

**Participating in a Place-Based  
Employment Initiative**  
**Lessons from the Jobs-Plus Demonstration  
in Public Housing**

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# Overview

Is it feasible to engage large numbers of public housing residents when employment services are offered right in their own housing developments? This is one of the many questions that the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families (“Jobs-Plus” for short) is trying to answer. Since 1998, Jobs-Plus has been under way in six cities in an attempt to raise the employment and earnings of residents of “low-work, high-welfare” public housing developments. Jobs-Plus offers residents employment-related services, rent reforms and other financial work incentives that help to “make work pay,” and community support to strengthen work-sustaining activities among residents. Operating on-site at the developments and offering service referrals to off-site partner agencies, Jobs-Plus seeks to inform all working-age residents about its services and to accommodate all who come forward for help.

## Key Findings

- **Implementation challenges.** Program operators had to overcome residents’ entrenched skepticism; contend with crime and safety problems; and address wide variations in residents’ employment histories, cultural backgrounds, and service needs. Efforts to address these problems diverted staff energies away from the program’s immediate employment goals.
- **Saturation.** The sites achieved widespread awareness of Jobs-Plus among the target group of residents, enlisting some of them as outreach workers to play a key role in enhancing the program’s profile and credibility among their neighbors.
- **Residents’ engagement.** Initial delays in implementing some features of Jobs-Plus added to the challenge of getting residents to embrace the program. However, as of June 2001, over half the targeted working-age residents across the sites had officially attached themselves to Jobs-Plus either as individual enrollees or as members of a household that received rent incentives. However, as additional Jobs-Plus services and program components became available over time, attachment rates increased among the targeted populations. Jobs-Plus’s place-based approach also permitted the site staff to assist residents in a variety of informal ways that proved critical to the program’s appeal.
- **Contrasting site experiences.** Variations in residents’ participation from site to site were influenced primarily by organizational factors, including differences in the sites’ ability to achieve stable program leadership, adequate professional staffing, and continuous support of the local housing authority. At the Dayton and St. Paul sites, an impressive 69 percent and 78 percent of targeted residents, respectively, became attached to Jobs-Plus; by contrast, at the Chattanooga site and at one of the two sites in Los Angeles, only 48 percent and 33 percent of residents were attached to the program.

This report presents recommendations for how housing authorities and their partner agencies can implement Jobs-Plus’s offer of on-site employment assistance. It describes practical steps that can be taken to promote employment as an expectation that comes with tenancy among working-age residents and to mobilize community resources to address residents’ employment needs. The lessons of this report are also applicable to other place-based employment initiatives that strive to be more accessible and more responsive to residents by locating in low-income communities outside of public housing.



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## Preface

Policymakers have endeavored for decades to improve the well-being and economic prospects of public housing residents and their often-troubled communities. It is widely agreed that achieving this goal requires, among other things, increasing residents' employment and earnings, especially in places characterized by high concentrations of joblessness. For the past six years, several communities across the country have been helping to test one of the most ambitious — and intensively evaluated — employment initiatives ever tried in public housing, the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families (“Jobs-Plus” for short). This demonstration project seeks to raise, by substantial amounts, the employment and earnings of residents of “low-work, high-welfare” public housing developments through a novel combination of services, incentives, and social supports.

As Jobs-Plus moves into its final year, this report looks at important questions about the responsiveness of the targeted population to this unusual offering: Can program operators persuade large numbers of working-age residents to come forward to get help finding jobs? Can Jobs-Plus overcome residents' deep cynicism derived from long experience associated with government programs that have been tried — and too often have failed — in low-income communities? How well do the range of financial incentives and employment supports offered on-site reach and engage residents, including those who have traditionally been the hardest to serve? Is there added value in offering residents employment services where they live, rather than through systems in which caseworkers meet clients only by appointment in their offices?

Certainly, implementing this complex program was not easy. Sites encountered funding delays, staffing problems, and, in some instances, gang activity, uneven housing authority support, and the multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds among residents at some sites. Yet there were also important accomplishments. The sites formed innovative service partnerships among housing authorities, resident leaders, and local workforce and welfare agencies; and they managed to engage substantial proportions of residents in program services and activities. In some sites, the public housing authorities also made impressive strides in communicating to residents a message encouraging employment from the beginning of their tenancy.

The story of the implementation of Jobs-Plus described in this report reveals what it takes for public housing authorities and their partners to put a multifaceted, place-based, “saturation” employment initiative into place in high-poverty communities and to actively engage residents in its services. The lessons it contains will be crucial to interpreting Jobs-Plus's overall effectiveness in increasing residents' employment and improving their well-being. How well Jobs-Plus succeeded in accomplishing this ambitious goal will be told in the evaluation's final report on impact findings, which will be published in late 2004.

Gordon Berlin  
Senior Vice President



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Susan Philipson Bloom developed and coordinated the review of Jobs-Plus case files for this report, and the following on-site field researchers interviewed program staff and residents over the years: Stan Bowie, Crystal Dunson, Sandy Gerber, Linda Kaljee, Carolina Katz, Ed Liebow, Francisca Magana, Theresa Myadze, Gabrielle O'Malley, Susan Phillips, Ellie Robinson, and Chia Vang. Ed Liebow also provided perceptive comments on an earlier draft of this report. The residents and staff members of Jobs-Plus, the housing management office, and other local service agencies across the Jobs-Plus sites generously shared their reflections in interviews. Several Jobs-Plus staff members, the Jobs-Plus collaborative in St. Paul, and The Rockefeller Foundation's Jobs Initiative Advisory Committee provided helpful insights and feedback on drafts of this report.

At MDRC, James Riccio played a crucial role in developing the report's central themes and generously gave of his time to help hone ideas and review successive drafts. Johanna Walter processed and analyzed the Jobs-Plus case file and housing authority administrative data, and Herbert Collado developed the charts for this report and checked their accuracy, with assistance from Lafleur Stephens and Chris Rodrigues. The following colleagues offered valuable suggestions for revisions: Gordon Berlin, Howard Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, Craig Howard, Jennifer Miller, Marilyn Price, Louis Richman, Amy Rosenberg, Nandita Verma, and Donna Wharton-Fields. Robert Weber edited the final manuscript, which was prepared for publication by Stephanie Cowell.

The Author



## Executive Summary

In 1998, the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families (“Jobs-Plus” for short) was launched in several cities around the nation in an effort to address the concentration of poverty and joblessness in public housing.<sup>1</sup> The Jobs-Plus approach seeks to transform “low-work, high-welfare” public housing developments into mixed-income communities by significantly raising the employment and earnings of the current residents. Jobs-Plus follows on a series of self-sufficiency initiatives sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and local public housing authorities over the past 30 years to help public (as well as Section 8) assisted housing residents to secure employment. Jobs-Plus also draws on various service features and strategies of comprehensive community initiatives that have targeted urban areas of concentrated poverty over the past decade with employment and social services.

However, the Jobs-Plus approach is much more complex and ambitious than previous housing authority self-sufficiency initiatives. Jobs-Plus offers residents a novel combination of (1) *employment-related services and activities* to help residents secure and retain employment; (2) *financial work incentives* consisting of changes in public housing rent rules that help “make work pay” by reducing the extent to which higher earnings from work are offset by increases in rent; and (3) *community support for work*, which seeks to strengthen social ties and activities among residents that support their job preparation and work efforts. Furthermore, Jobs-Plus is *place-based* in providing these services and activities from offices located on-site at the housing developments where residents live. Additionally, Jobs-Plus utilizes a bold *saturation strategy* that seeks to inform all working-age residents about the program and then to accommodate every resident who comes forward. Finally, Jobs-Plus relies on *local collaboratives* to design and implement the programs. In addition to the housing authority as the lead agency, the collaboratives are composed of representatives of the residents, the welfare agency, and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entity as mandatory partners, and they include other local service providers and employers who are recruited in response to the needs of the individual Jobs-Plus sites.

Through these efforts, Jobs-Plus seeks to infuse an entire housing development with its “employment message” and thereby to engage a high proportion of residents in its work-

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<sup>1</sup>The Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and The Rockefeller Foundation, with additional support from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor; the Joyce, James Irvine, Surdna, Northwest Area, Annie E. Casey, Stuart, and Washington Mutual Foundations; and BP. The demonstration is being managed by MDRC, which is also carefully evaluating the feasibility, implementation, and effectiveness of the program. The demonstration will continue through 2004.

promoting services and activities. Since there was considerable uncertainty at the outset of the demonstration about how to implement this untried program approach and about whether residents would take advantage of it, the *feasibility* of the program approach has been a key question for the demonstration research.

This report on residents' participation in Jobs-Plus addresses that question as part of a comprehensive, multiyear evaluation of the Jobs-Plus demonstration that is assessing through 2004 the implementation of the initiative and its effectiveness in improving the employment-related outcomes and well-being of public housing residents. Looking at the experiences of the Jobs-Plus programs in six cities (or demonstration "sites") around the nation — Baltimore, Chattanooga, Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle — the report offers a detailed examination of what it takes to involve large numbers of public housing residents in Jobs-Plus's services and activities. The report presents quantitative data showing the extent to which residents enrolled officially in the program and took advantage of its services and financial incentives. In addition, detailed qualitative data explore the variety of ways in which residents utilized the program and the reasons they gave for participating in the program or for staying away.

The findings of this report are therefore critical for establishing with confidence whether or not the Jobs-Plus approach received a fair test in this demonstration and in the effort to draw conclusions about its impacts on residents' employment and well-being. More broadly, the findings begin to address critical gaps in the limited research that currently exists on place-based employment initiatives — for instance, by specifying some reasonable expectations for service take-up in response to a saturation-of-services strategy. The report also offers lessons on implementation that would be important to consider in any future efforts to replicate Jobs-Plus or some of its features at other public housing developments or even in low-income neighborhoods that do not include public housing.

## **Key Findings About Participation in Jobs-Plus**

### **Challenges to the Jobs-Plus Approach**

- **Jobs-Plus encountered unexpected delays in program implementation, skepticism among residents, crime and safety problems, and wide variations in residents' employment histories and service needs.**

Each of the Jobs-Plus sites experienced lengthy, unexpected delays in implementing the three Jobs-Plus components — including the much-anticipated rent incentives — which were rolled out incrementally instead of all together at the same time. Furthermore, the sites found that Jobs-Plus's place-based saturation strategy presents a host of operational challenges. At first, the Jobs-Plus programs encountered widespread suspicion and cynicism among residents who had



repeatedly seen service programs come and go in their communities without making good on promises to substantially improve their lives. The Jobs-Plus programs also found that a geographically defined target population can encompass a range of employment backgrounds and eligibility for categorical services, as well as a variety of cultural backgrounds in multiethnic developments in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle. These factors complicated efforts to provide residents with appropriate on-site assistance and off-site service referrals to address their needs and circumstances. High resident turnover in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton required Jobs-Plus to continuously direct staff and resources toward outreach efforts to inform incoming residents about the program. Serious problems with safety and crime undercut program operations at a few sites. Finally, like many welfare-to-work programs, Jobs-Plus had a harder time engaging various subgroups of residents, such as working residents who needed help with job retention and career advancement, substance abusers, and victims of domestic violence.

### **Programmatic Accomplishments**

- **Residents were widely aware of Jobs-Plus, and over half of those targeted enrolled officially in Jobs-Plus and took up its employment services and financial incentives. Almost two-thirds of targeted households were connected to the program in these ways.**

The field research offers preliminary indications that extensive outreach efforts across the sites made residents widely aware of Jobs-Plus as a source of employment assistance and of the program's rent incentives. Furthermore, data from Jobs-Plus participant case files and housing authority administrative records indicate that, as of June 2001, Jobs-Plus managed to attach over half the *targeted residents* (that is, all those who were of working age and were not disabled) across the sites, either through individual enrollment in Jobs-Plus or through membership in a household that was receiving the rent incentives. In addition, 58 percent of the *targeted households* were connected to the program in these ways. Moreover, these rates were higher among residents living in the Jobs-Plus developments later in the demonstration (for example, the 2000 cohort) than among those living in the development earlier (for example, the 1998 cohort).<sup>2</sup> For example, the attachment rate of the 2000 cohort was higher (61 percent) than that of the 1998 cohort (51 percent) since Jobs-Plus could offer later cohorts the full complement of its services and rent incentives as well as a track record of success.

As shown in Figure 1, some sites' attachment rates were particularly impressive. For instance, the Dayton and St. Paul programs had the greatest success of all the sites in attaching

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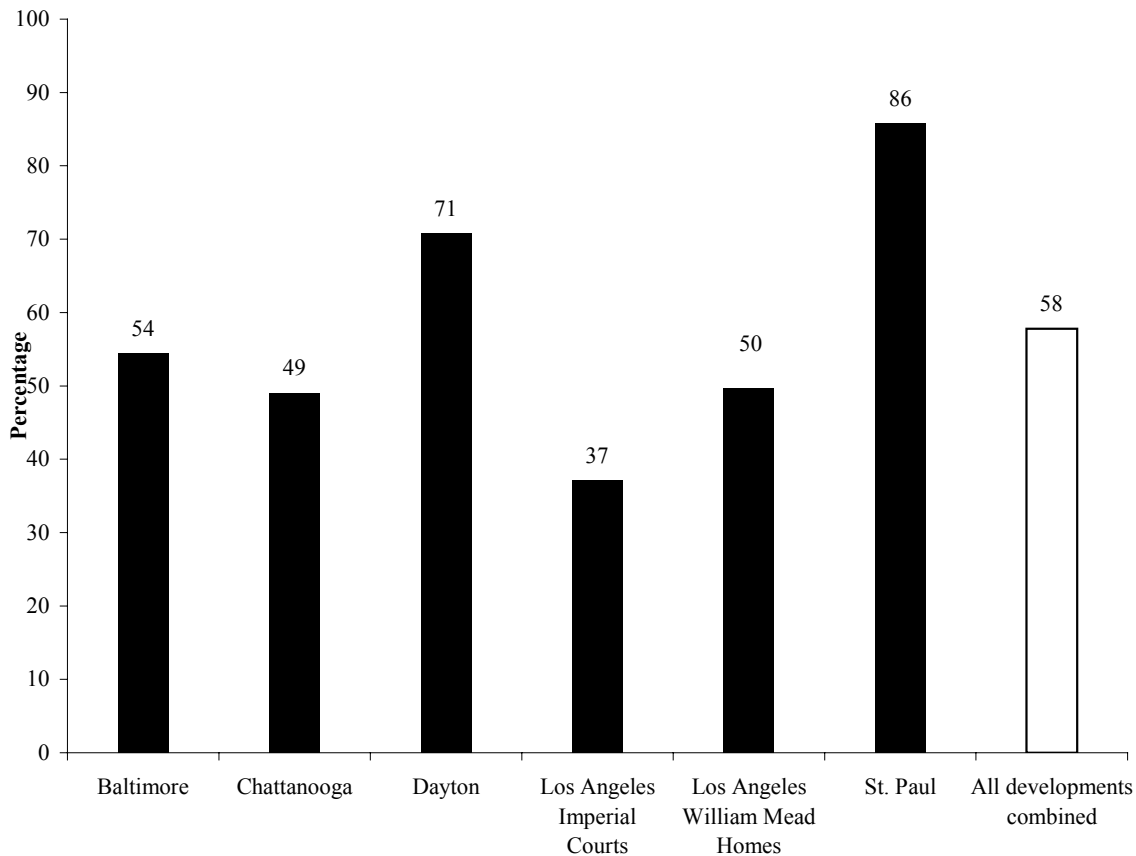
<sup>2</sup>The term "cohort" refers to all residents, ages 18 to 61 years, whose names appeared on the housing authority's 50058 forms as a resident of the Jobs-Plus development in October 1998 and/or 1999 and/or 2000. Thus, a resident who did not move would be counted in each cohort.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 1**

**Attachment Rate Among All Targeted Households  
Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments at Any Time Between 1998 and 2000, by Development**

*What percentage of targeted households had a member enrolled in  
Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted households” refers to households headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

targeted households (71 percent and 86 percent, respectively). The attachment rates were even higher for the 2000 cohort: 92 percent in Dayton and 78 percent in St. Paul.

Finally, more than half the residents who enrolled in Jobs-Plus looked to the program for employment assistance. Residents were most likely to seek employment services that could directly address their pressing need for work — such as job search and job referral assistance — and, to a lesser degree, help with job skills development.

- **Jobs-Plus was able to draw participants from both currently employed and unemployed residents and from those who were currently welfare recipients and those who were not welfare recipients.**

Although no single demographic characteristic distinguished the Jobs-Plus participants from the nonparticipants, Jobs-Plus did make inroads at most of the sites among *working residents*, who were drawn by the rent incentives as a key benefit, as well as among *nonworking residents*, who needed help getting a job. Jobs-Plus was also moderately to very successful at most of the sites in involving *welfare recipients* — a key target group for the demonstration — including almost two-thirds of those who reported AFDC/TANF income in the period between 1998 and 2001 in Dayton and nearly three-fourths of such residents in St. Paul. At the same time, Jobs-Plus also drew residents who were *not current or recent welfare recipients* and who therefore were not eligible for employment assistance from the welfare agency.

- **Residents were involved in Jobs-Plus in complex ways that the quantitative data cannot capture. For example, as a place-based initiative, Jobs-Plus could offer assistance in a variety of informal and ad hoc ways outside the program office.**

The quantitative findings on formal participation in Jobs-Plus are likely to be conservative estimates of residents' use of and involvement in Jobs-Plus across the sites. The case file review for this report was conducted at a time when several sites were still struggling to get staff and program components on-line. Furthermore, the place-based, saturation strategy permits Jobs-Plus to assist residents in a variety of informal ways besides providing formal program services. For instance, residents got job search counseling in ad hoc exchanges with staff in the courtyard or heard about job openings at community activities that Jobs-Plus sponsored. These forms of participation cannot readily be captured by case file records and administrative data, and they are documented instead for this report by field research that was conducted through summer 2003.

The field research also shows that, in their use of the Jobs-Plus components, the residents looked for help with pressing needs and for services that added value to their existing “portfolio of service providers,” including such support services as assistance with transporta-

tion, food, and child care. Participation therefore took the form of a high level of drop-in visits or calls to the program office rather than continuous involvement over an extended period of time. Furthermore, residents looked to Jobs-Plus for help in accessing services from other agencies. Jobs-Plus helped to cut through the red tape and followed up referrals to ensure that residents did not fall through the cracks. Residents appreciated Jobs-Plus's individualized, flexible assistance in response to the wide array of issues that influenced their employment, and those who lived in multiethnic housing developments liked the program's culturally specific offerings, which ranged from translation services to classes in English as a Second Language (ESL) and U.S. citizenship, to a General Educational Development (GED) course for Spanish speakers, to accompanying residents to immigration hearings in order to secure work permits. Finally, residents applauded Jobs-Plus's use of resident outreach workers and staff, which made the program more approachable and enhanced its credibility.

Nonetheless, this report emphasizes that much of what the residents described as being helpful about Jobs-Plus's service approach — ongoing outreach, personalized attention, responding to the wide array of issues that influence employment, and tracking of referral agencies and employers — required the Jobs-Plus staff to undertake considerable investments in time, training, and administrative support.

- **There was considerable variation across the sites in the extent to which the Jobs-Plus programs were able to get residents to join the program. This cross-site variation was attributed primarily to organizational factors, including differences across the sites in securing stable program leadership, adequate professional staffing, local housing authority support, and welfare agency cooperation in recruiting and assisting welfare recipients.**

There was also considerable variation across the sites in the levels of participation that Jobs-Plus was able to achieve. For instance, attachment rates of targeted residents of the combined 1998-2000 cohorts through June 2001 ranged across a spectrum, from lows of 29 percent (William Mead Homes) and 33 percent (Imperial Courts), to midpoints of 48 percent (Chattanooga) and 52 percent (Baltimore), and finally to highs of 69 percent (Dayton) and 78 percent (St. Paul). (This report emphasizes that the lower rates of enrollment and service take-up at the two Los Angeles sites through June 2001 were the consequences of programmatic and local problems at Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes.)

The sites differed in the extent to which Jobs-Plus enrollees participated in various services and activities. For instance, in regard to the rent incentives, even through December 2002, Jobs-Plus in Baltimore consistently remained at the low end of the spectrum, managing to engage only 12 percent of targeted residents of the combined 1998-2000 cohorts. Jobs-Plus in

Chattanooga and Dayton and at Imperial Courts hovered around the middle, engaging 23 percent, 36 percent, and 28 percent, respectively. In contrast, rent incentives receipt at William Mead Homes shot up once the program was fully staffed, rising from 27 percent in June 2001 to 46 percent in December 2002 — second only to St. Paul, where rent incentives receipt among targeted residents reached a high of 58 percent.

Some sites faced tougher working environments and more residents who had serious barriers to employment than other sites did. This report, however, contains no obvious or clear evidence to indicate that these conditions drove the cross-site variation in Jobs-Plus participation. In contrast, more influential factors seem to be the organizational conditions that affected the programs' capacity to capitalize on being on-site to administer services and conduct outreach effectively and consistently. At least three organizational factors played a prominent role in contributing to this cross-site variation: (1) stable program leadership and appropriate professional staffing, (2) the continued support for Jobs-Plus of the local housing authority — especially the on-site management office — and (3) the cooperation of the local welfare agency in helping Jobs-Plus recruit and assist welfare recipients at the housing developments. For instance, the success of the programs in Dayton and St. Paul in attaching substantial numbers of targeted residents underscores the importance of strategic cooperation with the housing management office in enrolling residents in the rent incentives plans. In contrast, the Jobs-Plus programs in Los Angeles were “late bloomers,” experiencing a substantial increase in program activity, enrollments, and take-up of services and rent incentives only after receiving a full complement of staff and stable leadership at both housing developments in the latter half of 2001.

## **Conclusion and Selected Recommendations**

This report provides preliminary but important evidence in support of the feasibility of the Jobs-Plus approach and its place-based saturation strategy for assisting sizable numbers of public housing residents with employment. The ultimate determination of whether the Jobs-Plus approach should be replicated will depend on the final research findings concerning its employment and income effects. However, this report offers lessons that are also relevant to the efforts of employment programs to locate in low-income communities outside of public housing and to assist residents with a broad array of employment-related backgrounds and circumstances. The following are selected recommendations for using the Jobs-Plus approach in whole or in part in either public housing or other low-income communities.

### **CAPITALIZING ON PLACE IN OFFERING EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

- Take advantage of informal, ad hoc ways available to a place-based program to engage and assist residents wherever they live and “hang out.” For instance, hold community events and conduct door-to-door outreach to inform

residents about employment opportunities and services, and make home visits to assist them.

- Offer individualized assistance to residents as well as standardized group services on-site, and develop referral partnerships with local service agencies to address residents' various employment needs, cultural backgrounds, and eligibility for different categorical services.
- Form partnerships with local ethnic organizations to develop culturally specific outreach and employment services for the various languages, cultural practices, and immigration-related problems of residents in multicultural communities.
- Recruit residents to help with program outreach and service delivery in order to draw on their social networks and knowledge of local conditions and needs, to win the trust of the community, and to attract participants to the program.
- Designate a program staff member to coordinate residents' outreach and service activities, and provide training for those responsibilities, such as instructions for conducting door-to-door outreach and handling confidential information.
- Use employment-related support services, such as monthly bus tokens or passes, as a "hook" to bring working residents regularly into the office to ask them about their employment and help them with career advancement.

### **COORDINATING WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

- Arrange for the management office to send the program monthly updates of incoming residents, and have a program staff member attend move-in interviews with new residents and annual lease renewal interviews with current residents, in order to orient and enroll them into the program.
- Have the housing management office inform the program of job gains and losses among the residents and incidences of domestic violence, substance abuse, and other problems that can undercut their employment, so that the program can follow up.

## **PARTNERING WITH THE WELFARE AGENCY AND THE WIA ONE-STOP CENTERS**

- Arrange for the local welfare agency to identify welfare recipients who reside in the housing development or neighborhood and who might be recruited by the program.
- Have the local welfare agency recognize participation in the program's employment activities as a way for welfare recipients to fulfill their work requirements.
- Consider substituting participation in Jobs-Plus as the mandated work activity for welfare recipients, thereby requiring recipients to visit the program office to enroll and to check in regularly to receive their benefits.
- Colocate welfare-to-work caseworkers with the program staff at the housing development or in the neighborhood, and integrate them into the program's efforts to recruit welfare recipients, to develop and implement individual service plans, and to monitor job retention and career development needs.
- Arrange with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop Center for program staff and participants to have on-line access through the program's computers to the One-Stop's database of employment openings.
- Train program staff in the procedures for processing applications for local WIA funds and programs so that the staff can knowledgeably help residents assemble the required paperwork and supporting documents before going to the One-Stop.
- Where there is gang activity or other dangers, make arrangements to ensure the safety of residents when traveling to and from the One-Stop Center to utilize services.





## Chapter 1

# Introduction

Since 1998, the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families (“Jobs-Plus” for short) has been under way in several cities around the nation in an ambitious effort to address the concentration of poverty and joblessness in public housing.<sup>1</sup> In the decades since the Great Depression, public housing has become a source of long-term housing for the chronically out of work and impoverished, instead of temporary shelter for mainly families who are working but poor. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported in 1998 that nationally only about one-third of public housing families with children reported wages as their primary source of income. Almost 50 percent of residents relied instead on public assistance — including AFDC/TANF payments, state-provided General Assistance (GA), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) — as their primary source of income.<sup>2</sup> Welfare reform has further heightened for local public housing authorities the urgency of addressing high rates of joblessness and public assistance receipt among public housing residents. The passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 confronted local housing authorities with the prospect of severe financial difficulties if the agencies are unable to collect rents from large numbers of residents who have exceeded their lifetime limits on cash assistance without achieving self-sufficiency, and if the federal government fails to supplement the shortfalls in rental income. The Jobs-Plus demonstration attempts to transform “low-work, high-welfare” public housing developments into mixed-income communities by significantly raising the employment and earnings of the current residents; it is therefore a timely response to this urgent situation.

Furthermore, in its efforts to promote employment among public housing residents, Jobs-Plus is pioneering in largely uncharted territory. It is far more ambitious in its objectives and more complex in its structure than previous self-sufficiency initiatives sponsored by HUD and local public housing authorities over the past 30 years to help public (as well as Section 8) assisted housing residents to secure employment. Jobs-Plus offers residents an innovative combination of program components that include rent-based financial incentives to work and community-building efforts in addition to employment-related services. Jobs-Plus also draws on

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<sup>1</sup>The Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and The Rockefeller Foundation, with additional support from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor; the Joyce, Annie E. Casey, James Irvine, Surdna, Northwest Area, Stuart, and Washington Mutual Foundations; and BP. The demonstration is being managed by MDRC, which is also carefully evaluating the feasibility, implementation, and effectiveness of the program. The demonstration will continue through 2004.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1998.

various service features and strategies of neighborhood-based programs and comprehensive community initiatives. The program operates on-site at the developments where residents live, and it utilizes a bold saturation strategy in an attempt to permeate the entire development with knowledge of the program and to engage substantial numbers of residents in its services and activities. Finally, because this package of services, incentives, and other work supports with a saturation focus has never been tried before, there has been considerable uncertainty about how best to administer it and about whether residents would take advantage of it. Consequently, a key issue for the research demonstration has been the *feasibility* of this ambitious and unprecedented program approach.

This report on resident participation in Jobs-Plus is part of a comprehensive, multiyear evaluation of the Jobs-Plus demonstration that is assessing the implementation and feasibility of the initiative and its effectiveness in improving the employment-related outcomes and well-being of public housing residents through 2004. The findings of this report shed important light on key questions concerning the feasibility of the Jobs-Plus approach as a way to engage and assist substantial numbers of targeted residents with employment. For instance, how extensive is residents' awareness of and involvement in Jobs-Plus's services and activities? What does (or would) it take for Jobs-Plus to inform and engage substantial numbers of targeted residents? The findings of this report can inform and advance this discussion by offering a detailed examination of what is actually required to involve public housing residents in Jobs-Plus's services and activities and by specifying reasonable expectations for service take-up among public housing residents. Furthermore, this report provides critical information that is needed to establish with confidence whether or not the Jobs-Plus model received a fair test in this demonstration in the effort to draw conclusions about its impacts on residents' employment and well-being.

## **The Jobs-Plus Approach**

Jobs-Plus is a voluntary program that offers public housing residents a novel combination of employment-related services, generous rent policies that help "make work pay," and community-building efforts to support working residents (Table 1.1). Jobs-Plus provides these services and activities from offices located on-site at the public housing developments where the residents live.

Furthermore, Jobs-Plus utilizes a bold *saturation strategy* (Figure 1.1) that targets its services and activities to *all* working-age residents of a housing development — from the most motivated and most likely-to-succeed to the hardest-to-serve. In the past decade, neighborhood-based programs and comprehensive community initiatives have targeted urban areas of concentrated poverty with employment and social services, and they have capitalized on residents' networks and the knowledge that neighborhood-based programs have of their communities to recruit and assist residents more widely and effectively. Similarly, Jobs-Plus's saturation strat-

egy seeks to *inform* all working-age residents in the development about its employment services and activities — drawing also on residents’ networks to spread the message — and to then *accommodate* all residents who come forward for these services and activities, instead of requiring them to compete for a limited number of slots. Jobs-Plus thereby endeavors to enhance resident take-up of its services and activities and to infuse the entire housing development with its “employment message.”<sup>3</sup>

## The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 1.1

### The Jobs-Plus Model

- 
- **Employment-related services and activities** to help residents secure and retain employment, including job search instruction, education programs, vocational training, and support services such as child care and transportation assistance.
  - **Financial incentives to work**, consisting of changes in public housing rent rules that help to “make work pay” by reducing the extent to which higher earnings from work are offset by increases in rent. These incentives assure residents that program participation and higher earnings from employment will not automatically raise their rents.
  - **Community support for work**, which seeks to strengthen social ties and activities among residents to support their job preparation and work efforts — for instance, by fostering neighbor-to-neighbor exchanges of information about job opportunities or various employment services available through Jobs-Plus.
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Jobs-Plus has been implemented in the following six cities (or demonstration “sites”) around the nation:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>An alternative approach for creating mixed-income communities in public housing developments that is also being utilized by HUD and local housing authorities (having been authorized and encouraged by the federal Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998) involves recruiting higher-income and working families to move into public and Section 8 assisted housing along with very low-income families. For further information about the background of the Jobs-Plus demonstration and features of the Jobs-Plus program model, see Riccio (1999, Chapters 1 and 2).

<sup>4</sup>Cleveland, Ohio, was also initially a Jobs-Plus research demonstration site, but a range of factors there contributed to shifts in the interests of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, so that supporting an employment demonstration that is limited to a single housing development was no longer feasible for the agency. In November 1999 — by mutual agreement of the housing authority, MDRC, and the lead funders of the national Jobs-Plus demonstration — Cleveland formally left the demonstration.

- Gilmore Homes in Baltimore, Maryland
- Harriet Tubman Homes in Chattanooga, Tennessee
- DeSoto Bass Courts in Dayton, Ohio
- Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes, both in Los Angeles, California
- Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul, Minnesota
- Rainier Vista Garden Community in Seattle, Washington

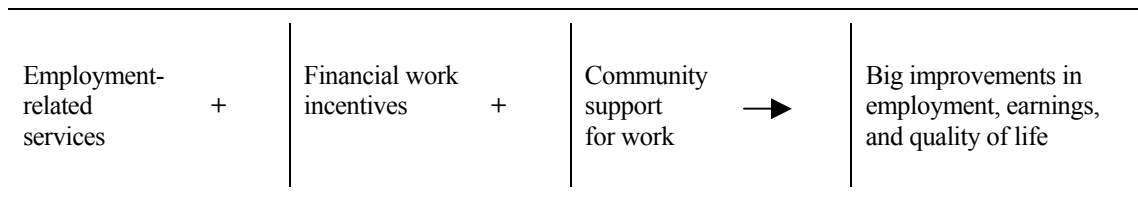
Full descriptions of the sites and their programs can be found in Appendix A.

### The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Figure 1.1

### The Jobs-Plus Strategy

**Saturation: Targeting all working-age residents with:**



In Seattle, however, the housing authority received a federal HOPE VI grant in 1999, which is being used to tear down and rebuild the Rainier Vista development.<sup>5</sup> Because of the temporary dislocation of the residents that demolition and reconstruction has entailed, Seattle’s

<sup>5</sup>HOPE VI is a HUD program that “is aimed at redeveloping the most ‘severely distressed’ housing projects throughout the country. These include projects that suffer from physical deterioration, severe isolation, lack of job opportunities, inadequate services, high crime rates, concentration of minorities and extremely poor residents, high rates of welfare dependency, and large numbers of single parent families” (Collins, Curley, Clay, and Lara, 2002, p. 3). The redevelopment process involves replacing public housing units with apartments or townhouses, some of which will become available at market rate to working families in an effort to reduce the concentration of poor households in the development communities. The local housing authority must use some HOPE VI funds to offer supportive services to residents who are relocated during the demolition, to help them find housing on the private market. However, housing authorities also have the option of offering — in addition to housing search assistance — various employment-related services to prepare residents for employment and life as private housing tenants (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

program is therefore no longer in the national Jobs-Plus demonstration. However, since a Jobs-Plus program continues to operate at Rainier Vista as part of the HOPE VI community and supportive services plan (under the name “HOPE-Plus”), research on Seattle’s program is included in this report.<sup>6</sup>

In Chattanooga, the housing authority, MDRC, and the lead demonstration funders mutually agreed in April 2002 to transition the site into a financial-incentives-only program that would no longer offer the other Jobs-Plus components (employment-related services and community support for work). This agreement was prompted by a number of factors, including the housing authority’s decision to bring its developments under the management of a private contractor. The demands of implementing this privatization initiative would have limited the attention that the housing authority could give to Jobs-Plus. The site’s transition into a financial-incentives-only program was completed by the late summer of 2002.<sup>7</sup>

Each of the Jobs-Plus programs was designed and implemented under the auspices of a local collaborative consisting of the housing authority as the lead agency, the welfare agency, a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entity, and resident leaders as mandatory partners; other local service providers and employers have been recruited in response to the needs of individual sites.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the Jobs-Plus programs are structured in a similar way across the sites. The staff and activities are located in converted housing units, community centers, or other facilities at the housing developments. Although staffing varies by site, it typically includes the following positions:

- *A project director* manages the program’s daily operations.
- *Case managers* guide and monitor residents’ efforts to prepare for, seek, and retain jobs.
- *Job developers* build program links with employers and locate job openings.
- *Resident outreach workers* tell residents about Jobs-Plus and get them involved in the program.

Across sites, the Jobs-Plus programs offer the residents employment-related services and rent incentives in the same general sequence. First, intensive *outreach and recruitment efforts* are directed at the residents in the housing development. As part of the *community support for work* component, residents have been hired as outreach workers and translators to ensure that members of the community are addressed in their primary languages. Next, residents who express interest in the program receive *intake, enrollment, and assessment services*, primarily on-site, by the case

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<sup>6</sup>For an extensive examination of resident participation in HOPE-Plus at Rainier Vista Garden Community, see Liebow, Reid, O’Malley, and Marsh (2003).

<sup>7</sup>See Bowie in Kato (2003).

<sup>8</sup>For details about the role of collaboratives in the Jobs-Plus demonstration, see Kato and Riccio (2001).

manager and employment specialists, often assisted by resident staff. This process permits the staff to orient residents to the program and to determine their eligibility for the rent incentives and/or their readiness for employment and their service needs.<sup>9</sup> Jobs-Plus then offers residents a selection of *education, employment, and support services*, which include instruction in job search techniques and basic work habits and norms, job training, basic skills education, and job placement assistance. Jobs-Plus also offers the *rent incentives* to households that include an employed member, and eligible households are encouraged to enroll in the incentives plan.<sup>10</sup>

Jobs-Plus provides employment-related services through a combination of *on-site services* by Jobs-Plus employees and colocated agency staff and *off-site programs* to which residents are referred. On-site employment resource centers or learning centers have been opened at all the housing developments, and they typically offer computer-based job search services and instruction in basic education and computer literacy (for example, word-processing programs and Internet use). Off-site services include job preparation, training, and work experience opportunities. Support services include child care, transportation, and referrals for substance abuse treatment and help in dealing with domestic violence.<sup>11</sup>

## **Limited Lessons About Using a Place-Based, Saturation Strategy to Promote Employment**

The Jobs-Plus demonstration offers an unprecedented opportunity to rigorously explore and assess the feasibility of using a place-based, saturation strategy to assist local residents with employment. Such initiatives — and rigorous evaluation of them — are rare.

The existing research has little to say about the effectiveness of neighborhood-based programs and comprehensive community initiatives from which Jobs-Plus has derived aspects of its place-based outreach and service approach. The research on these programs and initiatives has typically consisted of qualitative descriptions and analyses of the implementation and operations of the programs and of the communities they served. These studies offer little numerical

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<sup>9</sup>For example, HOPE-Plus in Seattle uses an intake form that resembles a generic job application form and that requires the resident to use a computer link to a job database. Staff observe how residents perform these tasks as a hands-on way to assess their skill needs.

<sup>10</sup>Each Jobs-Plus site has developed its own financial incentives plan. Most of the plans involve flat rents based on the size of the apartment rather than on the level of household income. However, the plans of the Baltimore and Chattanooga sites calculate a household's rent using a smaller percentage of income than the traditional, authoritywide percentage. For details about sites' individual plans, see Miller and Riccio (2002).

<sup>11</sup>Kato and Riccio, 2001, pp. 18-19, updated.

evidence of the extent of program outreach and service take-up (or about the impacts on employment and earnings) achieved by these place-based strategies.<sup>12</sup>

There is also a small body of research on a series of “self-sufficiency” program demonstrations sponsored by HUD that funded local housing authorities to provide employment services and financial work incentives.<sup>13</sup> Their relevance for Jobs-Plus is limited, since these programs were directed wholly or primarily at recipients of Section 8 housing vouchers or certificates instead of public housing residents. Therefore, none of their employment services were available on-site at public housing developments. Furthermore, much of the research was conducted before the effects could be seen on program participation among adult welfare recipients after welfare reform introduced work requirements and lifetime limits on public assistance. However, the research on those initiatives does highlight the difficulties that local housing authorities can encounter in recruiting program participants and providing employment assistance. For example, a 1999 study of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs found that most of the surveyed programs were unable to meet their quota of participants and that only 25 percent of them reported having more applicants than available slots.<sup>14</sup> Issues that FSS program coordinators reported as concerns and impediments to participation for residents included the fear of becoming ineligible for assisted housing if they earned more from working; skepticism about the capacity of social programs to help them; distrust of the housing authority; and problems in juggling family responsibilities (including caregiving) with work, education, and training activities. In another study — of the Gateway Transitional Families Program sponsored in 1987 for public housing residents by the housing authority of Charlotte, North Carolina — 50 of the first 100 participants were intentionally clustered at a single housing development in order to promote peer counseling and support among the participants and to provide an on-site case manager. However, Gateway participants who were subsequently surveyed cited concerns and impediments to participation that are similar to those mentioned by FSS program coordinators.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>For an overview of comprehensive community initiatives and their assessments, see Kubisch et al. (2002). For information about the Neighborhood and Family Initiative, see Chaskin (2000) and Chaskin, Dansokho, and Richards (1999); for the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative, see Molina and Nelson (2001) and Proscio (2002); for the Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, see Brown, Butler, and Hamilton et al. (2001); and for the Community Building Initiative, see Local Initiative Support Corporation (1996).

<sup>13</sup>Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS) of 1984, Operation Bootstrap of 1989, and Family Self-Sufficiency First (FSS) of 1991 called for the housing authorities to work with public and private sector entities, such as employers, community colleges, and nonprofit service providers, to locate employment services and job opportunities for participating residents. Employment services typically included remedial and general education, skills training, and help with job readiness, job search, transportation, and child care. PSS and Operation Bootstrap offered Section 8 certificates to those on Section 8 waiting lists as an incentive to participate. And FSS provided escrow savings accounts into which the local housing authority deposited rent increases that participants incurred from earning a higher income from employment. Participation in all of these programs was voluntary.

<sup>14</sup>Rohe and Kleit, 1999.

<sup>15</sup>Rohe, 1995; Rohe and Kleit, 1997.

As a program operating under the auspices of the local housing authority, Jobs-Plus would likely also encounter these challenges.

