

## Transitional Jobs Programs Work

A paycheck is the best alternative to a welfare check. Transitional jobs programs provide that paycheck for welfare recipients who need the most assistance leaving welfare for work, as well as for other workers having difficulty succeeding in the workplace. Transitional jobs are short-term, publicly subsidized jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services to help participants find and keep unsubsidized jobs. Participants in such programs often face significant barriers, including low levels of education and little recent work experience.

While in the programs, workers in transitional jobs earn between \$5.15 and \$8 per hour and work between 20 to 35 hours per week for three months to a year. Between 39 and 82 percent of people who enroll complete the program, and the majority of program graduates—81 to 94

percent—go on to find unsubsidized employment averaging \$7 to \$10 per hour to start.

Transitional jobs programs help graduates increase their employment skills, earnings, and the length of time spent working at a job. Currently there are approximately 20 transitional jobs programs across the nation in large and small cities as well as in rural areas. Following are specific employment and earnings outcomes from four transitional jobs programs serving rural and urban areas, as well as welfare recipients,

ex-offenders, and non-custodial fathers.

### Many Programs Serve Welfare Recipients

#### Washington State's Community Jobs Program

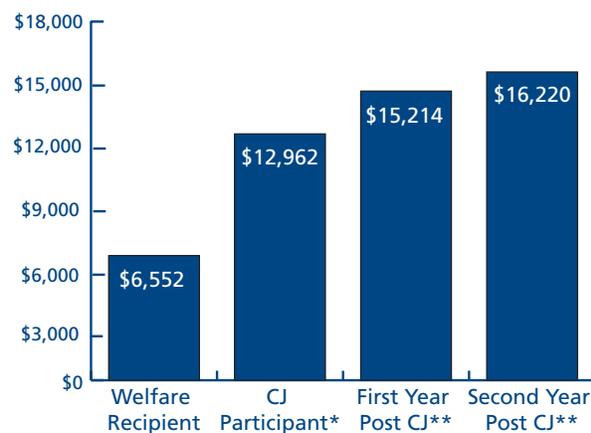
One of the largest statewide transitional jobs programs, Community Jobs operates in cities and rural areas across Washington State. It has served approximately 9,700 individuals since 1998.

- ◀ 72 percent of all program participants find unsubsidized employment.
- ◀ According to a study of five Washington State programs, employed program graduates saw their earnings rise 42 percent on average during their first year of unsubsidized employment.

#### Georgia's GoodWorks!

Georgia's GoodWorks! program is specially designed to work with long-term welfare recipients who have multiple and severe barriers to employment. The statewide program operates in both rural and urban areas and has served approximately 4,230 individuals since implementation in 2000.

**Average Annual Income for Washington's Community Jobs (CJ) Program**



\* Includes average CJ wages, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and earnings disregard on welfare assistance.

\*\*Includes average post-CJ wages, EITC, and earnings disregard on welfare assistance.

- ◀ According to a study of five sites, 70 percent of all participants find unsubsidized employment, while 86 percent of program completers do.
- ◀ Average hourly wages at unsubsidized placements vary from \$5.75 in rural areas to \$8 in urban areas.

### **Philadelphia's Transitional Work Corporation (TWC)**

TWC is the largest urban transitional jobs program in the nation, serving approximately 2,200 people annually. It has served 7,200 people since it began in 1997.

- ◀ 49 percent of those who enroll in the program and 92 percent of participants who complete the program find unsubsidized employment.
- ◀ Their average wage at their unsubsidized job is \$7.73 per hour, and over half are offered health insurance at their jobs.
- ◀ At the end of two full quarters, 79 percent of those who had

found unsubsidized employment are still working.

### **Other Hard-to-Employ Populations Also Can Benefit**

Transitional jobs programs have been effective with populations other than welfare recipients. Programs across the country serve ex-offenders, refugees, and at-risk youth. One example follows:

### **New York's Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**

CEO serves about 1,500 ex-offenders each year. Most of the participants are young men with limited education and work experience; many are non-custodial fathers.

- ◀ From 2000-2002, 56 percent of those who enrolled found unsubsidized employment.
- ◀ The average wage at the unsubsidized placement was \$7.31.

### **Success Where Other Programs Have Failed**

These results contrast sharply with the results found for *unpaid* work experience programs. The largest such program in the country, New York City's Work Experience Program, has reported only a 9-percent placement rate into unsubsidized employment in FY 2002. In Washington State, independent research found the state's unpaid work experience program to be so ineffective at increasing employment and earnings for participants that the state canceled the program.

Transitional jobs programs achieve results. These results are even more impressive because they represent the success of participants who face difficult barriers to employment.

*For more information on how transitional jobs programs mitigate barriers to employment, see the fact sheet, "Transitional Jobs Programs Break Through Barriers to Work." ■*

**For more information visit [www.transitionaljobs.net](http://www.transitionaljobs.net) or contact:**

**Debra Rhinehart**  
National Transitional Jobs Network  
Economic Opportunity Institute  
(206) 529-6365  
[debra@eoionline.org](mailto:debra@eoionline.org)



**Abbey Frank**  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
(202) 906-8023  
[afrank@clasp.org](mailto:afrank@clasp.org)

