The Employment Retention
and Advancement Project

Impacts for Portland's Career Builders Program

Gilda Azurdia
Zakia Barnes

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About the Employment Retention and Advancement Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acknowledgments

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

For the evaluation of the Portland, Oregon, ERA program, the following individuals deserve special thanks: Ron Taylor of the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS); Kim Freeman, Steps to Success program director at Mount Hood Community College; Pamela Murray, Steps to Success program director at Portland Community College; Linda Montgomery, DHS assistant director for the district; and Karen Frackowiak, Jeanne Kotsakis, Jerry Burns, and Michael Buckley of DHS.

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

The Authors

Overview

This paper and accompanying tables present the implementation results and two-year impacts on employment, earnings, and public assistance receipt for the Career Builders program in Portland, Oregon. Using a team-based case management approach, Career Builders intended to remove employment barriers and assist with job placement and employment retention and advancement for a particular group: applicants and recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who had a break in employment or received TANF in the two years prior to study entry. The program was run from two district offices of the Oregon Department of Human Services ("North" and "East" offices) in collaboration with two community colleges (Mount Hood Community College [MHCC] and Portland Community College [PCC]).

Key Findings

Career Builders was faced with many challenges that prevented it from being implemented as intended. Due to lack of funds and support from administrators and some staff, key features of the program model — in particular, the provision of postemployment services — were not implemented. As a result, the Career Builders program provided services very similar to those of the regular TANF program. Given that the program was not implemented as intended, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and MDRC jointly decided that the study of Career Builders would not provide a fair test of the program model that DHS attempted to implement. Therefore, the study ended only nine months after random assignment began. Not surprisingly, the impact results show that the program did not have any effects on employment, earnings, or receipt of public assistance.

The evaluation of Career Builders is part of the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project, an evaluation of 16 innovative models in eight states. ERA is a rigorous, long-term, multisite evaluation of program approaches that are designed to help current or former TANF recipients or other low-income families retain and advance in employment. The ERA evaluation was conceived and funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and supplemental support has been provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. (Appendix Table A.1 describes the 16 ERA models and their sites, target groups, and service strategies.)

The Portland ERA Model

The Portland Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, which operated between early 1993 and mid-1996, was successful in producing large increases in employ-

ment and earnings, and it also resulted in large reductions in welfare receipt for a broad cross-section of the welfare caseload, compared with no mandatory welfare-to-work program.[1] As a result of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, states and localities redesigned their welfare-to-work programs. Although Portland transformed its JOBS program in response to the federal legislation, it also kept some of the key features of JOBS. The redesigned TANF program was called "Steps to Success."

The Portland ERA model (the Career Builders program) originated from the interest of Oregon DHS administrators in improving the services provided by Steps to Success, Portland's regular TANF program, to a population that struggles with employment stability and self-sufficiency, specifically those who cycled on and off TANF ("cyclers"). Steps to Success provided educational and training programs that clients pursued on their own, employment services such as job search assistance, and any benefits (such as TANF and food stamps) for which individuals qualified. Regular TANF participants were assigned a case manager and were given a standard Pre-employment Development Plan (PDP), which outlined their welfare-to-work activities. Once a client found a job, very little follow-up was done. Furthermore, no retention services and limited advancement services were provided.[2]

During the planning phase for the Career Builders program, DHS implemented a survey to better understand the barriers and personal issues that cyclers faced in comparison with the larger TANF population, and the survey results assisted in the development of the Career Builders program. The program was operated jointly by Oregon DHS, Mount Hood Community College (MHCC), and Portland Community College (PCC) in two districts: (1) "North," or the Albina area of the city; and (2) "East," which includes both the East Portland and the Gresham areas.

The Career Builders model had a holistic approach to program services. Contrary to the then-current TANF program, which focused mainly on moving people from welfare to work, Career Builders was to focus on addressing family and personal issues that may have been preventing the clients from finding or keeping a job and on assisting clients after employment was attained. The Career Builders program model was designed to have the key components described below, which differentiated it from the regular TANF program.

[1]Hamilton et al. (2001).

[2]Applicants were required to do a 45-day job search before they were entitled to receive benefits. Some applicants who did not find jobs during this period were placed in Jobs Plus, which provided subsidized work experience. Clients who were placed in this program often found unsubsidized jobs.

Enhanced Screening and Assessment Tools

During the early phase of the program, DHS sought to improve on the upfront assessment process and the subsequent services that were available to those identified as having significant barriers to employment. Whereas the regular TANF program relied heavily on clients' self-reports to identify employment barriers, the Career Builders program was instead to use enhanced assessment and screening tools to identify barriers to employment, such as mental health and substance abuse issues. By using these tools, it was believed that, compared with the regular TANF program, a larger percentage of sample members with barriers would be identified.

