The Employment Retention
and Advancement Project

How Effective Are Different Approaches Aiming to Increase Employment Retention and Advancement?

Final Impacts for Twelve Models

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Overview

Research completed since the 1980s has yielded substantial knowledge about how to help welfare recipients and other low-income individuals prepare for and find jobs. Many participants in these successful job preparation and placement programs, however, ended up in unstable, low-paying jobs, and little was known about how to effectively help them keep employment and advance in their jobs. The national Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project sought to fill this knowledge gap, by examining over a dozen innovative and diverse employment retention and advancement models developed by states and localities for different target groups, to determine whether effective strategies could be identified.

Using a random assignment research design, the ERA project tested the effectiveness of programs that attempted to promote steady work and career advancement for current and former welfare recipients and other low-wage workers, most of whom were single mothers. The programs — generally supported by existing public funding, not special demonstration grants — reflected state and local choices regarding target populations, goals, ways of providing services, and staffing. The ERA project is being conducted by MDRC, under contract to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with additional funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. This report presents the final effectiveness findings, or impacts, for 12 of the 16 ERA programs, and it also summarizes how the 12 programs were implemented and individuals' levels of participation in program services.

Key Findings

- **Out of the twelve programs included in the report, three ERA programs produced positive economic impacts; nine did not.** All three programs increased employment retention and advancement. Increases in employment retention and earnings were largest and most consistent over time in the Texas ERA program in Corpus Christi (one of three sites that operated this program); the Chicago ERA program; and the Riverside County, California, Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) ERA program. These programs increased annual earnings by between 7 percent and 15 percent relative to control group levels. Each of them served a different target group, which suggests that employment retention and advancement programs can work for a range of populations. However, three-fourths of the ERA programs included in this report did not produce gains in targeted outcomes beyond what control group members were able to attain on their own with the existing services and supports available in the ERA sites.

- **Increases in participation beyond control group levels were not consistent or large, which may have made it difficult for the programs to achieve impacts on employment retention and advancement.** Engaging individuals in employment and retention services at levels above what they would have done in the absence of the programs was a consistent challenge. In addition, staff had to spend a lot of time and resources on placing unemployed individuals back into jobs, which made it difficult for them to focus on helping those who were already working to keep their jobs or move up.

Before the ERA project began, there was not much evidence about the types of programs that could improve employment retention and advancement outcomes for current or former welfare recipients. The ERA evaluation provides valuable insights about the nature of retention and advancement problems and it underscores a number of key implementation challenges that a program would have to address. In addition, it reveals shortcomings in a range of common approaches now in use, while identifying three distinct approaches that seem promising and worthy of further exploration.

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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, in the form of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — have intensified the need to help low-income families become economically self-sufficient and remain so. Although a fair amount is known about how to help welfare recipients prepare for and find jobs, 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. 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 evaluation is being conducted by MDRC.

Launched in 1999, the ERA project encompasses more than a dozen models and uses a rigorous research design to analyze the programs' implementation and impacts on research sample members. [1] In total, over 45,000 individuals were randomly assigned to research groups — in each site, to either a program group, which received ERA services, or a control group, which did not — starting in 2000 in the earliest-starting test and ending in 2004 in the latest-starting test. The random assignment process ensured that when individuals entered the study, there were no systematic differences in sample members' characteristics, measured or unmeasured, between the program and control groups in each site. Thus, any differences between them that emerge after random assignment (for example, in employment stability or average earnings) can be attributed to a site's ERA program — in contrast to the services and supports already available in the site. These differences are known as "impacts."

The aims, target populations, and services of the programs studied in ERA varied:

- **Advancement programs** focused on helping low-income workers (in most cases, workers currently or recently receiving welfare) move into better jobs by offering such services as career counseling and education and training.

[1] Sixteen different ERA models were implemented and studied in eight states: California, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, and Texas.

- **Placement and retention programs** sought to help participants find and hold jobs and, in some cases, were aimed at "harder-to-employ" people, such as welfare recipients who had disabilities or substance abuse problems.

- **Mixed-goals programs** focused on job placement, retention, and advancement — in that order — and were targeted primarily to welfare recipients who were searching for jobs.

Prior ERA project reports describe the implementation and impacts of each ERA program, drawing on administrative and fiscal records, surveys of study sample members, and field visits to the participating sites, as well as using the strong random assignment designs (also known as "experimental" designs) embedded in each ERA model test. These reports address such questions as: What services were provided by the program? How were the services delivered? Who received them? How were implementation and operational problems addressed? To what extent did the program improve employment rates, job retention, advancement, and other key outcomes in the short run?

This report presents the final effectiveness findings, or impacts, for 12 of the 16 ERA programs and also summarizes the 12 programs' implementation and levels of participation in program services. In addition, as the "report of record" on the economic impacts of most ERA programs, this report provides the foundation for future additional analyses. The report thus provides valuable information about which approaches are most effective as well as the building blocks for future analyses that will seek to ascertain how best to improve employment retention and advancement for low-income individuals.

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Finally, we extend our deep appreciation to the thousands of parents who participated in the study and gave generously of their time to respond to surveys. As policymakers continue to seek new and better ways to increase employment retention and advancement within low-income families, the information pertaining to the study's sample members and their families will provide valuable guidance for many years to come.

The Authors

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the final impact results for the national Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project. This project tested, using a random assignment design, the effectiveness of numerous programs intended to promote steady work and career advancement. All the programs targeted current and former welfare recipients and other low-wage workers, most of whom were single mothers. Given that earlier retention and advancement initiatives studied for these groups were largely not effective, ERA sought to examine a variety of programs that states and localities had developed for different populations, to determine whether effective strategies could be identified. In short, nine of the twelve programs examined in this report do not appear to be effective, but three programs increased employment levels, employment stability, and/or earnings, relative to control group levels, after three to four years of follow-up.

The ERA Project: Origin and Context

Research completed since the 1980s has resulted in much being learned about how to help welfare recipients and other low-income individuals prepare for and find jobs. While job preparation and placement programs have improved employment and earnings among participants, they primarily moved individuals into unstable, low-paying jobs. Moreover, research prior to ERA that examined programs explicitly designed to increase employment retention among newly employed welfare recipients found that the programs had few effects on retention or advancement.

The ERA project was intended to build and improve on past efforts in the employment retention and advancement area. It was conceived and funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The project was also supported by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). MDRC — a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization — is conducting ERA under contract to ACF.

From 2000 to 2003, a total of 16 innovative ERA programs were implemented in eight states as part of ERA. This report presents effectiveness estimates for 12 of the 16 ERA programs and for the main group of individuals targeted for services: low-income single parents.[1] The results cover a three- to four-year follow-up period and examine the programs' effects on employment retention, earnings, advancement (defined here primarily as earnings increases not fully explained by employment increases), and the receipt of welfare and food stamp benefits.

[1]Findings for two-parent families served by these programs and for programs that targeted "harder-to-employ" individuals are not included here but will be presented in other reports.

This impact report is the document of record for the ERA programs' impacts. Its purpose is to describe what was tested and what was found. A series of special topic papers and practitioner briefs will further examine the results contained in this document, to try to provide more clues as to why some programs may have had positive effects and others did not and to offer lessons for policy and practice.

The ERA Programs

The ERA programs embodied states' and localities' choices of program goals, target populations, and program components and were largely paid for through existing funding streams. The programs were thus "real-world" ones initiated by practitioners and not ones set up and funded solely for research purposes. The diversity of the programs presents an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of a variety of strategies implemented for different populations, in order to identify what might work. The programs' target groups and general strategies are briefly described below. Table ES.1 provides a summary of the points of service provision, selected ways of delivering services, and selected types of services for each of the ERA programs included in the report.

Target Groups

Almost all the ERA programs targeted current or former recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the cash welfare program that mainly serves single mothers and their children. The programs differed, however, in terms of when services were first provided and to whom. In this report, findings are presented in three groupings of programs, reflecting the programs' target populations: (1) programs that served unemployed TANF recipients, (2) programs that served employed TANF recipients, and (3) programs that served individuals who were employed and not receiving TANF. Presenting the results in these three target groupings allows practitioners who are planning to implement a program for a specific target population to easily see the range of ERA program models that were implemented for that population and the programs' results. In addition, it facilitates an assessment of how well similar or different strategies worked in achieving similar goals for roughly similar populations, and it suggests whether ERA programs work better when initiated at one or another point in individuals' employment careers — for example, when people are looking for work or when they are already in work.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table ES.1

ERA Models: Overview of Target Populations, Selected Ways of Delivering Services, and Selected Types of Services

	Target Populations														
	Not employed and receiving TANF					Employed and receiving TANF				Employed and not receiving TANF				
	Texas													
	Corpus Christi	*Fort Worth*	*Houston*	*Los Angeles EJC*	*Salem*	*Chicago*	*Los Angeles RFS*	*Riverside Training Focused*	*Riverside Work Plus*	*Cleveland*	*Eugene*	*Medford*	*Riverside PASS*	*South Carolina*
Ways of delivering services														
Nongovernmental organization as a provider of services	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Flexible staff hours and/or locations	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Employer linkages	✓	✓				✓				✓				
Types of services														
Financial work incentives	✓	✓	✓			✓								✓
Supported advancement through job change	✓	✓				✓						✓		
Education and training referrals and/or incentives						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E in the complete report.

NOTES: For discussion of the full set of features, by model, see Chapters 3, 4, and 5. For the definitions of these features, see Chapter 2.

Check marks indicate that the feature is present in the ERA model.

The models and their implementation often evolved over the study period. This table presents the features experienced by the majority of the study participants for the greatest extent of time.

The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites all operated the Texas ERA model.

General Strategies

The different strategies adopted by states and localities to promote employment retention and advancement were developed in accordance with program operators' views of the primary impediments to retention and advancement faced by individuals in their chosen target populations. None of the strategies, however, attempted to address labor market, or demand-side, issues. Rather, they all sought to address supply-side, or "worker-based," obstacles to economic success. Within the broad category of worker-based strategies, the ERA programs delivered services in new ways and/or provided new types of services or new combinations of services compared with what was already available at the time.

Delivering Services in New Ways

A number of programs provided services through **partnerships between welfare agency staff and staff from other organizations,** such as community colleges, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop contractors, nonprofit employment service providers, and/or community-based organizations, depending on the program. The rationales for using these service delivery arrangements were severalfold: partnerships increased the chances of leveraging resources; these arrangements could bring together different types of services and expertise in one location, and thus better serve program participants; and it was thought that nongovernmental organizations might be more familiar than governmental agencies with the jobs and services available in a community and, furthermore, that individuals might be more likely to engage with staff from nonwelfare organizations after leaving TANF. Many ERA programs also implemented **new staff practices,** giving staff more flexibility in when and where to meet with clients, to make it easier for working program participants to meet with staff.

Finally, a few ERA programs sought to develop **linkages with employers.** These linkages took the form of engaging a for-profit company that had strong relationships with local employers, to facilitate the identification of openings in higher-paying jobs; meeting with clients at their employer and sometimes with clients' employers, to discuss opportunities for advancement; or situating ERA services at individuals' places of employment to make it easy and convenient for people to participate in retention-related services.

Delivering New Types of Services or New Combinations of Services

The ERA programs provided some common services, most of which have been offered in previous and current programs. All the programs used one-on-one staff-client interactions as the means by which program services were delivered, although they differed regarding how this was done, that is, what was discussed during staff-client interactions, the intensity of the interactions, and staff configurations and roles. In addition, job search assistance of some type

was provided in almost all the programs, to initially get individuals into jobs, to get them new jobs if they left or lost a job, and/or to find people better jobs while they were working. In-depth assessments of individuals' needs, interests, and employment barriers were also done in many sites, and referrals were made to mental health or substance abuse treatment or counseling.

All the programs, however, experimented with providing new types of services or combinations of services. Several programs provided **financial incentives or rewards** — of a substantial amount in only one program — connected to employment, to encourage employment entry, promote employment retention, and raise individuals' implicit wage levels. Other programs provided **encouragement and support to change jobs,** from lower-paying jobs to higher-paying ones or to ones with better opportunities for advancement. A number of programs provided **encouragement for employed individuals to participate in education and training,** under the theory that working single parents may need support to engage and persist in education or training, given the difficultly of balancing parenting, work, and schooling. Finally, many of the programs provided individuals with **counseling on job-related issues,** under the expectation that this could both prevent unnecessary job loss and educate workers on how to advance at their current job.

The Evaluation's Design

Each of the ERA programs discussed in this report was studied using a random assignment evaluation design, a methodology that allows practitioners and policymakers to have a high degree of confidence in the results. In each site, individuals who met the ERA eligibility criteria (which varied by site) were assigned, at random, to a program group or to a control group. Members of the program group were recruited for (and, in some sites, were required to participate in) the services offered by the ERA program, while those in the control group were not eligible for ERA services but were eligible for other services and supports. The control group services and supports were always those generally available in the site's community but could also include the site's standard welfare-to-work program or, in some cases, minimal efforts that the site already had in place to provide assistance to individuals who found jobs. As a result, none of the control groups can be strictly considered to be a "no service" group. Each site's control group thus represents the benchmark against which that site's ERA approach is assessed.[2]

[2]There was significant variation across sites in terms of the types of services for which control group members were eligible, the extent of services, and how well known and readily accessible the services were.

In total, over 45,000 individuals were randomly assigned to research groups as part of ERA, starting in 2000 in the earliest-starting test and ending in 2004 in the latest-starting test.[3] In each site, MDRC tracked individuals in both research groups for three to four years following their random assignment, using administrative records — such as unemployment insurance (UI), welfare, and food stamp records — and sample member surveys. The random assignment process ensured that when individuals entered the study, there were no systematic differences in sample members' characteristics, measured or unmeasured, between the research groups. Thus, any differences between them that emerge after random assignment (for example, in employment rates or average earnings) can be attributed to the site's ERA program — in contrast to services and supports already available in the site. These differences are referred to here as "impacts."

Key Findings

The implementation, participation, and economic impact analyses in this report yielded the following key findings.

Implementation Findings

- **Engaging individuals in employment and retention services was a consistent challenge.**

Staff in the ERA programs expended considerable energy trying to engage individuals in program activities. Many ERA programs, particularly those targeting individuals outside the TANF system, included intensive marketing and outreach strategies. The ERA programs also used a variety of strategies to maintain staff-client relationships and encourage ongoing participation in program activities, including, in some programs, offering financial incentives to encourage contact and working with individuals at their workplaces. However, while most program group members reported having at least one contact with ERA program staff, maintaining contact over the course of the first year following random assignment was less common. Only five programs increased the percentage of program group members, compared with control group members, who were having contact with staff from an employment program as of the end of the first year of follow-up. Moreover, even in these five programs, increases in ongoing engagement were modest.

[3]Outcomes for approximately 27,000 sample members are analyzed in this report. Other documents will present results for the remaining sample members.

- **Rates of job loss were very high, and job loss occurred quickly in all the ERA programs, requiring staff to spend a significant amount of their time providing reemployment services.**

In a number of the ERA programs that attempted to provide services to individuals when they were employed (referred to as "postemployment programs" in this report), high levels and fast rates of job loss had several implications. One implication was that staff had less time available to work with individuals on advancement services. Another implication was that the volume of demands for reemployment services disrupted programs' staffing plans. Staff in postemployment programs were prepared for and anticipated working with employed clients to aid their placement into better jobs or ones positioned for advancement. Staff were also prepared to provide employment retention services to attempt to prevent job loss. In practice, many individuals had lost their jobs by the time program staff first made contact with them, forcing staff to focus on immediate placement needs instead.

- **The staffing of the ERA programs was critical, as most services hinged on staff actions and many welfare agency staff lacked skills and experience relevant to retention and advancement aims.**

In most of the ERA programs, staff were responsible for providing a range of services, rather than specializing in one or a few. Many of these services — such as recruitment, career counseling, labor market assessment, and job development — were not typically provided in standard welfare-to-work programs. Thus, the ERA programs often demanded skill sets and facilities in arenas or with populations that were new to staff. Despite efforts to hire and train qualified staff, providing the various retention and advancement services was a struggle for many ERA program staff.

Participation Findings

- **Increases in participation beyond control group levels were not consistent or large, which may have made it difficult for the programs to achieve impacts on employment retention and advancement.**

Overall, most of the ERA programs produced relatively small increases in participation in program activities and in the receipt of various types of retention and advancement assistance, but the reasons for this differed by the type of activity or "help" provided in the programs. Many of the control groups in this study were eligible for welfare-to-work programs that often provided such services as job search and education and training referrals. Therefore, the control group levels of participation in these services was often high (with participation levels in education and training being unexpectedly high in the case of programs serving employed individuals), and few ERA programs significantly raised participation above these levels.

In addition to encouraging participation in job search and education and training, most ERA programs offered other types of retention and advancement assistance, such as help resolving problems on the job or help finding a better job while working. While a 12-month client survey showed that few control group members received these types of assistance, few ERA programs increased the levels of receipt of these services by a substantial amount above the control group levels.

While the increases in participation in ERA services in a number of program tests were infrequent and small for two different reasons — high levels of control group participation in some activities and low levels of program group participation in others — the end result was the same: little impact on participation in services in these tests made it unlikely that these particular programs would improve economic outcomes (though there is no guarantee that these programs would have improved economic outcomes even if they had been able to boost participation more substantially). A few programs, however, did produce some sizable participation increases and also increased employment retention and advancement, as discussed in more detail below.

Effectiveness Findings

Several types of economic effects are examined in this report. Effects on employment retention (defined here as impacts on the extent of individuals' labor force participation) are primarily based on two key outcomes, both using UI data: the average quarterly employment rate and the extent to which people worked in four consecutive quarters. Any impacts on the average quarterly employment rate would indicate that program group members, compared with control group members, worked in more quarters. Any impacts on working four consecutive quarters would indicate that program group members, compared with control group members, were more likely to remain consistently employed, though not necessarily in the same job.

Effects on advancement are defined here primarily in terms of increases in earnings that cannot be fully explained by increases in quarters of employment. When a program increases total earnings, it can reflect either or both the program's effect on employment retention and its effect on advancement. Any increases in total earnings would indicate that program group members, compared with control group members, had more quarters of employment, worked more hours or weeks, or worked at higher wages. Because most advancement measures are created using UI data, it is impossible to separate out how much of the increase in earnings was due to more hours or weeks or working at higher wages, but it is possible to estimate how much was due to an increase in quarters of employment. Therefore, if the increases in total earnings are not fully explained by the effects on the number of quarters employed, it is likely that "advancement" (defined as individuals' working more hours or weeks or working at higher wages) occurred. In this report, advancement is secondarily defined as improvements in fringe benefits received, working conditions, or opportunities for promotions.

Table ES.2 indicates which ERA programs produced impacts on three of the above outcomes: average quarterly employment, working four consecutive quarters, and average annual earnings. (Survey-based impacts are not shown.) Only statistically significant impacts are shown in the table and are discussed in this summary and the report, except where otherwise indicated.[4]

- **Out of the twelve ERA programs included in the report, three programs — one in each target grouping — produced positive economic impacts: the Texas (Corpus Christi and Fort Worth sites), Chicago, and Riverside PASS ERA programs.**

The Texas ERA program offered a monthly stipend of $200 for former TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week, in addition to other pre- and postemployment services. As implemented in Corpus Christi, the program had consistent effects on employment retention and earnings. There is also evidence that the program may have led to advancement gains — meaning gains in hours worked, weeks worked, or wages — compared with the level of advancement seen in the control group. (Increases in earnings could not be fully explained by increases in the number of quarters employed.) In Corpus Christi, the program increased average annual earnings by $640 over the four-year follow-up period, or by almost 15 percent relative to control group earnings. In addition, the program generated its largest effects on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, when it increased earnings by $900, or by 18 percent relative to the control group level. This suggests that the impacts may continue in the longer term. The Texas ERA program in Fort Worth also produced increases in these measures, but the effects were concentrated in the second and third years of follow-up. In Fort Worth, the program increased earnings in the third year of follow-up by $900, or by 17 percent relative to the control group level. The implementation of the Texas program in Fort Worth started out weak and improved over time, which may have diluted the strength of the impacts because many program group members went through the program before implementation improved.

