The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Findings for the Cleveland Achieve Model: Implementation and Early Impacts of an Employer-Based Approach to Encourage Employment Retention Among Low-Wage Workers

Cynthia Miller
Vanessa Martin
Gayle Hamilton

With

Lauren Cates
Victoria Deitch

December 2008

MDRC is conducting the Employment Retention and Advancement project under a contract with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), funded by HHS under a competitive award, Contract No. HHS-105-99-8100. Additional funding has been provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The Lewin Group, as a subcontractor, is helping to provide technical assistance to the sites. HumRRO, as a subcontractor, is fielding the client surveys.

The findings and conclusions presented herein do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of HHS.

Dissemination of MDRC publications is supported by the following funders that help finance MDRC's public policy outreach and expanding efforts to communicate the results and implications of our work to policymakers, practitioners, and others: The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, and The Starr Foundation. MDRC's dissemination of its education-related work is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and Citi Foundation. In addition, earnings from the MDRC Endowment help sustain our dissemination efforts. Contributors to the MDRC Endowment include Alcoa Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, The Grable Foundation, The Lizabeth and Frank Newman Charitable Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, Jan Nicholson, Paul H. O'Neill Charitable Foundation, John S. Reed, The Sandler Family Supporting Foundation, and The Stupski Family Fund, as well as other individual contributors.

For information about MDRC and copies of our publications, see our Web site: www.mdrc.org.

Overview

This report presents results from an evaluation of the Achieve program in Cleveland. Run by the organization Towards Employment, Achieve provided on-site services in the workplace to increase retention among low-wage workers. It is among 16 models being tested by MDRC in the national Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project under contract to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with additional support from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

A common challenge for programs providing retention and advancement services is the difficulty of engaging clients, whose work and family responsibilities often leave little time to visit program staff. The key idea behind Achieve's employer-based model was to take the program to the workers, making it easier and more convenient for them to take advantage of services. The Achieve program consisted of on-site delivery of case management services, where staff met individually with clients to discuss a wide variety of issues, ranging from workplace and housing problems to transportation and child care; weekly information sessions covering such topics as time and stress management, goal-setting, budgeting, and credit repair; and trainings for the supervisors of low-wage workers.

Achieve is being evaluated using a random assignment research design, in which 44 employers were randomly assigned to either a program group, eligible to receive Achieve's services for their low-wage workers, or a control group, not eligible for these services. Because of traditionally high turnover rates in the long-term nursing care industry, Towards Employment recruited employers primarily from that sector.

Key Findings

- **Workers at the Achieve firms were more likely than those at the control firms to receive job retention services, but sustained engagement was difficult to achieve.** About three-quarters of the low-wage employees in the Achieve firms had some contact with the program, and employees in the Achieve firms were much more likely than those in the control firms to have received retention services. However, even with the program's on-site location, participation as a whole was less intensive than hoped for. Reasons for this include rapid turnover among low-wage workers, the difficult job demands placed on nursing home staff, and limited interest among some low-wage employees.

- **Achieve had little effect overall on low-wage employee's retention at their original firms, aside from a small increase in retention in the short term.** Within six months of random assignment, only 60 percent of employees starting out in the study firms were still at those firms. Achieve had no effect on the proportion of workers still at their original firms after six months or after one year, although it did lead to a small increase in the number of days worked during the first three months. Achieve did have positive effects on retention for two subgroups of employees who exhibited relatively high rates of turnover during the follow-up period — those earning very low wages and younger employees — and for the subgroup of firms with relatively high turnover rates prior to entering the study.

- **Achieve had no effect on firmwide turnover rates.** Achieve services were available to all employees at the firm, although the low-wage workers in the research sample were given top priority for services. Data for all workers at the firms indicate no effects on firmwide retention in the year following random assignment.

A future report in the ERA evaluation will present longer-term results for Cleveland's Achieve program.

Contents

List of Tables, Figures, and Boxes

Table

Table

Table

Figure

Box

About the Employment Retention and Advancement Project

The federal welfare overhaul of 1996 ushered in myriad policy changes aimed at getting low-income parents off public assistance and into employment. These changes — especially cash welfare's transformation from an entitlement into a time-limited benefit contingent on work participation — have intensified the need to help low-income families become economically self-sufficient and remain so in the long term. Although a fair amount is known about how to help welfare recipients prepare for and find jobs in the first place, the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project is the most comprehensive effort thus far to ascertain which approaches help welfare recipients and other low-income people stay steadily employed and advance in their jobs.

Launched in 1999 and slated to end in 2009, the ERA project encompasses more than a dozen demonstration programs and uses a rigorous research design to analyze the programs' implementation and impacts on research sample members, who were randomly assigned to the study groups. The study was conceived and funded by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; supplemental support has been provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. The project is being conducted by MDRC. Most of the ERA programs were designed specifically for the purposes of evaluation, in some cases building on prior initiatives. Because the programs' aims and target populations vary, so do their services:

- **Advancement programs** focus on helping low-income workers move into better jobs by offering such services as career counseling and education and training.
- **Placement and retention programs** seek to help participants find and hold jobs and are aimed mostly at "hard-to-employ" people, such as welfare recipients who have disabilities or substance abuse problems.
- **Mixed-goals programs** focus on job placement, retention, and advancement, in that order, and are targeted primarily to welfare recipients who are searching for jobs.

The ERA project's evaluation component investigates the following aspects of each program:

- **Implementation.** What services does the program provide? How are those services delivered? Who receives them? How are problems addressed?

- **Impacts.** To what extent does the program improve employment rates, job retention, advancement, and other key outcomes? Looking across programs, which approaches are most effective, and for whom?

A total of 16 ERA models have been implemented in eight states: California, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, and Texas. But — given significant differences in implementation in the three sites operating the Texas model — the project ultimately will yield 18 independent estimates of site effectiveness.[1]

The evaluation draws on administrative and fiscal records, surveys of participants, and field visits to the sites.

[1]Past reports list 15 ERA models. This number was changed, however, to recognize that one of the tests in Riverside, California, actually involved two models, given the two initiatives' different sets of service providers and program rules. Note that "site effectiveness" refers to the effectiveness of different models or to the effectiveness of a model that was implemented very differently in a number of locations.

Acknowledgments

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) evaluation would not have been possible without the cooperation, commitment, and hard work of a wide range of administrators and staff in all the ERA sites. Notably, findings from all the sites in the evaluation contribute to addressing the study's key questions. All the sites stepped forward to innovate in a challenging and important area of social policy and practice, and as much can be learned from models that so far are not showing economic impacts as from those that are. For the evaluation of the Cleveland, Ohio, ERA program, called "Achieve," the following individuals deserve special thanks.

Chelsea Mills, September Sparks, and Jill Rizika of Towards Employment have been vital to the evaluation. They played major roles in the program design and made a herculean effort to recruit firms to participate in the study. They also worked closely with MDRC to set up and monitor the evaluation, assisted in arranging many site visits, facilitated a range of other research and data collection activities, and provided support throughout the study. Walter Ginn, the former Executive Director of Towards Employment, was also instrumental in the early stages of the program design and provided valuable guidance and support throughout the study.

Given the unique nature of the research design, the authors would like to thank the Achieve advisers (case managers) for their flexibility and willingness to adjust their schedules and travel long distances to conduct numerous recruitment sessions for the study. They also graciously accommodated numerous MDRC site visits and data collection activities, willingly discussed their experiences, and participated in an in-depth study of how they spent their time at work. Lynne Perry of Towards Employment also contributed significantly to the program and study. Fran Hersh, Vickie Maddux, and John Suminski at the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) provided administrative records data to MDRC for the study.

At MDRC, we thank Barbara Goldman, Charles Michalopoulos, Stephen Freedman, Richard Hendra, and Margaret Bald, who provided helpful comments on earlier drafts of the report. Mike Fishman of The Lewin Group also provided comments on an earlier draft. Howard Bloom helped in the creation of the research design, which involved the random assignment of firms, and reviewed the random assignment process. Stephen Freedman helped oversee data collection from the beginning. Cindy Redcross provided guidance for the analysis of program costs. Tojuana Riley provided excellent research assistance, and Diane Singer provided administrative support. Joel Gordon and Galina Farberova managed the random assignment design. Gilda Azurdia, Zakia Barnes, and Mark van Dok did programming and assisted in the analysis. Robert Weber edited the report, and Stephanie Cowell and David Sobel prepared it for publication.

Finally, we extend our deep appreciation to the hundreds of people who participated in the study and gave generously of their time to respond to a survey.

The Authors

Executive Summary

This report presents interim results for the Cleveland site in the national Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project. Conceived and funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the ERA project is testing a range of innovative programs across the country that aim to promote steady work and career advancement for current and former welfare recipients and other low-wage workers. MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization, is conducting the ERA project under contract to ACF and is producing a similar interim report for each site in the project.[1]

The Cleveland ERA program, called "Achieve," is unique among the ERA programs in that it provided services to employees at the workplace. It is being evaluated using a design in which employers, rather than individuals, were randomly assigned to either a program or a control group. Run by the organization Towards Employment, Achieve targeted long-term nursing care facilities and provided services designed to help increase retention among their low-wage workers.

Origins and Goals of the Cleveland ERA Program

The idea of providing retention and advancement services to low-wage workers is not new. The Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD) was an early attempt to do this, and the ERA programs have tried to do this by building on the lessons from the PESD. A common finding from all these programs is that engaging clients in services is a constant challenge. For many workers, family and work responsibilities leave little time to engage in other activities. The key idea behind Cleveland's employer-based model was to take the program to the workers, making it easier and more convenient for them to take advantage of services.

The Achieve program consisted of three components: (1) Office Hours, during which Achieve staff were available to provide on-site case management services to entry-level employees, meeting individually with them to discuss and devise strategies to resolve a wide array of issues, ranging from workplace and housing problems to transportation and child care; (2) weekly Lunch and Learn information and life skills sessions, covering a variety of topics, such as time and stress management, goal-setting, budgeting, and credit repair; and (3) Supervisory Trainings, targeted to the supervisors of entry-level employees

[1]For further information on the ERA project, see www.mdrc.org.

and designed to help them enhance their current supervisory skills and achieve improved relationships with entry-level staff.

Although the supervisory trainings sought to address broader factors that contribute to worker turnover, on the whole, the program did not seek to fundamentally change employers' work environments, workplace rules and practices, or general ethos. Notably, in nursing homes, difficult work environments have been found to contribute to high staff turnover rates, as discussed in the report.

Towards Employment, a social services organization providing employment services to individuals in the Cleveland area, developed the Achieve program in 2000, with the belief that the employer should be a partner in the provision of retention services to low-wage workers. The employer would benefit from the program if there were a reduction in turnover among entry-level employees, a reduction in costs associated with turnover, and a potential improvement in worker productivity. The worker would also benefit — by staying on the job longer, he or she might be better positioned for advancement at that employer or elsewhere. In this type of model, however, a tension exists between serving the employer's versus the worker's interests, because, in some cases, the best move for a given worker may be to change employers.[2]

The Cleveland ERA Evaluation

The Cleveland ERA evaluation relied on the random assignment of employers, rather than individuals. Between early 2002 and mid 2004, 44 employers were recruited into the study. Half were assigned, at random, to the program group, eligible to receive Achieve services, and half were assigned to a control group. The Achieve model called for firm-level, rather than individual-level, random assignment, primarily because services delivered to some employees might "spill over" to affect other employees with whom they work. In this case, comparing two groups of employees within the same firm would not measure the true effects of services.[3]

Within the 44 study firms, a total of 697 low-wage employees agreed to participate in the study. Although Achieve services were available to all workers at the firm, these study participants received top priority. MDRC is tracking outcomes for the study firms and

[2]Achieve services did not continue if a worker left his or her original employer and moved to another employer.

[3]The process of estimating program impacts is similar for the random assignment of groups and the random assignment of individuals, although, for a given number of individuals, the statistical power of group-level analysis is generally lower.

participants using firm-provided information on employee retention, employment data from the Ohio unemployment insurance (UI) program, and a survey given to the study participants one year after study entry.

The Achieve Target Population

Because of traditionally high turnover rates in the long-term nursing care industry, Towards Employment targeted employers in that sector (although two manufacturing firms were brought in toward the end of intake). The study firms are generally small to medium in size, with over 40 percent having 150 to 200 employees. Most firms have fairly high turnover among their entry-level employees, with nearly a third having a turnover rate of 50 percent or higher.[4] Within these firms, the study targeted recently hired, low-wage workers, since retention problems tend to be greatest during the first few months on the job.

By targeting employers rather than individuals, the Cleveland ERA evaluation includes a significant number of low-wage workers with little or no recent connection to public assistance. This contrasts with most other ERA sites, which focused on current or former welfare recipients. In addition, sample members in Cleveland are somewhat older and more educated than those in the other ERA sites, and a fair number of them do not have children. Finally, although Achieve recruited among all low-wage workers in the firms — including food preparation and housekeeping staff, for example — the majority of study participants were nurses' aides, an occupation characterized as physically and emotionally demanding, with low pay and little autonomy. Turnover in nursing homes is highest for this group.

Key Findings on Program Implementation

- **Recruiting employers was a major challenge.**

To bring in 44 employers for the research study, Achieve staff had to contact over 300 firms over the 2002 to 2004 intake period. Most often, the reason that a firm did not participate was that it did not have the minimum number of recently hired, entry-level employees needed for the study. Although this eligibility criterion was imposed by the study, in practice it is more efficient to locate services at a firm that have a critical mass of individuals to serve. A few firms did not want to participate given the parameters of the research study — they were afraid of being assigned to the control group, with no services, and yet still be required to provide follow-up information on their employees. Finally, a few

[4] "Turnover" is defined as the number of worker resignations and terminations in a given period divided by the total workforce.

employers did not believe that turnover was a problem for them or felt that replacing lost workers was not costly.

- **The Achieve program was generally well implemented, although it was difficult to integrate it into the workplace environment. Service integration improved considerably for firms entering the study in 2004.**

Achieve staff successfully implemented the program model (each of the three components) in the 22 program group firms and were able to make adjustments over time as they learned more about integrating services into the nursing home environment. In particular, Achieve staff spent more time in the recruitment phase in 2004 meeting with employers and gauging their interest in and commitment to the program. Potential firms also had to demonstrate commitment from administrators and upper-level staff and a willingness to meet regularly with the Achieve managers. Some of the challenges in integrating the model might be found for any employer (such as problems in arranging adequate and consistent meeting spaces for group activities), while other challenges are likely specific to nursing homes (such as the difficulty of providing services in an industry that has round-the-clock shifts and requires staff to be on call for patient care at all times).

- **A high fraction of employees in the Achieve group firms had some contact with the program, although sustained engagement was difficult to attain. Workers at the Achieve group firms were more likely than those at the control group firms to receive job retention services.**

About three-quarters of the employees in the Achieve group firms had some contact with the program; over half attended at least one Office Hours session, and over half attended at least one Lunch and Learn group session. Although some workers participated in services very intensively — as measured by the number of sessions attended — a fair number participated only minimally. For example, about a quarter of the workers who attended an Office Hours session attended only once. Attendance at the Lunch and Learn sessions was more frequent. Given that services were provided on-site, early expectations were that almost all those who signed up for the study would participate in services and that they would do so consistently. Thus, participation as a whole was less intensive than hoped for. One reason for this was a combination of job demands and understaffing at some firms, meaning that some workers could not leave the floor of the nursing home to attend sessions. Another reason was high turnover: 40 percent of employees had left the firm within six months. Another reason is that some of the recently hired, low-wage workers who signed up for the study turned out to have limited interest in or need for the offered services. Nonetheless, data from the ERA 12-Month Survey indicate that employees in the Achieve group

firms were much more likely than employees in control group firms to have received retention services, particularly help dealing with problems on the job.

- **A fair number of employees who were not in the research sample also participated in services.**

After the first six months of operation, Achieve services were opened up to all employees at the firms, although employees in the research sample (recently hired, low-wage workers who had agreed to participate in the study) were given top priority. Across all firms, 19 percent of the nonresearch sample employees participated in at least one Achieve activity, with the Lunch the Learn sessions being the most common. In absolute terms, four times as many nonresearch sample members as research sample members participated in an Achieve activity. Thus, Achieve staff worked with a range of employees throughout the firms.

Key Findings on Program Impacts

- **Achieve had little effect overall on low-wage employee's retention at their original firms, aside from a small increase in the short term. Although the results are less certain, there is evidence to suggest that the program increased retention for some subgroups of employees.**

Table ES.1 presents Achieve's effects on retention, using data from two independent sources: data forms filled out by study employers and data from the ERA 12-Month Survey given to study participants. Differences between the ERA and control groups that are marked with asterisks are statistically significant, meaning that they are very likely due to the program. When interpreting the effects, it is important to remember that, with a sample of 44 firms, the evaluation will be able to detect only fairly large impacts. In other words, small differences that might be statistically significant in a larger sample are unlikely to be significant here.

Achieve had little effect on most measures of retention, but it did lead to a small increase in the numbers of days worked during the first three months following random assignment. By one year out, retention rates as reported on the survey were similar for both groups. Data from UI records (not shown) tell a similar story. Achieve did lead to larger and more consistent effects on retention for two subgroups of employees with relatively high rates of turnover — those earning very low wages and younger employees — as well as for the subgroup of firms with relatively high turnover rates. Finally, Table ES.1 illustrates the substantial mobility among the study employees. By six months out, for example, only about 60 percent of participating employees starting out in the control group firms were still

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table ES.1

Impacts on Retention

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
From employer-provided reports				
Percentage still employed at study firm				
After 30 days	92.5	88.8	3.8	0.126
After 90 days	78.5	73.6	4.9	0.184
After 180 days	65.0	60.2	4.8	0.299
Total days worked				
Through Day 30	28.9	28.1	0.8 *	0.093
Through Day 90	80.1	76.7	3.5 *	0.080
Through Day 180	143.5	138.2	5.3	0.289
Sample size = 697	381	316		
From ERA 12-Month Survey				
Employed at study firm in Month 12	44.8	40.2	4.7	0.321
Sample size = 485	260	225		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using firm-reported employment verification forms and the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for within-firm clustering. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The days shown in this table refer to elapsed calendar days, not workdays.

at these firms. After a year, according to the survey data, less than half of the workers were still at the study firms.

- **Achieve had no effect on firmwide turnover rates.**

Since Achieve services were available to all employees at the firm, effects on retention were estimated not just for the research sample but for all individuals working at the firm at the time that the firm entered the study. These data indicate no effects on firmwide retention in the short or long term, as indicated by UI records.

- **Achieve had no effect on workers' employment and earnings, more generally.**

Even though Achieve did not help research sample employees stay at their original firms longer, it was hypothesized that the program might affect their earning and employment outside these firms. Learning to deal with problems on the job, for example, is a skill that follows a worker to other employers. However, an analysis of UI and survey data for the first follow-up year indicates no effects on employment, earnings, or job type.

Policy Implications

Although the Achieve model is not the first program to deliver retention services at the workplace, it is certainly one of the first to be rigorously evaluated. The findings show that it is possible, although challenging, to recruit employers for this type of program and to deliver services at the work site. However, this particular mix of services did not significantly increase retention for the majority of workers, with the exception of some effects for selected subgroups. Although service use was less intensive than hoped, the results suggest that the lack of effects is not due to a low intensity of service receipt. Instead, the results suggest a reconsideration of both the type of services provided and whether to offer services at a level broader than the individual employer.

Recruiting employers is a challenge. Providing employer-based services makes sense only for firms with a sufficient number of low-wage workers, which narrows the potential field of eligible employers and narrows the reach of this type of program into the pool of low-wage workers. In 2006, for example, more than a third of low-wage workers were employed by firms with 25 or fewer employees.[5] In addition, although many firms might sign up for retention services, advancement services would be a tougher sell. Employers with no internal career ladders have little incentive to offer advancement services to their employees, since the employers will likely not reap any of the benefits.

Even with services located at the employer, sustained engagement of workers is hard to achieve. Although many of the problems that Achieve faced in engaging workers in services were specific to the nursing home industry, some were not. Even in an environment that has less demand for patient and floor coverage than in nursing homes, for example, workers may not have the time to leave their work to attend activities. In this case, negotiating up-front for paid time off for participating workers is important. In addition, as

[5]P. Osterman, "Improving Job Quality: Policies Aimed at the Demand Side of the Low Wage Labor Market," in T. Bartik and S. Houseman (eds.), *A Future of Good Jobs: America's Challenge in the Global Economy* (Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute, 2008).

found here, even when services can be accessed conveniently, some low-wage workers will not be interested in services, while others will leave the job before getting any sustained service "dosage."

Changes in the broader work environment may be needed. Workers leave jobs for a variety of reasons: some because of instability in their lives and others because of difficult work environments. In an industry such as long-term care, where high turnover is systemic, workplace factors are likely to be the most important. The Achieve model was designed not to change the broader work environment (such as pay rates, career ladders, and staffing levels) but, instead, to deal with individual-level factors that affect retention. In a high-turnover environment, an individual counseling approach may be effective for employees whose retention problems stem from personal circumstances, but it will have limited effects for the broader group of low-wage workers.[6] One suggestion is to expand the services provided in order to begin affecting the broader work environment, which has been found to have important effects on worker retention.[7] Supervisory trainings, for example, could be expanded to serve additional employees and cover additional topics. Helping firms to develop career ladders and to organize better teamwork among employees might also go a long way toward improving working conditions.[8]

A sector-based approach might provide a better platform for the delivery of these expanded services. Another option is to take the delivery platform for these services one level "up," providing services to groups of employers, either within or across industries.[9] Although this approach might not include the convenience of offering services at the workplace, if a more central location proved more feasible, it offers several potential advantages. First, to the extent that individual counseling services are provided, the program could follow workers if they leave their original employer — an important feature in high-turnover industries. Second, this approach helps to avoid the tension inherent in the employer-based model of serving the needs of either the employer or the employee. The program could coach some employees to change jobs, if advantageous, while filling these open slots with other clients. In this case, offering advancement services would also be an easier

[6]In fact, many argue that the Post-Employment Services Demonstration failed to have effects because it offered case management to all clients, many of whom did not need it.

[7]J. Banaszak-Holl and M. A. Hines, "Factors Associated with Nursing Home Staff Turnover," *Gerontologist* 36 (4) (1996). Also see, for example, the work of the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, described in M. Conway, A. Blair, S. Dawson, and L. Dworak-Muñoz, *Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field* (Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2007), p. 24.

[8]R. I. Stone, S. C. Reinhard, B. Bowers, D. Zimmerman, C. D. Phillips, C. Hawes, J. A. Fielding, and N. Jacboson, *Evaluation of the Wellspring Model for Improving Nursing Home Quality* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 2002).

[9]Although Towards Employment primarily served employers in the same industry (long-term care), Achieve was not viewed or implemented as a sector-based model. For examples of sector-based strategies, see the Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative.

"sell" for participating employers. Finally, serving groups of employers avoids the potential problem of scale, allowing the program to work with firms that may have only a handful of low-wage workers.

The Achieve Program Today

The Achieve model has evolved considerably since the time period in which its operations were evaluated as part of the ERA study. Notably, many of the key model changes — which came about through Achieve staff's experiences in the ERA study and continued interactions with employers — align with the suggested policy implications mentioned above. For example, Achieve now has a greater focus on organizational change and management practices, and it works with employers who are specifically interested in fostering such change. In line with this, offered services now include creating internal career ladders, developing and offering training for employees interested in applying for these newly created positions, and conducting staff-supervisor mediation within specific departments. Implementing such a model has required Achieve staff to view employers more as "customers," to ensure employer "buy-in," and to tie performance benchmarks to employer-identified goals.[10] In addition, as an example of a sector-based approach, Towards Employment recently launched a career ladder initiative and is working with individuals from preemployment through advancement — involving a collaborative of four employers, three educational institutions, and one other community-based organization.

[10]Reflecting these model changes, as well as increased experience and efficiency, the cost for the full set of currently offered Achieve services is estimated by Towards Employment staff to be about one-third the cost of serving employers in the research study.

Introduction

This report presents interim results for the Cleveland site in the national Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project. Conceived and funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the ERA project is testing innovative programs across the country that aim to promote steady work and career advancement for current and former welfare recipients and other low-wage workers.[1] MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization, is conducting the ERA project under contract to ACF and is producing a similar interim report for each site in the project.

The Cleveland program, or Achieve, is unique among the 16 models being studied as part of ERA, for several reasons. First, it is the only employer-based model, or one that provides retention services to low-wage workers at the workplace. Second, the program targeted low-wage workers, many of whom had little or no recent connection to the public assistance system. Finally, because services were provided at the workplace, the evaluation design called for the random assignment of firms, rather than individuals.

This Introduction provides background on the national ERA project and describes the key components of the Cleveland program. It also describes the research design for the evaluation and the characteristics of the sample.

Overview of the National ERA Project

For over a decade, policymakers and program operators have struggled to learn what kinds of services, supports, and incentives are best able to help low-income working parents retain steady employment and move up to better jobs. This issue has assumed even greater urgency in the wake of the 1990s welfare reforms, which made long-term welfare receipt much less feasible for families. Despite many efforts, scant evidence exists about effective strategies to promote employment retention and advancement. Previously evaluated programs that were aimed at improving retention or advancement — notably, the Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD), a four-site project that tested programs providing follow-up case management to welfare recipients who found jobs — generally failed to improve employment outcomes.[2]

[1]The U.S. Department of Labor has also provided funding to support the ERA project.
[2]Rangarajan and Novak (1999).

The Employment Retention and Advancement project was designed to improve on past efforts in this area by identifying and testing innovative models designed to promote employment stability and wage progression among welfare recipients and other low-income groups. The project began in 1998, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued planning grants to 13 states to develop new programs. The following year, HHS selected MDRC to conduct an evaluation of the ERA programs. From 2000 to 2003, MDRC and its subcontractor, The Lewin Group, worked closely with the states that had received planning grants, and with several other states, to mount tests of ERA programs. MDRC, Lewin, and Cygnet Associates also provided extensive technical assistance to some of the states and program operators, since most were starting the project from scratch, with no proven models on which to build.

Ultimately, a total of 16 ERA experiments were implemented in eight states. Almost all the programs target current or former recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — the cash welfare program that mainly serves single mothers and their children — but the program models are very diverse. One group of programs targets low-wage workers and focuses on advancement. Another group targets individuals who are considered "hard to employ" and primarily aims to place them in stable jobs. Finally, a third group of programs has mixed goals and targets a diverse set of populations, including former TANF recipients, TANF applicants, and low-wage workers in particular firms. Some of these programs initiate services before individuals go to work, while others begin services after employment. Appendix Table A.1 describes each of the ERA programs and identifies its goals and target populations.

The evaluation design is similar in most of the sites. Individuals who meet ERA eligibility criteria (which vary from site to site) are assigned, at random, to the program group — also called the "ERA group" or, in this case, the "Achieve group" — or to the control group. Members of the ERA group are recruited for the ERA program (and, in some sites, are required to participate in it), whereas members of the control group are not eligible for ERA services. In Cleveland, 44 firms were assigned at random to the ERA group, whose employees were eligible to receive Achieve services, or to a control group, whose employees were not offered Achieve services. The extent and nature of the services and supports available to the control group vary from site to site. The random assignment process ensures that any differences in outcomes that emerge between the two research groups during the follow-up period can be confidently attributed to the ERA program, rather than to differences in the characteristics of the people in the groups.

