

Service Delivery and Institutional Linkages

Early Implementation Experiences of Employment Retention and Advancement Programs

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Overview

Considerable interest exists among state and local welfare departments, workforce investment agencies, community colleges, and other nonprofit community-based service providers to find ways to promote job retention and advancement among employed welfare recipients and other low-wage working families. Little is known, however, about what services are effective. The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) evaluation, designed to provide more information about what works in this area, is the largest and most comprehensive study of its kind.

Conceived and sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the evaluation is being conducted under contract by MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has provided additional funding for the project. As of December 2002, a total of 15 ERA programs are being tested in 8 states. This report describes the initial experiences of those programs, focusing on implementation issues and institutional connections.

Key Findings

- **Increasing participation in postemployment services.** Based on early program assessments, the ERA sites have been fairly successful in contacting and initially engaging participants. Most sites have been able to generate at least one postemployment contact with 70 percent to 80 percent of the people assigned to the ERA program. Encouraging participation in ongoing program activities, however, has been more difficult: In many of the sites, less than half of the employed program group members participated in ongoing activities. To encourage participation, many sites designed creative marketing strategies, and some use financial and in-kind incentives.
- **Restructuring retention and advancement services.** Because the programs that are designed to increase retention and advancement are so new, staff have found the early phase of the ERA project to be a learning experience; they must understand how to work with participants in a postemployment context. To achieve this, sites have had to create new tools and restructure services. Some have created interview guides and checklists to uncover retention-related issues and explore advancement and training opportunities. Others have trained staff in ways of working with participants (and, in particular, in ways of working with them on advancement issues).
- **Creating institutional linkages.** Most of the ERA programs use relatively complex organizational arrangements to deliver services. Typically, the programs represent partnerships among several agencies and organizations, including welfare agencies, workforce investment agencies, nonprofit community-based organizations, community colleges, and others; however, at each site, the welfare agency usually takes on the lead organizing role. Rather than forge new relationships for ERA, most programs created partnerships by building on the linkages they had already established for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. A key factor in involving the workforce investment system in the ERA program (a linkage that occurred in some sites but not all) is that coordination between workforce investment agencies and welfare agencies is largely driven by funding that flows from the TANF system to the workforce investment system for the purpose of serving welfare recipients or working individuals.

Each ERA program is being evaluated using a research design that assigns people, by chance, either to a program group that receives the new services or to a counterfactual group that receives the services that were available before ERA was developed. MDRC will follow the two groups for three to five years and will produce both site-specific and crosscutting reports that describe the programs and assess their effects.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 1.2

Target Populations and Service Strategies

State	Location	Target Group	Primary Service Strategies
Advancement Projects			
Illinois	Cook County (Chicago) and St. Clair County (East St. Louis)	Welfare recipients who have worked at least 30 hours per week for at least six consecutive months.	Combination of services, with customized incentive programs, that promote career advancement (targeted job search assistance, education and training, assistance in identifying and accessing career ladders, etc.).
California	Riverside County Phase 2	Newly employed welfare recipients working at least 20 hours per week.	Test of two ERA programs to promote participation in education and training activities in combination with employment: The Work Plus group requires that participants work at least 20 hours per week, and the Training Focused group is not subject to a specific work requirement.
Placement and Retention (Hard-to-Employ) Projects			
Minnesota	Hennepin County (Minneapolis)	Long-term welfare recipients who were unable to find jobs through standard welfare-to-work services.	In-depth family assessment; low case loads; intensive monitoring and follow-up; emphasis on placement into unsubsidized employment or supported work with referrals to education and training, counseling, and other support services.
Oregon	Portland	Individuals who are cycling back onto welfare and those who have lost jobs.	Team-based case management; job search/job readiness components; post-employment follow-up services; mental health and substance abuse services for those identified with these barriers; supportive and emergency services.
New York	New York City PRIDE (Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment)	Welfare recipients whose employability is limited by physical or mental health problems.	Two main tracks: 1) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), where clients meeting state/federal eligibility requirements receive unpaid work experience, job search/job placement services, and retention services tailored to account for medical problems; 2) Work Based Education, where those who do not meet VR eligibility requirements participate in unpaid work experience, job placement services, and adult basic education.
New York	New York City SACM (Substance Abuse Case Management)	Welfare recipients with a substance abuse problem.	Intensive case management to promote participation in substance abuse treatment, links to mental health and other needed services.