Once enrolled in the Career Builders programs, clients were assessed in a two-week class for three-hour daily sessions. In addition to identifying barriers, this class was designed to help clients better understand their job skills and strengths and discover potential career paths, given their strengths and interests. This class was also designed to help people better understand why they had not succeeded in their past jobs and to find future employment that was a better fit for them.

Team-Based Case Management

Another key component of the Career Builders model was the use of a team-based case management strategy. By having a group of specialized staff assigned to one case, it was thought that services would be better tailored to each client. In addition to a case manager, each participant would be assigned an employment specialist, a mental health specialist, and a community resource staff. Furthermore, in order to allow for in-depth interaction with clients, each case manager would carry a reduced caseload.

Direct Referrals to Education and Training Programs

Given the close ties to the community colleges, Career Builders was expected to increase the number of people who received education and training. Unlike regular TANF clients, who would look for these types of services on their own, Career Builders was intended to be proactive in providing direct referrals to education and training programs.

Peer Support Classes

Throughout the program, ongoing peer support classes were also to be available. These classes were designed to assist clients through each phase of the program. They were also intended to encourage networking among other peers and dealing with ongoing issues related to family and work.

Employment Advancement and Retention Services

Once clients were ready to enter the job market, they were to be referred to an employment specialist. The employment specialist was to discuss long-term career plans and strategies with clients and incorporate them into a client's Employment Development Plan. The employment specialist was to develop a career and wage progression plan for the clients, as well as help them advance in the labor market. Furthermore, Career Builders staff were to contact employed clients to discuss any problems that might prevent them from keeping a job.

The Portland ERA Evaluation

The Research Design

As in the other ERA sites, MDRC used a random assignment research design to assess the effectiveness of the Portland program. As previously noted, the Career Builders program targeted TANF applicants and ongoing recipients who had a break in employment or received public assistance during the two years preceding their TANF grant determination. Program participation was mandatory. Study participants were assigned, at random, to one of two groups:

- **ERA group.** Individuals in this group were referred to the Career Builders program, which was to provide services, including: team-based case management, an enhanced assessment, direct referrals to education and training, and retention and advancement services.

- **Control group.** Individuals in this group were referred to the regular TANF program, which provided services including: case management, job placement assistance, and educational referrals. Clients assigned to the regular TANF program were not eligible for Career Builders' services.

The Random Assignment Process

The random assignment process differed depending on whether an individual was a TANF recipient or applicant.

- **Recipients.** Each month, the Central DHS Office staff would send a list to a random assignment clerk in the North and the East branch offices, naming the TANF recipients who had previously received TANF or lost a job within

the last two years and needed redetermination of their TANF eligibility.[3] Once the clerk determined that a person was eligible to participate in the study, a standard redetermination interview was scheduled for each client.[4] When the person showed up to the interview and was determined eligible to continue to receive TANF, she was given another appointment for random assignment.[5] If the client returned for the additional appointment, the random assignment clerk would then randomly assign the client.

- **Applicants.** All TANF applicants in Portland were required to attend an assessment and to search for jobs for 45 days in order to obtain cash assistance. DHS case managers screened applicants who had made it through the 45-day assessment program without finding a job, and they referred any client who was ready to transition to TANF to the random assignment clerk. Using the same eligibility criteria as for recipients, the clerk would then randomly assign the client.

Random assignment began on May 31, 2002, and ended on February 26, 2003. Given the likely difficulty of engaging hard-to-employ individuals and the importance of subgroup analyses, the desired target sample was 2,000 enrollees. However, throughout program operation, staff struggled to enroll people into the study.[6] At the end of random assignment, a total of only 634 single parents were randomly assigned: 318 to the Career Builders (ERA) group and 316 to the regular TANF (control) group.

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[3]Shortly after random assignment began, the Central Office provided a list of those clients who were up for a redetermination, sorted according to those who had or had not had a break in TANF over the past two years. The random assignment clerk would then exclude those who had not had a break in employment during the past year.

[4]The random assignment clerk also excluded the following groups of people from the eligible participant pool: no-parent households, ineligible noncitizens, non-English-speaking adults, recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), incapacitated adults, clients already randomly assigned or sharing a case with someone who was previously randomly assigned, and clients already assigned to a special project.

[5]Random assignment was intended to occur during the redetermination interview. However, due to staffing issues, random assignment was delayed to a subsequent appointment to conserve the time of case managers during the redetermination interviews.