The Cleveland ERA Program (Achieve)

Job turnover is associated with a variety of factors. For example, across all industries, individuals with lower education levels, single mothers with young children, and younger workers all have relatively high rates of turnover, which includes both quitting and being discharged.[3] Research suggests that the underlying causes of turnover for these and other groups include a range of personal and family barriers (such as problems with child care or transportation) and less tangible barriers (such as problems dealing with conflicts on the job, either with supervisors or with coworkers).[4] All of this led the planners of the Cleveland ERA model (Achieve) to incorporate a case management role, to help workers address personal circumstances, as one component of a program to increase employment retention and advancement. At the same time, however, job characteristics also influence how long workers stay at the firm. Firms that have more employees, pay higher wages, offer more promotion possibilities, and are unionized tend to have lower turnover rates than other firms.[5] As the next section also illustrates for the nursing home industry, lack of autonomy and worker collaboration also can contribute to low retention rates.

While case management was also a component in most other ERA site models, the difference in Cleveland is that the program services are delivered at employers' work sites. The key idea behind the employer-based model was to make it easier and more convenient for workers to receive services. Several of the other ERA programs have found that engaging clients in retention and advancement services was a constant challenge, particularly once the clients had found jobs. Low-wage workers — especially those balancing work and family responsibilities — may find it difficult to take the time to visit an employment office to meet with a case manager. Achieve sought to eliminate this inconvenience by providing services at the workplace. Another key difference between the Cleveland and other ERA models is that, instead of targeting particular individuals, Achieve targeted a high-turnover industry, the long-term nursing care industry. As a result, the program worked with a population that was different from those in other in ERA study sites: low-wage workers with little or no recent connection to public assistance. The key features of the Achieve program are the following:

- **Office Hours.** Achieve staff used case management as one approach to deliver services to entry-level employees. A key feature of Office Hours was that Achieve advisers were on-site at regular times so that employees could meet individually with them to discuss a wide array of issues, rang-

[3]Holzer and LaLonde (2000); Ballen and Freeman (1986).
[4]Holzer, Stoll, and Wissoker (2004).
[5]Holzer, Stoll, and Wissoker (2004); Holzer and LaLonde (2000); Brannon, Zinn, Mor, and Davis (2002).

ing from workplace and housing matters to transportation and child care concerns. Generally, the adviser's Office Hours at a given employer were regularly scheduled on one specific day per week, for a total of 3 to 4 hours per week.

- **Lunch and Learns, or Group Sessions.** In addition to Office Hours, Achieve staff offered weekly informational sessions, referred to as "Lunch and Learns," or "group sessions." Generally 30 minutes in length, these sessions were designed to provide life skills education in four broad areas — Workplace Success, Money Matters, Personal Wellness, and Continuing Education — and covered such topics as problem solving, time management, goal setting, conflict in the workplace, credit repair, budgeting, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

- **Supervisory Trainings.** The employer-focused component of the Achieve program was Supervisory Training, targeted to the supervisors of entry-level employees. Supervisory Training was conducted by two staff members from Towards Employment, a social services organization described below. In order to minimize disruptions to workplace operations, training was offered as an all-day, 8-hour session; as two half-day sessions; or as three 2-hour sessions. The training consisted of various activities (for example, role-play) designed to help the supervisors learn new skills and techniques, enhance their current supervisory skills, and gain support and insight from other supervisors who deal with similar workplace situations. The training motto was "Not about changing policies and procedures, it's about changing perspectives and changing spirit!" (Appendix Table A.5 presents a content outline of Achieve Supervisory Training.)

Although the third component of Achieve can be thought of as addressing both employee- and firm-level factors that contribute to turnover, on the whole, the program did not seek to fundamentally change employers' work environments, workplace rules and practices, or general ethos. While efforts to foster such transformations are worth considering as a tool to increase workers' retention, it should be kept in mind that this is not what Achieve set out to do or ended up doing.

These services were offered at participating employers for approximately one year, and the program did not serve individuals after they left the participating firm. Although some attempts were made to try to reengage these participants, the focus of Achieve was on retention at the original firm, not on reemployment. The original intent of the program was

to control caseload size by providing Achieve's Office Hours only to employees in the study sample, that is, those who attended orientation sessions and agreed to take part in the research. Lunch and Learn sessions, in contrast, were available to all staff. As described in the next section's discussion of program implementation in Cleveland, midway into the study period, Towards Employment and MDRC jointly decided to allow any employee at the firm to participate in Office Hours.

The Achieve program is run by Towards Employment, a community-based social services organization located in downtown Cleveland. Towards Employment has a long history in the Cleveland community, having been formed in the mid-1970s to provide services to low-income individuals through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). Towards Employment has since expanded its mission to provide job placement and retention services to low-income individuals who are not eligible for government-provided assistance — through the Workforce Investment Act, for example — as well as to those involved in the criminal justice system.

Towards Employment developed the Achieve program in 2000, with the belief that the employer should be a partner in the provision of retention services to low-wage workers. The employer would benefit from the program, through a reduction in turnover among entry-level employees, a reduction in costs associated with turnover, and a potential improvement in worker productivity. The worker would also benefit: by staying on the job longer, he or she might be better positioned for advancement at that employer or elsewhere. The retention services that workers receive while in Achieve might also affect their retention at subsequent employers. Note, however, that there is somewhat of a tension for Achieve staff in meeting both the workers and the employer's needs, which in many cases will not coincide. The program's goal, for example, was to keep workers at the firm longer, while, for some workers, a job change may be a good move.

Achieve was piloted at five employer sites in 2001. The next year, Achieve became part of the ERA evaluation and was implemented at 22 firms over the period from 2002 through 2005. For reasons mentioned below, Towards Employment focused on the long-term nursing care industry for the evaluation, with the result that 21 of the 22 firms are nursing care facilities.

The Target Industry and Population

Long-Term Nursing Care

In many ways, the health care sector, and long-term care in particular, is an ideal industry for Achieve to target. The health services sector is growing in the nation as a whole as well as in the Cleveland area. Within the health care sector, employment in nursing

homes is growing rapidly. There are over 15,000 certified nursing homes in the United States, and over 250 of them are within a 50-mile radius of downtown Cleveland, where Towards Employment's office is located.[6] (Although two of the 44 firms in the ERA study are in the manufacturing industry, this section focuses on nursing homes and their eligible employees.)

Another key feature of the industry is its historically high annual turnover rates, with estimates ranging from 45 percent to well over 100 percent.[7] Coupled with the ongoing difficulty of filling vacant positions, particularly for nursing assistants, both recruitment and retention have become key concerns among policymakers and practitioners. The aging of the baby boomers only compounds what has been termed a "crisis" in long-term care.[8]

Employee turnover in nursing homes can also be costly. The direct costs of recruiting and training a new employee and terminating the previous worker can add up to several times the employee's monthly salary.[9] Additional costs that are not necessarily quantifiable include lower staff morale and a reduction in the quality of care delivered to nursing home residents.[10]

Nurses and nurses' aides (also referred to as "nursing assistants") make up the key staff at nursing homes. Federal law and some states require minimum standards in terms of resident-to-staff ratios. For example, the average nursing home in the United States has 95 residents.[11] This facility might have two Licensed Nurses (LNs) available at all times and one Registered Nurse (RN) available during the day. It would also employ a much higher number of nurses' aides, since they provide the bulk of day-to-day care for residents — there might be 15 nurses' aides available at all times. In addition to management and administrative staff, the attending physician, and the director of nursing, the facility is also likely to include therapists, social workers, and dieticians, for example. Finally, entry-level staff would also include housekeeping/laundry, maintenance, and food service employees.

Low-Wage, Entry-Level Employees (Mostly Nurses' Aides)

Achieve spent considerable effort recruiting nursing homes to take part in the evaluation. (The process of recruitment is described in more detail below, in the section "Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program.") Employers were eligible for the study if

[6]Kaiser Family Foundation (2008); Ohio Department of Aging (2008).

[7]Stone and Weiner (2001). "Turnover" is typically defined as the number of worker resignations and terminations in a given period divided by the total workforce.

[8]Institute for the Future of Aging Services (2007).

[9]Pillemer (1996); Seavey (2004).

[10]Brannon, Zinn, Mor, and Davis (2002).

[11]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008).

they employed at least 15 workers who earned less than $13 per hour and who had been hired within the past six months. The requirement that employees be recently hired arose from the fact that retention problems tend to occur within the first several months on the job. These employees were eligible to sign up for the study and to serve as part of the research sample. As described below, Achieve eventually began offering its services to all employees at the firm, rather than just to the research sample. Individuals in the research sample, however, received top priority for services.

Not surprisingly, nurses' aides make up the majority of the research sample. Other employees include health technician staff, janitors, and housekeeping and food service staff. Nurses' aides provide 80 percent to 90 percent of care for residents.[12] An aide's typical tasks include helping patients with bedpans or other needs; helping patients with eating, dressing, bathing, and walking; moving patients in wheelchairs or beds; and delivering meals, cleaning rooms, recording vital signs, keeping records of food intake, and administering medicines, as directed by the nurse or doctor. Nurses' aides must become certified through a passing score on the certification test after a minimum of 75 hours of training (some states require more hours) that is typically provided by the employer.[13] If a nurse's aide remains in nursing, the next step on the career ladder is to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), which requires a one-year associate's degree. After LPN, the next step is to become a Registered Nurse (RN), which requires two to four years of nursing education. Thus, a career ladder does exist for nurses' aides — if not at the employer then in the industry at large — but the rungs on the ladder are fairly far apart.

Nurses' aides are low-paid employees, with earnings on par with those of the average worker in service occupations.[14] In 2005, for example, the median hourly wage for all workers in the Cleveland metropolitan area was $15.00. The median wage was $26.00 for RNs and $10.50 for nurses' aides.[15] In contrast to its relatively low wages, this occupation stands out for its high rate of occupational injuries. Nurses' aides rank second only to truckers in the rate of injuries and illnesses that result in days away from work.[16] Most injuries for this group are back injuries from lifting or moving patients.[17] Finally, a fair number of

[12]Banaszak-Holl and Hines (1996).

[13]The data do not indicate how many nurses' aides in the sample were already certified when they enrolled in the program.

[14]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006a).

[15]Wages are taken from the category "Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants." Data are not shown for nurses' aides specifically (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008).

[16]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003).

[17]Center for Personal Assistance Services (2008).

nurses' aides work a nonstandard (evening or night) shift, which has also been found to have negative effects on workers' health and well-being.[18]

Thus, the nurse's aide job is demanding both physically and mentally and requires constant interaction with residents who often have multiple needs and a limited ability to communicate. Nurses' aides typically have little autonomy at work and little input into the care of residents.[19] In fact, both nurses and nurses' aides often complain about poor supervision in nursing home settings and report feeling undervalued and unappreciated — factors that have important effects on the decision to leave a job.[20] Staff shortages make an already-hard job all the more difficult. It is not surprising, then, that this group has the highest rates of turnover among nursing home staff: a survey of nursing homes in 2002 found turnover rates of 50 percent for RNs and LPNs and 71 percent for nurses' aides.[21]

High turnover among nurses' aides stems from a variety of factors. As is the case with all types of workers, some nurses' aides may quit or be fired because of personal circumstances, such as family instability, child care problems, or difficulties with job performance. However, what may be equally or more important for this group are job- and firm-level factors, such as low wages, limited fringe benefits, limited career ladders, a lack of autonomy, and low staffing levels.[22] Turnover also tends to be higher when the local economy is strong, indicating the presence of other job opportunities. For-profit nursing homes have higher turnover among nurses' aides than nonprofit homes, since, in an effort to contain costs, they tend to offer employees fewer benefits. Turnover increases with a greater proportion of Medicare and Medicaid clients, versus those covered by private insurance, since lower reimbursement rates limit both wages and the quality of care that workers can give.[23] To address high turnover among nursing home staff, a variety of policies and practices have been proposed or introduced in recent years, including wage increases, the development of career ladders,[24] the provision of additional training, and changes in worker collaboration and teamwork.[25]

[18]LaDou (1982).

[19]Banaszak-Holl and Hines (1996).

[20]Bowers, Esmond, and Jacobson (2003).

[21]Decker et al. (2003).

[22]Banaszak-Holl and Hines (1996); Brannon, Zinn, Mor, and Davis (2002); Castle and Engberg (2006); Kash, Castle, Naufal, and Hawes (2006).

[23]Kash, Castle, Naufal, and Hawes (2006).

[24]Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (2008).

[25]Stone et al. (2002).

The Cleveland Context

Although Towards Employment is located in downtown Cleveland, many of the firms it worked with during the ERA evaluation were located in the suburbs, or in the larger metropolitan area. The population of the city has fallen by 11 percent over the past several years, down to about 420,000 in 2005, while that of the larger metro area has remained constant at about 2.2 million.[26] As is typical of city-suburban differences, Cleveland city's population is 51 percent black, compared with only 29 percent for the metro area as a whole.[27] In addition, the poverty rate in the city was over 30 percent in 2005, compared with 10 percent for the metro area.[28]

Although Cleveland was once a major manufacturing center, the number of jobs in manufacturing has continued to fall in recent years.[29] In fact, most of the reduction in total employment during the recession of 2001 to 2003 was in this sector. In contrast, the services sector is growing rapidly. Education and health services has shown the most rapid growth within the services sector and was the only area to see a substantial increase in employment during the recession, when total employment fell. As a result, education and health services jobs now account for a greater proportion of total employment in Cleveland than manufacturing jobs.

Cleveland has recovered from the earlier recession, but its recovery has been less robust than the nation's as a whole. Total employment in the metro area has not increased over the past several years, and the unemployment rate was 5.4 percent in 2006, compared with 4.6 percent for the United States as a whole.[30]

About the ERA Evaluation in Cleveland

Research Questions

The ERA evaluation focuses on the implementation of the various ERA models and their effects, or impacts. Key questions addressed in this report include the following:

- **Implementation.** How did Towards Employment execute the Achieve program? What services and messages did the program provide and em-

[26]Schweitzer and Rudick (2006).
[27]U.S. Census Bureau Web site: http://www.census.gov/.
[28]Schweitzer and Rudick (2006).
[29]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site: http://www.bls.gov/.
[30]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006b).

phasize? How did program staff spend their time? Given the unique setting of the program, roughly how much did it cost?

- **Participation.** Did Achieve succeed in engaging a substantial proportion of individuals in services? What types of services did people receive? To what extent did the program increase service levels above the levels that would "normally" be received, as represented by the control group's behavior?

- **Impacts.** Within the follow-up period, did Achieve increase workers' retention at their original firms? Did the program increase employment and, more generally, earnings by increasing employment stability and wage growth or by improving job characteristics for the Achieve group relative to the control group? Did Achieve increase firmwide retention rates, including all employees and not just those in the research sample?

The Random Assignment Process

The Cleveland ERA model is unique in the ERA evaluation in that is it being tested using a design that randomly assigned employers (rather than individuals) into either a program group or a control group. In this case, the outcomes for the control group represent a valid *counterfactual* for the program group, or what those outcomes would have been for the program group in the absence of the program. There are several reasons why this strategy was preferred over one that randomly assigned employees within a firm. First, some Achieve services — such as the Lunch and Learn sessions and the Supervisory Training — are designed to potentially benefit all workers in the firm. In this case, employees assigned to the control group would not represent a good control group, since they may reap some benefit from Achieve. Second, even if all services were designed only to benefit employees in the program group, there may be some "spillover" effects on those in the control group, since workers interact on a daily basis and may share information about the program.[31] Finally, conducting random assignment within a closed environment, such as a firm, could lead to strained relations among employees, since some workers are offered the new program and others are not.

Beginning in early 2002, Towards Employment began recruiting firms for the study. Eight firms that agreed to participate were randomly assigned in September 2002 to either the ERA group, eligible to receive Achieve services, or a control group, not eligible for services. Random assignment then occurred in three more stages: 14 firms in November 2002,

[31]For an attempt to estimate the extent of spillover, see Duflo and Saez (2003).

eight firms in February 2004, and 14 firms in May 2004. Intake of the 44 firms was conducted in these two rounds (one in 2002 and one in 2004) because Towards Employment did not have sufficient staff to provide Achieve services to all 22 program group firms at once.

Figure 1 illustrates the random assignment process. A total of 44 firms were brought into the study, with over 1,000 eligible employees. Orientation sessions were provided at participating employers in an effort to recruit eligible workers into the study. Interested employees filled out a baseline questionnaire and signed an informed consent agreement indicating their willingness to participate in the study. These data, along with employer baseline forms completed by a representative at each firm, were sent to MDRC to conduct random assignment (as represented by the diamond in the middle of Figure 1). Then 22 firms were chosen for the ERA, or Achieve, group, and 22 were chosen for the control group.[32] Firms were notified of their research status, and Achieve began providing services at the ERA group firms approximately two weeks later. As shown to the left of the diamond in the figure, 58 employees who had signed up for the study at the orientation sessions subsequently left the firm before random assignment, which typically occurred two to three weeks later. These employees are not included in the research sample.[33]

The Counterfactual: What Is ERA Being Compared With?

In many of the other ERA sites, individuals assigned to the control group received some type of employment service from either a welfare or a social services agency. In the case of Cleveland, there is no reason to suspect that the environment in the control group firms is any different from that in the industry as a whole. As mentioned earlier, the long-term care industry has recognized the problem of worker retention and has begun to take steps to address it. Although the evaluation did not include a systematic investigation into the extent of services provided at control group firms, some firms in both the program and the control group had undertaken less structured, employer-specific initiatives aimed at reducing turnover prior to their involvement in the ERA study. For example, some firms had revamped their recruitment process in an effort to recruit employees, especially nurses' aides, who were fully aware of what the job entailed and were prepared to do it; some had

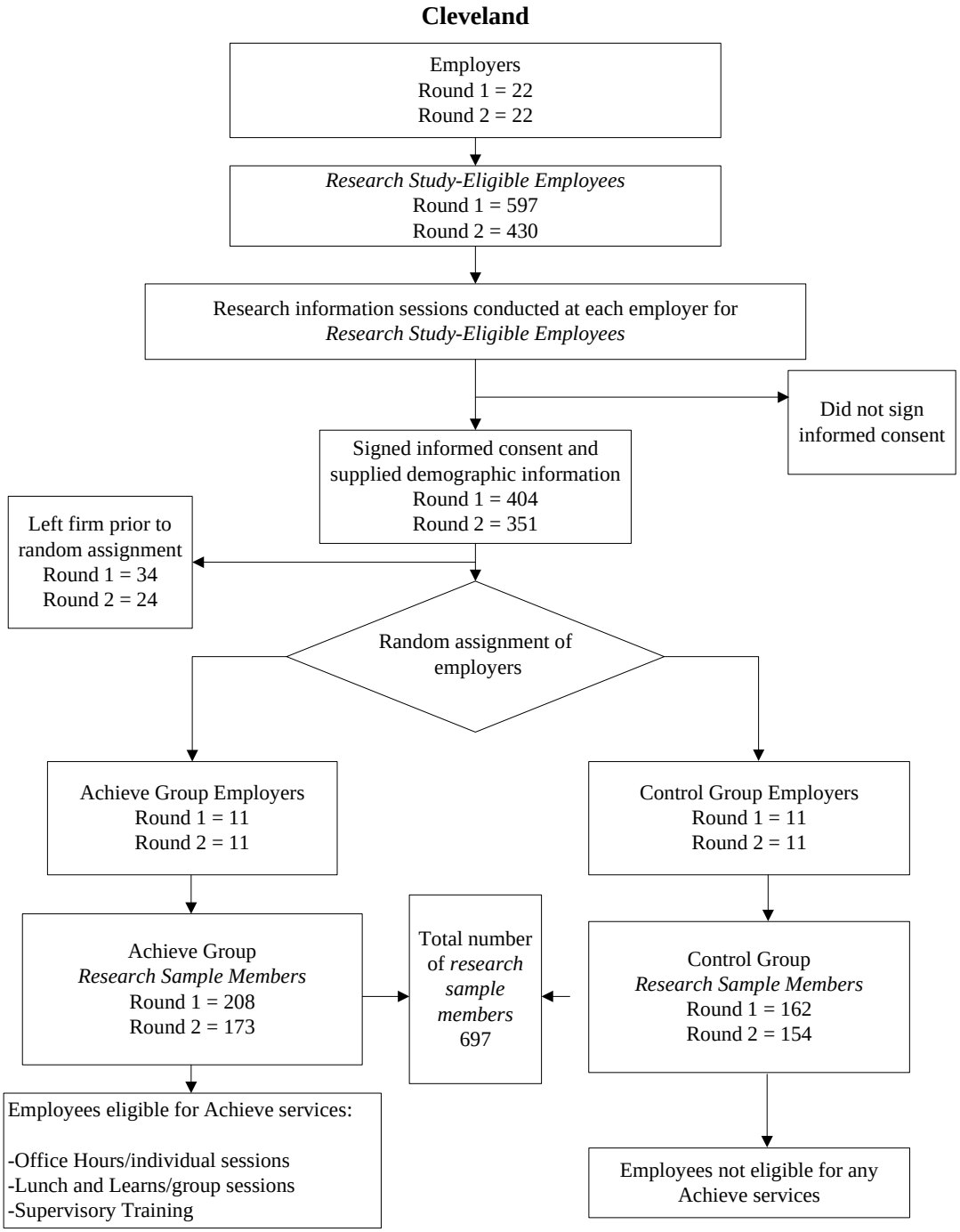
[32]Details on the process of assigning firms to either the program or the control group are provided in Appendix H.

[33]Baseline data indicate that employees who left before random assignment were typically younger and more educated than those who stayed. However, because these workers left the firm before the firm knew its research status, the analysis is not biased by dropping this group from the research sample. Most firms lost one or two workers during this period, and firms that eventually were assigned to the ERA group were just as likely to lose workers as those that were assigned to the control group.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Figure 1

Research Design and Research Sample Buildup in the Achieve Study



instituted a "90-day probationary period" for all new employees; and others had implemented programs to reward and recognize employees for their achievements.

Data Sources

The data sources for the analyses presented in the report are described below.

Baseline Data

MDRC collected data on sample members' demographic characteristics from a baseline information form. Data on participating employers were also collected using a baseline form filled out by each firm's Human Resources Department. These baseline data are used to describe the study employees and firms and to identify subgroups whose results are analyzed separately.

Employer Reports

MDRC collected data from study employers on the retention of study employees at 30, 60, and 180 days after random assignment. These data are used to measure retention among employees in the research sample.

Administrative Records

Program effects on employment, employment retention, and earnings are estimated using automated quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) wage records data. Employer identification numbers are used to estimate effects on retention at the study firms. For the research sample, these data are available for two years after random assignment. Data for all employees at the firm are available for one year after the firms were randomly assigned.

Program Participation and Implementation Data

Towards Employment provided MDRC with data on sample members' participation in program activities. In addition, MDRC conducted a "time study" of Achieve staff, which tracked their activities. Finally, information on program operations was obtained from interviews with Achieve staff, employers and employees, and observations of group sessions and supervisory trainings.

The ERA 12-Month Survey

Information about sample members' participation in program services and about their employment, income, and other outcomes was gathered by the ERA 12-Month Survey, which was administered to a random subset of ERA and control group members approximately 12 months after random assignment.

Samples and Sample Sizes

As noted, 44 firms participated in the study: 22 assigned to the Achieve group and 22 assigned to the control group. The research sample consists of employees at these firms who agreed to take part in the research study, who were initially the only workers eligible to receive Achieve services. As shown near the bottom of Figure 1, the research sample consists of 381 (208 + 173) employees in the Achieve firms and 316 (162 + 154) employees in the control group firms. Of these 697 employees, 485 completed the 12-month survey. Finally, because some Achieve services, such as the Supervisory Training, are expected to have effects on all employees at the firms, and because Achieve eventually offered case management services to all workers, effects are examined for a firmwide sample, or for all individuals working at the firms in the quarter of random assignment. This sample consists of over 10,000 individuals from the 44 firms.

Characteristics of the Sample Members at Baseline

Table 1 presents a descriptive look at the 44 firms in the study. (Appendix Table A.2 presents a comparison of characteristics for program and control group firms.) These data were obtained from a baseline questionnaire filled out by a firm representative, typically an employee in the Human Resources Department. The firms are generally small to medium in size, with over 40 percent having 150 to 200 employees. Most firms have fairly high turnover among their entry-level employees, with nearly a third having a turnover rate in the prior six months of more than 50 percent.[34] The majority of firms report having an Employee Assistance Program (EAP),[35] and a quarter report that some of their employees are unionized. Among firms with union representation, half of their workers, on average, are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. For the sample as a whole, about 13 percent of workers (25.6 x 52.2) are covered by a collective bargaining agreement — similar to the average for all U.S. workers.[36]

As mentioned above, there are over 250 nursing homes within a 50-mile radius of downtown Cleveland. Data from the State of Ohio Long-Term Care Consumer Guide provide some indication of whether the 42 nursing homes in the study are comparable to the other homes in the Cleveland area. On average, for the outcomes available, the homes in the study are similar to the average home in the area. For example, on a 2006 Family Satisfac-

[34]"Turnover" is defined as the number of employees who left the firm over this period divided by the total number of employees.

[35]EAPs typically offer employees confidential evaluation, treatment, and referrals to services for a range of problems, such as substance abuse, mental health, and other personal problems.

[36]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Web site.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 1

Selected Characteristics of Employers in the ERA Evaluation

Cleveland

Characteristic	Total
Industry (%)	
Health	95.5
Manufacturing	4.5
Average number of employees	241
Prior turnover rate[a]	39.4
Prior turnover rate (%)	
30 percent or less	36.4
31 percent to 50 percent	36.4
More than 50 percent	27.3
Employees meeting study eligibility[b] (%)	50.5
Has Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (%)	65.9
Has unionized employees (%)	25.6
Percentage of employees unionized among firms with unionized empoyees	52.2
Recruitment methods for entry-level employees (%)	
Newspaper ads	93.2
Employee referrals	90.9
Walk-ins/Help Wanted signs	86.4
Community agency	22.7
Temp agency	13.6
Welfare department	9.1
State employment agency	6.8
Other	11.4
Sample size	44

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Cleveland's Employee and Employer data list.

NOTES: [a]Turnover is defined as the number of employees who left the firm over the prior six months divided by the total number of employees.

[b]Round 1 study eligibility was based on being in a targeted job category (general office staff, protective services staff, food staff, health staff, building service staff, or health assessment/technician staff). Round 2 study eligibility was based on earning an hourly wage of $13 or less.

tion Survey, the study homes scored an overall rating of 89 percent, and the others scored 91 percent.[37] The rate of compliance with federal and state regulations was the same for both groups: 94 percent.[38] Study employers were somewhat larger facilities, with an average of 146 resident beds, compared with 100 beds for the other homes.[39] This difference in size is to be expected, since very small firms would have few low-wage workers and would likely be ineligible for the study. Both groups of homes are similar in terms of the fraction of beds that are Medicare certified (77 percent for study homes versus 72 percent for other homes) and Medicaid certified (81 percent for both). Finally, both groups have similar fees: the private pay rate per day is $181 for study homes and $171 for other homes.[40] On average, the data suggest that the homes that participated in the study are not an unusual or select group of nursing homes, indicating that the results presented here can be generalized to the broader group of homes in the Cleveland area. The study homes are somewhat larger, on average, than other homes, but they are similar on a range of other measures.[41]

Table 2 presents baseline characteristics for the employees in the study. Note that not all low-wage workers in the participating firms are included in the study; it includes only those who attended orientation sessions and agreed to participate. On average, 16 employees in each firm participated in the study, ranging from a low of 7 to a high of 34. (Appendix Table A.3 presents characteristics for the program and control group employees separately.)

The sample for the Cleveland ERA study differs in many ways from the samples in the other ERA sites. For example, at the time of random assignment, sample members in Cleveland were somewhat older than those in the other ERA sites (26 percent were age 41 or older), were more educated (74 percent had a high school diploma or higher), and were more likely to be currently or previously married. A fair number (40 percent) also did not have children. Most individuals worked full time, and most earned between $7 and $10 per hour.