Another small body of research on the efforts of local housing authorities to provide supportive services to public housing residents affected by the HOPE VI demolition and reconstruction process offers some lessons about service strategies and challenges presented by public housing clients. While the Community and Social Services component of the HOPE VI grants requires public housing authorities to provide housing relocation services to residents, the agencies have the option of also offering employment-related services to prepare residents to become working members of redeveloped, mixed-income housing or tenants in the private housing market. For instance, as part of the demolition of its high-rise housing developments, the Chicago Housing Authority offered residents access to classes in budgeting, General Educational Development (GED), computer training, and job readiness as well as help with child care and housing relocation assistance. These services were provided on- and off-site by housing authority staff and local nonprofit service providers. A recent study focused on those residents who accepted Section 8 vouchers to temporarily or permanently relocate in private housing. It underscored the range of service needs that programs had to address to prepare residents for employment; in addition to low levels of education and work experience, the barriers included serious physical and mental health problems.<sup>16</sup>

Another recent evaluation — of the HOPE VI Resident Services program at Mission Main in Boston, Massachusetts — indicates that, to attain high rates of service take-up, it is important to offer employment assistance in a conveniently accessible manner. Although the housing authority offered Mission Main residents a range of employment-related services and some of them were located on-site at the development, service take-up was low among residents who had relocated outside the development.<sup>17</sup> For instance, while 79 percent of the surveyed residents who still lived at Mission Main reported having heard of the Resident Services program and 45 percent of them had used its services, only 36 percent of the residents who had relocated outside the development had heard of the program, and only 18 percent of them had used its services.<sup>18</sup> Yet the relocated residents had a continuing and significant need for these services, being (among the surveyed residents) “the most economically disadvantaged group, with the lowest employment levels [and] incomes, and the highest [levels of] benefit use.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Popkin and Cunningham, 2002.

<sup>17</sup>Collins, Curley, Clay, and Lara, 2002. Employment-related supportive services included employability assessment, case management, job preparation, job search/placement, and classes in English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED, and computer skills as well as assistance in applying to off-site vocational schools and colleges for education and training.

<sup>18</sup>Collins, Curley, Clay, and Lara, 2002, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup>Collins, Curley, Clay, and Lara, 2002, p. 15.



In contrast, there is an extensive body of research on the progress that welfare-to-work programs have had in involving AFDC/TANF recipients in employment activities, which continually expands with new additions.<sup>20</sup> However, while the Jobs-Plus demonstration works with the welfare agency to provide employment assistance to working-age welfare recipients who reside in public housing, Jobs-Plus's saturation strategy also broadly targets all working-age residents — and not just welfare recipients — in each housing development.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, whereas welfare recipients are frequently mandated by the welfare agency to participate in these programs, participation in Jobs-Plus is voluntary.

In many ways, therefore, the Jobs-Plus sites and this report on participation have both entered new territory — the former, in implementing the program and its place-based, saturation strategy for offering employment assistance to all working-age residents of a public housing development; and the latter, in examining and assessing residents' responses to this ambitious service approach.

## Key Questions Addressed by This Report

This report addresses the following overarching question: What conclusions can be drawn about the feasibility of using the Jobs-Plus approach, with its place-based, saturation strategy, to assist substantial numbers of working-age public housing residents with employment? Answering this question is critical to determining whether the demonstration sites provided a full execution of the Jobs-Plus approach and, therefore, whether the impact evaluation was a fair test of this approach. The report addresses this overarching question by examining the following key themes concerning the implementation of — and residents' responses to — the Jobs-Plus approach.

- **Challenges facing Jobs-Plus.** What challenges has Jobs-Plus faced in its efforts to offer employment services and activities on-site at saturation levels and to involve all working-age residents? For instance, what unique difficulties might result from locating an employment program in a public housing development and targeting public housing residents?

Jobs-Plus's novel approach presented the demonstration sites with a host of both operational challenges and creative opportunities for program development. Chapter 2 of this report describes how the Jobs-Plus programs across the sites quickly learned that it is no quick-and-

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<sup>20</sup>For comprehensive examinations of participation in welfare-to-work programs across the United States and the research on this subject, see Hamilton (1988, 1995); and Hamilton and Scrivener (1999).

<sup>21</sup>For a housing development to be included in the Jobs-Plus demonstration, at least 40 percent of its working-age residents had to be relying primarily on AFDC for their income. At each site, the local welfare agency was designated as one of the key collaborative partners in designing and supporting the Jobs-Plus program.

easy proposition to utilize a place-based, saturation strategy to engage and assist public housing residents. The sites confronted numerous and daunting recruitment and service challenges and unexpected delays in implementing the program's components. By targeting the entire working-age population of a public housing development, the programs had to find ways to address the wide array of work histories and major barriers to service usage and employment that existed among the residents. By locating in public housing developments, the programs at several sites operated in high-crime areas where widespread substance abuse and gang-related violence posed serious threats to program implementation, outreach, and service delivery. As a program under the auspices of the local housing authority, Jobs-Plus had to contend with that agency's lengthy procurement processes and fluctuating support as well as with residents' deep-seated suspicions of their landlord — conditions that at several sites resulted in critical staffing shortfalls and difficulties in marketing services and the rent incentives. Consequently, none of the sites was able to launch all three Jobs-Plus components simultaneously as one package, in accordance with the original intent of the program model. In fact, it took the sites several years to achieve this objective.

- **Implementing Jobs-Plus's place-based, saturation strategy.** What steps has Jobs-Plus taken to implement its saturation strategy and overcome difficulties at the public housing developments? How has it capitalized on being on-site to familiarize itself with the community and to draw on residents' networks to reach and involve all working-age residents?

Chapter 3 highlights the ways in which several Jobs-Plus programs creatively capitalized on being on-site at the housing developments to address these challenges. In addition to cultivating extensive partnerships with other local service providers to accommodate the wide-ranging service needs of the residents, these Jobs-Plus programs worked closely with on-site housing management staff to send out a pro-employment message throughout the development, and they utilized resident outreach workers and informal, ad hoc opportunities for staff to interact with residents outside the Jobs-Plus office (for example, through home visits, exchanges in the parking lot, community celebrations) and to go wherever residents were most likely to be, to familiarize them with the program and offer employment-related help.

- **Residents' responses to Jobs-Plus.** How have public housing residents responded to Jobs-Plus and its saturation strategy? How widespread is their awareness of the program? Have their experiences of outreach and service usage with a place-based program been different in important ways from past experiences with off-site service providers?

Chapters 4 and 5 then look at the targeted residents' responses to this place-based, saturation strategy, using both quantitative and qualitative data over different time periods to illustrate

the many forms of resident involvement in these evolving programs. It is important to note that the notion of “saturating” the housing developments with services and activities refers to making the knowledge — as well as the availability — of Jobs-Plus’s services and activities widespread among all working-age residents: Are targeted residents broadly aware of Jobs-Plus and informed about its services and activities? Technically, the concept of reaching saturation does not necessarily mean that Jobs-Plus also *succeeded* in getting all working-age residents to take up its services and activities. Yet *through* this saturation strategy, Jobs-Plus seeks to assist a large number of working-age residents and, thereby, to significantly raise employment and earnings in the developments.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, this report looks at the extent and ways in which residents took advantage of Jobs-Plus’s services and activities across the sites. In addition, it explores which factors encouraged — or discouraged — residents from participating in the program.

- **Conclusions and lessons.** What conclusions can be drawn from this demonstration about the feasibility of using the Jobs-Plus approach to assist large numbers of public housing residents with employment? Furthermore, what operational lessons do the experiences of the demonstration sites offer concerning “best practices” for implementing Jobs-Plus’s place-based, saturation strategy? What broader lessons does this demonstration also offer to local welfare agencies, to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entities, and to other service providers about using place-based, saturation strategies to provide employment assistance to low-income persons?

Chapter 6 returns to the overarching question that prompted this report concerning the feasibility of the Jobs-Plus approach for broadly assisting public housing residents with employment. The chapter also offers lessons for implementing a place-based, saturation strategy to provide employment assistance, including best practices that can be applied more broadly to such programs in low-income communities in general, not just in public housing developments.

## Data Sources

This report draws on the following combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources to illustrate and assess resident participation in Jobs-Plus:

- **Housing authority administrative data.** At the start of tenancy and during their annual lease redetermination process, public housing leaseholders must

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<sup>22</sup>It is important to note that although “saturation level” refers to universal availability of services and activities to all working-age residents, it does not mean that Jobs-Plus can accommodate, for instance, each applicant who wants certified nurse assistant (CNA) training with a specific provider; instead, Jobs-Plus will ensure that each applicant has access to CNA training from one of several local providers.

fill out HUD's 50058 form, in which they provide information about their household's composition, income, and demographic characteristics.

- **Case files of Jobs-Plus enrollees.** These were maintained by Jobs-Plus staff and were reviewed by MDRC staff and field research consultants at the demonstration sites in summer 2001.
- **Field research.** The field research includes observations of Jobs-Plus activities as well as both structured and unstructured interviews of residents (including those not enrolled in the program) and of staff members of Jobs-Plus, the housing authority, and local service agencies. This research was conducted by MDRC researchers and local consultants, and it took place over the period from summer 2000 through summer 2003.

A wide variety of data sources was needed to illustrate and assess the multiple forms and levels of resident participation that were generated by the dynamic Jobs-Plus programs over the course of the demonstration. For instance, the administrative data from HUD's 50058 forms provide important demographic information about the target population and enrollees, and the Jobs-Plus case files offer numerical data about the extent to which the programs were able to engage residents in *formal* services and activities, such as job search and the rent incentives. However, since the case file review for this report was conducted in June 2001, the findings discussed in Chapter 4 also reflect formal resident participation during the early evolution of many programs, when they were still struggling to get staff and services operating effectively and had only recently begun implementing the rent incentives. In particular, the two programs in Los Angeles were grappling with chronic leadership turnover and staffing problems. (Indeed, Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes was still recovering from resident unrest and gang attacks against the housing authority that had rocked the development.) It is probably fair to say that the findings in Chapter 4 from the case file review may be *conservative estimates* of formal service take-up at most of the sites. In contrast, the analysis in Chapter 5 of field research on resident participation has the benefit of data collected through summer 2003, when the programs were mature and stable. Furthermore, the field research captures not only formal participation but also the wide array of *informal* ways in which residents were involved with this place-based program — data that typically elude documentation in case files.

## Conclusion

This report on the participation of public housing residents in the Jobs-Plus demonstration examines the challenges that the sites faced in implementing the program's approach and the responses of residents to its services and activities. Ultimately, it will be necessary to wait for the final demonstration survey to determine how extensively Jobs-Plus reached the resi-

dents, including those who did not formally enroll.<sup>23</sup> However, this report provides a wealth of interim information about residents' awareness of and involvement in the Jobs-Plus program. Moreover, it presents operational details about how outreach and service delivery were conducted across the sites with this approach. All this information is vital for interpreting the final survey findings and the impacts of Jobs-Plus on residents' employment and earnings. For instance, it is important to know about site-by-site variations in service take-up to see whether these might have contributed to differences in earnings and employment impacts across sites. Finally, this report's information about the feasibility of the Jobs-Plus approach is critical to determining whether or not the approach received a fair test in this research demonstration.

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<sup>23</sup>The fielding of the final survey began at some Jobs-Plus sites in March 2003.



## Chapter 2

# Challenges Facing a Saturation Strategy in Public Housing Communities

Operating in a public housing development and adopting a saturation strategy to inform and assist working-age residents as widely as possible can present major challenges to an employment program, while also providing creative opportunities for outreach and service delivery. This chapter lays out some of the key challenges that confronted the Jobs-Plus programs when they opened their office doors in 1998. First, the rollout of the program's three key components (employment-related services, financial incentives, and community support for work) occurred in an unexpectedly and disappointingly incremental fashion, rather than simultaneously. These delays were the result of local variations in political support, funding availability, and staffing capacity. Second, the residents who were targeted by the Jobs-Plus programs encompassed an array of employment histories, cultural backgrounds, and eligibility for categorical services; accommodate some of these differences presented serious barriers to program outreach and service take-up. Finally, political problems and conditions at the housing developments in some sites severely undercut and stalled Jobs-Plus for extended periods and seriously affected resident participation. The historical and contextual background presented in this chapter is therefore critical for understanding this report's information about variations in resident involvement in Jobs-Plus over time and across sites.

## A Rocky Road to Building Program Capacity

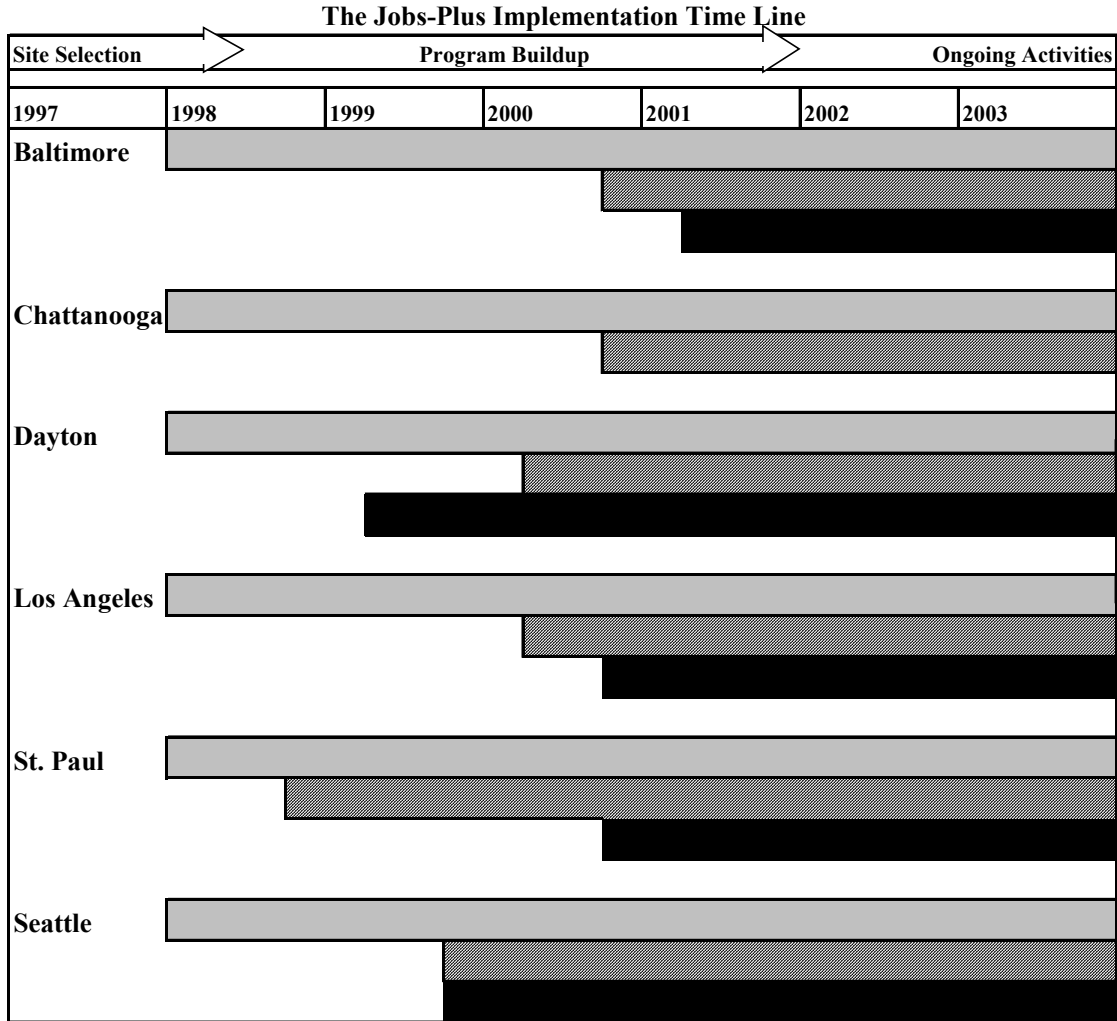
Jobs-Plus did not begin at any of the demonstration sites as a fully formed program with the capacity to provide all of its components to the residents. Figure 2.1 shows that the process of implementing the three components took place over several years. When Jobs-Plus opened its doors in 1998 across the sites, the programs began enrolling residents and offering them *employment-related services*. However, with the exception of St. Paul (where, before Jobs-Plus, residents already had access to on-site employment services at a spacious community center), the other sites were offering employment services on-site for the first time, in apartment units that were being converted into office space.<sup>1</sup> Wide differences existed across sites in the profess-

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<sup>1</sup>Well before the planning for Jobs-Plus began, the housing authority in St. Paul had arranged for an employment counselor to be assigned on-site from the St. Paul Public School's Support for Training and Employment Program (STEP). She continues to work at Mt. Airy Homes as an employment counselor on the Jobs-Plus staff.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Figure 2.1



**Employment-related services** refers to the availability of this Jobs-Plus component at each site, beginning with the year when the local Jobs-Plus program opened an office and began officially enrolling participants. Initially, the Jobs-Plus programs only offered employment-related services that varied widely across the sites in their scope and quality.

**Financial (rent) incentives** refers to the availability of this Jobs-Plus component at each site, beginning with the year when Jobs-Plus could begin enrolling households into the incentives program.

**Community support for work** refers to the availability of this Jobs-Plus component at each site, beginning with the year when the Jobs-Plus programs began hiring and training residents to assist with program outreach, for instance, as building captains (Dayton), community coaches (Los Angeles), and court captains (Baltimore). Chattanooga had not fully implemented this component before it became a financial-incentives-only program. And Seattle included a range of other activities under this component, such as a Community Shares program in which residents contributed services to the community (for example, transportation or child care assistance) for credits that could be exchanged for modest rent reductions or material products.

(continued)



**Figure 2.1 (continued)**

NOTES: “Program Buildup” refers to the demonstration time period during which the sites were still implementing the Jobs-Plus components, developing the program flow, and building the program staff.

“Ongoing Activities” refers to the demonstration time period during which the full complement of Jobs-Plus components was generally in place across the sites (with the exception of Chattanooga, which became a financial-incentives-only program in 2003).

sional preparedness of their staff to undertake program responsibilities that were inherently difficult, given the complexity of the Jobs-Plus model. In an effort to foster resident support for this untried approach, the programs in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Los Angeles were also strongly committed to hiring residents as staff. The trade-off they consequently faced was the additional challenge of equipping residents (who generally lacked professional preparation) with the requisite knowledge and technical skills to provide employment services and case management. Finally, cumbersome personnel and procurement regulations of the local housing authorities — which employed Jobs-Plus staff at most of the sites — led to serious delays at several sites in filling key staff positions and installing essential equipment, such as an automated management information system (MIS) and the computers needed to systematically enroll, assess, and track clients.

The *financial (rent) incentives* came on-line next, but most of the sites were unable to implement this much-anticipated component until mid to late 2000. Although the rent incentives had been widely expected to galvanize residents’ support for and involvement in Jobs-Plus, they had to be approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which would provide the funding needed to cover potential losses that local housing authorities might incur by permitting employed households that participated in Jobs-Plus’s rent incentives program to keep more of their earnings: “Issues arose between HUD and the congressional committee that oversees HUD’s total departmental budget over how to cover the potential losses in rent revenues to local housing authorities . . . leading to months of negotiations and well over a year’s delay in the sites’ ability to finalize and implement their incentives plan. The funding problem was eventually solved, although not until the spring of 2000.”<sup>2</sup>

As Figure 2.1 shows, the *community support for work* component took the longest to develop, but the effort solidified eventually in the form of institutionalized outreach by residents who are trained and hired for this purpose. They are known by different titles at each site: court captains (Baltimore), building captains (Dayton), community coaches (Los Angeles), community outreach workers (St. Paul), and resident outreach and orientation specialists (Seattle). These resi-

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<sup>2</sup>Kato and Riccio, 2001, p. 21.

dent staff primarily go door-to-door to distribute flyers about specific job openings, education and training opportunities, and services and activities; they also answer residents' questions about Jobs-Plus and relay residents' concerns to program staff. (Chattanooga had not fully implemented this component when its program shifted to providing financial incentives only.)

The delay in implementing the financial incentives component threatened to undermine Jobs-Plus's credibility among the residents who had been eagerly anticipating rent incentives as a tangible benefit of participating in the program: "There was a letdown [among the residents] when the rent incentives didn't come through," said the housing manager in Chattanooga. In St. Paul, Jobs-Plus had begun to offer the rent incentives at the end of 1998, after receiving HUD's one-year approval for its plan. However, when HUD had to withdraw its approval, the local housing authority faced serious damage to its reputation and that of Jobs-Plus if the rent incentives were suspended. Indeed, resident leaders who had championed Jobs-Plus in the Hmong community — the largest ethnic group at Mt. Airy Homes — felt that they had lost face and walked away from Jobs-Plus. "It was bad enough for [the residents] to have to wait the first time [for HUD's approval]," said a senior housing authority administrator in St. Paul; "But then to take it all away. It was awful." Therefore, the housing authority in St. Paul chose to continue implementing the rent incentives — and to absorb the costs of the rent reductions directly — through March 1999.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the staffing problems and procurement delays "were particularly troublesome for Jobs-Plus during the demonstration's start-up phase, when the institutional partners and residents were anxious to see tangible progress in getting a program on-line and placing residents into jobs."<sup>4</sup> For instance, even though Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles began to enroll and serve residents in June 1998, it did not get a full-time senior case manager until May 1999 and had no job developers until August 1999, instead providing employment assistance and organizing outreach activities through a series of part-time case managers and a resident intern who had no professional case management training. Residents complained that the program was "disorganized" and that "they [had] not been served as they felt they were promised." The Jobs-Plus project director in Los Angeles said at that time: "There was such a turnover in staff and lack of staff and . . . limited amount of [staff] training. . . . They're so overwhelmed, that they're just doing what they need to do to get by."

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<sup>3</sup>"[The] housing authority asked the St. Paul Public Housing Agency Board of Commissioners for permission to continue the financial incentives. Although the costs could have added up to over \$450,000 for Year 1, the board made the commitment to continue enrollment in the plan through March 31, 1999. . . . In late July 1999, HUD agreed to cover the housing authority's rent revenue losses through the end of HUD's fiscal year (September 30, 1999) by allowing the agency to tap Section 8 project reserves. The St. Paul Public Housing Agency Board of Commissioners would then take responsibility for revenue losses in October and November 1999" (Kato in Kato, 2003, p. 162).

<sup>4</sup>Kato and Riccio, 2001, p. 72.

MDRC was responsible for providing technical assistance to the sites and for conducting the demonstration research. An MDRC employee or local consultant was assigned to every Jobs-Plus site to be its “operations representative,” who was responsible for providing ongoing guidance and coaching to program administrators and staff. Initially, however, MDRC’s focus was on introducing Jobs-Plus staff to the best practices of employment assistance, until MDRC realized that what the staff at several sites badly needed was basic training on rudimentary features of social service delivery. It was not until 2000 that MDRC began offering the Jobs-Plus staff workshops on case management, job development, and ways to help “hard-to-serve” clients, and it also provided the programs with customized automated management information systems (MIS). The Jobs-Plus operations representative of Baltimore noted that the staff needed his help in learning “to use the computer, design flyers and newsletters, fill out forms and charts, answer phones and greet people at the front desk, or undertake outreach activities in the development.”<sup>5</sup>

Finally, local support for Jobs-Plus from key institutional partners — especially from the housing authority as the lead agency — was also essential in order to maintain a level of staff and range of services that would attract and satisfactorily assist the residents. But this support varied across the sites and over the course of the demonstration. In Baltimore, frequent turnover at senior levels of the housing authority constantly required Jobs-Plus’s project director to turn her attention away from supervisory and program development responsibilities and toward the effort to introduce Jobs-Plus to incoming officials, in order to retain the agency’s interest and funding for Jobs-Plus. In Chattanooga, although the executive director of housing authority at the outset of the demonstration was an avid supporter of Jobs-Plus, those who succeeded him in the directorship had limited interest in the demonstration and were increasingly preoccupied by other projects. Consequently, mounting managerial and staffing problems at Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga were not addressed, and residents’ confidence and participation in the program declined precipitously, bringing program activity in Chattanooga to a virtual standstill during the first half of 2000.

The role of MDRC’s operations representatives therefore also involved helping the project directors cultivate local institutional support and secure funding and service commitments for the program, particularly from the housing authority. Indeed, in October 2001, MDRC spearheaded a major effort to revive the Jobs-Plus program in Chattanooga, providing extensive consultation and technical assistance in this “reconstitution” effort.<sup>6</sup> However, MDRC’s opera-

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<sup>5</sup>Kato and Riccio, 2001, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup>“The key ingredients in that [reconstitution] effort would involve an extensive assessment of personnel, a redesign of the program, replacement and/or elimination of Jobs-Plus staff positions, and deliberate steps to professionalize the program,” which had a high number of residents in key staff positions for which they had inadequate professional training and experience. This effort was suspended in the spring of 2002, when the  
(continued)

tions representatives varied in the experience and skills they brought to helping the programs navigate local politics and the housing authority bureaucracy. For instance, in St. Paul, one operations representative early in the demonstration focused primarily on promoting resident empowerment instead of program development. Planning meetings of the Jobs-Plus collaborative became highly politicized and adversarial as some residents used the meetings as venues for airing grievances against the housing authority, rather than as occasions for the partners to collectively develop the program's employment activities. This required subsequent operations representatives to dedicate substantial attention toward mending relationships among the housing authority, the residents, and MDRC, which were deeply strained by this experience.

## **Residents' Skepticism Toward Service Programs and the Housing Authority**

Certain aspects of life in the housing developments also complicated Jobs-Plus's program efforts. Since residents looked to each other for advice about participating in service programs, it was imperative for Jobs-Plus to overcome the widespread suspicion and distrust that the program initially encountered among the residents across the sites. A common complaint heard from residents in early focus groups and interviews was that they had seen service programs come and go over the years in their communities without fulfilling promises to substantially improve their lives. This was particularly true among residents in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton and among U.S.-born residents in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle. A resident of Imperial Courts in Los Angeles observed: "We've had a lot of programs that came in, but what was the end result? When you left, I think that the residents were worse off than we were before." "People are afraid to fail again," said a resident in Chattanooga; "People have a 'Show-me attitude' and have to see others getting better jobs before they believe it." Jobs-Plus subsequently tried to build trust by cultivating well-respected residents for help in developing the program and recruiting participants who would give the program a try.

Furthermore, Jobs-Plus's association with the local housing authority initially reinforced residents' skepticism. Jobs-Plus staff members at all the sites except St. Paul and Dayton were employees of the local housing authority, and all the programs were directly accountable to the housing authority as their landlord and primary funder. Moreover, the agency's support and cooperation were critical to Jobs-Plus's operations. However, the residents across the sites generally viewed their landlord with sentiments ranging from wary caution to outright hostility and resentment. The on-site management office was primarily responsible for enforcing leases, collecting the rents, and maintaining security in the developments — for instance, evicting those

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decision was made to turn Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga into a financial-incentives-only program that would no longer offer employment assistance and community support for work (Bowie in Kato, 2003, p. 39).

households with members who engaged in illicit activities such as drug use, who harbored unregistered relatives and partners, or who permitted ex-felons to be on the premises.

In Los Angeles, the housing authority's disclosure of toxic soil on the grounds of William Mead Homes and its decision to temporarily uproot and relocate approximately 40 households during the soil remediation process sparked angry surges of unrest in 2000 and 2001. Jobs-Plus was caught in the crossfire of retaliatory violence directed at the housing authority by youthful resident members of the neighborhood gang, which brought program outreach and services to a standstill in the first quarter of 2000 and, at another point, stripped the Jobs-Plus office of all its computers and firebombed the computer learning center next door, where program activities were held.

## **Crime, Substance Abuse, and Safety Issues in Baltimore, Dayton, and Imperial Courts in Los Angeles**

Some Jobs-Plus sites also had to contend with a small subgroup of residents who believed that such criminal activities as drug dealing, fraud, theft, fencing stolen goods, gambling, and prostitution could be potentially lucrative sources of income. Particularly in Baltimore, Dayton, and Imperial Courts in Los Angeles, the false allure of fast money through crime competed with Jobs-Plus's efforts to interest this subgroup of residents in legitimate employment and program services.<sup>7</sup> "We can't give them that kind of money," said a staff member in Baltimore about the low-wage jobs available to residents with limited qualifications; "I've had young people come into my office and say, 'If you can't give me \$10 an hour, I don't see why I need to work, because I can make more than that [in illegal activities].'"<sup>8</sup>

Staff and residents also pointed to substance abuse as a major concern at these sites and as an obstacle to employment and job retention. A high of 80 percent of baseline survey respondents

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<sup>7</sup>Field research indicates that some residents across the Jobs-Plus sites earned money through informal economic activities (such as babysitting, hair braiding, and sales of foodstuffs, handicrafts, small appliances, electronic equipment, cosmetics, and sodas and sweets out of "candy houses" in the units). Most such activities are legal, except that the residents did not report their income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or the housing authority, and they were often not licensed to engage in the activities. For the most part, these were "side jobs" that did not deter residents from participating in Jobs-Plus, since the earnings that were derived from them were neither sizable nor stable. "It comes and goes," said a resident in Baltimore about such income; "You can't count on it." However, the informal economy did permit certain subgroups to get by without employment in the formal economy — such as fathers who owed arrears in child support payments (which would be garnished from their wages) and welfare recipients who refused to comply with work requirements. Jobs-Plus had a difficult time interesting these people in its services.

<sup>8</sup>Jobs-Plus staff emphasized that, in reality, drug dealing did not offer high returns for residents who engaged in it at minor levels. "Drug dealing out here is not that lucrative," observed a staff member in Dayton; "If you were a drug dealer and it was going well for you, at least you would have an automobile [unlike those who are dealers here]. You would have a change of clothing."

in Baltimore, as well as 71 percent in Dayton and 64 percent at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles, reported that selling or using drugs in public was a “pretty big” or “very big” problem in their development. Similarly, 59 percent of respondents in Dayton and 65 percent at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles reported that drinking in public was a “pretty big” or “very big” problem at their development.<sup>9</sup> The situation was particularly bleak in Baltimore, where residents and staff observed that the area in and around Gilmore Homes is saturated with drugs and estimated that 50 percent to 80 percent of the community either participates in the drug economy as users, sellers, or couriers or is affected by it as relatives and neighbors of the participants. Typically, by midday, the street in front of the Jobs-Plus office and various neighborhood corners are filled with glassy-eyed addicts conducting their transactions openly with drug dealers, even as young children pass on their way home from school. “All you have to do is to drive through,” emphasized the operations representative in Baltimore, “[and] eventually you will come across someone who is walking in front of your car and they’re not going to stop. And you have to understand that [that] person is more focused than you will ever be. They’re looking to get their next high.”

Substance abuse is a particularly insidious problem for residents who are trying to work and turn their lives around. “It’s a mental thing, like it’s calling me,” said Maisie Victor,<sup>10</sup> a resident in Baltimore who has been in and out of jobs during her two-decade struggle with drug addiction. “It was my grandson’s birthday at Chucky Cheese. I was eating and having a good time. And the mental thing — It overtook me. It was like ‘Go and get something.’ . . . I couldn’t even wait [for] my daughter [to] drive me home. . . . Forget it, I’ll just catch a cab. I had about \$80 in my pocket, and I spent all of that money [on drugs that night].”

Local gangs are often involved in the drug trafficking and other criminal activities at these sites, and they bring additional violence to the communities. In Baltimore and Imperial Courts in Los Angeles, Jobs-Plus and the residents sometimes found themselves in the crossfire of rival gangs fighting for control over drug sales in the area. Among baseline survey respondents in Dayton, 68 percent indicated that guns and gunfire were a “pretty big” or “very big”

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<sup>9</sup>Strict enforcement of restrictions against leasing public housing to ex-felons and of evictions for lease violations helped keep the level of drug trafficking and abuse low at Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul relative to the other Jobs-Plus developments. Security in general is also a priority for the housing authority in St. Paul, which used federal Drug Elimination Program (DEP) funds to hire city police officers for its A Community Outreach Policing Program (ACOP) to patrol the housing developments on foot and in squad cars. Housing authority officials report that this program helped to reduce crime in its housing developments to levels lower than for the rest of the city. William Mead Homes in Los Angeles also had fewer problems with drug dealing on-site, especially since the local gang had agreed with resident leaders to refrain from trafficking at the development. The resident leadership of Harriet Tubman Homes in Chattanooga was credited with working with the police and local service community a decade ago to transform this development from one that was notorious for homicides, drug culture, and crime into a relatively peaceful and safe place for families to live.

<sup>10</sup>The names of all residents mentioned in this report are fictional, and some details have been altered to protect identities.

problem, as did 67 percent in Baltimore and 59 percent at Imperial Courts. At one point, the police in Baltimore had to place a Jobs-Plus staff member under witness protection while testifying about a drive-by shooting death that occurred in broad daylight in front of the Jobs-Plus office. Residents of Imperial Courts said that gangs were relatively less of a problem, but only because now the development “belonged” to the territory of just a *single* gang as a result of a truce that the P. C. Crips had brokered with the rival Bloods in 1992. However, residents were fearful of going into rival gang territory to get to jobs, classes, or service referrals, since such truces forbade incursions into rival territory under penalty of death.<sup>11</sup>

The fear that neighbors might be involved in illicit activities and substance abuse can also discourage residents who are interested in working and staying out of trouble from interacting with each other. A resident in Baltimore said: “I go to work, stay in the house, just mind my business — no matter what anybody is doing out there. I speak to my neighbors, [but] I don’t get involved with [anybody].” This sentiment undercut Jobs-Plus’s efforts to utilize residents’ networks to relay information about program services and job openings. The Jobs-Plus operations representative in Baltimore observed:

A lot of times you don’t talk to your neighbor because your neighbor may be a crack addict. So you don’t want to tell your neighbor about the job because you don’t want to talk to your neighbor. And then, too, you wouldn’t want them working or coming to your job. So a lot of times you don’t want to talk to people.”

## **Resident Turnover in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton**

Tables 2.1 through 2.3 show that there was also a high degree of resident turnover at the Jobs-Plus developments in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton. For example, housing authority administrative records show that of all nondisabled residents who were living in the developments *and* were between ages 21 and 61 in October 1998, only 48 percent were still living at Gilmore Homes (Baltimore) three years later, in October 2001; only 45 percent were still at Harriet Tubman Homes (Chattanooga); and just 38 percent remained at DeSoto Bass Courts (Dayton). Residents of these three developments had ready access to “soft” local rental housing markets and to Section 8 vouchers from their local housing authority. High resident turnover at

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<sup>11</sup> Among baseline survey respondents at Imperial Courts, 52 percent reported not having a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Since youth from Imperial Courts are assigned by the public school system to Jordan Downs High School — which is in rival gang territory — the fear of retaliation for trespassing has been a significant barrier to attending and completing high school. During the height of the gang wars in the early 1990s, many men who currently reside at Imperial Courts and are now in their twenties did not get a high school education or sometimes even a middle school education because their mothers allowed them to stay at home, fearing that they would be killed en route to and from school.

## The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 2.1

### Residential Stability of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments in 1998

Development	Percentage Remaining After:		
	One Year	Two Years	Three Years
Baltimore	70	58	48
Chattanooga	73	64	45
Dayton	62	48	38
Los Angeles			
Imperial Courts	85	74	66
William Mead Homes	91	84	76
St. Paul	82	69	59
Seattle	89	82	70

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from housing authority (50058) records.

NOTE: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

these sites required the Jobs-Plus programs to keep directing scarce program resources toward outreach activities in order to inform incoming residents about Jobs-Plus and to encourage them to participate. (In contrast, much “tighter” local rental housing markets in Los Angeles and St. Paul kept resident mobility low at the Jobs-Plus developments.)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Verma (2003) presents a detailed study of mobility trends among public housing residents at Jobs-Plus’s treatment and comparison developments and a discussion of the implications of such mobility for undertaking a community initiative and place-based research in sites where a sizable number of residents who are tracked by the research have not received a substantial dose of the treatment.



## The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 2.2

### Residential Stability of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments in 1999

Development	Percentage Remaining After:		
	One Year	Two Years	Three Years
Baltimore	81	69	50
Chattanooga	86	57	40
Dayton	72	58	44
Los Angeles			
Imperial Courts	86	76	64
William Mead Homes	91	83	76
St. Paul	84	72	52
Seattle	91	77	53

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from housing authority (50058) records.

NOTE: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

## Differences in Residents’ Work Histories, Cultural Backgrounds, and Service Eligibility

### Demographic Variation Among Targeted Households Across Sites

The residents whom Jobs-Plus was called to assist varied widely across the sites in terms of the demographic composition of their households, and the differences presented recruitment and employment challenges to Jobs-Plus. Table 2.4 indicates that the household heads of the target populations in Baltimore, Dayton, and Chattanooga were almost all black. The great majority of these household heads were women, many of whom were also single mothers without another adult on the lease to contribute employment earnings to the household. Imperial Courts in Los Angeles closely approximated these demographic patterns, although the percentage of Hispanic residents there steadily rose over the course of the demonstration.

## The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

**Table 2.3**

### **Residential Stability of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments in 2000**

Development	Percentage Remaining After:	
	One Year	Two Years
Baltimore	84	59
Chattanooga	64	45
Dayton	79	60
Los Angeles		
Imperial Courts	87	72
William Mead Homes	89	81
St. Paul	85	62
Seattle	82	56

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from housing authority (50058) records.

NOTE: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

In contrast, many of the targeted household heads in St. Paul (as well as in Seattle) were immigrants from Southeast Asia, East Africa, and Latin America; and at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles, immigrants came from Mexico and Central America. Moreover, an influx of East African refugees has been transforming Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul over the course of the demonstration, from a development whose household heads were predominantly Southeast Asians at the time of the baseline survey to one where the percentage of black household heads (31 percent) is now fast approaching the percentage of Asian household heads (41 percent). Table 2.5 also indicates that there were more households with two or more working-age adults (usually a relative) on the lease at the two developments in Los Angeles and in St. Paul than at the other three sites, although Table 2.4 shows that the majority of household heads at these three sites were female. The challenges that Jobs-Plus faced in its efforts to assist the immigrants at these sites are discussed near the end of this chapter.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 2.4

Selected Characteristics of Targeted Household Heads  
Living in Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000

Characteristic	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes	
<b>Race/ethnicity of household heads (%)</b>						
White (non-Hispanic)	0	3	1	2	1	5
Black (non-Hispanic)	99	96	93	63	7	31
Hispanic	0	1	0	29	80	5
Asian	0	0	0	0	9	41
Missing	0	0	6	6	2	18
<b>Gender of household heads (%)</b>						
Male	13	7	10	14	39	27
Female	87	93	90	86	61	73
<b>Age distribution of household heads (%)</b>						
18-24	21	42	43	23	2	12
25-34	28	31	31	35	27	44
35-61	51	28	27	42	71	44
Average age of household head (years)	36	29	29	34	42	35
Sample size	510	453	543	479	366	276

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted household heads” refers to nondisabled heads of households between the ages of 18 and 61.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 2.5

Selected Characteristics of Targeted Households  
Living in Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000

Characteristic(%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes	
Households that moved out of the development by October 2001	39	51	54	28	13	29
<b>Duration of residence</b>						
Less than 1 year	43	43	45	38	17	36
1-4 years	22	30	35	33	32	39
4 years or more	35	26	20	30	51	25
<b>Percentage of households with an adult member who is:</b>						
Male	18	12	14	25	51	45
Female	87	94	90	94	94	89
<b>Percentage of households with individuals aged:</b>						
0-5	33	50	42	49	31	62
6-12	34	40	29	49	53	76
13-16	14	12	11	23	28	36
17-20	12	25	26	23	23	23
21-24	18	25	23	23	14	16
25-34	30	32	31	38	40	48
35-61	51	28	27	43	73	46
62 or older	0	0	0	0	1	3
<b>Number of adults in household</b>						
One	93	92	94	74	45	57
Two or more	7	8	6	26	55	43

(continued)

**Table 2.5 (continued)**

Characteristic (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes	
<b>Number of children in household</b>						
None	38	18	33	15	25	4
One	30	32	33	31	22	10
Two	23	29	19	26	26	19
Three or more	9	21	15	28	28	66
Sample size	510	453	543	479	366	276

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted households” refers to households headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

## Variation in the Job Readiness of the Residents

Because the working-age residents targeted by Jobs-Plus were not a homogeneous group, Jobs-Plus's saturation strategy had to include ways to recruit and assist residents who had a range of employment backgrounds and service needs. At each housing development, there were some residents with limited barriers to employment. "What they need is a little polishing sometimes," said a Jobs-Plus staff member in Baltimore. "They're not illiterate; they've got a GED; they've got skills training"; or they avidly sought Jobs-Plus's services to improve their employment prospects and get ahead. Many were already working and came to Jobs-Plus for the rent incentives as well as help in getting more training for a better job. African-American single mother Verna Martin was described by a staff member in Baltimore as "a highly self-motivated woman" who took advantage of Jobs-Plus's training and placement services to become a child care worker and later the site director of a child care program. She also took part in the driver's training and auto purchasing program to buy a car, and she used the rent incentives and financial workshops to purchase a home and move out of public housing.