(continued)

Table 1.2 (continued)

State	Location	Target Group	Primary Service Strategies
Projects with Mixed Goals			
California	Los Angeles County EJC (Enhanced Job Club)	Welfare recipients who have been referred to job club.	Job search workshops promoting a step-down method designed to help participants find a job that pays a “living wage” or has advancement opportunities.
California	Los Angeles County RFS (Reach for Success)	Newly employed welfare recipients working at least 32 hours per week.	Stabilization/retention services, followed by a combination of services to promote advancement: education and training, career assessment, targeted job development, etc.
California	Riverside County PASS (Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency)	Individuals who leave welfare with employment or who become employed within the 12 months following the termination of cash assistance.	Intensive, family-based support services delivered by community-based organizations to promote retention and advancement.
Ohio	Cleveland	Entry-level low-wage workers with specific employers making under 200% of the poverty line who have been in their current jobs less than 6 months.	Regular on-site office hours for counseling/case management and access to supportive services; Lunch & Learn meetings for social support and presentations; newsletter for workers and employers; and Supervisory Training for employer supervisors.
Oregon	Medford	Employed former welfare and food stamp recipients.	Individualized services which are delivered by case managers and career counselors, including stabilization/retention services; combination of services to increase enrollment in education and training and to promote advancement through “work-based” strategies.
Oregon	Eugene	Employed current and former welfare recipients.	Same as Medford.
Oregon	Salem	Welfare applicants.	Pre-employment: job search assistance combined with career planning. Post-employment: education and training; employer linkages to promote retention and advancement.
South Carolina	6 rural counties in Pee Dee Region	Individuals who left welfare (for any reason) between October 1997 and December 2000.	Individualized services delivered by case managers, including reemployment and support services; advancement services including job search, career counseling, and education and training; and individualized incentives used to encourage program participation, retention, and advancement.
Texas	Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston	Welfare applicants and recipients.	Individualized team-based case management; monthly stipends of \$200 for those who maintain employment and complete activities related to employment retention and advancement plan.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3.1

Institutional Structure of ERA Programs

State	Location/Program	Lead Agency at Local Level	Organization(s) Under Contract for Program Services	ERA Program Colocated at One-Stop?	Welfare and Employment Service Provider Staff Colocated?
California	Los Angeles EJC	Welfare agency	County Office of Education	No	No
	Los Angeles RFS	Welfare agency	None	No	No
	Riverside Phase 2:	Welfare agency	Workforce agency	Yes	No
	Training Business Group	None	None	No	No
	Riverside PASS	Welfare agency	Nonprofit agencies and community college	No	No
Illinois	Cook County	Welfare agency	For-profit agency	Yes (at one office)	No
	St. Clair County	Welfare agency	Nonprofit and for-profit agencies	No	No
Minnesota	Minneapolis	Workforce agency	Nonprofit agencies	Yes (at one provider)	Yes (at two providers)
	New York PRIDE	Welfare agency	Nonprofit agencies; Vocational Rehabilitation agency is program partner	No	No
Ohio	New York SACM	Welfare agency	Nonprofit agencies	No	No
	Cleveland	Nonprofit agency	None	No	No
	Eugene	Welfare agency	Community college	No	Yes
	Medford	Workforce agency	Workforce agency	Yes	Yes
Oregon	Portland	Joint: welfare and community college	Community colleges	Yes (at one office)	Yes
	Salem	Joint: welfare and workforce agency	Community college	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	Pee Dee Region	Welfare agency	None	No	No
Texas	Corpus Christi	Workforce agency	Nonprofit agency	Yes	Yes
	Fort Worth	Workforce agency	Nonprofit agency	Yes	Yes
	Houston	Workforce agency	Nonprofit agency	Yes	Yes

Appendix A

Descriptions of the ERA Programs

Appendix B

ERA Program Marketing Materials

To ensure that we are flexible in meeting your needs, E&ES has offices at the following Chicagoland locations:

Southwest (Daley) One Stop
7500 South Pulaski Road
Bldg. 100
Chicago, IL 60652
(773) 884-7000

Mid-South One Stop
715 East 47th Street
Chicago, IL 60653
(773) 538-5627

Hazel Crest Career
Center
17575 S. Kedzie
Hazel Crest, IL 60429
(708) 206-2318

Westside One Stop
3500 West Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL 60651
(773) 227-0319

Adams Career Center
200 West Adams
Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 629-5627

Cicero/Berwyn One Stop
2138 S. 61st Street
Suite 301
Cicero, IL 60804
(708) 222-3100

Trying to get ahead in the income and career race?