Finally, 70 percent of the sample worked as "health staff," which is typically a nurse's aide position. Appendix Table A.4 presents data for nurses aides versus all other occupations. There are several notable differences between the groups. The nurse's aide

[37]The questions asked "Overall, do you like this facility?" Data were available for about 60 percent of nursing homes.

[38]Data on citations and compliance were available for 98 percent of homes.

[39]Data on facility size were available for 50 percent to 56 percent of homes.

[40]Fee data were available for about 40 percent of homes.

[41]The caveat to this conclusion is that it is based on a limited set of quantifiable characteristics. For example, there were no data on the culture of the organization, such as the extent of teamwork and collaboration, management practices, and so on.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 2

Selected Characteristics of Sample Members

Cleveland

Characteristic	Total
Female (%)	81.9
Race/ethnicity (%)	
Hispanic	5.7
Black, non-Hispanic	56.4
White, non-Hispanic	34.4
Other	3.4
Age (%)	
25 years or younger	34.5
26 to 40 years	39.1
41 years or older	26.4
High school diploma/GED or higher (%)	73.7
Number of children in household (%)	
None	40.0
1	24.3
2 or more	35.7
Age of youngest child in household (%)	
Less than 3 years	30.9
3 to 5 years	22.1
6 years or older	47.0
Marital status (%)	
Never married	54.8
Married, living with spouse	22.2
Separated, divorced, or widowed	23.0
Job title (%)	
Health staff (for example, nurse's aide)	70.3
Building services (for example, janitor, housekeeper)	11.8
Food staff	8.8
Other	9.2
Hourly wage (%)	
Less than $7.50	12.6
$7.50 to 9.49	51.6
$9.50 and higher	35.7
Average hourly wage ($)	8.98
Hours worked per week (%)	
Less than 32	8.5
32 or more	91.5
Earnings in year before random assignment ($)	11,161

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Characteristic	Total
Employed in quarter before random assignment (%)	93.1
Sample size	697

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Cleveland's Employee and Employer data list.

group is overwhelming made up of women, for example. Nurses' aides also tend to be more educated, younger, and less likely to have children than workers in the other occupations. Nurses' aides earn, on average, a dollar more per hour than the other group ($9.30 versus $8.20).

Table 3 presents a look at job mobility and other job outcomes that would exist for this group in the absence of the Achieve program. This counterfactual is measured using data from the 12-month survey of workers in the control group firms. Employment stability does not appear to be a big problem for this group: 78 percent were employed at the 12-month point. However, rates of job instability are higher. Only about half (53 percent) of those working at the survey point were still working at their original random assignment employer. Achieve's focus is on the other half, who left during the course of the year. This group earned, on average, less than those who stayed, and they were less likely to be offered employer-provided health care coverage in their new jobs. It is difficult to identify, however, whether leaving their original job led to lower earnings or whether those with lower earnings initially were the ones most likely leave. The table also shows that many of those who left their original firm did not move seamlessly into another job; on average, they spent four months unemployed.

Roadmap of the Report

This report focuses on the implementation and impacts of Achieve, the ERA program in Cleveland. The next section further describes the Achieve program and its implementation. The report then presents the program's impacts on participation and service receipt, and the concluding section presents its impacts on job retention, employment, and earnings.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3

Employment During the Year After Study Entry for the Workers in Control Group Firms

Cleveland

Characteristic	Total
Employed at the 12-month survey (%)	77.6
Among those employed at 12-month survey	
Still working at random assignment employer (%)	52.5
Working at other employer (%)	47.5
Among those working at random assignment employer at 12-month survey	
Average hourly wage ($)	10.0
Hourly wage increased since random assignment (%)	79.3
Employer-provided health insurance (%)	84.0
Work schedule (%)	
Regular shift	44.7
Evening shift	20.7
Night shift	20.8
Other	13.8
Among those working at other employer at 12-month survey	
Average hourly wage ($)	9.1
Hourly wage increased since random assignment (%)	49.4
Employer-provided health insurance (%)	58.5
Work schedule (%)	
Regular shift	44.0
Evening shift	22.7
Night shift	14.2
Other	19.1
Still in health care industry (%)	67.7
Number of months unemployed between random assignment job and next job	4.1
Percentage of follow-up year unemployed	31.2
Among those not employed at 12-month survey	
Percentage of follow-up year unemployed	62.3
Sample size	225

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

The Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program

This section describes the operations of Achieve — the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) program in Cleveland — and draws on information learned during a series of site visits as well as from program participation data and results from MDRC's "time study" of Achieve staff. MDRC conducted two waves of extensive field research as part of both its implementation research and its technical assistance efforts. Both waves were conducted in late February and early March; the first was in 2003, and the second was in 2005. Given the uniqueness of the Achieve program and the research design, it was imperative for MDRC to understand clients' participation in the Achieve program as well as the nature of the work environment at the participating nursing homes. Since there was only one manufacturing firm in the program group, MDRC decided to focus the field research efforts on the 21 long-term nursing care facilities.

Interviews were conducted with the Achieve staff as well as a wide range of staff — administrators, day-to-day managers, frontline supervisors, and entry-level employees — in 11 of the program group nursing homes. The 11 facilities were picked to reflect a mix of settings, of Achieve advisers, and of the time when each facility entered the study. Across the two waves of field research, MDRC staff spoke with a total of 140 employees.

Challenges to implementing both the program model and the research design were numerous, including the recruitment of firms to be part of a random assignment study and the subsequent recruitment of employees to participate in the research, as well as the implementation of the Achieve program within workplace environments and their rules. Despite these challenges, the Achieve program was implemented as designed, and its implementation also improved over time. Since Achieve was stronger and better implemented in the firms randomly assigned in Round 2 (during 2004) than in the firms randomly assigned in Round 1 (during 2002), the two rounds are compared occasionally throughout this section.

Overall, the individuals who participated in the Achieve program seemed to appreciate the help that they received and to value the resources that they were given. From administrators' point of view, the Supervisory Training, in particular, was the most universally valued component of the program. Moreover, the program had at least some contact with a large percentage of the individuals who were part of the research sample at the program group firms: 79 percent participated in Round 2. However, many sample members did not participate in the program consistently or for long periods, and it was difficult for program staff to obtain even this level of participation. Many people were often unable to attend Achieve's services — the Office Hours and Lunch and Learn sessions — because of their

work schedules. The industry that Towards Employment chose to target was long-term nursing home facilities, which have round-the-clock shifts and require staff to be always on call for patient care. Therefore, it was almost impossible for some people to participate in the program on a regular basis.

To illustrate various points made in this section, quoted excerpts of interviews with nursing home employees are interspersed throughout the text. These were not selected randomly but were chosen to illustrate the employees' thoughts about and impressions of the Achieve program and their work environment — both positive and negative — as well as their perceived career trajectory. Although the quotes mostly reflect commonly held views about Achieve and the work environment, they should not be taken as being representative of all employees in these long-term nursing care facilities. Instead, their inclusion sheds light on some of the difficulties that are likely to be encountered when an employer-based retention program is implemented in the context of an industry that, on the one hand, has a demand for such a program due to high turnover among its entry-level workers but that also, on the other hand, might be a challenging setting in which to administer services at the workplace due to the inherent nature of the work.

The Framework of the Cleveland ERA Program: Program Development and Staffing

Program Development

Achieve is a small program within Towards Employment that focuses on retention and advancement through a workplace strategy. Towards Employment conducted a six-month pilot of the Achieve program in the spring of 2001, before MDRC came on board. Five employers were involved in the pilot: two warehouses, one call center, one nursing home, and one hotel. A total of 85 participants were involved. Towards Employment's assessment of the Achieve pilot suggested that the intensive case management and supervisory trainings — along with a work environment that offered access to supportive services and flexible personnel practices — had the potential to decrease turnover.[42]

[42]Turnover rates were examined in the pilot, but sample sizes were very small. Moreover, given that the pilot did not use a random assignment research design, it was possible only to compare historical turnover rates with the turnover rates for each employer following the pilot.

Staffing and Training

The design of Achieve as a highly specialized, self-contained program within Towards Employment allowed it to have a relatively simple staffing structure. The Achieve program consisted of three or four full-time Achieve advisers, one supervisor, one manager, and, during part of the study period, a part-time administrative assistant. All the Achieve advisers had backgrounds in social work and, prior to Achieve, had worked primarily on supportive services and crisis intervention programs. The Achieve advisers were assigned specific firms at which they administered the Achieve services. The Achieve supervisor was responsible for the operation of the Achieve program. The supervisor provided case management supervision; managed the daily operations of the program, from staffing to working with the employers; and coordinated all research-related activities with the research liaison. During most of the study period, the Achieve manager was mainly responsible for recruiting and then maintaining good relationships with employers.

On average, each Achieve adviser was assigned to work with three ERA firms.[43] As mentioned in the report's Introduction, most of the firms in the study were located in Cleveland's surrounding suburbs — some as distant as 28 miles from the city. Given this, the advisers spent a considerable amount of time traveling between Towards Employment's office and the Achieve firms or between firm and firm, since some of the advisers went directly from one firm to another.

Although simple by design, staffing for the Achieve program proved to be a major issue for Towards Employment. The program had very high rates of attrition, particularly among the Achieve advisers during Round 1. The frequent changes in staff did not appear to affect the quality of the services, but it did cause minor disruptions in service delivery. Most of the transitions were quick and smooth, but, as expected in any transition period, it took some time for the new Achieve advisers to establish rapport with their new clients, and it was also difficult for them to attempt to contact and engage clients whom they had never met. In addition, the turnover affected staff morale and the cohesiveness of the team. However, staffing became more stabilized in Round 2.

Despite the high turnover rates, Achieve staff ably took on the multiple challenges of implementing the research design and program model in the long-term nursing home industry, and they adjusted their program model over time as more was learned about employer-based retention services and nursing home facilities. They successfully recruited 22 employers for each of the two rounds of random assignment, for a total of 44 — an

[43]Depending on the time of study enrollment and how many advisers were on staff, an adviser could have worked with as many as four firms or as few as two. In the final few months of the study, a couple of advisers worked part time and only with one firm.

achievement that was certainly far from guaranteed at the beginning of the study. In addition, they were able to implement, within every firm randomly assigned to the program group, the three components of Achieve: Office Hours (case management), Lunch and Learn" or "group sessions" (workshops), and Supervisory Training.

Achieve advisers were trained by the Achieve supervisor as well as by MDRC operations staff and Cygnet Associates, a consulting firm retained by MDRC. The MDRC-sponsored trainings focused on how to market Achieve services to potential employers and individual participants, how to engage clients, and how to deliver retention services to clients.

The Challenges of Recruitment

Recruitment

Recruiting firms that were eligible and interested in both the program and the research study was challenging and time-consuming. As mentioned in the report's Introduction, firms were eligible for the study if they employed at least 15 workers who earned less than $13 per hour and had been hired within the past four to six months.[44] For Round 1, 115 long-term nursing home facilities in the Cleveland area were contacted; eventually, 29 of them agreed to be part of the study. Following further reviews of the number of study-eligible entry-level employees at the firms, Towards Employment and MDRC agreed that 22 of the 29 firms should be kept in the study. (Seven of the firms were not appropriate because they did not have sufficient numbers of study-eligible entry-level employees.) For Round 2, 314 firms in the Cleveland area were contacted; eventually, 23 of them agreed to be part of the study. Once again, one of the 23 was dropped from the study due to too few study-eligible employees.

Among the firms that were approached or contacted, the most common reason for not eventually agreeing to participate in the study was that the firm did not meet the study's main eligibility criterion of having at least 15 recently hired, low-wage employees. Other, less common reasons for not participating were a sense that the study was too much work (for example, for firms with no Human Resources Department) or a view that the firm did not want to take the chance of being assigned to the control group, which did not get the Achieve services but did need to periodically provide data for the research. In addition, there was a belief among a few firm administrators that they did not have a retention prob-

[44]After the first group of firms entered the study, the date-of-hire window was opened to six months prior to baseline collection because most recruited firms had hired too few employees within the past four months to meet the minimum sample-size requirement of 15 new employees per employer.

lem or, if they did, that they were doing fine dealing with a "revolving door" among their low-wage workers. These firm administrators viewed turnover as a natural part of the labor market and an inherent problem in the industry — due to the nature of the work — and not something that could be fixed. Moreover, general economic conditions during Round 2 reduced turnover in the industry, further eroding the sense of urgency among employers to address the issue.

Once firms agreed to be part of the study, Achieve and MDRC staff conducted "intake sessions," also referred to as "orientation sessions," to recruit employees. Staff at the firms — usually someone from the Human Resources Department — provided the Achieve manager with a list of entry-level employees, and then the manager reviewed the lists and determined which of the entry-level employees were eligible to participate in the Achieve study. Based on the number of study-eligible employees, the Achieve manager worked with the staff at the firm to arrange the intake sessions. Since employees' schedules varied considerably, it was necessary for Achieve to hold multiple intake sessions over the course of a few weeks in order to ensure that every study-eligible employee had an opportunity to attend an intake session. Also, in order to accommodate the round-the-clock schedules at these nursing homes, sessions were sometimes held as early as six o'clock in the morning and as late as eleven o'clock at night.

After the intake sessions were scheduled, the next step was to reserve adequate space for them, whether it be a meeting room or any other large open space in the facility. Securing appropriate and consistent meeting space was a constant issue for the Achieve program. Not only was it an issue during the recruitment phase, but it also complicated the delivery of the program services, since meeting spaces often changed with little or no advance notice to the Achieve advisers or employees at the firms.

In addition to organizing the intake sessions, Achieve and the Human Resources staff at the firms created flyers inviting study-eligible employees to attend the sessions. Human Resources staff also had to get approval from the frontline staff supervisors to allow their employees to leave the floor to attend the intake sessions. This pertained mostly to nurses' aides and less to housekeeping, food service, and maintenance staff.

Although it was time-consuming and arduous to set up the intake sessions, the actual sessions went fairly smoothly. Among all eligible employees, 70 percent agreed to participate in Round 1, and 84 percent did so in Round 2.[45] The higher take-up in Round 2 sug-

[45]In Round 1, 35 percent of all employees at the firms were eligible for Achieve. In Round 2, 22 percent of all employees at the firms were eligible.

gests that stronger marketing efforts, coupled with increased employer buy-in (discussed next), paid off in higher enrollment rates.

There are no systematic data available on the eligible employees who did not agree to participate in the study, but MDRC staff noted that some of the individuals who decided not to participate were women in their middle to late fifties who were second income earners and had been working in nursing homes, mostly as nurses' aides, for 10 to 20 years (although they were newly hired to the Achieve firms). While these women thought that the program sounded interesting and would be beneficial to some of the "younger" staff, they did not think that it would be relevant to them. In addition, one of the day-to-day nursing home managers reported to MDRC staff that "the older staff is more likely to think that they can handle their problems by themselves."

Employer Buy-In

For Achieve to be implemented well, employer buy-in was needed to secure release time for participants and logistical support for the program. The core program services to employees included attending a series of individual and group meetings. Therefore, participating employees needed to be able to leave their work stations to attend sessions. In addition, participating firms were expected to provide space for meetings as well as the time of support staff for help in scheduling the meetings.

During Round 1 of employer recruitment, marketing of the program did not include negotiations for paid release time for participants or arrangements for a meeting space. Firms did not necessarily understand the full extent of what they would be expected to provide by participating in Achieve. This created an obstacle to employee participation and made it more difficult to provide services.

In Round 2, participating firms were required to provide paid release time to all participating employees, space for both individual and group sessions, and help from the employer's support staff to schedule activities. Firms that did not agree to these requirements were ineligible to participate in the program. The ERA marketing staff worked with participating employers to negotiate Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) outlining expectations for both parties, and they set up regular meetings for feedback. However, despite these employer agreements in Round 2, one problem that persisted was that many participants worked in understaffed, busy work environments where it was difficult to find the time to leave their duties and attend Achieve services.

The Services and Messages of the Cleveland ERA Program

Marketing and Intake

Marketing

Once firms and eligible employees were recruited for the study and the random assignment of firms was completed, the Achieve manager and advisers spent time prior to the start of program services advertising Achieve within each program group firm. Achieve's marketing effort was mainly intended to entice employees to attend Office Hours and Lunch and Learn sessions, but it also was designed to garner enthusiasm for the program, from entry-level staff up through the administrators. Marketing staff created attractive flyers that were strategically placed in the hallways, on the elevators, and near the time clocks. Achieve advisers also had the receptionists at several of the nursing home firms make announcements over the loudspeaker to notify employees when the Lunch and Learns were starting. As two supervisors in one firm commented during Round 2, it would have been difficult for employees *not* to know when Achieve activities were happening, given the number of posters and fliers everywhere and the fact that the staff who attended Achieve activities talked about their experiences with others. In general, marketing improved in Round 2, partly in response to suggestions made by administrators, managers, and supervisors.

Initial Program Intake

Following the official date that program services began after each wave of random assignment, the Achieve adviser attempted to set up face-to-face meetings with those individuals who had agreed to be part of the Achieve study and who worked in firms that were randomly assigned to the program group. In these face-to-face meetings, background information on the employee (beyond that collected prior to random assignment) was collected by the adviser. In addition, the adviser explained the main services of Achieve.

Program Services

Implementing Achieve in long-term nursing home facilities required that staff incorporate the program, as best as possible, into the various settings, administrative priorities, and workplace rules of the participating employers. One of the most significant hurdles for Achieve was providing services in an industry that has round-the-clock shifts and requires staff to be always on call for patient care. Achieve advisers reported that roughly 40 percent of the recently hired, low-wage, entry-level employers who were targeted for Achieve were working on second (evening) or third (night) shifts, which — given that Achieve advisers' primary work hours were during the

first (day) shift — made it difficult for the advisers to have frequent contact with these workers, although advisers did provide activities during these shifts. In addition, the intensive nature of the employees' jobs did not allow them to participate on a regular basis, despite the convenience of having on-site services, which led to early expectations that almost all those who signed up for the study would participate in services and would do so consistently. The most common reason offered by managers, supervisors, and entry-level employees for the lower-than-expected levels of participation in Achieve was that long-term nursing home patients require constant care, and the coverage of patient floors takes priority. That said, however, the prevailing theme throughout both rounds of field research and across different levels of staff was that Achieve was perceived as a valuable program for those who participated in it.

As noted in the report's Introduction, the services offered at the Achieve group firms included Office Hours with a case manager; Lunch and Learns, or group sessions; and Supervisory Training for frontline supervisors. Excluding the Supervisory Training, these services were originally intended for entry-level employees but, after the first six months of program operations, were opened up to any employee at the firm. The Achieve program lasted for 15 months in Round 1 and for 12 months in Round 2. Although Round 1 services were intended to last only one year, they were extended for three months due to program modifications made during the first few months of the study.

Office Hours, or Case Management

Office Hours were intended to offer assistance and support to employees and to help them deal with issues or problems that might put them at risk of losing their job, such as transportation or child care arrangements. Given this, the Achieve advisers often spent their time in Office Hours offering problem-solving assistance to the employees. For example, if an employee was having a problem paying her utility bill, then the adviser would help her create a budget and also would refer her to a specific agency, such as the Consumer Credit Protection Agency, for assistance. In addition to these information and referral services, the advisers also provided supportive services, such as paying for the employees' work uniforms, eyeglasses, and college enrollment fees[46] and helping employees set short-term and long-term goals. Examples of a short-term goal would be setting up a direct deposit account with a credit union or contacting consumer credit counseling to reestablish credit or pay off debts. An example of a long-term goal (for a nurse's aide) would be taking the entrance exam for nursing school and enrolling in school.

[46]Towards Employment raised grant funding specifically to support Achieve operations, which include supportive services.

According to the Achieve advisers, the types of issues or problems discussed during Office Hours could directly affect the clients' employment at the particular firm — for example, if they were having arguments with a supervisor. If the advisers were able to resolve such an issue, then they would attempt to shift the focus of their client interactions to discussing possible career ladders. However, for the most part, these advancement-focused conversations rarely occurred, because clients either left the firm without notifying the Achieve adviser or had too many personal issues that they needed to resolve in order to be able simply to keep their job. Furthermore, at a few firms, Achieve was viewed as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and, as such, only employees who needed immediate help with a particular problem or issue would stop by during Office Hours to meet with an adviser. According to administrators and day-to-day managers in these few firms, the main advantage of Achieve over traditional EAPs was that it was more accessible because it was on the premises.

The advisers usually had a set location within the employer's facility where they held Office Hours and, in general, worked with a Human Resources staff member to make arrangements for Office Hours and generally to coordinate Achieve services with workplace practices and schedules. Over time, in an effort to engage more employees, Achieve advisers increasingly sought out employees in the hallways of the nursing home facilities to ask how they were doing and to encourage them to stop by to talk during Office Hours. (These actions are referred to as "informal contacts" in some of the tables discussed in the section below entitled "Program Participation.") In addition, in Round 2, Achieve also instituted a benchmark of having two contacts per month with each participant, in an effort to increase contacts. Notably, the amount of time that advisers spent in contact with clients increased considerably in Round 2.

As mentioned above, during the first six months of Achieve operations, access to the advisers during Office Hours was restricted to those entry-level employees who were part of the research sample. This was done largely to ensure that these individuals had sufficient access to case management services, given that it was impossible to predict the demand for the advisers' time during Office Hours at the outset of the Achieve program. Eventually, however — and definitely throughout Round 2 — Office Hours were open to any employee who wished to use them. (See Box 1.)

Lunch and Learns, or Group Sessions

In addition to Office Hours, Achieve staff also offered informational sessions, called "Lunch and Learns" in Round 1 and "group sessions" in Round 2. These sessions, generally 30 minutes in length, covered a variety of topics addressing employees' potential

Box 1

Employees' Views of Office Hours Sessions

Several quotes from field research interviews illustrate both why some employees sought out advisers' help during Office Hours and the difficulty that some employees had in attending Office Hours.

- A participant and an adviser talked about workplace attitudes and how to deal with them. The participant said that she likes her boss but that "there is a lot of negative attitude around" and she needed help in figuring out how to deal with it, so she spoke with the Achieve adviser.

- A participant who went to two Office Hours sessions said: "[The adviser] helped me with some financial stuff, some problems I've got. . . ."

- Another participant said: The "[case manager] is here to help us keep our jobs and not go to welfare to better ourselves. . . . [She's] like a coach." The participant was very proud that she was going to start school in the fall to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). She said that her case manager helped her look for grants for school and had also given her the "gumption to ask her employer to pay for [school], . . . and they usually don't."

- A day-to-day manager at one of the nursing homes said: "A lot of people are needed on the unit at one time, and [the firm] is very lean right now in terms of staff. Only so many people can leave at one time. They can't squeeze any more people out without affecting their benchmarks of resident care (number of resident falls, infected wounds, etc.). There are probably people who want to go [to Office Hours] but can't because of coverage issues."

- Another participant said: "I told [the adviser that] what is hard for me is that the session is at 3:00, and I get off at 4:30, and I've got a lot to do before I leave. I've got to collect the garbage and clean the floors, and it gets bunched up. So I told her to move it to, like, 1:00 — you know, after my lunch, 'cause people need breaks, you know; the day gets long. So I eat from 12:15 to 1:00, and then I can tell my supervisor that I am with [the adviser], and he doesn't mind. That works better. All he needs to know is that I am with her, even if I just meet to get my glasses. He doesn't mind, and he isn't calling around the building looking for me."

needs. Although not as private as the Office Hours, the Lunch and Learns allowed employees an opportunity to discuss general workplace issues in a confidential and supportive environment and to get information about a particular topic of interest to them. Also, during Round 1, they received a free lunch.

Each Lunch and Learn workshop focused on a different topic, and the workshop leader — either an Achieve adviser or one of Towards Employment's training facilitators — attempted to engage the employees by involving them in the discussion. In Round 1, the workshops were held twice a month at each program group employer; in Round 2, the workshops were held every week. The workshops were on a regularly set day at each employer and were open to all employees in the firm, not just to those employees who were part of the research sample.

The Lunch and Learn workshops were divided into four main categories: (1) Money Matters, (2) Personal Wellness, (3) Workplace Skills, and (4) Continuing Education. Achieve staff also periodically brought in "outside" speakers, for example, representatives from local community colleges. In Round 2, as part of Towards Employment's effort to tailor the Achieve services to the employees within a given firm, the advisers sometimes repeated sessions that were popular or particularly interesting and asked participants to make suggestions for other topics that they would like discussed in the group session.

In general, group sessions were attended more frequently than Office Hours. Participants clearly found value in these sessions and appeared to benefit from pertinent information. Based on MDRC's field research, entry-level employees who had attended at least one Lunch and Learn noted that they had found the following sessions to be most useful: finance and budgeting, income taxes, dealing with people in the workplace, goals discussions, and stress management. Although these individuals were not in the position to determine the extent to which Achieve was making a difference in reducing turnover and absenteeism, one employee said that the Lunch and Learns have "really, truly opened up avenues for them" (the people at risk of leaving). (See Box 2.)

Supervisory Training

As briefly described in the report's Introduction, another component of the Achieve program was the Supervisory Training, targeted to the supervisors of entry-level employees. The training was conducted by two staff members from Towards Employment. In order to minimize disruptions to workplace operations, Supervisory Training was offered as an all-day, 8-hour session; as two half-day sessions; or, as most commonly done in Round 2, three 2-hour sessions. The training consisted of various activities — for example, role-play —

Box 2

Employees' Views of Lunch and Learn Sessions

Several quotes from field research interviews illustrate the difficulty that employees had in making time to attend the Lunch and Learn group sessions — and also their appeal.

- One nursing home employee who had been to several Lunch and Learn sessions said: "Here the L&L sessions are on the clock, and my biggest problem is the amount of work I have to do, and taking a break from it means I might not get it all done. I only go to the sessions when it is a topic I can't manage by myself; otherwise, I don't go."

- Another employee explained why she is unable to attend Lunch and Learns as often as she would like. She also described her working conditions: "I have to clean 48 rooms in my seven-hour shift, and that includes some public areas too. It is just too much. In my last job, I was there 15 years until they started losing business and had to lay people off; I didn't have so many rooms. The 48 rooms are just too much, plus the discharges, which have to be completely pulled apart since everything in the room has to be disinfected. That can take up to an hour each. I am tired because of all the rooms, and sometimes I just can't get to the session or to see [the adviser]. But then she sends me a letter, and I know she wants me to stop by."

- One woman noted that supervisors or the Director of Nursing would sometimes pull people out of Lunch and Learns even if they had given notice that they were going to Achieve. This woman thought that this was rude and did not make sense, considering that the employer wanted Achieve at the firm. She tells her supervisor that "this meeting is important to me" because she is trying to better herself, and she says that it's not right that they pull her out just because something needs to be folded.

- One employee called the Lunch and Learn sessions a "half hour of energy," and another called them "interesting all the way around."

- One employee noted that she had passed on the advice that she had learned at a Lunch and Learn to her daughter, saying that you can "go from here and give info to other people."

- Another employee mentioned that she liked all the Lunch and Learn topics and learned something new in each session. She noted: "If this program leaves this place, a lot of people will lose out."

that were intended to help the supervisors learn new skills and techniques, enhance their current supervisory skills, and gain support and insight from other supervisors who were dealing with similar workplace situations. These trainings were intended to complement the Office Hours and Lunch and Learns by focusing on the supervisors of the frontline staff. Program designers posited that these trainings would increase retention at the firms by improving the relationships between entry-level staff and their supervisors and making the overall work environment better. While targeted to the supervisors of entry-level employers, a number of other supervisors also attended these training sessions during the first six months of Achieve operations. In Round 2, Achieve staff reported that many nurses — who had had little training in supervision — attended as well. (Appendix Table A.5 presents a content outline of Supervisory Training.)