Some residents, however, faced multiple barriers to employment that were so severe that they were reluctant to go to Jobs-Plus for help. Illiteracy limited the range of jobs for which Sarah James, in Baltimore, could apply. For instance, working as a child care provider would require her to read notes from parents and directions for medication prescribed to a child under her care. Illiteracy also affected her ability to follow directions to get to interviews and service agencies, since she was unable to read the signs on streets or buildings. She needed someone to accompany her to get to her destination and help her fill out forms: "My sister says, 'I know where that's at.' And Mondays when she's not working . . . she'll ride me down and show me where it's at. . . ." Angie Miller, in Dayton, initially only went to Jobs-Plus to comply with her welfare-to-work requirements: "At first I only wanted to go to work for a week or two to get the welfare people off my back." Angie had never held a steady job before, and her subsequent efforts to complete training and secure employment through Jobs-Plus were dogged by struggles with chronic illness, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and a lengthy record of felony convictions. Felony convictions bore heavily on the women. The kinds of jobs for which they typically qualified or for which welfare-to-work training funds were readily available (for example, home health aide, certified nurse assistant, child care worker) all screened for felony records.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>In general, HUD policies forbid people with felony convictions involving drug-related or violent crimes from applying for inclusion in a public housing lease or even from being on development premises. But the housing authorities of the Jobs-Plus sites differed in how strictly they enforced this policy. Furthermore, DeSoto Bass Courts in Dayton had a housing arrangement with Mercy Manor, a local program that helps women who were incarcerated, often for drug-related offenses, to reunite with their children and transition into employment. Mercy Manor participants received housing at DeSoto Bass Courts in units set aside for their use; (continued)

### ***Many residents were already working but in low-wage jobs***

The baseline survey of working-age, nondisabled household heads of the Jobs-Plus sites that was conducted at the outset of the demonstration sheds additional light on the range of employment histories and needs of the targeted residents.<sup>14</sup> As shown in Figure 2.2, the survey indicated that about 88 percent of the respondents had worked at some point in their lives and that only 12 percent had never been employed — in striking contrast to the assumption that public housing residents have little or no connection to the labor market. At the time of the survey, more than half (56 percent) the respondents were currently employed either full time or part time.<sup>15</sup>

However, the quality of the jobs they held was poor. Respondents reported working mostly as babysitters/child care workers, cashiers, housekeepers, and nurse assistants/aides; 73 percent of them earned less than \$7.75 an hour at their current or most recent job, and more than half were not in jobs that provided any kind of benefits, such as health insurance and paid sick and vacation days. Employment in these jobs was also precarious: Poor job security was a concern for 27 percent of survey respondents; constantly changing work hours were reported by 55 percent; and health problems or the safety risks of a job concerned 43 percent.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, making ends meet through steady employment had proved elusive. Table 2.6 shows public benefits receipt and average household income among survey respondents. Across sites, 72 percent of the respondents reported annual household incomes of less than \$10,000, and 55 percent reported that a household member had received AFDC/TANF in the past 12 months.

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Jobs-Plus provided employment assistance while Mercy Manor helped them remain sober and build a life with their children.

<sup>14</sup>Note that the target population of the research demonstration as reflected in the baseline survey was originally defined as all working-age, nondisabled residents between ages 16 and 61 (not ages 18 and 61). For an extensive examination of the baseline survey's findings concerning the employment patterns and job readiness of the residents of the Jobs-Plus treatment and comparison developments at the outset of the demonstration, see Martinez (2002).

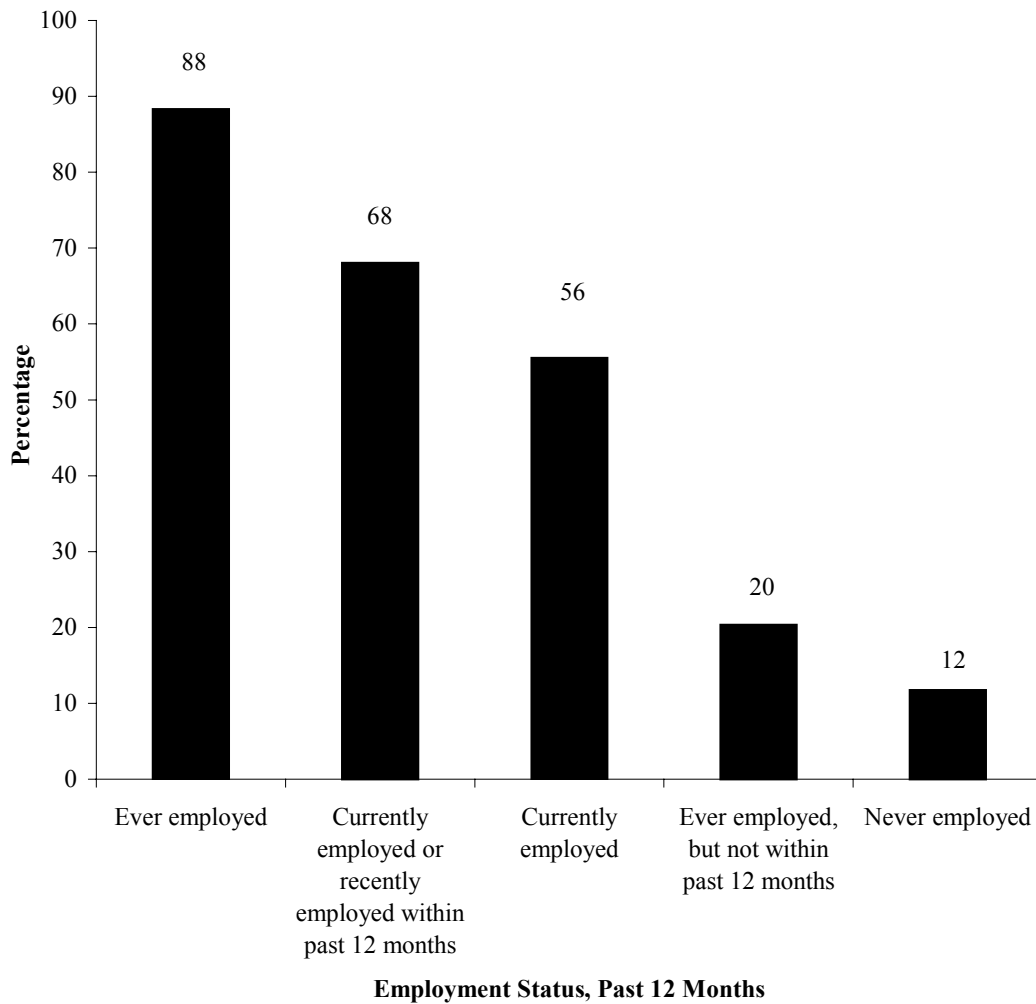
<sup>15</sup>A marked improvement in the economy during the 1990s and the implementation of TANF work requirements may have unexpectedly raised employment levels at the Jobs-Plus sites substantially above the 30 percent development-level employment rate, which was the maximum allowed for inclusion in the Jobs-Plus demonstration.

<sup>16</sup>The profit margins of the service and manufacturing sectors in which the residents found entry-level employment depend heavily on low wages and the flexibility of employers to cut or extend the work hours even of "permanent" employees on a daily or weekly basis in response to shifts in production demand. These jobs also often have few safeguards in place to protect workers from work-related injuries and to compensate them when injuries prevent them from working. Similar jobs in the public and nonprofit sector are vulnerable to cutbacks in public funding. See the following examinations of low-wage workers: Bradley (2001); Carre, Ferber, Golden, and Herzenberg (2000); and Lambert, Waxman, and Haley-Locke (2001). Regarding the lives of welfare recipients in low-wage employment, also see Polit et al. (2001); and Dodson, Manuel, and Bravo (2002).

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 2.2**

**Current and Past Employment Status of Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey Respondents**



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey and Martinez (2002).

NOTES: These calculations include respondents from the Seattle Jobs-Plus site.  
Because of missing responses, sample sizes range from 1,430 to 1,437.



The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 2.6

Public Benefits Receipt and Household Income of Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey Respondents,  
by Development

Characteristic (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul	Seattle
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes		
<b>Receipt of public benefits in the past 12 months<sup>a</sup></b>							
Anyone in household receiving welfare	48	54	59	76	50	n/a	44
Anyone in household receiving food stamps	68	85	72	77	56	n/a	56
<b>Yearly household income</b>							
\$5,000 or less	57	68	48	41	33	8	28
\$5,001-\$10,000	21	19	26	37	32	35	41
\$10,001-\$15,000	14	6	16	10	20	25	21
\$15,001-\$20,000	5	4	4	7	10	17	8
\$20,001-\$25,000	0	1	3	1	2	8	1
More than \$25,001	2	0	3	4	3	8	2
Sample size	218	220	241	208	237	153	160

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey and Martinez (2002).

NOTE: <sup>a</sup>Respondents in St. Paul were not asked this survey question.

***Residents who were looking for work were often hampered by lack of qualifications***

About one-third of the survey respondents — both employed and unemployed residents — reported having looked for a job in the past four weeks. But the majority of these respondents (74 percent) said that the lack of qualifications hampered their job search efforts, and 55 percent reported not having a high school diploma or GED certificate. (Table 2.7 shows that 68 percent of the respondents at William Mead Homes lacked a high school credential; the proportion peaked at 94 percent in St. Paul, where concentrations of foreign-born residents were high.) Nonetheless, only a minority of the respondents said they had utilized formal job search services or education and vocational training in the past 12 months to improve their employment prospects. Table 2.8 shows survey respondents' self-identified reasons for their difficulties in finding a job, by site.

***Unemployed residents who were not looking for work often had physical and mental health problems***

Baseline survey respondents who had not been employed in the past 12 months and were not looking for work fared poorly across all measures of physical and mental health status, including levels of substance abuse and depression and experiences of domestic abuse in the past 12 months. For example, almost half of those without recent employment self-rated their health as fair or poor — nearly twice the proportion of those recently employed full time. Those who were last employed more than a year ago also sought a high reservation wage (the minimum acceptable wage for a job that provided benefits), which was often based on unrealistic expectations — given their limited work experience — of what their skills would likely command in the labor market.<sup>17</sup>

***Residents who had never been employed tended to be Southeast Asian immigrants at the St. Paul and Seattle sites***

The percentage of survey respondents across the Jobs-Plus sites who had never been employed was generally very small. St. Paul and Seattle, however, were exceptions; their percentages of never-employed survey respondents (24 percent and 23 percent, respectively) were significantly higher than the percentages at the other sites. Never-employed respondents appeared to be “the most challenged in terms of being able to find or keep jobs,” being more likely

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<sup>17</sup>Martinez, 2002, p. 25.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Table 2.7**

**Education Background of Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey Respondents,  
by Development**

Education (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul	Seattle
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes		
No high school diploma or GED	43	46	33	51	68	94	53
High school diploma or GED	54	51	65	44	28	6	36
More than high school diploma or GED	3	3	2	5	3	0	11
Sample size	218	220	241	208	237	153	160

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey and Martinez (2002).

NOTE: "GED" refers to the General Educational Development certificate, which is given to those who pass the GED test and is intended to signify knowledge of basic high school subjects.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Table 2.8**

**Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey Respondents' Self-Identified Reasons for Difficulty in Finding a Job,  
by Development**

Reasons for Difficulty <sup>a</sup> (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul <sup>b</sup>	Seattle
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes		
Lack of qualifications	71	77	67	77	83	n/a	69
Not knowing how to find a job	30	33	27	39	58	n/a	52
Problems reading, writing, or speaking English	15	15	12	35	68	n/a	49
Problems in personal life	41	41	41	44	43	n/a	54
Racial/ethnic discrimination	51	57	49	56	63	n/a	40
Being a public housing resident	23	25	18	29	28	n/a	11
Scale score <sup>c</sup> (range = 0 to 6 reasons)	2	3	2	3	3	n/a	3
Sample size	218	220	241	208	237	153	160

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey and Martinez (2002).

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>Items representing discouragement of work efforts were reversed for inclusion in the scale score. Therefore, this scale score represents the average number of encouraging (positive) items affirmed by respondents.

<sup>b</sup>Respondents in St. Paul were not asked these survey questions.

<sup>c</sup>Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .64.

to have three or more children in the household and not to have a high school diploma or GED.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, never-employed respondents tended to be Asian — primarily Southeast Asian immigrants who had settled in large numbers at the St. Paul and Seattle sites in the decades after the Vietnam War — “suggesting that perhaps immigration status is a factor affecting their labor market connection.”<sup>19</sup>

***Foreign-born residents presented linguistic and cultural barriers to service delivery and employment in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle***

The sizable immigrant populations and multiple language groups at the Jobs-Plus developments in St. Paul and Seattle and at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles presented Jobs-Plus with additional outreach and service delivery challenges. The majority of household heads in St. Paul were immigrants from Southeast Asia, East Africa, and Latin America; at William Mead Homes and increasingly at Imperial Courts, many household heads came from Mexico and Central America.<sup>20</sup> These multiethnic housing developments presented Jobs-Plus with daunting language- and immigrant-related barriers to outreach, service delivery, and employment, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among refugees fleeing war and famine, unfamiliarity with social service systems in the United States, extensive translation needs (for example, Seattle’s Rainier Vista Garden Community had 22 language groups), and cultural resistance to professional child care or women in the workplace. And the foreign-born residents at Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes also included undocumented aliens who did not have the legal right to work in the United States.

For instance, there were some residents — like Sami Oman, a refugee from the civil strife in Ethiopia and an urban professional — who would be classified as English-proficient by the typical assessment for an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. These residents needed advanced language classes to get the vocabulary and language skills to participate in training programs and to qualify for better-paying jobs leading to self-sufficiency. A Jobs-Plus staff member in Seattle emphasized the dearth of advanced ESL services with an employment focus for the working poor: “The classes at Refugee Women’s Alliance and the community college are too easy. These people need business English. We need to get ESL help to people in training programs. They won’t make it through without writing and reading help.” At the other end of the spectrum were semiliterate or illiterate residents like Xiong Kao — a Hmong refugee from war in Southeast Asia — who needed to begin with the most basic of literacy courses, since standard ESL classes were too advanced for them. Many refugees also needed help in

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<sup>18</sup>Martinez, 2002, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup>Martinez, 2002, pp. 35-36.

<sup>20</sup>The percentage of Hispanic residents was also steadily rising among the predominantly African-American population at Imperial Courts.

dealing with such problems as post-traumatic stress disorder; in Xiong's case, chronic headaches and debilitating bouts of depression from PTSD kept him from holding onto jobs or pursuing further education or training. "People need help with this," said a HOPE-Plus staff member in Seattle; "For people with PTSD, if there's a major shift or challenge in their lives, they just shut down. These residents try and go forward, but when they do, the unresolved issues of the past pop up." Xiong's wife emphasizes: "My people don't have enough education, so they get jobs in companies that don't pay enough. Seven or eight dollars an hour. Not enough to take care of the family." A nurse assistant, she would like to take ESL classes and to get further training to become a registered nurse. However, with the burden of child care and work responsibilities for the family on her shoulders, she can hardly take on another thing: "I'll wait until my little girl starts school, and then maybe I'll look at more education. . . . It would be so hard to try and do your homework, and the kids come and bother you." In the face of multiple barriers to employment and service use, the Kaos saw little hope of moving beyond their daily soul-crushing struggle to make ends meet in low-wage jobs.

Jobs-Plus had to provide outreach and employment services in ways that accommodated the cultural sensitivities and immigrant-related circumstances of the foreign-born residents.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Residents differed in eligibility for categorical mainstream services***

Although Jobs-Plus offered various services on-site at the housing developments, a key aspect of its case management consisted of helping residents to access employment-related services and activities through referrals to off-site agencies. However, unlike the categorical clientele of a welfare-to-work program, the residents at each site differed in the range of services for which they were eligible. Some residents were welfare recipients who were subject to work mandates and eligible for the agency's welfare-to-work services, such as subsidized child care and training, but others were not. Some households were eligible for food stamps or were already involved with refugee assistance organizations, but others were not. These differences in service eligibility complicated Jobs-Plus's efforts to help the residents to put together a package of assistance to secure self-sufficiency through employment.

## **Conclusions**

The experience of the Jobs-Plus sites highlight the challenges that an employment program can encounter in operating at a public housing development and targeting all the working-age residents. Jobs-Plus had to contend with wide differences among the residents in terms of job readiness, work experiences, and eligibility for services. Some residents were unemployed

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<sup>21</sup>For more information on the efforts of Jobs-Plus to provide culturally appropriate services to address the needs of foreign-born residents in St. Paul and Seattle, see Kato (2002).

and needed help in looking for a job, sometimes for the first time. Others were employed but wanted help in getting better jobs with higher wages and benefits. Residents frequently needed help with barriers that commonly prevent low-income persons from accessing services for which they are eligible, such as lack of transportation to service agencies, complicated application procedures, and the need of the foreign-born for language translation assistance. Hard-to-employ residents needed additional assistance with physical and mental health problems that kept them from working. Residents' suspicion of the housing authority; cultural differences in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle; and crime and safety issues in Baltimore, Dayton, and Los Angeles complicated — and sometimes even threatened — program outreach and service delivery. Finally, problems with local political support, funding availability, and staffing capacity delayed the implementation of the Jobs-Plus components and undercut efforts of the program to build credibility by quickly showing residents that it could help them get jobs.

These challenges made it difficult for Jobs-Plus to implement a saturation strategy that involved standardized forms of mass outreach and service delivery. Chapter 3 discusses how reaching all the targeted residents required Jobs-Plus instead to capitalize on being on-site in the developments to conduct outreach and offer services in creative ways that accommodated residents' various needs and circumstances and that addressed their barriers to service delivery.

### Chapter 3

## Capitalizing on Place in Implementing the Jobs-Plus Approach

Given the saturation strategy of the Jobs-Plus approach, implementing the program required the sites to inform all working-age, nondisabled residents of a public housing development of Jobs-Plus's services and activities and to accommodate all those who came forward for help. This report identifies serious challenges that Jobs-Plus encountered in this effort, including residents' distrust of service programs, participants' differences in employment and cultural backgrounds and service needs, and structural impediments that low-income people typically face to accessing services, such as complex application procedures. This chapter explores the creative ways in which several Jobs-Plus programs capitalized on being on-site to address these challenges, to inform the community about the program, and to assist residents as widely as possible. These efforts included cultivating partnerships with residents, the housing management staff, and local service agencies and utilizing informal interactions and community activities as well as formal services to address residents' wide-ranging needs and circumstances.

It is important to emphasize that although Chapter 2 highlights the *challenges* of operating on-site and working with public housing residents, a key *advantage* that Jobs-Plus had over conventional welfare-to-work and employment programs was in serving a population whose needs for shelter were already being met by public housing. Jobs-Plus could therefore concentrate on residents' employment needs. Public housing offered low-income families stability and relief from the specter of homelessness. This was particularly the case in cities like Los Angeles and St. Paul, where tight housing markets significantly restricted the availability of affordable housing for the poor. Residents across the Jobs-Plus sites talked about harrowing bouts of homelessness for their families before moving into public housing. For every resident who expressed dissatisfaction with the housing development and the readiness to move out, many more were relieved that they could count on a roof over their heads even when their low-wage jobs were tenuous: "Because, really, you're out on your own," emphasized a resident in Baltimore about moving out of public housing; "There's no safety net . . . I would hate to leave. . . . Once you get out there on your own, you're on your own. . . . I'm scared in a way to get a home because I'm by myself . . . and all the problems [are] going to be there on me."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The residents regarded even the most troubled housing development as their home and community. Many had lived in the development for years and had relatives and friends there or nearby in the neighborhood. In a pinch, they looked for help from reciprocal support networks consisting of extended family members, a partner, and friends in the development and neighborhood. For instance, they lent each other money, looked after each  
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## Broadening the Target Population of Jobs-Plus

The Jobs-Plus programs across the sites took the model's approach as a call to expand awareness of the program and support for resident employment throughout the entire housing development. The target population of the Jobs-Plus research demonstration was originally defined as only working-age, nondisabled residents between ages 16 and 61. However, all the sites broadened their target population to include other categories of residents in their outreach efforts. For instance, they all enrolled disabled residents and retired seniors, since these groups could potentially work part time without jeopardizing their eligibility for Social Security (SS) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits; in addition, the financial incentive policies permitted unemployed seniors and disabled residents who were household heads to enroll their households in the rent incentives plan as long as the household included an employed adult member. Some seniors and disabled residents were well-respected members of the community whose good opinion of Jobs-Plus could help the program build credibility among the other residents and thus help recruit participants.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the programs in Baltimore, Dayton, and Seattle hired seniors and disabled residents to provide part-time help with outreach and service delivery.

In Baltimore and St. Paul, where there were sizable numbers of SSI recipients, Jobs-Plus also promoted part-time employment for disabled residents as a way to improve their quality of life and psychological health — as a staff member in St. Paul said, “not just for monetary reasons but also for all those nontangibles that come with working.” In St. Paul, many of the disabled residents were foreign-born immigrants whose sociocultural isolation was intensified by their lack of exposure to the work world. Jobs-Plus arranged for a Social Security Administration officer to speak to the residents about the regulations governing work and SSI receipt. The staff regularly took the Jobs-Plus Hmong Women's Support Group to places of employ-

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other's children, gave each other food and car rides, and fixed each other's cars. “I think I've had a very good experience here,” said one of the few Caucasian residents of Mt Airy Homes in St. Paul. “It's a tight community. We're all right here. [W]e seem to work it out.” Jobs-Plus's outreach efforts had to take into account that residents relied heavily on each other's opinions when deciding whether or not to participate in a program.

<sup>2</sup>HUD ([http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/phr/about/ao\\_faq2.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/phr/about/ao_faq2.cfm)) defines a disabled household as one “whose head, spouse, or sole member is a person with disabilities. It may include two or more persons with disabilities living together, or one or more persons with disabilities living with one or more live-in aides.” And a disability is defined as “a physical, mental, or emotional impairment as specified in Section 223 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.423) or in Section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 6001b(5)), or one that a) is expected to be of long, continued, and indefinite duration; b) substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently; and c) is of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. . . . The definition of a person with disabilities does not exclude persons who have the disease acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV). However, for the purpose of qualifying for low income housing, the definition does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.”

ment within easy commuting distance from the housing development, as a way to encourage the women who had mental and physical disabilities to consider employment. “The more factories that we’ve taken them to, the more experiences we’ve given them, their questions seem to become more employment-focused,” said the job developer in St. Paul. “They’re getting a lot closer to considering it.” As a result also of her efforts to track down firms for tours, the job developer was able to find and introduce residents to many nearby employers who typically did not advertise job openings.

At the same time, most of the sites — with the exception of Baltimore and Los Angeles — did not formally enroll youth under 18 years of age, even though 16- and 17-year-olds were part of the demonstration’s official target population. However, all the sites offered after-school and summer activities for youth that often included employment-related services in an effort, on the one hand, to support working parents by keeping their older children out of trouble and, on the other hand, to improve the employment prospects of those who would soon be entering the adult workforce.

In Baltimore, Chattanooga, Dayton, and Imperial Courts in Los Angeles, Jobs-Plus staff and residents also cited the problem of male partners who actively discouraged female residents from participating in Jobs-Plus and who undercut their efforts to maintain employment. The majority of these men resided illegally in units leased by the women. “[These boyfriends] blatantly tell them they had better not leave the unit,” said a staff member in Dayton. “Or the boyfriend will say he’ll watch the children. But when it’s time for her to go to work, he won’t watch the children. We’ve heard both.” The isolation that male partners imposed on these women made it difficult for Jobs-Plus to identify and assist the women.<sup>3</sup> Those who were persuaded to come forward for services experienced resistance, and even violence, at the hands of their boyfriends, who did not want them to get ahead and become independent. Staff members in Baltimore spoke of several women whose boyfriends showed up at their GED and driver’s education classes, ordered them to leave, and threatened the staff.

If Jobs-Plus were to succeed in reaching all the targeted women, the programs needed to secure the consent and support of their male partners.<sup>4</sup> However, local public housing regula-

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<sup>3</sup>Since the women were reluctant to volunteer information, the Jobs-Plus programs generally could only estimate the number who were involved in problematical relationships and who needed services for domestic violence or substance abuse. Any “hard numbers” usually came from reports by the management office or security police concerning incidences of domestic violence or drug possession or sales. For instance, the substance abuse program operated by Sankofa for Dayton’s housing authority estimated the need for its services based on an assessment that it did with the security police at the developments.

<sup>4</sup>A housing manager in Los Angeles said that focus groups of residents held by MDRC at the beginning of the demonstration emphasized the critical need for Jobs-Plus to work with the unregistered male residents in developments like Imperial Courts, where their presence and involvement in gang activity were so extensive. Otherwise, Jobs-Plus would have a difficult time establishing its credibility — and even surviving — in the

(continued)

tions against harboring unregistered residents and the eligibility requirements of Jobs-Plus's funding sources limited the leeway that the programs had in trying to win over the men by helping them get employment and social services, particularly for drug abuse treatment. Box 3.1 describes how the program in Dayton reached out to the unregistered partners of residents at DeSoto Bass Courts.

## **Informal On-Site Opportunities to Engage and Assist Residents**

Jobs-Plus's case managers, job developers, and administrative staff coordinated outreach activities, conducted intake and assessment, and offered job search assistance and case management services out of offices in the housing developments. However, being on-site also created many *informal* opportunities for staff to leave their offices and go out to the homes, courtyards, and neighborhood corners and shops where residents were likely to be found — to get to know them, hear directly about their concerns and needs, and assist them in ad hoc, individualized ways. “We discovered [that] we needed to do training services in nontraditional ways,” said a staff member in Seattle. “We weren't taking advantage of our proximity if we didn't cross lines, going to homes, babysitting, visiting families.” For instance, home visits during or after regular program hours permitted the staff to learn about people's lives and “see things happening in the family,” where the domestic problems that undercut employment occurred. Such visits helped break down cultural barriers with foreign-born residents and encouraged those who suffered from domestic problems or mental health issues to consider referrals for professional help. Indeed, staff members emphasized the necessity of being “opportunistic” in taking advantage of every interaction in the development to assist residents and build trust and credibility. In Dayton, a staff member talked about going outside for a cigarette as an occasion to grab residents as they went to and from work: “If I see somebody, if I'm hanging out in the back, . . . I holler.” In Baltimore, the project director observed:

Case management is done in the courtyard. . . . Outreach is done in the courtyard. We can't get from here to there without someone [approaching us], and you have to deal. You have to satisfy that person's needs right where they are, or you say, “Come on and walk me down to the office” or “Walk me to my car.” And they will do that. We have some clients that will not come into the office. This girl right over here. [She] won't come in the office.

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community: “See that parking lot over there with all those guys hanging out? If you don't get them, your program won't go. That's it. None of them are on the lease. But they're there every day. Sitting and watching. They'll come over and rob and burn your place whenever they want to intimidate you. Your program is not going to go.”

### **Box 3.1**

#### **Dayton: Outreach to Unregistered Male Partners**

Dayton stands out from the other Jobs-Plus sites in having benefited from funds allocated by the executive director of the housing authority for outreach, substance abuse, and employment services for the fathers of children who reside at DeSoto Bass Courts, even fathers who are not legal residents of the development. The executive director hoped to challenge the pervasive drug culture in Dayton's developments in a manner that built rapport with the young men and strengthened their capacity to support their families. Jobs-Plus was particularly creative in using these funds to sponsor community-based, informal outreach activities to build trust and encourage these men to give Jobs-Plus a "look-see." The program's philosophy was: "If you can straighten up the men, the women tend to follow their lead." Jobs-Plus worked together with the nonprofit Sankofa's substance abuse services and with Men of Standards (MOS), a group of recovering addicts who provided support to other recovering addicts and whose backgrounds were similar to those of the men at DeSoto Bass Courts. These partners sponsored basketball tournaments with picnics that proved popular and successful in bringing out the entire family. MOS recruited the men by going door-to-door and "just walking the site and talking to people . . . trying to observe and build rapport." At the basketball games, Jobs-Plus staff manned information booths and circulated among the residents, having friendly conversations and inquiring about their lives and work and informally offering information about the program's services for jobs and problems with mental health, substance abuse, child support, felony convictions, and driver's license retrieval.

These activities subsequently encouraged the unregistered men to come to Jobs-Plus for help. After one basketball tournament, a staff member said: "A former coworker came here, and there were five guys sitting on the porch, and she said, 'What are those hoodlums doing out there?' And I said: 'See, they're here to see [the job developer] about employment. You just assumed that they're hoodlums.'" And by reaching out to the male partners, Jobs-Plus was also successful in bringing out many female residents whom the staff had not seen for quite a while or whom they had not yet been able to engage at all: "Folding chairs in arms, here they would come."

The Jobs-Plus programs also sponsored various activities for the entire development, often in partnership with the resident council. Usually these events were held on weekends and included entertainment for the entire family, and they became a popular way to inform residents about program services and opportunities for employment. For instance, Jobs-Plus in Baltimore tried to reconnect with working residents during the week preceding Thanksgiving Day by offering a turkey and fixings to those who could present two recent successive paystubs. The staff inquired about their jobs and lives, offered them assistance, and updated their case files.

The staff consequently developed a broader, holistic understanding of the needs and circumstances that could affect residents' employment — including family problems and supports, social networks, and neighborhood conditions — which expanded their notion of services for employment. For instance, staff members in St. Paul and Seattle saw that problems with

health, children and teens, immigration status, and finances could undercut a resident's ability to secure and retain a job. Their notion of employment assistance included accompanying residents to doctor's appointments or immigration hearings and helping them to buy furniture or translate letters and bills. Such assistance also helped to build trust and ties of obligation with foreign-born residents that had payoffs for the program's employment goals. "If you can offer something that they truly believe will benefit them," said a staff member in St. Paul, "then when you ask them to do something [that is directly related to work, such as attending an ESL class], even if they don't like it, they feel obligated to do it."

## **Residents in Outreach and Service Delivery**

When asked how they had heard about Jobs-Plus or a specific service like the rent incentives, residents across the sites generally cited a similar range of media or venues:

- Flyers, usually left at the door or mail slot but sometimes distributed by an outreach worker, along with a verbal greeting and explanation
- Letters sent by Jobs-Plus or the management office
- Housing management referrals to Jobs-Plus
- Word-of-mouth communications among residents
- Signs outside the Jobs-Plus office
- Telephone calls from Jobs-Plus
- Home visits from Jobs-Plus outreach workers or staff
- Announcements at resident council meetings
- Events sponsored by Jobs-Plus, such as a health fair or barbecue
- Welfare caseworkers' referrals to Jobs-Plus

Many residents emphasized that, in making decisions about participating in programs, they relied most on what they heard from one another. Being on-site gave Jobs-Plus the opportunity to turn to the residents for help in recruiting participants and in tracking and supporting their employment efforts. Participants who had been successfully served by Jobs-Plus — especially if they were community leaders — could therefore play an important role in referring friends to Jobs-Plus and bringing them to the office or activities. "I think word of mouth is important," a Jobs-Plus participant in Baltimore said; "I've brought a couple people down there. . . . I [tell] people about it. . . . 'They will help you out. You just have to go down there and sit and talk to the lady.'" A housing manager at one of the Los Angeles Jobs-Plus sites emphasized, however, that any missteps with one or two residents could reverberate around the development:

If they get a bad taste [about] the program and something doesn't go right or you're not delivering what you said you are going to do, it's over with. It's a rumor-mill community. "Jobs-Plus, get out!" There're always rumors, rumors, rumors. You got to constantly combat that. . . . They'll say: "Nah, I'm not going. And I'm telling everyone else too!" And it hurts your program and your effectiveness.

A *participatory approach to service delivery* trains members of targeted communities to market and deliver services, recruit service users, and track the status of service recipients for the program. It is widely used in the delivery of public health services in developing countries. Furthermore, it has been helpful in the United States in building program credibility and service use among those who may be difficult to reach with standard information campaigns or who are reluctant to come forward for assistance — for instance, in providing AIDS education and needle-exchange programs for injection drug users;<sup>5</sup> drug prevention education programs for low-income, at-risk youth;<sup>6</sup> and public health programs for low-income communities.<sup>7</sup> By engaging members of the target community as *co-service producers*, programs like Jobs-Plus can capitalize on residents' social networks, intimate knowledge of the target community, and informal interactions outside the program's offices and work hours to approach and assist other members of this community wherever residents happen to be, both physically and psychologically.<sup>8</sup>

The Jobs-Plus programs involved residents as salaried employees or volunteers with stipends, engaging them in such key positions as community organizers; outreach workers who publicized the program and recruited participants; intake specialists who helped case managers to screen and assess participants; job coaches who assisted the job developer with skills assessment, training, and job search; and outreach workers who helped circulate job information and follow up working residents. In fact, the community support for work component of Jobs-Plus has primarily taken the form of institutionalized program outreach by residents as court captains (Baltimore), building captains (Chattanooga and Dayton), community coaches (Los Angeles), community outreach workers (St. Paul), and resident outreach and orientation specialists (Seattle). These residents went door-to-door to inform households about education, training, and employment opportunities offered by Jobs-Plus and other programs and to tell them about community events and activities. They also relayed to the program any concerns that the residents expressed to them during outreach. Box 3.2 describes how the residents of William Mead Homes in Los Angeles helped the program develop some popular on-site services.

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<sup>5</sup>Broadhead and Heckathorn, 1994; Henman et al., 1998.

<sup>6</sup>Perry, Komro, Veblen-Mortenson, and Bosna, 2000; McMahon, Browning, and Rose-Colley, 2001.

<sup>7</sup>Bailey, DeWolf, Hasnain-Wynia, and Margolin, 2001; Zukoski and Shortell, 2001.

<sup>8</sup>Venkatesh, 1997; Proscio, 2002.

### **Box 3.2**

#### **William Mead Homes in Los Angeles: Residents Involved in Service Creation**

The residents of William Mead Homes took the lead in organizing some on-site program services, including an after-school program for older children and a General Educational Development (GED) class for Spanish-speaking residents. A GED certificate was essential to qualifying for better-paying jobs in Los Angeles. “FedEx, UPS — You need a GED just to lift a box!” exclaimed a Jobs-Plus staff member. The community coaches arranged for a GED instructor to teach classes two evenings a week in the community center and went door-to-door and recruited residents for the class. Furthermore, they continued to take turns setting up the classroom each evening and providing child care for the parents, and they could be heard on their way to the community center calling out to residents to remind them to come. Typically, GED class attendance at the other Jobs-Plus sites has been sparse and sporadic, regardless of whether the classes are offered on-site in the developments or elsewhere in the city and whether they are held during the daytime or in the evening. Residents frequently lost interest when they realized the amount of work involved. However, GED class attendance at William Mead Homes has remained high, averaging around 25 residents each evening. Several residents went on to pass the GED exam, for which Jobs-Plus paid the exam fee. The residents attributed this response to the community’s appreciation of the class as a resident undertaking and to the encouragement they received from the coaches and from residents who have successfully passed the GED exam.

At the ethnically diverse sites (Los Angeles, St. Paul, Seattle), Jobs-Plus drew on the social networks, languages, and cultural understandings of foreign-born resident staff and volunteers to recruit program participants from their immigrant communities. These residents provided entrée into immigrant communities for whom employment programs were often outside their cultural experience. “When I think back to the first group,” recalled a Jobs-Plus job coach in Seattle, “they took a big chance coming in. It was outside of their cultural paradigm. They were very unusual people. . . . They thought they were coming to me for help, but they didn’t realize that they were helping me out. These were all key people for me, leaders in the community. They started to bring their friends to me. . . . It really helped with recruitment.”

The residents therefore helped Jobs-Plus to extend its reach into the developments, creating a “sensor web” of multiple contact points where residents and Jobs-Plus could “find” and speak with one another — ranging from the offices of Jobs-Plus to the front porches and neighborhood corners and stores where residents hung out. A staff member in Baltimore said of the resident staff and court captains:

They do a lot more than what they're really saying they do. . . . They do a lot of court communication. Say, for instance, people walking up and down the court and . . . know [these residents] work for Jobs-Plus, and they will stop them and ask them various questions and let them know that various things are going in within the development itself. As well as the new move-ins, activities that's going on within the community, and in the Jobs-plus program.

However, substance abuse, drug dealing, and other criminal activity in Baltimore discouraged staff and resident outreach workers from engaging in door-to-door outreach and home visits. For instance, staff members said that they would like to do home visits in the evenings after regular work hours but that they would have to be accompanied by security police — hardly an approach that would encourage residents to open their doors and speak honestly about their problems. Furthermore, residents in public housing developments generally abide by a “Don’t ask, don’t tell” ethos in the face of illicit activity, such as the presence of unregistered people in the units, domestic violence, drug activity, and drive-by shootings. Therefore, the resident outreach workers in Baltimore said that they avoided certain units where they believed that “things you don’t want to be caught seeing” were likely to occur. “You are not supposed to be in other people’s business,” observed a field researcher. Retaliation for breaking this code could be deadly. This was unfortunate, since Jobs-Plus in Baltimore looked to the resident outreach workers to connect with those troubled residents who avoided the program office and staff. Indeed, all the Jobs-Plus programs needed to take additional steps to help resident staff and outreach workers find ways to assist the program without jeopardizing their safety.

## **Collaborating with Housing Services to Promote Employment**

The Jobs-Plus programs in Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle worked closely with the on-site housing management staff to spread the message of employment as an expectation of working-age residents and of participation in Jobs-Plus as a feature of residency. When new residents arrived at the Jobs-Plus developments for their move-in interviews, the on-site management staff in Dayton and St. Paul made sure that a Jobs-Plus staff member was present to talk about the program. Usually, this arrangement encouraged new residents at these two sites to enroll in Jobs-Plus on the spot. The management staff in Seattle and at the two developments in Los Angeles distributed Jobs-Plus materials to new residents and referred them to the Jobs-Plus office.<sup>9</sup> Box 3.3 describes some of the ways that the management staff at Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul assist foreign-born residents.

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<sup>9</sup>Public housing applicants in Dayton, Los Angeles, and St. Paul also first heard about Jobs-Plus as a benefit of a Jobs-Plus development at the local housing authority’s application center when they were introduced to the agency’s housing developments. For instance, the Jobs-Plus project director in Los Angeles trained the  
(continued)



### Box 3.3

#### **St. Paul: Housing Management and Jobs-Plus Staff Assisting Foreign-Born Residents**

In St. Paul, the foreign-born residents at Mt. Airy Homes face a range of domestic, health, and cultural adjustment problems that can undermine their ability to get and keep a job. The support of the management office has been critical to Jobs-Plus's efforts to help residents with these problems, in addition to providing them with employment services and rent incentives. For instance, since the residents are required to report job gains or losses and earnings changes to the management staff, it is the management office — and not Jobs-Plus — that often has the current information about residents who are struggling with job loss, domestic violence, delinquent children, substance abuse, or mental health problems. Also, the management office receives reports from the security police about incidents of domestic violence, substance abuse, or delinquent children. Jobs-Plus staff therefore depend on the management staff to inform them and refer residents to Jobs-Plus for help when these problems surface.

The housing management office includes staff members who speak the languages of the large Southeast Asian community at Mt. Airy Homes. Some staff members have also made the journey from refugee camps to St. Paul and have been past residents at the development. They bring a welcomed appreciation and sensitivity to the cultural dimensions of the foreign-born residents' concerns. The residents flock to see these staff members for advice in dealing with all kinds of issues besides paying the rent — from problems as serious as domestic abuse to matters as mundane as how to use the garden hose — and even to accompany them when they venture into unfamiliar settings where they might need help. “Big time, people walk in. Big time, phone calls,” said a constantly called-upon assistant housing manager, who also volunteers each week to teach a popular class to prepare the Hmong residents at Mt. Airy for the U.S. citizenship exam.