The program in Chicago was a mandatory, work-focused advancement program, offering targeted job search assistance and help to identify and access career ladders, provided by staff in a private, for-profit firm. This program produced increases in employment retention and earnings. In addition, there is evidence that the program may have led to advancement gains, compared with the level of advancement seen in the control group. But while the Chicago ERA program raised average annual earnings by almost $500, or by 7 percent relative to the control group level, these effects weakened over time. Impacts on employment were no longer statisti-

[4] An impact is considered to be statistically significant if there is less than a 10 percent probability that the estimated difference would have occurred by chance in the absence of any effect of the program. The tables and figures in this report note statistical significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent, and 1 percent levels.

Table ES.2

ERA Models: Summary of Economic Impact Results

Model	Average Quarterly Employment					Employed 4 Consecutive Quarters					Average Annual Earnings				
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up
Not employed and receiving TANF															
Texas															
Corpus Christi	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Fort Worth		•						•					•		
Houston															
Los Angeles EJC				—		•			—					—	
Salem				—					—					—	
Employed and receiving TANF															
Chicago	•	•			•		•					•			•
Los Angeles RFS				—					—					—	
Riverside Phase 2															
Riverside Training Focused[a]															
Riverside Work Plus															
Employed and not receiving TANF															
Cleveland				—					—					—	
Eugene[a]				—					—					—	
Medford				—					—					—	
Riverside PASS	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
South Carolina															

(continued)

Table ES.2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES: A dash indicates "not available" or that the sample size is too small to yield meaningful results.

Bullets indicate positive statistically significant differences between outcomes for the program and control groups up to the 10 percent level.

[a]The negative impacts for the Eugene and Riverside Training Focused programs are not shown on this table. For negative impacts, see the site-specific summary tables in the complete report.

cally significant in Year 4 as a whole, but positive earnings impacts persisted in some quarters, suggesting that the Chicago program may have had a long-term effect on advancement. It also achieved the largest reductions in welfare receipt among all the ERA programs. Program group levels of welfare receipt were approximately 25 percent lower than control group levels.

Increases in employment retention and earnings were large and consistent in the Riverside PASS ERA program, which was a voluntary, individualized, retention and advancement program provided primarily by three community-based organizations and a community college. There is also evidence that the program may have led to increases in advancement, compared with what was seen in the control group. This program increased average annual earnings by $870 over the four-year follow-up period, an increase of 10 percent relative to the control group level. In addition, the program generated its largest effects on earnings ($970) in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting that the program may lead to even longer-term earnings gains.

- **In the Chicago and Riverside PASS ERA programs, which provided services to employed individuals, impacts were driven by entering another job after random assignment — not by staying stably employed at the original job.**

Of the three programs that produced positive impacts, two of them initiated services after people had found jobs (postemployment programs), and one of them (referred to here as a "preemployment program") initiated services before people found jobs. It might be expected that the postemployment programs would achieve their impacts by lengthening the amount of time that people stayed in the job they held when they entered the program. However, in both of these postemployment programs, the impacts reflect participants' entering new jobs at greater rates than control group members, either directly from another job or after a period of unemployment.

This result suggests that even programs designed to affect employment retention and advancement among those already working should be very deliberate about how job change and job loss are addressed. Job changes and reemployment needs may present opportunities to improve outcomes. Job loss, for example, can be analyzed to understand the reasons why people lost their job and can lead to developing plans to avoid job loss in the future. Similarly, job changes can be used as a way to place individuals into better jobs. In addition, this result suggests that a focus on employment retention, rather than job retention, may be more effective or more realistic.

Conclusions

The reports' findings suggest several conclusions.

- **The results revealed some strategies that can be effective in promoting employment retention and advancement for welfare recipients and other low-income groups.**

Increases in employment retention and earnings were largest and most consistent over time in the Texas ERA program in Corpus Christi, the Chicago ERA program, and the Riverside PASS ERA program. The Texas program in Fort Worth improved over time and produced gains in Years 2 and 3. Each of these three ERA programs served a different target group, which suggests that employment retention and advancement programs can work for a range of populations.

Table ES.3 highlights the features of these three programs. Caution should be exercised when trying to identify promising program features, however, as some of the programs lacking positive impacts also contained some of these features and it is not clear which features "drove" the impacts in any given site. Two findings from the research literature can help place these findings in context. With regard to the Texas findings, several studies have now shown that programs that provide financial incentives to supplement earnings in combination with services can promote employment retention among low-wage workers.[5] With regard to the Chicago program, nonexperimental work has suggested that low-wage workers often advance by changing jobs and that matching individuals with jobs in particular firms that pay higher wages can be an effective strategy to promote advancement.[6] The fact that these strategies have been found to be effective in previous research as well as in this study lends additional evidence that these are promising strategies to promote employment retention and advancement.

- **Improving employment retention and advancement remains a challenge.**

Three-fourths of the ERA programs included in this report did not produce gains in the targeted outcomes beyond what control group members were able to attain on their own with the existing set of services and supports. This suggests that, despite a range of programs and approaches and significant effort by staff and program managers, gains in employment retention and advancement are difficult to attain. In addition, even among the programs that produced improvements in retention and advancement outcomes, wages remained very low, and many of

[5]Gennetian, Miller, and Smith (2005); Huston et al. (2003); Michalopoulos et al. (2002); Riccio et al. (2008).

[6]Andersson, Holzer, and Lane (2005). Indeed, a recent nonexperimental analysis of the employment patterns of ERA sample members confirmed that job change was associated with higher wages for median-earning sample members (Miller, Deitch, and Hill, 2010).

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table ES.3

Highlights of Programs That Increased Employment Retention and Advancement

	Corpus Christi, Texas Fort Worth, Texas	Chicago	Riverside PASS
Strategy	Placement, retention, and advancement: job search assistance, stipend for employed former TANF recipients, reemployment assistance, and work site visits	Advancement: job search assistance, career counseling, and reemployment assistance	Retention and advancement: reemployment assistance, career counseling, and referrals to education and training
Target population	Unemployed TANF applicants and recipients	TANF recipients who had worked at least 30 hours per week for at least 6 consecutive months	Employed former TANF recipients who recently left TANF
Service providers	Local workforce development boards under contract with nonprofit organizations	Experienced, for-profit, employment intermediary	Primarily community-based organizations and a community college
Control services	Relatively strong welfare-to-work program	Standard welfare-to-work program	Limited postemployment services
Participation highlights	In Corpus Christi, 30 percent took up the financial incentive; 20 percent did so in the other Texas sites. Increased percentages receiving help with retention and advancement in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth.	Increased percentages receiving help in finding a better job while working and in getting other forms of retention and advancement help.	While increases in participation were not large, participation data are for a cohort that had few positive economic impacts.[a]
Economic impacts	Increased employment retention and advancement in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth but not in Houston	Increased employment retention and advancement and reduced welfare receipt	Increased employment retention and advancement

SOURCES: ERA 12-Month Survey, administrative records, and interim reports.

NOTES: [a]Participation impacts in this report are based on client survey data. As detailed in the text, survey response issues were present in the Riverside PASS site. Analysis of program data suggested that only the Riverside PASS program may have increased the use of a broader range of services. These data are not used in this report because they only capture services reported to the welfare department by ERA service providers.

these families remained in poverty at the end of the follow-up period. It is also important to consider, however, that ERA was a test of multiple strategies rather than a demonstration of a few promising programs. As noted above, before the ERA project began, there was not much evidence of programs that could improve employment retention and advancement outcomes for current or former welfare recipients. The ERA evaluation has revealed three distinct approaches that seem promising and worthy of further exploration.

* * *

While this report presents the final impact estimates of many of the ERA programs, it is not the final word from the ERA project. Further analysis is being conducted of the rich ERA databases to try to shed light on which program features, participant characteristics, institutional arrangements, or economic contexts were most associated with improvements in employment retention and advancement. In addition, other publications will consider the costs and benefits of selected ERA programs, the employment and training dynamics of the ERA sample, and the employment patterns of ERA sample members in two-parent families. A series of practice briefs will also probe more deeply and extract lessons for those who operate and staff retention and advancement programs. Finally, a synthesis document will consider the policy, practice, and research lessons learned from the whole of the ERA project.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, there has been growing interest among policymakers in identifying the kinds of services, supports, and incentives that can help low-income working parents retain steady employment and advance in the labor market. This has reflected several developments. First, broad economic trends have reduced the availability of high-paying jobs for people who do not have a college education and have increased the number of families headed by low-income workers. Partially because of this, the federal government and many states have increased spending on supports for low-income working families, such as tax credits, child care subsidies, and health insurance. Second, the welfare reforms of the 1990s encouraged or required millions of single parents with low skills (primarily women) to enter the labor market and imposed time limits on the receipt of assistance. As a result of these developments, long-term welfare receipt has become much less common, and steady employment and wage advances have grown in importance as means of achieving economic well-being. At the same time, the current economic climate in the United States has made achieving these objectives more difficult by increasing the number of individuals at risk of losing employment or advancement opportunities.

As of 10 years ago, little was known about effective strategies to help low-income parents keep employment and advance in their jobs. While research had yielded substantial knowledge about how to help welfare recipients and other low-income individuals prepare for and find jobs, many participants in these successful job preparation and placement programs ended up in unstable, low-paying jobs. Moreover, prior research — in the mid-1990s — that examined programs explicitly designed to increase employment retention among newly employed welfare recipients found that the programs had few effects on retention or advancement.[1]

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project was designed to fill the gap in knowledge about employment retention and advancement strategies that might be effective. ERA's goal was to identify and rigorously test a diverse set of innovative models designed to promote employment stability and wage or earnings progression among current or former welfare recipients or other low-income groups. As part of ERA, over a dozen different program models have been evaluated over the past 10 years using random assignment research designs. These models embodied states' and localities' choices of program goals, target popula-

[1]For results from the Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD), see Rangarajan and Novak (1999).

tions, and program features, and the programs were largely paid for through existing funding streams. The programs were thus "real-world" interventions initiated by practitioners and not ones set up and funded solely for research purposes. The diversity of the models presents an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of a variety of strategies implemented for different populations, in order to identify what might work.

This report summarizes long-term findings on the effects of 12 of the ERA program models for their primary target group: low-income, generally female, single parents. (Findings for two-parent families served in these programs and for the programs that targeted "harder-to-employ" individuals are not included here but will be presented in other reports.) Table 1.1 provides a summary of the targeted populations and services that were offered in the 12 ERA programs covered in this report.

The report's effectiveness findings are based on a comparison of each site's ERA program and, usually, the site's preexisting services and supports, which often included the site's standard welfare-to-work program. The ERA programs' effects thus represent the added value of the ERA models beyond the services and supports already available. The report examines effects on employment retention (defined here as the extent of an individual's labor force participation), on earnings, and on advancement (defined here primarily as increases in earnings that are not fully explained by increases in quarters of employment). Effects on use of welfare and other income supports are also examined.

For each of the 12 programs, the report presents implementation findings and final economic effects measured over three or four years. As such, it is the foundation for a number of analytical papers, syntheses, and practice briefs that will be forthcoming from the ERA project. Thus, while the 12 programs' final effectiveness findings are included here, future documents will provide additional guidance to policymakers and program operators as they seek to glean lessons from the ERA project.

In brief, the findings reported here are mixed. Many strategies do not appear to be effective, but some do appear to increase employment retention and, in some cases, advancement. Future ERA documents will seek to offer hypotheses regarding why some of the strategies may have had positive effects and others did not, as well as lessons for policy and practice.

This chapter provides an introduction to ERA by describing the project's history, the models tested in the project, ERA's research design, the settings of the ERA tests, ERA sample members' characteristics, and the typical labor market behavior of the groups targeted in ERA. Finally, the chapter states the research questions addressed in this report, presents considerations in interpreting ERA's effectiveness results, and outlines the report's organization.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 1.1

Brief Description of ERA Programs

Program	Target Group	Program Description
Texas Corpus Christi Fort Worth Houston	Unemployed TANF applicants and recipients	Mandatory preemployment job search assistance, followed by voluntary postemployment assistance (which could include employer site visits and reemployment assistance), with a monthly stipend of $200 for former TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week; services provided by staff in nonprofit organizations contracted by local workforce agencies
Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club	Unemployed TANF recipients	Mandatory 5-week job club focused on career development activities and job search targeted to individuals' careers of interest; operated jointly by county welfare and education agency staff
Salem (Oregon)	Unemployed TANF applicants	Mandatory preemployment job search assistance and voluntary postemployment services; jointly provided by welfare agency and community college staff
Chicago	TANF recipients who had worked at least 30 hours per week for at least 6 consecutive months	Mandatory work-focused advancement program offering targeted job search assistance and help to identify and access career ladders; provided by staff in a private, for-profit firm
Los Angeles Reach for Success	TANF recipients who had worked at least 32 hours per week for at least 30 days	Voluntary, intensely marketed, individualized retention and advancement program; administered by welfare agency staff
Riverside Training Focused	TANF recipients who had worked at least 20 hours per week for at least 30 days	Education/training-focused advancement program with flexibility to reduce or eliminate required work hours if participating in education or training; operated by workforce agency
Riverside Work Plus	TANF recipients who had worked at least 20 hours per week for at least 30 days	Education/training-focused advancement program with less flexibility (compared to the Riverside Training Focused program) to reduce or eliminate required work hours if participating in education or training; operated by county welfare agency

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Program	Target Group	Program Description
Cleveland	Low-wage workers at specific employers who earned less than $13 per hour and who had been in their current job for less than 6 months	Voluntary, employer-based employment retention program, including ongoing staff-client relationships, weekly peer support groups, and supervisory trainings; provided by a community-based organization
Eugene (Oregon)	Employed individuals who had left TANF within the year and who were working more than 20 hours per week	Voluntary, individualized program, including career counseling and service referals; provided through a welfare agency partnership with a community college and WIA contractor.
Medford (Oregon)	Employed individuals who were former recipients of TANF or current recipients of the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training program and/or the Employment-Related Day Care program	Voluntary, individualized retention and advancement program, including career counseling and service referals; provided through a welfare agency partnership with a nonprofit employment service provider
Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency	Employed former TANF recipients	Voluntary, marketed, individualized retention and advancement program; provided primarily by three community-based organizations and a community college
South Carolina	Individuals who left TANF for any reason between October 1997 and December 2000	Voluntary program offering individualized job placement, retention, and advancement services with modest financial incentives for program engagement and employment; provided by a welfare agency

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTES: The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites all operated the Texas ERA program.

ERA programs not included here are the New York City PRIDE program, the Minnesota program, the New York City Substance Abuse Case Management program, and the Portland (Oregon) Career Builders program.

The History of ERA

The Problem: Employment, Wages, and Earnings of Single Parents

Due, in part, to the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), employment rates for low-income single mothers have recently risen.[2] In the early 1990s, for example, the employment rate for low-income single mothers was about 67 percent, and it rose to 78 percent by 2000.[3] The increase was especially large for single mothers who had received welfare in the previous year (and may have remained on welfare), for whom rates of employment doubled over this time period, from about 30 percent in the early 1990s to nearly 60 percent in 2000.[4]

The wages of single mothers, however, are often low. Considering all workers today, one out of four earn less than $10 per hour.[5] While some of these low-wage workers are teenagers, many are adults supporting families. Considering just single mothers, the 25th percentile wage in 2000 was $8.00 per hour, which suggests that many single parents are not earning a wage that is high enough to move their families out of poverty.[6] Moreover, recent trends in wage growth over time do not bode well for advancement. While women's wages have not stagnated or declined as much as men's wages, from 2001 through 2006-2007, wage growth among women at the bottom of the earnings distribution has been only 1 percent.[7]

In addition, job retention among low-wage workers is low. Among female low-wage workers, the median job spell duration is about four months, and about four in ten job spells end in nonemployment.[8]

Narrowing the group of interest further, to welfare leavers, annual earnings and income are low: average earnings are below $3,000 per quarter and below $10,000 per year.[9] This suggests that, despite higher employment rates, current and former welfare recipients have had trouble maintaining continuous employment and advancing in the labor market.

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[2]Macroeconomic conditions, and probably the increased generosity of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), contributed to this trend as well.

[3]Holzer and Martinson (2005).

[4]Blank and Schmidt (2001).

[5]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008).

[6]Lerman (2005).

[7]Mishel, Bernstein, and Allegretto (2007). These estimates of wage growth depend on the type of inflation adjustment that one uses. In addition, the estimates do not take into account the rising worth of health insurance benefits for those who have jobs that include such fringe benefits.

[8]Schochet and Rangarajan (2004).

[9]Acs and Loprest (2004).

These are the types of statistics that ERA sought to improve, by identifying and testing a diverse set of innovative program models designed to promote employment stability and advancement.

Past Efforts to Increase Employment Retention and Advancement Among Low-Income Individuals

Research on several different types of policy interventions, described below, as well as the past program experience of states and localities, set the stage for the ERA project.

Providing Postemployment Services to Newly Employed Welfare Recipients

The Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD) was a four-site project that examined the effectiveness of providing various services to welfare recipients newly employed in part-time or full-time jobs. Operated from 1994 to 1996, the programs' offered services included counseling and support; job search assistance; resolution of government benefits issues; referrals to services such as child care, training or education programs, legal aid, or specialized counseling; and more frequent, larger, and flexible payments for work-related expenses. The most commonly utilized services in the programs were counseling and work-expense payments.

The PESD programs were evaluated using a random assignment design, where control group members were eligible to receive minimal case management services provided by the welfare department for a short period after they found jobs and left welfare. A comparison of the labor market behavior of those assigned to the PESD programs with the behavior of those assigned to the control groups showed that the PESD programs had little effect on employment retention or earnings.[10]

Providing Earnings Supplements or Stipends to Low-Income Individuals

Several random assignment studies have shown that supplementing the earnings of low-wage workers can promote employment retention. The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), which was first operated in 1994, allowed welfare recipients to keep up to $250 more of their monthly welfare grant when they went to work. A study of two versions of the MFIP program showed that both versions increased overall employment levels and also increased the frequency of sustained work.[11] The New Hope Project, a demonstration program implemented in two inner-city areas in Milwaukee from 1994 through 1998, offered low-income full-time

[10]Rangarajan and Novak (1999). PESD was funded by the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

[11]Gennetian, Miller, and Smith (2005).

workers several benefits: an earnings supplement, subsidized health insurance and child care, and, if needed, referrals to wage-paying community service jobs. New Hope increased employment as well as earnings, and it reduced poverty rates as well.[12] Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP), which operated in two provinces as a demonstration project from 1992 to 1999, offered a monthly earnings supplement to single-parent welfare recipients if they worked full time. This program increased employment levels and rates of employment retention.[13,14]

Finally, another form of financial incentives — rent breaks for public housing residents conditioned on work — has had positive effects on earnings for many different types of public housing residents, as examined in the Jobs-Plus demonstration, operated from 1998 to 2003.[15]

Providing Preemployment Services to Welfare Recipients

Prior to PESD and ERA, few studied welfare-to-work programs provided any formal postemployment services beyond transitional benefits. Studies of welfare-to-work programs do suggest, however, that preemployment services can increase stable employment and earnings. In the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), several programs increased individuals' likelihood of remaining employed for a year or more. The program with the largest effect on stable employment and earnings growth was in Portland, Oregon. While the research design used in NEWWS cannot conclusively indicate why these effects were largest for this program, the Portland program was unusual in that it allowed some individuals to participate in short-term training or education before they searched for work and also encouraged participants to hold out for jobs that paid higher than the minimum wage and that offered fringe benefits.[16]

The Development of the ERA Project

Given that previously tested initiatives that focused on improving retention and advancement for welfare recipients were not effective, ERA sought to examine a variety of innovative models. The goal was to determine whether any strategies could be effective, given the paucity of positive results in this area in the past, while at the same time taking account of

[12]Huston et al. (2003).

[13]Michalopoulos et al. (2002).

[14]More recent results from an ongoing study of an ERA-like trial program in the United Kingdom (UK) are also promising. The UK Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) program offered a combination of job coaching and financial incentives tied to employment retention in full-time jobs to several groups receiving government income support. Two-year results, based on a random assignment design, are showing that the program has increased earnings for the target group most similar to the groups targeted in the U.S. ERA project (Riccio et al., 2008).