Messages from the training that seemed particularly to resonate with supervisors included the idea of "putting themselves into their supervisees' shoes" and seeking to be more sympathetic about where their supervisees were "coming from." Supervisors related to the material presented at the training and noted, "This is what we deal with." The large majority of people who attended the training and who were interviewed by MDRC enjoyed it and had positive things to say about it. One supervisor said that staff loved the training and tried to mimic some of its style and role-playing elements in their monthly in-service meetings. A number of people noted that they would like to see as many supervisors attend as possible, and one manager expressed that she would like the nonsupervisory employees to experience something similar. According to one attendee, it was "the best training program he's ever been to"; another stated that "you had to come away feeling that you could improve on your outlook."

Interviews produced some examples of the effects that Supervisory Training had had. One supervisor became "more conscientious of the effects of disciplining employees" through the training, according to her Human Resources administrator/day-to-day manager. The administrator said that this supervisor had become very power hungry after she was promoted and began to manage her former coworkers, and that people were worried about her. One supervisor was using the training to deal with specific situations. She noted that a nurse had come to her with a problem and that she had referenced Achieve in her response to the nurse, saying: "We can't assume that people just know things. You need to step back and try to figure out what people need." Another supervisor had implemented some of the lessons from the training, such as starting an Employee of the Month award for the department and trying to make people feel important — for example, by telling an employee, "You're the only one who can handle this for me."

Program Participation

This section discusses participation in Achieve services during Round 2, based on data recorded by Achieve advisers in the Commence database.[47] Given that program services in Round 2 were offered for 12 months, the participation statistics in this section essentially cover a 12-month follow-up period. In addition, this section presents an analysis of Achieve advisers' monthly contact reports.[48]

Table 4 presents rates of participation in Achieve services among research sample members during Round 2, overall and for the different Achieve services. Recall that research sample members are those who agreed to participate in the study and were still employed at the firm of random assignment when Achieve services began. Some individuals — about 10 percent in each round — left their firms between baseline data collection and the start of Achieve services. Among the research sample, 79 percent participated in some type of Achieve service in Round 2 over the 12-month follow-up period. This percentage varied substantially by employer: as few as 56 percent of the research sample members at one Round 2 firm ever participated in any services while as many as 93 percent of the research sample members at another firm eventually participated (not shown in the table).

Regarding the types of Achieve services in which people participated, Table 4 shows that research sample members were almost equally likely to go at least once to an Office Hours session or to a Lunch and Learn (or group) session; they were somewhat more likely to be referred to supportive services by an Achieve adviser (case manager):

- 61 percent of research sample members in Round 2 ever went to an Office Hours session.
- 60 percent of research sample members in Round 2 ever attended a Lunch and Learn session.
- 70 percent of research sample members in Round 2 were referred to specific supportive services by an adviser.

[47]Commence is the relational database system that Towards Employment used to track client participation in Achieve services. Participation statistics derived from the research sample members' responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey are presented in the section below entitled "Effects on Program Participation, Service Receipt, and Workplace Satisfaction."

[48]Appendix B presents a comparison of participation statistics for Round 1 and Round 2, using an approximate six-month follow-up period.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4

Rates of Participation in Different Achieve Services, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Total
Ever participated in any Achieve service	79.2
Ever attended an Office Hours session	61.3
Ever attended a Lunch and Learn session	60.1
Ever referred to specific services by a case manager[a]	69.9
Ever had an informal contact	67.1
Sample size	173

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on program participation data provided by Towards Employment.

NOTES: The follow-up period for these rates is approximately 12 months.

[a]Specific services included information and referral, health care-eye care, emergency assistance-clothing, emergency assistance-testing, transportation-bus tickets, and incentives.

In addition, many research sample members also had "informal contact" with Achieve advisers, for example, when an adviser would seek them out during their work hours and check to see how they were doing. Overall, 67 percent of research sample members in Round 2 ever had such informal contact.

While the above discussion has indicated that over three-quarters of those in the Achieve Round 2 research sample participated at some point in an Achieve service, the *intensity* of participation among those who did participate was not as high as Achieve administrators or the researchers expected at the start of the study. As noted above, given that Achieve services were provided on-site, early expectations were that almost all those who signed up for the study would participate in services and that they would participate consistently. As shown in Table 5, among those who ever went to an Office Hours session, 26 percent went to one session; 28 percent went to two to four sessions; and 46 percent of those who ever went to an Office Hours session went to five or more. Research sample members who attended an Office Hours session went to an average of 5.6 sessions; the median number of sessions was 4 (not shown). Among those in Round 2 who ever went to a

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5

Intensity of Participation in Different Achieve Services Among Those Who Participated, Round 2

Cleveland

Distribution of Contact	Total (%)
Number of times participated in any Achieve service	
1	6.6
2-4	18.2
5 or more	75.2
Sample size	137
Number of Office Hours sessions attended	
1	25.5
2-4	28.3
5 or more	46.2
Sample size	106
Number of Lunch and Learn sessions attended	
1	21.2
2-4	35.6
5 or more	43.3
Sample size	104
Number of referrals to supportive services	
1	18.2
2-4	27.3
5 or more	54.5
Sample size	121

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on program participation data provided by Towards Employment.

NOTE: The follow-up period for these data is approximately 12 months.

Lunch and Learn session, 21 percent went to one session; 36 percent went to two to four sessions; and 43 percent went to five or more. The average number of sessions attended was 7.8 sessions; the median number of sessions was 4 (not shown). Notably, an average of 33 Lunch and Learn sessions were offered per employer during Round 2. Among those who received referrals to supportive services, most received six referrals over a 12-month period.

Most of the participation data that are available pertain to the activities of the research sample members. However, employees at the firms involved in Achieve who were not part of the research sample were eligible to participate in Achieve services as well. Their extent of participation in Achieve services could affect firmwide rates of turnover. In fact, over four times as many nonresearch sample members (587) as research sample members (137) participated in Achieve services in Round 2. Note, however, that there were many more nonresearch sample members than research sample members at the Achieve group firms, so differences in the number of people in these two samples who participated in Achieve reflects this situation as well.

Across all firms, 20 percent of all nonresearch sample employees participated in at least one Achieve activity. Participating nonresearch sample employees were most likely to attend a Lunch and Learn session (82 percent of them did so). But other activities were also common: 68 percent of participating nonresearch sample employees were ever referred to supportive services by an Achieve adviser, and 61 percent ever attended an individual session with an adviser. The number of nonresearch sample members participating in Achieve services varied widely by employer. The number who ever attended a Lunch and Learn session, for example, ranged, among Round 2 employers, from as few as 22 to as many as 85. Again, this range reflects, in part, the number of recently hired, low-wage employees at each employer. In general, the participation statistics for the nonresearch sample employees suggest that Achieve staff provided services to a range of employees throughout the study firms.

In Round 2, Achieve management also tracked the extent of contact between Achieve advisers and the research sample members. Specifically, management sought to increase the extent of interaction between the advisers and research sample employees by setting contact goals. These goals specified that advisers were to have contact with each research sample member at least twice per month — an ambitious goal. Notably, in Round 2, in no month did all “available” (that is, still-on-the-job) research sample members interact with an Achieve adviser. Moreover, a sizable proportion of sample members did not interact at all with Achieve advisers during each month. The proportion of sample members who had contact with advisers in any given month, however, was much higher in the second wave of Round 2 than in the first wave of Round 2, suggesting that advisers’ methods of successfully engaging sample members improved over time. It should be kept in mind that

the Achieve advisers attempted to make contact with 100 percent of the research sample members each month; many of these attempts, however, did not result in actual contact.

The third major component of Achieve services was Supervisory Training. In Round 2, a total of 138 supervisors attended at least one portion of the six-hour training curriculum. Supervisors who completed the training received continuing education units of credit for their participation. These credits were approved by the state as ones that could apply toward keeping up certifications for nurses, social workers, and those in the dietary field. This accreditation was not available in Round 1, and Achieve staff reported that it helped boost attendance at the Supervisory Training sessions in Round 2.

In general, as detailed in Appendix B, participation data suggest that Achieve's implementation was stronger in Round 2 than in Round 1 and that the proportion of research sample members receiving any Achieve services — and a strong "dosage" of Achieve services — was higher in Round 2 than in Round 1.

In sum, over three-quarters of the Achieve research sample participated at some point in an Achieve service in Round 2. Given that services were provided at the workplace, however, the intensity of participation among those who did participate was not as high as initially expected. In general, it was difficult for Achieve to keep employees involved in the program. As discussed above, participants did not necessarily have the time to meet with Achieve advisers or to consistently attend group Lunch and Learn sessions, which were scheduled during work hours, due to the demands of their jobs. Participation rates in Round 2 were higher than in Round 1, which likely reflected efforts by advisers to track down research sample members and encourage them to attend Office Hours and group sessions.

How Achieve Staff Spent Their Time

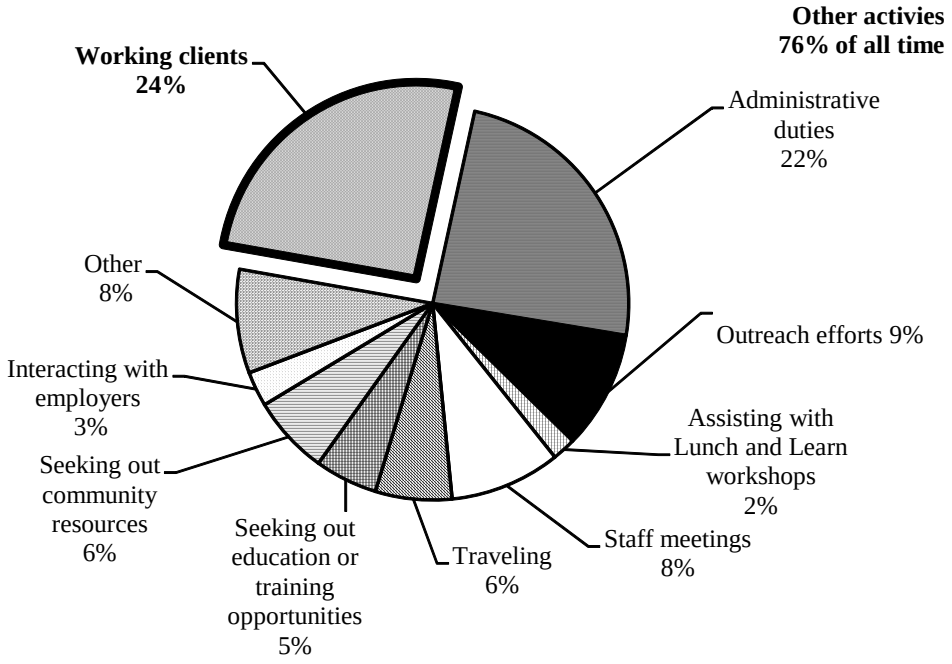
MDRC administered a time study in all the ERA sites to better understand the practices of program case managers. The study captured detailed information on the nature of the ERA staff-client interactions and on the topics covered in these interactions. It also collected information on how ERA case managers typically spent their time each day. In Cleveland, the time study was completed by all the Achieve advisers — three in Round 1 and four in Round 2 — during a two-week period. The time study was conducted three times: from July 14 to 27, 2003; from September 29 to October 12, 2003; and then from July 19 to August 1, 2004.

Overall, the frequency of contact between Achieve advisers and employees increased considerably in the second round. As Figure 2 shows, the Achieve advisers spent 24 percent of their work time in Round 2 in contact with "clients," in other words, interacting

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Figure 2

Summary of How Cleveland ERA Case Managers Typically Spent Their Time, Round 2



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA time study.

one-on-one with employees at the program group facilities. (This includes any employees, not just research sample members.) While 24 percent of work time spent in contact with any clients is high compared with the situation as measured in Round 1 (14 percent), it is still lower than the average found for the other ERA sites. Note, however, that the on-site Achieve advisers would have spent more time traveling between employers than program staff did in the other ERA sites.

Not only did the frequency of contact with employees increase in Round 2, but the intensity of contact was also greater. As shown in the bottom rows of Appendix Table B.3, the average number of daily interactions with employees in Round 2 was almost triple what it was in Round 1 (5.5 in Round 2, compared with 2.0 in Round 1).

The type of contact also changed in Round 2, relative to Round 1, as indicated in Appendix Table B.4, which provides detailed information on the topics that were covered during the Achieve advisers' contacts with participants. The focus of the contacts shifted from general check-ins to specific discussions of retention and advancement. General

check-ins made up only 28 percent of discussions with the clients in Round 2, compared with 45 percent in Round 1. In addition, the Achieve advisers spent more time discussing career goals and advancement in Round 2 (9 percent in Round 2, compared with 5 percent in Round 1).

Cost Analysis

Employer-based retention and advancement programs are somewhat new, and thus the level of investment required to operate this type of program, as well as the type of costs incurred, is not known. Because of the relative newness of this type of program, data were collected to estimate the total cost of operating the Achieve program and its likely cost per employer. These estimates may be valuable to program operators who are interested in implementing an employer-based retention and advancement program or to employers that would like to have such services offered at their work site.

Table 6 shows the annual costs incurred by Achieve to operate the program for one year during Round 2 (considered the steady-state period).[49] As shown in the table, the estimated annual cost was $502,195.[50] Program costs are broken out into costs incurred for staff and program operations, overhead, and supportive services. The majority of the costs stem from staff and program operations (approximately 83 percent of total costs); overhead is a moderate expense at $84,103 (17 percent of total costs); and supportive services represent a minimal expense at less than 1 percent of total costs. Achieve is a very staff-intensive program, so, not surprisingly, the majority of its operating costs were for staff salaries and benefits. Program operating costs also included things like staff travel to and from the partici-

[49]Cost estimates are based on 2004 program costs; 2004 is considered the steady-state period. 2004 costs are then applied to all months of Round 2 program operations (March 2004 to May 2005). Overhead and staff and program operations costs are varied by the number of FTEs (full-time-equivalent employees) per month during this time period. The number of FTEs ranged from 5.1 to 9.2 per month during Round 2. Supportive service costs were held constant for each month. All cost estimates are inflation-adjusted to 2007, Quarter 1. Cost estimates are not discounted to the present value, because program costs occurred over a one-year period and equal costs over time were assumed (varied by FTE for overhead and by staff and program operations costs). Discounting values to the present value accounts for the time value of money: a dollar today is worth more than a dollar tomorrow, because it may be invested and produce income over time. Discounting values to the present value allow dollar amounts to be compared on the same basis. Presenting costs in the present value is especially important when programs have high upfront costs; a program with high upfront costs is more costly in present-value terms than a program with the same total nominal costs evenly expended over the life of the program.

[50]The total program costs include costs of recruiting employers into the program, which are costs that would be incurred by the program operator in a nonexperimental environment. There was at least one full-time staff person devoted to recruiting employers during this period. All research-related costs have been excluded.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 6

Estimated Cost of Cleveland ERA Program (in 2007 Dollars)

Cleveland

Total program costs (annual) ($)	502,195
Staff and program operations	414,574
Overhead	84,103
Supportive Services[a]	3,518
Total program costs per employer[b] ($)	58,747

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from Towards Employment financial expenditure and staffing reports.

NOTES: Estimates were inflation-adjusted to Quarter 1, 2007, dollars using the Consumer Price Index.

All program costs are based on 2004 expenditures.

Overhead and program operations costs were varied monthly by the number of full-time employees (ranged from 5.1 to 9.2) who worked on Achieve during the period. Supportive service costs were held constant for each month, based on supportive service costs in 2004.

Costs were estimated for all Round 2 months (March 2004 to May 2005), and then the average monthly Round 2 costs were used to estimate annual costs.

[a]Supportive service costs were higher in 2005.

[b]The average monthly cost per employer in Round 2 was used to calculate the average annual cost per employer (the number of employers ranged from 4 to 11 per month in Round 2).

pating employers and expenses for Lunch and Learn sessions. Overhead expenses included rent, utilities, office supplies and equipment, marketing, and staff training. Overhead is a small component of the costs in this program, but that may have been tempered by the fact that Achieve is one of several programs being operated by Towards Employment. Thus, many overhead expenses were shared across multiple programs being run from the same location. The supportive services component of Achieve — including incentives, transportation, clothing, and emergency funds for clients — had the lowest cost.

The cost analysis also estimated the costs per employer (although employers did not pay for Achieve services during the research period). The last row of Table 6 shows that the cost per employer for the ERA Achieve program was $58,747.[51] The cost per employer includes all expenses incurred for Achieve but does not include other expenses that the employer may have incurred, such as employee release time or space at the work site for To-

[51]Due to economies of scale, the cost per employer is higher in months with fewer employers. Excluding the two months in Round 2 that had the highest costs per employer (March and April 2004) reduces the cost per employer to $50,560.

wards Employment staff to provide services. It is important to note that the cost per employer is not necessarily the cost that employers would pay for Achieve, depending on who is providing the program. For example, even after the research period has ended, Towards Employment is still offering the ERA program to employers in Cleveland, and the employers pay a fraction of the actual costs, as the majority of Towards Employment's costs are covered by funds from Cuyahoga County and by the financial support of foundations.[52] In addition, employers who contract with Towards Employment after the research period select the employer-based retention and advancement services that they want, and they rarely request all three of the services — Office Hours (case management), Lunch and Learn sessions, and Supervisory Training — offered during the research period and estimated in this cost analysis.

Reflections on Program Operations

- **It was important to secure buy-in from employers and to work with employers to establish specific program goals and desired outcomes.**

Achieve's relationship with employers was better in Round 2 because, prior to selecting firms for the study, the Achieve manager spent an enormous amount of time (almost all of her time) meeting with employers and gauging their interest in and commitment to the program, to assess which employers would be good partners. In addition, in Round 2, prior to becoming part of the study, the employer needed to get buy-in from administrators and upper-level staff, which was not required of the Round 1 firms (often it was a representative from Human Resources who agreed to take part in the study); the employer also had to agree to meet regularly with the Achieve manager to discuss the program and any ideas that either party had for improving it or tailoring it to the needs and interests of the employees at that particular firm; and the employer had to secure adequate space for Office Hours and Lunch and Learn sessions.

- **Situating employment retention services at the workplace had some disadvantages for securing an employee's participation.**

Achieve was integrated into the various nursing homes in which it was situated more fully in Round 2 than in Round 1. In Round 2, this integration took the form of making sure that the case management Office Hours and the Lunch and Learn sessions were at convenient times for the low-wage workers, were offered during more than one work shift, and did not conflict with other out-of-the-ordinary activities in the nursing homes. In addition, all employers were able to make sure that anyone participating in Achieve could do so

[52]The costs vary depending on the amount of time required for services at the employer's work site.

on the clock, that is, while they were being paid. Finally, Achieve management held quarterly meetings with all nursing home administrators, to iron out any scheduling difficulties that were occurring, to understand whether there were special topics that the employer wanted covered in the Achieve group sessions, and to accommodate any other requests of the employer. Notably, however, Achieve did not attempt to — and was not intended to — change workplace cultures or environments.

Locating the program at nursing homes was intended to make it more convenient for low-wage workers to access Achieve services and to result in a higher proportion of those employees targeted for services actually getting services — and a greater dosage of services — than in other ERA programs. As described above, one of the biggest issues was that situating services at nursing homes, where there are numerous requirements for resident coverage, at times *hindered* people from taking advantage of offered services. Echoing a sentiment noted above, one employee described a situation in which, when she did not give her supervisor notice that she was "leaving the floor" to go to a Lunch and Learn session, she had her Lunch and Learn participation privileges suspended as punishment. Her supervisor noted that the Achieve flyers should have emphasized that people could go to Achieve sessions only if it did not interfere with work, because "we're here for the residents." Along these same lines, one administrator noted that while the Achieve case manager made a point of telling people that she was on-site, "this kind of loose invitation will never work in this environment." The administrator questioned whether correct messages about Achieve could be communicated from administrators to the supervisors and whether the supervisors communicated correctly to the employees.

In addition, at some of the nursing homes, participating in Achieve meant staying at work longer than usual. One supervisor, offering a reason for lower-than-expected participation in Achieve, said that people did not want to stay at work longer: "I'm not going to be here any longer than I have to." This administrator noted that many employees were single mothers and students, with busy lives, and also that people shared their cars with their spouses and would encounter difficulty if they deviated from their set work schedules. Finally, it is possible that services take on a different slant when offered at the workplace. One supervisor noted that, for someone just getting back into the workforce after a while, Office Hours can seem like "being on trial," not receiving help.

- **Providing services at the workplace posed some internal difficulties as well.**

In interviews with different levels of staff at the nursing homes in the Achieve group, some equity issues were noted. One administrator, at a nursing home where Achieve participation was not allowed "on the clock," claimed that if her facility allowed this, other

staff would say: “Why not me? Why do they get to go and get paid? . . . If you start something like that, it snowballs.” Along the same lines, a supervisor thought that it was unfair that breaks were being given to the entry-level staff but not to supervisors. As he put it: “There ain’t nobody Achieving me. All they [the administrators] care is that I show up for work. Nobody cares about *my* personal life.” Finally, some supervisors felt that there were some workplace rules that should not be bent. One supervisor, for example, said that his interpretation of Supervisory Training was that Achieve wants him to be more sympathetic to the aides, but he stated: “I can’t deal with that [personal] part. I need [them] to show up.” He went on to say that if an aide called in to say that she or he would be late or could not work, he would understand. But if the aide did not even call, he had no sympathy and did not think that he should have any.

Effects on Program Participation, Service Receipt, and Workplace Satisfaction

This section presents the effects of Achieve — the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) program in Cleveland — on service receipt and program participation, including the extent and nature of employees' contacts with case managers and their receipt of retention and other supportive services.[53] It also examines whether Achieve affected employees' attitudes toward their supervisors or their job satisfaction. Data from the ERA 12-Month Survey are used to compare these outcomes for employees in the Achieve group firms with outcomes for employees in the control group firms.

The findings presented here should be interpreted in the context of substantial job mobility for this population. By the time of the 12-month survey, less than half the employees were still with the firm where they worked at the time of random assignment, that is, one of the original 44 study firms. The survey measures participation during the first year after program entry and job satisfaction for the job held nearest to the 12-month interview. Thus, some employees may have had only a few months of exposure to the Achieve program, and the work conditions that they reported on the survey do not necessarily refer to conditions at the study firms. Also, the findings reported here refer only to the employees in the research sample. Data shown in the previous section ("Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program") indicate that a substantial number of other employees at the firms received some Achieve services.

- **Employees in the Achieve group firms were more likely than those in the control group firms to meet with an employment counselor or related staff during the follow-up period. However, only about half the workers in the Achieve group firms reported any contact.**

As described in the report's Introduction, the main feature of the Achieve program was the availability of Office Hours, during which case managers (called "Achieve advisers") were stationed at the employer to provide workers with assistance on a range of factors that might affect job retention. Although the section on the program's implementation highlights the difficulties that Achieve staff faced in meeting with workers and sustaining their engagement, the program nonetheless should increase workers' interactions with case managers or advisers, since this type of service did not exist at the control group firms.

[53]For comparability with other ERA reports, impacts on participation in job search, education, and training were also estimated. Since Achieve was not designed to affect these outcomes, these results are presented in Appendix Tables E.7 and E.8.

Most firms had Employee Assistance Plans (EAPs), but these were rarely used by employees and were not located on the premises.

Table 7 presents impacts on contact with program staff during Year 1, and Box 3 explains how to read the impact tables in this report. The survey questions about contact were broad in nature, designed to capture both Achieve services available to employees at the Achieve group firms and any other types of employment or retention services available to employees at both the Achieve and the control group firms.[54] These questions likely capture formal or informal meetings with case managers but are unlikely to capture attendance at Lunch and Learn sessions (described in the Introduction). Employees at Achieve group firms were more likely to have met at some point with a case manager or employment adviser, and they met with them more frequently. Achieve increased the rate of contact with such staff by 22.2 percentage points, from 30.2 percent for the control group to 52.4 percent for the program group. On average, employees in Achieve group firms met with staff seven times during the year, compared with three times for the control group. As expected, most of the increased contact that was caused by the program took place at the work site.

About a third of the control group reported meeting with staff during the year, and most of this contact took place at the staff or case manager's office. The data do not indicate with whom these employees were meeting. However, as shown in the report's concluding section ("Effects on Job Retention and on Employment and Earnings"), a fair number of employees left their original firm during the year, so much of this contact may have been with an agency designed to help people find work or change jobs.

Among survey respondents in the Achieve group firms who reported that they met with staff, 15 percent had 1 or 2 contacts; 25 percent had 3 to 5 contacts; 26 percent had 6 to 15 contacts; and 33 percent had 16 or more contacts (not shown). Thus, the data suggest that interactions with a case manager may have been very intensive for about a third of the sample. However, it is also likely that many of these contacts were the informal ones mentioned in the section on program implementation, which may have amounted to a quick check-in in the hallway.

The implementation section also mentions the difficulty of engaging employees who were working nonstandard shifts. Separate analyses indicate that employees working the evening or night shift were just as likely as those working the day shift to report that

[54]The survey asked respondents whether they had any contact with a case manager or staff person from a program or organization that helps people find and keep jobs. Such an organization might be a welfare, employment, or other type of agency.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 7

Impacts on Contacts with Program Staff in Year 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Any contacts with case manager/employment program since random assignment[a] (%)	52.4	30.2	22.2	***	0.000
Average number of contacts with staff/case manager	6.8	3.1	3.7	***	0.007
In person	4.7	1.4	3.3	***	0.004
By telephone	2.1	1.7	0.4		0.479
Ever met with staff/case manager (%)	39.5	22.4	17.1	***	0.004
At home	2.2	1.9	0.4		0.799
At workplace	25.2	8.7	16.5	***	0.001
At staff/case manager's office	16.9	16.1	0.8		0.824
At school/training program	9.2	7.1	2.1		0.447
At other places	4.0	0.3	3.8	**	0.030
Staff/case manager talked with respondent's employer (%)					
Never	83.8	92.0	-8.2	**	0.019
Once or twice	8.5	5.8	2.7		0.286
More than twice	5.0	1.8	3.3	*	0.086
Don't know	2.7	0.5	2.2		0.108
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

A two-tailed test was applied to the differences between the program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]This measure includes respondents who said "yes" on the client survey to either of the following questions: "Have you had any experiences with programs or organizations that help people find or keep jobs since your random assignment date?" "Since your random assignment date, have you had any contact, in-person or by phone, with a case manager or a staff person from an employment, welfare or other agency?" However, subsequent survey questions regarding the number and location of contacts were asked only of respondents who said "yes" to the latter question. Therefore, there are some respondents who reported contact but were not asked about the number and location of contacts.

Box 3

How to Read the Tables in the ERA Evaluation

Most tables in this report use a similar format, illustrated below. The table shows a key participation outcome for employees at the Achieve group firms and the control group firms — whether and where they met with staff from an employment program. (The survey question was designed to capture both Achieve services for employees at the Achieve group firms and services from any employment counselors or programs that might exist for workers at the control group firms.) For example, the table shows that 39.5 percent of the Achieve group employees reported meeting with a case manager or staff during the year, compared with 22.4 percent of control group employees.

Because firms were assigned randomly to either the Achieve group or the control group, the effects of Achieve can be estimated by the difference in outcomes between employees in the two groups of firms. The "Difference" column in the table shows the differences between the two research groups' rates of contact — that is, the program's *impacts* on contact. For example, the impact on contact with program staff is calculated by subtracting 22.4 from 39.5, yielding 17.0 percentage points.

Differences marked with asterisks are statistically significant, meaning that it is quite unlikely that the differences arose by chance. The number of asterisks indicates whether the impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent, 5 percent, or 10 percent level (the lower the level, the less likely that the impact is due to chance). For example, as shown below, Achieve had a statistically significant impact of 16.5 percentage points on the proportion of employees who reported meeting with staff or a case manager at their workplace. Three asterisks indicate that this impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. The p-value shows the exact level of significance.