[6]The program struggled to meet the targeted sample size for various reasons: the eligible recipient pool diminished over time (redetermination was performed every six months), and many recipients did not show up for their random assignment appointment. Furthermore, the eligible pool of applicants was small. Not enrolling enough people into the study was an issue of great concern, since the effects of the program would have been difficult to detect with small sample sizes unless the program's effects were very large.

The Portland ERA Sample

Table 1 shows selected background characteristics of the research sample at the time of random assignment, that is, at baseline. As shown, the large majority of sample members are female and were single parents when they entered the study. The majority had a child under the age of 6, which suggests that they had ongoing child care needs. The average age of sample members was 30 years, and about half of them are either black or Hispanic. Although the Career Builders program attempted to target a disadvantaged group of people, the sample members are less disadvantaged than other welfare populations. For instance, only about half of them received cash assistance for two years or more prior to random assignment, and two-thirds had a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. The study may have resulted in a relatively better-off sample because those individuals who were in the midst of a long jobless and TANF receipt spell (typically a very disadvantaged population) were not eligible to participate in the study.

Program Implementation

In order to interpret the impacts of Portland's Career Builders program on employment and other outcomes, this section examines the program implementation results. Although the program provided preemployment services, the major distinction between the Career Builders program and the regular TANF program was intended to be the postemployment services provided by Career Builders. For this reason, this section mainly focuses on the implementation of Career Builders' postemployment services. From the start, Portland struggled to implement the program model as it was intended, for reasons detailed below.

- Career Builders case managers were intended to have low caseloads to permit intensive monitoring of clients and the provision of additional services — features that the regular TANF program did not provide. However, because of budget cuts and a hiring freeze in Oregon, case managers in the regular TANF program were extremely understaffed. In exchange for smaller caseloads, Career Builders case managers agreed to perform all the redetermination interviews for the program, including those for clients who were not eligible for random assignment. As a result, ultimately, these additional responsibilities made staff unable to focus on providing postemployment services.

- The Career Builders staff in the North district office were additionally overburdened because non-ERA cases were not transferred to other DHS staff as expected. Career Builders staff there were supposed to transfer their previous caseloads to other staff in order to keep their caseloads small and to focus on providing services to those who were randomly assigned. The North office

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Table 1

Selected Characteristics of Single-Parent Families at Baseline

Portland Career Builders

Characteristic	Total
Gender (%)	
Female	95.7
U.S. citizenship (%)	99.1
English as primary language (%)	98.9
Race/ethnicity (%)	
Hispanic	7.2
Black	39.4
White	42.7
Other	10.7
Age group (%)	
30 years or less	56.2
31 to 40 years	30.3
41 or older	13.6
Average age (years)	30.4
Number of children in household (%)	
1	41.6
2	27.9
3 or more	30.4
Age of youngest child (%)	
2 years and under	45.3
3 to 5 years	21.6
6 years and over	33.1
No high school diploma or GED (%)	34.1
Housing status (%)	
Rents unsubsidized	46.7
Rents public/subsidized	44.3
Other[a]	9.0
Received AFDC/TANF for 2 or more years prior to random assignment (%)	45.0
Ever employed in year prior to random assignment (%)	53.5
Ever employed in quarter prior to random assignment (%)	26.5
Months employed in past 3 years (%)	
Did not work	13.7
Less than 12 months	47.9
12 months or more	38.4
Sample size (total = 634)	

(continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Oregon baseline information form.

NOTES: Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences. This table shows results for sample members randomly assigned from May 31, 2002, to February 26, 2003.

Table 1 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Oregon baseline information form.

NOTES: Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences. This table shows results for sample members randomly assigned from May 31, 2002, to February 26, 2003.

[a]The category "Other" includes living with friends or relatives, owning a home or apartment, or living in emergency housing or temporary housing.

staff, however, had to keep working with their former cases in addition to working with the new ERA cases.

- The two branches' program messages and service delivery differed. While the North office staff focused on barrier removal, the East office staff focused on vocational training placements. Most important, however, was that some program staff did not embrace the Career Builders program ideology, which made it difficult to implement the program.

- Facing budget cuts, DHS administrators did not provide the level of resources adequate to run the Career Builders program as planned. Soon after random assignment began, administrators decided that only minimal post-employment services were to be provided. This was a major concern for the ERA evaluation, since these types of services were the key component that differentiated Career Builders from the regular TANF program.