[15]Bloom, Riccio, and Verma (2005).

[16]Hamilton (2002).

the hypotheses generated by the studies of past efforts. Thus, there was not one single model tested in ERA. Rather, a wide net was cast in which to identify strategies that might improve employment retention and advancement outcomes.

The project began in 1998, when the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued planning grants to 13 states to develop new programs, and it awarded a contract to The Lewin Group to provide planning assistance to these states. The following year, ACF selected MDRC to conduct an evaluation of the ERA models.[17] From 2000 to 2003, MDRC and, starting in 2001 as a subcontractor, The Lewin Group worked closely with the states that had received planning grants, and with several other states, to mount tests of ERA models.[18] MDRC, Lewin, and Cygnet Associates also provided extensive technical assistance to some of the states and program operators, since most were starting from scratch, with no proven models on which to build.

For the ERA evaluation, ACF, MDRC, and Lewin focused on choosing, and assisting states to refine, programs that would test two different (although not mutually exclusive) routes to improved economic success. One type of program sought in the site selection process focused on increasing individuals' work experience and on-the-job training. These "work-based" programs were ones that assessed individuals' skills and interests, focused on understanding employer and labor market needs, and tried to address individuals' barriers to advancement and develop individualized career path plans within and between employers. The second type of program sought in the site selection process emphasized education and training. These "education/training-based" programs were attractive because many low-income individuals have low skill levels, and it was thought that many would be unlikely to remain steadily employed or advance to better jobs unless they gained additional skills. Thus, programs that allowed individuals to combine work and training were sought, particularly ones that gave special attention to recruiting participants, made accommodations for working families, tried to match individuals and programs, and encouraged attendance and the completion of classes. Regardless of the route to economic success embodied in the models, it was understood that the programs would call on staff to acquire new skills, to address a set of issues different from those that they were used to addressing, and to perform new job duties.

The program models that eventually were selected for inclusion in the ERA project — while reflecting the above two possible routes to improved economic success — most importantly embodied states' and localities' choices of goals, target populations, and program features. Moreover, the programs were paid for through existing funding streams (and largely

[17]The U.S. Department of Labor has also provided funding to support the ERA project.

[18]The Lewin Group worked with MDRC on site development prior to 2001 as an independent contractor as well.

not through special demonstration funding), which indicated states' commitment to a vision of welfare reform that included a focus on the long-term self-sufficiency of families. The programs, though new, were designed by practitioners, as opposed to researchers, and were operated in real-world conditions and not in "hothouses," or protected conditions.

Ultimately, a total of 16 ERA models in eight states were included in the ERA project, with multiple tests operating in some states.[19] Many of the tests took place in urban areas, including several of the nation's largest cities, and almost all were relatively large in scale, enrolling over 1,000 people over a one- to three-year period. The models differed as to whether their most emphasized goal was employment retention or advancement,[20] but almost all the models served current or former recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the cash welfare program that mainly serves single mothers and their children. As described in the next section, however, the models varied in their strategies to encourage employment retention and advancement, in their specific target groups, and in their program features.

The ERA Models Included in This Report

The program models that ultimately were studied in ERA used several different types of strategies to facilitate progress along work-based or education/training-based routes to increase employment retention or advancement. As mentioned above, this particular report focuses on 12 of the 16 ERA models; it excludes the models that targeted "harder-to-employ" individuals. (Results for these models will be presented in other reports.) For the 12 models examined in this report, this section first highlights three of the major strategies used. Next, the ERA target groups (or served populations) are described. Finally, the section discusses the various types of outcomes that were sought by model designers and program operators.

General Strategies of the ERA Models and Their Rationales

The strategies adopted by states and localities in their ERA program models were developed in accordance with program operators' views of the primary impediments to retention

[19]Some past ERA reports listed 15 ERA models. The total increased to 16 to recognize that one of the tests in Riverside, California, actually involved two models with different sets of service providers and program rules. In addition, in light of the significant differences in implementation in the three sites that operated one of the 16 models (the Texas model), effectiveness estimates for the Texas model are presented by site. Thus, in total, the project yields 18 independent estimates of site effectiveness, where "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 sites.

[20]A few ERA models (not included in this report) focused on an early stage in individuals' employment careers and sought to increase the proportion of "harder-to-employ" people who entered the labor market.

and advancement faced by individuals in their chosen target populations. None of the models, however, attempted to address labor market, or demand-side, issues. They did not, for example, seek to affect hiring, training, staffing, or advancement in particular industry sectors. Rather, all the models attempted to address supply-side, or "worker-based," obstacles to economic success.

Within the broad category of worker-based strategies, the ERA models can be viewed as embodying three types of strategies. Some models sought to encourage retention and advancement by focusing on these goals when individuals were not employed but were seeking work; some models delivered services in new ways; and some models provided new types of services or new combinations of services. These strategies were not set forth at the outset of the ERA project as site selection criteria; rather, these strategies are presented here as a way of capturing the diversity of the studied ERA models, and, in fact, any one ERA model often was an example of the use of two or all three of these strategies. Each of these three types of strategies and their rationales are described below. Finally, the models were intended to be different from those studied as part of the Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD), and a brief description of how the ERA and PESD models differed is presented.

Delivering Services to Individuals When They Were Not Employed

As shown in Table 1.2, several ERA models sought to increase employment retention and advancement by **providing services to individuals who were not employed but looking for jobs.** Designers of these models hoped that the relationships forged between program staff and individuals while they were searching for jobs would continue after individuals found jobs. In the Texas ERA model, for example, staff members began working with TANF applicants and recipients while they were seeking employment and then continued to work with individuals after they found jobs and even after they left the TANF rolls. Designers also, in some models, sought to improve employment retention and, eventually, advancement, by counseling unemployed individuals to seek jobs that were in — or related to — their fields of interest, as opposed to seeking any type of job during a job search. This was based on evidence from previous research on preemployment programs that suggested that the message delivered in group job sessions about the types of jobs to seek could affect individuals' employment and earnings. In the Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club ERA model, for example, program participants were urged to seek their most desired job in their area of interest during a five-week job club. If that most desired job was not attainable, the individual could "step down" the search to the next most desired job in that field, with further steps "down" if jobs were not secured.[21]

[21]Designers of another model — the South Carolina ERA model — concerned about sustained poverty among TANF leavers, sought to provide services to another "new" target group: individuals who had left TANF up to three years earlier. When contacted by program staff, some of these individuals were not em-
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Delivering Services in New Ways

Many of the ERA models used different types of innovative organizational features to deliver retention or advancement services in new ways. While TANF agencies almost always had lead roles in implementing the ERA models, a number of models provided program services through **partnerships between welfare agency staff and staff from other organizations** — for example, community colleges, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop contractors, nonprofit employment service providers, and community-based organizations. The rationales for using these service delivery arrangements were severalfold. Some model designers expected that such partnerships would leverage resources. Others anticipated that the arrangements would bring together different types of services and expertise in one location and, thus, would better serve program participants. In the Medford ERA model, for example, a partnership to operate the program was developed between the welfare agency and a nonprofit employment service provider that was a WIA contractor. The partnership was intended to leverage this contractor's expertise and workforce development network. For similar reasons, a community college that also operated a WIA One-Stop Center was part of the partnership operating the Eugene ERA model. Finally, other model designers expected that nongovernmental organizations would be more familiar than governmental agencies with the jobs and services available in a community and, furthermore, that individuals would be more likely to engage with staff from nonwelfare organizations after leaving TANF. This was another motivation for the partnerships developed in the Medford and Eugene ERA models and also came into play in the development of the Riverside PASS ERA model. In Riverside PASS, several community-based organizations and a community college were chosen to provide all services.

Many ERA models included **increased staff flexibility,** for staff to work flexible hours and to meet with program participants in a variety of locations, under the expectation that this would make it easier for working program participants to interact with program staff. In the Eugene ERA model, for example, weekly office hours were held at a community college. Staff in a number of programs also could meet with participants in the evenings or during weekends.

A few ERA models sought to develop **linkages with employers.** Designers of the Chicago ERA model, for example, contracted with a for-profit company, which had strong relationships with local employers, to provide all ERA services, under the expectation that the use of this provider would facilitate the identification of higher-paying jobs and the placement of ERA participants into those jobs. Staff operating the Texas ERA model, as another example, conducted occasional meetings with program participants at their workplace, sometimes meeting with staff at the employer's work site to discuss opportunities for advancement that existed with

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ployed, while others were employed. Services provided in this model were tailored to individuals' specific situations and goals.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 1.2

ERA Models: Overview of Target Populations, Selected Ways of Delivering Services, and Selected Types of Services

	Target Populations														
	Not employed and receiving TANF					Employed and receiving TANF				Employed and not receiving TANF				
	Texas													
	Corpus Christi	*Fort Worth*	*Houston*	*Los Angeles EJC*	*Salem*	*Chicago*	*Los Angeles RFS*	*Riverside Training Focused*	*Riverside Work Plus*	*Cleveland*	*Eugene*	*Medford*	*Riverside PASS*	*South Carolina*
Ways of delivering services														
Nongovernmental organization as a provider of services	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Flexible staff hours and/or locations	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Employer linkages	✓	✓				✓				✓				
Types of services														
Financial work incentives	✓	✓	✓			✓								✓
Supported advancement through job change	✓	✓				✓						✓		
Education and training referrals and/or incentives						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTES: For the definitions of these features, see Chapter 2. For discussion of the full set of features, by model, see Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Check marks indicate that the feature is present in the ERA model.

The models and their implementation often evolved over the study period. This table presents the features experienced by the majority of the study participants for the greatest extent of time.

The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites all operated the Texas ERA model.

that employer. Finally, as another example, designers of the Cleveland ERA model sought to "take the services to the workers" and situated all ERA services at individuals' places of employment (in this case, long-term nursing care facilities), to make it as easy and convenient as possible for program participants to access retention-related services and to engage employers in the effort.[22]

Delivering New Types of Services or New Combinations of Services

The ERA models provided some common services, most of which have been offered in previous and current programs. All the models, for example, used one-on-one staff-client interactions as the platform from which program services were delivered, although they differed regarding how this was done, that is, what was discussed during staff-client interactions, the intensity of the interactions, and staff configurations and roles. In addition, job search assistance of some type was provided in almost all the models, to initially get individuals into jobs, to get them new jobs if they left or lost a job, and/or to find people better jobs while they were working. In-depth assessments of individuals' needs, interests, and employment barriers were also done in many sites, and referrals to mental health or substance abuse treatment or counseling could be made.

All the ERA models, however, experimented with providing new types of services or combinations of services. Several models provided **financial incentives or rewards** connected to employment — of a substantial amount in one model, the Texas model. Program designers were motivated by the results of previous studies indicating that supplementing the earnings of low-wage workers can promote employment retention, by giving people additional income to meet their expenses or by giving them greater incentive to keep working. There was also an expectation that this feature could encourage employment entry and increase individuals' implicit wage levels. In the Texas ERA model, for example, program participants were offered monthly stipends of $200 for each month in which they worked at least 30 hours per week. In the South Carolina model, participants were offered $50 if they increased their wage by 8 percent or more, moved from a part-time job to a full-time one, or moved to a job with benefits. Other types of incentives were also offered in some models. In the Chicago model, for example, participants were offered $75 transit passes if they returned for office visits.

Other models sought to promote advancement through **encouragement to change jobs.** In these models, staff encouraged individuals to move from lower-paying jobs to higher-

[22]While the Cleveland ERA model might appear to be a "demand-side" intervention, given the location of its services at individuals' workplaces, the model did not have any components that sought to affect hiring, staffing, or promotion practices at the workplace. Only one model component — the supervisory training provided to staff who supervised low-wage workers at the involved employers — attempted to improve a workplace practice.

paying ones; supported individuals when they made such changes; and, in the case of one model (the Chicago ERA model), set up job interviews for individuals with employers who had specific, higher-paying job openings.

Many models provided **encouragement for employed individuals to participate in education and training** and offered assistance to help individuals balance education or training participation with employment. Designers of these models viewed skills acquisition as a route to sustained employment and eventual advancement, but they believed that working individuals needed encouragement and support to engage and persist in education or training, given the difficultly of balancing parenting, work, and schooling. The Riverside Training Focused model, for example, sought to improve access to education and training by allowing individuals to replace required weekly work hours with hours of education and training for up to two years, by directing participants to specific education and training providers and programs, and by paying for selected education and training slots, if needed.

Finally, many of the models provided individuals with individualized **counseling on job-related issues,** under the expectation that this could both prevent unnecessary job loss and educate workers on how to advance at their current job.

Departing from Programs Studied in the PESD Project

The models studied under the ERA project also were designed to be different from the ones studied in the Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD), given the general lack of economic improvements found in PESD. The ERA models departed from the PESD programs along several dimensions, as described in Box 1.1.

ERA Model Target Groups

While almost all the models targeted current or former recipients of TANF, the models differed in terms of *when* services were first provided, and *to whom.* Findings for the ERA models are grouped in this report according to the models' target populations, that is, according to when staff in the models first provided services to individuals. Separate chapters examine ERA models that served unemployed TANF recipients (Chapter 3), models that served employed TANF recipients (Chapter 4), and models that served individuals who were employed and not receiving TANF (Chapter 5).

Presenting the results in these three target groupings has several advantages. First, grouping the models allows practitioners who are planning to implement a program for a specific target population to easily see the range of ERA program models that were implemented for that population and also the models' results. Second, given that the models in each grouping tend to have similar goals, this organization of models facilitates an assessment of

Box 1.1

How Did the ERA Models Differ from the PESD Programs?

The Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD) was a four-site project that examined the effectiveness of providing case management to newly employed welfare recipients. The project used a random assignment research design. Staff in the 1994 to 1996 PESD programs were able to contact most of the individuals randomly assigned to the program group and offer them services. The most common services utilized in the programs were counseling and work-expense payments. The PESD programs generally failed, however, to increase employment retention or earnings.[*] The ERA models differed from the PESD programs in several ways:

- **ERA had greater customization of services.** Most of the ERA models sought to tailor services to particular target groups and often had divergent goals for the different groups (for example, retention for newly employed individuals and advancement for those steadily employed). In contrast, staff in the PESD programs worked only with newly employed welfare recipients, and services were aimed primarily at increasing retention.

- **ERA staff worked with individuals who were not employed.** In about half the ERA models, program staff first started working with individuals when they were not employed. These services were provided to establish relationships between ERA participants and program staff prior to job entry, to encourage participants to start thinking about retention and advancement prior to taking a job, and to attempt to place participants in better initial jobs. In contrast, PESD staff did not work with individuals until they had found jobs.

- **ERA models included more services, additional features.** As examples, some ERA models offered financial work incentives to ERA participants, in addition to other services; other models sought to provide more opportunities for training; one model had staff stationed at workplaces; and one model had a job search approach focused on individuals' careers of interest.

- **ERA had greater diversity of primary service providers.** Primary service providers in the ERA models included organizations such as community colleges, nonprofit employment agencies, community-based organizations, and for-profit organizations — in addition to welfare agencies. The welfare agency often partnered with these other organizations. In the PESD programs, staff in welfare agencies provided all services.

- **ERA had more variation in service delivery methods.** ERA models experimented with new ways to deliver services — for example, by organizing staff and staff roles differently, placing a greater emphasis on career counseling and coaching, lowering caseloads, providing more proactive follow-up, increasing the availability of staff to individuals, implementing more comprehensive assessments, and providing a stronger focus on education and training.

[*]Rangarajan and Novak (1999).

how well similar or different strategies worked in achieving similar goals for roughly similar populations. Finally, the groupings allow one to see whether ERA program services tend to work better when initiated at one or another point in individuals' employment careers — for example, when people are looking for work or when they are already in work.

It should be kept in mind, however, that many ERA sample members moved in and out of work and on and off TANF over the ERA follow-up period, so the circumstances of the individuals in the model tests are not static. Staff in the ERA programs in each of the three target groupings had to provide different types of services over time, as sample members' employment and welfare situations changed. Furthermore, changes in sample members' situations did not always go in one direction. While many unemployed sample members eventually found jobs, a sizable proportion of those who were employed as of study entry and who worked steadily in the first year of follow-up did not work or worked only intermittently in the second year of follow-up. Similarly, some sample members who were not TANF recipients as of study entry became TANF recipients at some point during the follow-up period. Finally, states' TANF grant levels and earnings disregard policies[23] also influenced these target groupings: some employed TANF recipients in one state would be employed TANF leavers in another state.

Sample members' changing employment and welfare situations also played a role in how long ERA program services were provided to individuals, and this differed by model. In some models, individuals could receive services as long as they had a connection with TANF. In other models, individuals could receive services for a set period of time — for example, for one year in one model.

Types of Retention and Advancement Sought in ERA

ERA model designers sought to achieve different types of employment retention and advancement. Regarding retention, the models in many cases were designed to encourage workers to stay employed in the job they held as of staff's first contact with them, with staff counseling individuals regarding on-the-job issues or personal or family problems that might interfere with their job performance. In many cases, models were also — or instead — designed to encourage workers to maximize the time that they were employed in any job and not necessarily in the job they held as of program staff's first contact with them — through, for example, the provision of help to quickly find another job following a job loss or the provision of financial incentives tied to employment (as opposed to job) retention. Finally, in some models where

[23]The earnings disregard is the amount or proportion of earnings that is not counted when calculating the size of a welfare grant. The earnings disregard creates a greater incentive to work by allowing welfare recipients to keep a large portion of their welfare check when they find a job.

advancement was not an explicit goal, employment retention was viewed as a long-term strategy to foster advancement, as individuals built up steady work experience and skills.

In most cases, model designers defined advancement broadly, as increased earnings. In these cases, longer employment spells with fewer gaps between them, increases in work hours, and wage increases would all contribute to increased earnings. Operators of at least one model viewed advancement as movement from informal jobs with few benefits to more formal jobs with more benefits, particularly if there were wage increases. More formal jobs also increased the opportunity for individuals to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, Social Security benefits, and Medicare. Advancement also involved seeking to place individuals who were working in formal jobs into better, more highly-paid jobs. In addition, the provision of help to quickly find another job following a job loss was seen in some models as a way not only to increase employment retention but also as a way to foster advancement, if a better job than the last job could be obtained. Finally, improvements in fringe benefits received, job stability, working conditions, or opportunities for promotion were also often viewed as aspects of advancement.

Sometimes "retention" and "advancement" were complementary, as when employment retention allowed an individual to acquire the work experience, job skills, and seniority that led to a promotion or a better résumé for a prospective new employer. Sometimes, however, they were at odds, as when an individual would forgo employment in order to participate full time in education or training.

The ERA Research Design

Each of the ERA models discussed in this report was studied using a random assignment evaluation design — a methodology that allows practitioners and policymakers to have a high degree of confidence in the results. In each site, individuals who met the ERA eligibility criteria (which varied by site) were assigned, at random, to a program group, usually called "the ERA group," or to a control group. Members of the program group were recruited for (and, in some sites, were required to participate in) the services offered by the ERA program, while those in the control group were not eligible for ERA services. Both groups were eligible for the services and supports generally available in the site's community and, often, for the site's standard welfare-to-work program or, in some cases, minimal efforts that the site already had in place to provide assistance to individuals who found jobs. Both groups also were eligible for the child care and transportation assistance that is normally provided to TANF recipients or to working TANF leavers, either to support participation in employment-promoting activities or in employment itself. The control groups thus were not "no service" groups. Rather, each site's control group is the benchmark against which that site's ERA approach is assessed, and the employment retention and advancement outcomes of the control group over time represent what

would have happened in the absence of the site's ERA program. Comparisons between the program group and the control group thus represent the "added value" of the ERA services.[24] Table 1.3 briefly summarizes the program-control treatment comparisons examined in each of the ERA tests discussed in this report.