With one visit, you can be on the *fast track* to a higher-paying job—and walk out with a **\$50 Jewel gift certificate.**

**With one visit, you can improve the quality of your life!
You have nothing to lose and much to gain!!**

How can you earn more money and get a better job?

EASY! You have been selected by the State to work with Employment & Employer Services, Inc. (E&ES) to make this happen!

E&ES is a Chicago company in business for 21 years specializing in getting people **BETTER JOBS** that pay **MORE MONEY!**

So what's next?

E&ES will contact you to schedule a convenient time to meet and develop an acceptable plan to get you a better job that pays more money and offers better benefits.

At the meeting, you will be introduced to a professional Career and Income Advisor who has helped hundreds of people like yourself to increase their earnings and obtain a better job.

All active participants will receive additional bonuses!

Jewel Gift Certificates
Clothing Allowances for Job Interviews
Transportation Reimbursements
Bus Passes

E&ES is dedicated to working with you because of the following reasons:

Why...

E&ES believes that employment and career growth are the foundations for stability of the individual, family, and community.

What we have done...

Helped 42,000 Chicago-land workers in the past 20 years find new or better jobs.

How we did it...

Every day, over 2,600 Chicagoland employers use E&ES to fill their job openings.

This service is provided at NO COST to you!



IMPROVE YOUR INCOME

- Getting a Job –
- Keeping a Job –
- Getting a Better Job



MOVING UP CAREER CONSULTANTS

RICHARD CRUMMY, Chesterfield County
P.O. Box 269, Chesterfield, SC 29709
Telephone: 843/623-5236
Cell Phone: 843/861-2357

JOHN L. GRAHAM, Darlington County
P.O. Drawer 1377, Hartsville, SC 29551
Telephone: 843/332-2231
Cell Phone: 843/307-0712

LYNN BARNHILL, Darlington County
P.O. Drawer 1377, Hartsville, SC 29551
Telephone: 843/332-2231
Cell Phone: 843/307-0592

LARONNA FAULK, Dillon County
P.O. Box 1307, Dillon, SC 29536
Telephone: 843/774-8284 Ext. 156
Cell Phone: 843/845-0883

DEBRA GHEE, Florence County
2685 S. Irby Street, Box A
Florence, SC 29505
Telephone: 843/669-3354 Ext. 309
Cell Phone: 843/616-0595

EDELL JOHNSON, Florence County
2685 S. Irby Street, Box A
Florence, SC 29505
Telephone: 843/669-3354 Ext. 308
Cell Phone: 843/616-0790

JERYL Y. ANDERSON, Florence County
345 S. Ron McNair Boulevard
Lake City, SC 29560
Telephone: 843/394-8575 Ext. 105
Cell Phone: 843/616-0470

TARA MCKENZIE, Florence County
345 S. Ron McNair Boulevard
Lake City, SC 29560
Telephone: 843/394-8575 Ext. 101
Cell Phone: 843/616-0852

DEBORAH MARTIN, Marion County
137 Airport Court/Suite A, Mullins, SC 29574
Telephone: 843/423-4623 Ext. 128
Cell Phone: 843/430-0390

LIZ T. STUBBS, Marlboro County
P.O. Drawer 120, Bennettsville, SC 29512
Telephone: 843/479-4389
Cell Phone: 843/439-0463

Appendix C

**ERA Program Interview Guides
and Assessment Tools**

CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN



No one can feel okay at work if they have problems with their child care. It is important to take care of your childcare problems as quickly as possible, to help you keep your job.