It was clear early on that the differences between the program and control groups would not be attained because of the difficulties the offices encountered in implementing the Career Builders program model. According to the six-month assessment, although many Career Builders group members attended and completed the upfront two-week class and although the Career Builder's team had more intensive contact with clients, very few sample members were receiving other types of services. Compared with individuals in the control group (that is, the regular TANF program), more Career Builders participants completed personal development plans, personal and career assessments, and received supportive services. Surprisingly, control group participants were more likely than those in the Career Builders program to be in employment-related components like job search and short-term training. Given the Career Builders program's focus on skill development and closer connections to the community colleges, it was surprising that fewer clients in the Career Builders group were participating in training. Furthermore, only a few Career Builders' participants had received retention and advancement services from either district office.

Economic Effects

The first column in Table 2 shows the average value for each outcome for the Career Builders (or ERA) group in Portland, and the second column shows the average value for the regular TANF (or control) group for each of the two years of the study's follow-up period (that is, Quarters 2 through 9).[7] The third column in the table shows the effects, or "impacts," of the ERA program. These are calculated as the differences in average outcomes between the ERA group and the control group.[8] The fourth column shows the statistical significance values, or p-values.[9] Since random assignment ensures that there are no systematic differences between the ERA and control groups — other than exposure to the program being studied — any differences in outcomes after random assignment can be attributed to the Career Builders program intervention.

The control group outcomes represent the results from the regular TANF program. As shown, control group members did not work consistently during the follow up period. During Years 1 and 2, 64 percent of control group members worked in a job that was covered by unemployment insurance (UI), but only 29 percent were employed for four consecutive quarters.[10] Earnings for this group were also low; only 11 percent of the control group members earned over $10,000 in Year 1.

The Career Builders program had no effect on employment and earnings during the follow-up period. Approximately 59 percent of the ERA program group found employment during the two-year follow-up period, compared with 64 percent of the control group. ERA program group members earned $6,335 over the follow-up period, similar to the control group's average earnings of $6,204.

Table 3 shows the impacts on public assistance and measured income. As shown, many control group members left TANF over time. Nearly all control group members received TANF at the time of random assignment, but, in the second year of follow-up, only

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[7]"Quarter 1" refers to the quarter in which random assignment occurred.

[8]The impacts are estimated in a regression framework, which also controls for a range of background characteristics, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, number of children, month of random assignment, prior public assistance receipt, prior earnings, and prior employment. These regression-adjusted impact estimates control for the very small residual measured differences in sample members' pre-random assignment characteristics that were not eliminated by random assignment. This helps to improve the precision of the impact estimates.

[9]Statistical significance is used to assess whether a difference can be confidently attributed to the program. In this report's results, an effect is said to be statistically significant at the 10 percent level if there is less than a 10 percent chance that the estimated effect could have stemmed from a program that had no real effect. Statistical significance is also presented at the 5 percent and the 1 percent levels.

[10]Note that "off-the-books" jobs or unpaid work are not captured by the UI system. Other jobs not covered by the UI system include federal, out-of-state, and military jobs and self-employment.

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Table 2

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment and Earnings

Portland Career Builders

Outcome	Career Builders Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Years 1-2				
Ever employed (%)	58.8	64.2	-5.4	0.136
Average quarterly employment (%)	30.8	32.9	-2.1	0.421
Number of quarters employed	2.5	2.6	-0.2	0.421
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	27.4	28.8	-1.4	0.687
Total earnings ($)	6,335	6,204	131	0.867
Earned over $20,000 (%)	11.4	10.3	1.1	0.637
Average quarterly full-time employment (%)	5.9	6.2	-0.4	0.760
Average hourly wage ($)	5.46	5.48	-0.02	0.958
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	0.3	0.7	-0.4	0.478
$5.00-$6.99	5.4	5.4	-0.1	0.973
$7.00-$8.99	31.2	36.9	-5.7	0.134
$9.00 or more	21.7	20.6	1.0	0.744
Year 1				
Ever employed (%)	45.8	49.8	-4.0	0.286
Average quarterly employment (%)	29.8	31.4	-1.6	0.563
Number of quarters employed	1.2	1.3	-0.1	0.563
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	13.7	16.6	-3.0	0.281
Total earnings ($)	2,759	2,762	-2	0.995
Earned over $10,000 (%)	9.1	10.8	-1.7	0.452
Average quarterly full-time employment (%)	4.7	5.3	-0.6	0.624
Average hourly wage ($)	4.07	4.20	-0.14	0.713
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.510
$5.00-$6.99	6.4	8.5	-2.1	0.330
$7.00-$8.99	23.0	24.6	-1.6	0.641
$9.00 or more	14.8	16.0	-1.2	0.681