Sample Sizes and Follow-Up Periods

In total, over 45,000 individuals were randomly assigned to research groups as part of ERA, starting in 2000 in the earliest-starting test and ending in 2004 in the latest-starting test.[25] In each site, MDRC tracked individuals in both research groups for three to four years following their random assignment, using administrative records — such as unemployment insurance records, welfare records, and food stamp records — and sample member surveys. The random assignment process ensured that when individuals entered the study, there were no systematic differences in sample members' characteristics, measured or unmeasured, between the research groups. Thus, any differences between them that emerge after random assignment (for example, in employment rates or average earnings) can be attributed to the site's ERA model — in contrast to services and supports already available in the sites.

The Definition of "Impacts"

Differences in outcomes between the research groups after random assignment are known as "impacts," and they indicate the effects of the ERA program in each site. Tests of statistical significance were performed on all impacts presented in the report, to determine whether an impact could confidently be attributed to an ERA program. Except where otherwise indicated, only statistically significant impacts are discussed in the report.[26]

The above-described experimental (random assignment) design enables researchers to attribute impacts to the effects of the studied ERA models with a high degree of confidence. Each ERA model, however, offered a package of services and supports to individuals. The type of random assignment design that was implemented in ERA does not support the parsing out of the relative contributions of specific program design or implementation features to the models' economic impacts.

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[24]Across the sites, the control group benchmark differed, in terms of the types of services for which control group members were eligible, the extent of services, and how well known and readily accessible the services were. None of the control groups, however, can be strictly considered to be a "no service" group.

[25]Outcomes for approximately 27,000 sample members are analyzed in this report. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the other documents in which results for the remaining sample members will be presented.

[26]An impact is considered statistically significant if there is less than a 10 percent probability that the estimated difference would have occurred by chance in the absence of any effect of the program. The report's tables and figures note statistical significance at the 10 percent, 5 percent, and 1 percent levels.

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Table 1.3

Summary of Comparisons Examined in Each ERA Test

Program	Program Group Treatment	Control Group Treatment
Texas Corpus Christi Fort Worth Houston	Mandatory preemployment job search assistance to continue to recieve TANF grant, followed by voluntary postemployment assistance (which could include employer site visits and reemployment assistance), with a monthly stipend of $200 for former TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week; services provided by staff in nonprofit organizations contracted by local workforce agencies	Mandatory (for TANF receipt) preemployment job search assistance, followed by limited, voluntary postemployment assistance with no stipend; services provided by staff in nonprofit organizations contracted by local workforce agencies
Los Angeles EJC	Mandatory (for TANF receipt) 5-week job club focused on career development activities and job search targeted to individuals' careers of interest; operated jointly by county welfare and education agency staff	Mandatory (for TANF receipt), traditional 3-week job club focused on getting any type of job quickly; operated jointly by county welfare and education agency staff
Salem	Mandatory (for TANF receipt) preemployment job search assistance and voluntary postemployment services; jointly provided by welfare agency and community college staff located at the WIA One-Stop Career Center	Mandatory (for TANF receipt) preemployment job search assistance services; jointly provided by welfare agency and community college staff located at the welfare office
Chicago	Mandatory (in addition to existing TANF requirements), work-focused advancement program offering targeted job search assistance and help to identify and access career ladders; provided by staff in a private, for-profit firm.	Mandatory (standard TANF requirements) less intensive and more retention-oriented program; provided by staff at the local welfare agency

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Program	Program Group Treatment	Control Group Treatment
Los Angeles RFS	Voluntary (beyond TANF work requirements), intensely marketed, individualized retention and advancement program; administered by welfare agency staff	Voluntary (beyond TANF work requirements), less individualized, and more "rule-bound" postemployment program; administered by welfare agency staff
Riverside Training Focused	Education/training-focused advancement program with flexibility to reduce or eliminate required work hours (for TANF receipt) if participating in education or training; operated by workforce agency	Work-focused advancement program with no flexibility to reduce or eliminate required work hours (for TANF receipt) if participating in education or training; operated by county welfare agency
Riverside Work Plus	Education/training-focused advancement program with less flexibility (compared to the Riverside Training Focused program) to reduce or eliminate required work hours (for TANF receipt) if participating in education or training; operated by county welfare agency	Work-focused advancement program with no flexibility to reduce or eliminate required work hours (for TANF receipt) if participating in education or training; operated by county welfare agency
Cleveland	Voluntary (with active recruitment), employer-based employment retention program, including ongoing staff-client relationships, weekly peer support groups, and supervisory trainings; provided by a community-based organization	Voluntary (intermittently offered) employer-based counseling, should individuals choose to pursue it
Eugene	Voluntary, individualized program, including career counseling and service referals; provided through a welfare agency partnership with a community college and WIA contractor	Voluntary, nonindividualized postemployment services normally offered in the community, should individuals choose to pursue them
Medford	Voluntary (with active recruitment), individualized retention and advancement program, including career counseling and service referrals, provided through a welfare agency partnership with a nonprofit employment service provider	Voluntary, nonindividualized postemployment services normally offered in the community, should individuals choose to pursue them

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Program	Program Group Treatment	Control Group Treatment
Riverside PASS	Voluntary, marketed, individualized retention and advancement program; provided primarily by three community-based organizations and a community college	Voluntary, less-intensive postemployment services provided by staff in local welfare agency, should individuals choose to pursue them
South Carolina	Voluntary program (with active recruitment) offering individualized job placement, retention, and advancement services with modest financial incentives for program engagement and employment; provided by a welfare agency	Voluntary employment-related services normally available in the community, should individuals choose to pursue them

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites all operated the Texas ERA model.

In a few places in this report, comparisons are reported that are not experimental. Most such "nonexperimental analyses" examine earnings only among sample members who were employed. Since there may be differences in the characteristics of program group and control group members who were employed, any differences in outcomes may not necessarily be attributable to the ERA program. Statistical tests are not performed for these analyses. The text and tables make it clear when comparisons are nonexperimental.

As a means of advancing the state of knowledge in this field about what types of interventions should be studied further in the future — and to provide guidance to practitioners about how programs that aim to promote employment retention and advancement among low-wage workers might best be designed and operated — systematic nonexperimental analyses are also being undertaken as part of ERA. These analyses will be described in future ERA documents.

The Implications of *When* Random Assignment Occurred

Random assignment occurred at different points in the various ERA tests, but broad patterns exist within each of the three target groupings. In general, individuals were randomly assigned without regard to whether they were interested in receiving retention/advancement services; that is, individuals usually were automatically included in the study and in the random assignment process if they met a site's eligibility criteria. But, after random assignment occurred, in most models those who were assigned to the program group were not required to participate in retention/advancement services. While in some models individuals were required after random assignment to look for jobs if they were unemployed, in most models, individuals' participation in retention/advancement services — that is, the ERA services that were generally added to preexisting programs — was voluntary. As a result, program staff usually needed to market ERA services to those who were randomly assigned to the program group; individuals included in the samples were not necessarily interested in receiving such services, required to participate in them, or motivated to seek them out on their own initiative. Levels of service receipt are important in a random assignment study, since, as discussed below, to the extent that participation in services is low in both the program and the control group, the program-control difference in service receipt will be small, lowering the probability that the models will produce positive impacts on employment or earnings.

For **models that targeted unemployed TANF recipients,** random assignment occurred when individuals applied for TANF or were determined to be eligible to continue to receive TANF. In these model tests, persons randomly assigned to the program groups were required to participate in activities aimed at placing them in jobs, and many of them did so; once they were employed, participation in ERA and other services was generally voluntary, and participation in ERA services was not as universal.

For **models that targeted employed TANF recipients,** random assignment generally occurred when welfare agency staff received notice that a welfare recipient had found a job or had held a job for a certain period of time while receiving TANF. In most of these cases, individuals who were randomly assigned to the program groups were required to work or participate in work-related activities for a certain number of hours each week, in line with general TANF requirements, but they were not necessarily required to participate in ERA activities.

For **models that targeted individuals who were employed and not receiving TANF,** random assignment occurred at a different point in each model test. In several of the tests, individuals were randomly assigned when welfare agency staff received notice that they had become ineligible for TANF due to earnings above a certain level. In two of these tests, random assignment was done regardless of individuals' interest in services; in one of these tests, individuals were asked whether they were interested in receiving postemployment services, and, if so, they were randomly assigned. In one of the other tests in this grouping, TANF leavers were randomly assigned regardless of their current employment status or interest in receiving ERA services. In the final test in this grouping, low-wage workers at long-term nursing care facilities who were interested in receiving ERA-type services were randomly assigned. Thus, while some sample members in this final grouping of tests were likely interested in receiving ERA-like services and, if placed in a control group, may have sought such services out on their own, this was not necessarily the case for the vast majority.

Economic Environments and Service Settings of the ERA Tests

As discussed at the outset of this chapter, broad economic trends have elevated the importance of steady employment and eventual wage advances as means to economic well-being and self-sufficiency for low-wage workers. In addition, the current economic climate has increased the number of low-wage workers at risk of losing jobs and advancement opportunities. This section discusses the economic environments of the ERA programs' operation and follow-up periods (roughly 2001 through 2007), as well as the services that would have been available to control group members during this time period.

Economic Environments

The ERA programs operated in a fairly challenging labor market context. The United States economy was in a recessionary state for most of 2001. The unemployment rate reached a high of 6 percent in 2003, and employment (that is, the number of jobs reported by employers) did not return to prerecession levels until 2005. This fairly long postrecession labor market slump — often referred to as a "jobless recovery" due to the lack of labor market gains despite

increases in productivity and other macroeconomic indicators — was particularly difficult for low-wage workers.[27]

There was also considerable regional variation in labor market conditions around the country during the period under study in ERA. In one ERA site, for example, there was job growth in every year between 2000 and 2007, and most of the unemployment was due to workers' transitioning into the labor market and between jobs. In contrast, as another example, another site's unemployment rate remained high, and the number of jobs in the area steadily declined.

The random assignment evaluation design equalizes the effect of varying labor market conditions between the control and program groups. That is, whether the site had an expanding, stagnant, or contracting labor market is "controlled for" by the design and so is not a factor in the size, direction, and/or existence of differences in the outcomes of program group members compared with control group members. Thus, the economic environments surrounding the ERA tests do not explain the programs' impacts. Placing the impacts within a site's labor market context, however, can assist in understanding why a program produced the observed impacts.[28]

Preexisting Services and Supports

Another environmental factor was the preexisting services and supports available in the sites' communities. In many sites, as is discussed in the report, control group members participated in services at significant levels. This is likely due to two developments. First, the services and supports offered to control group members as part of the sites' "standard" welfare-to-work programs reflected localities' responses to the many welfare reform initiatives put into place since the late 1980s and, possibly, to research findings about effective approaches. These initiatives included the 1988 and 1996 welfare reform acts that changed the conditions of welfare and the 1998 reform of the workforce development system. The services and supports available to control group members also reflected changes in welfare earnings disregard policies and expansions in the Food Stamp Program, child care assistance, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that have increasingly supported low-income individuals who work. Overall, these changes have resulted in more services and supports being offered to low-wage workers. Second, control group members in the ERA study often had access to services in their greater environments, provided by community colleges, workforce agencies, and other organizations.

[27]Economic Policy Institute (2006).

[28]For each site discussed in this report, a short summary of the local economic conditions is included. This summary provides information as to the conditions, but it does not attempt to explain "why" the local economic conditions in any given site are relatively good or bad.

These services would have been in addition to what the sites' welfare agencies would have offered as part of their welfare-to-work programs or minimal postemployment services.

Characteristics of ERA Sample Members and the Labor Market Behavior of Control Group Members

Across the sites, sample members in the ERA tests were primarily female single parents who were former or current welfare recipients.[29] At study entry, the average sample member had more than one child, and almost two-thirds had at least one child who was an infant or toddler. Approximately half the sample members did not have a high school diploma, and more than a third had a welfare receipt history of two years or longer. Among those for whom an employment history was available, over 90 percent had had some employment in the past three years, but less than a third had worked for more than 24 months in that period. Considering ERA sample members who were employed as of random assignment, less than half worked full-time hours.[30] While the characteristics of sample members varied across the sites, many sample members at each site faced multiple obstacles to finding and/or keeping employment.[31]

As discussed above, retention of employment and advancement in the labor market has been difficult for low-wage workers. The employment patterns of the ERA control group members, from their study enrollment through the follow-up period covered in this report, illustrate these issues. In ERA site tests targeting employed current or former welfare recipients, unemployment insurance data, which are available in quarterly "chunks," indicate that only half the control group members who were employed in the quarter following random assignment were employed continuously for two years. Switching the focus to the first job (employer) after random assignment, average job tenure in site tests targeting nonemployed recipients ranged from 1.4 quarters to 1.7 quarters, or fewer than six months; in site tests targeting employed recipients, these figures were higher, with average job tenure ranging from 3.7 quarters to 5.6 quarters.

[29]The Cleveland ERA test's sample was distinct from the samples in the other sites. Cleveland sample members had little or no recent connection to public assistance, and they were not necessarily single parents.

[30]The Cleveland sample is an exception to this case as well; over 80 percent of Cleveland sample members were full-time workers.

[31]ERA sample members, most of whom were low-wage workers, represent a particular subset of the general population of low-wage workers. Nationally, about half of all low-wage workers are female, and only a fifth are in single-parent households. In contrast to the ERA sample, only a minority of low-wage workers nationally do not have at least a high school diploma or equivalent credential, and almost three-quarters of them work full-time hours. (These characteristics of the national population of low-wage workers are based on calculations from the March 2005 Current Population Survey [U.S. Census Bureau, 2005].)

Moreover, job loss was often very quick. Data from the ERA 12-Month Survey suggest that about half of sample members in the model tests targeting employed individuals had either already become unemployed during the period between being identified as eligible for ERA and being randomly assigned or had left the job that they held as of random assignment within 90 days.

The difficulties in remaining employed are reflected in the modest earnings changes observed for control group members. Between the first and second years after random assignment, their average annual earnings increased by about $500. However, only a third of the control group members had higher earnings in the second year than in the first, and about half of those with an earnings gain experienced an improvement of less than $1,000 per quarter. As a further indication of employment instability, no earnings change statistic over the first two years of follow-up could be calculated for 43 percent of the control group members because they were not employed in one or both years.

While the ERA sample members represent a particular subset of the low-wage worker population, their retention and advancement difficulties are typical of the broader population. Small proportions of low-wage workers are able to remain consistently employed, increase their earnings, and move up in the workforce permanently; most, however, do not.[32]

Research Questions Addressed in This Report

In brief, this report addresses the following major questions.

- **Implementation.** What does it take to mount these types of programs? What methods did program staff use to engage targeted individuals? What services were delivered? To what extent did the ERA programs increase engagement and deliver different types of services, relative to what normally would happen?

- **Impacts.** To what extent did the ERA models improve employment, employment retention, and advancement beyond the levels attained by control group members, over a three- to four-year follow-up period?

Additional questions relating to the costs and benefits of selected ERA models are addressed in a companion report.[33] That document examines such questions as: To what extent did selected ERA programs produce gains or losses from different perspectives — those of the

[32]See Theodos and Bednarzik (2006); Gottschalk (1982); Smith and Vavrichek (1992); Swaim (1997).
[33]Redcross, Deitch, and Farrell (2010).

participants, overall government budgets, and society as a whole? What was the cost-effectiveness of these programs?

Findings from all the models in the ERA project contribute to addressing all the above questions. All the sites involved in ERA stepped forward to innovate in a challenging and important area of social policy and practice, and knowledge can be gained from models that did not show economic impacts as well as from those that did.

Considerations in Interpreting ERA Impacts

As discussed above, states and localities used a number of different strategies in their program models to promote employment retention and advancement. When actually put into the field, however, the implementation of the ERA models often differed in some ways from the models as they were designed. In some cases, for example, despite training provided by MDRC and ERA project consultants, program staff did not have the experience or skills needed to fully provide the types of services envisioned in a model. In a few cases, as another example, funding cuts forced alterations in the model designs toward the end of their implementation periods.[34]

In addition, take-up of services by program group members sometimes varied from the levels originally expected, and this often differed by type of service or activity. In models targeted to TANF recipients, participation in activities such as job search assistance or even education or training courses was often fairly high, as these activities were often mandated as part of individuals' TANF quid pro quo. Even among individuals not receiving TANF, program group members' participation rates in these activities were sometimes substantial. In contrast, program group members' participation in other types of activities (such as receiving counseling or help relating to how to deal with problems on a job, assess one's career aptitudes and possible options, or find a better job while working) was often low — among those both on and off the TANF rolls.

In a random assignment evaluation, however, the activities of the control group are as important to take into account as those of the program group. In many of the ERA models examined in this report, the control group levels of participation in some activities were higher than expected. But control group levels of participation — and whether or not the levels were "unexpected" — differed by the type of service or activity.

[34]In fact, a test of an ERA model initially included in the ERA project — operated in Memphis, Tennessee — was dropped from the project early on, due to the site's inability to implement the model. In addition, evaluation activities for one of the 16 tests included in ERA — a test of the Portland, Oregon, Career Builders model, which served harder-to-employ individuals — eventually were curtailed after it became clear that the model's innovative features could not be implemented.

As a result, program-control differences in service receipt or activity participation varied by model as well as by type of service or activity. In some cases, these differences were small, due to low rates of receipt or participation among both program and control group members; in some other cases, these differences were small for another reason: higher-than-expected rates of service receipt or participation by the control group members that were not exceeded by the rates of the program group members. In cases where there were small "treatment" differences, the probability of achieving positive effects on retention and advancement was lowered.

All the above factors — the ways in which the ERA models deviated from their designs in their actual implementation, the levels of participation by program group members in various types of services and activities, and the contrasts between the program and control group members' participation in the different services and activities — need to be taken into account when interpreting the impact findings presented in this report. In the conclusions of the presentations of findings for each ERA model in this report, each of these factors is discussed, as a way of helping readers interpret the economic impacts for that model. In addition, the last chapter of the report uses these factors to broadly assess the impacts for groupings of ERA models.

The Structure of This Report

The structure of the following chapters is designed to allow readers to take several pathways through the report, given that this report serves as the foundation for a number of analytical papers, syntheses, and practice briefs that will be forthcoming from the ERA project. The report's structure is outlined below.

Chapter 2 presents information about the ERA project's research samples and data sources. It also describes the key implementation and economic outcome measures that are used throughout the report.

Following Chapter 2, results are presented in three separate chapters that group the ERA models according to the status of their target populations as of study entry. Each chapter first discusses a model's history, target population, and significance; then it presents the model's implementation features and economic impacts.

The groupings of ERA models, and the chapters covering them, are as follows:

- **Models serving unemployed TANF recipients (Chapter 3).** Three models first provided services when individuals were not employed and were receiving TANF: the Texas model (operated in three sites), the Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club (EJC) model, and the Salem model.

- **Models serving employed TANF recipients (Chapter 4).** Four models first provided services when individuals were employed and were receiving TANF: the Chicago, Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS), Riverside Training Focused, and Riverside Work Plus models.

- **Models serving employed non-TANF recipients (Chapter 5).** Five models first provided services when individuals were employed and not receiving TANF: the Cleveland, Eugene, Medford, Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS), and South Carolina models.[35]

Because the economic effects that are measured in the ERA project reflect what actually happened to individuals when they were eligible for the ERA models, the focus of the implementation discussions in the above three chapters is on the services that were actually delivered as sites implemented these models — not on what was designed to occur. Implementation issues were common, although they varied in their severity.

Chapter 6, the final chapter of the report, presents a summary of the ERA effectiveness results for each of the three groupings of models and provides some concluding thoughts.

Five **appendixes** support the results presented in this report. Appendixes A, B, and C contain tables of results that are drawn on heavily in the main results chapters. Appendix D includes tables that show secondary measures from the 42-month survey and also presents the 42-month survey response analysis. Appendix E contains citations for the ERA interim reports that discuss the program models and sites included in this report. Box 1.2 explains how to interpret the impact tables presented in the ERA evaluation.

[35]While included in this grouping, the South Carolina model served both employed and nonemployed TANF leavers. The model sought to find and provide services to individuals who had left TANF up to three years earlier. When contacted by program staff, some of these individuals were not employed.

Box 1.2

How to Read the Impact Tables in the ERA Evaluation

Most tables in this report use a similar format, illustrated below. The data show a series of participation outcomes for the ERA group and the control group. For example, the table shows that about 60 (60.2) percent of the ERA group and about 48 (47.7) percent of the control group "ever had contact with staff/employment program."