The active support of the housing management office has been particularly important for enrolling residents in Jobs-Plus's financial incentive plans, since the management office has current information about households that have working members who are eligible for the rent savings. Indeed, in St. Paul — even though a Jobs-Plus staff member attends move-in interviews and annual lease redetermination interviews at the housing management office for new and current residents — housing authority guidelines require that a management staff person explain the Jobs-Plus rent incentives to the residents. In Los Angeles, the housing manager at William Mead Homes has been particularly proactive in using lease redeterminations as an op-

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downtown application center staff about describing Jobs-Plus's services and benefits to applicants. The center staff also told applicants that they were expected to participate in the program as a condition of accepting housing at the two Jobs-Plus developments in Los Angeles, even though Jobs-Plus is a voluntary program and cannot mandate residents to participate.

portunity to identify candidates for the rent incentives and to call them up and personally refer them to Jobs-Plus. “I’m seeing all the reviews,” he said; “Each month we’re doing about 30-some-odd reviews. . . . I’ll screen through, and I’ll pull those out and label ‘Jobs-Plus’ right off so that we already know. And the Jobs-Plus program doesn’t have to worry about it. . . . Everybody that I’ve seen in that category, I had them come in and I had them go over to Jobs-Plus.”

## **Drawing on Referral Partnerships with Local Service Agencies**

Accommodating the range of residents’ employment-related service needs required Jobs-Plus also to make referrals to off-site agencies for various education, training, and support services. The mix of on-site and off-site services varied across programs, reflecting differences in the availability of local funding for services that could be offered exclusively on-site and the range of resident needs that called for intensive, specialized off-site services, such as detoxification and recovery programs for substance abusers. Jobs-Plus staff also considered the trade-offs between the accessibility and convenience of on-site services, on the one hand, and the value of exposing residents through off-site services to “real-world” conditions outside the housing development, on the other hand. For instance, staff members in Baltimore pointed to the isolation and limited exposure of residents at Gilmore Homes to life outside the neighborhood and to the lack of employment opportunities nearby. So off-site service experiences were regarded as preparation for the work world — a way to expose residents to life and commuting outside the development and neighborhood.

To ensure that residents had access to the off-site services that they needed, the Jobs-Plus programs developed extensive referral partnerships with local public and nonprofit service agencies and community colleges. These included the local welfare agency and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) entity, both of which frequently allocated subsidized training slots to Jobs-Plus participants. Ethnic and refugee organizations in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle assisted Jobs-Plus with the language and social service needs of foreign-born residents. In addition to providing adult education and job training, local agencies helped Jobs-Plus address the specialized needs of certain subgroups of residents, such as counseling and legal services for domestic violence victims, job preparation and job search assistance for youth, and detoxification and recovery services for substance abusers (Box 3.4).<sup>10</sup>

Jobs-Plus also arranged for some partner agencies to assign staff to work at the demonstration sites. For instance, the Employment Development Department (EDD) in Los Angeles and the WIA entity in Baltimore colocated job developers at the Jobs-Plus programs, and the Seattle program hired staff from the Refugee Women’s Alliance (ReWA) as job coaches to

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<sup>10</sup>For a detailed discussion of Jobs-Plus’s extensive service partnerships, see Kato and Riccio (2001, Chapter 4).

### Box 3.4

#### **Baltimore: Partnering with a Health Care Consortium to Address Widespread Substance Abuse**

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore identified physical and mental health issues among Gilmore Homes residents as critical barriers to sustainable employment. Among these issues, drug abuse was cited as a primary concern. “It’s a stopper,” said a resident in Baltimore of the effects of substance abuse on residents who became fixated on supporting drug or alcohol addictions. However, residents who wanted to turn their lives around faced a daunting challenge trying to get help from a labyrinthine network of private and public health insurance and social and health services. Jobs-Plus therefore arranged for the Vision for Health Consortium (VHC) of public and private health organizations in Baltimore to locate a health referral program on-site in a converted residential unit at Gilmore Homes, across the street from the Jobs-Plus office. VHC worked closely with Jobs-Plus to offer adults primary care and health education, assessments and referrals for substance abuse treatment, and substance abuse prevention programs.

The presence of well-respected, longtime residents on the staff of the on-site VHC office encouraged residents who had substance abuse problems to come forward for help. A VHC staff member emphasized that the first step was often the hardest for addicts to take: “We get people who come in when they hit rock bottom, and they don’t know which way to go.” These residents often started by coming into the office to talk, and then they finally acknowledged that they needed help. “This one guy came in. It took him awhile. But sometimes they came back three or four times. They can’t get up the nerve to go through the pain to get help.” Sometimes residents “actually come to my home . . . knock on my door . . . a lot of them just need someone to talk to. . . .” Despite the monumental hurdles involved in substance abuse recovery, Jobs-Plus and VHC have had success stories that illustrate the importance of being available on-site when a person is in immediate need of services. For instance, Ramona Graves turned to VHC only after her mother told her that she could not return to their apartment and see her baby until she got help with drug addiction. VHC was immediately able to place Ramona in a 28-day treatment program, and it later placed her in two other treatment programs over several months. Jobs-Plus and VHC helped Ramona to stay clean, get a job, and learn to drive a car. Facing so much denial and recidivism among substance abusers at Gilmore Homes, a VHC staff member observed: “[I]t makes us feel good when we know that this thing works.” Unfortunately, in September 2002, funding shortfalls resulted in the closure of the VHC office at Gilmore Homes.

work with foreign-born residents.<sup>11</sup> The local welfare agencies in Chattanooga, Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and, for a period of time, Baltimore assigned an employment caseworker to the Jobs-Plus sites; welfare recipients in these developments could ask that their cases be trans-

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<sup>11</sup>EDD is the state agency in California that handles the Wagner-Peyser Act’s federal employment services, such as Unemployment Insurance and job matching and job transitioning assistance for workers.

ferred to the colocated caseworkers.<sup>12</sup> An important objective of the Jobs-Plus demonstration was to assist the local welfare agencies in engaging working-age recipients who resided in the developments and help them become self-sufficient. Ideally, it was hoped that Jobs-Plus would be able to recruit TANF recipients through its on-site outreach efforts and provide on-site case management support and the rent incentives to encourage them to retain their jobs and accumulate savings. The welfare agencies, in turn, could keep Jobs-Plus informed about the TANF recipients in the developments and the agencies' service offerings.

Jobs-Plus also needed the local welfare agencies to recognize participation in Jobs-Plus's employment activities as a way for TANF recipients in the developments to fulfill their work requirements. Otherwise, TANF recipients would not have time to participate in both TANF and Jobs-Plus work activities. However, only Dayton's welfare agency agreed to mandate participation in Jobs-Plus as the work activity for all TANF recipients at DeSoto Bass Courts, thereby helping the program to engage a large number of TANF recipients at this site. In contrast, the welfare agencies at the other sites agreed only to refer residents to Jobs-Plus as an *option* for fulfilling their work requirements — an option that frontline welfare agency staff did not always communicate to the residents.<sup>13</sup> Jobs-Plus staff members usually had to initiate calls to welfare-to-work caseworkers to get information about TANF recipients in the developments or to ensure that the agency offered them services. A Jobs-Plus staff member in Seattle observed that although some welfare-to-work caseworkers thought that Jobs-Plus was doing them a favor by offering to work intensively with clients on their caseload, others had a strong sense of turf and resented Jobs-Plus's efforts.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>A caseworker from Work Matters was assigned to the Jobs-Plus office in Baltimore in the third quarter of 2000 until June 2001. Work Matters was a welfare-to-work program operated by the city's WIA agency. In an arrangement with the housing authority, Work Matters offered job preparation and guaranteed subsidized employment to residents at Gilmore Homes who were either long-time TANF recipients (that is, clients who had been receiving cash assistance for 30 months or more) or who were noncustodial parents. Jobs-Plus was responsible for recruiting and conducting intake of eligible residents. The Jobs-Plus staff observed that it was easier to identify, assist, and track TANF recipients who lived at Gilmore Homes when the Work Matters caseworker was on-site. They routinely discussed the cases they shared, and the caseworker helped Jobs-Plus cut through welfare agency red tape when residents had trouble accessing benefits and support services. The Jobs-Plus staff could also "grab" residents who came to the office to see her before they went upstairs. But as the numbers of TANF-eligible clients at Gilmore Homes declined, the caseworker was reassigned to the downtown office of Work Matters, to the dismay of the Jobs-Plus staff. And TANF clients at Gilmore Homes were redirected to the downtown welfare offices — and thereby away from Jobs-Plus — for employment assistance.

<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of efforts by Jobs-Plus and the welfare agency to promote mutual accountability and coordination in assisting TANF recipients at the Jobs-Plus sites, see Kato and Riccio (2001, Chapter 4).

<sup>14</sup>Fortunately, clients in Seattle were assigned to welfare-to-work caseworkers alphabetically, by the client's last name. So the Jobs-Plus staff could tell the identity of a resident's welfare-to-work caseworker by the resident's last name, since the welfare agency provided Jobs-Plus with a list of the caseworkers and their alphabetical assignments (A-G, H-K, and so on). Identifying caseworkers was not always so easy at the other Jobs-Plus sites.

## Conclusions

Implementing a saturation strategy on-site at the public housing developments permitted and required Jobs-Plus to conduct outreach and service delivery in ways that addressed wide variations in local contexts and residents' needs and circumstances. This chapter provides examples of how some Jobs-Plus programs capitalized on being on-site to inform, engage, and assist the residents. In addition to the formal services offered at the Jobs-Plus office by program staff and by other agencies' colocated staff and referrals to an array of off-site service partners, outreach and employment assistance also took the form of ad hoc, informal interactions between staff and residents around the development, in places wherever residents were likely to be found. In Dayton, St. Paul, Seattle, and William Mead Homes in Los Angeles, Jobs-Plus also collaborated closely with housing management staff to convey a pro-employment message and to market the rent incentives to the residents. Enlisting respected residents — including those who were retired or disabled — as outreach workers helped Jobs-Plus expand its presence in the community, bringing trusted, familiar faces to residents' doors and courtyards, encouraging them to give Jobs-Plus a try. (In Seattle and Los Angeles, residents also played a growing role in organizing and delivering services as a result of Jobs-Plus's leadership in capacity-building efforts under the community support for work component.)

However, Baltimore's experiences indicate how drug trafficking and abuse in a housing development can deter door-to-door outreach and home visits, particularly in the evenings and with the hard-to-serve residents whom Jobs-Plus is struggling to reach. Furthermore, housing authority lease regulations constrained the program's efforts to assist men who were residing illegally in women's units, even though their support was often needed to encourage the women to participate in Jobs-Plus.

Chapter 4 begins to look at residents' responses to these efforts by examining their participation in Jobs-Plus's formal employment services and activities.

## Chapter 4

# Residents' Patterns of Participation in Jobs-Plus: A Quantitative Assessment

Jobs-Plus's saturation strategy ultimately seeks to assist working-age public housing residents with employment as extensively as possible. What success has the program had so far in fostering widespread knowledge of its services and activities among the targeted residents? Moreover, since residents' awareness at "saturation levels" does not necessarily mean that all working-age residents are also taking up Jobs-Plus's services and activities, what kind of a response has the program been getting from working-age residents? This report sheds light on these questions and attempts to specify levels of response that such an approach can reasonably be expected to generate — in the absence of extensive research on comparable program precedents, particularly those that do not have mandatory participation requirements.<sup>1</sup>

## Measuring Participation in Jobs-Plus

Reports on participation in employment and social service programs typically look at participation in terms of program enrollment by individual clients and receipt of formal program services. This report, however, examines the response to Jobs-Plus's saturation strategy in broader terms. Chapter 3 shows that a saturation strategy prompted Jobs-Plus to engage and assist residents not only through formal services but also through informal interactions and activities throughout the housing developments. Residents could therefore be involved in Jobs-Plus in a range of ways.

First of all, *individuals* who were age 18 or older could officially enroll in the Jobs-Plus program, usually by filling out a registration form.<sup>2</sup> (The programs in Baltimore and Los Angeles also enrolled individuals who were younger than 18.) Registration was generally followed by an assessment of a resident's service needs. Some sites, such as Baltimore, required the resident to schedule an appointment for this assessment at a later date. St. Paul — as part of its annual lease redetermination process — also required all working-age residents to attend an orientation each year that covered the rent incentives component and other Jobs-Plus services. By

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, the Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM) in San Diego tried to substantially increase the participation of AFDC recipients in its employment-related activities by saturating its caseload with these activities. However, participation in SWIM's activities was mandatory for the clients, in contrast to residents' voluntary participation in Jobs-Plus.

<sup>2</sup>The Jobs-Plus registration form varied from site to site but generally collected data about the resident's contact information, educational and employment background, TANF status, and household composition.

enrolling in Jobs-Plus, the individual became eligible for the program's case management and employment-related services and could apply for the rent incentives if he or she or someone else in the household were employed.

Second, *households* that had at least one employed member could apply for Jobs-Plus's rent incentives. Every site required that the household head fill out the incentives application, even though he or she might not be the employed member of the household. And the household head first had to enroll in Jobs-Plus as a prerequisite for applying for the rent incentives. However, the entire household could benefit from the potential savings in rent, even if all the members were not individually enrolled in Jobs-Plus.

Finally, even residents who were not formally enrolled in Jobs-Plus could be touched and engaged by the program in many *informal* ways. Chapter 3 gives examples of how a saturation strategy permits residents to learn about education, training, and job opportunities without ever stepping into a Jobs-Plus office — by means of information diffused throughout the development through door-to-door flyers, word-of-mouth, and popular community events that Jobs-Plus sponsored. Case file records and other standard measures of program participation cannot capture this kind of involvement. Moreover, the staff often used informal, ad hoc interactions both inside and outside the Jobs-Plus offices to give residents assistance and information.

### **Participation Measurements**

Given these different means and levels of resident involvement in Jobs-Plus, it was necessary to develop various ways to examine program participation for this report. The chapter begins by looking at the quantitative data and utilizing the following three measurements of formal participation in Jobs-Plus:

- **Jobs-Plus attachment rate.** The percentage of targeted residents who are individually enrolled in Jobs-Plus *or* who belong to households receiving Jobs-Plus rent incentives
- **Jobs-Plus enrollment rate.** The percentage of targeted residents who have individually registered for Jobs-Plus
- **Service referral or participation rate among Jobs-Plus enrollees.** The percentage of enrolled residents who were referred to or participated in specific employment-related services with the assistance of Jobs-Plus

Note that the attachment rate is the most encompassing measure of formal involvement in Jobs-Plus. It captures residents' connection to the program that exists by virtue of their having individually enrolled in Jobs-Plus *or* their having benefited from the rent incentives as a member of a household enrolled in Jobs-Plus. The enrollment rate and the service referral or

participation rate are more conventional measures of participation that reflect individual registration and receipt of services.

## Data Collection

This chapter examines the rates of attachment, enrollment, and service referral or participation as well as the demographic characteristics of Jobs-Plus participants and nonparticipants. These measurements were calculated, first, from *housing authority administrative data* on the residents of the Jobs-Plus developments. At the start of their tenancy and during an annual lease redetermination process, public housing leaseholders must fill out a HUD 50058 form whereby they provide information about their household's composition, income, and demographic characteristics. Second, this chapter's participation measurements were also derived from the *case files* of Jobs-Plus enrollees that were maintained by the Jobs-Plus staff at the program offices. Case files were reviewed by MDRC staff and field research consultants at the Jobs-Plus sites in summer 2001. Therefore, the participation measurements in this chapter document Jobs-Plus enrollment and service receipt through June 2001.

Data for this report were collected for the 1998, 1999, and 2000 annual cohorts of non-disabled, working-age residents in the Jobs-Plus developments. The term "cohort" refers to all residents, ages 18 to 61 years, whose names appeared on the housing authority's 50058 forms as a resident of the Jobs-Plus development in October 1998 and/or 1999 and/or 2000.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to develop a fuller picture of participation in Jobs-Plus over the course of a multiyear demonstration, this report looks at three cohorts rather than at a single cohort of targeted residents. On the one hand, inclusion of the 1998 cohort permits the research to follow a group of targeted residents for a longer period of time. On the other hand, the addition of the 1999 and 2000 cohorts allows the research to examine the experiences of targeted residents who moved into the developments after 1998 — particularly, after fully formed Jobs-Plus programs were in place.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the case file data were collected from a sample of randomly selected residents who completed an enrollment process to join Jobs-Plus or who belonged to a household whose head enrolled in Jobs-Plus's rent incentives plan. Sample sizes range from lows of 239 participants at William Mead Homes and 284 at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles to highs of 430 participants in St. Paul and 496 in Baltimore. Data were collected only from the case files of

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<sup>3</sup>Chapter 3 notes that the Jobs-Plus research demonstration initially included 16- and 17-year-olds as part of its target population. However, because most programs did not enroll residents younger than 18, the analysis in this report is limited to nondisabled residents ages 18 to 61.

<sup>4</sup>Since targeted residents could be part of more than one cohort if they remained at the housing development for more than a year, statistical adjustments have been made in this chapter's charts and tables to eliminate duplication across cohorts.



residents who were part of the research demonstration's target population of nondisabled residents ages 18 to 61 years who have Social Security numbers.<sup>5</sup> The case file data, therefore, do not include information about seniors or about nondisabled residents who enrolled in Jobs-Plus. Nor does it include information about working-age, undocumented immigrants who resided legally at Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes and who, therefore, were part of the target population in Los Angeles and were among those formally enrolled and assisted by the program. The policy of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) permits undocumented immigrants to take out a lease or to be on the lease as long as one member of the household has U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status.<sup>6</sup> Whether leaseholders or household members, undocumented aliens were also eligible for Jobs-Plus's rent incentives in Los Angeles, as long as one household member was employed.

Finally, a caveat must be noted about the quality of the participation measurements in this chapter that were derived from Jobs-Plus case files. The case file review for this report encountered wide variations across sites in the completeness of files and the exactness of record-keeping practices for services rendered. Dayton was the exception in requiring the staff to write up an "activity ticket" to record practically every encounter with a resident, whether inside or outside the office. All sites except Seattle needed either to install for the first time or to upgrade their automated management information system (MIS) for maintaining client data. Furthermore, the case file review was conducted at a time when many sites were still struggling to get staff and services operating effectively, and they had only recently begun implementing the financial incentives component of Jobs-Plus. The case file data are particularly problematical for illustrating participation in the two programs in Los Angeles, which were both grappling at the time with chronic leadership turnover and staffing shortfalls; William Mead Homes was also recovering from the devastation of gang violence and residents' unrest and dissatisfaction with

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<sup>5</sup>These residents were all considered "current participants" because no site officially dropped participants from its rolls other than when they moved out of the development (although residents became ineligible for the rent incentives component if they became unemployed).

<sup>6</sup>See Miller (in Kato, 2003, p. 91): "Changes in HUD policies over the past five years have restricted the extent to which housing authorities can rent to undocumented immigrants, and while families without documented members are no longer permitted to apply for public housing, undocumented immigrants are still permitted to take out leases or be on the lease as long as one member of the household has U.S. citizenship or legal U.S. immigration status." The author adds that California law prevents eviction on the basis of legal immigration status and that undocumented families who resided in public housing units prior to enactment of the law are allowed to retain their housing. This has resulted in high numbers of undocumented immigrants in Los Angeles public housing units relative to other cities. "Housing authorities are required to charge families who have undocumented members a higher, prorated rent based on the number of undocumented persons in the household so that only documented residents are receiving assistance. . . . Rent calculations vary widely for these families based on composition, but Housing Services staff at HACLA estimate that most of these families in the two Jobs-Plus developments typically pay an additional \$100 in monthly rent, compared to households where all members are documented."

the local housing authority. For all these reasons, this chapter's findings about program participation based on the case file review may be *conservative estimates* of formal service take-up at most of the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites.

In contrast, the analysis in Chapter 5 of residents' participation based on field research has the benefit of data that were collected *through summer 2003*, when the programs were fully developed and stable, to describe the array of ways — both informal and formal — in which public housing residents were involved with this place-based employment program.

## **Rates of Jobs-Plus Attachment, Enrollment, and Service Referral or Participation**

One part of the story of residents' involvement with Jobs-Plus can be described through rates of attachment to and enrollment in the program and rates of referrals to or participation in program services and activities.

### **Levels of Individual Attachment to Jobs-Plus**

The attachment rate is the most encompassing measure of formal involvement with Jobs-Plus. A resident is “attached” to Jobs-Plus if he or she is personally enrolled in the program or lives in a household that is enrolled in its rent incentives plan. What proportion of all working-age, nondisabled adults living in the housing developments at any time from 1998 to 2000 were ever formally attached to Jobs-Plus by 2001?

Figure 4.1 presents the Jobs-Plus attachment rate at each site for the three cohorts combined. The attachment rates of members of the combined cohorts ranged from lows of 33 percent (Imperial Courts) and 39 percent (William Mead Homes) to highs of 69 percent (Dayton) and 78 percent (St. Paul), averaging 53 percent of the cohorts across sites.

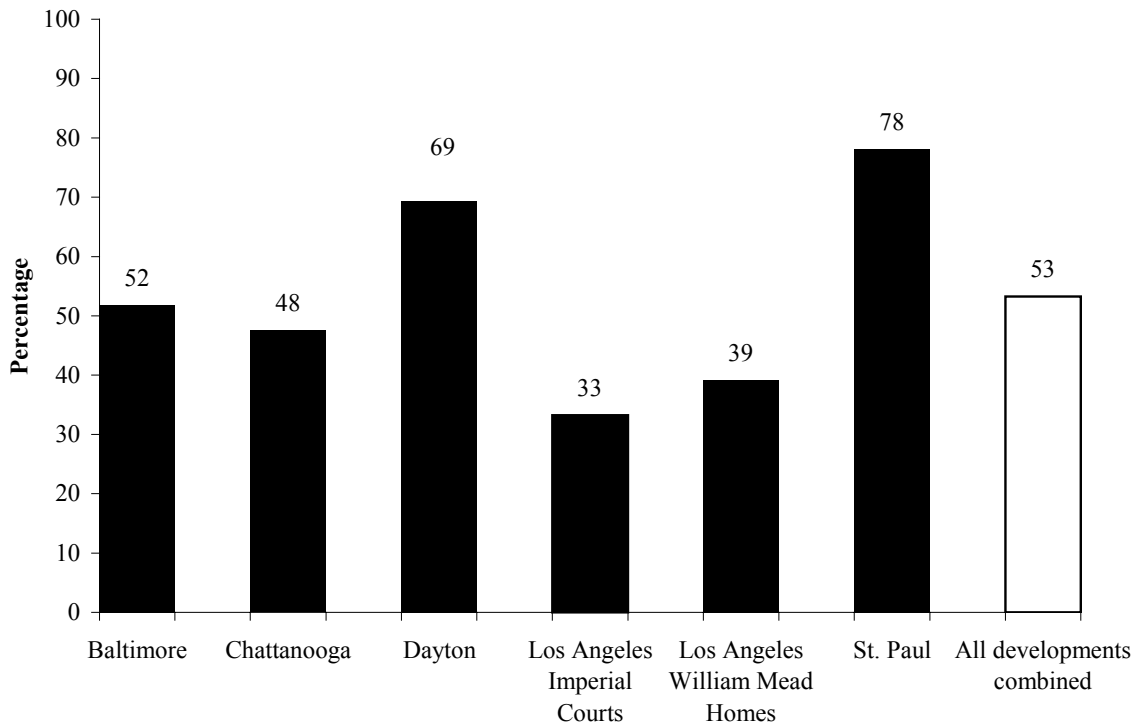
Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show the influence of cohort membership on attachment rates. As shown in Figure 4.2, attachment rates across the sites were higher among the targeted residents who belonged to the 1999 cohort (59 percent) and to the 2000 cohort (61 percent) rather than to the 1998 cohort (51 percent). Figure 4.3 shows that this was also the story for the three cohorts at each of the Jobs-Plus sites except St. Paul, which may reflect the fact that later cohorts — unlike the 1998 cohort at all sites except St. Paul — had the benefit of, and were drawn by, mature programs that offered all the Jobs-Plus components and that had built a track record of success. The programs had also improved their capacity to conduct outreach, administer the rent

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.1**

**Attachment Rate Among All Targeted Residents  
Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments at Any Time Between 1998 and 2000,  
by Development**

*What percentage of targeted residents enrolled in  
Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

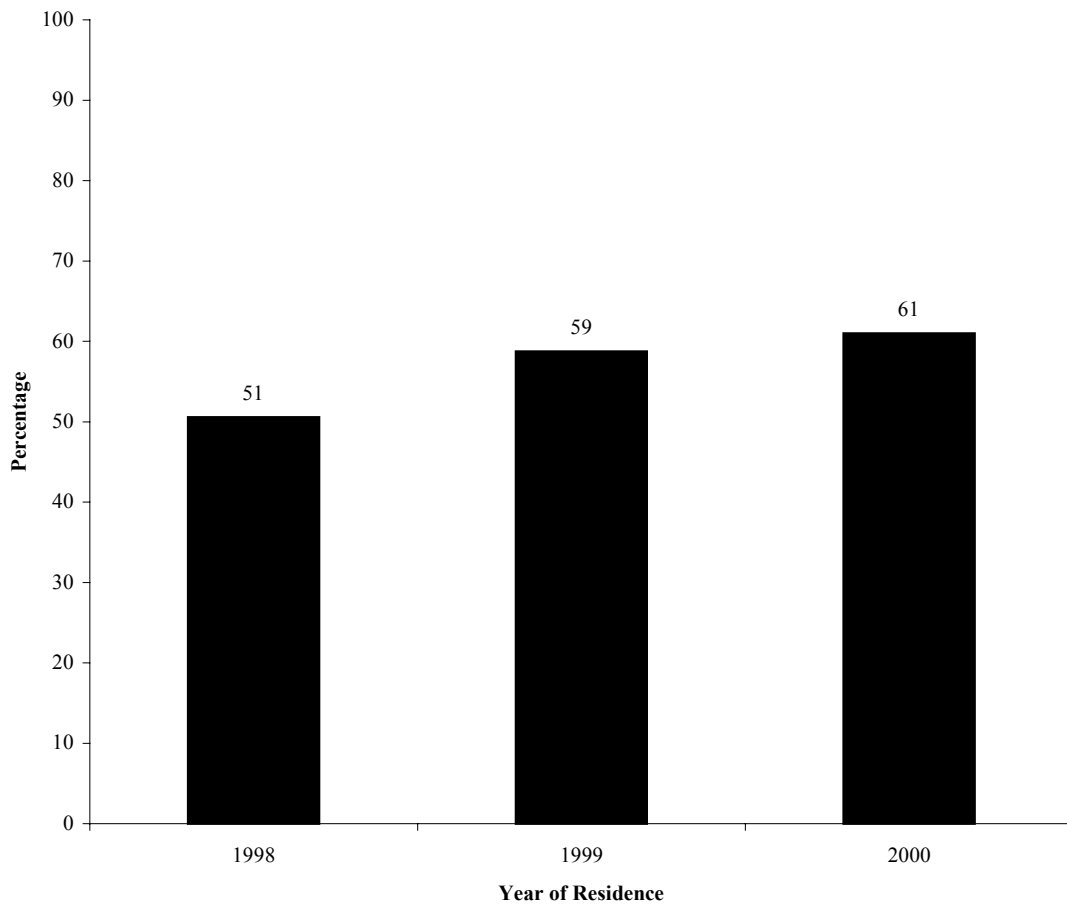
In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.2**

**Attachment Rate Among All Jobs-Plus-Targeted Residents,  
by Year of Residence  
(All Developments Combined)**

*What percentage of targeted residents enrolled in  
Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: A resident may be part of more than one annual sample depending on the number of years she or he lived in a Jobs-Plus development during the period of interest.

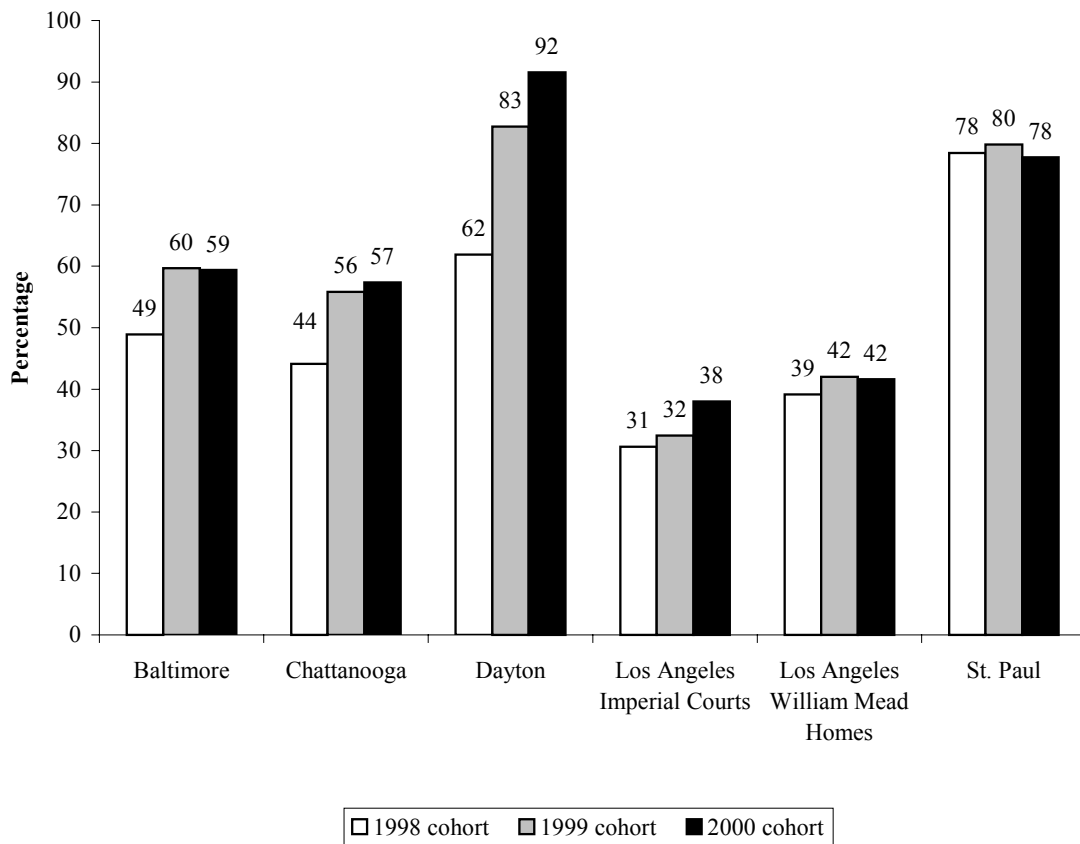
The results for each housing development are weighted equally.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.3**

**Attachment Rate Among All Jobs-Plus-Targeted Residents,  
by Development and Year of Residence**

*What percentage of targeted residents enrolled in  
Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: A cohort includes all nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. A resident may be part of more than one cohort depending on the number of years she or he lived in a Jobs-Plus development.

incentives, and maintain participants' records. The fact that only St. Paul offered and had vigorously marketed the rent incentives since 1998 may account for the similar attachment rates of all three cohorts at that site.<sup>7</sup>

Another way to look at the extent to which Jobs-Plus penetrated the developments across sites is through the *household attachment rates*. A "household" is the housing authority's key unit of measurement of its leasing and service interventions. A household is "attached" to Jobs-Plus if one of its members has ever been formally enrolled in the program or if the household has ever been enrolled in the rent incentives plan. Figure 4.4 indicates that, for all three cohorts combined, Jobs-Plus was able to attach 58 percent of the targeted households across sites. St. Paul was particularly outstanding in having attached 86 percent of targeted households, followed by Dayton, with 71 percent. An important factor in these two programs' success was their effective collaboration with the housing management staff in marketing the rent incentives. In contrast, the lower-than-average attachment rates of the two Los Angeles programs must be seen as time-limited representations of participation prior to June 2001, which is discussed later in this chapter.

### **Attachment Rate Growth for the 1998 Cohort**

Figure 4.5 shows the growth over time in the attachment rates of individual members of the 1998 cohort — for whom the follow-up opportunity was longer than for the other two cohorts — and shows that their levels of attachment grew over time and at different rates at each site. Note that the figure indicates *cumulative* attachment rates for members of the 1998 cohort who had *ever* been enrolled in Jobs-Plus; it therefore cannot show decreases in attachment rates over time, even if a sizable number of residents happened to have stopped participating in the program.

Figure 4.5 also indicates the month and year when the rent incentives became available at each site. Jobs-Plus in St. Paul implemented the incentives long before the other programs, and it undertook an effective incentives development and marketing campaign that prompted eligible households to apply for this benefit even after a rocky start. St. Paul achieved a notable 78 percent individual attachment rate among the 1998 cohort, and it did so early in the demonstration, unlike any other site. The rent incentives component was a key value-added element that made the program attractive to the residents of Mt. Airy Homes, who already had access to

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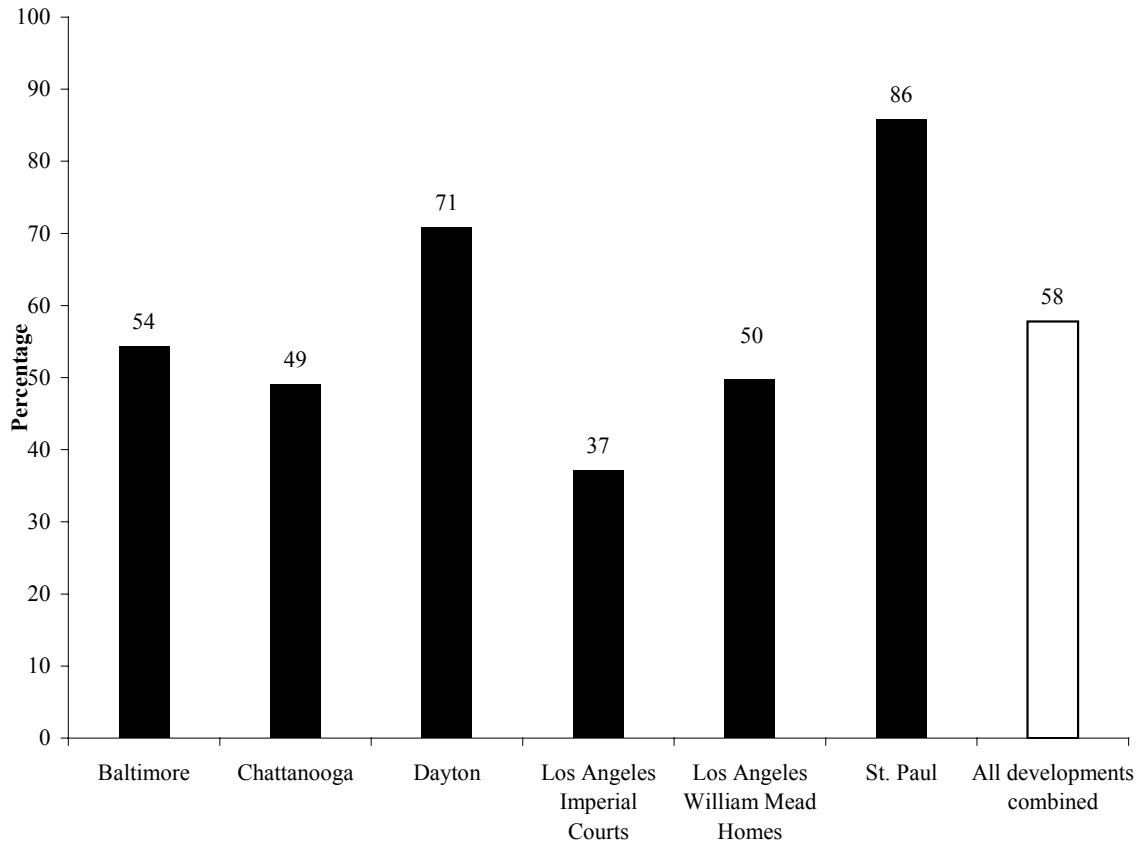
<sup>7</sup>The attachment rates shown in Figure 4.1 of all three cohorts combined for each site are not the averages of the attachment rates in Figure 4.3, which shows the three cohorts separately for each site. Because an individual can be in more than one cohort, it was necessary to adjust the base used in the calculations. (The definition of a cohort member is anyone who lived in the development in a given year.) The combined cohort rates count only once each individual who lived in the development in any of the three years.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.4**

**Attachment Rate Among All Targeted Households  
Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments at Any Time Between 1998 and 2000, by Development**

*What percentage of targeted households had a member enrolled in  
Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted households” refers to households headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.5**

**Cumulative Attachment Rate Among Jobs-Plus-Targeted Residents Living in the Developments in 1998, by Development**

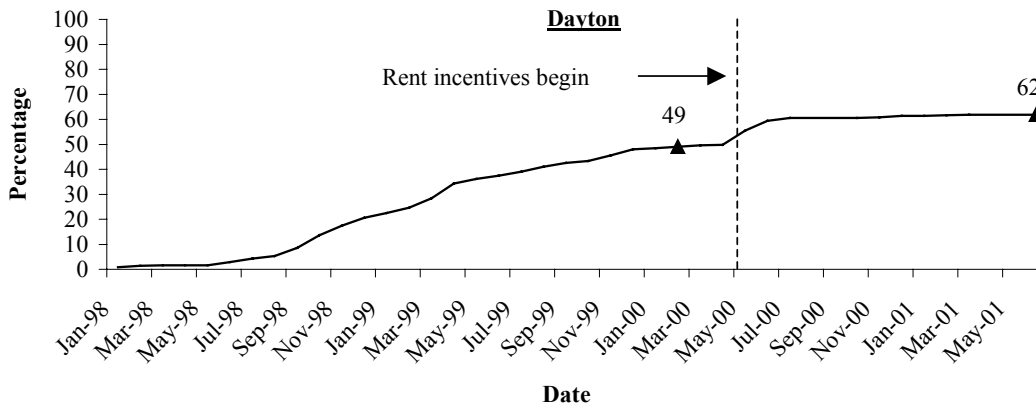
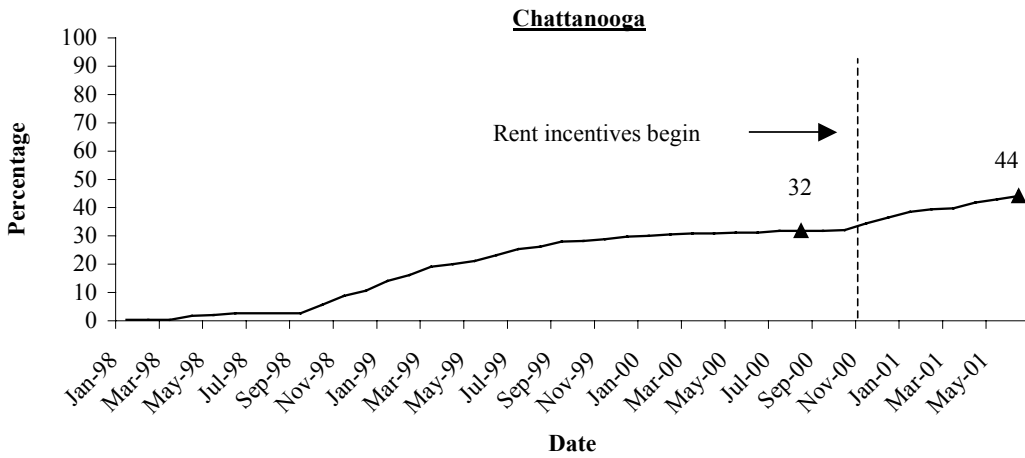
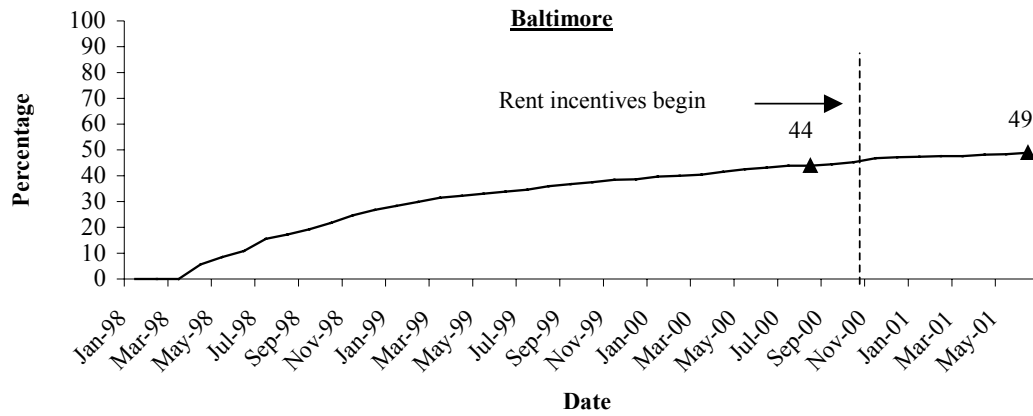
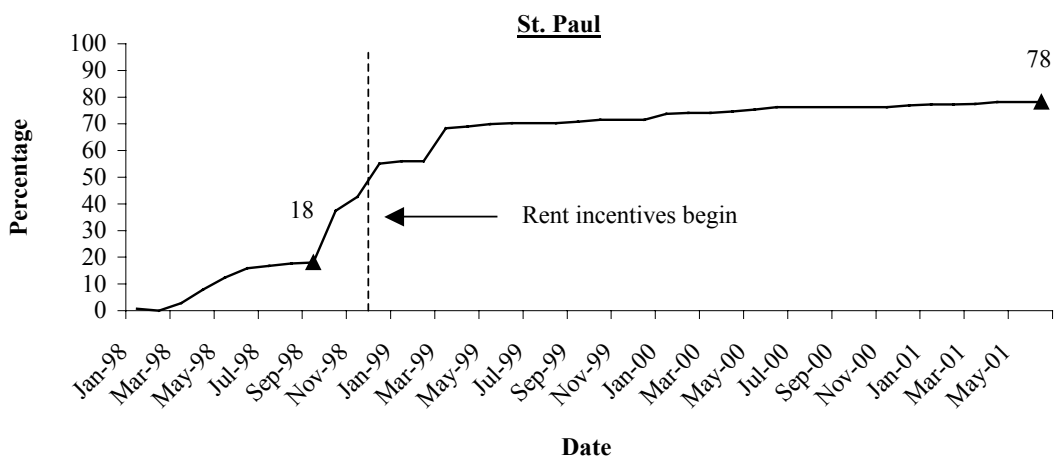
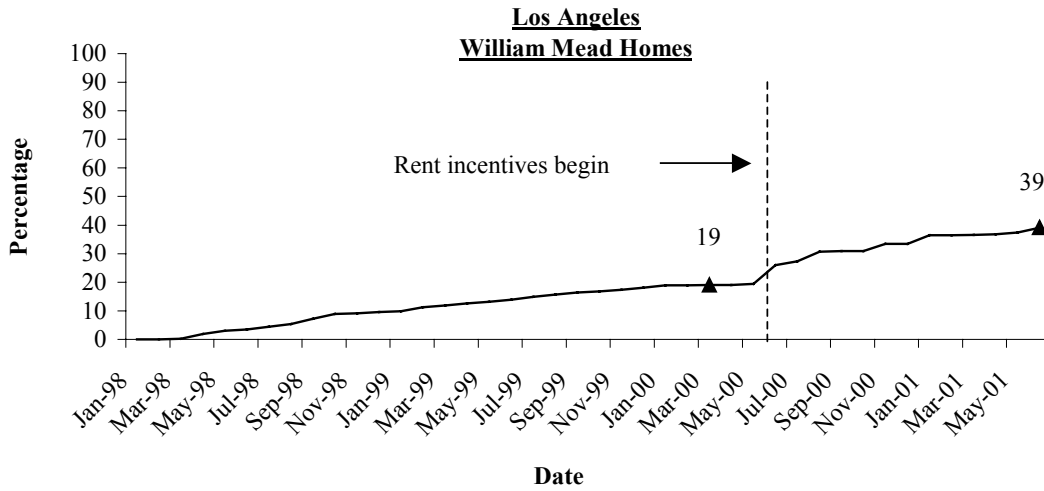
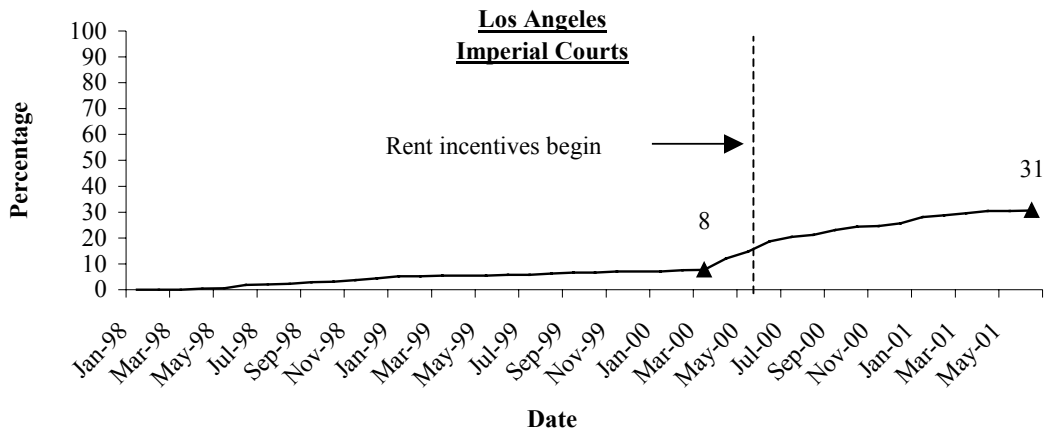




Figure 4.5 (continued)



(continued)

### Figure 4.5 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTE: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

on-site employment services before Jobs-Plus began in St. Paul; many of the development’s immigrant residents were also already receiving employment assistance from local refugee organizations.