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Outcome	Career Builders Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Year 2				
Ever employed (%)	46.3	51.5	-5.2	0.183
Average quarterly employment (%)	31.8	34.3	-2.5	0.412
Number of quarters employed	1.3	1.4	-0.1	0.412
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)	17.7	18.2	-0.5	0.871
Total earnings ($)	3,576	3,443	133	0.781
Earned over $10,000 (%)	13.8	13.0	0.8	0.773
Average quarterly full-time employment (%)	7.0	7.2	-0.1	0.937
Average hourly wage ($)	4.38	4.51	-0.13	0.732
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	0.3	1.0	-0.7	0.258
$5.00-$6.99	3.6	5.0	-1.3	0.423
$7.00-$8.99	24.3	26.3	-1.9	0.582
$9.00 or more	18.0	18.6	-0.6	0.846
Sample size (total = 634)	318	316		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Oregon Employment Development Department unemployment insurance (UI) records.

NOTES: This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Oregon unemployment insurance (UI) program. It does not include employment outside Oregon or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs, some agricultural jobs, and federal government jobs).

59 percent received TANF. Most of the control group members received food stamps throughout the follow-up period.

Individuals in the Career Builders group were just as likely to receive TANF and food stamps as control group members during Years 1 and 2. As expected, the program also had little effect on income, when income from UI earnings, TANF, and food stamps was considered.

Conclusion

The Career Builders program model was designed to build on the services provided by the regular TANF program. Although the Career Builders and the regular TANF programs provided certain similar services, the Career Builders model had key planned features, such as the team-case management strategy and the retention and advancement ser-

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Table 3

Impacts on Public Assistance and Measured Income

Portland Career Builders

Outcome	Career Builders Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Years 1-2				
Ever received TANF (%)	94.2	94.2	0.0	0.988
Amount of TANF received ($)	7,102	6,646	457	0.182
Number of months receiving TANF	14.1	13.5	1	0.308
Ever received food stamps (%)	98.3	98.5	0	0.822
Amount of food stamps received ($)	5,637	5,646	-9	0.960
Number of months receiving food stamps	19.6	20.2	-1	0.213
Total measured income[a] ($)	19,075	18,496	578	0.434
Year 1				
Ever received TANF (%)	93.3	93.2	0.1	0.977
Amount of TANF received ($)	4,211	4,056	155	0.373
Number of months receiving TANF	8.5	8.3	0	0.558
Ever received food stamps (%)	97.4	97.3	0	0.961
Amount of food stamps received ($)	2,976	2,995	-19	0.825
Number of months receiving food stamps	10.5	10.8	0	0.223
Total measured income[a] ($)	9,946	9,813	133	0.701
Year 2				
Ever received TANF (%)	63.6	59.4	4.2	0.269
Amount of TANF received ($)	2,891	2,590	302	0.147
Number of months receiving TANF	5.7	5.2	0	0.240
Ever received food stamps (%)	85.8	89.9	-4	0.113
Amount of food stamps received ($)	2,661	2,651	10	0.933
Number of months receiving food stamps	9.1	9.4	0	0.309
Total measured income[a] ($)	9,129	8,684	445	0.352
Sample size (total = 634)	318	316		

(continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from UI, TANF, and food stamp administrative records from the State of Oregon.

NOTES: This table includes only earnings in jobs covered by the Oregon unemployment insurance (UI) program. It does not include employment outside Oregon or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs, some agricultural jobs, and federal government jobs).

[a]Total measured income represents the sum of UI earnings, TANF, and food stamps for the ERA group and control group.

Table 3 (continued)

NOTES: This table includes only earnings in jobs covered by the Oregon unemployment insurance (UI) program. It does not include employment outside Oregon or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs, some agricultural jobs, and federal government jobs).

[a]Total measured income represents the sum of UI earnings, TANF, and food stamps for the ERA group and control group.

vices, which would have distinguished it from the control group program. The Career Builders program, however, did not have strong support from administrators and some program staff. This, coupled with a lack of resources, resulted in the program's not being implemented as intended. By the time of the six-month assessment, it was clear that the services offered to the program and control group programs were very similar. At this time, the Career Builders program ended, since it was agreed by DHS, HHS, and MDRC that the Portland ERA study was not a fair test of the Career Builders model. It is, therefore, not surprising that Career Builders did not increase employment and earnings relative to the regular TANF program.

Appendix A

Description of ERA Models

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.1

Description of ERA Models

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

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1 (continued)

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

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1 (continued)

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

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