Because individuals were assigned randomly either to the ERA group or to the control group, the effects of the program can be estimated by the difference in outcomes between the two groups. The "Difference (Impact)" column in the table shows the differences between the two research groups' participation rates — that is, the program's impacts on participation. For example, the impact on "ever had contact with staff/employment program" can be calculated by subtracting 47.7 percent from 60.2 percent, yielding 12.5 percentage points.

Differences marked with asterisks are "statistically significant," meaning that it is quite unlikely that the differences arose by chance. The number of asterisks indicates the level of statistical significance of the impact (the lower the level, the less likely that the impact is due to chance). One asterisk corresponds to the 10 percent level; two asterisks, the 5 percent level; and three asterisks, the 1 percent level. The p-values show the exact levels of significance. For example, as shown below, the ERA group had a statistically significant impact of 12.5 percentage points at the 5 percent level on the measure "ever had contact with staff/employment program."

Impacts on Participation Outcomes

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Engagement					
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	60.2	47.7	12.5	**	0.041
Average number of contacts with staff	6.6	6.4	0.3		0.889
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	27.2	16.5	10.7	**	0.036

Chapter 2

Sample Sizes, Data Sources, and Measures

This chapter provides background information on the research samples, data sources, and outcome measures that are used in the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project and are discussed in the following three chapters. Chapter 1 demonstrates the diversity and innovation of the ERA programs, in terms of their goals, strategies, and target populations. In order to capture and systematically analyze this diversity, a standardized set of implementation and economic outcome measures are used in this report. The implementation measures convey what was actually tested in ERA, and they facilitate systematic descriptions of how the ERA programs rolled out and the extent to which services were used. The economic measures assess improvements in retention and advancement outcomes. The chapter begins with an overview of sample sizes and data sources and then discusses implementation and economic outcome measures.

Sample Sizes and Data Sources

Sample Sizes

Figure 2.1 shows the random assignment dates, data follow-up periods, and sample sizes for each of the ERA tests discussed in this report. Large sample sizes enable reliable estimates of the program impacts. As noted in Chapter 1, the ERA evaluation followed over 45,000 individuals. The sample followed for this report is smaller because this report does not include results for three models that served harder-to-employ individuals and does not include outcomes for two-parent families. Results for these models and sample members will be shared in future documents.

Approximately 27,000 individuals are followed for this report, and sample members are spread fairly evenly over tests in the three target groups relating to employment or nonemployment and receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): unemployed TANF recipients = 8,018; employed TANF recipients = 10,457; and employed non-TANF recipients = 8,586.

Considering the tests that are covered in this report, the earliest began random assignment in October 2000 (the Corpus Christi and Fort Worth sites of the Texas ERA model), and the latest concluded random assignment in September 2004 (the Los Angeles Enhanced Job

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Figure 2.1

Timelines and Sample Sizes, by Site

Site	Year								Total Sample Size		
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Administrative Records	12-Month Survey	42-Month Survey
Chicago									1,728	598	1,019
Cleveland									697	485	
Corpus Christi									1,727	290	
Eugene									1,179	440	
Fort Worth									1,572	188	
Houston									2,032	297	
Los Angeles EJC									1,183	608	
Los Angeles RFS									5,700	848	973
Medford									1,164	345	
Riverside PASS									2,770	224	888
Riverside Phase 2									3,029	712	
Salem									1,504	300	
South Carolina									2,776	552	
Total									27,061	5,887	2,880

Random assignment period

Follow-up period

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: The 42-month survey was administered only in Chicago, Los Angeles RFS, and Riverside PASS.

Club [EJC] model). Across the ERA tests, sample sizes range from 697 (in the Cleveland ERA test) to 5,700 (in the Los Angeles Reach for Success [RFS] ERA test).[1] For each of the tests, analyses were conducted to confirm that ERA group members were statistically indistinguishable from control group members at the time of random assignment, that is, that the random assignment process "worked." Analyses confirmed this in every case.

Data Sources

The measures discussed in this chapter and used throughout this report were created from the following data sources.

Baseline Data

Baseline data, collected at the time of random assignment, include information on demographic characteristics, prior employment, and prior welfare receipt. This information is used to describe the study samples, to create subgroups, and to refine statistical estimates.

Field Research

Field research is the main data source for the analysis of program features and implementation. MDRC staff interviewed case managers, service providers, and program administrators to learn about the goals, structure, and operations of the ERA programs at several points over the course of the study period. MDRC researchers collected information on a range of topics, including the marketing and outreach approaches used to recruit prospective participants, the types of program services and supportive services provided, management and staffing structure, relationships between organizations involved in program operations, enforcement of any participation requirements, and implementation issues. As part of this work, MDRC staff also reviewed a number of sample members' case files and observed some program operations. In addition, some focus groups were conducted. Finally, a study of program staff's use of time was completed.

Administrative Records

Effects on employment and earnings were computed using unemployment insurance (UI) wage records data, and effects on public assistance were computed using TANF and food stamp administrative records. All data sources cover only activity within the states in which the evaluations were conducted. As shown in Figure 2.1, follow-up data are available through 2007 for most models. Four years of post-random assignment UI wage data are available for all

[1]The sample sizes in this report for South Carolina differ from those stated in the interim report because, as noted, two-parent families are excluded from the analyses in this report.

sample members in half the models; in the other half, three years are available. UI records cover only employment that is reported to the unemployment insurance system. It is estimated that UI data cover approximately 90 percent of all jobs.[2] UI coverage varies among states but generally excludes most federal, railroad, and agriculture employees as well as family workers, domestics, and independent contractors. In addition, all unreported employment is missed. Four years of post-random assignment food stamp and TANF data are available for five models, and three years of data are available for six models. (No welfare data were collected for the Cleveland test because its sample had no direct association with TANF as of the time of study entry.)

Labor Market Information

Data on local labor markets were collected from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in order to profile labor market conditions at the times and places that the ERA programs operated. Data for these calculations were drawn from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

12-Month Survey Data

Information about sample members' experiences with program operations and services as well as their employment outcomes was gathered through a survey, which was administered to a subset of ERA and control group members approximately 12 months after their random assignment. The numbers of respondents to this survey across the model tests range from 188 sample members to 848 sample members (Figure 2.1). Response rates varied from 72 percent in Salem, Oregon, to 82 percent in Corpus Christi.

For most sites, the response bias analysis of the 12-month survey indicates some differences in background characteristics of varying levels between the survey sample and the research sample, between the program and the control group members in the survey sample, and/or between the survey respondents and the nonrespondents. Except for the situation in the survey for the Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) program in Riverside, California, however, none of these differences is of a nature that seriously affects the generalization of the survey results pertaining to participants' experiences with program operations and services. In the case of Riverside PASS, the survey was drawn from a cohort that experienced no large economic impacts, while the full sample experienced increases in a wide range of measures. In addition, the survey sample for Riverside PASS is small (224) and not representative of the full research sample.

[2]Kornfeld and Bloom (1999).

For findings related to economic outcomes, the administrative records are given more weight than the 12-month survey, for several reasons. First, the survey findings are usually based on a relatively small sample taken from select cohorts of the research sample, compared with the findings based on the administrative records, which cover the entire research sample. Second, several sites had differences between survey respondents and nonrespondents related to previous employment, earnings, and/or public assistance receipt. Finally, the survey data are subject to recall error among respondents. Therefore, greater weight is placed on the findings based on administrative records in this evaluation, particularly in cases where the survey results are different.

42-Month Survey Data

A second survey was administered to sample members in the Chicago, Los Angeles RFS, and Riverside PASS ERA tests 42 months after enrollment in the program. The administration of the 42-month survey was constrained to a small number of sites for resource reasons; these three sites were chosen because of their promising results as of the time of survey site selection.[3] Respondent sample sizes range from nearly 900 in the Riverside PASS test to approximately 1,000 in the other two tests, and no serious response bias problems were detected (Figure 2.1). Response rates varied from 68 percent in Riverside PASS to 78 percent in Chicago. The 42-month survey covered employment retention and advancement in greater depth than the 12-month survey. It also included questions pertaining to other areas, such as health and family outcomes. Impacts on these outcomes are shown in Appendix D.

Measures

Implementation

Implementation research supports impact analyses by describing the nature of the programs being tested and providing possible explanations for the patterns of impacts. It also provides information that serves as the foundation for the next generation of models and programs. The examination of the implementation of the ERA programs in this report focuses on the resources and organizational capacity of providers, the operating procedures and systems in the delivery of services, and the uptake of services by the target population. A series of

[3]When decisions about survey selection were made, economic impacts in the Texas ERA site appeared to be fading. Later in the follow-up period, however, the impacts strengthened again, particularly in the Corpus Christi site.

implementation measures are used to systematically assess the programs along two dimensions: program features and client experiences.[4]

Program Features

The specific program features examined in the report are described in Box 2.1. The first two features — program resources and organization, and staffing — provide information on the logistics of administering ERA programs. The others capture the breadth of strategies both within and across ERA programs. Systematic field research served as the primary data source for assessing ERA program features.

Throughout the following chapters, the details of features for each ERA program are presented. In addition, differences between the ERA programs and the counterfactual situations experienced by control group members are assessed for each program feature. (The outcomes for people who were randomly assigned to the control groups represent the *counterfactual* because the control groups could not participate in ERA services; their outcomes thus represent what would have happened in the absence of the ERA programs.)

Client Experiences

The measures of client experience included in the report were chosen to capture the uptake of services of both ERA and control group members and are tied to the program features discussed above. ERA sought to provide help that went well beyond the traditional services provided by welfare-to-work programs. These new service strategies were rarely captured by existing management information systems, and it was possible that control group members could have received them from entities or initiatives outside ERA. Therefore, surveys (particularly the 12-month survey) are the key data source for measuring participation in ERA services and for comparing participation levels of the program and control groups.

Fully capturing ERA service levels through surveys, however, has some drawbacks. Some of the provided ERA services could have been perceived by participants as relatively insignificant (for example, a short telephone conversation to check in about problems on the

[4]In this report, the term staff-client engagement (Box 2.1) is used to capture the staff activities traditionally associated with case management. Using the term "case management" often implies uniformity in the individualized services provided by program staff, even though there may be important differences across models and sites. It also is a term that many human service practitioners use to describe a more narrow scope of activities than those conducted by ERA staff. Thus, in this report, the way ERA staff worked with clients on an individualized basis is treated as one programmatic feature within the broader range of services that were provided. The specific details regarding the way staff worked with clients — what was discussed in interactions, what approach was used, the intensity of the interactions, and staffing configurations — is described, so that different enhancements across sites can be articulated.

Box 2.1

Program Features Assessed for the ERA Programs

Program resources and organization. The sources of financial resources and the setup of institutional structures, including the agencies or partnerships providing program administration and the range of service providers enlisted for the oversight and delivery of ERA programs.

Staffing. The human capital resources drawn upon for the delivery of ERA programs, including staffing levels; staffing arrangements (for example, team-based staffing); the duties associated with various staff positions; the level and nature of staff experience, skills, and training; performance standards and incentives; and staff practices in terms of meeting locations and work schedules.

Staff-client engagement. The nature of staff-client interactions within the ERA programs, from initial outreach through ongoing participation, including the rules of any participation requirements; the means, tools, and intensity of marketing and outreach efforts; how clients were directed through program services and activities and the use of formal or informal assessments; and the level and ways of monitoring of client progress and conducting follow-up.

Initial job preparation and placement services. The nature, content, and emphases of ERA services for moving unemployed clients into jobs.

Retention services. The nature and content of ERA services and supports for stabilizing and maintaining employment among the newly employed or those who recently changed jobs, including connections to work supports and social service providers, one-time payments to cover financial needs, financial work incentives, and counseling on job-related issues. Included here are also the reemployment activities directed to individuals who became unemployed (similar to services offered for initial job placement).

Advancement services. The content and nature of ERA activities promoting advancement, including career counseling, counseling regarding how to seek a promotion or increase in wages or work hours at a current job, job search and job development activities to identify "better" or higher-paying jobs, and referrals to and participation incentives for education and training programs to build skills and credentials.

Employer linkages. The formal and informal relationships between ERA program staff and local employers, including the collection of information about local employers' labor needs, coaching clients in the job application process for specific employers, job development efforts, and discussing clients' performance and possible career ladders with employers' staff.

job), even if they influenced participants' behavior. It is likely that some clients did not recall, and thus did not report, some of these interactions with ERA staff.[5]

Measures of client experiences are briefly summarized in Box 2.2.[6] Specifically, client experiences include contact with staff from any type of welfare or employment program and the type of help or services received from such staff. Program-control comparisons of these measures indicate how client experiences differed between the ERA and control groups, that is, the extent to which there were impacts on these client experience outcomes.

Economic Outcomes

The economic impacts analysis in this report focuses on three categories of outcomes: (1) employment retention, (2) earnings and advancement, and (3) public assistance and income. As discussed in Chapter 1, research on employment retention and advancement is still relatively new for this policy area. In addition, employment retention and advancement are complex behaviors requiring multiple indicators in order to determine whether a program has affected them. Therefore, new measures were created in order to capture whether the ERA programs affected retention and advancement. These measures are presented in Box 2.3 and are discussed below.

Employment Retention

"Employment retention" refers to the extent of an individual's labor force participation. ERA programs were deemed as impacting employment retention if the amount of employment observed for the ERA group exceeded the amount of employment observed for the control group. The amount of employment can be assessed in a variety of ways. First, a program could increase the amount of time that ERA group members were employed simply by increasing the extent to which ERA group members were *ever* employed. Differences between the ERA and the control groups in the cumulative amount of employment over the follow-up period can also reflect an impact on the *frequency* of employment. Finally, increasing the *stability* of ERA group members' employment also increases the amount of employment, by reducing the occurrence of unemployment. Programs could possibly affect employment along some of these

[5]There is evidence that this was an issue, at least in some sites: data available from the management information systems in a few of the ERA sites indicate higher levels of participation in the ERA services by program group members than is indicated by survey-based estimates of participation.

[6]Many other measures of client experiences are analyzed in the ERA site-specific interim reports. For exact citations, see Appendix E. The reports can be found on the Web at the sites for the Administration for Children and Families (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/employ_retention/index.html) and MDRC (http://www.mdrc.org/project_publications_14_9.html).

Box 2.2

Client Experiences Assessed for the ERA Programs

Extent of engagement. The extent of staff engagement with sample members, including the frequency, and ongoing nature of contacts.

Received help with retention services. The extent and nature of assistance related to employment retention that was received by sample members, including participation in job search activities and help dealing with problems on the job.

Received help with employment advancement services. The extent and nature of assistance with employment advancement that was received by clients, including help with career assessment and participation in any education or training activities.

dimensions and not others, and so attention to the pattern of impacts along all these dimensions provides an understanding as to how the ERA programs affected employment retention.

The primary focus for the analysis of impacts on employment retention is on overall employment, regardless of whether the employment was with a single employer or multiple employers. Impacts on *job-level* retention are shown in Appendixes A, B, and C.

Earnings and Advancement

In this report, "advancement" is defined primarily as increases in earnings that are not fully explained by increases in quarters of employment and, secondarily, as improvements in fringe benefits received, working conditions, or opportunities for promotions. In the three 42-month survey sites, it is possible to look at these secondary advancement measures in more depth and over a time period within which improvements in advancement outcomes could be reasonably expected.

Increases in earnings provide a clear and direct measure of economic mobility. However, earnings can increase for reasons other than advancement. This is because earnings levels are directly impacted by employment rates. All else being equal, increases in any of the employment retention measures discussed in the previous section will increase earnings. This is because average earnings include zeros for people who were not working during the follow-up period. Consequently, increases in the percentage of the follow-up period employed will directly translate into earnings increases. In the impact analysis, an effort is made to "tease out" the increases in earnings that are due to working more quarters from increases in earnings that are due to other factors (such as working for more hours, or at higher wages, or for more weeks). One indicator of advancement is seen when increases in earnings are larger, *in percentage terms,* than increases in employment retention.

Box 2.3

Employment Retention and Advancement Measures Assessed for the ERA Programs

Employment Measures

Ever employed (%). This is the percentage of sample members that ever worked in a UI-covered job during the follow-up period.

Average quarterly employment (%). This cumulative measure of employment examines, overall, how much one worked during the follow-up period. The average quarterly employment measure does not, however, capture the extent to which individuals held onto employment in consecutive quarters. It measures the frequency of employment.

Had employment spell of at least four quarters (%). This is a measure of continuous employment retention (in consecutive quarters). It measures the stability of employment.

Length of longest employment spell (in quarters). This is another measure of the stability of employment. Inversely, the length of longest unemployment spell measures how long individuals stayed out of the labor market and provides a measure of how quickly the ERA programs reemployed those who lost their jobs.

Earnings and Advancement Measures

Average annual earnings ($). This measure can be affected by the number of quarters, weeks, or hours worked, and wage rates. Increases in earnings suggest the possibility of advancement, but other measures need to be assessed in order to complete the determination.

Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%). This measure indicates the percentage of quarters in which sample members earned over $3,500. This level of earnings corresponds to working full time, at a wage of $7.50 per hour, for all of the weeks in a quarter. For many sample members, earning at this level would represent advancement in the labor market.

Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 or Year 4 that increased by $250 or more. This measure picks up long-term advancement. If ERA had immediate effects on advancement in Year 1 (as appeared to occur in a few sites) and these effects do not grow over time, they will not show up in this measure.

Other advancement measures. Advancement is primarily defined in this report as increases in earnings that are not fully explained by increases in employment. In addition, improvements in fringe benefits received, working conditions, or opportunities for promotions are examined.

As noted above, most of the economic impact analyses in this report use unemployment insurance records. Because UI data do not typically contain information on wages or on hours or weeks worked, these data do not directly indicate *why* earnings increases might be larger than employment increases. The UI data cannot help to quantify the relative contribution of increases in wages, hours, or weeks worked. In the sites with 42-month survey data available, it is possible to make more precise statements as to which factors are driving the results.

Public Assistance and Income

Since most of the ERA sample members were current or former welfare recipients at the time of random assignment, the report also examines how these employment-focused programs affected the use of public benefits. In addition, earnings increases may be completely offset or supplemented by changes in public assistance, so effects on total income are analyzed. Most of the discussion of income in this report focuses on the sum of TANF and food stamp payments and earnings. A more complete measure of income — which includes income from jobs not covered by the UI system and income from other household members, child support, Supplemental Security Income [SSI], and other sources — is available from the 12-month survey and the 42-month survey.[7] Impacts using this measure of income are presented in Appendixes A, B, and C.

Secondary Outcomes

Other economic and noneconomic outcomes were tracked as part of the 12- and 42-month surveys. These include measures of child outcomes, adult health, household composition, and other sources of income. Impacts on several of these measures are shown in Appendix D. These measures, while important, do not reflect the direct "primary outcomes" that ERA sought to affect. (Those are employment retention and advancement.) Therefore, impacts on these measures should be viewed with some caution, particularly in tests where ERA did not affect the primary outcomes that, in turn, would be expected to influence them. Regarding the secondary outcomes in general, it is important to be aware of the possibility that some comparisons will be statistically significant by chance, given the many secondary outcomes.

[7]In addition, a fuller measure that includes all measurable sources of income is presented in a companion report on the benefits and costs of selected ERA programs (Redcross, Deitch, and Farrell, 2010).

Chapter 3

Findings for ERA Programs Serving Unemployed TANF Recipients

Introduction

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programs that are discussed in this chapter include those that targeted individuals who were not working and were applicants or recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) when they enrolled in the programs. This category includes three programs: the Texas ERA program, which operated in Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston; the Enhanced Job Club (EJC) model in Los Angeles; and the Salem (Oregon) ERA program.

Among the programs described in this chapter, only the Texas program as operated in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth produced improvements in employment retention and advancement. The ERA program in Corpus Christi increased employment retention and led to advancement gains, compared with the levels seen in the control group. It also reduced the amount of food stamp assistance that clients received, and it increased their average annual income in the cumulative four-year follow-up period. The ERA program in Fort Worth produced a similar pattern of results, except that its effects were somewhat less persistent over time.