1. Can you depend on your childcare provider? Yes No
2. Are you happy with your childcare provider?..... Yes No
3. Does your child(ren) get along with your childcare provider? Yes No
4. Has your childcare provider been approved by the State?..... Yes No
5. Do you have back-up care if your provider cannot watch your children?..... Yes No

If yes... **Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

6. Do you have a back-up plan for childcare if your child(ren) is ill? Yes No
7. Do you have a plan for childcare when their school is closed? Yes No
8. Are there any other problems with your childcare? Yes No

9. Would you like information about parenting resources in the community? Yes No

10. Other: _____

PROGRESS ACTION PLAN

Step #	Action to Resolve Concern/Issue	Who?	Referrals	Start Date	End Date
1					
2					
3					
4					

Signature

Date

Income Improvement Specialist or
Career Development Specialist

Date

Plan Completed
 Certificate Received

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Progress wants to give you the help you need to do well at your job. Answering the questions below will help us work with you to make your job a success. If you are ever having a hard time at work, please call us right away.

1. Do you like your job?..... Yes No
If no, why? _____
2. Do you get along with your employer or supervisor?..... Yes No
If no, why? _____
3. Do you get along with your co-workers?..... Yes No
If no, why? _____
4. Is there a part of your job that you are having problems with?..... Yes No
If yes, what? _____
What can you do about these problems? _____
How do you think we can help you with these problems? _____
5. Do you need training to help you do better or get ahead at your job? Yes No
If yes, what? _____
6. Are there items such as equipment, special clothing, etc. that you need for your job? Yes No
If yes, what? _____

PROGRESS ACTION PLAN

Step #	Action to Resolve Concern/Issue	Who?	Referrals	Start Date	End Date
1					
2					
3					
4					

Signature

Date

Income Improvement Specialist or
Career Development Specialist

Date

<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate Received
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HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



1. Do you or a member of your family have emotional problems? Yes No
- Depression? Yes No
- Anxiety? Yes No
- Parenting? Yes No
- Anger management? Yes No
- Other: _____

2. Do you or a member of your family have problems with addiction? Yes No
- Alcohol? Yes No
- Drugs? Yes No
- Smoking? Yes No
- Gambling? Yes No
- Other: _____

3. Are you or a family member seeing a counselor or in treatment? Yes No

PROGRESS ACTION PLAN

Step #	Action to Resolve Concern/Issue	Who?	Referrals	Start Date	End Date
1					
2					
3					
4					

Signature

Date

Income Improvement Specialist or
Career Development Specialist

Date

<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate Received
--

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Having stable housing is a key factor in being able to retain your job and to improve your position in employment. The following questionnaire will allow us to gain information in order to help you evaluate your housing needs and concerns.

1. How much are your rent/house payments? \$ _____

2. Are you in any kind of subsidized housing program?..... Yes No

(HACSA, HUD, St. Vincent de Paul, etc.)

3. Are you satisfied with your current housing situation? Yes No

4. How much is your average winter utility bill?..... \$ _____

5. Is your home weatherized?..... Yes No

6. Have you applied for LIEAP or Reach programs in the past? Yes No

7 Other: _____

PROGRESS ACTION PLAN

Step #	Action to Resolve Concern/Issue	Who?	Referrals	Start Date	End Date
1					
2					
3					
4					

Signature

Date

Income Improvement Specialist or
Career Development Specialist

Date

<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Completed <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate Received
--

Program	Branch	Case Name	Case Number	Worker
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INCOME IMPROVEMENT PLAN

<u>Name:</u>	Social Security No.	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<u>Home Phone:</u>
<u>Address:</u>	<u>City:</u>	<u>Zip Code:</u>	Work Phone:

Job/Life Goals: _____

ACTIVITIES: WHAT, WHEN, AND WHERE		Begin Date	End Date
1	Childcare (reg., back-up, and sick childcare)		
2	Transportation (establish reliable transportation)		
3	Medical		
4	Safety/DV		
5	Family/Mental Health/Drug and Alcohol		
6	Finance/Budget/ W-5		
7	Housing		
8	Legal		
RETENTION			
9	Employment Improvement Issues Basic Things to Know About Your Job		
10	Work Attitude, Ethics and Habits		
11	Job Retention Questionnaire		
12	Other <input type="checkbox"/> WFN Classes <input type="checkbox"/> Better Employee Classes <input type="checkbox"/>		