At the other sites, even though the implementation of the rent incentives was delayed, the incentives frequently generated renewed interest in Jobs-Plus. However, since residents had to be employed to qualify for the incentives, the take-up rates varied across sites. The rent incentives in Los Angeles provided a welcome boost to the number of households officially involved with Jobs-Plus, especially at William Mead Homes, where there were many working households. Working residents were also encouraged to enroll in Jobs-Plus for the first time in Chattanooga and Dayton.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Baltimore’s gains in participation were minimal following the implementation of the rent incentives.

#### Individual Jobs-Plus Enrollment and Rent Incentives Receipt

Another way to look at formal involvement in Jobs-Plus is to examine the proportion of individuals who officially *enrolled* in the program. Unlike eligibility for the rent incentives, the residents did not have to be employed or to belong to a household with an employed member in order to enroll in Jobs-Plus for employment assistance.<sup>9</sup> What proportion of all working-age,

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<sup>8</sup>A forthcoming MDRC report will examine the implementation of, and residents’ participation in, the Jobs-Plus rent incentives programs across sites.

<sup>9</sup>Participation measures for this chapter were adjusted based on the findings of a quality control (QC) effort to confirm the accuracy of data initially collected from the Jobs-Plus case files. This effort involved randomly selecting approximately 20 individuals from among those residents who did enroll and those residents who did not enroll in Jobs-Plus at each site. First, Jobs-Plus staff reviewed these lists to confirm whether the case file review correctly identified these individuals as enrollees or as nonenrollees. The enrollment and attachment rates in Figures 4.1 through 4.6, in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, and in Appendix Tables B.1 and B.2 for the full sample at each site and across sites are, therefore, the QC-adjusted rates. For instance, if the QC effort iden-

(continued)

nondisabled adults living in the housing development at any time from 1998 to 2000 were ever formally enrolled in Jobs-Plus by June 2001?

As shown by the white bars in Figure 4.6, individual enrollment rates in Jobs-Plus for the three cohorts combined (1998-2000) generally hovered around the halfway mark at most sites, ranging from lows of 44 percent (Chattanooga) and 51 percent (Baltimore) to highs of 64 percent (Dayton) and 68 percent (St. Paul). At all the sites, enrolling in the rent incentives plan involves a different process than enrolling in Jobs-Plus, but enrolling in the overall program is a *prerequisite* for enrolling in the incentives plan. The head of household has to fill out the application for the rent incentives, even though that person may not necessarily be the working member of the household. Therefore, every household head who has enrolled the household in Jobs-Plus's rent incentives program should also be recorded in the case files as having enrolled in Jobs-Plus.

The individual attachment and enrollment rates closely correspond with one another at all sites except Los Angeles, even though the attachment rate might be expected to be considerably higher (because it also includes members of households that have more than one adult who may be "passive" beneficiaries of the rent incentives without having enrolled in Jobs-Plus themselves). The close correspondence between the attachment rate and the enrollment rate at most sites may be a result of (1) there not being many targeted households that had more than one adult member on the lease in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton and (2) the requirement in St. Paul — where there were numerous households with more than one adult — for each adult to enroll in Jobs-Plus when the household applied for the rent incentives.

The difference between the individual attachment and enrollment rates of the two Los Angeles programs is notable, particularly at William Mead Homes, where 39 percent of the residents were attached to Jobs-Plus by June 2001 but only 19 percent were enrolled. A partial explanation for this disparity may be the fact that Latino and Asian households that participated

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tified a number of enrolled or attached residents that was 50 percent higher than the number identified initially by the case file review, then the initial estimate was multiplied by 1.50 to get the QC-adjusted enrollment or attachment rate.

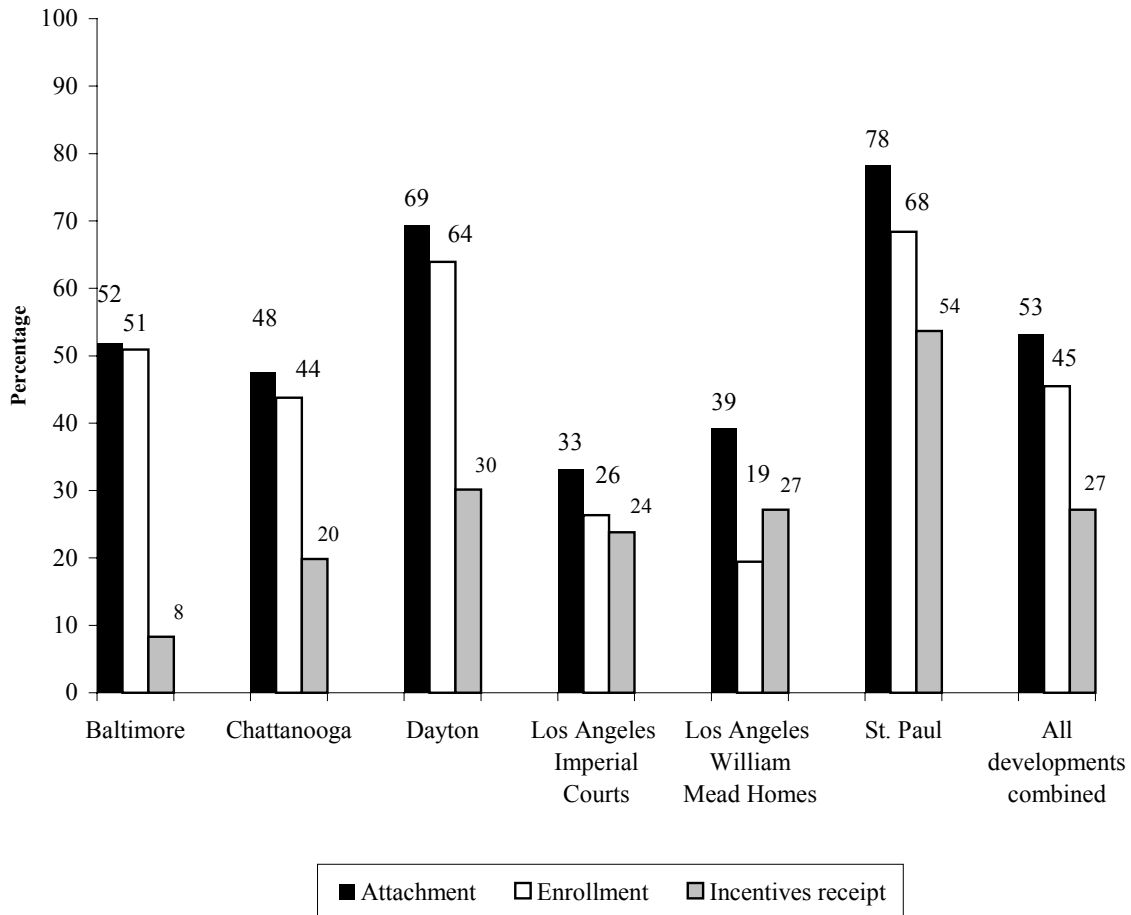
It is important to note that the Jobs-Plus staff in Baltimore and in Chattanooga identified some residents as enrollees and as rent incentives recipients but could not provide documentation to verify these claims. It is therefore safe to say that the QC-adjusted enrollment and attachment rates across the sites may be conservative estimates, with a possible difference of as high as 60 percent for Chattanooga. Furthermore, the QC-adjusted rate could not be incorporated into the enrollment component of the attachment rate because it was not possible to adjust enrollment at the individual level. The attachment rate counts an individual as attached if that person enrolled in Jobs-Plus *or* lived in a household getting Jobs-Plus's rent incentives. Next, the Jobs-Plus staff were also asked to check whether the initial data collection had missed any information about enrollees' service use. The service utilization rates in Table 4.1 for the full sample at each site and across sites are therefore the QC-adjusted rates.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.6**

**Rates of Attachment, Enrollment, and Rent Incentives Receipt Among All Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments at Any Time Between 1998 and 2000, by Development**

*What percentage of adults attached to or enrolled in Jobs-Plus or lived in a household that received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

in the rent incentives program (especially at William Mead Homes) often included two or more adults, as in St. Paul. However, unlike St. Paul's program, Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles did not require every adult member of a household that received the rent incentives to also enroll personally in Jobs-Plus. In addition, the case file review in Los Angeles found that some household heads who had enrolled in the rent incentives program with the housing management office had not been recorded in the case files as having enrolled in Jobs-Plus.

Finally, Figure 4.7 shows the rates of cumulative rent incentives receipt among targeted residents through December 2002 and offers a way to see whether sizable increases in participation occurred through enrollments in the rent incentives after June 2001. The only site that saw any substantial increase in rent incentives take-up was William Mead Homes in Los Angeles, where rent incentives receipt rose from 27 percent in June 2001 (Figure 4.6) to 46 percent in December 2002 (Figure 4.7). Baltimore's rate remained the lowest, having grown from 8 percent to only 12 percent during this period.

### **Interpreting the Participation Rates in Los Angeles**

The attachment and enrollment rates of the two Los Angeles programs — which were consistently lower than the rates of the other sites through June 2001 — have to be assessed against the historical background of problems experienced in the evolution of these two programs. As noted in previous chapters, both programs had chronic problems with understaffing and turnover in leadership during the period leading up to the case file review for this report, making it unlikely that their rates would have been much higher. These difficulties seriously undercut the programs' capacity to engage in outreach, service delivery, and systematic case file record-keeping, particularly around marketing and administering the rent incentives. However, soon *after* the case file review was conducted, both programs received a full complement of staff, and Imperial Courts established stable site leadership.

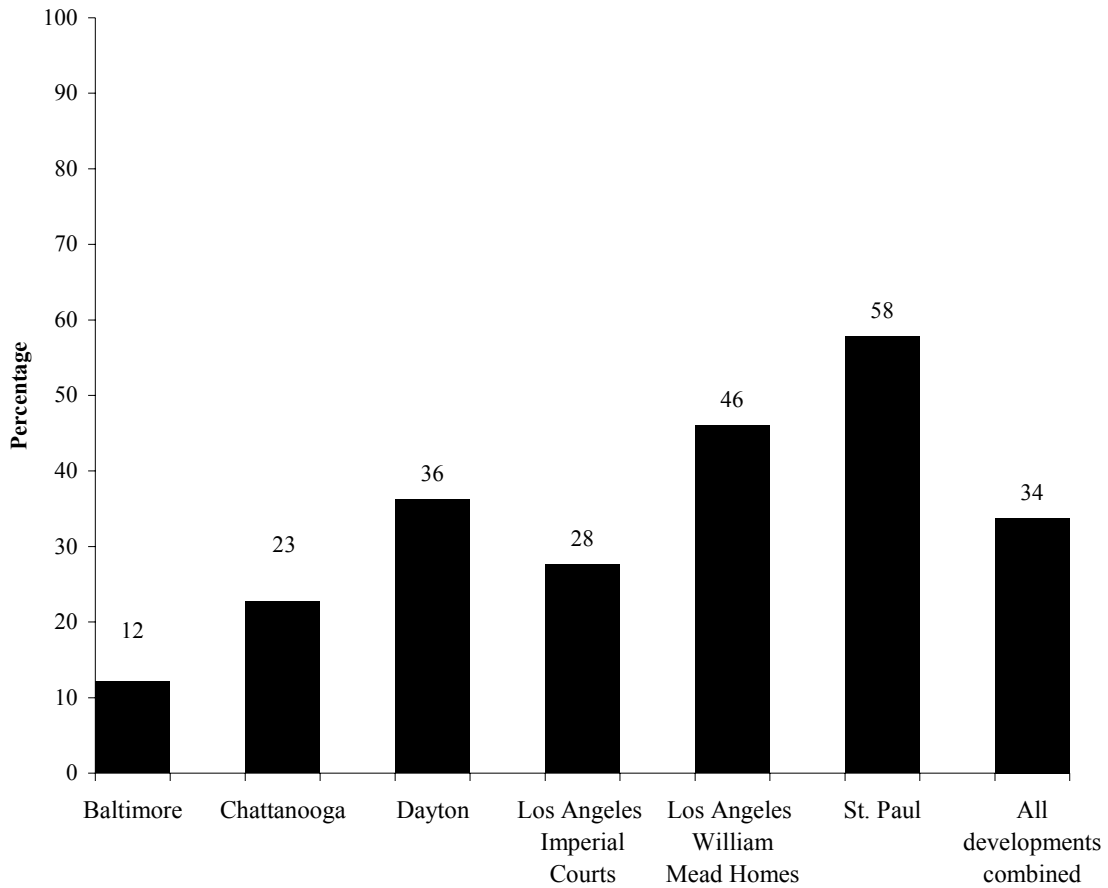
In fall 2001, Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles also undertook the most innovative, extensive, and well-coordinated effort of any of the sites to recruit, train, and deploy residents as outreach workers ("community coaches") in implementing the community support for work component. Consequently, both programs experienced a surge in activities, enrollments, and take-up, which Chapter 5 illustrates using field research data. Figure 4.7 captures some of this progress, showing the growth in cumulative rent incentives receipt through December 2002. Helped by the enthusiastic support of a new housing manager, Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes was particularly successful in using the rent incentives to draw large numbers of working residents into the program.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Figure 4.7**

**Rent Incentives Receipt Through December 2002 Among All Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments at Any Time from 1998 Through 2000, by Development**

*What percentage of adults lived in a household that received its rent incentives by December 2002?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from review of case files of Jobs-Plus enrollees and housing authority (50058) data.

NOTE: In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

## **Levels of Employment Service Referral or Participation Among Enrollees**

Another way to look at formal involvement in Jobs-Plus is through the rates at which residents who were enrolled in the program were referred to or participated in an employment service or activity with the assistance of Jobs-Plus. The data in this section draw on case file records of the employment service use of a sample of residents from the 1998-2000 cohorts who had enrolled in Jobs-Plus. Note that the case file review looked only at recorded referrals to or participation in employment services and did not examine such work support services as child care or transportation assistance.

According to the combined data in Table 4.1 (the rightmost column), 63 percent of the 1998-2000 cohorts who enrolled in Jobs-Plus had participated in or were ever referred to at least one of the employment-related activities listed. The activities that enrollees sought most were job referrals (41 percent) and job search assistance (27 percent). Help with job search could occur within a group, such as a job club involving classroom instruction, or individually, with staff helping residents to look for job openings in newspapers and on the Internet. Rates of job referrals were particularly high in Dayton (65 percent) and William Mead Homes in Los Angeles (60 percent). The popularity of services that were likely to lead directly to employment is understandable, given the residents' pressing need to find a job.<sup>10</sup>

Next in demand were various services to prepare residents for employment or for better-paying jobs, such as life-skills training (18 percent), vocational training (13 percent), Adult Basic Education (ABE) (10 percent), and work experience (7 percent). Rates of participation in or referrals to vocational training were higher at William Mead Homes (18 percent) and in St. Paul (32 percent) than at the other sites. Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes helped residents access off-site training opportunities by providing escort services through rival gang territory. And Jobs-Plus in St. Paul responded to an extensive survey of residents' employment service needs by securing funding for several well-attended on-site training courses.

The enrollees were least likely to seek postsecondary education (3 percent). This appears to reflect the sizable number of residents at all sites who had not completed secondary education and who lacked a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

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<sup>10</sup>Across the sites, the Jobs-Plus staff tried to take advantage of any calls or visits that residents made to the office to check in with them. It can often be assumed from a case file note about a visit to pick up bus tokens or to use the fax or copy machine that this led to an extensive conversation about child care issues, a troublesome coworker, or a difficult commute.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Table 4.1**

**Rates of Participation in Various Jobs-Plus Activities  
Among Jobs-Plus Enrollees Who Lived in the Developments Between 1998 and 2000**

Participation Measure (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles			All Developments Combined
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes	St. Paul	
<b>Of those enrolled<sup>a</sup></b>							
Ever oriented or assessed	72	99	94	22	82	100	78
Ever referred to a job	41	24	65	14	60	43	41
<b>Ever referred to or participated in:</b>							
Job club/search	40	30	30	13	30	19	27
English as a Second Language (ESL) course	0	0	0	1	23	12	6
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	5	18	16	1	4	16	10
Postsecondary education	0	1	3	0	9	4	3
Vocational training	5	9	5	9	18	32	13
Work experience	0	1	3	9	26	3	7
Life-skills training	21	16	8	1	13	49	18
Any of the above activities <sup>b</sup>	48	47	46	25	70	83	53
Any of the above activities or referred to a job	60	49	76	27	80	83	63
Sample size	58	98	63	81	39	134	473

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The target sample includes all nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between ages 18 and 61.

Participation measures were adjusted based on the findings of an effort undertaken to confirm the accuracy of data collected from the Jobs-Plus case files. This effort involved randomly selecting approximately 20 enrollees from each Jobs-Plus development. Jobs-Plus staff reviewed the collected data to see if any information had been missed about enrollees' service use.

In the averages for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

<sup>a</sup>Basic information about the characteristics of Jobs-Plus enrollees at the time of enrollment was collected for all Jobs-Plus enrollees. This table includes additional information on participation in Jobs-Plus activities that was collected for a random subsample of enrollees.

<sup>b</sup>Does not include orientation or assessment.



In contrast, there was a demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) courses at William Mead Homes (23 percent) and in St. Paul (12 percent), where many residents were immigrants who lacked English proficiency; and there was a demand for ABE classes in Chattanooga (18 percent) and Dayton (16 percent), where residents were primarily English-speaking African-Americans.<sup>11</sup> It is also important to note that these figures do not include participation in the popular GED class for Spanish speakers at William Mead Homes, which is described in Chapter 3, or the well-attended on-site ESL class at Imperial Courts. Jobs-Plus organized both these activities *after* the case file review for this report was completed.<sup>12</sup> Nor do these figures indicate participation in the U.S. citizenship classes that were conducted in both English and Hmong in St. Paul and that filled the assembly hall of the community center at Mt. Airy Homes every week. The foreign-born residents in St. Paul and Los Angeles indicated an urgent need to secure citizenship in order to maintain their legal right to live and work in the United States and to qualify for public assistance and Social Security benefits — especially given the scrutiny that foreign-born individuals have received since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The consistently low rates of service usage that are recorded in the case files of Imperial Courts partly reflect that program's problems — discussed previously — with inadequate staffing and leadership turnover, which undercut its outreach and service capacities. Moreover, the staff at Imperial Courts tended to limit the procedural requirements for services, permitting residents who did not want to fill out an enrollment form or undergo an assessment to drop by and look up job postings, talk with staff about employment leads and other problems, and get bus tokens and other support services. The site coordinator who was assigned to Imperial Courts soon after the case file data were collected for this report changed such practices and implemented procedures that residents have to follow to access services as well as requirements for staff in collecting information from those who seek services.<sup>13</sup>

### **Distinguishing Between Residents Who Are Easier or Harder to Engage**

Are residents who have certain background characteristics more likely or less likely to get involved with Jobs-Plus than other residents? The evaluation of the Saturation Work Initia-

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<sup>11</sup>The low 6 percent cross-site figure for rates of participation in or referral to ESL courses reflects the absence of the need for such training among the overwhelmingly English-speaking residents at the Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton sites.

<sup>12</sup>People in the United States whose primary language is Spanish have access to GED preparation classes in Spanish and can take the GED examination in Spanish. This policy has contributed to the higher rates of participation in GED courses among Spanish-speaking residents at William Mead Homes than among the African and Asian residents of the Jobs-Plus sites in Seattle and St. Paul.

<sup>13</sup>In Los Angeles, where there are two programs in the demonstration, the Jobs-Plus project director has overall responsibility for both of them, primarily dealing with fundraising and staffing issues and liaison work vis-à-vis the housing authority, whereas a site coordinator has been assigned to each program to supervise the staff and day-to-day operations.

tive Model (SWIM) program's efforts in San Diego to saturate the welfare caseload with education, training, and job search services found that increases in participation levels were highest among the most disadvantaged AFDC recipients and were lowest among recipients with the least prior welfare receipt. This might have occurred partly because the longer spells on welfare gave the most disadvantaged recipients more opportunities to enter SWIM's employment activities.<sup>14</sup> "The results emphasize the importance of . . . *who* is participating (that is, what segment of the caseload) . . . as well as *what* people are doing when they participate."<sup>15</sup> The findings reported below about Jobs-Plus, however, do not show clear cross-site differences in the influence of selected demographic characteristics on residents' participation, although some sites were more successful in engaging certain subgroups than other sites were.

### Age

As shown in Table 4.2, age does not stand out as a factor influencing participation in Jobs-Plus at any of the sites.<sup>16</sup> At most sites, the percentages of 25- to 34-year-olds and of 35- to 61-year-olds who were attached to Jobs-Plus were only slightly higher than the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds.

### Gender

In Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton — sites where household heads were mostly single mothers — Jobs-Plus had a harder time attaching the targeted male residents than the female residents (Table 4.2). In contrast, in St. Paul and Los Angeles — where there were a number of two-parent immigrant households — attachment rates of men and women either corresponded fairly closely (as in St. Paul and at Imperial Courts) or were higher for men than for women (as at William Mead Homes).

### Race/Ethnicity

At sites where the targeted population is predominantly black — Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton — the rates with which Jobs-Plus attached black residents (Table 4.2) correspond closely to the sites' overall individual attachment rates (Figure 4.6). At multiethnic Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul, Jobs-Plus succeeded in attaching a majority of each ethnic group, including 81 percent of the Asians, the largest group.

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<sup>14</sup>Friedlander and Hamilton, 1993.

<sup>15</sup>Hamilton and Scrivener, 1999, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup>In the calculation of the age group percentages in Table 4.2, the age of a given resident is the age indicated on the most recent 50058 form submitted by that resident's household to the housing authority.

**The Jobs-Plus Demonstration**

**Table 4.2**

**Attachment Rates of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000,  
by Selected Demographic Subgroup**

Subgroup (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul	All Developments Combined
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes		
<b>Age</b>							
18-24	51	44	67	25	38	66	49
25-34	58	51	66	34	33	88	55
35-61	49	50	78	40	42	76	56
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	36	31	51	36	48	75	46
Female	55	50	73	32	34	80	54
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>							
Black (non-Hispanic)	52	48	70	32	45	75	54
White (non-Hispanic)	--	--	--	--	--	--	n/a
Hispanic	--	--	--	36	41	--	38
Asian	--	--	--	--	24	81	53
Missing	--	--	61	34	--	76	57

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

The subgroup percentages are based on sample sizes at the subgroup level for each Jobs-Plus development that can be found on Appendix Table B.1.

--" indicates cell sizes of fewer than 20.

In the averages for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

In Los Angeles, the presence of bilingual Hispanic staff in key service and outreach positions has been critical for the participation of Hispanic residents at both Jobs-Plus developments. The housing manager at William Mead Homes estimated that more than 80 percent of the Hispanic residents were monolingual and needed translation assistance. A Hispanic staff member at Imperial Courts also noted that Hispanic residents tended to be wary of service programs because their households often included undocumented family members who feared immigration problems. She therefore emphasized the importance of building trust by assigning bilingual Hispanic staff and outreach workers to Hispanic households. Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts benefited from the presence of bilingual Hispanic staff in such key service positions as case management. While the attachment rate of 36 percent of the Hispanic residents as of June 2001 might appear low, it represents considerable progress at a site where there were serious racial tensions between Hispanic and African-American residents and where Hispanic residents initially avoided Jobs-Plus as being a program for African-Americans.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, during the period leading up to the case file review, Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes lacked sufficient numbers of bilingual staff to work with the Spanish-speaking residents. The attachment rates for Hispanics and blacks at William Mead Homes were therefore about the same (41 percent and 45 percent, respectively), even though Hispanic residents greatly outnumbered black residents. Fortunately, the Spanish-speaking residents had access at the time to several bilingual Hispanic members of the housing management staff who could help them enroll in the rent incentives plan.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the participation of Hispanic residents at William Mead Homes grew markedly after the case file review for this report was conducted, following the assignment of a bilingual case manager to Jobs-Plus in fall 2001 and as a result of concerted efforts to train and utilize Spanish-speaking community coaches in program outreach and service development.

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<sup>17</sup>The attachment rate of Hispanic residents at Imperial Courts (36 percent) was higher than that of the African-American residents (32 percent). Both staff and residents expressed the belief that the African-American residents were more skeptical about service programs and had higher expectations for services and desirable job conditions and wages than the Hispanic residents. For instance, African-American and Hispanic community coaches at Imperial Courts clashed when the former demanded higher stipends from Jobs-Plus for their outreach work. An African-American coach complained: "I mean the stipend is only \$100 [a month]. . . . And you can't expect these people to come to all the meetings, or all the outreach and things like that, when they have no motivation but \$100." In contrast, the stipend was an important source of income to the Hispanic coaches, whose job options were limited by their immigration status and lack of English proficiency. "I know I can count on that [to help pay my bills]," said a Hispanic community coach; "I know it's a permanent \$100 for one year. . . . Nobody's going give it to me in the street."

<sup>18</sup>Important materials from the housing authority in Los Angeles are usually translated into all the major languages spoken at William Mead Homes, including Vietnamese.

## Earnings Income

Table 4.3 shows that residents who reported earnings to the housing authority in 1998 (or when they subsequently moved into the development) were neither more likely nor less likely to participate in Jobs-Plus than residents who did not report earnings from 1998 to 2000. It would seem that the program's rent incentives would have helped to attract working residents. For instance, among residents from households that reported earnings, the Dayton and St. Paul programs attached 79 percent and 80 percent, respectively. At most sites, however, Jobs-Plus also drew a majority of the residents from households without earnings, who presumably could have used help in getting a job. Imperial Courts was a troubling exception at this point in its history: Although residents from households without earnings far outnumbered residents whose households had working members (Appendix Table B.1), Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts managed to attach only 19 percent of residents from households without earnings (Table 4.3).

## AFDC/TANF Income

Table 4.3 further shows that residents who reported AFDC/TANF income to the housing authority in 1998 (or when they subsequently moved into the development) were also neither more likely nor less likely to participate in Jobs-Plus than residents who did not report AFDC/TANF income from 1998 to 2000. It is important to emphasize, however, that Jobs-Plus succeeded in engaging the majority of the targeted AFDC/TANF recipients at every site except Los Angeles. This is consistent with the original vision of Jobs-Plus, which included collaborating with the local welfare agency to increase employment and participation in work activities among welfare recipients in the housing developments.

In Dayton and St. Paul, Jobs-Plus was noticeably more successful than at the other sites in engaging targeted welfare recipients, attaching 70 percent and 72 percent, respectively. Dayton was the only site where the welfare agency required recipients who lived at DeSoto Bass Courts to go to Jobs-Plus to fulfill their work requirement — in contrast to other sites, where Jobs-Plus was only one of many available options. St. Paul was the only site where the welfare agency assigned a financial eligibility caseworker as well as an employment caseworker on-site with Jobs-Plus. “I love that they have [my caseworkers] right here,” said a resident in St. Paul, noting that welfare recipients would otherwise have to go to the downtown welfare office, often with young children in tow, where parking was limited and metered for only 30 minutes at a time. Moreover, the welfare agency in St. Paul also funded an intensive case manager to work

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Table 4.3

Attachment Rates of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000,  
by Income Subgroup

Income Subgroup (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles			All Sites Combined
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes	St. Paul	
<b>Reported earnings</b>							
Yes	55	53	79	46	40	80	59
No	58	44	68	19	44	71	51
<b>Reported AFDC/TANF</b>							
Yes	59	51	70	22	35	72	52
No	55	44	72	38	44	80	56

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

The income subgroups refer to targeted members of households that did or did not report earnings or AFDC/TANF income to the housing authority. The subgroup percentages are based on sample sizes at the subgroup level for each Jobs-Plus development that can be found on Appendix Table B.1.

In the averages for all sites combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

full time at Jobs-Plus with hard-to-serve welfare recipients who were approaching lifetime limits on their benefits.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts had a much harder time engaging welfare recipients during this time period, attaining an attachment rate of only 22 percent even though the majority of targeted residents were welfare recipients.<sup>20</sup> The local welfare agency had colocated an employment caseworker at Imperial Courts. However, cooperation in outreach and case management between Jobs-Plus and the caseworker was minimal, partly because the caseworker was housed until recently in a separate office, across the development from Jobs-Plus.<sup>21</sup> Fortunately, in fall 2002, the site coordinator was able to relocate the caseworker within the Jobs-Plus office, where she is available to meet residents two days a week. This arrangement has greatly improved the flow of welfare recipients between the caseworker and Jobs-Plus staff as well as their coordination about clients' needs.

Finally, it is also important to emphasize that Jobs-Plus succeeded across the sites in attracting targeted residents who were *not* receiving AFDC/TANF benefits, with attachment rates of 72 percent and 80 percent in Dayton and St. Paul, respectively. Indeed, Jobs-Plus appears to have been an important source of employment-related services and financial incentives to residents who did not qualify for welfare-to-work services and benefits.

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<sup>19</sup>The Jobs-Plus staff in St. Paul cooperated closely with these colocated caseworkers to recruit and assist welfare recipients. For instance, Jobs-Plus identified the residents who would be the first recipients to face lifetime limits on their benefits in July 2002, and it targeted them with information and appeals to come to Jobs-Plus for help in filing for extensions. Community outreach workers went door-to-door with flyers about the impending time limits, and staff members made repeated phone calls and home visits urging residents to come to the program. Consequently, Jobs-Plus was successful in helping the welfare agency secure extensions for all the targeted welfare recipients. The staff emphasized the importance of persistent and early outreach and hands-on assistance to get welfare clients to apply for extensions on time. An application for an extension had to be filed at least a year ahead of a person's termination date, because the bureaucratic process took that long or longer to review applications. "Remember that it sounds like a lot of time to them," said a staff member; "They're the type that generally speaking aren't planning. They're living day-to-day."

<sup>20</sup>While Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes also attached less than a majority — 35 percent — of the welfare recipients, it is important to note that the welfare caseload there was different from the caseloads at the other sites. The caseload at William Mead Homes consisted mostly of "child-only" cases, which, in California, meant that only the children in a household were receiving financial support from the welfare agency; this support was not contingent on the head of household's complying with a work requirement.

<sup>21</sup>The welfare caseworker at Imperial Courts during the time that the case file review was conducted also said that she did not necessarily steer clients toward Jobs-Plus, seeing it as only one of many employment service providers in Los Angeles County. Moreover, she was reluctant to refer to the program clients who faced lifetime limits on welfare, believing that Jobs-Plus could not help them get better-paying jobs with benefits that would allow them to become self-sufficient: "What I find is that people who go to Jobs-Plus and want jobs right away can do that. They can get a job right away . . . but many times it's entry-level jobs."

## Conclusions

The discussion in this chapter of participation data from the housing authority's administrative records and Jobs-Plus's case files provides a snapshot of what the Jobs-Plus programs achieved in resident take-up of formal services and benefits by June 2001 — as well as some insight into the levels of formal participation that can reasonably be expected of an on-site, saturation strategy for engaging public housing residents on a voluntary basis.

By June 2001, at most of the demonstration sites, Jobs-Plus had managed to attach at least half of the targeted adults and almost two-thirds of the targeted households. However, there was considerable variation across sites: The programs in Los Angeles were consistently the exceptions at the lower end, while the programs in Dayton and St. Paul were the exceptions at the higher end. The subsequent implementation of the rent incentives helped to attract working households and prompted an increase in attachment rates at most of the sites.

The high attachment rates that Jobs-Plus was able to achieve in Dayton and St. Paul emphasize the value of working closely with the housing management office in strategic and creative ways to market the program and enroll the residents — particularly in the rent incentives component — from the moment they arrive at the development to sign their lease. In contrast, the experiences of the Los Angeles programs during the period leading up to the case file review for this report underscore the importance of stable leadership and adequate staffing to conduct outreach and service delivery and thus achieve desirable rates of resident participation.

The residents, however, did not limit their formal involvement in Jobs-Plus to the rent incentives. More than half of those who enrolled in the program also turned to it for employment assistance. The residents were most likely to seek services that could directly address their pressing need for work, such as job search and job referral assistance. They also turned to Jobs-Plus — although to a lesser degree — for help with job skills development, showing some differences between the types of services sought: The largely foreign-born residents of Los Angeles and St. Paul needed to improve their English language proficiency, while the native-born, English-speaking residents of Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton focused on basic education. Chapter 5 discusses the challenges that the programs faced in attracting working residents to training and education aimed at career advancement.

Male residents were somewhat less likely to participate officially in Jobs-Plus at sites where most of the targeted residents were single mothers.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise, no other demographic characteristics noticeably distinguish participants from nonparticipants across the sites. While Jobs-Plus was moderately to very successful in engaging recent or current welfare recipients in

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<sup>22</sup>For a profile of attached and nonattached residents at each site, by demographic subgroup, see Appendix Table B.2.



the housing developments — a key target group for the demonstration — the sites also achieved similar attachment rates among residents who were *not* current or recent welfare recipients and who, presumably, were not eligible for employment assistance from the welfare agency. Jobs-Plus made inroads into households with reported earnings as well as those without earnings.

Special arrangements that Jobs-Plus made with the welfare agency in St. Paul to colocate an array of caseworkers and with the welfare agency in Dayton to mandate participation in Jobs-Plus for welfare recipients at DeSoto Bass Courts helped those two programs engage much higher percentages of welfare recipients than the other programs did.

Finally, the participation rates that are discussed in this chapter are possibly conservative estimates of residents' use of and involvement with Jobs-Plus, because the case file data cover only the period through June 2001, which was a rocky time of program start-up and development. Moreover, the case file review did not collect data about residents' use of support services for work, such as assistance with child care and transportation. The discussion in Chapter 5 of qualitative research data collected through mid-2003 emphasizes the importance of support services in bringing residents into the Jobs-Plus offices for help, and it also points to many other forms of resident involvement that cannot be captured by case files and administrative records.

## Chapter 5

# How and Why Residents Participated in Jobs-Plus

Qualitative data from field research conducted at the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites provide another important lens for examining residents' involvement with the program. First of all, the findings based on the case file data offer a record of participation only through June 2001, whereas the field research chronicles this evolving program through summer 2003. Second, the case file records and administrative data cannot capture the patterns of involvement — both formal and informal — that can be encouraged by a place-based, saturation strategy for offering employment assistance. Residents learned about education, training, and job opportunities as they moved about the housing development — without ever stepping into the Jobs-Plus office — by such means as door-to-door flyers, word-of-mouth communications, and community events and celebrations. Staff and residents also frequently exchanged information and assistance through informal, ad hoc interactions both inside and outside the office. This chapter examines the extent of residents' awareness of Jobs-Plus, the reasons they gave for participating (or not participating) in the program, and the outreach and service delivery practices that encouraged them to get involved.

## Widespread Awareness of Jobs-Plus

As a saturation initiative, Jobs-Plus seeks to ensure that all residents of a public housing development are informed about the program and its three main components: employment services, financial incentives, and community support for work. Although it is necessary to wait for the final demonstration survey to determine how extensively Jobs-Plus reached the residents — including those who did not formally enroll — the field research data can provide preliminary information about residents' awareness of the program. The field research indicates that awareness of Jobs-Plus and its services varied from site to site, depending on the intensity and quality of outreach. However, staff and residents across the sites widely agreed that Jobs-Plus had saturated their housing development with information. Although residents did not necessarily know all the correct details about the program's services and rent incentives plan, the constant flyers, home visits, and other outreach efforts and word-of-mouth communication among residents seemed to convey that Jobs-Plus was there to help the residents get a job and would offer a break in the rent for those who worked. As a resident in Baltimore insisted: "Oh, yes, they know. Trust me, they know." "[The community coaches] do a very good job of outreaching, saturating the community with information," said the Jobs-Plus site coordinator at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles. When asked whether he thought there were a single person in the development who didn't know about Jobs-Plus, he said: "No, I can't think that [is so]. We really

do a good job of getting the word out.” Similarly, a housing management staff member in St. Paul exclaimed: “I would really fall over if anyone in Mt. Airy [Homes] didn’t know what Jobs-Plus was by now.”