Overview of Program Designs in This Group

All the programs discussed in this chapter targeted unemployed TANF applicants and recipients and shared several goals, including improving the job placement, job retention, and employment advancement outcomes of program group members. Because the programs targeted cash assistance applicants and recipients who were not working when they enrolled in the program, they had a common strategy of providing preemployment services that individuals were required to participate in as a condition of receiving cash assistance. However, there were differences in each program's postemployment services.

Table 3.1 compares a selection of actual (as opposed to planned) program features for the ERA programs aimed at this target group. As the table shows, within the programs, some features were particularly prominent and, therefore, represent the focus of the discussion in this report. Appendix A briefly describes all the program features (Appendix Boxes A.1, A.2, and A.3) and provides details on program administration (such as operation dates and funding). This chapter discusses the key program services as they actually were implemented and how these

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Table 3.1

Comparison of Program Features Across ERA Programs Targeting Individuals Not Employed and Receiving TANF

Program Feature	Corpus Christi	Fort Worth	Houston	Los Angeles EJC	Salem
Staffing					
Staff positions - team-based (vs. solo)	✓	✓			✓
Staff performance management (standards, incentives)	✓				
Flexible staff hours and/or locations	✓	✓			✓
Caseloads - low	✓	✓	✓		
Staff/client engagement					
Participation requirements					
TANF participation requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ERA participation requirements beyond TANF ones	✓	✓	✓		
Initial outreach - intensive					
Initial outreach - financial participation incentives					
Program flow - client assessment and individualized service package	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ongoing - develop/maintain an employment plan	✓	✓			
Initial job preparation and placement services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Retention services					
Reemployment services	✓	✓			
Financial work incentives	✓	✓	✓		
Emergency financial assistance					
Connections to other services (work supports, social services)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advancement services					
Supported advancement through job change	✓	✓			
Education and training referrals and/or incentives					
Staff counseling on job-related issues	✓	✓			
Employer linkages	✓	✓			

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTES: The program features are defined in Chapter 2.

Check marks indicate that the feature is present in the ERA program.

The models and their implementation often evolved over the study period. This table presents the features experienced by the majority of the study participants for the greatest extent of time.

differed from the services received by the control group. A broader discussion of both planned and actual implementation is provided in the ERA site-specific interim reports.[1]

One-on-one staff-client relationships were central to all the programs except for the Los Angeles EJC model. Unlike the other programs, Los Angeles EJC used job clubs to deliver services to groups of ERA clients. While each program was designed to deliver postemployment services, the staffing approach and intensity varied. For example, the Los Angeles EJC ERA model did not include any postemployment services by design, but it tried to achieve retention and advancement goals by placing participants in jobs in their field of interest. In contrast, the Salem and the Texas programs invested staff resources in the delivery of postemployment services as a key component. The Texas program was unique in that it also provided a financial incentive of $200 per month to working TANF leavers. Due to the participation requirements associated with TANF receipt, outreach and marketing were not immediate priorities in the designs of the programs.

Since all these programs served unemployed TANF applicants and recipients, the target populations were relatively similar. The demographic characteristics of those who were served are displayed in Table 3.2. In most of these sites, only about half the sample members had a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate when they entered the study. Sample members in these sites were, on average, younger than 30 years old and had an average of two children, and those children were young: about half the sample members had a youngest child age 2 or younger. In most of the sites in this target group, large majorities of sample members had two years or less of prior welfare receipt at the time the study began. Although these programs targeted TANF recipients who were not employed, many sample members did have recent work experience, as the table shows: during the quarter before entering the study, between 27 percent and 49 percent of sample members in these sites had been employed in jobs covered by the unemployment insurance (UI) system.

Sample members in this target group left the first job they held after random assignment more quickly than those in the other target groups covered in this report (Chapters 4 and 5). More than a third of the control group left their first job by the end of the first quarter. By the third quarter after the study began, only 36 percent were still working at their original employer. This is likely explained by the fact that sample members in this target group had less prior attachment to the workforce than sample members in the other target groups.

The ERA programs serving these sample members experienced some implementation difficulties. The ERA programs in Corpus Christi and Los Angeles EJC were particularly well

[1]For complete citations, see Appendix E, which also notes where the reports can be found on the Web.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3.2

Selected Characteristics of ERA Sample Members at the Time of Random Assignment: Not Employed and Receiving TANF

Characteristic[a]	Texas			Los Angeles EJC	Salem
	Corpus Christi	Fort Worth	Houston		
Female (%)	94.3	96.1	97.7	91.0	89.6
Average age (years)	28.7	28.1	27.8	30.0	29.5
Race/ethnicity (%)					
Hispanic	73.9	10.6	27.5	56.4	15.4
Black, non-Hispanic	8.1	67.1	61.9	34.6	2.7
White, non-Hispanic	15.8	21.5	9.6	5.6	70.3
Other	2.2	0.8	1.1	3.4	11.6
Average number of minor children	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.7
Age of youngest child (%)					
2 or under	49.6	52.1	51.5	47.8	41.4
3 to 5	21.0	18.6	21.5	20.5	23.2
6 or over	29.4	29.4	27.1	31.8	35.4
High school diploma/GED certificate or higher (%)	48.2	55.2	44.9	48.2	68.5
Total prior AFDC/TANF receipt (%)					
None	38.8	35.5	38.2	15.6	41.3
Less than 2 years	40.6	49.8	44.5	41.1	38.6
2 years or more	20.6	14.7	17.3	43.4	20.1
Living in public or subsidized housing (%)	16.5	22.8	23.2	11.2	17.8
Employed in quarter prior to random assignment[b](%)	48.6	48.2	43.2	26.6	45.3
Employed in quarter of random assignment[b](%)	49.3	43.2	39.2	26.0	42.8
Employment in the past 3 years (%)					
Did not work	14.5	13.2	14.6	NA	10.6
Less than 6 months	18.2	22.2	21.1	NA	11.4
7 to 12 months	18.1	17.5	21.8	NA	16.0
13 to 24 months	21.3	21.1	19.8	NA	17.2
More than 24 months	28.0	26.1	22.7	NA	44.8
As of random assignment the number of hours worked per week among employed (%)					
1-19 hours	28.5	24.2	24.6	NA	47.1
20-31 hours	40.9	33.9	36.8	NA	27.1
32 or more hours	30.7	41.9	38.6	NA	25.7
As of random assignment the hourly wage among employed (%)					
Less than $5.15	16.5	6.5	6.4	1.8	13.6
$5.15 to $6.99	63.2	53.2	57.3	25.8	20.0
$7.00 to $9.99	17.3	27.4	27.3	43.7	45.0
$10.00 or more	3.0	12.9	9.1	28.7	21.4
Sample size	1,727	1,572	2,032	1,183	1,504

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

SOURCES: Calculations from ERA baseline forms, automated records, and administrative data.

NOTES: NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.
[a]Statistics include both program and control group members.
[b]This information is based on unemployment insurance (UI) records.

implemented, and the ERA program in Fort Worth made significant improvements over the course of the study period. The Houston and Salem ERA programs both experienced a number of implementation issues. All the programs, except for Los Angeles EJC (which did not provide postemployment services), had at least some difficulty providing postemployment services to participants who found work. In the Texas sites, the program also experienced some difficulties in increasing the take-up of the financial incentive, although this improved over time in the Corpus Christi and Fort Worth sites.

Texas ERA Findings: Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston

Texas ERA at a Glance

- Served unemployed TANF applicants and recipients
- Provided a financial incentive for those leaving TANF for work, coupled with job search assistance and postemployment services (including reemployment assistance and visits to working clients at their employer's site)
- Was well implemented in Corpus Christi but experienced some operational difficulties in Fort Worth and, particularly, in Houston
- Compared with the control group, differences mostly in postemployment services and the financial incentive (similar preemployment services)
- Resulted in 30 percent taking up the financial incentive in Corpus Christi and approximately 20 percent doing so in the two other Texas sites
- Produced consistent impacts in employment retention and advancement outcomes in Corpus Christi, less consistent impacts in Fort Worth, and no impacts in Houston

Texas ERA Test: Introduction

The Texas ERA program was designed to promote job placement, retention, and advancement for TANF applicants and recipients. The Texas program was implemented in Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston and operated from 2000 to 2004. Results for each Texas site are presented separately because there were important implementation differences across the sites.

Origins of the Test

The ERA program in Texas was explicitly designed to improve on the poor performance of past retention and advancement programs — primarily the Post-Employment Services Demonstration (PESD) programs discussed in Chapter 1 — as well as to enhance the services provided under the standard TANF employment program. The program design grew out of a concern with the level of "recycling" in the TANF caseload in Texas. TANF grant levels in Texas were relatively low — the maximum monthly grant for a family of three was $203 — and while Texas had a generous earnings disregard (90 percent of earnings were disregarded for four months when calculating the size of TANF grants), most individuals in Texas who took a job left welfare after the earned income disregard period. State administrators found that many of these individuals leaving welfare worked at low wages with poor benefits and ended up returning to the rolls. Thus, the ERA program was designed to increase employment retention

and wage levels for those leaving welfare. It was also hoped that the ERA program would increase TANF recipients' participation levels in preemployment services and their overall employment levels.

The primary innovation of the Texas ERA program was a financial incentive designed to encourage work and employment retention. A stipend[2] of $200 per month was provided to participants who had left TANF and were employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week. Those who worked 15 hours per week combined with an education and training activity were also eligible for the stipend. The stipend was available after a four-month period during which clients received an earned income disregard (an amount comparable to the stipend, because clients received almost their full TANF grant in addition to their earnings), and there was a limit of 12 stipends. Although the content and intensity of the postemployment services varied across the sites, the Texas program provided services that included individualized assistance with job-related problems and support services, monitoring of job performance and issues through regular site visits to employers, reemployment assistance for participants who lost jobs, and support in meeting the requirements of the stipend. Preemployment job search assistance was also part of the Texas ERA program, but this service was similar to those received by the control group through the standard TANF employment program.

Labor Market Context

The ERA program in Texas operated in three diverse sites, although all had relatively poor economic conditions during the time of the study. Random assignment began just before the national recession of 2001. For much of the operational period of the Texas ERA program, the labor market conditions were fairly challenging, with growth starting in the last few years of sample member follow-up.

Corpus Christi, a midsize city located on the Gulf Coast, has an economy based on petroleum, shipping, and tourism. In 2003, the unemployment rate was 6.7 percent and had increased from 6.3 percent in 1999, when the study began.

Fort Worth is the sixth-largest city in Texas. Located in Tarrant County, it is a major mercantile, commercial, and financial center providing agribusiness and wholesale services to much of west Texas. In December 1999, the unemployment rate was 2.8 percent, but it increased to 6.4 percent by 2003.

[2]The Texas ERA program referred to these monetary benefits as "stipends." However, throughout MDRC publications and the broader workforce development literature, they are also referred to as "financial incentives" and "wage supplements," among other terms. To reflect this programmatic choice, the discussion of the Texas ERA program also uses "stipend."

Houston is not only the largest city in Texas but also the fourth-most-populous city in the nation. Houston is regarded as a major port and corporate management center, and the city is home to many businesses, including petrochemicals; medical research and health care delivery; high technology, including computer, aerospace, manufacturing, and distribution; and related service industries. As of December 1999, the unemployment rate was 4.2 percent, but it increased to 6.9 percent by 2003.

Target Population

Individuals were assigned to the ERA or control group immediately following an eligibility or recertification interview for TANF. (In the case of TANF applicants, random assignment occurred before they were approved for cash assistance.) Only those applicants and recipients who were subsequently approved for TANF could receive ERA services. Thus, a small proportion of the sample (11 percent to 16 percent across the sites) were never eligible for program services, since they were not approved to receive TANF. This diluted, to a small extent, the program-control treatment differential.[3]

There were some differences in the demographic characteristics of the sample members across the three sites (Table 3.2). Most individuals were not working when they entered the ERA program. Nearly 75 percent of the Corpus Christi ERA sample members are Hispanic — the highest percentage of all the ERA sites — in contrast with Fort Worth and Houston, where the majority of sample members are black. Over half the sample members in Corpus Christi and Houston did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate when they entered the study. In fact, the Houston sample had the lowest rate of educational attainment in this target group.

Significance of This Test

Overall, the Texas ERA test examines whether job search assistance, postemployment assistance from program staff (which could include employer site visits and reemployment assistance), and a monthly stipend of $200 for TANF leavers working at least 30 hours a week can improve employment retention and advancement for TANF applicants and recipients, compared with a preemployment program that focused on quick job entry with limited postemployment services. Chart 3.1 highlights important treatment differences between the programs for the ERA group and the control group in the Texas test.

[3]In addition, because the Texas ERA program began at the preemployment phase but became most different after sample members were employed, individuals who did not find jobs during the follow-up period had similar experiences in the ERA and control groups, thus also diluting the treatment differential.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 3.1

Program-Control Group Differences:

Texas ERA Test in Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• To promote job placements, employment retention, and advancement for unemployed TANF applicants and recipients	• To promote job placement for unemployed TANF applicants and recipients
Program resources and structures	• Except for financial incentive, funded by state TANF program	• Funded by state TANF program
Staffing	• Team-based staff structure in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth	• Generalist staff structure
	• Staff performance measurement system in Corpus Christi	• No performance measurement system
	• Meetings with clients at employers' sites in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth	• No meetings at employers's sites
Staff-client engagement	• Individualized ongoing assistance from staff after leaving TANF for work	• Individualized assistance from staff only while on TANF and during earned income disregard period
Retention services	• Offer of $200 per month stipend for former TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week, after 4-month earned income disregard	• No stipend
	• Regular contact with working clients who left TANF and received stipend	• Limited contact with working clients and only during earned income disregard period
	• Reemployment services in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth	• No reemployment services
Advancement services	• Discussions with workers and their employers about advancement options in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth	• No advancement services
Employer linkages	• Site visits to employer	• Limited contact with employers

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

Texas ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

This section discusses the key features of the Texas ERA program, highlighting important implementation differences across the three sites, and describes client experiences in the program as well.

Program Resources and Organization

The Texas ERA services were primarily funded by TANF resources. The exception is the Texas ERA stipend, which was supported by federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) sanctioning resettlement funds.[4] As a result of using this financing source for the stipend, TANF regulations on the definition of "assistance" did not apply to the stipend. Payments that are categorized as assistance are subject to certain TANF rules, primarily a five-year lifetime limit on receipt.

The state's Department of Human Services (DHS), in coordination with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), designed the Texas ERA program. At the local level, all employment services for TANF recipients were coordinated by local workforce development boards, under the guidance of TWC. In each of the sites, the local workforce development boards contracted with nonprofit organizations to operate the ERA program. Each site had some discretion in how it structured the ERA program, although each followed the same general model.

The Coastal Bend Workforce Development Board oversaw the ERA program in Corpus Christi. In turn, it contracted with a local nonprofit organization, Workforce-1, to operate the ERA program. In Corpus Christi, a strong management team was in place during the early phases of the project and was responsible for developing the initial ERA program, with new management taking over in 2002 when this team moved on to other opportunities. In Fort Worth, the Workforce Development Board contracted with a nonprofit organization, the Women's Center, for some ERA services (primarily ongoing staff-client engagement and postemployment services), while also using the provider of the control group services for the preemployment ERA services. While the program experienced several initial implementation issues, the introduction of a new program manager in fall 2002 resulted in many program improvements. In Houston, the ERA program was operated by HoustonWorks USA (a local nonprofit agency board), under contract to the Houston-Galveston Area Council (the local

[4]A state that failed to meet some AFDC performance criteria had a part of its grant rescinded or reduced; that is, the state was sanctioned. These extra monies were often distributed to nonsanctioned states (or "high-performer" states) for program improvements. These monies were not subject to the same limitations on types of expenditures as standard AFDC grants to states were.

workforce investment board). Nonprofit organizations were also the providers of the preemployment services for control group members.

Staffing

Texas ERA services were provided primarily by program staff who were employed by the nonprofit agency operating the ERA program in each site. While staff responsibilities in the ERA program evolved over time, all sites ended up using a specialized service delivery approach — with one set of staff being responsible for preemployment activities (primarily assessment of clients and monitoring their participation); another set of staff responsible for job search, job development, and reemployment assistance (in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth only); and another set responsible for postemployment services (monitoring individuals' employment status, issuing stipends, assisting with job-related issues). In all the sites, DHS staff — not ERA program staff — were responsible for TANF eligibility and benefit issues.

There were, however, important distinctions in staffing across the sites. Corpus Christi moved most quickly to establish its specialized staffing structure. Fort Worth used staff from two agencies to provide different services to ERA participants for much of the study period; one agency focused on client assessment and monitoring, and the other focused on job search activities. Particularly during the early phases of the study, there were some coordination issues between these two agencies, which affected the client flow through activities. Houston used a generalized staffing approach for much of the study period but moved to a specialized approach over time.

The number of staff in the programs varied. Corpus Christi generally had the largest staff, at one point having 12 program staff as well as other administrative staff and a workshop facilitator. In Fort Worth and Houston there were fewer staff (six to eight). All the sites went through some period over the course of the study when they were short-staffed and caseloads were higher than intended.

Corpus Christi was the only Texas site to develop a comprehensive system for measuring staff performance. The performance measures evolved somewhat over time, and both management and line staff took them seriously. The measures focused on key goals, including participation levels, job placements, retention rates, wage increases, employer site visits, and payment of stipends. The other sites generally did not have specific measures for staff performance — particularly related to employment retention and advancement issues. For example, Houston had some job placement measures for staff but none that were related to postemployment services or stipend receipt.

Staff varied in their previous employment experiences. Some had a history of working with welfare-to-work programs, particularly in the standard TANF employment program (the

services received by the control group). Others did not have experience in social services but brought experience from related fields, such as employment placement or temporary job agencies. DHS held annual training sessions for ERA staff in all the sites, covering a range of issues related to the program, including marketing financial incentives, developing career ladders, and identifying strategies for preventing job loss and promoting advancement.

The Texas ERA program generally did not provide significant flexibility for program group members in terms of meeting hours. The programs did not include extended hours, although, by the end of the study period, all the Texas sites ran evening and weekend support groups for individuals receiving the stipend. In Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, staff could also meet with clients outside the office, particularly at their workplaces.

Staff-Client Engagement

The Texas ERA and control group preemployment programs were mandatory for individuals while they were receiving TANF, meaning that clients faced a possible reduction or termination of TANF benefits for noncompliance with program rules. Individuals in both programs were not required to participate in program activities after they left TANF, although there were requirements, in addition to working, for receiving the stipend.

Because the Texas ERA program was mandatory at the outset, outreach and marketing of most services were not a major component of the program. However, all sites found that the "take-up" of the stipend was much lower than expected, leading them to develop marketing strategies focused on the financial incentive.

Corpus Christi moved more quickly than the two other ERA sites in Texas to develop a strong marketing effort for the $200 monthly stipend. Marketing strategies included (1) telling individuals about the stipend and strongly encouraging them to take advantage of the stipend at all junctures in the program — immediately after they were assigned to the program, at assessment, during job search activities, when they found a job, and when they had finished the earnings disregard period; (2) hanging posters and displaying fliers throughout the ERA offices informing participants of this benefit; (3) developing strategies to strengthen the appeal of the payments — for example, calling the incentive an employment bonus and emphasizing the total amount of the payment ($2,400 over one year); and (4) creating posters and videos that told "success stories" of participants who received the stipend and how they used the resource.

In Fort Worth, there were limited efforts to market the stipend during the initial stages of the program. However, when the new management team was put in place, staff did make improved efforts in this area using many of the strategies developed in Corpus Christi. Houston did not market the financial incentive in a concerted manner until late into the study period, and it also drew on the efforts developed in Corpus Christi.

The client assessments in the Texas ERA program generally focused on reviewing a client's education and work history and addressing support service needs. In Corpus Christi, there was some focus on identifying long-term career goals and pathways as part of the assessment, although an overall focus on quick employment remained. In Fort Worth, a multistep assessment process involving different staff was put in place initially, but the process had the effect of limiting the number of individuals who received other program services and moved to employment. Eventually a more streamlined assessment was developed and conducted as part of the first week of the job search workshop. Houston also included an additional in-depth assessment for many participants (which involved an extensive interview with a staff person who was a licensed psychologist) throughout the study period.