Impacts on Contacts with Staff or Case Managers from an Employment Program

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Ever met with staff/case manager	39.5	22.4	17.1	***	0.004
At home	2.2	1.9	0.4		0.799
At workplace	25.2	8.7	16.5	***	0.001
At staff/case manager's office	16.9	16.1	0.8		0.824
At school/training program	9.2	7.1	2.1		0.447
At other places	4.0	0.3	3.8	**	0.030

they had met with a case manager at least once.[55] The difference is in the intensity of contacts. Those working the night shift reported about half as many contacts as the other two groups. Finally, Table 7 shows that the program led to a modest increase in the number of employees reporting that staff or their case manager spoke with their employer about them, although this outcome was still very rare.[56] Note that Achieve — although providing services at the workplace and conducting training for supervisors — was not focused on intervening with the employer on behalf of a given employee.

- **Employees in the Achieve group firms were more likely than those in the control group firms to receive help with retention and advancement issues. However, they were not more likely to receive help with support services, such as child care and transportation.**

Case managers reported that much of the time in Office Hours sessions was spent offering problem-solving assistance to workers, such as how to deal with coworkers and supervisors or addressing financial problems. As shown in the section describing program implementation, the majority of contacts, aside from being general check-ins, dealt with on-the-job issues or personal or family issues. The Achieve program should therefore have increased the number of workers who received assistance dealing with these types of problems.

Table 8 presents effects on a variety of ways in which employees might be helped by case managers or other staff. Achieve's primary effect was to increase the receipt of retention services. Employees in Achieve group firms were more likely to report receiving three types of services in particular: enrolling in life skills classes while working (most likely, the Achieve Lunch and Learn sessions), dealing with problems on the job, and exploring long-term career goals. Overall, 38.5 percent of those in Achieve group firms reported receiving retention and advancement services, compared with 27.5 percent of the control group, for an increase of 11 percentage points. This increase is fairly modest and a bit below average among other ERA sites that increased the receipt of these services.

Another effect of the Achieve program was to increase workers' reported use of their employers' Employee Assistance Program (EAP), from 4.8 percent to 13.9 percent. It is not clear whether this represents a true increase in the use of EAPs or whether some sample members considered Achieve services part of their employer's EAP. For example, some employees may have been referred by their Achieve case manager to a particular service

[55]Shift status is determined as of the time of the 12-month survey. Since many workers had left their original firms by that point, this is only a rough estimate of their status while in the Achieve group firms.

[56]Survey respondents were asked whether a case manager or other staff person spoke "with your employer about you, such as your job performance or possibilities for promotion."

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 8

Impacts on Areas in Which Respondents Received Help

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Received help with support services	19.6	16.5	3.1		0.353
Finding or paying for child care	16.7	13.6	3.1		0.328
Finding or paying for transportation	5.5	7.0	-1.5		0.530
Received help with basic needs	24.6	28.0	-3.4		0.415
Housing problems	9.8	10.9	-1.0		0.794
Access to medical treatment	17.4	17.7	-0.2		0.960
Financial emergency	6.7	8.3	-1.7		0.532
Received help with other benefits	41.2	39.5	1.7		0.697
Getting Medicaid	29.4	29.6	-0.2		0.965
Getting food stamps	27.0	25.3	1.7		0.662
Getting Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	22.8	20.8	1.9		0.616
Received help with job preparation	18.5	13.8	4.7		0.200
Enrolling in job readiness or training	13.3	7.3	6.1	*	0.051
Looking for a job	10.5	8.3	2.3		0.416
Finding clothes, tools, or supplies for work	9.1	5.1	4.0		0.189
Employer provided an Employee Assistance Program	41.9	40.0	1.9		0.743
Ever used an Employee Assistance Program	13.9	4.8	9.1	***	0.009
Received help with retention/advancement services	38.5	27.5	11.0	**	0.025
Finding a better job while working	6.3	3.8	2.5		0.322
Enrolling in life skills classes while working	18.4	1.9	16.5	***	0.000
Career assessment	9.0	5.6	3.4		0.190
Dealing with problems on the job	17.9	7.7	10.2	***	0.005
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	11.3	6.5	4.9		0.137
Exploring long-term career goals[a]	16.8	9.0	7.8	**	0.030
Obtaining certification or additional training[a]	16.5	17.0	-0.5		0.889
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]This type of help was measured only in the Cleveland ERA test.

offered by the employer's EAP. In general, the use of EAPs is very low, and a comparison of this table with Table 1 (showing that 66 percent of study employers reported having an EAP) suggests that many employees are either unaware of this employer-provided benefit or fail to take it up if they are aware of it.

It is somewhat surprising that Achieve did not significantly increase the receipt of help with child care or transportation — two factors thought to have important effects on job retention. Perhaps these particular barriers to retention are not prevalent in this sample.

At the time of study enrollment, for example, 40 percent of the sample did not have children (Table 2).

Among the study employees in general, for both the Achieve group and the control group, the most common area in which employees received help was accessing benefits. Table 8 shows that about 40 percent of both groups received help getting or applying for Medicaid, food stamps, and/or the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Achieve did not increase the number of employees reporting help with these benefits, but this was not a goal of the program.

- **Employees starting out in the Achieve group firms were generally less satisfied with their work environment at the one-year mark than employees starting out in the control group firms.**

Conflicts with supervisors or coworkers are often cited as reasons for job turnover. In fact, as mentioned in the report's Introduction, poor supervision, a lack of autonomy, and feeling undervalued are typical complaints among nurses' aides. Case managers expected to and did help workers deal with these types of problems. In addition, the program's Supervisory Training was also designed to improve manager-staff relations. The ERA 12-Month Survey included a series of questions specifically for the Achieve study to measure employees' job satisfaction, particularly in the area of supervisor quality and the extent to which employees felt supported and respected. A surprising and somewhat puzzling effect of Achieve was to reduce employee satisfaction on several of these measures.

Table 9 presents the results. Employees starting out at Achieve group firms reported less satisfaction with their supervisors, particularly in the areas of providing guidance and opportunities for advancement. For example, 60.5 percent of individuals starting out in Achieve group firms reported that their supervisor praised them and provided helpful feedback for improvement, compared with 71.0 percent of control group employees — for a statistically significant reduction of 10.5 percentage points. They were also more likely to report problems with adequate staffing at their workplace ("My workplace has enough people to get the job done"). Note that these data capture satisfaction with the current or most recent job as of the 12-month survey, which, for many employees, is not the same job that they held as of random assignment. Thus, these results should be interpreted with some caution, since many workers left their original firms over the year — in which case, job satisfaction is being assessed at a new employer.

Although the reason for these effects is unclear, one hypothesis is that Achieve helped to raise employees' awareness of issues relating to retention and advancement. As such, these workers may have begun to expect more in this area from their supervisors, and

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 9

Impacts on Selected Measures of Job Satisfaction

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage who agree with each statement:[a]				
My supervisor makes sure that I know what is expected of me	70.3	76.6	-6.3	0.152
My supervisor gives me the information I need to do my job well	70.9	77.2	-6.3	0.171
My supervisor is a good role model and provides me with opportunities and guidance	55.4	67.5	-12.1 **	0.019
My supervisor creates a team atmosphere	62.6	69.9	-7.4	0.124
My supervisor praises and gives helpful feedback for improvement	60.5	71.0	-10.5 **	0.033
My supervisor supports advancement efforts	47.4	62.1	-14.7 ***	0.010
My supervisor treats me in a respectful manner	67.5	77.5	-10.0 **	0.032
I am provided with the equipment needed to do my job well	68.7	74.0	-5.3	0.287
My workplace has enough people to get job done	44.6	55.6	-11.0 **	0.035
I am given a reasonable workload and enough time to do it well	61.0	65.5	-4.4	0.417
I have a say in how my job is done	65.3	70.8	-5.5	0.245
I have someone at work who I feel will speak up for me	63.0	63.2	-0.1	0.979
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA-12 Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Responses shown only for those reporting that they agreed "a lot" or "a little" with the statement.

they were subsequently disappointed. Another hypothesis relates to the tension between being able to take advantage of Achieve services and being able to "leave the floor" to participate. This may have raised awareness of and dissatisfaction with staff shortages. One of the key reasons that employees in the Achieve group firms gave for not being able to attend Office Hours sessions was the lack of workers to cover their shifts. Data are not available to directly support or refute these hypotheses.

- **Effects on contacts with program staff, participation, and service receipt were similar for firms in Round 1 and Round 2.**

Appendix Tables E.1 through E.8 present impacts for each round separately. Overall, the effects were very similar for both rounds. For example, Achieve increased the rate

of contact with a case manager or staff person by 20.3 percentage points in Round 1 and by 21.8 percentage points in Round 2. Effects on the receipt of help with retention and advancement services were 11.4 percentage points for Round 1 and 7.7 percentage points for Round 2, although neither effect is statistically significant, owing to small sample sizes. Thus, despite field research indicating an improvement in implementation in Round 2, participation data do not bear this out. It may be that the program improved in ways that are not measurable with the survey data.

Effects on Job Retention and on Employment and Earnings

This section presents the effects of Achieve — the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) program in Cleveland — on employment outcomes during Year 1. It examines the program's effects on job retention, or whether employees at the Achieve group firms stayed at their original jobs (the jobs that they had held at random assignment) longer than employees at the control group firms did. The section also examines employment rates and earnings in general, or whether the Achieve group employees worked more and earned more than the control group employees, within or outside their original firms.

Achieve's effects are estimated using three sources of data. First, the 44 firms in the study provided job retention data for research sample employees at one, two, and six months after random assignment. Second, state unemployment insurance (UI) records data provide employment and earnings information for all research sample employees, covering employment at any employer within the state. Finally, the ERA 12-Month Survey provides data on job characteristics and mobility.

Results are presented first for employees in the research sample, or the 697 entry-level employees who agreed to take part in the study. However, as noted in the section "Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program," Achieve staff eventually began serving all workers in a given firm, although employees in the research sample were given priority. For this reason, this section concludes with a look at Achieve's effects on firmwide turnover for the 44 study firms. State UI records data are used for this analysis.[57] Finally, an important factor to consider when interpreting the results is the "power of the test," or the ability of the evaluation to detect impacts of small or modest size. Although Towards Employment succeeded at the herculean task of recruiting 44 firms into the study, this is still a relatively small sample and is able to detect only fairly large impacts. In other words, small differences that may be statistically significant in a larger sample are unlikely to be statistically significant in this smaller sample.

Job Retention

- **Achieve had little effect on employees' retention at their original firms, aside from a small increase in the short term.**

[57]UI records data include not only an employee's earnings in a given quarter but also the federal identification number of the employer. This information is used to track job retention from quarter to quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 10

Impacts on Retention at the Random Assignment Employer, from Employer-Provided Reports

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage still at firm after 30 days	92.5	88.8	3.8	0.126
Percentage still at firm after 90 days	78.5	73.6	4.9	0.184
Percentage still at firm after 180 days	65.0	60.2	4.8	0.299
Total days worked				
Through Day 30	28.9	28.1	0.8 *	0.093
Through Day 90	80.1	76.7	3.5 *	0.080
Through Day 180	143.5	138.2	5.3	0.289
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using firm-reported employment verification forms.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for within-firm clustering. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The days shown in this table refer to elapsed calendar days, not workdays.

Tables 10 and 11 present effects on employees' retention at the original study firms.[58] The report's Introduction documents the relatively high rates of turnover for this group (using the control group as a benchmark), and these tables provide similar information. By six months after random assignment (Day 180), for example, only 60 percent of the control group sample were still at their original employer (Table 10). By one year out, the retention rate for the control group was only 40 percent (the lower panel of Table 11). Employees at the Achieve group firms had no statistically better retention rates than those at the control group firms.

[58]The two manufacturing firms in the study are included in all analyses presented here. The results are similar when these two firms are excluded and the analysis focuses only on long-term care facilities.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 11

Impacts on Retention at the Random Assignment Employer, from UI and Survey Data

Cleveland

Characteristic	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
From UI records data				
Employed with random assignment employer				
Quarter of random assignment	97.0	99.5	-2.4 *	0.095
Quarter 2	88.0	83.2	4.8 *	0.096
Quarter 3	69.3	67.0	2.3	0.572
Quarter 4	58.4	55.2	3.2	0.534
Quarter 5	47.6	47.6	0.0	0.965
Quarter 6	44.1	43.4	0.7	0.988
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316		
From ERA 12-Month Survey				
Still employed at random assignment employer	44.8	40.2	4.7	0.321
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records and responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Table 10 presents data on retention for the research sample employees as provided by the study employers. Achieve had little effect on most measures of retention, but it did lead to a small increase in the numbers of days worked through the first three months.[59] The data in Table 11 — also for the research sample employees — are from UI records and the 12-month survey, and they tell a similar story, also indicating that Achieve had no effect on retention in the longer term.

[59]These data refer to calendar days worked, not to official workdays.

Employment and Earnings

- **Achieve had no effect on employment and earnings more generally.**

Although Achieve did not help research sample employees stay at their original firms longer, it was hypothesized that that the program might affect their earning and employment outside these firms. Learning to deal with problems on the job, for example, is a skill that follows a worker to other employers. In addition, learning about career options can also improve a worker's job prospects even if it does not increase retention at a particular job.

Tables 12 and 13 present Achieve's effects on employment and earnings and on the characteristics of sample members' current or most recent job as of the 12-month survey. UI data for the first two years show no effects on employment, employment stability, or earnings (Table 12). On average, control group employees earned about $15,000 during Year 1, and 71.6 percent of them worked in all four quarters of the year. Achieve had no statistically significant effects on these outcomes. Survey data shown in Table 13 tell a similar story. Achieve had no effects on hours worked, wage rates, or benefits. There was a modest reduction in part-time work at the 12-month point. It is not clear what to make of this effect, given the lack of a clear hypothesis about how Achieve might affect work hours.

Effects for Subgroups

- **Achieve increased short-term retention at the firms that had relatively high historical turnover rates and, across all firms, among the lowest-wage workers and young workers.**

Box 4 discusses both firm-level and individual-level factors associated with turnover, and Table 14 presents Achieve's effects on turnover for several subgroups. The subgroups were chosen to identify groups that could be expected to have relatively high rates of turnover, although for different reasons. Recently hired workers, for example, are more likely to leave the firm than those who have managed to stay around for at least several months. Nurses' aides might have higher rates of turnover, since their jobs could be characterized as more difficult than jobs for other workers in the sample, including food service workers, housekeeping workers, and so on. Single mothers may have more trouble staying in jobs due to child care issues. Finally, lower-wage workers and younger workers might have shorter job tenure if they have less attachment to the firm and are less settled in their careers.

The results show that Achieve increased retention for three groups, each of which had relatively high turnover rates. First, consider very low-wage workers, or those earning less than $9 per hour at study entry. This group had fairly high rates of turnover: only 55.6

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 12

Impacts on Summary Measures of Employment and Earnings, Full Sample

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Years 1-2				
Total earnings ($)	29,535	29,640	-105	0.893
Ever employed (%)	99.2	97.9	1.3	0.178
Average quarterly employment (%)	86.3	84.8	1.5	0.639
Number of quarters employed	6.9	6.8	0.1	0.639
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	86.8	83.9	2.9	0.463
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,276*	*4,369*	*-93*	
Year 1				
Total earnings ($)	15,293	15,068	225	0.768
Ever employed (%)	98.8	97.3	1.5	0.179
Average quarterly employment (%)	90.6	87.7	2.9	0.288
Number of quarters employed	3.6	3.5	0.1	0.288
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	78.5	71.6	6.9	0.207
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	73.6	72.1	1.5	0.681
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,221*	*4,296*	*-75*	
Year 2				
Total earnings ($)	14,242	14,572	-330	0.640
Ever employed (%)	90.6	91.7	-1.1	0.545
Average quarterly employment (%)	82.1	81.9	0.2	0.993
Number of quarters employed	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.993
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	70.1	69.3	0.8	0.871
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	65.0	64.0	1.0	0.799
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,338*	*4,448*	*-110*	NA
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316		

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

[b]Italic type indicates comparisons that are nonexperimental.

percent were still at the firm after six months. Achieve increased retention for this group, by 11 percentage points after three months. Similar results are found for younger workers. These subgroup findings should be considered suggestive, given that when many subgroups are examined, some statistically significant differences may arise simply by chance.[60]

Achieve also increased retention rates among high-turnover firms. Study firms were classified as high versus low turnover based on turnover rates in the six months prior to study entry. Not surprisingly, those classified as high-turnover firms have lower retention rates after study entry as well: only 52.7 percent of control group employees were still at the firm after six months, compared with 70.0 percent of employees at the firms classified as low-turnover firms. Among high-turnover firms, Achieve increased employee retention by 10.2 percentage points (94.9 percent versus 84.7 percent) through the first month of follow-up. The program also increased total days at work in high-turnover firms, by 7.4 days over the first three months. The UI data show a similar pattern as the employer-provided retention data, with a sizable effect on retention in Quarter 2.[61] Note that the ability to detect impacts for this group of high-turnover firms is limited by the small sample size, as illustrated by the fact that some fairly large impacts are not statistically significant.[62]

Finally, although not shown in the tables, Achieve's effects did not substantially vary by round. Field research suggested that Achieve was better implemented in Round 2. However, the few impacts that do exist in the earlier months occur for Round 1. Employees

[60]Even if the overall effect of a program were zero, there will be sampling variation around this mean effect. In this case, dividing the full sample into a series of subgroups can result in a few negative and positive statistically significant, yet spurious, effects.

[61]The UI data do not exactly match the employer-provided data for two key reasons. First, the employer-provided data indicate retention status as of a given date, for example, 90 days after random assignment, whereas the UI data indicate employment at the study firm at some point during the quarter. Second, Quarter 2 after random assignment does not correspond to Months 1 to 3 after random assignment, but it covers Months 1 to 3 for employees at firms randomly assigned late in a calendar quarter and Months 3 to 5 for employees at firms randomly assigned early in a calendar quarter.

[62]With firm-level random assignment, the power of the statistical test depends largely on the number of firms in the analysis and less so on the number of individuals across these firms.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 13

Impacts on Other Employment Outcomes

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Characteristics of current job				
Employment status (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	90.0	90.2	-0.2	0.942
Currently employed	71.7	77.6	-5.9	0.194
No longer employed	18.3	12.6	5.7	0.112
Current working status				
Full time	64.1	64.2	-0.2	0.972
Part time	7.2	13.5	-6.3 **	0.044
Currently employed at a good job[a]	49.9	49.9	0.0	0.993
Still in health care industry	65.6	63.3	2.3	0.618
Hours				
Average hours per week	27.1	28.8	-1.7	0.333
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30 hours	7.2	13.5	-6.3 **	0.044
30 to 34 hours	6.6	8.4	-1.7	0.511
35 to 44 hours	51.1	46.4	4.7	0.395
45 hours or more	6.4	9.5	-3.1	0.247
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $7.50	8.3	9.0	-0.7	0.805
$7.50 to $9.49	23.1	28.4	-5.3	0.207
$9.50 or more	44.9	51.2	-6.3	0.184
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*9.53*	*9.50*	*0.03*	
Hourly wage increased since random assignment (%)	46.8	49.3	-2.5	0.604
Earnings				
Average weekly earnings ($)	258	273	-15	0.403
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	6.2	7.9	-1.7	0.510
$201 to $300	11.7	15.8	-4.1	0.278
$301 to $500	46.9	48.4	-1.5	0.749
$500 or more	6.4	5.5	0.8	0.715
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

(continued)

Table 13 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Benefits				
Employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	47.5	46.1	1.4	0.757
Paid vacation	57.0	57.7	-0.7	0.885
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	57.1	53.6	3.4	0.473
Dental benefits	48.5	49.7	-1.2	0.763
Retirement plan	45.0	44.4	0.6	0.924
Health care plan or medical insurance	53.9	55.9	-2.0	0.648
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	35.4	33.3	2.1	0.738
Split	1.6	1.7	-0.2	0.902
Irregular	1.2	3.9	-2.7 *	0.096
Evening shift	17.1	17.6	-0.5	0.898
Night shift	9.0	14.0	-5.0	0.117
Rotating shift	5.5	6.5	-1.0	0.667
Other schedule	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.330
Odd Job	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.330
Jobs skills index[c]	0.34	0.34	-0.01	0.508
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	58.7	62.8	-4.1	0.404
Work with computers	17.3	17.0	0.3	0.860
Arithmatic	25.1	29.2	-4.1	0.385
Customer contact	65.6	71.4	-5.8	0.231
Employment dynamics				
Number of months unemployed between random assignment job and next job				
None	55.8	56.5	-0.7	0.884
1 to 3	15.8	12.0	3.9	0.347
4 to 6	5.4	8.4	-3.0	0.232
More than 6	23.0	23.2	-0.1	0.952
Percentage of follow-up year unemployed				
None	51.9	50.7	1.3	0.790
1-33	16.7	19.4	-2.6	0.644
34-66	11.3	9.7	1.6	0.600
67-99	10.1	10.1	-0.1	0.965
100	10.0	10.2	-0.2	0.957
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

(continued)

Table 13 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week, makes $7 per hour, and receives health insurance. If a job does not offer health insurance, a "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and makes $8.50 or more per hour (Johnson and Corcoran, 2003).

[b]A split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular shedule is one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to night.

[c]The job skills index was created by regressing the "good job" measure on 10 dummy variables that indicate whether sample members possess specific job skills. This regression generated weights that ranked each skill based on its association with working at a good job. Each sample member was given a job skills score that was created by multiplying the regression-derived weights by each of the 10 jobs skills dummy variables. The result is an index that measures the probability of working at a good job, based on the skills that are required at the current job.

in Round 2 firms had higher retention rates in general (as revealed by the control group employees), which might explain the smaller effects for this round.

Firmwide Effects

- **Achieve did not increase firmwide retention rates.**

As discussed in the section "Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program," Achieve staff eventually provided services to all interested employees at the firms, not just to those in the research sample. Table 15 presents effects on retention for all workers who were employed at the firm during the quarter that it entered the study.[63]

The top two panels present results for all employees at the firm, and the bottom two panels give results for low-wage employees (or those whose quarterly earnings suggest that they earned less than $13 per hour at full-time work). The estimates show no significant effects on retention from quarter to quarter for all workers or for low-wage workers. For example, among all low-wage workers at the control group firms in the quarter of random assignment, 82.6 percent still worked at the firm one quarter later. The comparable figure for the Achieve group firms is 81.3 percent.

Although Achieve began making its services available to all workers at the firms, some of these workers may have joined their firm several months after it entered the study.

[63]This analysis was estimated over 34 of the 44 firms, since several firms, being part of a larger parent company, could not be uniquely identified using the UI federal employer identification number.

For this reason, the table also presents retention rates from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3. Although Achieve did not affect retention into Quarter 2, this comparison is nonexperimental, since the subgroup is defined by a post-random assignment outcome (employment at the firm in Quarter 2). Nonetheless, the results show no effects on this later measure of retention.

* * *

Achieve had few effects on retention or employment more generally for the full sample of low-wage workers. However, it did increase short-term job retention for a few groups characterized by relatively high turnover. Rates of employee interaction with the program were not as high as expected but were high enough to conclude that the Achieve model got a fair test. Achieve was essentially designed to affect retention problems that were driven by workers' personal circumstances, such as family instability, transportation problems, and difficulties interacting with coworkers. The Office Hours (and, to some extent, the Lunch and Learn sessions) were designed to help address these problems.

Job retention is low for low-wage workers in general, and personal and family circumstances are undoubtedly important factors affecting their ability to stay employed. However, in an industry such as long-term care, where high turnover is systemic, its causes go beyond the individual worker. In fact, recent research has identified a range of workplace factors that affect retention in nursing homes, such as the lack of autonomy, low pay, physically and emotionally demanding work, and chronic staff shortages. The Achieve model was not designed to change the broader work environment, which is perhaps why it was able to increase retention for a few high-turnover groups (whose retention problems probably also stem from personal circumstances) but not for the broader group of low-wage workers.

It is difficult to predict whether Achieve would have had bigger effects had it operated in another industry. (Although Achieve did recruit two manufacturing firms into the study, 95 percent of the firms were nursing homes.) What is clear is that it was difficult to integrate the program into the nursing home work environment, where staff have little time to leave the floor to participate in services, and that the Achieve model by itself was not enough to increase retention.

Box 4: Firm-Level and Individual-Level Factors Associated with Turnover

Firm-level factors. The retention rate for low-wage workers ranged from 24 percent to 81 percent for the firms in the study.* The table below presents the association of several firm characteristics with this retention rate. The first column shows that firms that pay more, have a union, and are larger have higher retention rates. However, in a model that accounts for all factors at once, only employee earnings has a statistically significant effect. Larger firms and those with unions appear to reduce turnover primarily because they pay higher wages. There are also other firm characteristics that may be predictive of firm retention — such as management and opportunities for advancement at the firm — that the model is not able to capture.

Characteristics of firms that predict retention rate

	Bivariate Regression	Multivariate Regression
	Parameter Estimate	Parameter Estimate
Average quarterly earnings at the firm	0.018 ***	0.013 ***
Percentage of workers unionized	0.127	-0.092
Firm has unionized employees	8.186 *	6.389
Firm size	0.026 **	0.008
Prior turnover	-0.319 ***	-0.141
Adjusted R^2		0.3944
Sample size		39

Employee-level factors. Overall, 48 percent of sample members were still working at their random assignment firm in the fifth quarter of follow-up. The table below presents the association of several sample member characteristics with this measure of retention. Older workers and female workers are more likely to stay, while those recently hired are more likely to leave. In addition to factors already discussed, those with higher hourly wages are more likely to stay, and health staff are more likely to leave.

