suggests that if the participant chooses to confront her boss, she should do it alone, as opposed to with her co-workers, and in an assertive not aggressive way.

It is now 11:00, and the class takes a short break before resuming for a lesson on cover letters. This lesson starts with the instructor asking if anyone has ever used a cover letter. Two say they have before, and two say they had never heard of cover letters before they attended another job readiness workshop a few months ago.

The instructor asks what they should put in the cover letter. Someone responds that they should use it to point out why they would be good candidates for that job specifically. The instructor agrees, saying that when she finds a job she wants to apply for, she prints out the job description and takes it to her desk. She reads it through once, then reads it through again and highlights key words that describe the job. Then she uses this to write the cover letter. This is a way of demonstrating to the employer that she really understands what the job is.

The instructor stresses the importance of looking carefully for the *right* job, and writing a cover letter demonstrating that it is the right job. It is important to read the job description carefully in order to make sure that it is the right job. It is better to apply for fewer jobs that are a good fit than to apply randomly to hundreds of jobs that might not be a good fit. Finally, she says that the cover letter is one of the four main documents that they will create during the job readiness class that they need for employment. The others are the resume, references and a thank you letter to send after an interview.

Someone asks what to do when the job description's requirements include a set of skills and a bachelor's degree, and the applicant has the skills and experience but not the bachelor's degree. Should she apply anyway? And if so, should she say something in the interview about why she does not have a bachelor's degree? The instructor responds that the candidate should apply, and stress that she has the skills needed for the job, even if she does not have the credential of a college degree.

The instructor then tells everyone to move to a computer to practice writing a cover letter. Each participant is to find a job description online for a job that he or she is interested in, print it out, and then write a cover letter for it. They must try to find a person's name to which they should address the letter, rather than addressing it "To Whom It May Concern." If they cannot find the name of the human resources director or manager, then they can address it to the "Hiring Manager." They should use the heading they use on their resumes, if they have them, so that the documents match. Staff moves around the room helping people one-on-one with this exercise.

Participants' ability to navigate the internet and use Microsoft Word varies greatly. Some participants find a job description immediately and set to work composing and formatting a cover letter. Others struggle, and ask for help. A program intern has come in, and she assists one participant with using the mouse. One participant asks a staff member if she should consider a job that goes till 5:30pm, when her son's day care closes at 5:00. The staff member points out that this is only an exercise, and that if she were actually to apply for this job and get it, they could work on finding an alternate child care arrangement. The participant begins to talk through alternate child care options that would allow her to work till 5:30, including asking a friend to pick her son up and watch him for half an hour.

When participants are done, they are told to print out their cover letters, staple them to the job description and hand them in to the instructor. The instructor will read through them and return them with individualized feedback at the next class. Participants who have finished early begin chatting with each other. Two women exchange cell phone numbers.

At 12:00 it is time for class to end. Everyone hands in their cover letters, and the instructor hands out the next assignment: Everyone is to come up with three people who could serve as references, and then find their contact information. This assignment is due at the next class.

## Appendix 6: Career Centers

### **Background**

The One-Stop Career Center System was established under the Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998 with the goal of streamlining access to employment services<sup>1, 7, 11</sup>. The One-Stop System replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and is characterized by several key changes:

1. *Streamlined Services.* The One-Stop system offers a **single point of access** to multiple employment and training programs. All WIA-funded employment and training services must be offered through these centers, including Welfare to Work, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans Administration and HUD training and employment programs. In addition, many Career Centers partner with non-WIA funded local training and employment programs.
2. *Universal Access.* Unlike JTPA programs, One-Stop Centers have **no income eligibility requirement**, so anyone can access the Career Center Services.
3. *Increased Involvement at State and Local Levels.* The WIA requires states to establish state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), appointed by state governors, to plan and monitor delivery of workforce development efforts, including oversight of local One-Stop Career Centers.
4. *Increased Accountability.* The WIA increased emphasis on accountability, creating a set of standardized **performance-based measures**, known as Common Measures, that evaluate One-Stop Career Center performance based on client job placement, retention and earnings increase.<sup>\*\*7</sup>

Career Centers offer three levels of mandated services, often alongside other non-WIA funded services offered by local partners.

1. *Core Services.* Core services for all Career Center users include review of eligibility for other WIA services, outreach, intake, orientation, initial assessment, job search and placement assistance, and referrals to other support services.
2. *Intensive Services.* Intensive services are for job-seekers facing more significant barriers, and include diagnostic testing, individual employment plan development, group counseling, case management and short term pre-vocational services.

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\*\* These measures apply to adults and dislocated workers. Common Measures for youth are placement in education or employment, attainment of a degree or certificate, and literacy and numeracy gains.

3. *Training Services.* Those who still do not gain employment after intensive services eligible for training services, which are often linked to jobs in demand in the regional market.

### **One-Stop Career Centers and Homeless People**

Despite there being universal access to One-Stop Career Centers, some argue that the Common Measure goals discourage the Career Centers from providing services to sections of the unemployed population who are facing more barriers and are less likely to get a job.<sup>1, 14, 17</sup> The most recent WIA data on One-Stop Career Centers from 2011 show that the homeless represented only about 1% of all Career Center exiters.<sup>11</sup> In addition, employment rates for homeless people who have gone to One-Stop Career Centers are on average 13% lower than the rest of the population. As a result, One-Stop Centers could be better encouraged to support homeless people if performance targets for the expected employment rate of this population were lowered to acknowledge the greater barriers to employment homeless people often face.<sup>11, 14, 17</sup> A recent study analyzing the national One-Stop system suggests that the expected employment rate for the homeless should be lowered by approximately 40%, to better account for the significant barriers faced by this population.<sup>11</sup>

### **One-Stop Career Centers and Secure Jobs**

The Secure Jobs Initiative provides an opportunity for improved One-Stop Career Center services for the homeless population in several key ways:

1. *Ongoing data collection and evaluation of key barriers to employment.* The evaluation team is collecting data not only on the barriers to employment faced by the homeless population, but also on the barriers to effective service delivery, as well as the five sites' innovative solutions to those barriers.
2. *Collaboration between housing Stabilization Workers and Employment Specialists.* Housing Stabilization Workers can follow through on referrals to Career Centers and get feedback from employment workers about client participation. In turn, Employment Specialists learn about other barriers that a client faces from the case managers, enabling them to better support participants in the job placement process. In addition, HomeBASE Stabilization Workers can focus on the critical issue of housing stability. When participants are stably housed, they can better engage in employment and training services.
3. *Focused One-Stop employment services for an underserved population.* Since One-Stop Centers are evaluated based on job placement and retention, they are discouraged from providing services to those who are harder to employ. However, the formal collaboration between housing agencies and Career Centers has created opportunities for this gap to be filled. Secure Jobs participants now benefit from improved services, including one-on-one employment support and structured job readiness programs.