The staff-client relationship in the Texas ERA program started during the initial preemployment services and continued after individuals found employment, both during the earnings disregard period and once they started receiving a stipend. In contrast, interactions between staff and control group members were less frequent for individuals once they were working, and interactions did not continue after the disregard period ended.

Reflecting this difference in service availability, program group members in Corpus Christi and Houston reported significantly more contact with staff from an employment program, when surveyed 12 months after study entry, than control group members did. Table 3.3 shows that over 60 percent of the Corpus Christi program group had been contacted by program staff within this period (13 percentage points more than the control group), and program group members were also more likely to be in contact with staff at the time of the 12-month survey. Similarly, in Fort Worth, 63 percent of the program group were contacted within the first 12 months — a rate 18 percentage points higher than the control group rate. In Fort Worth, the program group had an average of 14 contacts in the first 12 months, compared with an average of 5 contacts for the control group. The ongoing nature of the contact was also much more pronounced in Fort Worth; Table 3.4 shows that nearly 30 percent of the program group were in contact at the end of one year, compared with 9 percent of the control group. In contrast, across the range of measures of staff-client contact included in the survey, the ERA program in Houston did not produce any statistically significant effects.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Job placement was one of the primary goals in the Texas ERA program, and the preemployment services were focused on this objective. As the first step in the program, participants generally attended a one-week job search workshop, where a range of job search-related activities — including job search resources, résumé development, and interviewing techniques — were covered. Once the class was completed, clients were required to make and document a specified number of job search contacts per week for a three- to five-week period.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3.3

Summary of Impacts:

Corpus Christi

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	60.2	47.7	12.5 **	0.041
Average number of contacts with staff	6.6	6.4	0.3	0.889
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	27.2	16.5	10.7 **	0.036
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.0	58.2	3.8	0.531
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	8.4	1.5	6.9 ***	0.009
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	17.8	7.4	10.4 **	0.010
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	13.6	3.9	9.7 ***	0.006
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	30.6	22.7	7.9	0.150
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	28.5	14.0	14.6 ***	0.003
Sample size (total = 290)	141	149		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	88.4	89.3	-0.9	0.535
Average quarterly employment (%)	51.7	48.0	3.7 **	0.012
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	63.4	56.9	6.5 ***	0.003
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	6.4	6.0	0.4 **	0.044
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.1	6.6	-0.4 *	0.057
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,011	4,371	640 ***	0.007
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	12.8	10.9	1.9 **	0.045
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	44.7	47.4	-2.7	0.219
Earnings decreased by more than $250	15.8	15.7	0.1	0.934
Earnings changed by less than $250	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.987
Earnings increased by $250 or more	32.5	29.8	2.6	0.224
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	474	505	-31	0.171
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,589	2,723	-134 **	0.050
Average annual income[c] ($)	8,074	7,599	475 **	0.040
Sample size (total = 1,727)	870	857		

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

The ERA program in Fort Worth and Houston produced increases in the level of participation in job search activities. In Fort Worth, the ERA program increased the proportion of people who participated in *group* job search: 63 percent of the program group participated in a group job search/job club in the first 12 months, compared with 49 percent of the control group (Appendix Table A.5). But levels of participation in *any* type of job search, which includes individual job search as well, were the same for both groups. In Houston, the ERA program produced increases in participation in any type of job search: 80 percent of program group members in Houston participated in some type of job search activity in the first 12 months — an increase of 10 percentage points over the control group (Table 3.5). Similar proportion of program and control group members in Corpus Christi participated in job search activities: about 60 percent (Table 3.3).

Retention Services

For employed participants, the goal of the Texas ERA program was employment retention and advancement in the labor market, with both individualized assistance from program staff and financial incentives provided to assist with this goal. Individuals in the ERA program who found jobs were required to work for four months (while receiving an earned income disregard) prior to receiving the stipend. To receive the stipend, program group members had to work the required number of hours, submit necessary documentation, and attend some type of employment-related activity each month. Individualized assistance from program staff on job-related issues was provided to working clients throughout the earned income disregard and stipend period.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3.4

Summary of Impacts:

Fort Worth

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	63.0	44.9	18.1 **	0.014
Average number of contacts with staff	14.0	5.2	8.9 ***	0.007
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	29.7	9.0	20.7 ***	0.001
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	77.4	72.7	4.6	0.500
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	5.8	1.7	4.1	0.177
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	20.9	6.0	14.9 ***	0.005
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	13.5	2.7	10.7 **	0.012
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	38.7	29.5	9.2	0.193
Received any help with retention/advancement[p] (%)	31.0	10.9	20.1 ***	0.002
Sample size (total = 188)	92	96		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	86.9	85.0	2.0	0.226
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.5	46.9	1.6	0.274
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	61.3	58.5	2.8	0.214
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	6.1	5.8	0.3	0.153
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.6	6.9	-0.3	0.160
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,706	5,256	449	0.148
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	17.1	15.5	1.7	0.154
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	49.7	49.5	0.2	0.932
Earnings decreased by more than $250	14.7	14.1	0.7	0.712
Earnings changed by less than $250	5.1	4.9	0.2	0.855
Earnings increased by $250 or more	30.3	31.5	-1.2	0.601
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	606	621	-15	0.570
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,690	2,528	162 **	0.025
Average annual income[c] ($)	9,002	8,406	596 **	0.043
Sample size (total = 1,572)	784	788		

(continued)

Table 3.4 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

Program staff were generally required to have monthly contact with working participants during the earnings disregard period. In order to determine continued eligibility for TANF and the earned income disregard, program staff were required to verify monthly the hours and wages of employment through these contacts, but they also used the opportunity to address any job-related issues. These contacts typically took place by telephone, and participants faxed any necessary paperwork. In addition to these contacts, staff typically met in person with ERA participants once during the earned income disregard period, to encourage individuals to take advantage of the stipend when they became eligible.

Individuals receiving the stipend were required to attend some type of employment-related activity each month. The ERA program in all three sites was generally flexible in what it allowed to count toward this requirement — including training at work, education and training programs, various support groups, or other activities in the community. By the end of the study period, all the sites sponsored their own support groups that program group members could attend to meet the requirement. Program staff also provided a monthly calendar of both ERA-operated support groups and other community events that could be used to fulfill this requirement. In Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, staff handed out stipend checks at a monthly workshop, which allowed individuals to get their stipend check and meet the attendance requirement at the same time.

Once individuals started receiving the stipend, postemployment staff were expected to continue to make at least monthly contact with individuals on their caseload. Staff focused on employment retention and job-related problems while also ensuring that individuals met the

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Table 3.5

Summary of Impacts:

Houston

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	59.5	58.4	1.1	0.853
Average number of contacts with staff	9.7	6.1	3.6	0.118
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	21.0	20.1	1.0	0.836
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	79.6	69.1	10.4 **	0.038
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	11.7	6.4	5.3	0.111
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	12.4	11.2	1.1	0.756
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	10.0	5.4	4.6	0.135
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	35.2	34.9	0.3	0.960
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	24.0	18.3	5.7	0.233
Sample size (total = 297)	150	147		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	82.0	83.2	-1.2	0.461
Average quarterly employment (%)	43.4	43.3	0.1	0.963
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	54.9	53.4	1.6	0.443
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	5.3	5.4	-0.1	0.656
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	7.5	7.5	0.0	0.990
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	4,722	4,777	-56	0.819
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	12.9	13.8	-0.9	0.303
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	53.9	54.9	-1.0	0.610
Earnings decreased by more than $250	13.8	15.2	-1.4	0.351
Earnings changed by less than $250	5.1	3.5	1.6 *	0.078
Earnings increased by $250 or more	27.0	26.1	0.9	0.631
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	759	703	56 **	0.033
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,863	2,822	41	0.538
Average annual income[c] ($)	8,344	8,302	41	0.860
Sample size (total = 2,032)	1,009	1,023		

(continued)

Table 3.5 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

requirements to receive the stipend. Staff also addressed issues related to work supports and social service referrals as needed.

In order to more effectively address both retention and advancement issues, Corpus Christi and Fort Worth staff conducted many of their monthly meetings with individuals receiving the stipend at the work site, although Fort Worth did not begin employer visits until late in the study period. Office visits were difficult when participants were working. In addition, staff found in-person meetings more valuable than phone contacts. These short meetings generally included discussions with both the employee and the employer about job-related issues, job performance, and advancement options.

Although program staff knew that job loss was a common problem for the ERA population, they were still somewhat surprised by its magnitude. Sometimes participants would inform program staff if they were going to lose their job or quit, but other times staff did not find out about an employment change until they attempted their regular monthly contact. Because of this, all the sites tried to strengthen their reemployment services. Corpus Christi and Fort Worth had goals of reemploying ERA participants within two weeks of finding out about job loss. This assistance was provided regardless of whether the individual was on TANF or not. Fort Worth also designated a program staff member to address all cases that needed reemployment services.

Overall, Corpus Christi implemented the postemployment component of the ERA program most smoothly, with the other sites adopting some of their strategies over time. Program practices in Corpus Christi included designating program staff to work only with individuals receiving stipends, regular site visits to employers, in-house support groups to meet the stipend participation requirement, and reemployment services. These practices were developed by the

strong management team that the program had in place during the early phases of the project. The ERA program in Fort Worth struggled during the early portion of the study period, but it made significant improvements when a new manager was hired, including establishing a number of new practices, such as regular site visits to employers. Houston moved the most slowly to get key components of the program off the ground — particularly postemployment services — and it focused on these only near the end of the study period.

Of the three sites that implemented the Texas ERA program, stipend receipt rates were highest in Corpus Christi, with 30 percent of all program group members (including those who found jobs as well as those who did not) receiving a stipend over the course of program operations. The stipend receipt rate was lower in Fort Worth and Houston, with approximately 20 percent of program group members ever receiving a stipend. In both Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, almost half of those who received a stipend received 11 or more stipends. However, in Houston, the stipend was received much less consistently than in the other sites — close to two-thirds of those who received a stipend received six or fewer stipends, and only 9 percent received 11 or more stipends.

One explanation for why stipend receipt rates were not higher concerns eligibility criteria: some individuals in the program group did not qualify for the stipend because they were not approved to receive TANF, they did not find jobs, or they did not work longer than the four-month earned income disregard period. Because of these steps, a relatively long period of time elapsed between when individuals enrolled in the program and they received their first stipend: about 17 months, on average (and somewhat shorter in Fort Worth). Furthermore, while individuals who received the entire earned income disregard generally became eligible for the stipend, they may not have received it if they did not work enough hours, submit the required documentation, or attend the required activity in a given month. Overall, among those who were eligible because they worked at least four months, approximately 55 percent received a stipend in Corpus Christi, and 40 percent received one in Fort Worth and Houston.

As discussed above, all the sites developed a solid marketing effort for the ERA stipends, particularly over time, with Corpus Christi moving most quickly to develop marketing materials and strategies. However, with only about half of those who were eligible receiving stipends, there was still clearly room for improvement. Based on phone interviews with ERA participants, reasons for not accessing the stipend among those who were eligible included not attending the required monthly employment activity, a desire to discontinue involvement with a government program, and a lack of knowledge or understanding of the stipend requirements. In addition, some participants lost jobs before they became eligible for the stipend.

Overall, data from the 12-month survey suggest that the stipend may have been the primary difference in retention services for the program and control groups. However, there

were some limited exceptions. In Corpus Christi, for example, the program group members were more likely than control group members to receive help dealing with problems on the job (Table 3.3) and to receive help with support services (Appendix Table A.1).

Advancement Services

For those individuals who became relatively stable in their jobs, Texas ERA staff also worked with clients on advancement options — primarily in terms of the next job at the employer or a job change. Like retention services, these services were put in place most quickly in Corpus Christi, were developed over time in Fort Worth, and were not addressed in Houston until late in the study period. In Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, program staff made efforts to discuss participants' career paths, views of their ideal job, and what was needed to obtain an ideal job. In addition, ERA staff in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth visited their clients' work sites. These employer visits included examining potential advancement opportunities within the workplace and strategies for moving to a better job, such as obtaining more training or taking more initiative on the job. ERA staff also worked with employers to identify what workers needed to do to advance in their jobs and what criteria were used to evaluate employees and give raises. Although the ERA program in Houston intended to support advancement strategies, its actual implementation offered only limited services in this area.

Overall, participants in the Corpus Christi site reported significantly more assistance with employment advancement, compared with control group members, particularly in terms of finding a better job while working and receiving a career assessment (Table 3.3). Similarly, ERA participants in Fort Worth reported significantly more assistance with advancement issues than individuals assigned to the control group. The ERA program in Fort Worth increased the proportion of individuals who received assistance finding a better job while working and completing a career assessment (Appendix Table A.5). In Houston, there was no increase in participation in advancement services relative to the control group (Table 3.5).

While individuals could work part time, participate in education and training, and still receive a stipend, this was a rarely used option in any of the Texas ERA sites. As a result, there was no increase in the use of education and training programs compared with the control condition (Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5).

Overall, about 29 percent of the program group in Corpus Christi participated in any retention or advancement services in the 12 months following study entry — a rate double that of the control group (Table 3.3). In Fort Worth, this rate was 31 percent of the program group — nearly triple the rate of participation in these services by the control group (Table 3.4). In Houston, there was no increase in overall participation in retention or advancement services relative to the control group (Table 3.5).

Employer Linkages

Like other program services, the connection between the Texas ERA program and employers was strongest in Corpus Christi, gained strength in Fort Worth, and was underdeveloped in Houston. In Corpus Christi, for most of the study period, postemployment staff conducted employer site visits at frequent intervals after an individual found a job and, later, moved to the goal of monthly employer site visits whenever possible. As a result, nearly 18 percent of the ERA program group in Corpus Christi reported that their employer had been contacted by a program staff member — a rate significantly greater than the 2 percent of the control group that reported this (Appendix Table A.1). In addition, ERA job developers in Corpus Christi tried to solicit new companies to provide opportunities to program group members, particularly companies that currently employed program group members. Staff also attempted to identify new employment opportunities at the employers they were visiting when they checked on clients.

Fort Worth started conducting employer site visits similar to those in Corpus Christi later in the study period. In this site, 8 percent of the program group reported that an ERA staff member had contacted their employer, compared with 1 percent of the control group (Appendix Table A.5). No specific job development was done for the ERA program in Fort Worth.

Due to local administrative issues, the ERA program in Houston had difficulty implementing employer site visits for working individuals and dedicating job development staff to the ERA program. As a result, the program had limited linkages to employers, and there was no increase, relative to the control group, in the percentage of program group members reporting that ERA staff had contact with their employer (Appendix Table A.8).

Texas ERA Program: Economic Impacts

As discussed, there were important differences in program services and implementation in the three Texas sites. Because of these differences, the economic impact results for each of the Texas sites are presented separately.

Corpus Christi ERA Site: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Corpus Christi ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The ERA program in Corpus Christi produced gains, relative to the control group, in several measures of employment retention and earnings in the cumulative four-year follow-up period. In addition, there are some indications that ERA may have led to increased advancement, compared with the control group level.

- ERA decreased the amount of food stamp assistance received but had no effect on the amount of TANF assistance received. ERA increased average annual income over the cumulative follow-up period.

Control Group Outcomes

Control group outcomes during the four-year follow-up period in Texas represent what would have happened in the absence of the ERA program and what the ERA program was trying to improve on. Average earnings for control group members in Corpus Christi were the lowest among all the ERA control groups examined in this report, reflecting a high level of disadvantage in this sample. Average quarterly employment was under 50 percent, and average earnings were under $4,500 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period (Table 3.3). Figure 3.1 shows that the control group's average earnings increased steadily (although modestly) over the follow-up period, without a corresponding increase in the employment rate.[5] This may indicate that there was some advancement over time in the control group, although the data cannot indicate whether the earnings increase is due to more hours of work or higher wages.[6] While most of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first year of the follow-up period, in the fourth year of follow-up, only 18 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table A.2).

Employment and Employment Retention

Given the stipend and postemployment services, it was expected that the ERA program in Corpus Christi would have effects on employment retention. The Corpus Christi program did generate gains in several measures of employment retention in the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 3.3).[7] ERA increased average quarterly employment by 3.8 percentage points, or by about 8 percent of the control group level. ERA also increased the percentage of program group members who had an employment spell of at least four quarters, by 6.5 percentage points — almost 12 percent over the control group level. In addition, ERA increased the average

[5]People who are not employed in a given quarter have earnings of zero, and these zeros are included in average earnings. Thus, average earnings could increase over time if employment levels increased as well as if the earnings of those who were working increased.

[6]Many studies show a similar pattern in which TANF applicants' and new recipients' earnings increase over time as they enter into the labor market, not necessarily as the result of any program.

[7]Texas program impacts do not appear to be diluted by sample members who never qualified for TANF and were therefore never eligible for ERA services. This measure is considered nonexperimental because it includes only the subset of the full research sample who received TANF in a certain time period after random assignment. Nonexperimental impacts for sample members who received TANF in the first or second quarter of random assignment were compared with impacts for those who did not. There are no statistically significant differences in the impacts between these groups, which suggests that the dilution did not have an effect on the results. This is the case for Corpus Christi and Fort Worth (the two Texas sites that experienced positive economic impacts).

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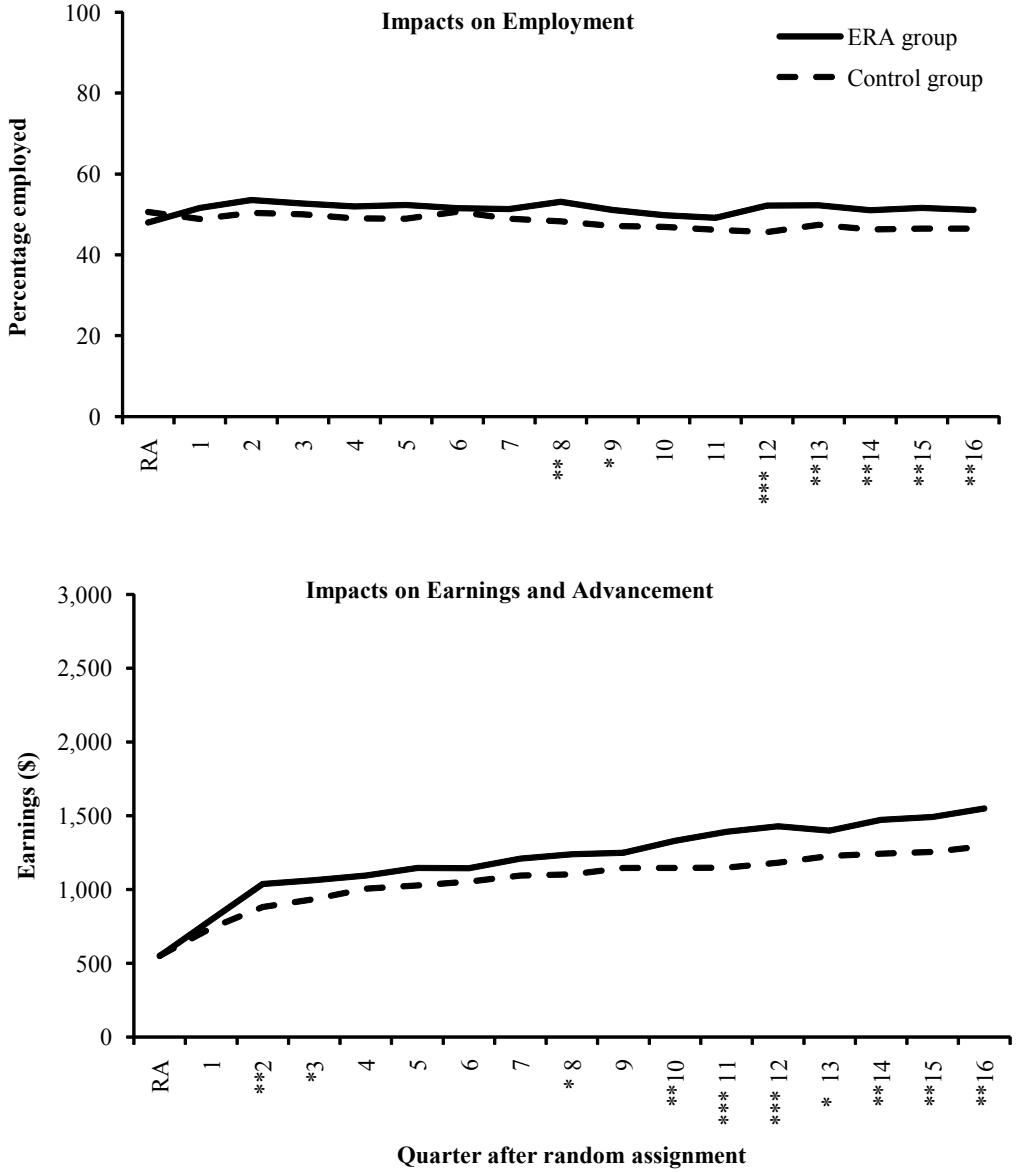
Figure 3.1
Impacts on Employment and Earnings Over Time:
Corpus Christi



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for the State of Texas.