## **Different “Waves” of Participants**

Residents and staff at several sites expressed the opinion that there were different “waves” of residents who enrolled in the program, who could be distinguished by their average age and degree of readiness for employment and who presented different service needs over the period of the demonstration so far. They agreed that the “first wave” of residents included people who were generally more ready for work or more receptive to services that would prepare them for work. For instance, in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton, the residents who first came through the doors when Jobs-Plus opened its offices tended to be female, African-American TANF recipients who had children and who were described as “older” — meaning anywhere from 25 to 50 years old but sufficiently beyond high school to have had some work experience and, as a resident in Chattanooga put it, to have gotten “sick and tired of the way life is going,” scrambling month-by-month to make ends meet on a welfare check. “I was receiving social services, and it just wasn’t enough,” said a resident in Baltimore; “When I needed things other than once a month, it was like I couldn’t get it, because I only got a check once a month. . . . It’s hard to learn how to manage \$300 and you have three kids. So, I just decided that, okay, I’m going to go and find me a job and work for what I want.” These older residents looked to Jobs-Plus for help in getting jobs to make more money and possibly even to move out of public housing. “[The older participants],” observed a job developer in Dayton, “procrastinated through the years, but once they made up their minds, they made the decision to change their lifestyles.”

However, the staff at these three sites had a harder time engaging and assisting the other residents. “The younger group,” said a resident staff member in Chattanooga, “[were] more comfortable just staying home and hanging out than the older residents, who got involved earlier.” Those in this group who did come forward for services were also primarily female TANF recipients, but they were younger, between 18 and 24, and presented increasingly more challenging barriers to employment. Besides lacking a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate and not having work experience, the younger residents needed to be persuaded that becoming steadily employed and self-supporting was necessary and beneficial. A staff member in Dayton said that the program there saw a younger African-American population, ages 18 to 25, who had either dropped out of high school or had been out of school for only a few years: “They come in with all the right questions, but follow-through is a problem for them — I think because they only have themselves to take care of, and it doesn’t take very much.” A young resident in Chattanooga, who acknowledged that her participation in Jobs-Plus

and in employment was sporadic and half-hearted, described her age cohort as “not motivated — not seeing nothing in [Jobs-Plus] for them. Just too young to see anything.”

## **Patterns of Service Usage and Reasons for Participation**

The typical model of participation in an employment program envisions progression through formal, standardized services that usually are offered in a group context and in a developmental sequence to which a client gains access by completing an official enrollment process. This sequence usually starts with orientation, enrollment, and assessment and then moves on to training, education, or assisted job search. For a Jobs-Plus participant, this hypothetically might include the following steps over several years:

enrollment/assessment → certified nurse assistant training → job placement at a convalescent hospital → rent incentives → financial management workshops

However, the financial uncertainty and anxiety that characterized the lives of many of the residents in this demonstration — whether employed or unemployed — encouraged them to prefer services that addressed their pressing needs and that required only limited program participation to access. Although many residents were also already involved with various service organizations, sometimes these social service systems only added to residents’ uncertainty and distress, because of rigid eligibility requirements, complex application procedures, and bureaucratic errors. “[The residents] come here, and they have their financial worker, and then they have me,” said a Jobs-Plus staff member in St. Paul; “And those who have a job have a child care worker, if they’re getting their child care subsidy. If they’re divorced, they have a child support worker.” This staff member emphasized that the complexity of all this could be a major source of anxiety, confusion, and frustration for the residents: “Just think of what they have to go through annually [just to get everything reauthorized]!” In this context, it is understandable that residents would see Jobs-Plus as yet another service provider and would hesitate to get involved extensively and continuously.

The following sections show, however, that Jobs-Plus came to fill a distinctive service niche at these public housing developments by assisting residents promptly, flexibly, and individually with a wide range of pressing needs that could undermine their work efforts. In this way, Jobs-Plus addressed critical gaps in existing service systems at several sites, offering residents a measure of proximate support and relief in their uncertain lives.

### ***Residents were most likely to use services that addressed a pressing need***

Fairly consistently across the Jobs-Plus sites, residents and staff alike cited the following services and activities (which are not listed in any particular order) as the ones that residents

were most likely to use. Notably, a number of these are employment support services — a category that is not included in the case file reviews.

#### Employment Assistance

- Job leads
- Job search assistance

#### Rent Incentives

#### Support Services

- Transportation help (for example, bus tokens to off-site services and job interviews)
- Clothing vouchers
- Food pantry
- On-site child care
- After-school and weekend activities for children and youth, particularly if offered on-site
- Assistance in accessing off-site child care
- On-site driver's education program (Baltimore, St. Paul)
- Car repair assistance (Dayton, St. Paul)

In contrast, staff and residents agreed that the following employment services (which also are not listed in any particular order) were used to a lesser degree:

- On-site English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED classes
- On-site training opportunities (for example, child care provider, certified nurse assistant, computer operator, hotel/restaurant worker)
- Referrals to off-site education and training opportunities

These field research findings are consistent with the case file data, which record lower usage rates for education and training services and higher usage rates for employment services like job search assistance that lead more directly and quickly to employment. Moreover, the field research underscores the residents' need for support services to help them retain employment and maintain their households on low-wage jobs. In general, residents preferred services and activities that they believed would directly and quickly translate into employment, income increases, or tangible relief for a pressing need, instead of services that were directed toward a longer-term goal and required a major investment of time. The residents dropped in regularly for *bus tokens*, which the programs provided to help participants get to service referrals and

jobs, and they applied for *clothing vouchers* to buy work attire and uniforms and for *emergency food assistance*. Indeed, at most Jobs-Plus sites, such visits were often the primary point of contact between staff and participants.

Working residents repeatedly mentioned the *rent incentives* as a major benefit of Jobs-Plus that brought substantial and immediate savings to their households each month. “They love the rent incentives,” said a staff member in Dayton. A resident in Los Angeles whose rent for a two-bedroom apartment went down substantially exclaimed: “It’s great! . . . You don’t have to worry about making more money and [being charged] more for the rent.” Some residents, like this one, took advantage of the opportunity that the financial incentives offered to work additional hours or jobs, and they used the extra income to pay for skills development or such purchases as a car. In general, however, working residents saw the financial incentives as a wind-fall: “People around here . . . when they get free stuff . . . that’s when everybody comes down,” said a resident about the rent incentives in Los Angeles. “It’s when we have free stuff, like when we had the Easter-basket giveaway — that’s when a lot of people showed up.”<sup>1</sup>

***Residents were generally opportunistic, idiosyncratic, and sporadic — rather than sequential and continuous — in their use of services, and they often turned to Jobs-Plus for relief in a crisis***

Generally, the residents at the Jobs-Plus sites were discriminating consumers who were quite knowledgeable about the various program and service options in their localities. Since many residents were already involved with various service organizations — including welfare-to-work programs and refugee assistance agencies — they looked to Jobs-Plus for added value beyond what was already available to them from other programs, and they were highly selective in their use of its services. “[Jobs-Plus doesn’t] have the variety that other people do,” explained a young man at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles, about his decision to seek employment assistance from other programs; “For example, Kulik or Community Build has more [of a] variety of jobs. And the jobs . . . at Jobs-Plus [aren’t in the] field I want to go in.” A Somali couple in St. Paul said that they went to Jobs-Plus for job leads, citizenship classes, and the rent incentives, but they continued to go to the refugee organization that had sponsored them for help with education and training. This is consistent with research that indicates that low-income clients typically rely on assistance from a “portfolio of service suppliers” to address needs and circumstances that vary from client to client.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, research indicates that a client’s perceptions and use of a proffered service will likely be influenced by access to other services (Will Jobs-Plus fill a gap or complement the client’s current service portfolio?) and by previous experi-

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<sup>1</sup>A forthcoming MDRC report will provide a comprehensive examination of participation in Jobs-Plus’s rent incentives programs across sites.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, 1993, 1996; Knox and Bane, 1994; Edin and Lein, 1997.

ences with other service providers (Will previous unpleasant experiences with a training program or with the welfare office's employment counselor discourage the client from approaching Jobs-Plus for employment assistance?).<sup>3</sup>

Residents' involvement with Jobs-Plus also included a high level of drop-in activity or calls to the program office for assistance with an array of problems that came up at home or at work. Like the resident who insisted, "I'm the kind of person who doesn't use the resources until I really, really have to," residents usually came running to Jobs-Plus for emergency food assistance, job leads, or the rent incentives safety net after losing a job or for child care assistance when a babysitter failed to show up that day. "The 'stop-and-start' is based on need," said a Jobs-Plus staff member in St. Paul; "Where they think the job counselors can be a resource, then they call. Otherwise, if things are going good for people, they don't call. 'Going good' might mean not having pressure from their [welfare] counselor for the moment, or their employment is steady, or they have child care for their kids for the summer. 'Going bad' is facing eviction or missing a training mandated by a [welfare] counselor."

The intensity of residents' involvement with Job-Plus therefore varied over time and was difficult to gauge simply by asking residents at a point in time how often they had contact with the program. For instance, a resident in search of a job might make a series of calls and visits to Jobs-Plus, especially if the resident were new to the workforce and needed a staff member's help filling out résumés, preparing for job interviews, or learning how to use public transportation to get to work. Once the resident was employed, however, the calls and visits generally tapered off until, for instance, the resident lost the job and requested the safety net or sought the program's help in getting a GED or further training or education to qualify for a better position. The challenge for Jobs-Plus was to capitalize on these urgent appeals and find ways to encourage residents to come back and take up additional services to develop their skills and get better jobs. "We believe that if they receive help when they ask, they'll return again," said a staff member in Dayton. "Eventually, they'll understand the whole approach to Jobs-Plus. We let them take baby steps."

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<sup>3</sup>For instance, Wuthnow, Hackett, and Yang Hsu (2003) examined low-income clients' perceptions of service providers in Lehigh Valley in northeastern Pennsylvania, using a method that took into account the clients' varying portfolios of service providers (which included the welfare agency, secular nonprofit and faith-based service organizations, hospitals, and religious congregations). The study found that clients tended to use providers selectively to address different needs. For instance, clients who sought help from faith-based and secular nonprofit service organizations "resemble public welfare recipients in the extent of financial need and scope of family problems." But they looked to religious congregations for help with different types of problems. "Insofar as financial and health problems raise spiritual and emotional needs, congregations play a role in addressing these needs" (p. 202). And clients' evaluations of the effectiveness and trustworthiness of their overall portfolio of service providers were lower when they had sought assistance from public welfare agencies and higher when they had included help from congregations.

It is important to note that the residents probably would not have gone to an off-site program for such support. This is poignantly illustrated by the experience of one resident in Baltimore whom a field researcher observed at the Jobs-Plus office over several days while conducting case file reviews for this report. This resident had been struggling to get off methadone and had progressed sufficiently to the point where the staff had worked out with her a service plan to get into job training. However, the resident feared that her history of substance abuse would be held against her, despite staff reassurances that it would not. So day after day this resident dropped by and sat around the case manager's office, "just hanging out," receiving verbal encouragement from the staff and drawing comfort from their presence until she finally built up enough courage to make the call and get the training process under way. The field researcher thought it unlikely that the resident would have gone to an agency downtown to do this, instead remaining at home immobilized by fear. Nor would such "hanging out" have been tolerated at most agencies, where the resident would have been seen as one of a long line of clients taking up waiting-room space. Yet this kind of on-site informal support could make the difference for a resident in going into drug treatment or in securing and retaining a job. Said a staff member in St. Paul: "I think we've become a real listening post for people — a guide, maybe, in some ways. People call to find out what to do in certain situations."

***Residents usually needed individualized assistance rather than formal group activities***

Since residents varied considerably in terms of employment readiness and eligibility for categorical services and funding, Jobs-Plus assisted them predominantly on an individualized basis. A staff member in St. Paul said: "We don't have a whole lot of ongoing activities that people can engage in on a regular basis, other than case management on a monthly [individual] basis. It's need-based." For instance, although the employment service that residents sought most was job search assistance, what this actually entailed varied with a resident's needs and preferences. If a resident called or dropped by the office to ask about job leads, this might lead to an extended interaction with a staff member during which a new participant either would undergo skills assessment and develop an employment action plan and then get help in reviewing job listings and applying for a job or would be referred to off-site education and training opportunities or employment support services such as child care. However, if residents were not interested in further assistance, they could also just drop by to check job listings posted on the wall or on the Internet. The staff at most sites said that they did not always document such residents' visits. A resident in Baltimore applauded Jobs-Plus's flexibility in accommodating individual preferences and circumstances:

[Jobs-Plus] is special. They know you as a person. They don't address you as a group. They get to know you and your situation, and it means a lot. . . . A lot of programs don't have that. "Well for this group, this is what we offer.



. . . This is from 9 [o'clock] to such and such." Either you can do it, or you don't. Jobs-Plus finds . . . a way that they can help you. They cater to your special needs.

Staff members also said that the one-on-one approach was critical to building trusting relationships with individual residents over time, in order to assist them effectively. For instance, residents needed to get to a certain "comfort level" with a staff person before they would disclose serious impediments to job retention, such as substance abuse or domestic violence or problems with children. A staff member in St. Paul referred to a long-time client who kept losing job after job. She only discovered that he had a serious learning disability that was causing him problems at work when she was helping him complete an application and test materials for a driver's license to qualify for another job. (Adults with learning disabilities usually develop compensatory skills over time so that their disability cannot be readily detected.) "I've worked with him for five years. But it took me a very long time to get to an honest point with him where I could really say something." She went on to insist: "That's why it's so critical for us to see them. You can't get to know someone well unless it's face-to-face. You [have to] do home visits."

### ***Residents appreciated the convenience of on-site, drop-in services***

Residents said that they appreciated the convenience of being able to walk over to see a Jobs-Plus staff member about problems at home or work and to attend ESL, GED, and training classes and workshops on-site. "I think it's a good thing," said a resident in Baltimore, where getting to caseworkers or programs downtown entailed lengthy bus rides with several transfers; "It's a nice place to be located, because you can just come outside and walk down the street and go there. I think that's very good." This approach included access to employment caseworkers from the welfare agency on-site at several housing developments. "[Jobs-Plus] made it convenient," said a welfare recipient in St. Paul; "You can walk over here. And they pretty much have an open-door policy." Indeed, colocating the caseworker from the welfare agency with the Jobs-Plus staff provided a "hook" to bring residents into the Jobs-Plus office, since checking in with the caseworker was mandatory for receiving cash benefits, whereas participating in Jobs-Plus was voluntary.

Ideally, bringing residents together on-site in an education or training class could also create or strengthen supportive bonds among them and bolster their efforts to succeed. For instance, participants of the popular on-site driver's education classes that Jobs-Plus offered in Baltimore said that the supportive "family environment" encouraged them to attend even if they felt embarrassed about being rather "old" for a driver's education class or exhausted at the end of a workday. "There were actually people there my age, too. And I was, like, 'Wow! This is cool.' And that's what got me. And when I came home [from work], I was so tired. And I was, like, 'I've got to go to this driver's ed,' even though it was right there. But I was, like, 'I'm go-

ing because Rose might be there.’ It was fun. It turned out to be so much fun.” In St. Paul, the Hmong residents derived a sense of security and cultural familiarity from one another’s presence in on-site language and training classes.

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore also found, however, that bringing residents together for formal program services such as an on-site course could intensify cynical attitudes that some residents harbored toward services and employment and the ill feelings that they felt toward one another. “I found that when just the residents are in the training program,” said the project director, about training courses offered on-site in the past, “for some reason they just keep at each other with the negatives about what’s not happening and what they don’t like. And they compound it because they have this group to talk to about it all the time. And so it starts. It wears us out because we’re constantly trying to fix [it].” The staff and residents agreed that those residents who were convinced that they had no compelling reason to change their lifestyles were unlikely to come forward for services, whether these were offered conveniently on-site or elsewhere. “Well, initially we thought that the value of being on-site would be that we would be able to capture the people. Wrong!” the staff member acknowledged ruefully of her employment agency’s attempt to offer computer training on-site in partnership with Jobs-Plus. “I mean it’s right across the street. Wrong! I mean it was like pulling teeth to get folks. . . . The motivation is really definitely the problem. I mean we did door-to-door. We did canvassing. We did everything. Call a friend. You know — anything to get these folks in, and it was really hard to get a lot of commitment. . . . That’s the attitude that most of those folks got.” In short, offering a GED or training course or case management on-site was not necessarily a panacea in efforts to engage participants in program services.

### ***Residents looked to Jobs-Plus as a broker with other agencies***

Many residents in the Jobs-Plus demonstration were already involved with various other service organizations, but they had difficulty accessing those services because of rigid eligibility requirements, complex application procedures, and bureaucratic errors. This was particularly the case with the procedures of the welfare agency, which was frequently cited by residents as a source of confusion and distress, rather than assistance, in their lives. For example, Sherry Hodge was one of the residents whom Jobs-Plus staff in St. Paul described as “the ones who are trying to do the right things.” This widow and mother of several young children had gotten training and job search assistance from Jobs-Plus to become a bus driver for the public school system. Over the past two years — with her salary and job benefits and with savings from the rent incentives, augmented by income from other temporary work — Sherry had managed to leave the TANF rolls and had enrolled in the housing authority’s homeownership preparation program. However, Sherry was unexpectedly laid off when emergency cutbacks in state education funding led to the cancellation of summer school programs. Furthermore, she received a letter informing her that several years earlier the welfare agency had miscalculated her

food stamp benefits and that she owed the agency several thousand dollars in “overpaid” benefits. “Trust me, it all went on food,” Sherry emphasized. However, the welfare agency demanded that she repay this amount in monthly installments, so Sherry was confronted with an additional burden of unanticipated debt that would extend over several years. “If they make a mistake like that, why do I have to pay for it?” she asked, in tears. “I could use the money [that I have to pay] each month for pairs of shoes for my kids or food or this or that.” Finally, her daughter had recently been diagnosed with a medical condition that would require expensive corrective surgery and a lengthy recovery. Jobs-Plus played an important role in helping residents like Sherry to cut through the red tape in seeking information and redress from the appropriate agency channels.

Since Jobs-Plus frequently referred residents to other agencies for services, the program also tried to ensure that those residents did not fall through the cracks. “They’re going to be moved about smoothly,” insisted a staff member in Baltimore, about Jobs-Plus’s role in the referral process; “They’re not going to be jerked from this person to the next person, but they’re going to know exactly where they are and who they going to see next and the reason why they’re going to see this person or that person.” “Greasing the wheels” for the residents, as one field researcher put it, required Jobs-Plus staff to keep up with employers and agency staff and to make sure that Jobs-Plus staff had up-to-date information about any services or jobs to which they referred residents.<sup>4</sup>

Residents were most scathing in their criticism when they claimed that a Jobs-Plus staff member had given them misleading or erroneous information — for example, about a service or job that turned out to have additional eligibility requirements that Jobs-Plus had not known about or had failed to communicate. A “wasted trip” to a referral was usually costly in terms of time, child care and transportation expenses, and forgone wages, and it also was sometimes humiliating. A resident at one site bitterly described an attempt to follow up on a job lead that a staff member had recommended: “One time I left here at 5 in the morning, left my children with a babysitter and went to a place, a far-away place. . . . The lady there said to me: ‘You don’t speak English. We asked Jobs-Plus to send us people who are bilingual.’ . . . I had to pay for a babysitter for my three kids because they were on vacation [from school]. I paid \$30 for that — money they never reimbursed me. I wasted my time. I had to take three buses to get there.” The

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<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of the arrangements and instruments used to promote accountability and cooperation between Jobs-Plus and referral agencies at the various demonstration sites, see Kato and Riccio (2001, Chapter 4). Such arrangements included memoranda of understanding between the agencies, joint staff trainings, regular meetings, data-sharing agreements, and professional relationships cultivated by individual staff members.

staff strove to avoid such mistakes, because word of them would quickly spread along the development's grapevine, undermining the reputation of the program.<sup>5</sup>

Jobs-Plus staff also worked closely with residents to prepare them for appointments. This might involve carefully taking them through the process of making an appointment and showing them how to dress appropriately for it, how to use public transportation to get to the appointment, and how to apply for the service or job once they got there. A resident could be stumped by any one of these steps. The staff were willing to go with residents to job interviews and appointments at social service agencies as well as to immigration offices to settle work-permit issues and to family court to handle domestic problems. Foreign-born residents in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle who were relative newcomers to service delivery systems and employment in the United States repeatedly cited the value of such supportive accompaniment. Said a staff member in Seattle: "I've realized that there are services for people, but we need to provide much more support to them. I go to clinics with them, or find people to go with them. . . . And if you have language or cultural barriers, the court system is really difficult to understand and scary. You don't have people to go to for help. [Foreign-born residents] tend to be afraid of the legal system. In their own country, going to court means that they could be put in jail right away or have their kids taken from them. They need someone to go with them, to explain how things work." Box 5.1 describes some ways that the programs in Los Angeles and Seattle helped immigrant residents understand their rights as employees. Residents were drawn to Jobs-Plus by the presence of other residents as outreach workers and staff.

The presence of residents as staff and outreach workers at the Jobs-Plus programs created a "comfort zone" that encouraged their neighbors to come to the office for help. People believed that the resident staff could readily appreciate their problems and concerns, having come from similar backgrounds. "How can you know what's going on in my life if you haven't been where I'm at?" asked a resident in Baltimore. "[The resident staff] have been where we're at. . . . It's like if you weren't brought up in the same neighborhood, you wouldn't know what I'm going through. But to sit down and talk to someone who is like, 'Well I was there. I was sitting up right here. I was doing the same thing you was doing.' [A resident staff member] still comes around to sit on our porches and talk to us and everything." The resident staff members

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<sup>5</sup>Jobs-Plus staff members expressed frustration with their counterparts at other agencies who undercut the program's credibility with residents by relaying inaccurate information to Jobs-Plus about their own services and who failed to follow through on appointments with residents. For instance, a staff member in Baltimore recalled sending a resident to a medical facility for some dental work after being assured by staff there that the procedure would be done at no cost to the resident. But when the resident arrived for his appointment, he was asked to pay \$45 to be seen. When he complained later to Jobs-Plus, the staff member called the clinic immediately. "I said to the receptionist, 'I talked to you on the telephone, and then you said free. Then you turn around and tell him he [has] to have \$45 dollars. Tell us up-front. Because that [makes] us look bad.'"

### Box 5.1

#### Los Angeles and Seattle: Helping Immigrants Claim Employee Rights and Benefits

Working residents at the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites needed information about benefits available to the working poor. Some who were interviewed for this report did not realize that although they were earning income, they still qualified for child care and transportation assistance from the welfare agency and for medical insurance for their children, and some did not know how to apply for worker's compensation when they were injured or laid off. The Jobs-Plus programs at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles and in Seattle have taken some promising steps to educate and assist residents with matters relating to employee rights and benefits.

At William Mead Homes, Jobs-Plus brought staff from the East Los Angeles Women's Center on-site and was negotiating with several immigration agencies to offer legal services to the foreign-born residents. In addition to providing domestic abuse counseling, the center has been helping the Hispanic and Asian residents pursue legal channels for addressing sexual harassment and unfair job termination. "[They] are grateful just to have a job. They want to be self-sufficient and provide for their families," said a staff member from the center; "They are faced with . . . discrimination, but they may be first-generation [immigrants] and don't know their rights or are scared to report."

In Seattle, Jobs-Plus kept the Job Resource Center open late several nights a week so that residents could drop in to see staff members about immigration problems and how to apply for benefits. The program also arranged for a resident to be trained and hired part time as a legal advocate to accompany residents to agency appointments. A Vietnamese-speaking resident outreach worker referred to these services as one of the main reasons why Vietnamese residents went to Jobs-Plus in Seattle: "Because almost all Vietnamese people don't know how to fill out the papers, and they don't know where they can go when they have a problem. So I just say, if you have any questions, just come to Jobs-Plus and ask them to help you."

could also explain procedures and questions on application forms in colloquial terms that their neighbors could grasp quickly and confidently.

Many residents also felt comfortable approaching resident staff members and outreach workers *outside* the program office for information and advice. A resident who worked for one of the Los Angeles programs said that she was often approached by other residents and talked about Jobs-Plus as she went about the development after work. "My neighbor is . . . always asking me about Jobs-Plus. But she never comes here [to the offices]." Indeed, some residents were

reluctant to seek help in any way other than from resident staff and outreach workers *outside* the program offices, so distrustful were they of professional staff and formal program services.

However, utilizing residents to help with program outreach required that the Jobs-Plus staff spend considerable time training and coordinating them and ensuring that the outreach workers conveyed accurate information to the community and also relayed their neighbors' concerns to the program staff for action.<sup>6</sup> The resident workers also needed training about proper procedures for handling confidential information, especially since this information was often conveyed to them in professionally ambiguous situations outside the program offices and hours. Some people expressed concerns about how resident staff and outreach workers would handle their confidential information, fearing that it would be spread around the development. A court captain in Baltimore said: "I think sometimes some people think it's better to talk to somebody that they don't know, somebody that don't live here because . . . they're scared the information will get out . . . they'll tell their business. But then some people feel comfortable with it. But I think a lot of times here, people feel uncomfortable speaking to the people that they see everyday."

### ***Jobs-Plus had difficulties engaging working residents in job retention and career advancement services***

Across the demonstration sites, Jobs-Plus had a difficult time finding ways to keep working residents involved with the program in order to stabilize and extend their employment and make progress toward the long-term goals of career advancement and self-sufficiency.

Some residents were constantly getting fired or walking out of jobs, particularly in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton. Jobs-Plus staff referred to these residents as "cyclers." Some managed to stay in a job for a few months or even weeks. They often had little work experience and major problems with tardiness and absenteeism, especially if they were juggling child care and commutes on public transportation for the first time or were struggling with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, or a chronically ill family member. Others were used to working, but only for the limited time needed to pay off some bills or purchase an item. "There seems to be a consistent notion that you don't have to go to work every day," said the job developer in Dayton; "If you go three days, you're doing great."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For background on the technical assistance that residents received to undertake service responsibilities for the Jobs-Plus programs, see Kato and Riccio (2001, Chapter 6) and a forthcoming MDRC report on the implementation of the Jobs-Plus community support for work component at the demonstration sites.

<sup>7</sup>The operations representative of Jobs-Plus in Baltimore said: "I call it the living-room furniture phenomenon. The goal is to buy the living-room furniture set. So they get the layaway plan for the living-room furniture set, they get a job. Right, three months they get the set. Once the set is paid off, they quit because they  
(continued)

Joe Taylor, for instance, was a recovering addict in Baltimore who had not been able to hold down any job for longer than a month or two. Joe was eager to work, and he enhanced his Supplemental Security Income (SSI) with earnings from odd jobs in the neighborhood — painting rooms, mowing lawns, refinishing floors. However, years of substance abuse had impaired his cognitive abilities. Working in the warehouse of a construction supply business, he had a hard time discriminating among the categories of building materials that he was asked to load, one day sending off a delivery truck with a shipment of doors and fixtures of the wrong size. And as a stocker at a grocery store, he was unable to prioritize the various tasks that were assigned to him on short notice. “I’m doing one thing,” he said, “and they want[ed] me to stop this and do something else, and I never [got] caught up. And then they [got] mad at me because I [didn’t get] the showcase stocked enough.” Joe had difficulty negotiating his assignments with his supervisors, tending instead to lose his temper in frustration and get himself fired.

The need to stay employed in order to remain eligible for Jobs-Plus’s rent incentives was generally insufficient to motivate residents to hold onto jobs. When they lost one, they were used to just going to the housing management office to apply for the minimum rent (Box 5.2). “I think that the current sentiment is that . . . folks are going to come into employment opportunities, they’re going to stay three to six months if they stay that long, and then they’re going to drop out,” said a project director. “Then they come back and ask for another job, and they may stay three to six months in the second job.”

The staff at all sites wanted to help residents with troubles on the job before they were fired, not after. Most of the programs maintained extended and weekend office hours in addition to making the standard 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up inquiries of working residents through the letters and phone calls typically required by funders. However, residents often said that they were too busy at work or with families after work to return calls. Therefore, the staff at several sites made visits to the homes of working residents, and they tried to take advantage of any calls or visits that working residents made to the office (to pick up a monthly supply of bus tokens, request support services like child care and emergency food assistance, or use the fax or copy machine). Box 5.3 describes some ways that the programs in Dayton and Seattle provide more individualized follow-up.

Working residents at the Jobs-Plus sites also needed help getting better jobs that offered fringe benefits. This report indicates that a sizable number of residents were already working before Jobs-Plus began operating, but they had low-wage jobs. With residents facing lifetime limits on TANF assistance across the sites, Jobs-Plus staff were eager to help residents move into better jobs that could help them achieve financial independence. However, the program had

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reach their goal. . . . They can sit at home all day and watch the TV until the next goal comes. . . . My kid needs clothes or something like that, and get another job.”

## Box 5.2

### **St. Paul: Using the Rent Incentives “Safety Net” to Re-engage Working Residents**

In St. Paul, the Jobs-Plus rent incentives program at Mt. Airy Homes offered a safety net to participants who lost their jobs “through no fault of their own”: They could apply for two months of \$25 minimum rent while looking for another job. Since residents had to apply for the safety net at Jobs-Plus rather than at the housing management office, this gave the program an institutionalized opportunity to re-engage working residents. “Sometimes it brings people back because they see something [that we offer] that can really help them,” said a Jobs-Plus staff member. That was the case for a resident who had enrolled in the rent incentives plan but had not used Jobs-Plus’s employment and support services until she lost her job and applied for the safety net. “I never got around to it,” she explained. But at the meeting with her case manager to discuss the safety net, she also began working on ways to deal with her child’s disabilities, which were interfering with her own ability to keep a job.

a difficult time encouraging working residents to prepare for better jobs by taking up education and training opportunities, even when these included free tuition and stipends. “The challenge has been . . . in getting people to think about taking the next step,” emphasized a staff member in St. Paul. “People think: ‘I’ve got a job. I’m making a little money. My rent is okay. Why do I want to complicate things?’” This is consistent with the problems that welfare-to-work programs and other employment programs for low-income communities have generally had in encouraging clients who have gotten jobs to come back for career advancement services.<sup>8</sup> Yet many welfare recipients who have entered the workforce are still not earning enough in low-wage jobs to leave public assistance, and they will soon come up against lifetime limits on their cash benefits.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Rangarajan and Novak, 1999; Wood and Paulsell, 1999; Golonka and Matus-Grossman, 2001; Bloom et al., 2002. It is noteworthy for Jobs-Plus’s place-based strategy that when Wood and Paulsell examined postemployment case management provided by community-based organizations rather than by welfare agency staff, they found that community-based providers with the strongest links to a particular neighborhood had the most success in recruiting clients.

<sup>9</sup>Cancian et al., 1999; Martinson, 2000; Isaacs and Lyon, 2000; Bloom and Michalopoulos, 2001; Bernhardt and Dresser, 2002; Brock et al., 2002; Hamilton, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Waxman and Lambert, 2002.



### Box 5.3

#### **Dayton and Seattle: Partnering with Employers to Assist Working Residents**

Jobs-Plus staff in Dayton and Seattle also worked directly with employers to address “adjustment problems” that residents were having in a new job. For instance, the job developer in Dayton visited worksites informally during his daily routine to see how residents were doing on the job — picking up his morning coffee and donut at a coffee shop where one resident worked and purchasing sundries at a drugstore where another was employed. The job developer referred to one resident who had never worked before and who was upset that her coworkers and the customers at a pharmacy were looking at her. “She said: ‘They don’t like me. Something is wrong with me.’” When the job developer met with her and her supervisor, they discovered that the only reason people were looking at her was because she was new.

Mediating with employers was particularly important in Seattle, to help foreign-born residents settle into the workplace. For instance, staff members talked about working with job supervisors to find ways to accommodate the headscarves, loose clothing, and prayer times of the Muslim residents or to address problems that the residents were having communicating in English: “If someone’s English isn’t good, and they are told what time to come, they might just [politely] smile and nod their head but completely misunderstand the information.”

Residents and employers underscored the importance of such individualized follow-up for helping residents keep their jobs. “Jobs-Plus helps me to maintain and keep a steady head,” said a recovering addict in Dayton, acknowledging the program’s critical role in helping her to resist drugs and criminal activities day after day in order to keep her job. “It’s great that they are there for me to talk personally. They help me to keep steady.”

The director of a temporary employment agency in Dayton that hired numerous Jobs-Plus participants observed:

Jobs-Plus reprograms their minds to let [the residents] know that: “You’re not here by yourself.” I’m not a counselor. I’m not a social worker. I’m an employer. A lot of times they need someone to go to [and] say: “I gotta have someone for daycare. Where can I go to get daycare?” Or that nagging feeling that the drug problem is coming back: “Who can I go to?” That’s not my job. That’s not what I do. [The job developer] and the counselors here at Jobs-Plus say: “Get yourself over. We’ll get you some help.” I think that’s a tremendous help. What I do, I open doors of opportunity for them. But I’m not going to walk through or push them through. The Jobs-Plus program and the counselors here can hold their hands and help them walk through and get them going in the right direction.

Jobs-Plus in Dayton and St. Paul tried to capitalize on the popularity of the rent incentives to engage working residents in other employment-related activities, such as attending financial management or GED classes. Compliance, however, was difficult for the programs to enforce, and many residents resented the requirement. Working residents across the sites repeatedly said that they felt overwhelmed by the challenge of attending a GED or training class after a long workday and bus commute, especially if they were holding down multiple jobs and had young children or ailing relatives to tend at home. Indeed, the small number of residents who were enrolled in training programs and GED classes and even pursuing advanced degrees while working maintained hectic, exhausting schedules. For instance, an East African resident in St. Paul said that he worked as a security guard from midnight to 8 A.M. and then went directly to the community college where he was studying to become a radiologist. He did not return home until 5 P.M. and had only a few hours to help his wife tend their three children and get some sleep before heading back to work.

Given such difficulties, those working residents who actively sought training and higher education were therefore younger, rather than middle-aged. If they had young children, there usually was at least one other adult in the household contributing income and sharing child care responsibilities. In Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle, the working residents included immigrants who were willing to undergo considerable hardships to take up opportunities in the United States to learn, work, and advance. (Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 shows that the rates of participation in or referrals to vocational training were highest in St. Paul and at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles.) A resident of William Mead Homes insisted: “In this country, if you get stuck in one place, you can’t go forward. You have to keep studying, no matter what.” He and his wife had moved to Los Angeles from Mexico and were studying to become licensed nurse practitioners (LPNs) while working full time in low-wage service jobs. Similarly, a Hmong resident in St. Paul emphasized: “For me, skills and classes that Jobs-Plus provides are most important [even more than the rent incentives], because you can get work and pay the rent, even if the rent is \$500. Or a resident can choose to move out if they have training and a job.” He and his wife had made use of Jobs-Plus since its inception “to help find a job and to improve ourselves, to get more skills.”

Contacting and encouraging working residents to think about career advancement and supporting their efforts to get better jobs, training, and higher education required the Jobs-Plus staff to display the same kind of persistence, opportunism, and individualized case management that were required to address job retention issues (Box 5.4). As a staff member in St. Paul said, residents needed “some really deliberate handholding” to overcome a constellation of sociocultural, financial, and logistical hurdles. For instance, besides needing financial aid to pay for tuition, fees, and books, residents who were interested in training and education needed help filling out applications, preparing for entrance exams, choosing courses, securing child care to cover class hours, and juggling work, family, and studies. Many foreign-born residents had little or no

#### **Box 5.4**

### **Los Angeles and Dayton: Supporting Residents in Education and Training**

Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles engaged a higher percentage of participants in vocational training than any other site except St. Paul. Jobs-Plus played an important role for residents of William Mead Homes in expediting the lengthy and complex process of applying for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training funds. Residents were required to submit their applications to the housing authority's Career Service Center (CSC) at a neighboring housing development, Ramona Gardens, for processing by the staff there. However, Jobs-Plus arranged to have its job developer trained in the procedures for processing the WIA applications so that he could knowledgeably help residents assemble the required paperwork and supporting documents. Jobs-Plus staff then followed up with the CSC staff at Ramona Gardens to ensure that residents' applications did not fall through the cracks. Furthermore, since the residents of William Mead Homes were at risk of attack from rival gangs at Ramona Gardens, Jobs-Plus staff accompanied residents when they had appointments with CSC staff, to ensure their safety.

Jobs-Plus in Dayton explored various ways to recruit residents for training and to help them complete the programs. For instance, it arranged with a local technical institute to provide residents with training for employment in the lucrative heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and refrigeration (HVACR) field, and it targeted recruitment efforts toward young African-American male residents. One participant talked about the racial stereotypes that this group encountered in the predominantly white, suburban technical institute: "I don't know if they [were] expecting us to go up there and start rioting or kicking down the vending machines or stealing the computers, [but] all their stuff is still there. All we want to do is steal the knowledge that they're 'giving' to us and use it to succeed." Jobs-Plus therefore worked with the training staff on an ongoing basis to help them learn to interact more effectively with low-income, minority students, while providing the residents with intensive case management follow-up and tutoring so that these residents would successfully complete the program. "I go out and talk to the instructor; I talk to the students," said the case manager assigned to this project. "If an issue is arising, I address it immediately." In December 2002, 17 of the first group of 22 participants successfully completed the program.

exposure to education or training in the United States — and perhaps also in their native country. And many U.S.-born residents had experienced neglect, racial discrimination, and failure in their educational institutions. One working resident at William Mead Homes who was pursuing computer studies part time at a local technical college claimed that her high school teachers routinely "wrote off" low-income Hispanic students like herself, neglecting to prepare them for college in the expectation that they would become pregnant and drop out. She credited the Jobs-

Plus staff with inspiring her to see herself for the first time as “college material” with a future beyond low-wage jobs.

## **Reasons for Staying Away from Jobs-Plus**

None of the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites was completely successful in enrolling its entire target population and engaging them in program services and activities. Some residents did not get involved with Jobs-Plus in any way, formal or informal. Why was this so?

### **No Perceived Value Added by Jobs-Plus to Individual Service Portfolio**

Residents chose to enroll in Jobs-Plus if they believed that the program offered benefits that added value to their individual “service portfolio” — something beyond what they were currently receiving from other providers. However, those who were already involved with other programs did not necessarily see the need for Jobs-Plus’s employment assistance. For instance, in early 2002, Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles surveyed the remaining households that had not enrolled in Jobs-Plus and the rent incentives plan. The community coaches found that a number of the targeted household heads who had not enrolled were in school or were training full time or were caring for a disabled family member and felt that they did not need employment assistance from Jobs-Plus at the moment. Yet these residents were not adverse to seeking help in the future, if their circumstances changed, or to applying for Jobs-Plus’s rent incentives when they were employed.

### **Cultural Obstacles to Women’s Employment**

In St. Paul and Seattle, cultural expectations were strong among two-parent households of immigrants from Southeast Asia and East Africa that wives with young children should not seek employment outside the home even though Jobs-Plus counted these women as part of its target population. “It’s clearly a real barrier [to employment for women],” observed a staff member of the management office in Seattle about the East African residents; “A woman working [for pay outside the home] in East African cultures is rather new.” Some of these foreign-born women might appear officially “attached” to Jobs-Plus because their working husbands or sons enrolled the household in the rent incentives plan or because they themselves frequently took advantage of on-site ESL classes. But the women would not seek help from Jobs-Plus to find employment for themselves, even though male household members might be holding multiple jobs to support the family.

A major concern for many immigrant households at these two sites was the care of their children while parents were away at work. It was generally outside their cultural experience to entrust their children to professional child care services, even when these were provided con-

veniently on-site. “In my culture, they believe that the only way kids get proper care is when the parents are around,” emphasized a Somali Muslim father; “So usually the wife would be home with the kids, and the husband works.” These parents worried that their children would lose respect for the parents and their cultural and religious heritage: “They don’t like it if [the people who tend their children] don’t share their culture, like they’re afraid the kids will eat things not compatible with their culture.” They apprehensively regarded U.S. culture as being overly permissive when it comes to children — “They become wild,” emphasized an Ethiopian mother — and they were reluctant to let their children attend after-school and weekend activities that Jobs-Plus sponsored for older children and teens.

For those immigrant households that were willing to use professional child care, the costs could be prohibitive even when subsidized, if the fees were calculated on a per child basis, since these households frequently had numerous children. Indeed, St. Paul stood apart from the other Jobs-Plus sites in its high percentage of targeted households that had three children or more: 66 percent (Table 2.5). Many immigrant households came from rural communities where high birthrates were common, since children offer extra hands to work the land and child mortality rates were high. “They have too many kids and have to take care of their children,” said a Hmong resident in St. Paul, of residents who did not work or participate in Jobs-Plus to get a job. It did not seem worthwhile for mothers in these households to seek wage employment except, perhaps, “off the books” if the work could be done in the home, such as preparing food or handicrafts for sale.