Characteristics of sample members that predict working in Quarter 5

	Bivariate Regression	Multivariate Regression
	Parameter Estimate	Parameter Estimate
Female	0.087 *	0.152 ***
Age 25-40	-0.019	-0.023
Age 41 or older	0.147 ***	0.126 **
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.075 *	-0.042
Hispanic or other ethnicity	-0.072	-0.021
Number of children	-0.023	-0.007
No high school diploma or GED	-0.068	-0.069
Health staff	-0.079 *	-0.135 ***
Never married	-0.050	0.031
Married and living with spouse	0.045	0.057
Hourly wage between $7.50 and $9.49	0.063	0.130 **
Hourly wage greater than $9.50	0.097	0.163 **
Began work at firm within 90 days prior to random assignment	-0.142 ***	-0.131 ***
Adjusted R^2		0.0484
Sample size		697

SOURCES: Cleveland baseline and administrative records. NOTE: Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** =1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

*The firm retention rate of low-wage workers was calculated as the number of low-wage workers still at the firm in Quarter 5 divided by the number of low-wage employees at the firm in Quarter 1.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 14
Impacts on Retention for Selected Subgroups

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Hired within 3 months of random assignment					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	90.5	83.9	6.6	0.127	0.143
90 days	73.2	66.9	6.3	0.503	0.726
180 days	56.3	52.3	4.0	0.543	0.913
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	28.6	27.3	1.3	0.116	0.155
Through Day 90	78.0	72.0	6.0	0.133	0.202
Through Day 180	134.8	125.6	9.2	0.391	0.407
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	96.0	99.3	-3.3	0.176	0.712
Quarter 2	85.0	80.9	4.1	0.391	0.941
Quarter 3	61.1	60.2	0.9	0.991	0.820
Quarter 4	48.0	48.8	-0.8	0.892	0.246
Quarter 5	38.4	42.9	-4.5	0.448	0.209
Sample size (total = 331)	200	131			
Hired before 3 months of random assignment					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	92.9	93.8	-0.9	0.842	0.143
90 days	82.9	79.6	3.3	0.571	0.726
180 days	72.4	67.5	4.9	0.434	0.913
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	28.9	28.9	-0.1	0.952	0.155
Through Day 90	81.3	80.9	0.5	0.837	0.202
Through Day 180	149.9	149.7	0.1	0.981	0.407

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	98.2	99.5	-1.3	0.203	0.712
Quarter 2	90.1	85.6	4.5	0.215	0.941
Quarter 3	76.3	73.5	2.8	0.620	0.820
Quarter 4	69.1	60.4	8.7	0.142	0.246
Quarter 5	57.6	51.3	6.3	0.415	0.209
Sample size (total = 362)	178	184			
Nurses' aides					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	93.0	88.2	4.8	0.165	0.541
90 days	77.6	73.4	4.1	0.398	0.748
180 days	61.4	58.6	2.8	0.597	0.387
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	29.1	27.8	1.3 *	0.052	0.136
Through Day 90	80.2	75.8	4.4	0.105	0.626
Through Day 180	142.0	135.7	6.3	0.352	0.873
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	98.3	99.3	-1.0	0.340	0.062
Quarter 2	90.0	84.6	5.5 *	0.095	0.821
Quarter 3	69.5	65.1	4.4	0.344	0.948
Quarter 4	54.6	52.8	1.7	0.755	0.488
Quarter 5	44.1	46.5	-2.5	0.591	0.373
Sample size (total = 489)	265	224			
Other job title					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	91.3	90.2	1.1	0.807	0.541
90 days	80.8	74.0	6.9	0.334	0.748
180 days	74.4	62.5	11.9	0.184	0.387

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	28.5	28.9	-0.3	0.734	0.136
Through Day 90	80.3	78.2	2.1	0.599	0.626
Through Day 180	147.6	143.2	4.4	0.654	0.873
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	93.2	100.9	-7.6 *	0.059	0.062
Quarter 2	83.3	79.5	3.8	0.574	0.821
Quarter 3	71.7	67.9	3.8	0.603	0.948
Quarter 4	68.5	59.0	9.5	0.263	0.488
Quarter 5	56.6	48.8	7.8	0.332	0.373
Sample size (total = 207)	115	92			
Single mothers					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	91.3	88.0	3.3	0.491	0.644
90 days	79.1	71.2	7.8	0.209	0.716
180 days	61.9	49.5	12.4	0.117	0.245
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	28.8	28.0	0.8	0.317	0.813
Through Day 90	79.9	74.6	5.3	0.142	0.718
Through Day 180	141.9	131.4	10.5	0.240	0.655
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	97.7	99.8	-2.1	0.176	0.538
Quarter 2	88.1	82.9	5.1	0.295	0.768
Quarter 3	69.8	61.8	8.0	0.229	0.427
Quarter 4	55.7	43.4	12.3	0.116	0.216
Quarter 5	43.8	39.2	4.5	0.564	0.439
Sample size (total = 277)	161	116			

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Not single mothers					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	94.3	88.2	6.2 *	0.074	0.644
90 days	78.9	74.0	4.9	0.306	0.716
180 days	67.6	66.0	1.5	0.778	0.245
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	29.1	28.0	1.1 *	0.057	0.813
Through Day 90	80.9	77.1	3.7	0.137	0.718
Through Day 180	146.0	140.7	5.3	0.418	0.655
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	96.1	99.8	-3.8 *	0.094	0.538
Quarter 2	89.0	82.0	7.0 *	0.068	0.768
Quarter 3	69.8	69.1	0.7	0.984	0.427
Quarter 4	61.2	61.5	-0.3	0.842	0.216
Quarter 5	50.4	52.9	-2.5	0.613	0.439
Sample size (total = 419)	220	199			
High-turnover firms[a]					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	94.9	84.7	10.2 **	0.031	0.310
90 days	80.2	71.1	9.1	0.216	0.298
180 days	63.0	52.7	10.3	0.130	0.194
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	29.0	27.4	1.6 *	0.058	0.802
Through Day 90	81.2	73.8	7.4 **	0.048	0.281
Through Day 180	144.8	131.6	13.2	0.187	0.261

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	99.2	99.4	-0.2	0.808	0.325
Quarter 2	90.7	79.1	11.7 **	0.029	0.180
Quarter 3	69.6	63.2	6.4	0.403	0.323
Quarter 4	56.4	46.2	10.2	0.176	0.127
Quarter 5	40.1	42.1	-2.0	0.740	0.773
Sample size (total = 288)	157	131			
Low-turnover firms[a]					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	95.1	90.5	4.6	0.235	0.310
90 days	79.9	80.6	-0.7	0.964	0.298
180 days	66.0	70.0	-3.9	0.767	0.194
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	29.4	28.1	1.3	0.132	0.802
Through Day 90	81.8	79.2	2.6	0.415	0.281
Through Day 180	146.2	147.7	-1.5	0.942	0.261
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	96.2	99.8	-3.5	0.181	0.325
Quarter 2	87.4	84.4	3.0	0.554	0.180
Quarter 3	70.4	74.3	-3.9	0.596	0.323
Quarter 4	59.3	66.1	-6.8	0.490	0.127
Quarter 5	51.8	56.5	-4.7	0.535	0.773
Sample size (total = 273)	152	121			

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Hourly wage less than $9.00						
Still at firm (%)						
30 days	93.8	82.3	11.6	***	0.008	0.003
90 days	80.5	68.2	12.3	**	0.049	0.133
180 days	66.1	55.1	11.0		0.141	0.488
Average days worked						
Through Day 30	28.9	27.1	1.8	**	0.026	0.014
Through Day 90	81.2	72.0	9.2	**	0.010	0.016
Through Day 180	145.9	129.2	16.7	**	0.050	0.094
Still at firm (UI data) (%)						
Quarter of random assignment	94.6	100.1	-5.6		0.119	0.099
Quarter 2	87.4	78.0	9.4	*	0.063	0.264
Quarter 3	70.7	64.5	6.2		0.425	0.585
Quarter 4	60.6	52.7	7.9		0.309	0.504
Quarter 5	48.6	45.3	3.3		0.716	0.740
Sample size (total = 360)	206	154				
Hourly wage equal to or greater than $9.00						
Still at firm (%)						
30 days	91.0	94.9	-3.9		0.282	0.003
90 days	77.6	77.2	0.4		0.941	0.133
180 days	66.5	62.1	4.5		0.466	0.488
Average days worked						
Through Day 30	28.7	29.2	-0.5		0.395	0.014
Through Day 90	79.5	80.4	-0.9		0.732	0.016
Through Day 180	143.1	144.3	-1.3		0.862	0.094

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Still at firm (UI data) (%)						
Quarter of random assignment	99.6	99.2	0.4		0.682	0.099
Quarter 2	89.3	87.5	1.9		0.662	0.264
Quarter 3	69.1	68.0	1.2		0.847	0.585
Quarter 4	57.3	56.0	1.2		0.847	0.504
Quarter 5	48.0	48.2	-0.2		0.972	0.740
Sample size (total = 337)	175	162				
Younger than age 30						
Still at firm (%)						
30 days	96.1	86.2	9.9	***	0.006	0.015
90 days	79.9	69.3	10.6	**	0.048	0.153
180 days	62.0	55.8	6.2		0.273	0.873
Average days worked						
Through Day 30	29.4	27.4	2.0	***	0.005	0.009
Through Day 90	81.9	74.6	7.3	**	0.013	0.079
Through Day 180	144.3	130.9	13.5	*	0.059	0.143
Still at firm (UI data) (%)						
Quarter of random assignment	98.0	99.7	-1.8		0.154	0.475
Quarter 2	92.6	80.4	12.3	***	0.005	0.017
Quarter 3	70.2	59.8	10.4	*	0.064	0.057
Quarter 4	54.3	48.5	5.9		0.339	0.613
Quarter 5	43.9	42.1	1.8		0.750	0.475
Sample size (total = 344)	176	168				

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	P-Value for Difference Between Subgroups
Age 30 or older					
Still at firm (%)					
30 days	89.7	91.2	-1.6	0.649	0.015
90 days	78.1	77.5	0.5	0.918	0.153
180 days	68.5	63.6	5.0	0.385	0.873
Average days worked					
Through Day 30	28.5	28.8	-0.3	0.644	0.009
Through Day 90	78.9	78.4	0.5	0.852	0.079
Through Day 180	144.1	144.6	-0.6	0.933	0.143
Still at firm (UI data) (%)					
Quarter of random assignment	96.0	99.5	-3.6	0.154	0.475
Quarter 2	84.4	85.7	-1.4	0.750	0.017
Quarter 3	69.7	73.5	-3.7	0.478	0.057
Quarter 4	62.9	61.3	1.6	0.822	0.613
Quarter 5	50.6	54.6	-4.1	0.435	0.475
Sample size (total = 352)	205	147			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland and firm-reported employment verification forms.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Low-turnover firms have a turnover rate of less than 35 percent, and high-turnover firms have a turnover rate of 35 percent or more. Four pairs of firms were excluded because they included a high-turnover firm and a low-turnover firm.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 15

Impacts on Employee Retention at Participating Employers, Research and Nonresearch Employees

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
All employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	85.6	86.1	-0.5	0.775
Quarter 3	75.4	76.7	-1.3	0.653
Quarter 4	68.9	70.9	-2.0	0.526
Quarter 5	63.2	65.5	-2.3	0.522
Sample size (total = 10,824)	4,148	6,676		
All employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	85.9	86.6	-0.7	0.700
Sample size (total = 10,945)	4,152	6,793		
All low-wage employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	81.3	82.6	-1.3	0.629
Quarter 3	69.7	72.5	-2.7	0.476
Quarter 4	63.1	66.4	-3.2	0.442
Quarter 5	56.9	60.6	-3.8	0.396
Sample size (total = 8,209)	3,116	5,093		
All low-wage employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	85.7	87.6	-1.9	0.411
Sample size (total = 6,705)	2,469	4,236		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The data are weighted to give each firm equal weight in the analysis.

Five pairs of firms were excluded because data were not available.

Appendix A

Supplementary Tables for “Introduction”

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.1

Description of ERA Models

State	Location	Target Group	Primary Service Strategies
Advancement projects			
Illinois	Cook County (Chicago)	TANF recipients who have worked at least 30 hours per week for at least 6 consecutive months	A combination of services to promote career advancement (targeted job search assistance, education and training, assistance in identifying and accessing career ladders, etc.)
California	Riverside County Phase 2 (Work Plus)	Newly employed TANF recipients working at least 20 hours per week	Operated by the county welfare department; connects employed TANF recipients to education and training activities
California	Riverside County Phase 2 (Training Focused)	Newly employed TANF recipients working at least 20 hours per week	Operated by the county workforce agency; connects employed TANF recipients to education and training activities with the option of reducing or eliminating their work hours
Placement and retention (hard-to-employ) projects			
Minnesota	Hennepin County (Minneapolis)	Long-term TANF recipients who were unable to find jobs through standard welfare-to-work services	In-depth family assessment; low caseloads; intensive monitoring and follow-up; emphasis on placement into unsubsidized employment or supported work with referrals to education and training, counseling, and other support services
Oregon	Portland	Individuals who are cycling back onto TANF and those who have lost jobs	Team-based case management, job search/job readiness components, intensive retention and follow-up services, mental health and substance abuse services for those identified with these barriers, supportive and emergency services

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1 (continued)

State	Location	Target Group	Primary Service Strategies
Placement and retention (hard-to-employ) projects (continued)			
New York	New York City PRIDE (Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment)	TANF recipients whose employability is limited by physical or mental health problems	Two main tracks: (1) Vocational Rehabilitation, where clients with severe medical problems receive unpaid work experience, job search/job placement and retention services tailored to account for medical problems; (2) Work Based Education, where those with less severe medical problems participate in unpaid work experience, job placement services, and adult basic education
New York	New York City Substance Abuse (substance abuse case management)	TANF recipients with a substance abuse problem	Intensive case management to promote participation in substance abuse treatment, links to mental health and other needed services
Projects with mixed goals			
California	Los Angeles County EJC (Enhanced Job Club)	TANF recipients who are required to search for employment	Job search workshops promoting a step-down method designed to help participants find a job that is in line with their careers of interest
California	Los Angeles County (Reach for Success program)	Newly employed TANF recipients working at least 32 hours per week	Stabilization/retention services, followed by a combination of services to promote advancement: education and training, career assessment, targeted job development, etc.
California	Riverside County PASS (Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency program)	Individuals who left TANF due to earned income	Family-based support services delivered by community-based organizations to promote retention and advancement

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1 (continued)

State	Location	Target Group	Primary Service Strategies
Projects with mixed goals (continued)			
Ohio	Cleveland	Low-wage workers with specific employers making under 200% of poverty who have been in their current jobs less than 6 months	Regular on-site office hours for counseling/case management; Lunch & Learn meetings for social support and presentations; and supervisory training for employer supervisors
Oregon	Eugene	Newly employed TANF applicants and recipients working 20 hours per week or more; mostly single mothers who were underemployed	Emphasis on work-based and education/training-based approaches to advancement and on frequent contact with clients; assistance tailored to clients' career interests and personal circumstances
Oregon	Medford	Newly employed TANF recipients and employed participants of the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training program and the Employment Related Day Care program; mostly single mothers	Emphasis on work-based and on education/training-based approaches to advancement and on frequent contact with clients; assistance tailored to clients' career interests and personal circumstances; access to public benefits purposefully divorced from the delivery of retention and advancement services
Oregon	Salem	TANF applicants	Job search assistance combined with career planning; once employed, education and training, employer linkages to promote retention and advancement
South Carolina	6 rural counties in the Pee Dee Region	Individuals who left TANF (for any reason) between 10/97 and 12/00	Individualized case management with a focus on reemployment, support services, job search, career counseling, education and training, and use of individualized incentives
Texas	Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston	TANF applicants and recipients	Individualized team-based case management; monthly stipends of $200 for those who maintain employment and complete activities related to employment plan

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.2

Selected Characteristics of Firms, by Research Group

Cleveland

Characteristic	Achieve Group	Control Group	Total	
Industry (%)				
Health	95.5	95.5	95.5	
Manufacturing	4.5	4.5	4.5	
Average number of employees	212	271	241	
Prior turnover rate	38.7	40.0	39.4	
Prior turnover rate (%)				
30 percent or less	31.8	40.9	36.4	
31 percent to 50 percent	40.9	31.8	36.4	
More than 50	27.3	27.3	27.3	
Employees meeting study eligibility (%)	52.4	48.6	50.5	
Has Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (%)	68.2	63.6	65.9	
Has unionized employees (%)	22.7	28.6	25.6	
Percentage of employees unionized among firms with unionized employees	53.2	51.4	52.2	
Recruitment methods for entry-level employees (%)				
Newspaper ads	86.4	100.0	93.2	[*]
Employee referrals	95.5	86.4	90.9	
Walk-ins/Help Wanted signs	86.4	86.4	86.4	
Community agency	27.3	18.2	22.7	
Temp agency	13.6	13.6	13.6	
Welfare department	13.6	4.5	9.1	
State employment agency	4.5	9.1	6.8	
Other	18.2	4.5	11.4	
Sample size			44	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Cleveland's Employee and Employer data list.

NOTES: Brackets in the statistical significance column indicate that 20 percent or more of the cells had 5 percent or less of the data and that, thus, the test of statistical significance may not be valid.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.3

Selected Characteristics of Sample Members, by Research Group

Cleveland

Characteristic	Achieve Group	Control Group	Total	
Female (%)	80.6	83.5	81.9	
Race/ethnicity (%)				
Hispanic	5.8	5.7	5.7	
Black, non-Hispanic	59.3	52.8	56.4	
White, non-Hispanic	31.5	38.0	34.4	
Other	3.4	3.5	3.4	
Age (%)				
25 years or younger	31.2	38.4	34.5	*
26 to 40 years	39.6	38.4	39.1	*
41 years or older	29.1	23.2	26.4	*
High school diploma/GED or higher (%)	71.7	76.3	73.7	
Number of children in household (%)				
None	38.1	42.4	40.0	
1	25.7	22.6	24.3	
2 or more	36.2	35.0	35.7	
Age of youngest child in household (%)				
Less than 3 years	29.7	32.6	30.9	
3 to 5 years	22.5	21.5	22.1	
6 years or older	47.9	45.9	47.0	
Marital status (%)				
Never married	54.5	55.2	54.8	
Married, living with spouse	22.6	21.6	22.2	
Separated, divorced, or widowed	22.9	23.2	23.0	
Job title (%)				
Health staff (for example, nurse's aide)	69.7	70.9	70.3	
Building services (for example, janitor, housekeeper)	13.2	10.1	11.8	
Food staff	8.2	9.5	8.8	
Other	8.9	9.5	9.2	
Hourly wage (%)				
Less than $7.50	13.1	12.0	12.6	**
$7.50 to 9.49	55.4	47.2	51.6	**
$9.50 and higher	31.5	40.8	35.7	**
Average hourly wage ($)	8.90	9.08	8.98	*
Hours worked per week (%)				
Less than 32	7.7	9.5	8.5	
32 or more	92.3	90.5	91.5	

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Characteristic	ERA Group	Control Group	Total
Earnings in year before random assignment ($)	11,049	11,297	11,161
Employed in quarter before random assignment (%)	91.9	94.6	93.1
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Cleveland's Employee and Employer data list.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.4

Selected Characteristics of Nurses' Aides and Other Jobs

Cleveland

Characteristic	Nurses' Aides	Other Jobs
Female (%)	90.4	62.3
Race/ethnicity (%)		
Hispanic	4.9	7.7
Black, non-Hispanic	59.5	49.3
White, non-Hispanic	31.7	40.6
Other	3.9	2.4
Age (%)		
25 years or younger	37.5	27.5
26 to 40 years	40.2	36.7
41 years or older	22.3	35.7
High school diploma/GED or higher (%)	75.7	69.1
Number of children in household (%)		
None	36.7	47.6
1	24.0	25.2
2 or more	39.3	27.2
Age of youngest child in household (%)		
Less than 3 years	32.4	26.9
3 to 5 years	23.9	16.7
6 years or older	43.7	56.5
Marital status (%)		
Never married	57.2	49.5
Married, living with spouse	19.1	29.1
Separated, divorced, or widowed	23.8	21.4
Job title (%)		
Health staff (for example, nurse's aide)	100.0	NA
Building services (for example, janitor, housekeeper)	NA	39.6
Food staff	NA	29.5
Other	NA	30.9
Hourly wage (%)		
Less than $7.50	5.1	30.4
$7.50 to 9.49	50.9	53.1
$9.50 and higher	44.0	16.4
Average hourly wage ($)	$9.29	$8.25
Hours worked per week (%)		
Less than 32	8.5	8.7
32 or more	91.5	91.3
Earnings in year before random assignment ($)	12,000	9,197

(continued)

Appendix Table A.4 (continued)

Characteristic	Nurses' Aides	Other Jobs
Employed in quarter before random assignment (%)	93.0	93.2
Sample size	489	207

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Cleveland's Employee and Employer data list.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.5

Content Outline for Achieve Supervisory Training

I. Introduction
- Meet and Greet
- Objectives for Training
- Team Building Exercise
- Assessment of Work Style

II. Managing Diversity
- Bridges Out of Poverty, by Ruby Payne
- Case Study – Sally
- HHS Study: "Recent Findings on Frontline Long-Term Care Workers"
- Home vs. Work Beliefs
  - Unspoken Rules of the Workplace
  - Personal/Social Beliefs Survey
  - Work Ethics & Rules

III. Workplace Culture
- Who Are Your Workers?
- Changing Face of the Workplace and Its Implications
- Generational Comparisons and Motivators
- 50 Ways to Motivate Your Staff
- Dale Carnegie Study Findings on What Motivates Workers
- Team Work Activity
- Leadership vs. Management

IV. Cost of Turnover
- Statistical Information: "National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform"
- Discussion: Ways to Increase Employee Retention

V. Communicating Effectively
- Conflict Cycle
- Different Types of Voices Speech
- Improving Listening Skills
- Six Steps of Giving Feedback
- Communication Styles & Anger Styles
- Mediating Conflict
- Stress Management Techniques
- Goal Setting & Employee Evaluation

VI. Summary & Evaluation
- Next Steps: Follow-up Session and "Homework"
- Obtaining Continuing Education Certificate
- Additional Handouts: Hiring the Right People & Resources Use in the Training

---

Appendix B

Supplementary Tables for “Implementation of the Cleveland ERA Program”

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.1

Rates of Participation in Different Achieve Services Within Four to Seven Months of Random Assignment, Rounds 1 and 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Round 1 (%)	Round 2 (%)	Total (%)
Ever participated in any Achieve service (%)	63.5	74.6	68.5
Ever attended an Office Hours session (%)	36.1	53.8	44.1
Ever attended a Lunch and Learn session (%)	44.2	53.8	48.6
Ever referred to specific services by a case manager (%)[a]	30.3	55.5	41.7
Ever had an informal contact (%)	36.5	64.2	49.1
Sample size (total = 381)	208	173	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on program participation data provided by Towards Employment.

NOTES: Round 1 rates include data from Wave 1 and Wave 2. The follow-up period for Wave 1 is approximately six and a half months. The follow-up period for Wave 2 is approximately four and a half months.

Round 2 rates include data from Wave 3 and Wave 4. The follow-up period for Wave 3 is approximately six and a half months. The follow-up period for Wave 4 is approximately four and a half months.

[a]Specific services included information and referral, health care-eye care, emergency assistance-clothing, emergency assistance-testing, transportation-bus tickets, and incentives.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.2

Intensity of Participation in Different Achieve Services Among Those Who Participated Within Four to Seven Months of Random Assignment, Rounds 1 and 2

Cleveland

Distribution of Contact	Round 1 (%)	Round 2 (%)	Total (%)
Number of times participated in any Achieve service			
1	24.2	11.6	18.0
2-4	41.7	34.9	38.3
5 or more	34.1	53.5	43.7
Sample size	132	129	261
Number of Office Hour sessions attended			
1	50.7	37.2	42.9
2-4	40.0	39.4	40.5
5 or more	9.3	23.4	16.7
Sample size	75	94	168
Number of Lunch and Learn sessions attended			
1	23.9	36.6	30.8
2-4	47.8	37.6	42.2
5 or more	28.3	25.8	27.0
Sample size	92	93	185
Number of referrals to supportive services			
1	57.1	31.3	41.5
2-4	41.3	58.3	62.6
5 or more	1.6	10.4	7.5
Sample size	63	96	159

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on program participation data provided by Towards Employment.

NOTES: Round 1 rates include data from Wave 1 and Wave 2. The follow-up period for Wave 1 is approximately six and a half months. The follow-up period for Wave 2 is approximately four and a half months.

Round 2 rates include data from Wave 3 and Wave 4. The follow-up period for Wave 3 is approximately six and a half months. The follow-up period for Wave 4 is approximately four and a half months.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.3

Extent of Contact Between Achieve Advisers and Clients

Cleveland

Outcome	Round 1	Round 2
Percentage of work time spent in contact with		
Any client	13.9	23.8
Working clients	13.9	23.5
Nonworking clients	NA	0.3
Average number of client contacts (per case manager)		
Any client	20.0	55.5
Working clients	20.0	54.4
Nonworking clients	NA	1.1
Average number of client contacts per day (per case manager)		
Any client	2.0	5.5
Working clients	2.0	5.4
Nonworking clients	NA	0.1
Number of case managers time-studied	3	4

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA Time Study.

NOTES: The Round 1 time study was administered July 14-27, 2003, and September 29 - October 12, 2003. The Round 2 time study was administered July 19 - August 1, 2004.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.4

Topics Covered During Contact with Achieve Clients

Cleveland

Outcome	Round 1	Round 2
Percentage of all client contacts, which included at least some discussion of:[a]		
Initial client engagement[b]	3.4	6.3
Supportive service eligibility and issues	6.7	3.4
General check-in	44.9	28.3
Screening/assessment	0.0	0.4
On-the-job issues/problems	14.8	18.2
Personal or family issues	27.0	40.1
Specific employment and training options	16.2	13.3
Career goals and advancement	4.8	8.6
Reemployment	1.3	3.4
Enrollment in government assistance and ongoing eligiblity issues	0.0	0.9
Assistance with the EITC	0.0	0.4
Schedule/referral for screening/assessment	0.0	0.9
Schedule/referral for job search or other employment services	0.0	1.0
Schedule/referral for education or training	10.5	1.1
Schedule/referral for services to address special or personal issues	13.9	20.7
Number of case managers time-studied	3	4

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA Time Study.

NOTES:
[a]These percentages will add up to more than 100 percent, since more than one activity category or topic could be recorded for each client contact.
[b]Each client contact may cover one or more topic activities but is only counted once per activity category.

Appendix C

Notes for Tables and Figures Displaying Results Calculated with Administrative Records Data

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Dollar averages include zero values for sample members who were not employed or were not receiving TANF or food stamps.

The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control group arose by chance.

Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering.

NA = not applicable.

Appendix D

Notes for Tables and Figures Displaying Results Calculated with Responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates comparisons that are nonexperimental. These measures are computed only for sample members who were employed. Since there may be differences in the characteristics of program group and control group members who were employed, any differences in outcomes may not necessarily be attributable to the ERA program. Statistical tests were not performed.

Dollar averages include zero values for sample members who were not employed or were not receiving TANF or food stamps.

The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control group arose by chance.

Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering.

NA = not applicable.

Appendix E

Impacts on Participation and Employment, by Round

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.1

Impacts on Contacts with Program Staff in Year 1, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Any contacts with case manager/employment program since random assignment[a] (%)	48.0	27.7	20.3 **	0.014
Average number of contacts with staff/case manager	6.4	2.9	3.5 *	0.097
In person	4.2	1.2	3.0 *	0.062
By telephone	2.1	1.7	0.5	0.630
Talked with staff/case manager in past 4 weeks (%)	14.3	7.3	7.0	0.223
Ever met with staff/case manager (%)	29.2	15.8	13.5 *	0.061
At home	2.5	2.4	0.2	0.938
At workplace	19.6	6.6	13.0 **	0.048
At staff/case manager's office	6.6	7.4	-0.8	0.821
At school/training program	8.5	5.2	3.3	0.377
At other places	3.0	1.0	2.0	0.349
Staff/case manager talked with respondent's employer (%)				
Never	82.8	90.7	-8.0	0.131
Once or twice	11.1	4.9	6.1	0.135
More than twice	3.4	3.2	0.2	0.926
Don't know	2.8	1.2	1.6	0.492
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix C.

[a]This measure includes respondents who said "yes" on the client survey to either of the following questions: "Have you had any experiences with programs or organizations that help people find or keep jobs since your random assignment date?" "Since your random assignment date, have you had any contact, in-person or by phone, with a case manager or a staff person from an employment, welfare or other agency?" However, subsequent survey questions regarding the number and location of contacts were asked only of respondents who said "yes" to the latter question. Therefore, there are some respondents who reported contact but were not asked about the number and location of contacts.

[b]Employment is calculated using the ERA 12-Month Survey and includes those who reported employment since random assignment. It includes formal employment and "odd jobs."

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.2

Impacts on Contacts with Program Staff in Year 1, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Any contacts with case manager/employment program since random assignment[a] (%)	55.7	33.9	21.8 **	0.024
Average number of contacts with staff/case manager	7.3	3.3	4.0	0.106
In person	5.3	1.6	3.7 **	0.046
By telephone	2.0	1.7	0.3	-1.622
Talked with staff/case manager in past 4 weeks (%)	18.0	10.4	7.6	0.156
Ever met with staff/case manager (%)	47.4	31.8	15.6	0.127
At home	1.4	2.0	-0.6	0.748
At workplace	30.9	10.7	20.2 **	0.012
At staff/case manager's office	25.6	26.8	-1.2	0.851
At school/training program	8.7	10.5	-1.8	0.690
At other places	4.5	0.1	4.4	0.164
Staff/case manager talked with respondent's employer (%)				
Never	85.8	92.3	-6.5	0.171
Once or twice	5.6	7.0	-1.4	0.693
More than twice	6.3	0.8	5.5 *	0.070
Don't know	2.4	-0.1	2.5	0.179
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]This measure includes respondents who said "yes" on the client survey to either of the following questions: "Have you had any experiences with programs or organizations that help people find or keep jobs since your random assignment date?" "Since your random assignment date, have you had any contact, in-person or by phone, with a case manager or a staff person from an employment, welfare or other agency?" However, subsequent survey questions regarding the number and location of contacts were asked only of respondents who said "yes" to the latter question. Therefore, there are some respondents who reported contact but were not asked about the number and location of contacts.