### **Resistance to Employment in the Formal Economy**

There were some residents at every site who steadfastly stayed away from Jobs-Plus altogether. Some simply were not interested in working in the formal economy. The men sometimes had sizable arrears in child payments that would automatically be garnished from any wages they earned except from under-the-table employment. The women were often supporting their households on a patchwork of public assistance, under-the-table jobs, and gifts from relatives and boyfriends. Welfare agency sanctions or lifetime limits on TANF benefits were not sufficiently a threat to prompt these women to comply with their work requirements. At Jobs-Plus sites in states that had “adults-only” policies for imposing sanctions and lifetime limits on TANF receipt, noncompliant welfare recipients told the staff that if all else failed, they could still get benefits for their children, which they could supplement by working in the informal economy. “My kids are still going to get it,” these residents said to the employment caseworker assigned by the welfare agency to Jobs-Plus at William Mead Homes. A Jobs-Plus staff member in Chattanooga observed that some of these nonparticipating women were younger and “just want to get with their peer group and hang out.” When approached about enrolling in Jobs-Plus to get a job, they would tell her: “My momma will help me if I need money” or “I’ve got a boyfriend who can give me [the amount of a TANF check].” A staff member in Dayton acknowl-

edged sadly: “They have to decide in their minds that they need help. Until then, there’s nothing Jobs-Plus can do. They [have] become very resourceful.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Addiction, Mental Illness, and Domestic Violence**

Jobs-Plus’s difficulties persisted throughout the demonstration in its efforts to help residents who were seriously afflicted with drug or alcohol addictions or mental illness or who were victims of domestic violence. Substance abusers who had young children were afraid that they would lose custody of their children if they asked for help. Domestic violence victims were often isolated from the community by their partners, making it difficult for Jobs-Plus to identify and assist them. A court captain in Baltimore said: “I haven’t even seen the girl that lives across from me in the high-rise. I haven’t seen [her] but on Fridays at 1:30 [P.M.] . . . because he’s been basically keeping her isolated.” Finally, those residents who believed that Jobs-Plus was “tight with the housing authority” were afraid that Jobs-Plus would share information with the management office about their substance abuse, delinquent teens, or domestic violence at the hands of an unregistered partner — which would result in the eviction of the entire household.

### **Jobs-Plus’s Association with the Housing Authority**

Jobs-Plus’s association with the housing authority stands out as having been an obstacle to participation in the program for some residents. Jobs-Plus staff tried to maintain an appearance of independence from the housing authority, and they constantly assured the residents that the program did not share confidential information with the management office. But it was not easy to eradicate the association between the two entities from the minds of the residents, since the housing authority employed Jobs-Plus staff (or, in St. Paul, funded the program). For instance, efforts by Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts in Los Angeles to assist unregistered relatives and partners with employment were met with skepticism by residents because of the program’s association with the housing authority. One resident put it this way:

The main thing I’m saying is that Jobs-Plus . . . is under the housing authority. Like an umbrella, right? How is Jobs-Plus working for the housing authority and coming out here and telling people, look, if you have a felony or are on parole or something like that, they can do something to try to get you a

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<sup>10</sup>Staff members also frequently complained about welfare recipients who came to Jobs-Plus only for periodic job search assistance, to comply with their work requirements, but were not serious about securing or retaining employment. These residents tried to “game” the system and “stretch out” their TANF eligibility for as long as they could. A job developer described the reasoning process: “You have 36 months. So what you do is to use those months logistically. . . . October, November, December is a cold period. So I’ll stop working. And I’ll get back into the system so that I can be part of the system for as long as I can. . . . Eventually it’s just going to end. But they attempt to stretch it out as long as they can.”

job? And they're working for housing authority? When housing authority is saying, well, if you got a felony, or been convicted of a crime or on parole or something like that . . . you can't live here; we [aren't going to] put you on [the] lease!

Jobs-Plus's association with the housing authority was most problematic in efforts to enroll the residents in the rent incentives plan. At every site, there were some households that were eligible for the rent incentives but that did not apply. The housing authority had a key role in calculating the adjusted rents, which led to additional scrutiny of residents' employment, incomes, and households. This was particularly a concern for residents who had failed to report income from jobs they held that might be revealed by the application process for the rent incentives. A housing management staff member in Baltimore observed:

I can tell you from experience that the people that had reservations with enrolling in the program are those that are committing housing fraud. . . . We have one particular woman . . . it was her and the adult daughter. Well, the adult daughter worked, which we knew, and the mother worked, which we knew. But when they came to enroll and the daughter provided paystubs, I said, "Well, wait a minute. This says that you're working at ABC Company. When did you stop working at XYZ Company?" And then I said, "Okay, well, I need to obtain some documentation from your current employer and your previous employer." But it came back that she was really working for both of those places. Had they reported that — I mean, they were paying a rent of maybe, like, \$280 — had they reported and disclosed all income, . . . for their particular size unit, they would have been responsible for paying \$547 a month [under traditional rent rules].

Because residents like these would have to pay back the rent they owed, word quickly spread throughout the developments that residents in similar circumstances should not apply for the rent incentives. The management staff member in Baltimore who is quoted above went on to say that a review of leasing information early in 2002 indicated that there were still approximately 144 households at Gilmore Homes that were eligible for the rent incentives but had not enrolled — far more than the number that *had* enrolled. Vigorous promotional efforts that included door-to-door visits by resident outreach workers did not increase the take-up rate significantly. Similarly, in early 2002, when the community coaches at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles surveyed the remaining households that had not enrolled in Jobs-Plus and the rent incentives plan, they encountered residents who acknowledged that they had not enrolled because they were working but not declaring the income to the housing authority. "They say, 'I don't want to have anything to do with housing,'" emphasized the Jobs-Plus staff member who

coordinated the survey; “It’s not Jobs-Plus. It’s [the] housing [authority]. They don’t want to be affiliated with housing.”

The housing authority in St. Paul instituted a policy to address the problem of undeclared income, and that greatly facilitated the site’s take-up of rent incentives. In the first year of the program, the housing authority agreed to negotiate with residents to pay off any arrears they owed over a specified period of time, instead of requiring immediate payment or eviction. A senior administrator of the housing authority emphasized the importance of this conciliatory gesture for the rent incentive program’s subsequent success in enrolling households in St. Paul: “That’s how the trust-building started. It was a big point to the residents.”

## **Conclusions**

The picture in this chapter that is emerging from the fieldwork is one in which residents were more involved in Jobs-Plus — and in far more complex ways — than the quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 is able to capture. Intensive outreach efforts across the sites seem to have made residents widely aware of Jobs-Plus as a source of employment assistance and rent incentives, and residents typically looked to the program for help with pressing needs and services that added value to their portfolio of service providers. They applauded Jobs-Plus for responding flexibly and individually to the wide array of factors that influenced their employment, for offering the rent incentives to working residents, for providing culturally specific services at the multiethnic sites, for drawing on residents as staff and outreach workers, and for helping them to access services from other providers. Jobs-Plus thereby addressed critical gaps in existing service systems at several sites, offering a measure of proximate support and relief in residents’ uncertain lives.

However, by providing individualized services on an as-needed basis in the context of a voluntary program, Jobs-Plus also risked becoming reactive and being driven largely by the needs of those residents who happened to call or walk through the door, usually in some kind of crisis. Jobs-Plus had a harder time across the sites in following up working residents over extended periods of time and in helping them to keep their jobs, get the skills needed to acquire better jobs, and make progress toward self-sufficiency from public assistance. These goals also required staff to engage in intensive outreach and individualized assistance.

Some residents at every site remained uninvolved with the program. Severe problems with substance abuse, mental illness, or domestic violence or fear of housing authority scrutiny were among the factors keeping them from participating in Jobs-Plus. Only St. Paul’s housing authority had a policy of negotiating with households to repay any arrears in rent over an extended period of time, to encourage residents to enroll in the rent incentives plan. Being a voluntary program, Jobs-Plus ultimately had little at its disposal — beyond intensive, persistent outreach — to



persuade “hard-to-serve” residents to come forward for help. “It’s not like the resources aren’t here,” said a resident in Baltimore; “It’s not like that. You have to want to change. They have to dedicate themselves to that change and, if not, there is not much [Jobs-Plus] can do.”

Indeed, much of what residents described as helpful about Jobs-Plus’s service approach — ongoing outreach, personalized attention, responding to the wide array of factors that influence employment, and keeping up with referral agencies and employers — required considerable time, training, and administrative support on the part of the Jobs-Plus staff. The program is very labor-intensive, and staff acknowledged that they were unable to offer as much effective outreach and personalized follow-up as were needed by both working and nonworking residents. “This type of activity is taking a lot of my time,” said a staff member in Seattle about home visits and off-site trips to clinics and courts with residents; “[People] ask me, ‘Is that in your job description? I say, ‘Well, yeah — Who else is going to do it?’ These issues often influence whether someone works or doesn’t work.”

All the programs in the demonstration struggled to find ways to avoid spreading their limited staff and services too thinly, and local funding constraints offered little hope of additional personnel and resources. “The reality is, from where we sit, [Jobs-Plus] is not a cheap program to do,” said a senior housing authority official at one site; “We couldn’t afford to underwrite these kinds of employment centers. For us they’re very expensive.” While the rent incentives constitute the biggest cost of the program, support for on-site employment services has also been very expensive. These costs will certainly be a key factor in determining whether Jobs-Plus can be replicated by other housing authorities.

It is also important, though, to consider the experiences of comparable employment programs when assessing residents’ involvement in Jobs-Plus. For instance, this report emphasizes the difficulties that local housing authorities have had in getting large numbers of residents to take up supportive services, including employment assistance, provided as part of the HOPE VI demolition and reconstruction process. Nor have welfare-to-work programs been able to achieve 100 percent participation by welfare recipients, even though participation is mandatory in order to retain cash assistance. As a voluntary program, Jobs-Plus could expect at least as much difficulty in recruiting participants from the welfare population.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>For a variety of reasons, attaining 100 percent participation is not a realistic goal for welfare-to-work programs. In addition to recipients who find jobs on their own or who are eventually exempted from participation requirements for “good-cause” reasons (such as a serious illness of the client or a family member), others face serious problems that prevent them from seeking employment assistance or using it effectively (Hamilton and Scrivener, 1991; Hamilton, 1995). Studies on “hard-to-serve” recipients with multiple barriers to employment also cite problems with substance abuse, domestic violence, chronic health problems, mental illness, and felony convictions (Gardner and Fishman, 2000; Brown, 2001).

## Chapter 6

# Lessons and Recommendations

The Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families is an unusually ambitious employment-related intervention. Although there have been past efforts to assist public housing residents with employment and self-sufficiency, nothing has matched Jobs-Plus in terms of the comprehensiveness of its approach. As a place-based, saturation initiative that combines employment-related services, financial work incentives, and community support for work, it was hoped that the program would reach and engage in its activities a high proportion and broad cross-section of working-age residents in the housing developments at the demonstration sites. Of course, when the demonstration designers first conceived Jobs-Plus, they had no assurance that residents would respond accordingly — or that the program could even be implemented.

This report provides preliminary but important evidence that the Jobs-Plus sites succeeded to an important degree on both counts. However, this report also emphasizes that getting to this point has involved a long and difficult journey and that not all the sites have been equally successful in fully implementing the Jobs-Plus approach.

This chapter takes stock of the different experiences of the Jobs-Plus sites in implementing the program's approach and in encouraging residents to take up its services and activities. The chapter summarizes key findings about residents' involvement in Jobs-Plus and distills some lessons from the sites' experiences to guide future efforts to replicate Jobs-Plus, in whole or in part, at other public housing developments. It also offers lessons that may be useful for place-based employment initiatives in low-income communities that do not include public housing.

## Challenges to Getting Residents to Participate in Jobs-Plus

The Jobs-Plus demonstration sites all encountered various hurdles in implementing this untried program approach and in getting residents to respond to it. First, there were unexpected delays in getting the employment programs operating effectively across the sites. The three Jobs-Plus components (employment services, rent incentives, and community support for work) were rolled out incrementally — instead of simultaneously, as was the original intent — taking roughly three to four years to get all of them in place at most of the sites. Postponement of the eagerly anticipated rent incentives was particularly damaging to Jobs-Plus's credibility among the residents across the sites. Most sites also had trouble assembling the core organizational infrastructure, including essential equipment and trained staff adequate to the demands of both professional service delivery and informal community-based outreach. The continuity of local housing authority sup-

port, which was key to Jobs-Plus's funding and programming, varied across the sites over the course of the demonstration. Indeed, diminishing attention from the housing authority in Chattanooga for Jobs-Plus eventually led to the decision of that agency and key demonstration funders in April 2002 to limit Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga to the rent incentives only.

Furthermore, operating in a public housing development and a low-income neighborhood also presented considerable *challenges* to this employment program. The Jobs-Plus approach proposes that physically situating an employment program in a public housing development or low-income neighborhood to serve a geographically defined target population confers important *advantages* for program outreach and service delivery. For instance, on-site programs can deepen their familiarity with conditions in the community and with concerns of its households that critically influence residents' employment, and they can provide employment services in a readily accessible manner. However, as a newcomer to the community, Jobs-Plus initially met with widespread suspicion and cynicism among residents, who had repeatedly seen service programs come and go without making good on promises to substantially improve their lives. A geographically defined target population also encompasses a range of employment backgrounds and eligibility for categorical services — for instance, some residents have extensive work experience while others have little, and some are eligible for the welfare agency's employment services and child care benefits while others are not. Another challenge has to do with differences in cultural backgrounds in multiethnic housing developments and neighborhoods. These factors complicated efforts to provide residents with appropriate on-site assistance and off-site service referrals to address their widely varying needs and circumstances. Serious problems with safety and crime at some Jobs-Plus sites also undercut program outreach and service delivery. For instance, the widespread use and trafficking of drugs at Gilmore Homes in Baltimore hampered efforts by staff and outreach workers to go door-to-door to recruit and follow up participants and also limited the program's ability to utilize residents' networks as conduits for conveying employment information and community support for work. Additionally, whenever resident turnover was high — as was the case in the developments in Baltimore, Chattanooga, and Dayton — the program had to continuously direct staff and resources toward new outreach efforts targeted at incoming residents.

Finally, like many welfare-to-work programs, Jobs-Plus had enduring difficulties across the sites in engaging certain subgroups of residents. These included the "hard-to-serve" (for example, alcoholics and drug addicts, victims of domestic violence, men with substantial arrears in child payments that would be garnished from their paychecks); foreign-born women whose native cultures discouraged mothers with young children from seeking employment outside the home; and working residents who needed help with job retention problems and career advancement but who were difficult to re-engage in the program.

## Accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus Approach

Despite many difficulties, Jobs-Plus can point to some real achievements across the sites in efforts to inform and assist substantial numbers of public housing residents with employment. Although the research demonstration will have to wait for the final survey of residents to determine how much Jobs-Plus succeeded in saturating the housing developments with knowledge of the program, the field research provides preliminary information indicating that the residents were widely aware of Jobs-Plus. Not all of them had up-to-date details about program services, but they widely knew that Jobs-Plus offered help with employment and that rent incentives were available for working households.

However, being aware of Jobs-Plus and its offerings is no guarantee that residents will take advantage of the program. Data from Jobs-Plus participant case files and housing authority administrative records indicate that, as of June 2001, the program managed to attach 53 percent of the *targeted residents* across the sites and 58 percent of the *targeted households*, either through individual enrollment or through membership in a household that was receiving the rent incentives. Attachment rates of targeted residents increased with each succeeding cohort of residents.<sup>1</sup> For example, attachment rates for the 1999 and 2000 cohorts were higher (59 percent and 61 percent, respectively) than those for the 1998 cohort (51 percent), since Jobs-Plus could offer later cohorts the full complement of its services and rent incentives and a track record of success. At some sites, attachment rates are particularly impressive. For instance, the programs in Dayton and St. Paul had the most success of all the sites through June 2001 in attaching targeted residents (69 percent and 78 percent, respectively, of the combined 1998-2000 cohorts) and targeted households (71 percent and 86 percent, respectively). The figures are even higher for the individual 1999 and 2000 cohorts, with attachment rates of 83 percent and 92 percent, respectively, in Dayton and rates of 76 percent and 78 percent, respectively, in St. Paul.

Formal involvement in Jobs-Plus was not limited to the rent incentives. About 55 percent of the residents who enrolled in Jobs-Plus across the sites were seeking employment assistance. Jobs-Plus was particularly successful in Dayton, in that 76 percent of enrollees were referred to or participated in any of Jobs-Plus's employment activities. Residents were most likely to ask for employment services that could directly address their pressing need for work, such as job search and job referral assistance, and they looked to Jobs-Plus to a lesser degree for help with job skills development; the emphasis among foreign-born residents in Los Angeles and St. Paul was on improving their English proficiency.

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<sup>1</sup>The term "cohort" refers to all residents, ages 18 to 61 years, whose names appeared on the housing authority's 50058 forms as a resident of the Jobs-Plus development in October 1998 and/or 1999 and/or 2000.

Finally, although the report does not identify any demographic characteristics that markedly distinguished program participants from nonparticipants, Jobs-Plus made substantial inroads at most of the sites among *working residents*, who were drawn by the rent incentives as a key benefit, and among *nonworking residents* and *welfare recipients* (a key target group for the demonstration), including almost two-thirds of those who reported AFDC/TANF income between 1998 and 2001 in Dayton and nearly three-fourths of such residents in St. Paul. At the same time, the sites also drew residents who were *not current or recent welfare recipients* and who, therefore, were not eligible for employment assistance from the welfare agency.

The report emphasizes that these rates of formal participation in Jobs-Plus are likely conservative estimates of residents' use of and involvement in Jobs-Plus across the sites. The case file review did not collect data about residents' use of employment support services for work that Jobs-Plus also offered, such as assistance with child care and transportation. Furthermore, a place-based, saturation employment program also permits forms of involvement that cannot be readily captured by case file records and administrative data. The field research underscores that residents were involved in Jobs-Plus in far more complex ways than the quantitative data can capture, including the following examples:

- Residents looked to Jobs-Plus for help with pressing needs and services that added value to their existing portfolio of service providers, including such support services as assistance with transportation, food, and child care.
- Residents' involvement with the program included a high level of drop-in activity and calls to the office rather than continuous involvement over an extended period of time.
- Residents appreciated Jobs-Plus's individualized, flexible assistance in response to the wide array of issues that influenced their employment, and they appreciated its culturally specific services at the multiethnic housing developments.
- Residents looked to Jobs-Plus for help in accessing services from other agencies; Jobs-Plus helped to cut through the red tape and followed up referrals to ensure that residents did not fall through the cracks.

Finally, all the demonstration sites recruited the residents themselves to help with program outreach and service delivery as part of the community support for work component — in the effort to draw on residents' social networks and knowledge of local conditions and needs to win the trust of the community and attract participants. Jobs-Plus participants repeatedly cited the role of resident staff and outreach workers in making the program approachable and enhancing its credibility.

## **Substantial Cross-Site Variation in Residents' Participation**

It is important to emphasize that there was also considerable variation across the sites in the levels of participation that Jobs-Plus was able to achieve. For instance, attachment rates of targeted residents of the combined 1998-2000 cohorts through June 2001 ranged across a spectrum, from lows of 33 percent (Imperial Courts) and 39 percent (William Mead Homes), to midpoints of 48 percent (Chattanooga) and 52 percent (Baltimore), and finally to highs of 69 percent (Dayton) and 78 percent (St. Paul). (The report emphasizes that the lower rates of enrollment and service take-up at the two Los Angeles sites through June 2001 were the consequences of programmatic and local problems at the sites. However, the programs were able to address their problems soon *after* the case file review for this report was completed, resulting in a vigorous increase in program activity and participation at both Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes.)

The sites differed in the extent to which Jobs-Plus enrollees participated in various services and activities. For instance, in regard to the rent incentives, even through December 2002, Jobs-Plus in Baltimore consistently remained at the low end of the spectrum, managing to engage only 12 percent of targeted residents of the combined 1998-2000 cohorts. Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga and Dayton and at Imperial Courts hovered around the middle, engaging 23 percent, 36 percent, and 28 percent, respectively. In contrast, rent incentives receipt at William Mead Homes shot up once the program was fully staffed, rising from 27 percent in June 2001 to 46 percent in December 2002 — second only to St. Paul, where rent incentives receipt among targeted residents reached a high of 58 percent.

Participation among Jobs-Plus enrollees in education and vocational training was highest in St. Paul and at William Mead Homes. Demand was strong among foreign-born residents for classes to improve their English proficiency as well as for a General Educational Development (GED) course for Spanish speakers at William Mead Homes and U.S. citizenship classes in St. Paul, to ensure the right to work in the United States. Early in the program, residents of Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul had the benefit of customized on-site training for jobs selected on the basis of a needs survey. Working residents who did seek further training and education at these sites tended to be younger rather than middle-aged, and there was often another adult in the household contributing income and sharing child care responsibilities.

## **Factors Contributing to Cross-Site Variation**

The Jobs-Plus programs had more success at some sites than at others in implementing the program components in a timely manner and engaging residents widely in services and activities. As indicated earlier, some sites faced tougher working environments and more residents with serious barriers to employment than the other sites did. This report, however, contains no

obvious or clear evidence to indicate that these conditions drove the cross-site variation in Jobs-Plus participation. In contrast, more influential factors seem to be the organizational conditions that affected the programs' capacity to capitalize on being on-site to administer services and conduct outreach effectively and consistently. For example, the Jobs-Plus programs in Los Angeles were "late bloomers," experiencing a substantial increase in program activity, enrollments, and take-up of services and rent incentives only after receiving a full complement of staff and stable leadership at both housing developments in the latter half of 2001. The following sections discuss three organizational factors that played a prominent role in the cross-site variation in residents' participation in Jobs-Plus.

### **Stable Site Leadership and Adequate Professional Staffing**

Stable site leadership and adequate professional staffing stand out as critical for conducting program outreach and service delivery and for achieving desirable rates of resident participation, particularly around marketing and administering the rent incentives. Problems in these areas contributed greatly to the consistently low rates of enrollment and service take-up of the two Jobs-Plus programs in Los Angeles through June 2001 and to the collapse of Chattanooga's employment services in mid-2000. Indeed, this report emphasizes that much of what residents described as being helpful about Jobs-Plus's service approach — ongoing outreach, personalized attention, responding to the wide array of issues that influence employment, and tracking of referral agencies and employers — requires the Jobs-Plus staff to undertake considerable investments in time, training, and administrative support. At the same time, the sites varied considerably in their staffing and equipment. Some sites went for lengthy periods without key staff and critical equipment, such as computers with Internet access and an automated management information system (MIS), and they faced lengthy procurement processes to acquire them. Staff members were also not always prepared to utilize these resources or to assume their program responsibilities, especially since Jobs-Plus required a mix of professional social service expertise and community-organizing savvy. Technical assistance was required to help the programs negotiate with various agencies to secure staff and resources and to provide training that included introductory workshops on case management, job development, and the use of an MIS.

### **Housing Authority Support**

Jobs-Plus's ability to recruit residents and maintain services depended heavily on housing authority support, since all the sites relied primarily on the local housing authority for funding and staff. The diminishing attention and support of housing authority leadership in Baltimore and Chattanooga for Jobs-Plus over the course of the demonstration profoundly undercut the ability of those programs to maintain adequate staffing, engage in program development, and implement the rent incentives component. In Los Angeles, the housing authority's lengthy and complex procurement procedures resulted in crippling delays in getting Jobs-Plus at Impe-

rial Courts and William Mead Homes a full complement of staff and essential equipment until mid-2001. Furthermore, dissatisfaction among residents of William Mead Homes with the housing authority's handling of the soil remediation effort prompted retaliatory violence by local gangs that disrupted Jobs-Plus's services and brought the program to a standstill in early 2000. Finally, local differences in the ways that the housing authority enforced policies for evicting households that harbored ex-felons, used drugs, or had arrears in rent payments affected efforts of the Jobs-Plus programs to assist domestic violence victims, substance abusers, and unregistered partners and to recruit residents for the rent incentives plans.

The success of an employment program that locates at a public housing development also depends heavily on the level of communication and cooperation that it establishes with the on-site housing management staff. The management office is the source of current information about residents' job gains and losses and incidences of domestic violence, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and other problems that can affect residents' employment. The management office also knows about incoming residents and handles the annual lease renewals for current residents. For instance, the job developer at William Mead Homes noted that tracking working residents to help them with job retention would have been much easier if the management office shared its employment records with Jobs-Plus, since residents were required to report job gains and losses to the management office but not to Jobs-Plus. Arrangements with the management office that facilitated information flow and cooperation in service delivery included sending Jobs-Plus monthly updates of incoming residents and inviting a program staff member to attend the management office's move-in interviews with new residents and annual lease renewal interviews with current residents, to orient and enroll them into the program. The Jobs-Plus programs in Dayton and St. Paul succeeded in attaching large numbers of targeted residents through such strategic cooperation with the on-site management office, particularly around enrolling residents in the rent incentives plans. In St. Paul, the management office also required rent incentive recipients who lost a job to apply to Jobs-Plus for the safety net and for help in getting another job.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Jobs-Plus found that the program also must be mindful of residents' distrust of the management office because of its role in enforcing their lease obligations. For instance, concerns about the management office's finding out about unreported earnings — or about unregistered household members or drug activity — undercut take-up of the rent incentives, particularly in Baltimore and at Imperial Courts, and discouraged hard-to-serve residents in all the sites from coming to Jobs-Plus for help with substance abuse and domestic violence. Across sites, Jobs-Plus was constantly walking a tightrope in an effort, on the one hand, to co-

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<sup>2</sup>The safety net in St. Paul's rent incentives program permits households that lose all their wage income "through no fault of their own" to pay a minimum rent of \$25 per month for up to two months out of each calendar year. This helps these households with the rent while working-age members look for another job.



operate with the management office without being labeled an arm of the housing authority and, on the other hand, to build credibility with the residents without taking on an advocacy role for their grievances against the housing authority. Measures that the sites found helpful for allaying residents' concerns about the housing authority and for clarifying their expectations of Jobs-Plus included (1) assuring the residents repeatedly in multiple ways that the program did not share case file materials and other confidential information with the management office; (2) building credibility among residents by cultivating the support of the resident council and recruiting residents to help with program outreach and service delivery; and (3) maintaining a neutral position in the face of conflicts between the residents and the local housing authority, emphasizing that Jobs-Plus is an employment program, not an advocacy organization.

### **Cooperating with the Local Welfare Agency and with WIA One-Stop Centers**

Each Jobs-Plus program needed the support of the *local welfare agency* to recruit welfare recipients who lived at the site's housing development, since residents had to comply with the welfare agency's work requirements to receive financial assistance, whereas participation in Jobs-Plus was voluntary. In working with this key collaborative partner to engage welfare recipients, the Jobs-Plus sites found it helpful to get the local welfare agency (1) to identify recipients who resided in the development or neighborhood and who might be recruited by the program; (2) to recognize participation in Jobs-Plus's employment activities as a way for welfare recipients to fulfill their work requirements and, ideally, to mandate program participation as their work activity, as was the case in Dayton, thereby requiring welfare recipients to visit the Jobs-Plus office to enroll and to check in regularly to receive their benefits; and (3) to colocate welfare caseworkers at Jobs-Plus and to integrate them into the program's efforts to recruit welfare recipients, develop and implement their individual service plans, and monitor their job retention and career development needs.

Residents were also drawn to Jobs-Plus at some sites by the program's efforts to help them access training, education, and employment opportunities more readily at the *WIA One-Stop Centers*.<sup>3</sup> Various Jobs-Plus sites arranged with the local government agency in charge of workforce development — another key collaborative partner — to place computers on-site at the housing development for residents to use in accessing the WIA One-Stop Center's database of employment openings and employment service updates. At William Mead Homes, Jobs-Plus's efforts to help residents with barriers that discouraged them from using the Community Service Center's (CSC) employment services contributed to the program's success in getting

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<sup>3</sup>For a detailed discussion of steps taken by the Jobs-Plus sites to build collaborative partnerships with the local welfare agency and the WIA entity for funding and service delivery purposes, see Kato and Riccio (2001, Chapter 4).

residents to take up federally funded training opportunities for public housing residents at the CSCs. For instance, a Jobs-Plus staff member underwent the same training that the CSC staff received in the procedures for processing applications for federally funded programs. He was therefore able to knowledgeably help residents assemble the required paperwork and supporting documents *before* they went to see the CSC staff, thereby bypassing a good deal of the bureaucratic red tape that residents usually encountered there. The Jobs-Plus staff also accompanied residents through rival gang territory to get them safely to and from the CSCs. Finally, on-site at William Mead Homes, Jobs-Plus offered “college counseling” and organized homework nights to help residents complete their programs, since many of them were attending community colleges or training institutions for the first time.

## **Lessons for Community-Based Employment Initiatives**

The findings of this report also offer lessons that are relevant to the efforts of employment initiatives to locate programs in low-income communities other than public housing and to assist residents with a broad array of employment-related backgrounds and circumstances. The experiences of the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites point to various challenges that such initiatives need to anticipate when locating in these environments and some strategies to consider for addressing these challenges in providing services and recruiting residents. Some of the outreach and service strategies that various Jobs-Plus sites found helpful include the following:

- **Residents in outreach and service delivery.** Residents who are highly regarded in the community can help to build program credibility and attract participants by assisting the program as outreach workers and staff in supporting administrative roles. To carry out these roles effectively, however, they will need professional staff supervision and ongoing training, such as workshops on how to go door-to-door explaining program information and on how to handle residents’ confidential information, put together newsletters, answer phones, and greet visitors.
- **Individualized assistance.** Offering both individualized assistance and standardized group services to residents on-site and developing referral partnerships with off-site service agencies helped Jobs-Plus to address the wide range of employment needs, cultural backgrounds, and categorical eligibility for services that can exist among public housing residents and other geographically defined target groups.
- **Informal, ad hoc interactions.** Jobs-Plus staff took advantage of the informal, ad hoc ways that are available to a place-based program to engage and assist residents wherever they lived and “hung out.” For instance, Jobs-Plus

sponsored community events and conducted door-to-door outreach to inform residents about employment opportunities and services.

- **Service partnerships with ethnic organizations.** Forming partnerships with local ethnic organizations to develop culturally specific outreach and employment services helped Jobs-Plus to accommodate the various languages, cultural practices, and immigration-related problems of the residents of multicultural housing developments and neighborhoods.
- **Support services to re-engage working residents.** The Jobs-Plus sites found that it is difficult to connect with working residents to help them with job retention and career advancement. Some sites found that offering employment-related support services such as monthly bus tokens or passes succeeded as a “hook” in bringing working residents regularly back into the office, where the staff could ask them about their employment and offer them help with career advancement.

## Conclusions

As the end of the Jobs-Plus research demonstration approaches in 2004, important questions need to be answered about whether the Jobs-Plus sites provided the demonstration research with a full execution of the program’s approach and, therefore, whether the impact evaluation was a “fair test” of the approach. This report contributes critical information for addressing these issues.

First, this report attests to the feasibility of the Jobs-Plus approach, with its place-based, saturation strategy for assisting substantial numbers of working-age public housing residents with employment. The experiences of the demonstration sites show what a voluntary employment program needs to do to involve public housing residents in its services and activities and what the Jobs-Plus approach can reasonably expect to achieve in service take-up among public housing residents. Despite the considerable challenges that Jobs-Plus encountered across sites, several programs made substantial headway in informing and engaging working-age public housing residents in employment activities and the rent incentives plans. However, this report emphasizes that program strides in enrollments and service take-up as well as informal resident involvement required certain local conditions and investments — including a stable complement of professional staff who were capable of intensive case management and informal outreach in the community — and resources for utilizing residents in outreach efforts. In particular, it can be difficult to cultivate and sustain the support of housing authority leadership and the cooperation of on-site management staff.

Second, this report provides support for the position that the Jobs-Plus approach received a “fair test” at the demonstration sites. With the exception of Chattanooga, all the sites were able to implement Jobs-Plus’s key features — the three program components, on-site service delivery, and a saturation focus — at reasonable levels in real-world circumstances that included resident mobility at the housing developments. However, it cannot also be said that Jobs-Plus received an “ideal test” across the demonstration sites. For example, the three components were not implemented simultaneously, as required by the model. The programs varied considerably in the stability and quality of their administration, staffing, service offerings, and outreach efforts; most sites failed to get substantial help from their collaborative with program resources and development; and some sites even had trouble retaining the support of the lead agency, the housing authority.

The ultimate determination of whether Jobs-Plus should be replicated will depend on the final research findings concerning its impacts in these sites on public housing residents’ employment, earnings, and well-being. That being said, the findings in this report nonetheless offer lessons to place-based employment initiatives for low-income communities other than public housing, and the report helps to address critical gaps in the limited research on participation in place-based employment programs.



**Appendix A**  
**Site Descriptions and Their Programs**



## Jobs-Plus in Baltimore

**Development.** *Gilmor Homes*

**Housing and neighborhood.** 528 apartments in low-rise buildings in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore

**Demographics.** Predominantly African-American single mothers as household heads, along with a sizable minority of disabled residents and seniors

**Programmatic challenges.** Widespread drug use has been a critical barrier to employment. High incidence of property and violent crimes, including drug trafficking. High resident turnover. In 2000, a mayoral change prompted an increasing shift of the city's economic development resources away from the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood at about the same time that leadership changes at the housing authority weakened support for Jobs-Plus. Conditions undercut staffing and operations of Jobs-Plus and key service referral partners.

**Programmatic advantages.** During the 1990s, the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood was part of the Baltimore City Empowerment Zone and a recipient of substantial public and private investments in health care, social services, and homeownership. Fully operating collaboratives of local public and nonprofit service providers are available to partner with Jobs-Plus and address residents' needs.

**Employment-related services.** Jobs-Plus offers on-site individualized intake, assessment, and case management. Job search and job readiness assistance are available either from Jobs-Plus staff or through referrals to such partner agencies as Eden Jobs and Goodwill Industries. Until January 2002, Jobs-Plus offered on-site driver's education linked to the auto-purchasing program of a partner agency. A satellite office of the Vision for Health Consortium (VHC) of public and private health organizations offered on-site health assessments and substance abuse treatment referrals until it closed, in September 2002. TANF recipients had an on-site caseworker from Work Matters — a welfare-to-work program of the local housing authority and the WIA agency — until June 2001, when the caseworker was reassigned to a downtown office. TANF recipients were redirected to downtown welfare offices (and away from Jobs-Plus) for employment services.

**Rent incentives.** Implemented in November 2000, the rent incentives plan at Gilmor Homes reduces the percentage of adjusted income that is used to calculate working families' rent (from the traditional 30 percent to 20 percent). Half the reduced rent is deposited in a non-interest-bearing escrow account for each month that residents work during a consecutive 12-month period. At the end of each annual cycle, the savings are rebated to residents for use at their discretion, as long as they were not employed for 30 days or more during that cycle.

**Community support for work.** In 2001, Jobs-Plus trained residents to be court captains, who help circulate information about services and job openings and recruit participants for such activities as the on-site driver's education class, a workshop on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and the rent incentives program.



## Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga

**Development.** *Harriet Tubman Homes*

**Housing and neighborhood.** 423 apartments in low-rise buildings located 3 miles northeast of downtown Chattanooga

**Demographics.** Predominantly African-American single mothers as household heads

**Programmatic challenges.** There was a strong initial focus on resident empowerment in the form of hiring residents for Jobs-Plus management and staffing positions, without adequate capacity-building to ensure that they could undertake these responsibilities. There was also limited program oversight by the housing authority. In late 1999, these factors contributed to a breakdown in services and recruitment. In early 2000, the national demonstration partners spearheaded an effort to reconstitute the program by hiring experienced professionals for key staff positions. However, the housing authority's decision to privatize its property management and resident services operations made it unlikely that the agency could oversee Jobs-Plus adequately. In the summer of 2002, the housing authority and national demonstration partners agreed to continue a scaled-down, financial-incentives-only version of Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga.

**Programmatic advantages.** Harriet Tubman Homes has dynamic resident leadership and a record of effective activism. In the 1990s, residents successfully partnered with local police and community organizations to battle high levels of drug use and of property and violent crimes. Residents also gained access to additional public transportation routes and to on-site social and educational programs.

**Employment-related services.** The program was reconstituted between June 2000 and June 2002, after which Jobs-Plus offered residents on-site intake, assessment, and job readiness assistance. Those who were deemed job-ready were referred to the job coach, who divided her time between Jobs-Plus and the Southeast Tennessee Career Center, where she helped residents use job search services. Education and training as well as support services were available, largely through referrals to off-site providers. However, the Hamilton County Board of Education provided on-site GED preparation and computer literacy classes, and the Academy of Allied Health offered several cycles of certified nurse assistant training. Other on-site programs included the Family Neighborhood Center, which provided job training, a food pantry, and after-school programs.

**Rent incentives.** Implemented in November 2000, Chattanooga's financial incentives plan involves a two-step rent schedule for households with working members. Step 1 calculates rents at 10 percent of countable income (for 16 months), and Step 2 calculates rents at 20 percent (for the remaining time of the demonstration). This is the only Jobs-Plus component that has been offered in Chattanooga since June 2002.

**Community support for work.** Jobs-Plus became a financial-incentives-only program before it could fully implement this component.

## Jobs-Plus in Dayton

**Development.** *DeSoto Bass Courts*

**Housing and neighborhood.** 390 row-house apartment units located about 4 miles southwest of downtown Dayton (To increase open areas and parking space, 128 units of the original development had been demolished in mid-2002.)

**Demographics.** Predominantly African-American single mothers as household heads

**Programmatic challenges.** There are high rates of resident turnover and of property and violent crimes. Substance abuse is a critical barrier to employment and job retention. Difficulties with resident leadership arose in the early years of the program.

**Programmatic advantages.** Sankofa (a nonprofit agency that was formerly the housing authority's Resident Services division) administers Jobs-Plus in Dayton and has provided stable and capable leadership and staff. There is enduring high-level support in securing funding and program services of the housing authority and other collaborative partners, including Montgomery County's welfare agency and multiservice Job Center. Customized training and job opportunities for Jobs-Plus participants are cultivated through partnerships with local employers. Public transportation is available from DeSoto Bass Courts to downtown Dayton and other areas of Miami Valley.

**Employment-related services.** Jobs-Plus offers residents on-site intake, assessment, case management, and job readiness and job search assistance as well as job retention follow-up. To conduct independent job search, residents have on-line access at Jobs-Plus to the Job Center's database of job openings, and they are referred to the Job Center and to off-site partners for most education, training, and support services. Jobs-Plus has also hosted several cycles of on-site job trainings, including cash-register training sponsored by Walgreen's drugstore chain and workshops on household management and income tax preparation. In 2002, Jobs-Plus partnered with RETS Tech to recruit participants for its heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and refrigeration (HVACR) training program, and it provided case management follow-up to ensure training completion. The program also received housing authority funding to offer employment and substance abuse assistance to noncustodial fathers of children who live at DeSoto Bass Courts, even when the fathers were not on the lease. Outreach has taken the form of well-attended basketball tournaments and family picnics in partnership with the community-based Men of Standards.

**Rent incentives.** Implemented in May 2000, Dayton's financial incentives plan eliminates income-based rent calculations and replaces them with a two-step, flat-rent approach. Jobs-Plus's flat rents are set at a rate lower than what most households with full-time workers would pay if their rent remained income-based. During Step 1, which begins on enrollment, rents are set for one year at about one-third the normal market-based flat rent for a given unit size. During Step 2, rent increases are limited to about one-half the normal flat rent for a similar unit, for the remainder of the demonstration.

**Community support for work.** Jobs-Plus in Dayton trained residents to be building captains, who are paid a stipend in the form of a rent credit to distribute information about the program's services and about job openings and to recruit participants.

## Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles

**Developments.** *Imperial Courts* and *William Mead Homes*

**Housing and neighborhood.** Imperial Courts: 481 apartments in low-rise buildings in the Watts neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles; William Mead Homes: 414 apartments in low-rise buildings in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles

**Demographics.** Imperial Courts: In 1997, African-Americans headed 78 percent of households, and Hispanics headed 20 percent — a proportion that has subsequently grown to about 40 percent. William Mead Homes: Hispanics head about 80 percent of households, and many of the other household heads are of Southeast Asian origin. More than half the households have two or more adults.\*

**Programmatic challenges.** Both programs had a slow buildup through mid-2001, with housing-authority-related delays in addressing leadership turnover, staffing gaps, and equipment needs — which undercut the capacity for outreach and service delivery. There are immigrant-related barriers to employment, such as limited English proficiency and, for some, the lack of the legal right to work in the United States. Imperial Courts: There is a high incidence of property and gang-related violent crimes. William Mead Homes: In late 1999, resident unrest prompted by the housing authority's unpopular soil remediation project brought Jobs-Plus to a standstill; the program was reconstituted in early 2000.