[b]Employment is calculated using the ERA 12-Month Survey and includes those who reported employment since random assignment. It includes formal employment and "odd jobs."

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.3

Impacts on Areas in Which Respondents Received Help, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Received help with support services	21.3	19.5	1.8		0.717
Finding or paying for child care	17.5	16.1	1.4		0.745
Finding or paying for transportation	6.6	9.1	-2.5		0.507
Received help with basic needs	27.8	34.9	-7.1		0.289
Housing problems	15.2	9.0	6.3		0.293
Access to medical treatment	17.7	25.5	-7.8		0.210
Financial emergency	8.2	11.7	-3.5		0.470
Received help with other benefits	41.6	42.9	-1.3		0.846
Getting Medicaid	31.5	33.4	-2.0		0.758
Getting food stamps	32.8	28.4	4.4		0.462
Getting Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	23.6	19.6	3.9		0.489
Received help with job preparation	24.5	18.5	6.0		0.341
Enrolling in job readiness or training	16.4	12.0	4.5		0.390
Looking for a job	18.0	12.0	6.0		0.279
Finding clothes, tools, or supplies for work	11.2	8.3	3.0		0.547
Employer provided an Employee Assistance Program	40.8	39.4	1.4		0.843
Ever used an Employee Assistance Program	14.6	2.6	12.0	**	0.013
Received help with retention/advancement services	41.8	30.4	11.4		0.126
Finding a better job while working	8.1	7.5	0.6		0.875
Enrolling in life skills classes while working	20.1	4.2	15.9	***	0.006
Career assessment	11.6	8.7	2.9		0.504
Dealing with problems on the job	17.2	10.2	7.0		0.183
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	13.6	9.9	3.7		0.459
Exploring long-term career goals[a]	19.5	10.2	9.3		0.106
Obtaining certification or additional training[a]	19.5	19.9	-0.4		0.942
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]This was measured only in the Cleveland site.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.4

Impacts on Areas in Which Respondents Received Help, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Received help with support services	18.2	12.9	5.3	0.268
Finding or paying for child care	16.5	10.5	6.0	0.189
Finding or paying for transportation	4.6	4.6	0.0	0.898
Received help with basic needs	21.1	21.3	-0.2	0.975
Housing problems	5.3	11.8	-6.6	0.122
Access to medical treatment	16.9	9.9	7.0	0.180
Financial emergency	4.4	5.6	-1.2	0.713
Received help with other benefits	42.2	34.4	7.8	0.262
Getting Medicaid	27.5	25.5	2.0	0.728
Getting food stamps	22.1	20.9	1.2	0.831
Getting Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	22.2	21.8	0.4	0.947
Received help with job preparation	13.2	8.0	5.2	0.243
Enrolling in job readiness or training	10.1	2.6	7.5 *	0.054
Looking for a job	4.0	3.5	0.5	0.697
Finding clothes, tools, or supplies for work	7.1	1.6	5.6	0.160
Employer provided an Employee Assistance Program	44.9	38.5	6.4	0.404
Ever used an Employee Assistance Program	13.6	6.6	7.0	0.214
Received help with retention/advancement services	33.8	26.1	7.7	0.261
Finding a better job while working	4.1	0.6	3.5	0.225
Enrolling in life skills classes while working	16.3	-0.2	16.6 ***	0.002
Career assessment	6.2	2.6	3.6	0.254
Dealing with problems on the job	18.4	5.5	12.9 **	0.029
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	8.5	3.6	5.0	0.319
Exploring long-term career goals[a]	14.1	7.8	6.4	0.201
Obtaining certification or additional training[a]	13.0	14.5	-1.6	0.748
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]This was measured only in the Cleveland site.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.5

Impacts on Selected Measures of Job Satisfaction, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage who agree with each statement:[a]				
My supervisor makes sure that I know what is expected of me	68.1	77.6	-9.5	0.151
My supervisor gives me the information I need to do my job well	69.4	77.9	-8.6	0.247
My supervisor is a good role model and provides me with opportunities and guidance	50.3	67.2	-16.9 **	0.038
My supervisor creates a team atmosphere	57.4	70.5	-13.1 *	0.085
My supervisor praises and gives helpful feedback for improvement	61.7	72.7	-11.0	0.130
My supervisor supports advancement efforts	46.3	63.0	-16.7 **	0.042
My supervisor treats me in a respectful manner	67.2	80.4	-13.1 *	0.066
I am provided with the equipment needed to do my job well	65.9	75.7	-9.8	0.283
My workplace has enough people to get job done	41.9	60.2	-18.3 **	0.025
I am given a reasonable workload and enough time to do it well	59.9	65.9	-6.0	0.404
I have a say in how my job is done	63.1	71.1	-8.0	0.267
I have someone at work who I feel will speak up for me	58.5	67.5	-9.1	0.212
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]Percentage reporting that they agreed "a lot" or "a little" with the statement.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.6

Impacts on Selected Measures of Job Satisfaction, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage who agree with each statement:[a]				
My supervisor makes sure that I know what is expected of me	73.5	74.2	-0.7	0.853
My supervisor gives me the information I need to do my job well	74.0	74.6	-0.6	0.874
My supervisor is a good role model and provides me with opportunities and guidance	61.4	66.9	-5.5	0.441
My supervisor creates a team atmosphere	68.9	68.0	0.9	0.929
My supervisor praises and gives helpful feedback for improvement	59.8	68.7	-8.9	0.253
My supervisor supports advancement efforts	49.3	60.3	-11.0	0.218
My supervisor treats me in a respectful manner	68.3	74.1	-5.8	0.400
I am provided with the equipment needed to do my job well	72.0	71.5	0.5	0.939
My workplace has enough people to get job done	46.4	52.0	-5.6	0.484
I am given a reasonable workload and enough time to do it well	62.7	64.4	-1.7	0.746
I have a say in how my job is done	67.8	70.2	-2.4	0.801
I have someone at work who I feel will speak up for me	67.3	59.0	8.3	0.258
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.
[a]Percentage reporting that they agreed "a lot" or "a little" with the statement.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.7

Impacts on Participation in Job Search, Education, Training, and Other Activities, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Ever participated in any activity[a] (%)	68.0	62.8	5.2		0.448
Participated in any employment-related activity[b] (%)	46.0	39.7	6.3		0.543
Participated in a job search activity	45.0	37.3	7.7		0.460
Group job search/job club	24.3	13.5	10.8	*	0.080
Individual job search	34.3	33.7	0.7		0.961
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	34.9	39.1	-4.2		0.672
Adult basic education/GED classes	13.8	9.7	4.1		0.429
English as a Second Language (ESL) classes	2.0	1.3	0.7		0.703
College courses	19.2	26.4	-7.3		0.380
Vocational training	11.4	10.7	0.7		0.876
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	1.8	5.9	-4.1		0.155
Ever participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	39.2	39.5	-0.3		0.967
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	3.2	3.4	-0.2		0.900
Education/training activities	7.9	7.5	0.4		0.876
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.3	0.9	-0.6		0.382
Among those who participated in each type of activity[c]					
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	*7.2*	*9.1*	*-1.9*		
Education/training activities	*22.5*	*19.2*	*3.3*		
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	*17.4*	*16.1*	*1.3*		
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]"Any activity" includes employment-related activities, education/training activities, life skills, and other types of activities.

[b]"Employment-related activities" include job search activities, unpaid jobs, and on-the-job training.

[c]Italic type indiciates comparisons that are nonexperimental.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.8

Impacts on Participation in Job Search, Education, Training, and Other Activities, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Ever participated in any activity[a] (%)	54.0	54.8	-0.8	0.915
Participated in any employment-related activity[b] (%)	44.0	31.3	12.7	0.127
Participated in a job search activity	44.0	31.3	12.7	0.127
Group job search/job club	26.4	13.2	13.2 *	0.053
Individual job search	26.1	26.3	-0.2	0.976
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	23.4	34.8	-11.5	0.120
Adult basic education/GED classes	7.4	4.8	2.6	0.620
English as a Second Language (ESL) classes	2.0	0.4	1.6	0.340
College courses	11.5	23.5	-12.0 **	0.048
Vocational training	6.9	12.6	-5.8	0.346
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	3.0	1.9	1.0	0.663
Ever participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	31.5	40.6	-9.2	0.317
Average number of weeks participating in:				
Job search activities	5.0	3.0	2.0	0.260
Education/training activities	4.0	5.5	-1.5	0.351
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.437
Among those who participated in each type of activity[c]				
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	*11.3*	*9.7*	*1.7*	
Education/training activities	*17.0*	*15.8*	*1.2*	
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	*17.5*	*7.6*	*9.9*	
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]"Any activity" includes employment-related activities, education/training activities, life skills, and other types of activities.

[b]"Employment-related activities" include job search activities, unpaid jobs, and on-the-job training.

[c]Italic type indiciates comparisons that are nonexperimental.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.9

Impacts on 30-Day, 90-Day, and 180-Day Retention at Random Assignment Employer, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage still at firm after 30 days	94.8	88.7	6.1	0.112
Percentage still at firm after 90 days	79.4	72.8	6.5	0.238
Percentage still at firm after 180 days	62.2	57.8	4.4	0.489
Total days worked				
Through Day 30	29.1	27.9	1.2 *	0.068
Through Day 90	81.7	76.2	5.6 *	0.056
Through Day 180	145.0	136.8	8.1	0.260
Sample size[b] (total = 370)	208	162		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using firm-reported employment verification forms.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for within-firm clustering. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a] Of the 404 employees who agreed to participate in the Achieve study in Round 1, 34 left their original firm prior to random assignment.

[b] Of the 351 employees who agreed to participate in the Achieve study in Round 2, 24 left their original firm prior to random assignment.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.10

Impacts on 30-Day, 90-Day, and 180-Day Retention at Random Assignment Employer, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Percentage still at firm after 30 days	89.9	88.6	1.3	0.651
Percentage still at firm after 90 days	78.0	74.0	4.0	0.446
Percentage still at firm after 180 days	68.8	62.3	6.5	0.273
Total days worked				
Through Day 30	28.6	28.3	0.3	0.648
Through Day 90	78.5	76.9	1.5	0.611
Through Day 180	142.4	139.0	3.4	0.641
Sample size[b] (total = 327)	173	154		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using firm-reported employment verification forms.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members' characteristics, and they account for within-firm clustering. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Of the 404 employees who agreed to participate in the Achieve study in Round 1, 34 left their original firm prior to random assignment.

[b]Of the 351 employees who agreed to participate in the Achieve study in Round 2, 24 left their original firm prior to random assignment.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.11

Impacts on Retention at Random Assignment Employer, Round 1

Cleveland

Characteristic	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
From UI records				
Employed with random assignment employer				
Quarter of random assignment	99.5	99.4	0.1	0.916
Quarter 2	88.5	79.5	9.0 *	0.052
Quarter 3	70.5	66.3	4.2	0.453
Quarter 4	57.7	53.1	4.5	0.562
Quarter 5	42.8	42.6	0.1	0.985
Quarter 6	38.2	39.8	-1.6	0.771
Sample size (total = 370)	208	162		
From ERA 12-Month Survey				
Still employed at random assignment employer	38.4	32.6	5.8	0.416
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland and responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendixes C and D.

[a]Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.12

Impacts on Retention at Random Assignment Employer, Round 2

Cleveland

Characteristic	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
From UI records				
Employed with random assignment employer				
Quarter of random assignment	94.3	99.2	-4.9 *	0.094
Quarter 2	87.6	86.7	0.9	0.812
Quarter 3	68.5	67.2	1.3	0.820
Quarter 4	60.4	56.2	4.2	0.472
Quarter 5	53.8	52.5	1.3	0.931
Quarter 6	51.0	47.3	3.7	0.729
Sample size (total = 327)	173	154		
From ERA 12-Month Survey				
Still employed at random assignment employer	52.8	46.3	6.5	0.370
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland and responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendixes C and D.

[a]Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.13

Impacts on Summary Measures of Employment and Earnings, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Years 1-2				
Total earnings ($)	28,338	28,997	-659	0.684
Ever employed (%)	99.8	99.1	0.7	0.415
Average quarterly employment (%)	86.2	84.5	1.7	0.703
Number of quarters employed	6.9	6.8	0.1	0.703
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	85.6	82.1	3.4	0.590
Average earnings per quarter employed [b] *($)*	*4,110*	*4,291*	-181	
Year 1				
Total earnings ($)	14,675	14,944	-269	0.736
Ever employed (%)	99.6	98.1	1.5	0.249
Average quarterly employment (%)	90.5	87.6	2.9	0.416
Number of quarters employed	3.6	4	0.1	0.416
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	77.4	66.6	10.8	0.212
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	74.7	71.4	3.3	0.543
Average earnings per quarter employed [b] *($)*	*4,053*	*4,263*	-210	NA
Year 2				
Total earnings ($)	13,662	14,053	-391	0.691
Ever employed (%)	90.2	92.2	-1.9	0.555
Average quarterly employment (%)	81.9	81.3	0.5	0.959
Number of quarters employed	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.959
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	69.8	68.5	1.3	0.863
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	64.8	59.4	5.5	0.326
Average earnings per quarter employed [b] *($)*	*4,172*	*4,321*	-148	NA
Sample size (total = 370)	208	162		

(continued)

Appendix Table E.13 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Year 3				
Total earnings ($)	13,635	14,542	-907	0.440
Ever employed (%)	87.2	85.6	1.7	0.667
Average quarterly employment (%)	78.0	77.1	0.9	0.904
Number of quarters employed	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.904
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	68.3	66.1	2.2	0.673
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	61.7	60.3	1.4	0.812
Average earnings per quarter employed [b] *($)*	*4,369*	*4,713*	-344	NA
Year 4				
Total earnings ($)	13,085	14,176	-1,090	0.403
Ever employed (%)	85.8	83.6	2.2	0.642
Average quarterly employment (%)	74.2	73.8	0.4	0.995
Number of quarters employed	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.996
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	60.4	61.3	-0.9	0.836
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	57.4	57.7	-0.3	0.957
Average earnings per quarter employed [b] *($)*	*4,406*	*4,801*	-395	NA
Sample size (total = 370)	208	162		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: See Appendix C.

[a]Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

[b]Italic type indicates comparisons that are nonexperimental.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.14

Impacts on Summary Measures of Employment and Earnings
Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Years 1-2				
Total earnings ($)	30,518	30,831	-313	0.865
Ever employed (%)	98.7	96.2	2.5	0.170
Average quarterly employment (%)	85.8	85.9	-0.2	0.867
Number of quarters employed	6.9	6.9	0.0	0.867
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	87.0	87.3	-0.3	0.931
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,447*	*4,484*	-37	NA
Year 1				
Total earnings ($)	15,904	15,346	557	0.578
Ever employed (%)	98.1	96.3	1.7	0.357
Average quarterly employment (%)	90.4	88.1	2.3	0.670
Number of quarters employed	3.6	3.5	0.1	0.670
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	79.2	77.3	1.9	0.779
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	72.2	72.8	-0.7	0.897
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,400*	*4,355*	*44*	NA
Year 2				
Total earnings ($)	14,614	15,484	*-870*	0.446
Ever employed (%)	90.1	92.3	-2.3	0.474
Average quarterly employment (%)	81.2	83.8	-2.6	0.499
Number of quarters employed	3.2	3.4	-0.1	0.499
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	69.3	71.5	-2.1	0.702
Earnings over $10,000 (%)	63.2	71.2	-8.0	0.172
Average earnings per quarter employed[b] ($)	*4,500*	*4,619*	*-119*	NA
Sample size (total = 327)	173	154		

(continued)

Appendix Table E.14 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: See Appendix C.

[a]Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

[b]Italic type indicates comparisons that are nonexperimental.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.15

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	87.9	91.9	-4.0	0.372
Currently employed	66.0	77.3	-11.3	0.207
No longer employed	21.9	14.6	7.3	0.196
Current working status				
Full time	56.4	62.9	-6.6	0.440
Part time	8.7	14.7	-6.0	0.246
Currently employed at a good job[a]	42.1	49.3	-7.2	0.322
Hours				
Average hours per week	24.3	28.1	-3.8	0.248
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30 hours	8.7	14.7	-6.0	0.246
30 to 34 hours	7.9	5.1	2.8	0.444
35 to 44 hours	41.1	49.7	-8.6	0.287
45 hours or more	7.4	8.2	-0.7	0.855
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	0.0	1.7	-1.7	0.214
$5.00 to $6.99	5.5	6.9	-1.5	0.675
$7.00 to $8.99	22.6	16.3	6.3	0.294
$9.00 or more	37.0	52.6	-15.7 **	0.045
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*9.46*	*9.31*	*0.16*	
Earnings				
Average weekly earnings ($)	228	263	-35	0.269
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	6.4	9.4	-3.0	0.527
$201 to $300	14.8	14.7	0.1	0.981
$301 to $500	37.7	50.0	-12.3	0.106
$500 or more	6.1	3.5	2.6	0.385
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114		

(continued)

Appendix Table E.15 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Benefits (%)				
Employer-provided benefits at current job				
Sick days with full pay	40.2	41.8	-1.6	0.808
Paid vacation	46.2	55.2	-8.9	0.217
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	47.0	51.7	-4.7	0.521
Dental benefits	37.7	45.6	-8.0	0.305
Retirement plan	35.9	36.2	-0.3	0.967
Health care plan or medical insurance	44.5	51.9	-7.4	0.301
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	27.8	33.2	-5.5	0.486
Split	2.1	2.0	0.0	0.973
Irregular	-0.1	4.5	-4.6 *	0.065
Evening shift	19.1	18.6	0.5	0.932
Night shift	10.1	12.1	-2.0	0.652
Rotating shift	5.8	5.7	0.1	0.930
Other schedule	0.6	1.1	-0.5	0.690
Odd Job	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.690
Jobs skills index[c] (%)	0.34	0.34	0.00	0.784
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	58.6	63.0	-4.3	0.592
Work with computers	17.0	15.7	1.3	0.873
Arithmetic	28.7	28.7	0.0	0.997
Customer contact	60.4	73.2	-12.8	0.143
Sample size (total = 244)	130	114		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week, makes $7 per hour, and receives health insurance. If a job does not offer health insurance, a "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and makes $8.50 or more per hour (Johnson and Corcoran, 2003).

[b]A split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular shedule is one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to night.

[c]The job skills index was created by regressing the "good job" measure on 10 dummy variables that indicate whether sample members possess specific job skills. This regression generated weights that ranked each skill based on its association with working at a good job. Each sample member was given a job skills score that was created by multiplying the regression-derived weights by each of the 10 jobs skills dummy variables. The result is an index that measures the probability of working at a good job, based on the skills that are required at their current jobs.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.16

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	93.2	87.3	5.9	0.192
Currently employed	77.1	78.1	-1.0	0.866
No longer employed	16.0	9.2	6.9	0.169
Current working status				
Full time	71.1	66.3	4.8	0.466
Part time	6.0	11.8	-5.8	0.177
Currently employed at a good job[a]	56.7	51.6	5.0	0.471
Hours				
Average hours per week	29.7	29.6	0.1	0.961
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30 hours	6.0	11.8	-5.8	0.177
30 to 34 hours	5.9	11.1	-5.2	0.232
35 to 44 hours	59.4	44.8	14.6 *	0.060
45 hours or more	5.8	10.3	-4.5	0.264
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.7	-0.2	1.9	0.192
$5.00 to $6.99	3.9	4.5	-0.6	0.829
$7.00 to $8.99	18.8	23.9	-5.1	0.371
$9.00 or more	52.8	49.9	2.8	0.671
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*9.61*	*9.67*	*-0.06*	
Earnings				
Average weekly earnings ($)	288	285	3	0.904
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	6.0	6.5	-0.4	0.907
$201 to $300	8.9	16.7	-7.8	0.176
$301 to $500	55.9	47.2	8.7	0.218
$500 or more	6.4	7.8	-1.4	0.706
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

(continued)

Appendix Table E.16 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Benefits (%)				
Employer-provided benefits at current job				
Sick days with full pay	54.2	51.0	3.2	0.747
Paid vacation	66.9	61.3	5.6	0.451
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	67.8	54.9	12.9 *	0.080
Dental benefits	59.0	54.3	4.7	0.891
Retirement plan	55.5	51.2	4.3	0.780
Health care plan or medical insurance	62.9	60.6	2.3	0.959
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	43.2	33.2	9.9	0.185
Split	0.7	1.8	-1.1	0.489
Irregular	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.998
Evening shift	14.6	17.1	-2.5	0.647
Night shift	8.8	14.9	-6.1	0.193
Rotating shift	5.0	7.7	-2.8	0.443
Other schedule	2.0	0.4	1.5	0.412
Odd Job	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.412
Jobs skills index[c]	0.33	0.35	-0.02	0.316
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	58.4	63.1	-4.7	0.493
Work with computers	17.4	18.4	-1.0	0.983
Arithmetic	19.9	31.7	-11.8 *	0.079
Customer contact	71.0	69.1	1.9	0.816
Sample size (total = 241)	130	111		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: See Appendix D.

[a]A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week, makes $7 per hour, and receives health insurance. If a job does not offer health insurance, a "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and makes $8.50 or more per hour (Johnson and Corcoran, 2003).

[b]A split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular shedule is one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to night.

[c]The job skills index was created by regressing the "good job" measure on 10 dummy variables that indicate whether sample members possess specific job skills. This regression generated weights that ranked each skill based on its association with working at a good job. Each sample member was given a job skills score that was created by multiplying the regression-derived weights by each of the 10 jobs skills dummy variables. The result is an index that measures the probability of working at a good job, based on the skills that are required at their current jobs.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.17

Impacts on Employee Retention at Participating Employers, Research and Nonresearch Employees, Round 1

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
All employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	84.6	83.8	0.7	0.817
Quarter 3	73.3	72.1	1.2	0.797
Quarter 4	66.6	65.9	0.7	0.883
Quarter 5	58.8	58.5	0.3	0.967
Sample size (total = 3,386)	1,726	1,660		
All employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	84.1	83.7	0.4	0.897
Sample size (total = 3,457)	1,789	1,668		
All low-wage employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	81.1	79.7	1.3	0.755
Quarter 3	68.6	66.7	1.9	0.747
Quarter 4	62.1	60.1	1.9	0.763
Quarter 5	53.4	53.0	0.5	0.952
Sample size (total = 2,600)	1,359	1,241		
All low-wage employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	84.7	83.6	1.1	0.790
Sample size (total = 2,093)	1,114	979		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: See Appendix C.
Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.
The data are weighted to give each firm equal weight in the analysis.
Four pairs of firms were excluded because data were not available.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table E.18

Impacts on Employee Retention at Participating Employers, Research and Nonresearch Employees, Round 2

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
All employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	85.8	87.3	-1.4	0.567
Quarter 3	76.0	79.0	-3.0	0.425
Quarter 4	69.6	73.5	-3.9	0.351
Quarter 5	64.8	68.9	-4.1	0.354
Sample size (total = 7,438)	2,422	5,016		
All employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	86.6	88.1	-1.5	0.595
Sample size (total = 7,488)	2,363	5,125		
All low-wage employees at firm in quarter of random assignment				
Percentage still at firm in:				
Quarter 2	81.2	84.3	-3.1	0.382
Quarter 3	69.7	75.7	-6.0	0.248
Quarter 4	63.0	69.9	-6.8	0.225
Quarter 5	57.9	64.7	-6.7	0.232
Sample size (total = 5,609)	1,757	3,852		
All low-wage employees at firm in Quarter 2				
Still at firm in Quarter 3	85.8	89.8	-4.0	0.233
Sample size (total = 4,612)	1,355	3,257		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from Cleveland.

NOTES: See Appendix C.
Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.
The data are weighted to give each firm equal weight in the analysis.
One pair of firms were excluded because data were not available.

Appendix F

Impacts on Household Composition and Income and Other Outcomes

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table F.1

Impacts on Household Income and Composition

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household income				
Percentage with each income source (%)				
Own earnings	82.2	84.1	-1.9	0.600
Earnings of other members	41.1	44.0	-2.9	0.502
Child support	12.1	8.2	3.9	0.201
Public assistance	36.8	35.7	1.1	0.795
TANF	6.7	6.4	0.3	0.930
Food stamps	31.0	29.6	1.4	0.714
SSI or disability	8.4	7.2	1.1	0.804
Total household income in prior month ($)	1,881	2,073	-192	0.152
Percentage of household income that is respondent's	73.3	70.9	2.4	0.446
Household composition				
Number in household	3.3	3.2	0.1	0.481
Ever married (%)	47.3	46.2	1.2	0.783
Living with partner (%)	21.1	21.0	0.1	0.987
Current marital status (%)				
Married and living with spouse	20.9	19.9	0.9	0.821
Separated or living apart from spouse	10.6	6.9	3.8	0.187
Divorced	14.0	16.2	-2.2	0.541
Widowed	1.8	2.8	-1.0	0.485
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table F.2

Impacts on Other Outcomes

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Health care coverage (%)				
Respondent has health care coverage[a]	76.3	77.6	-1.3	0.722
Publicly funded	39.2	37.4	1.8	0.716
Privately funded	44.2	46.2	-2.0	0.663
All dependent children have health care coverage (%)	58.2	49.2	8.9 *	0.067
Respondent and all children have health care coverage (%)	49.6	46.3	3.3	0.550
Child care (%)				
Ever used any child care in Year 1	31.6	31.5	0.1	0.976
Transportation				
Owns car, van, or truck (%)	73.3	83.3	-10.0 **	0.036
Commuting time (minutes)	26.7	24.5	2.2	0.290
Transportation costs per week ($)	24.60	23.92	0.7	0.757
Method of transportation to work (%)				
By car	57.1	66.0	-8.9 *	0.081
By bus	16.7	10.9	5.8	0.105
Gets a ride	12.5	13.5	-1.0	0.808
Walks	5.3	2.7	2.6	0.195
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for sample members' characteristics.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Measures of health care coverage combine data from the survey's sections on employment, health care coverage, and income and from administrative records on public assistance receipt. A respondent could be receiving both public and private health care coverage.

Appendix G

ERA Survey Response Analysis for the Cleveland Achieve Program

This appendix assesses the reliability of impact results for the ERA 12-Month Survey. It also examines whether the impacts for the survey respondents can be generalized to the impacts for the research (report) sample. First, the appendix describes how the survey sample was selected. Second, it discusses the response rates for the survey sample for the two research groups. Third, the appendix examines differences in background characteristics between survey respondents and survey nonrespondents, and then it analyzes differences among survey respondents according to research group. The appendix then compares the impacts on employment and earnings across the survey samples and the report sample, as calculated using administrative data. Finally, the appendix compares levels of and impacts on employment measures as calculated using survey data with those calculated using administrative records.

This analysis generated some concerns about the reliability of the survey data. Based on a couple of key pre-random assignment characteristics, it appears that control group respondents entered the program more job-ready than ERA group respondents. In particular, control group respondents were more likely to have been recently employed and to have a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. While the regression-adjustment procedures used in the impact analysis provide some protection against this, the results should be viewed with caution; when the survey results differ from the administrative records, more weight should be given to the larger and unbiased administrative records sample. Also, survey respondents and nonrespondents significantly differed in some pre-random assignment characteristics.