**Programmatic advantages.** Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles has had dynamic project and site leadership since mid-2001, and both housing developments have had experienced resident leadership and a tradition of community activism. Strong collaborative partnerships address wide-ranging service needs. Both developments are reasonably close to employment and public transportation: Imperial Courts is near the Alameda Corridor, the focus of redevelopment efforts; and William Mead Homes is centrally located near downtown businesses. Los Angeles is the only site actively working to maintain Jobs-Plus beyond the demonstration period.

**Employment-related services.** On-site job preparation and job search assistance are available for individuals and groups. The housing authority designated Jobs-Plus as the “portal” for its Career Service Centers (CSCs), and Jobs-Plus publicized CSC services and boosted take-up by helping residents complete applications for CSC education and training opportunities. Collaborative partners help Jobs-Plus provide services through colocated staff or off-site referrals. On-site at both housing developments are an employment caseworker from the welfare agency and a job developer from the Employment Development Department. Imperial Courts offers ESL classes and a Head Start program for which Jobs-Plus arranged child care training, to prepare residents for teacher's aide positions. At William Mead Homes, the East Los Angeles Women's Center provides domestic violence counseling, and the East Los Angeles Skills Center offers GED classes for Spanish speakers.

(continued)

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\*MDRC calculations based on data from tenant rosters provided by housing authorities in October 1997 (Riccio, 1999).

### **Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles (continued)**

**Rent incentives.** Implemented in June 2000, Phase 1 of Los Angeles's plan either froze the rent of participating households for 18 months (if the current rent was less than the Jobs-Plus flat rent) or reduced it to the proposed flat rent (if the current rent was higher than the flat rent). During Phase 2, which began in February 2002, participating households paid the flat rent. William Mead Homes benefited from the support of housing management in recruiting participants for the incentives plan.

**Community support for work.** Beginning in November 2000, Jobs-Plus recruited approximately ten community coaches at each housing development and trained them about economic development and community organizing to help circulate Jobs-Plus information and recruit program participants. Coaches subsequently played a key role in developing services, including on-site GED classes for Spanish speakers at William Mead Homes. Both developments' Jobs-Plus programs also work closely with their resident councils to sponsor community events. Of all the sites, Los Angeles has been most successful in implementing this component of Jobs-Plus. There is a strong commitment to resident empowerment through leadership development and civic participation.

## Jobs-Plus in St. Paul

**Development.** *Mt. Airy Homes*

**Housing and neighborhood.** 298 townhouses renovated from 1993 to 1996 and 152 high-rise units adjacent to the downtown area of St. Paul

**Demographics.** In 1997, 65 percent of heads of households were of Asian origin, mostly Hmong. The percentage of African immigrant households has subsequently grown.\*

**Programmatic challenges.** Language- and immigrant-related barriers to outreach, service delivery, and employment, such as limited English proficiency and post-traumatic stress disorder. Initial focus of MDRC's technical assistance in St. Paul on resident empowerment contributed to resident conflict with other partners. Using a shared collaborative leadership model to develop and manage Jobs-Plus required an intensive time commitment.

**Programmatic advantages.** Stability and professionalism of Jobs-Plus staff. Spacious Mt. Airy Community Center for program offices and activities. Services for foreign-born residents by Hmong- and Spanish-speaking Jobs-Plus staff and partnerships with refugee organizations. Colocated employment counselor, financial eligibility worker, and intensive case manager from welfare agency for TANF recipients. Enduring support of housing authority and other key collaborative agencies.

**Employment-related services.** On-site assistance with job readiness, job search, and job retention. ESL and U.S. citizenship classes, GED instruction until summer 2003, and Hmong Women's Support Group for mental health and cultural conflict issues. Head Start program, after-school and summer activities for families with children. Referrals to local schools and agencies for such services as postsecondary education, driver's education.

**Rent incentives.** First site to implement rent incentives, in November 1998. Struggled with unexpected delays in HUD's agreeing to cover potential losses to housing authority's rent revenues incurred by permitting working households to keep more earnings. St. Paul's plan provides one month's free rent for enrolling in Jobs-Plus. During Year 1, 100 percent of a household's earned income is disregarded in calculation of monthly rent. In Years 2 through 5, rent calculations are based on the flat-rent model and are graduated to reflect a percentage (after utility adjustments) of the housing authority's ceiling rents, ranging from 45 percent in Year 2 to 90 percent in Year 5. Annual free month's rent if employed 12 continuous months, plus \$25 per month of deferred rent credit for each month of employment. Rent reductions during periods of unemployment. Strong management office support in recruiting, orienting, and enrolling households as well as administering incentives.

**Community support for work.** Since 2000, residents who speak the languages of the most numerous ethnic groups at Mt. Airy Homes, under the direction of a Vista worker, help Jobs-Plus as *community outreach workers* to publicize program activities and job opportunities, recruit participants, and relay resident concerns to the staff.

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\*MDRC calculations based on data from tenant rosters provided by housing authorities in October 1997 (Riccio, 1999).

**Appendix B**  
**Supplemental Exhibits to Chapter 4**



The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Appendix Table B.1

Sample Sizes of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000,  
for the Full Sample and by Demographic Subgroup

Characteristic (%)	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Dayton	Los Angeles		St. Paul	All Developments Combined
				Imperial Courts	William Mead Homes		
<b>Age</b>							
18-24	136	216	253	198	138	93	1,034
25-34	151	143	175	197	162	162	990
35-61	255	125	143	231	333	153	1,240
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	91	62	85	142	240	140	760
Female	451	422	485	484	393	268	2,503
Missing	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>							
Black (non-Hispanic)	537	462	530	364	42	118	2,053
White (non-Hispanic)	0	15	7	13	7	16	58
Hispanic	2	6	1	215	498	19	741
Asian	0	0	0	2	74	187	263
Native American/Alaskan Native	1	0	0	0	2	1	4
Missing	2	1	33	32	10	67	145
<b>Reported earnings</b>							
Yes	131	169	131	126	248	96	901
No	238	299	281	232	108	92	1,250
Missing	173	16	159	268	277	220	1,113
<b>Reported AFDC/TANF</b>							
Yes	154	227	168	225	125	102	1,001
No	215	241	244	133	231	86	1,150
Missing	173	16	159	268	277	220	1,113
Sample size	542	484	570	626	633	411	3,266

(continued)



**Appendix Table B.1 (continued)**

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

In the averages for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Appendix Table B.2

Characteristics of Targeted Residents Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments Between 1998 and 2000,  
by Development and Attachment Status as of June 2001

Characteristic	Baltimore <sup>a</sup>		Chattanooga <sup>a</sup>		Dayton	
	Attached	Not Attached	Attached	Not Attached	Attached	Not Attached
<b>Age (%)</b>						
18-24	25	25	41	48	43	48
25-34	31	25	32	28	29	34
35-61	44	50	27	25	28	18
Mean age (years)	33	36	29	29	29	27
<b>Gender (%)</b>						
Male	12	22	8	17	11	24
Female	88	78	92	83	89	76
<b>Race/ethnicity (%)</b>						
Black (non-Hispanic)	99	99	97	94	94	90
White (non-Hispanic)	0	0	1	5	1	2
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	0	0	2	1	0	1
Native American/Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	1	0	0	5	7
<b>Income sources (%)</b>						
Earnings	34	37	41	32	35	24
AFDC/TANF	43	40	52	45	40	42
Sample size	285	275	235	261	400	186

(continued)

**Appendix Table B.2 (continued)**

Characteristic	Los Angeles					
	Imperial Courts		William Mead Homes		St. Paul	
	Attached	Not Attached	Attached	Not Attached	Attached	Not Attached
<b>Age (%)</b>						
18-24	24	35	21	22	19	36
25-34	32	31	22	28	45	22
35-61	44	33	57	50	36	42
Mean age (years)	33	31	37	36	33	32
<b>Gender (%)</b>						
Male	25	22	46	33	33	39
Female	75	78	54	67	67	61
<b>Race/ethnicity (%)</b>						
Black (non-Hispanic)	55	60	8	6	28	33
White (non-Hispanic)	2	2	1	1	4	2
Asian	0	0	7	15	47	40
Hispanic	37	33	81	77	4	6
Native American/Alaskan Native	0	0	0	1	0	1
Missing	5	5	2	1	16	18
<b>Income sources (%)</b>						
Earnings	57	26	67	71	54	41
AFDC/TANF	50	68	30	39	51	63
Sample size	214	442	264	424	361	109

(continued)

## Appendix Table B.2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000. The term “targeted residents” refers to nondisabled residents aged 18 to 61 living in a household headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61.

The "income sources" subgroup refers to targeted members of households that did or did not report earnings or AFDC/TANF income to the housing authority.

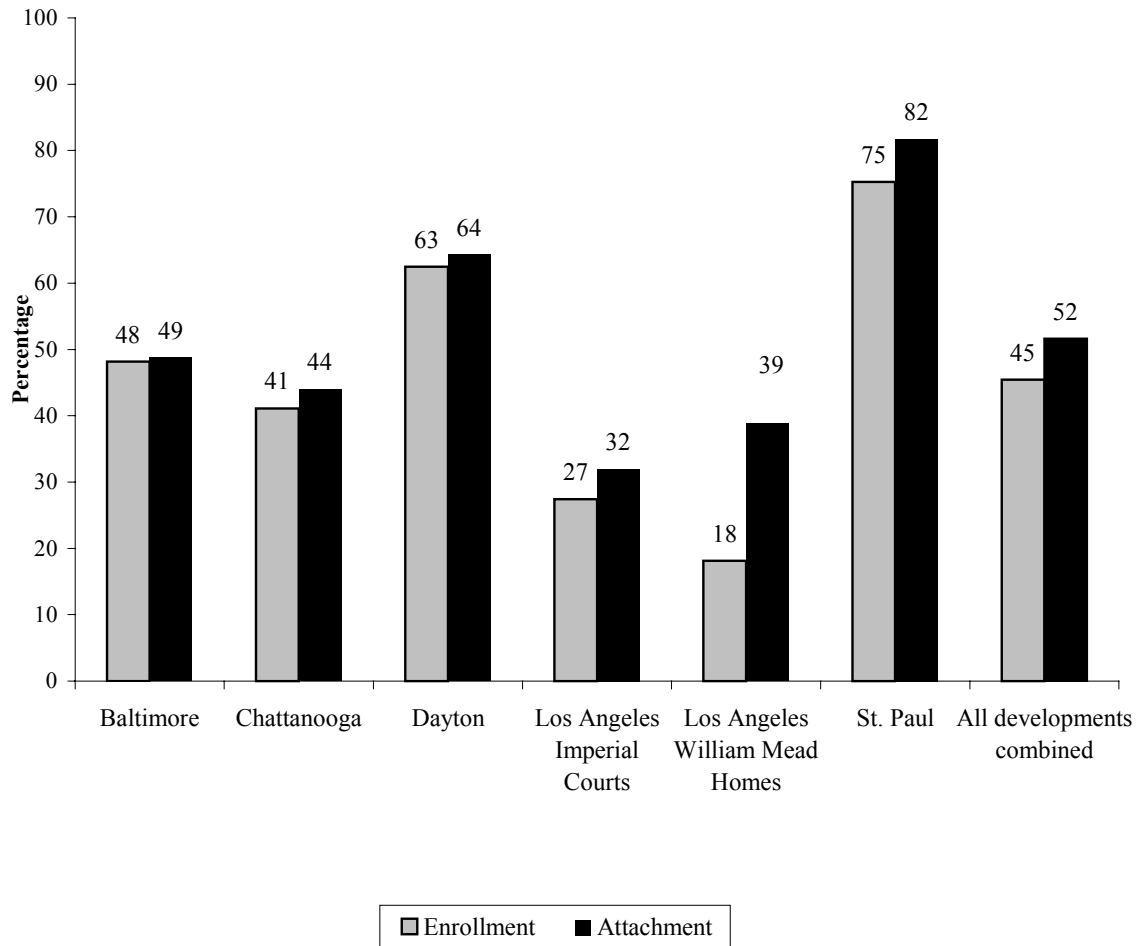
<sup>a</sup>Participation measures were adjusted based on findings of a quality control (QC) effort to confirm the accuracy of data collected from Jobs-Plus enrollees' case files. This QC effort involved randomly selecting at each Jobs-Plus development 24 targeted residents who enrolled in Jobs-Plus and 24 targeted residents who did not enroll in Jobs-Plus. Jobs-Plus staff confirmed the status of these residents as either Jobs-Plus enrollees or nonenrollees, and reviewed the collected data to see if any information had been missed about enrollees' service use. The Jobs-Plus enrollment figures for Baltimore and Chattanooga could be higher than the ones reported in Appendix Table B.2. As many as 17 percent and 29 percent of the sample of targeted residents in Baltimore and Chattanooga, respectively, who were deemed nonenrollees may have actually enrolled in Jobs-Plus. This means as many as 58 individuals in Baltimore and 101 individuals in Chattanooga who were designated nonenrollees may have actually been enrolled in Jobs-Plus.

## The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

### Appendix Figure B.1

#### Enrollment and Attachment Rates Among All Targeted Residents Aged 21 to 61 Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments in 1998, by Development

*What percentage of targeted residents aged 21 to 61 ever enrolled in Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?*



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted households” refers to households headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

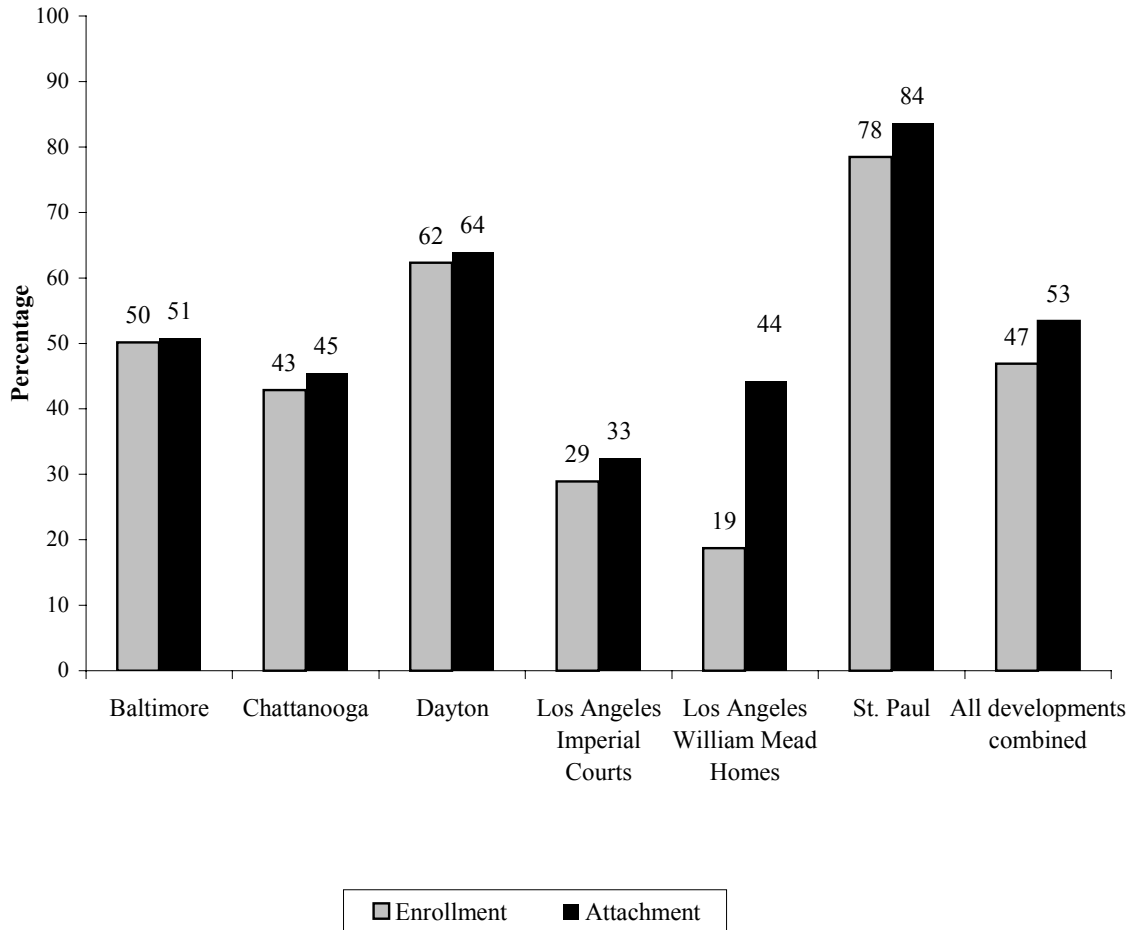
In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.

The Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Appendix Figure B.2

Enrollment and Attachment Rates Among All Household Heads Aged 18 to 61 Living in the Jobs-Plus Developments in 1998, by Development

What percentage of targeted household heads aged 18 to 61 ever enrolled in Jobs-Plus or received its rent incentives by June 2001?



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from MDRC-collected Jobs-Plus case files, Jobs-Plus rent incentives data, and housing authority (50058) records.

NOTES: The term “targeted households” refers to households headed by a nondisabled resident between the ages of 18 and 61. Characteristics are as of the earliest year of residence between 1998 and 2000.

In the average for all developments combined, the results for each housing development are weighted equally.



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## Recent Publications on MDRC Projects

Note: For works not published by MDRC, the publisher's name is shown in parentheses. With a few exceptions, this list includes reports published by MDRC since 1999. A complete publications list is available from MDRC and on its Web site ([www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org)), from which copies of MDRC's publications can also be downloaded.

### Reforming Welfare and Making Work Pay

#### Next Generation Project

A collaboration among researchers at MDRC and several other leading research institutions focused on studying the effects of welfare, antipoverty, and employment policies on children and families.

*How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research.* 2001. Pamela Morris, Aletha Huston, Greg Duncan, Danielle Crosby, Johannes Bos.

*How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Employment and Income: A Synthesis of Research.* 2001. Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos.

*How Welfare and Work Policies for Parents Affect Adolescents: A Synthesis of Research.* 2002. Lisa Gennetian, Greg Duncan, Virginia Knox, Wanda Vargas, Elizabeth Clark-Kauffman, Andrew London.

#### ReWORKing Welfare: Technical Assistance for States and Localities

A multifaceted effort to assist states and localities in designing and implementing their welfare reform programs. The project includes a series of "how-to" guides, conferences, briefings, and customized, in-depth technical assistance.

*After AFDC: Welfare-to-Work Choices and Challenges for States.* 1997. Dan Bloom.

*Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform.* 1997. Amy Brown.

*Business Partnerships: How to Involve Employers in Welfare Reform.* 1998. Amy Brown, Maria Buck, Erik Skinner.

*Promoting Participation: How to Increase Involvement in Welfare-to-Work Activities.* 1999. Gayle Hamilton, Susan Scrivener.

*Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs.* 2000. Gordon Berlin.

*Steady Work and Better Jobs: How to Help Low-Income Parents Sustain Employment and Advance in the Workforce.* 2000. Julie Strawn, Karin Martinson.

*Beyond Work First: How to Help Hard-to-Employ Individuals Get Jobs and Succeed in the Workforce.* 2001. Amy Brown.

#### Project on Devolution and Urban Change

A multiyear study in four major urban counties — Cuyahoga County, Ohio (which includes the city of Cleveland), Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, and Philadelphia — that examines how welfare reforms are being implemented and are affecting poor people, their neighborhoods, and the institutions that serve them.

*Big Cities and Welfare Reform: Early Implementation and Ethnographic Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change.* 1999. Janet Quint, Kathryn Edin, Maria Buck, Barbara Fink, Yolanda Padilla, Olis Simmons-Hewitt, Mary Valmont.

*Food Security and Hunger in Poor, Mother-Headed Families in Four U.S. Cities.* 2000. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

*Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Urban Communities: The Urban Change Project and Methodological Considerations.* 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Johannes Bos, Robert Lalonde, Nandita Verma.

*Post-TANF Food Stamp and Medicaid Benefits: Factors That Aid or Impede Their Receipt.* 2001. Janet Quint, Rebecca Widom.

*Social Service Organizations and Welfare Reform.* 2001. Barbara Fink, Rebecca Widom.

*Monitoring Outcomes for Cuyahoga County's Welfare Leavers: How Are They Faring?* 2001. Nandita Verma, Claudia Coulton.

*The Health of Poor Urban Women: Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change.* 2001. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

*Is Work Enough? The Experiences of Current and Former Welfare Mothers Who Work.* 2001. Denise Polit, Rebecca Widom, Kathryn Edin, Stan Bowie, Andrew London, Ellen Scott, Abel Valenzuela.

*Readying Welfare Recipients for Work: Lessons from Four Big Cities as They Implement Welfare Reform.* 2002. Thomas Brock, Laura Nelson, Megan Reiter.

*Welfare Reform in Cleveland: Implementation, Effects, and Experiences of Poor Families and Neighborhoods.* 2002. Thomas Brock, Claudia Coulton, Andrew London, Denise Polit, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Ellen Scott, Nandita Verma.

*Comparing Outcomes for Los Angeles County's HUD-Assisted and Unassisted CalWORKs Leavers.* 2003. Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

*Monitoring Outcomes for Los Angeles County's Pre- and Post-CalWORKs Leavers: How Are They Faring?* 2003. Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

*Welfare Reform in Philadelphia: Implementation, Effects, and Experiences of Poor Families and Neighborhoods.* 2003. Charles Michalopoulos, Kathryn Edin, Barbara Fink, Mirella Landriscina, Denise Polit, Judy Polyne, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, David Seith, Nandita Verma

### **Wisconsin Works**

This study examines how Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program, one of the first to end welfare as an entitlement, is administered in Milwaukee.

*Complaint Resolution in the Context of Welfare Reform: How W-2 Settles Disputes.* 2001. Suzanne Lynn.

*Exceptions to the Rule: The Implementation of 24-Month Time-Limit Extensions in W-2.* 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle.

*Matching Applicants with Services: Initial Assessments in the Milwaukee County W-2 Program.* 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle, Ben Glispie.

*Community Service Jobs in Wisconsin Works: The Milwaukee County Experience.* 2003. Andrea Robles, Fred Doolittle, Susan Gooden.

### **Employment Retention and Advancement Project**

Conceived and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this demonstration project is aimed at testing various ways to help low-income people find, keep, and advance in jobs.

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

### **Time Limits**

*Welfare Time Limits: State Policies, Implementation, and Effects on Families.* 2002. Dan Bloom, Mary Farrell, Barbara Fink.

*Leavers, Stayers, and Cyclers: An Analysis of the Welfare Caseload.* 2002. Cynthia Miller.

### **Florida's Family Transition Program**

An evaluation of Florida's initial time-limited welfare program, which includes services, requirements, and financial work incentives intended to reduce long-term welfare receipt and help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

*The Family Transition Program: Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program.* 1999. Dan Bloom, Mary Farrell, James Kemple, Nandita Verma.

*The Family Transition Program: Final Report on Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program.* 2000. Dan Bloom, James Kemple, Pamela Morris, Susan Scrivener, Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

### **Cross-State Study of Time-Limited Welfare**

An examination of the implementation of some of the first state-initiated time-limited welfare programs.

*Welfare Time Limits: An Interim Report Card.* 1999. Dan Bloom.

### **Connecticut's Jobs First Program**

An evaluation of Connecticut's statewide time-limited welfare program, which includes financial work incentives and requirements to participate in employment-related services aimed at rapid job placement. This study provides some of the earliest information on the effects of time limits in major urban areas.

*Connecticut Post-Time Limit Tracking Study: Six-Month Survey Results.* 1999. Jo Anna Hunter-Manns, Dan Bloom.

*Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative.* 2000. Dan Bloom, Laura Melton, Charles Michalopoulos, Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

*Connecticut's Jobs First Program: An Analysis of Welfare Leavers.* 2000. Laura Melton, Dan Bloom.

*Final Report on Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative.* 2002. Dan Bloom, Susan Scrivener, Charles Michalopoulos, Pamela Morris, Richard Hendra, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Johanna Walter.

### **Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project**

An evaluation of Vermont's statewide welfare reform program, which includes a work requirement after a certain period of welfare receipt, and financial work incentives.

*Forty-Two-Month Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project.* 1999. Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

*WRP: Key Findings from the Forty-Two-Month Client Survey.* 2000. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

*WRP: Final Report on Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project.* 2002. Susan Scrivener, Richard Hendra, Cindy Redcross, Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter.

### **Financial Incentives**

*Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs.* 2000. Gordon Berlin.

### **Minnesota Family Investment Program**

An evaluation of Minnesota's pilot welfare reform initiative, which aims to encourage work, alleviate poverty, and reduce welfare dependence.

*Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program.* 2000:

*Volume 1: Effects on Adults.* Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox, Lisa Gennetian, Martey Doodoo, Jo Anna Hunter, Cindy Redcross.

*Volume 2: Effects on Children.* Lisa Gennetian, Cynthia Miller.

*Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program.* 2000. Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, Lisa Gennetian.

*Final Report on the Implementation and Impacts of the Minnesota Family Investment Program in Ramsey County.* 2000. Patricia Auspos, Cynthia Miller, Jo Anna Hunter.

### **New Hope Project**

A test of a community-based, work-focused antipoverty program and welfare alternative operating in Milwaukee.

*New Hope for People with Low Incomes: Two-Year Results of a Program to Reduce Poverty and Reform Welfare.* 1999. Johannes Bos, Aletha Huston, Robert Granger, Greg Duncan, Thomas Brock, Vonnie McLoyd.

*New Hope for Families and Children: Five Year Results of a Program to Reduce Poverty and Reform Welfare.* 2003. Aletha Huston, Cynthia Miller, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Greg Duncan, Carolyn Eldred, Thomas Weisner, Edward Lowe, Vonnie McLoyd, Danielle Crosby, Marika Ripke, Cindy Redcross.

### **Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project**

A test of the effectiveness of a temporary earnings supplement on the employment and welfare receipt of public assistance recipients. Reports on the Self-Sufficiency Project are available from: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), 275 Slater St., Suite 900, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9, Canada. Tel.: 613-237-4311; Fax: 613-237-5045. In the United States, the reports are also available from MDRC.

*Does SSP Plus Increase Employment? The Effect of Adding Services to the Self-Sufficiency Project's Financial Incentives* (SRDC). 1999. Gail Quets, Philip Robins, Elsie Pan, Charles Michalopoulos, David Card.

*When Financial Work Incentives Pay for Themselves: Early Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project's Applicant Study* (SRDC). 1999. Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins, David Card.

*The Self-Sufficiency Project at 36 Months: Effects of a Financial Work Incentive on Employment and Income* (SRDC). 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, David Card, Lisa Gennetian, Kristen Harknett, Philip K. Robins.

*The Self-Sufficiency Project at 36 Months: Effects on Children of a Program That Increased Parental Employment and Income* (SRDC). 2000. Pamela Morris, Charles Michalopoulos.

*When Financial Incentives Pay for Themselves: Interim Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project's Applicant Study* (SRDC). 2001. Charles Michalopoulos, Tracey Hoy.

*SSP Plus at 36 Months: Effects of Adding Employment Services to Financial Work Incentives* (SRDC). 2001. Ying Lei, Charles Michalopoulos.

*Making Work Pay: Final Report on the Self-Sufficiency Project for Long-Term Welfare Recipients* (SRDC). 2002. Charles Michalopoulos, Doug Tattre, Cynthia Miller, Philip Robins, Pamela Morris, David Gyarmati, Cindy Redcross, Kelly Foley, Reuben Ford.

### **Mandatory Welfare Employment Programs**

#### **National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies**

Conceived and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), this is the largest-scale evaluation ever conducted of different strategies for moving people from welfare to employment.

*Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies* (HHS/ED). 2000. Gayle Hamilton.

*Evaluating Alternative Welfare-to-Work Approaches: Two-Year Impacts for Eleven Programs* (HHS/ED). 2000. Stephen Freedman, Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton, JoAnn Rock, Marisa Mitchell, Jodi Nudelman, Amanda Schweder, Laura Storto.

*Impacts on Young Children and Their Families Two Years After Enrollment: Findings from the Child Outcomes Study* (HHS/ED). 2000. Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Kristin Moore, Suzanne LeMenestrel.

*What Works Best for Whom: Impacts of 20 Welfare-to-Work Programs by Subgroup* (HHS/ED). 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Christine Schwartz.

*Evaluating Two Approaches to Case Management: Implementation, Participation Patterns, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of the Columbus Welfare-to-Work Program* (HHS/ED). 2001. Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.



*How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs – Executive Summary* (HHS/ED). 2001. Gayle Hamilton, Stephen Freedman, Lisa Gennetian, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Anna Gassman-Pines, Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Surjeet Ahluwalia, Jennifer Brooks.

*Moving People from Welfare to Work: Lessons from the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies* (HHS/ED). 2002. Gayle Hamilton.

*Pursuing Economic Security for Young Adults: Five Year Impacts of Pre-Employment Services in the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies*. 2003. Freedman.

### **Los Angeles's Jobs-First GAIN Program**

An evaluation of Los Angeles's refocused GAIN (welfare-to-work) program, which emphasizes rapid employment. This is the first in-depth study of a full-scale "work first" program in one of the nation's largest urban areas.

*The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: First-Year Findings on Participation Patterns and Impacts*. 1999. Stephen Freedman, Marisa Mitchell, David Navarro.

*The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: Final Report on a Work First Program in a Major Urban Center*. 2000. Stephen Freedman, Jean Knab, Lisa Gennetian, David Navarro.

### **Teen Parents on Welfare**

*Teenage Parent Programs: A Synthesis of the Long-Term Effects of the New Chance Demonstration, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD)*. 1998. Robert Granger, Rachel Cytron.

### **Ohio's LEAP Program**

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

*LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents*. 1997. Johannes Bos, Veronica Fellerath.

### **New Chance Demonstration**

A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

*New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children*. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.

*Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational*

*Study*. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

### **Center for Employment Training Replication**

This study is testing whether the successful results for youth of a training program developed in San Jose can be replicated in 12 other sites around the country.

*Evaluation of the Center for Employment Training Replication Sites: Interim Report* (Berkeley Policy Associates). 2000. Stephen Walsh, Deana Goldsmith, Yasuyo Abe, Andrea Cann.

*Working with Disadvantaged Youth: Thirty-Month Findings from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Training Replication Sites*. 2003. Cynthia Miller, Johannes Bos, Kristin Porter, Fannie Tsend, Fred Doolittle, Deana Tanguay, Mary Vencill.

### **Focusing on Fathers**

#### **Parents' Fair Share Demonstration**

A demonstration for unemployed noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children on welfare. PFS aims to improve the men's employment and earnings, reduce child poverty by increasing child support payments, and assist the fathers in playing a broader constructive role in their children's lives.

*Fathers' Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood* (Russell Sage Foundation). 1999. Earl Johnson, Ann Levine, Fred Doolittle.

*Parenting and Providing: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Paternal Involvement*. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cindy Redcross.

*Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment*. 2000. John M. Martinez, Cynthia Miller.

*The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum*. 2000. Eileen Hayes, with Kay Sherwood.

*The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share*. 2001. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox.

### **Career Advancement and Wage Progression**

#### **Opening Doors to Earning Credentials**

An exploration of strategies for increasing low-wage workers' access to and completion of community college programs.

*Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers*. 2001. Susan Golonka, Lisa Matus-Grossman.

*Welfare Reform and Community Colleges: A Policy and Research Context.* 2002. Thomas Brock, Lisa Matus-Grossman, Gayle Hamilton.

*Opening Doors: Students' Perspectives on Juggling Work, Family, and College.* 2002. Lisa Matus-Grossman, Susan Gooden.

*Opening Doors: Supporting CalWORKs Students at California Community Colleges: An Exploratory Focus Group Study.* 2002. Laura Nelson, Rogéair Purnell.

*Changing Courses: Instructional Innovations That Help Low-Income Students Succeed in Community College.* 2003. Richard Kazis, Marty Liebowitz.

*Money Matters: How Financial Aid Affects Nontraditional Students in Community Colleges.* 2003. Victoria Choitz, Rebecca Widom.

## Education Reform

### Career Academies

The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this study examines a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

*Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships.* 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.

*Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Engagement and Performance in High School.* 2000. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

*Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Initial Transitions to Post-Secondary Education and Employment.* 2001. James Kemple.

### First Things First

This demonstration and research project looks at First Things First, a whole-school reform that combines a variety of best practices aimed at raising achievement and graduation rates in both urban and rural settings.

*Scaling Up First Things First: Site Selection and the Planning Year.* 2002. Janet Quint.

### Closing Achievement Gaps

Conducted for the Council of the Great City Schools, this study identifies districtwide approaches to urban school reform that appear to raise overall student performance while reducing achievement gaps among racial groups.

*Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement.* 2002. Jason Snipes, Fred Doolittle, Corinne Herlihy.

### Project GRAD

This evaluation examines Project GRAD, an education initiative targeted at urban schools and combining a number of proven or promising reforms.

*Building the Foundation for Improved Student Performance: The Pre-Curricular Phase of Project GRAD Newark.* 2000. Sandra Ham, Fred Doolittle, Glee Ivory Holton.

### Accelerated Schools

This study examines the implementation and impacts on achievement of the Accelerated Schools model, a whole-school reform targeted at at-risk students.

*Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach: A Look at Early Implementation and Impacts on Student Achievement in Eight Elementary Schools.* 2001. Howard Bloom, Sandra Ham, Laura Melton, Julienne O'Brien.

### Extended-Service Schools Initiative

Conducted in partnership with Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), this evaluation of after-school programs operated as part of the Extended-Service Schools Initiative examines the programs' implementation, quality, cost, and effects on students.

*Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative (P/PV).* 2002. Jean Baldwin Grossman, Marilyn Price, Veronica Fellerath, Linda Jucovy, Lauren Kotloff, Rebecca Raley, Karen Walker.

### School-to-Work Project

A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or careers.

*Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work* (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

*Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs.* 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

### Project Transition

A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

*Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed.* 1999. Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

### Equity 2000

Equity 2000 is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the College Board to improve low-income students' access to college. The MDRC paper examines the implementation of Equity 2000 in Milwaukee Public Schools.

*Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative in Milwaukee Public Schools.* 1999. Sandra Ham, Erica Walker.

## **Employment and Community Initiatives**

### **Jobs-Plus Initiative**

A multisite effort to greatly increase employment among public housing residents.

*Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work: Origins and Early Accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration.* 1999. James Riccio.

*Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration.* 1999. Howard Bloom.

*Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: An Early Look at Program Implementation.* 2000. Edited by Susan Philipson Bloom with Susan Blank.

*Building New Partnerships for Employment: Collaboration Among Agencies and Public Housing Residents in the Jobs-Plus Demonstration.* 2001. Linda Kato, James Riccio.

*Making Work Pay for Public Housing Residents: Financial-Incentive Designs at Six Jobs-Plus Demonstration Sites.* 2002. Cynthia Miller, James Riccio.

*The Special Challenges of Offering Employment Programs in Culturally Diverse Communities: The Jobs-Plus Experience in Public Housing Developments.* 2002. Linda Kato.

*The Employment Experiences of Public Housing Residents: Findings from the Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey.* 2002. John Martinez.

*Children in Public Housing Developments: An Examination of the Children at the Beginning of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration.* 2002. Pamela Morris, Stephanie Jones.

*Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: Key Features of Mature Employment Programs in Seven Public Housing Communities.* 2003. Linda Kato.

*Staying or Leaving: Lessons from Jobs-Plus About the Mobility of Public Housing Residents and Implications for Place-Based Initiatives.* 2003. Nandita Verma.

### **Neighborhood Jobs Initiative**

An initiative to increase employment in a number of low-income communities.

*The Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: An Early Report on the Vision and Challenges of Bringing an Employment Focus to a Community-Building Initiative.* 2001. Frieda Molina, Laura Nelson.

*Structures of Opportunity: Developing the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative in Fort Worth, Texas.* 2002. Tony Proscio.

*Final Report on the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: Lessons and Implications for Future Community Employment Initiatives.* 2003. Frieda Molina, Craig Howard.

### **Connections to Work Project**

A study of local efforts to increase competition in the choice of providers of employment services for welfare recipients and other low-income populations. The project also provides assistance to cutting-edge local initiatives aimed at helping such people access and secure jobs.

*Designing and Administering a Wage-Paying Community Service Employment Program Under TANF: Some Considerations and Choices.* 1999. Kay Sherwood.

*San Francisco Works: Toward an Employer-Led Approach to Welfare Reform and Workforce Development.* 2000. Steven Bliss.

### **Canada's Earnings Supplement Project**

A test of an innovative financial incentive intended to expedite the reemployment of displaced workers and encourage full-year work by seasonal or part-year workers, thereby also reducing receipt of unemployment insurance.

*Testing a Re-Employment Incentive for Displaced Workers: The Earnings Supplement Project.* 1999. Howard Bloom, Saul Schwartz, Susanna Lui-Gurr, Suk-Won Lee.

## **MDRC Working Papers on Research Methodology**

A series of papers that explore alternative methods of examining the implementation and impacts of programs and policies.

*Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration.* 1999. Howard Bloom.

*Estimating Program Impacts on Student Achievement Using "Short" Interrupted Time Series.* 1999. Howard Bloom.

*Using Cluster Random Assignment to Measure Program Impacts: Statistical Implications for the Evaluation of Education Programs.* 1999. Howard Bloom, Johannes Bos, Suk-Won Lee.

*The Politics of Random Assignment: Implementing Studies and Impacting Policy.* 2000. Judith Gueron.

- Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Urban Communities: The Urban Change Project and Methodological Considerations.* 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Joannes Bos, Robert Lalonde, Nandita Verma.
- Measuring the Impacts of Whole School Reforms: Methodological Lessons from an Evaluation of Accelerated Schools.* 2001. Howard Bloom.
- A Meta-Analysis of Government Sponsored Training Programs.* 2001. David Greenberg, Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins.
- Modeling the Performance of Welfare-to-Work Programs: The Effects of Program Management and Services, Economic Environment, and Client Characteristics.* 2001. Howard Bloom, Carolyn Hill, James Riccio.
- A Regression-Based Strategy for Defining Subgroups in a Social Experiment.* 2001. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.
- Explaining Variation in the Effects of Welfare-to-Work Programs.* 2001. David Greenberg, Robert Meyer, Charles Michalopoulos, Michael Wiseman.
- Extending the Reach of Randomized Social Experiments: New Directions in Evaluations of American Welfare-to-Work and Employment Initiatives.* 2001. James Riccio, Howard Bloom.
- Can Nonexperimental Comparison Group Methods Match the Findings from a Random Assignment Evaluation of Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs?* 2002. Howard Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos, Carolyn Hill, Ying Lei.
- Using Instrumental Variables Analysis to Learn More from Social Policy Experiments.* 2002. Lisa Gennetian, Johannes Bos, Pamela Morris.
- Using Place-Based Random Assignment and Comparative Interrupted Time-Series Analysis to Evaluate the Jobs-Plus Employment Program for Public Housing Residents.* 2002. Howard Bloom, James Riccio
- Intensive Qualitative Research Challenges, Best Uses, and Opportunities.* 2003. Alissa Gardenhire, Laura Nelson
- Exploring the Feasibility and Quality of Matched Neighborhood Research Designs.* 2003. David Seith, Nandita Verma, Howard Bloom, George Galster.



## **About MDRC**

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. We are dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through our research and the active communication of our findings, we seek to enhance the effectiveness of social policies and programs. MDRC was founded in 1974 and is located in New York City and Oakland, California.

MDRC's current projects focus on welfare and economic security, education, and employment and community initiatives. Complementing our evaluations of a wide range of welfare reforms are new studies of supports for the working poor and emerging analyses of how programs affect children's development and their families' well-being. In the field of education, we are testing reforms aimed at improving the performance of public schools, especially in urban areas. Finally, our community projects are using innovative approaches to increase employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Our projects are a mix of demonstrations — field tests of promising program models — and evaluations of government and community initiatives, and we employ a wide range of methods to determine a program's effects, including large-scale studies, surveys, case studies, and ethnographies of individuals and families. We share the findings and lessons from our work — including best practices for program operators — with a broad audience within the policy and practitioner community, as well as the general public and the media.

Over the past quarter century, MDRC has worked in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada. We conduct our projects in partnership with state and local governments, the federal government, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.