Survey Sample Selection

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the *report sample* includes 697 sample members randomly assigned from September 2002 to May 2004. The *survey-eligible sample* includes 94 percent of the report sample who met the eligibility criteria. Anyone who was younger than age 18, who did not speak English or Spanish, who did not work in the health care industry (the pair of manufacturing firms was excluded from the survey), or who did not still work with their original random assignment employer at the time of random assignment was excluded from the survey-eligible sample. All 656 eligible sample members were chosen to be interviewed. This sample is referred to as the *fielded sample* and includes 360 ERA (Achieve) group members and 296 control group members.

Survey Response Rates

Sample members who were interviewed for the ERA 12-Month Survey are referred to as "survey respondents," or the *respondent sample,* while those who were not interviewed are known as "nonrespondents," or the *nonrespondent sample.* A total of 485 sample members, or

Box G.1

Key Analysis Samples

Report sample. All sample members who were randomly assigned between September 2002 and May 2004.

Survey-eligible sample. Sample members in the report sample who met the criteria for inclusion in the survey.

Fielded sample. Sample members who were selected from the survey-eligible sample to be interviewed for the survey.

Respondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who completed the ERA 12-Month Survey.

Nonrespondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who were not interviewed because they were not located or they refused to be interviewed or because of other reasons.

74 percent of the fielded sample, completed the survey. The response rates of the research groups are similar: 72 percent of program group members completed the survey, compared with 76 percent of the control group; 86 percent of the nonrespondent sample refused to be interviewed or could not be located.[1]

Whenever the response rate is lower than 100 percent, *nonresponse bias* may occur. Differences may exist between the respondent sample and the larger, fielded sample, owing to differences between the sample members who completed the survey and those who did not. Furthermore, the estimates may be biased if the background characteristics of the research groups differ.

Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents Within the Survey Sample

In order to examine whether there are systematic differences between those who responded to the survey and those who did not, an indicator of survey response status was created, and then multivariate analysis was used to identify which pre-random assignment characteristics are significantly related to the indicator.

Appendix Table G.1 shows the estimated ordinary least squares (OLS) regression coefficients for the probability of being a respondent to the ERA survey. In addition to such back-

[1]Other respondents were not interviewed because they were deceased, incapacitated, institutionalized, or located after the fielding period expired or because they did not speak English or Spanish.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table G.1

Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Likelihood of Being a Respondent to the ERA 12-Month Survey

Cleveland

	Fielded Survey Sample		
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value	Standard Error
ERA group	-0.061 *	0.094	0.035
Female	0.115 **	0.017	0.048
Age	0.004 **	0.036	0.002
Black, non-Hispanic	0.079 *	0.052	0.041
Hispanic or other ethnicity	-0.081	0.216	0.065
Number of children	0.021	0.486	0.031
Has a child age 2 or younger	-0.004	0.948	0.055
Has a child between age 3-5 years	0.056	0.325	0.057
Has a child between age 6-12 years	0.015	0.810	0.061
Has a child between age 13-18 years	-0.018	0.764	0.061
No high school diploma or GED certificate	-0.011	0.776	0.039
Health staff	-0.064	0.142	0.044
Started job within 90 days prior to random assignment	0.076 *	0.062	0.041
Earnings in prior quarter	0.000	0.942	0.000
Earnings in prior year	0.000	0.234	0.000
Employed in prior quarter	-0.130	0.169	0.094
Employed in prior year	0.052	0.711	0.140
Hourly wage	0.010	0.486	0.014
Pair 2	-0.008	0.945	0.119
Pair 3	-0.001	0.996	0.116
Pair 4	0.023	0.844	0.114
Pair 5	0.030	0.789	0.113
Pair 6	-0.002	0.986	0.114
Pair 7	0.078	0.508	0.116
Pair 8	0.059	0.596	0.109
Pair 9	-0.026	0.820	0.114
Pair 10	0.029	0.814	0.122
Pair 11	-0.046	0.692	0.114
Pair 12	0.138	0.236	0.113
Pair 13	0.188	0.104	0.110
Pair 14	0.198	0.120	0.122
Pair 15	0.101	0.367	0.109
Pair 16	0.107	0.370	0.116
Pair 17	0.222 *	0.072	0.117
Pair 18	0.029	0.825	0.130
Pair 19	0.062	0.647	0.133
Pair 20	0.175	0.174	0.124
Pair 21	0.134	0.264	0.116
Likelihood Ratio Test $\chi 2(82.2)$	***		
Sample size	656		

(continued)

Appendix Table G.1 (continued)

SOURCES: Cleveland baseline data and administrative records.

NOTES: Estimates are regression-adjusted using sample members characteristics, and they account for firm-level clustering.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** =1 percent, ** = 5 percent, * = 10 percent.

Results were similar using a logistic model.

ground characteristics as race/ethnicity, age, and number of children, a research status indicator and firm-pair indicators were included in the model. The first column of the table provides the parameter estimate for each variable in predicting the probability of completing the survey. The asterisks and p-values show whether each relationship is statistically significant.

Overall, the model is successful in predicting response: a likelihood ratio test between a model with only the firm-pair indicators and a model with the firm-pair indicators as well as the sample members' background characteristics indicates that the full model is more successful in predicting response (model $\chi^2(18) = 82.2$; p-value less than 0.0001).

Several background characteristics are positively related with survey response: gender (p-value less than 0.05); age (p-value less than 0.05); race (p-value less than 0.10); and started at firm within 90 days of random assignment (p-value less than 0.10). Also, one firm pair is positively related to survey response (p-value less than 0.10). The ERA group members (p-value less than 0.10) were less likely to be survey respondents.

For the ERA group and Pair 17, the difference in the percentage of respondents and the percentage of nonrespondents who had the characteristic is fairly small (not shown). For example, 54 percent of respondents are in the ERA group, compared with 58 percent of nonrespondents; and 6 percent of respondents are from Pair 17, compared with 2 percent of nonrespondents. For gender, race/ethnicity, and start date at firm, the difference in the percentage of respondents and the percentage of nonrespondents who had the characteristic is larger (not shown). For example, 86 percent of respondents are female, compared with 78 percent of nonrespondents; 60 percent of respondents are black, compared with 47 percent of nonrespondents; and 50 percent of respondents started at the firm within 90 days prior to random assignment, compared with 39 percent of nonrespondents. On average, respondents were age 32.9 when they entered the study, compared with an average age of 31.3 years for nonrespondents (not shown).

Comparison of the Research Groups in the Respondent Sample

Random assignment designs minimize the possibility of potential bias. There is the possibility that the characteristics of the research groups differ due to the selective nature of the

survey response process. If this is true, the reliability of impact estimates for the respondent sample may be affected.

Appendix Table G.2 shows selected characteristics of the ERA and control group members at baseline. In general, differences between the research groups at the time of random assignment are small and not statistically significant. The only exception to this finding is that more control group members than ERA group members had a high school diploma or GED and more of them were employed in the quarter prior to random assignment. One other difference between the two groups of respondents is that the control group had higher hourly wages; however, this difference is also present in the full sample. Furthermore, MDRC performed a logistic regression to test whether there is a relationship between sample members' background characteristics and their research group status, and this obtained a similar finding (not shown). The logistic regression model was not able to predict the research group status of survey respondents, and the only statistically significant characteristic in the model is "has high school diploma or GED."

Comparison of the Respondent Sample with the Fielded Sample and the Report Sample

Using administrative records data, this section discusses whether the survey respondents' impacts can be generalized to the fielded sample and the report sample. Consistency of impact findings among the samples is considered to be the best result, suggesting that impacts on measures calculated from survey responses can be generalized to the report sample. Survey results may be considered unreliable because of response bias when impacts for survey respondents as calculated using administrative data differ in size and direction from results for all other samples. An unlucky sample draw or "sampling bias" may be inferred when impacts for the respondent sample resemble results for the fielded sample but findings for both samples vary from those for the report sample, from which the samples were drawn.

Appendix Table G.3 shows the adjusted means and impacts on several employment outcomes for the report, fielded, and respondent samples in Year 1 and during the last quarter of the follow-up period.[2] This table shows that the impacts on job retention and on being employed with the random assignment employer vary in statistical significance by sample but that, in general, the impact estimates are similar, with a few exceptions: the impact on retention at firm

[2]All the impacts are regression-adjusted within each sample, to control for differences in background characteristics, prior earnings, prior employment, firm pair, job title, and length of employment at firm prior to random assignment.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table G.2

Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Cleveland

Variable	Achieve Group	Control Group	
Female (%)	85.8	86.7	
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Hispanic	4.6	4.0	
Black, non-Hispanic	63.1	56.4	
White, non-Hispanic	29.2	36.4	
Other	3.1	3.1	
Age (%)			
25 years or younger	29.6	37.5	
25 to 40 years	40.0	37.5	
41 years or older	30.4	25.0	
High school diploma/GED or higher (%)	71.5	79.6	**
Number of children in household (%)			
None	32.7	39.3	
1	26.5	22.8	
2 or more	40.8	37.9	
Age of youngest child in household (%)			
Less than 3 years	30.9	30.1	
3 to 5 years	23.4	25.7	
6 years or older	45.7	44.1	
Marital status (%)			
Never married	54.4	55.1	
Married, living with spouse	21.6	21.8	
Separated, divorced, or widowed	23.9	23.1	
Job title (%)			
Health staff (for example, nurse's aide)	73.1	73.8	
Building services (for example, janitor, housekeeper)	10.8	10.7	
Food staff	10.0	9.8	
Other	6.2	5.8	
Hourly wage (%)			
Less than $7.50	11.9	12.0	**
$7.50 to 9.49	55.4	44.9	**
$9.50 and higher	32.7	43.1	**
Average hourly wage ($)	8.96	9.14	
Hours worked per week (%)			
Less than 32	7.8	9.8	
32 or more	92.2	90.2	

(continued)

Appendix Table G.2 (continued)

Variable	Achieve Group	Control Group	
Earnings in year before random assignment ($)	10,908	11,595	
Employed in quarter before random assignment (%)	90.4	95.6	**
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from baseline data and UI records from the State of Ohio.

NOTES: Chi-square (categorical) and two-tailed T (continuous) tests were used to assess the difference in characteristics across research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

after 180 days is larger and statistically significant for the respondent sample, whereas the number of days worked through Days 30 and 90 are similar estimates for all samples but are statistically significant only for the report and fielded samples. Employment with the random assignment employer has similar estimates through Quarter 3 but is statistically significant for some samples, not all. Quarter 4 and 5 employment with the random assignment employer is not statistically significant for any of the samples, but the impact estimate is larger for the respondent sample. The "ever employed" outcome is larger and statistically significant for the fielded sample. It is important to note that although the magnitude and statistical significance of the impacts vary on some measures, the direction of the impacts is the same.

The Consistency of Outcomes and Impacts Calculated with Survey Data and with Administrative Data

This section compares the outcomes and impacts on employment as calculated from survey responses and the findings on similar measures as calculated from administrative data for survey respondents. Several factors led to differences in reported employment rates between the survey and unemployment insurance records (UI-covered employment). First, some respondents may underreport employment on surveys, whereas others may claim employment when they are not working. In addition, employment data reported in surveys include jobs not covered by the UI system, such as self-employment, informal employment, and out-of-state jobs.

For this analysis, survey results are considered to be less reliable when members of one research group show a greater propensity to underreport their employment than their counterparts in the other research group do. Underreporting occurs when a respondent does not report employment, whereas administrative data show employment. MDRC performed a match analysis on employment and found some variation by research group in the level of underreporting.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table G.3

Comparison of Impacts for the Report, Fielded, and Respondent Samples

Cleveland

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Retention at random assignment employer				
Percentage still at firm after 30 days				
Report sample	92.5	88.8	3.7	0.123
Fielded sample	92.9	88.4	4.5 *	0.078
Respondent sample	93.3	88.6	4.7	0.103
Percentage still at firm after 90 days				
Report sample	78.6	73.6	4.9	0.173
Fielded sample	78.9	73.3	5.5	0.154
Respondent sample	80.1	75.0	5.2	0.314
Percentage still at firm after 180 days				
Report sample	65.0	60.2	4.8	0.280
Fielded sample	65.7	59.0	6.7	0.146
Respondent sample	69.9	61.4	8.5 *	0.075
Total days worked through Day 30				
Report sample	28.9	28.1	0.8 *	0.087
Fielded sample	28.9	28.0	1.0 **	0.040
Respondent sample	29.0	28.1	0.9	0.103
Total days worked through Day 90				
Report sample	80.1	76.7	3.5 *	0.078
Fielded sample	80.4	76.3	4.1 **	0.049
Respondent sample	80.8	76.9	3.9	0.105
Total days worked through Day 180				
Report sample	143.5	138.2	5.3	0.277
Fielded sample	144.2	137.2	6.9	0.186
Respondent sample	147.6	139.7	8.0	0.227
Employed with random assignment employer				
Quarter of random assignment (%)				
Report sample	97.0	99.5	-2.5	0.138
Fielded sample	98.0	99.4	-1.4	0.182
Respondent sample	97.7	99.6	-1.9 *	0.099
Quarter 2 (%)				
Report sample	88.0	83.2	4.8 *	0.095
Fielded sample	88.3	82.9	5.4 *	0.073
Respondent sample	88.1	83.6	4.5	0.192
Quarter 3 (%)				
Report sample	69.4	67.0	2.3	0.552
Fielded sample	69.7	66.5	3.2	0.430
Respondent sample	72.1	69.2	2.9	0.572

(continued)

Appendix Table G.3 (continued)

Outcome	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Quarter 4 (%)				
Report sample	58.4	55.2	3.3	0.512
Fielded sample	59.2	54.0	5.3	0.263
Respondent sample	62.9	57.5	5.4	0.257
Quarter 5 (%)				
Report sample	47.7	47.6	0.1	0.996
Fielded sample	48.0	46.0	2.1	0.604
Respondent sample	51.8	48.2	3.7	0.442
Employment and earnings, Quarters 2-5				
Ever employed (%)				
Report sample	98.8	97.4	1.4	0.197
Fielded sample	99.0	97.1	1.9 *	0.085
Respondent sample	98.9	98.6	0.2	0.819
Average quarterly employment (%)				
Report sample	90.6	87.7	2.9	0.269
Fielded sample	91.2	87.6	3.6	0.139
Respondent sample	90.8	89.6	1.2	0.619
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)				
Report sample	78.5	71.5	7.0	0.188
Fielded sample	79.1	71.3	7.8	0.115
Respondent sample	79.0	72.7	6.3	0.226
Number of quarters employed				
Report sample	3.6	3.5	0.1	0.269
Fielded sample	3.6	3.5	0.1	0.139
Respondent sample	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.619
Earnings ($)				
Report sample	15,290	15,072	218	0.779
Fielded sample	15,562	15,092	470	0.443
Respondent sample	15,619	15,315	305	0.648
Employment and earnings, Quarter 5				
Ever employed during Quarter 5 (%)				
Report sample	88.0	83.2	4.8	0.338
Fielded sample	88.4	82.7	5.7	0.180
Respondent sample	88.5	85.3	3.3	0.491
Earnings during Quarter 5 (%)				
Report sample	3,597	3,517	80	0.756
Fielded sample	3,666	3,466	200	0.298
Respondent sample	3,706	3,499	208	0.327

(continued)

Appendix Table G.3 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from the State of Ohio and firm-reported employment verification forms.

NOTES: The report sample includes 697 sample members; Achieve group: 381; control group: 316.
The fielded sample includes 656 sample members; Achieve group: 360; control group: 296.
The respondent sample includes 485 sample members; Achieve group: 260; control group: 225.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

About 14 percent of control group respondents reported that they were not working at the end of Year 1, even though the UI records indicate employment, compared with 17 percent of respondents in the program group (results not shown). Overall, the propensity of the two groups to underreport was similar; however, the program group was more likely than the control group to underreport end-of-year employment.

Appendix Table G.4 shows a comparison of impacts from administrative records and survey responses for the respondent sample. As discussed above, the program group and control group respondents showed a similar propensity to underreport their employment in Year 1 and random assignment employment at the end of Year 1; however, the program group was more likely to underreport employment at the end of Year 1.

Conclusion

Because of the differences between the control group and the program group on a couple of key pre-random assignment characteristics and because of the differences between respondents and nonrespondents on some pre-random assignment characteristics, the survey results should be used with caution. While some differences in the magnitude and statistical significance of impacts exist among the report, fielded, and survey samples, the direction of impacts is consistent, and thus the survey is reliable for showing the general story of the ERA program in Cleveland. Additionally, the survey is primarily used to show participation outcomes, which typically require less precision to measure.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table G.4

Comparison of Impacts from Administrative Records and Survey Responses for the Survey Respondent Sample

Cleveland

Outcome (%)	Achieve Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employed in Year 1				
Records impact	98.9	98.6	0.2	0.819
Survey impact	90.0	90.2	-0.2	0.942
Employed at end of Year 1				
Records impact	88.5	85.3	3.3	0.491
Survey impact	71.7	77.6	-5.9	0.194
Employed at end of Year 1 in random assignment job				
Records impact	51.8	48.2	3.7	0.442
Survey impact	44.8	40.2	4.7	0.321
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) records from the State of Ohio and the ERA 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Records employment impacts include only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio unemployment insurance (UI) program. They do not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs, some agricultural jobs, and federal government jobs).

Appendix H

The Random Assignment of Firms

The random assignment of the 44 firms for the Cleveland study in the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project took place in four separate waves, described below. It was necessary to divide the process into waves because of the practical difficulties of recruiting and starting services with a large number of employers at one time.

Round 1

- Wave 1: September 2002 — 8 firms
- Wave 2: November 2002 — 14 firms

Round 2

- Wave 3: February 2004 — 8 firms
- Wave 4: May 2004 — 14 firms

In general, random assignment for each wave was conducted by pairing each firm with another that had a similar or close turnover rate in the prior six months. One firm in each pair was randomly selected to be in the treatment (program) group, eligible for Achieve services, and the other firm in that pair was selected to be in the control group. Because retention was the key outcome of interest and because prior turnover at a firm is strongly associated with future turnover, it was important that a given treatment group firm match its control group counterpart as closely as possible regarding prior turnover.

Specifically, the steps were the following:

1. Collect baseline data for each firm (including firm size; low-wage employee turnover during the past six months; number of low-wage, entry-level employees), and collect baseline data for participating employees (including age, race/ethnicity, number of children, and so on).

2. Rank the firms from highest to lowest value for turnover in the past six months. For example,

Firm	Turnover Rate
A	0.63
B	0.63
C	0.58
D	0.57
E	0.47
F	0.35
G	0.27
H	0.11

3. Randomly choose one firm from each pair to be in the treatment group.

Firm	Turnover Rate	Research Status	Pair Number
A	0.63	treatment	1
B	0.63	control	1
C	0.58	control	2
D	0.57	treatment	2
E	0.47	control	3
F	0.35	treatment	3
G	0.27	control	4
H	0.11	treatment	4

4. Use the baseline data to compare the average characteristics of the firms and employees in the treatment group with those of the firms and employees in the control group.

In each wave, a minor adjustment was made in the assignment within a given pair or to the initial pairing of firms in order to balance the overall employee characteristics across treatment and control group firms. In Waves 1 and 2, for example, the initial random assignment resulted in a noticeable difference between treatment and control group firms in the proportion of participating employees who were black. In each wave, the assignment status of the pair with the largest discrepancy on this employee characteristic was reversed. In this example, the assignment status of Pair 3 would be changed. Firm E would now be in the treatment group, and firm F would be in the control group.

Firm	Turnover Rate	Research Status	Percentage Black	Pair Number
A	0.63	treatment	30	1
B	0.63	control	50	1
C	0.58	control	75	2
D	0.57	treatment	25	2
E	0.47	control	95	3
F	0.35	treatment	25	3
G	0.27	control	90	4
H	0.11	treatment	80	4

After changing the assignment status of one pair in each wave, the treatment and control group firms continued to be well matched on prior turnover and other characteristics and were now more evenly matched in terms of the race/ethnicity of their employees.

In Wave 3, after the firms were ranked by prior turnover but before random assignment was conducted, two firms were reassigned to a different pair. The reasoning was that these firms

shared the same location and same administrator and were, therefore, the best match for each other. (Their prior turnover rates were also not substantially different.) Using the above example, Firm C would have been reassigned to Pair 1, and Firm B would have been reassigned to Pair 2. Then random assignment proceeded as usual: one firm within each pair was randomly selected for the treatment group, and the other was assigned to the control group. Finally, in Wave 4, two manufacturing firms were included in the sample. In this wave, only the 12 nursing homes were ranked by prior turnover and were randomly assigned within pairs. The two manufacturing firms were paired, since they came from the same industry.

Impacts on employee retention and other outcomes shown in the report are estimated in a regression framework, controlling for individual characteristics and a series of dummy variables indicating the pair to which each firm belonged. Standard errors were corrected for the clustering of individuals within firms.

References

Ballen, J., and R. Freeman. 1986. "Transitions Between Employment and Nonemployment." In R. Freeman and H. Holzer (eds.), *The Black Youth Employment Crisis.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Banaszak-Holl, J., and M. A. Hines. 1996. "Factors Associated with Nursing Home Staff Turnover." *Gerontologist* 36 (4).

Bowers, B. J., S. Esmond, and N. Jacobson. 2003. "Turnover Reinterpreted: CNAs Talk About Why They Leave." *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* 29.

Brannon, D., J. S. Zinn, V. Mor, and J. Davis. 2002. "An Exploration of Job, Organizational, and Environmental Factors Associated with High and Low Nursing Assistant Turnover." *Gerontologist* 42 (2).

Castle, N. G., and J. Engberg. 2006. "Organizational Characteristics Associated with Staff Turnover in Nursing Homes" *Gerontologist* 46 (1).

Center for Personal Assistance Services. 2008. *Lost-Worktime Injuries and Illnesses of Nursing* Aides, *Orderlies, and Attendants.*
Web site: http://www.pascenter.org/lost_workdays/index.php.

Conway, M., A. Blair, S. Dawson, and L. Dworak-Muñoz. 2007. *Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

Decker, F. H., P. Gruhn, L. Matthews-Martin, K. J. Dollard, A. M. Tucker, and L. Bizette. 2003. "Results of the 2002 AHCA Survey of Nursing Staff Vacancy and Turnover in Nursing Homes." Washington, DC: American Health Care Association, Health Services Research and Evaluation.

Duflo, E., and E. Saez. 2003. "The Role of Information and Social Interactions in Retirement Plan Decisions: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118, 3: 815-842.

Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative. 2008. Boston: Commonwealth Corporation. Web site: http://www.commcorp.org/eccli/index.html.

Holzer, H., and R. LaLonde. 2000. "Job Stability and Job Change Among Less Skilled Workers." In D. Card and R. Blank (eds.), *Labor Markets and Less-Skilled Workers.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Holzer, H., M. Stoll, and D. Wissoker. 2004. "Job Performance and Retention Among Welfare Recipients." *Social Service Review.*

Institute for the Future of Aging Services. 2007. *The Long-Term Care Workforce: Can the Crisis Be Fixed?* Washington, DC: American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and the Institute for the Future of Aging Services.

Kaiser Family Foundation. 2008. Web site: http://www.statehealthfacts.org.

Kash, B. A., N. G. Castle, G. S. Naufal, and C. Hawes. 2006. "Effect of Staff Turnover on Staffing: A Closer Look at Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses, and Certified Nursing Assistants." *Gerontologist* 46 (5).

LaDou, J. 1982. "Health Effects of Shift Work." *Western Journal of Medicine* 137 (6).

Ohio Department of Aging. 2008. Web site: www.ltcohio.org.

Osterman, P. 2008. "Improving Job Quality: Policies Aimed at the Demand Side of the Low Wage Labor Market." In T. Bartik and S. Houseman (eds.), *A Future of Good Jobs: America's Challenge in the Global Economy.* Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute.

Pillemer, K. 1996. *Solving the Frontline Crisis in Long-Term Care.* Cambridge, MA: Frontline Publishing.

Rangarajan, A., and T. Novak. 1999. *The Struggle to Sustain Employment: The Effectiveness of the Postemployment Services Demonstration.* Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Schweitzer, M., and B. Rudick. 2006. *A Closer Look at Cleveland's Latest Poverty Ranking.* Cleveland: Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

Seavey, D. 2004. *The Cost of Frontline Turnover in Long-Term Care.* Better Jobs Better Care Practice and Policy Report. Washington, DC: Institute for the Future of Aging Services and American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.

Stone, R. I., S. C. Reinhard, B. Bowers, D. Zimmerman, C. D. Phillips, C. Hawes, J. A. Fielding, and N. Jacobson. 2002. *Evaluation of the Wellspring Model for Improving Nursing Home Quality*. New York: Commonwealth Fund.

Stone, R., with J. Weiner. 2001. *Who Will Care for Us? Addressing the Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute and American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.

U.S. Census Bureau Web site: http://www.census.gov/.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008. Web site: http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/include/DataSection/ResultsSummary/OneHome_AllResults.asp?dest=NAV|Results|ResultsOverview|OneHomeAllResults|ResultsSummary&OneHomeNHC=366229%7CPARKSIDE+VILLA#TabTop.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web site: http://www.bls.gov/.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2003. *Jobs with the Most Lost-Time Injuries.* Web site: http://stats.bls.gov/opub/ted/2003/mar/wk4/art05.htm.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2006a. *National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, June 2005.* Bulletin 2581. Web site: http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0832.pdf.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2006b. *Unemployment Rates for Metropolitan Areas.* Web site: http://www.bls.gov/lau/lamtrk06.htm.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2008. *Occupational Employment Statistics.* Web site: http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm#O.

EARLIER MDRC PUBLICATIONS ON THE EMPLOYMENT RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT PROJECT

A Comparison of Two Job Club Strategies
The Effects of Enhanced Versus Traditional Job Clubs in Los Angeles
2008. David Navarro, Gilda Azurdia, and Gayle Hamilton.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Impacts for Portland's Career Builders Program
2008. Gilda Azurdia and Zakia Barnes.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the Valuing Individual Success and Increasing Opportunities Now (VISION) Program in Salem, Oregon
2008. Frieda Molina, Wan-Lae Cheng, and Richard Hendra.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from Two Education and Training Models for Employed Welfare Recipients in Riverside, California
2007. David Navarro, Stephen Freedman, Gayle Hamilton.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment (PRIDE) Program in New York City
2007. Dan Bloom, Cynthia Miller, Gilda Azurdia.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) Program in Riverside, California
2007. David Navarro, Mark van Dok, Richard Hendra.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from Minnesota's Tier 2 Program
2007. Allen LeBlanc, Cynthia Miller, Karin Martinson, Gilda Azurdia.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the Chicago ERA Site
2006. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Jocelyn Page.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the Texas ERA Site
2006. Karin Martinson, Richard Hendra.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Results from the South Carolina ERA Site

2005. Susan Scrivener, Gilda Azurdia, Jocelyn Page.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project
Early Results from Four Sites
2005. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Karin Martinson, Susan Scrivener.

Service Delivery and Institutional Linkages
Early Implementation Experiences of Employment Retention and Advancement Programs
2003. Jacquelyn Anderson, Karin Martinson.

New Strategies to Promote Stable Employment and Career Progression
An Introduction to the Employment Retention and Advancement Project
2002. Dan Bloom, Jacquelyn Anderson, Melissa Wavelet, Karen N. Gardiner, Michael E. Fishman.

NOTE: A complete publications list is available from MDRC and on its Web site (www.mdrc.org), from which copies of reports can also be downloaded.

About MDRC

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs.

Founded in 1974 and located in New York City and Oakland, California, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are proactively shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-offenders and people with disabilities, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Child Development
- Improving Public Education
- Raising Academic Achievement and Persistence in College
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.