NOTES: "RA" refers to the quarter of random assignment.
Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; and * = 10 percent.

length of the longest employment spell by 0.4 quarter — almost 8 percent over the control group average.

The ERA program in Corpus Christi had its most pronounced effect on employment retention by helping program group members who would have worked for a short period of time retain employment for a longer period. ERA decreased the percentage of program group members who worked less than 25 percent of the quarters in the follow-up period by almost 30 percent, relative to the control group, and similarly decreased the proportion of program group members whose longest employment spell was only one or two quarters (Appendix Table A.3). The effects of the ERA program in Corpus Christi on employment retention also stemmed partially from helping program group members find new jobs more quickly after the loss of a job. ERA decreased the average length of the longest unemployment spell by about 0.4 quarter (Table 3.3), and at least part of this effect was due to the program's helping individuals find a job more quickly after loss of employment.

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the ERA program in Corpus Christi did not produce statistically significant impacts on employment until the last quarter of Year 2, and it had its largest effect on employment in the last quarter of Year 3, when it increased employment by almost 7 percentage points — a 14 percent increase above the control group level. ERA continued to increase quarterly employment in Corpus Christi through the fourth year of follow-up.

Earnings and Advancement

The ERA program in Corpus Christi increased earnings and may have led to job advancement, compared with the control group level. ERA first generated earnings gains, relative to the control group, in the first year of follow-up. After these early gains, there were no statistically significant impacts on earnings for a few quarters, until they appeared again in the last quarter of Year 2. In the last two years of the follow-up period, ERA increased average earnings by $175 to $260 per quarter, an increase of 14 percent to 21 percent over the control group's quarterly earnings. It would be expected that ERA would lead to increased earnings for program group members, relative to control group members, due to its effects on employment retention. However, ERA had a larger effect on earnings than can be explained just by its effect of increasing the number of quarters employed. In the last quarter of follow-up, ERA increased earnings by about $250, an increase of 20 percent above the control group earnings level. In addition, ERA produced an employment increase of almost 5 percentage points in that quarter, or about 10 percent above the control group level. Because the earnings impact is larger in percentage terms than the employment impact, this suggests that ERA may have led to advancement gains, such as increases in hours or weeks worked or in wage rates, relative to the control group.

The ERA program in Corpus Christi produced gains in earnings through the end of the four-year follow-up period, even after program group members would have lost eligibility for the stipends and services. In fact, the ERA program in Corpus Christi had its largest effect on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting the possibility that the program may lead to even longer-term gains (Appendix Table A.2).

Over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, the ERA program in Corpus Christi generated gains in several measures of earnings and advancement for the program group, compared with the control group. ERA increased average annual earnings by $640, or by almost 15 percent of control group earnings (Table 3.3). ERA also increased the percentage of quarters in which program group members were earning more than $3,500, by about 2 percentage points — an 18 percent increase relative to the control group level. In addition, a nonexperimental measure of average earnings per quarter employed is higher for program group members than for control group members, which provides evidence that there was some advancement for program group members relative to control group members (Appendix Table A.3).[8] ERA did not have a statistically significant impact, however, on one of the main measures of advancement: the percentage of people who made at least $250 more in their highest-earning quarter in Year 4 than in their highest-earning quarter in Year 1.[9]

Looking at a broader definition of advancement, the ERA program in Corpus Christi did produce gains in some measures of the types of skills required at jobs and in some measures of benefits at the jobs that sample members held at the time of the 12-month survey (Appendix Table A.4). For example, ERA increased the percentage of program group members whose employers provided paid vacation days by close to 8 percentage points — almost doubling the percentage for the control group.

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The ERA program in Corpus Christi decreased the amount of food stamp assistance received, but it increased average annual income over the four-year follow-up period (Table 3.3). (This measure of income does not include the value of the stipend.) Program group members received $134 less in annual food stamp benefits, on average, than the control group received. ERA did not affect the amount of TANF assistance received by program group members.

[8]This measure is considered nonexperimental because it includes only a subset of the full report sample. Because people who are employed in the program group may have different characteristics than people who are employed in the control group, differences in these outcomes may not be attributable to the ERA program.

[9]This measure has a couple of important limitations. First, it does not measure advancement that may have occurred by moves from unemployment in Year 1 into employment. If ERA was able to help people move from unemployment into better jobs than similar people in the control group, then this would be a form of advancement as well. Second, there is evidence that the program may have led to advancement for program group members within the first year of follow-up; this measure would not capture that type of advancement.

Largely due to the program's effects on earnings, ERA increased annual income by an average of $475, a 6 percent increase over the control group level. Including the value of stipends received, ERA increased average annual income by $604 over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, compared with the control group level (not shown).[10]

Fort Worth ERA Site: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Fort Worth ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The ERA program in Fort Worth generated increases in some measures of employment, employment retention, and earnings in the four-year follow-up period, relative to the control group levels, but the effects were concentrated in the second and third years of follow-up. There is also evidence that the ERA program produced some gains in advancement, compared with the control group level, in the four-year follow-up period.
- ERA increased average annual income and the amount of food stamps received in the cumulative four-year follow-up period.

Control Group Outcomes

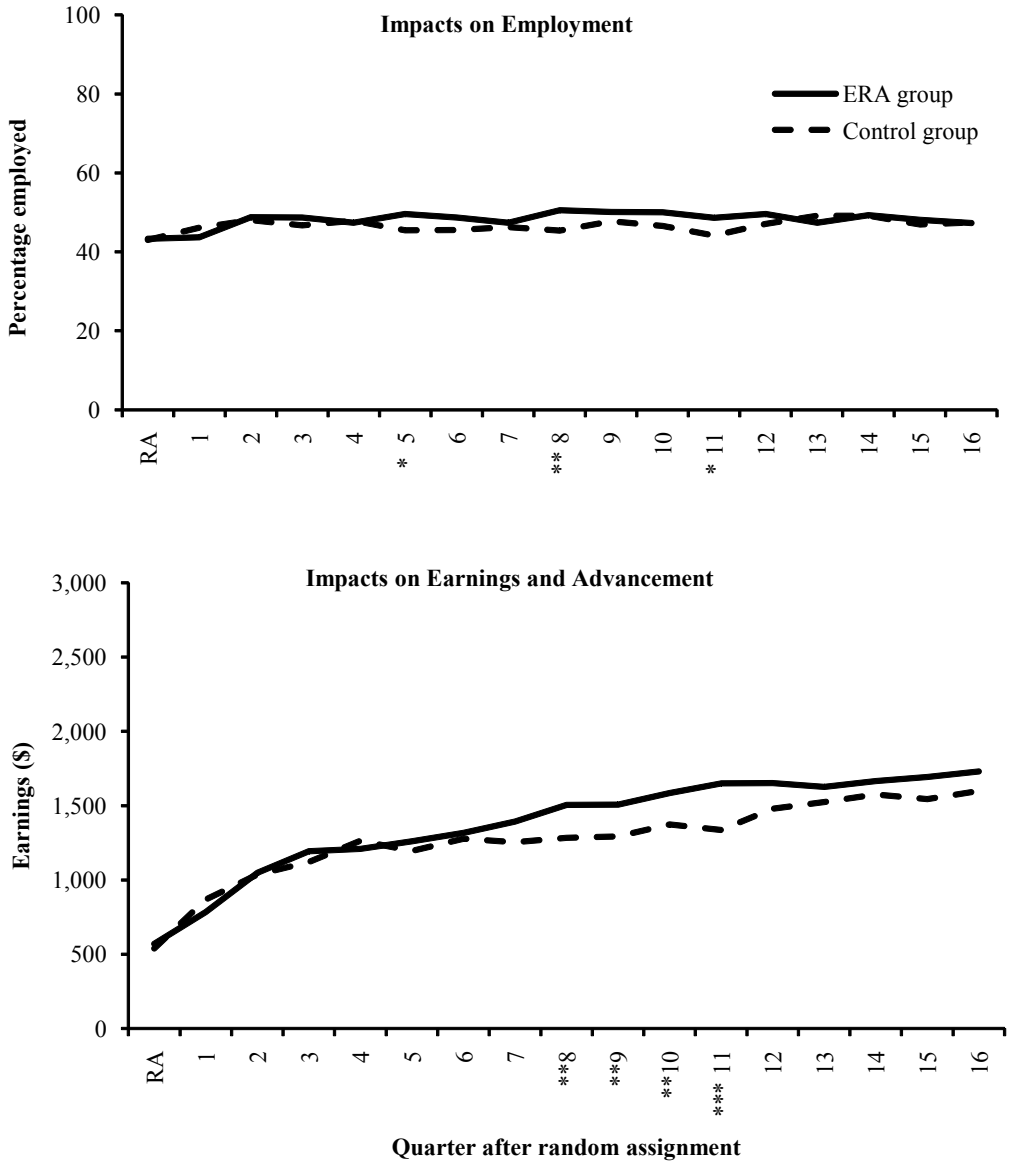
As would be expected, employment and earnings were lower for control group members in Fort Worth than for control group members in other target groups in this report who were already employed at study entry (presented in Chapters 4 and 5). However, compared with the control group outcomes for other samples in the programs presented in this chapter, the Fort Worth outcomes are not remarkable. The average quarterly employment rate was under 50 percent, and average earnings were just under $5,300 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period (Table 3.4). Figure 3.2 shows that average earnings increased steadily over the follow-up period — without a corresponding increase in employment — which indicates there was some advancement over time in the control group. Table 3.6 shows that while most of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, only 24 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the fourth year.

Employment and Employment Retention

The ERA program in Fort Worth did not produce statistically significant impacts on any of the main measures of employment or employment retention over a cumulative four-year

[10]People who entered the study late in the follow-up period in all three Texas sites had approximately 21 months to access the stipend before the program ended (Martinson and Hendra, 2006).

Figure 3.2
Impacts on Employment and Earnings Over Time: Fort Worth



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for the State of Texas.

NOTES: "RA" refers to the quarter of random assignment.
Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1percent; ** = 5 percent; and * = 10 percent.

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Table 3.6

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income, by Year of Follow-Up:

Fort Worth

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	68.4	68.5	0.0	0.984	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	47.2	47.2	0.0	0.987	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	23.6	25.5	-1.9	0.357	2.0
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	14.6	15.1	-0.5	0.761	1.7
Annual earnings ($)	4,235	4,289	-54	0.851	286
Ever received TANF (%)	80.2	79.9	0.2	0.901	1.9
Ever received food stamps (%)	92.3	91.3	0.9	0.487	1.4
Total income[a] ($)	8,173	8,068	105	0.695	269
Follow-up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	69.6	63.2	6.4 ***	0.003	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	49.1	45.7	3.4 *	0.070	1.9
Employed every quarter (%)	29.0	27.0	1.9	0.362	2.1
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	21.7	19.4	2.2	0.244	1.9
Annual earnings ($)	5,477	5,010	466	0.184	351
Ever received TANF (%)	49.1	48.7	0.4	0.883	2.4
Ever received food stamps (%)	79.8	80.4	-0.7	0.736	1.9
Total income[a] ($)	8,727	8,089	638 *	0.054	331
Follow-up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	65.8	64.2	1.6	0.471	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	49.6	46.4	3.2	0.100	2.0
Employed every quarter (%)	33.8	28.7	5.1 **	0.022	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	24.7	21.7	3.0	0.136	2.0
Annual earnings ($)	6,395	5,482	914 **	0.022	399
Ever received TANF (%)	32.0	35.4	-3.3	0.141	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	75.7	75.9	-0.2	0.915	2.0
Total income[a] ($)	9,416	8,379	1,036 ***	0.006	380
Follow-up Year 4					
Ever employed (%)	63.8	62.2	1.6	0.475	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.0	48.2	-0.1	0.945	2.0
Employed every quarter (%)	32.2	33.7	-1.4	0.529	2.3
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	26.1	25.0	1.1	0.599	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	6,715	6,245	470	0.275	431
Ever received TANF (%)	21.8	23.5	-1.7	0.410	2.0
Ever received food stamps (%)	70.2	72.1	-1.9	0.374	2.1
Total income[a] ($)	9,691	9,086	605	0.143	412
Sample size (total = 1,572)	784	788			

(continued)

Table 3.6 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

NOTES: The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.
[a]This measure represents the sum of the UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

follow-up period (Table 3.4). However, the program did generate increases, relative to the control group, in some measures of employment and employment retention in the second and third years of follow-up (Table 3.6).

The gains in employment in some of the quarters in the second and third years of follow-up (Figure 3.2) were large enough to generate an increase in average quarterly employment in Year 2 (Table 3.6). ERA also increased the percentage employed in every quarter of Year 3 by 5 percentage points, or by almost 18 percent of the control group level. These effects disappeared by the fourth year of follow-up, however.

Given the stipend and postemployment services, it was expected that the program's effects would be on employment retention. While the program in Fort Worth did increase employment retention in the middle of the follow-up period, the effects were not as persistent as those for the program in Corpus Christi.

Earnings and Advancement

The ERA program in Fort Worth produced some earnings gains and may have led to additional advancement, compared with the control group levels. ERA increased quarterly earnings, relative to the control group, at the end of Year 2 and throughout most of Year 3. It would be expected that ERA would lead to increased earnings for program group members, relative to control group members, due to its effects on employment retention. However, Fort Worth had a larger and more persistent effect on earnings than could be explained by its effect on increasing the number of quarters employed. In the quarters in which there were statistically significant impacts on earnings, the impacts ranged from $200 to $315 per quarter, an increase of 16 percent to 24 percent over the control group's average earnings. In the same quarters, program group employment rates were 5 percent to 11 percent higher than the control group employment rates. Because the earnings impacts are larger in percentage terms than the employment impacts, this suggests that ERA may have led to advancement, such as increases in hours or weeks worked or wage increases.

The ERA program in Fort Worth did not produce an impact on earnings in the cumulative four-year follow-up period, relative to the control group (Table 3.4). However, the nonexperimental measure of average earnings per quarter employed — described above, in the discussion of Corpus Christi — is higher for program group members than for control group members (Appendix Table A.6). This also indicates that there was some advancement gain for program group members.

The Fort Worth program generated statistically significant impacts on some measures of the types of skills required at jobs that sample members held at the time of the 12-month survey (Appendix Table A.7). ERA had a particularly large effect on the percentage of program group members who worked with computers at least monthly in their job; almost three times as many of them reported this activity, compared with the control group.

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The ERA program in Fort Worth produced an average annual increase in food stamps of about $160, compared with the level seen in the control group over the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 3.4). ERA also increased average annual income by about $600, or by 7 percent of the control group level. (This measure of income does not include the value of the stipend.) Including the value of stipends received, ERA increased average annual income by almost $700 over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, compared with the control group level (not shown).[11] The ERA program in Fort Worth had no effect on TANF benefits during the four-year follow-up period.

For reasons that are unclear, the Fort Worth program increased the amount of food stamp assistance received in each of the first three years of follow-up (not shown). Due to the effects on earnings and food stamp assistance, the ERA program in Fort Worth increased income in the second and third years of follow-up. In Year 3, the income of program group members averaged over $1,000 (12 percent) more than the income for control group members (Table 3.6).

Houston ERA Site: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Houston ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The ERA program in Houston did not produce any changes, relative to the control group, in employment, employment retention, or earnings in the four-year follow-up period. There is also no evidence that ERA led to advancement gains, compared with the level of advancement for the control group.

[11] Martinson and Hendra (2006).

- ERA increased the amount of TANF received throughout the follow-up period but did not have any effect on food stamp receipt or average annual income.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment and average earnings were quite low for control group members in Houston, even compared with those in other ERA programs targeting similar individuals (not employed at study entry). Table 3.5 shows that average quarterly employment was less than 45 percent and that average earnings were under $5,000 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period. Average earnings increased modestly over the follow-up period, without a corresponding increase in employment, which indicates that there was some advancement over time for those in the control group (Appendix Table A.9). While most of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, only about 30 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the fourth year (Appendix Table A.9).

Employment and Employment Retention

The Houston ERA program did not generate any changes, relative to the control group, in the main measures of employment or employment retention in the four-year follow-up period (Table 3.5). Corpus Christi and Fort Worth both had impacts on employment retention, and it took time to produce these effects. In Houston, no effects on employment or employment retention emerged over time.

Patterns of stipend receipt were different in Houston than in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth. While about 20 percent of program group members in Houston ever received a stipend (similar to the rate in Fort Worth), a much lower percentage of program group members in Houston received a significant number of stipends. Only 9 percent of program group members in Houston who ever received a stipend received 11 or more stipends, compared with close to 50 percent in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth. This result is probably attributable to the weak implementation of the ERA program in Houston, where staff experienced significant difficulties putting postemployment services in place (including the stipend).

Earnings and Advancement

The ERA program in Houston did not produce any increases in any measures of earnings or advancement compared with the control group levels (Table 3.5).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

On average, ERA raised annual TANF benefits in Houston by about $60 for the program group, compared with the control group level, over the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 3.5). But the increase was not large enough to produce statistically significant differences in income, not including the value of stipends received. Even including the value of stipends, ERA did not increase average annual income over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, compared with the control group level. The program did not produce any changes in the amounts of food stamp assistance received.

Texas ERA Program: Pattern of Findings

While the Corpus Christi ERA program generated some increases in earnings in the first year of follow-up, it was not until the end of Year 2 that the Corpus Christi and Fort Worth programs started producing their largest and most sustained effects on employment retention and earnings.[12] This delay may have been the result of the way the ERA and control services were structured. Program and control group members were not employed at the time they entered the study, and, as discussed above, preemployment services ended up being very similar for the ERA and control groups. After finding employment, both program and control group members had four months in which their earnings were disregarded in the calculation of their TANF grant, which essentially gave them an employment "stipend" of sorts (as they generally received almost their full TANF grant in addition to their earnings during that time). Thus, the ERA and control groups received similar services through the end of the earnings disregard period: both groups received preemployment services, minimal postemployment services, and a stipend in the form of the earnings disregard. Only after the disregard period was there are a large difference in program services.

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Despite the fact that program implementation and the marketing of the stipend appear to have improved over time in both the Corpus Christi and the Fort Worth ERA program, there are no statistically significant differences in impacts when analyzed by study cohort.

[12]The interim report on the Texas program (cited in Appendix E) presents analysis of two years of follow-up data for a subsample of sample members who had a full two years of follow-up data at the time. The results presented in that report reflect modest and scattered effects; however, additional follow-up has changed the story.

Texas ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

The Texas ERA program was designed to provide both job search assistance and post-employment services (which could include employer site visits and reemployment assistance) to individuals applying for or receiving cash assistance, most of whom were not working when they entered the program. To encourage employment retention and advancement, the program offered a monthly stipend of $200 for TANF leavers working at least 30 hours a week after receiving an earned income disregard for four months. The control group received preemployment services that focused on quick job entry, followed by limited postemployment services.

Corpus Christi ERA Site

The ERA program was strongly implemented in Corpus Christi, with key features put in place relatively quickly, including a developed strategy for marketing the stipend and a strong postemployment service component featuring site visits to employers to address job-related issues and job advancement. While postemployment services were different for the program and control groups, services in the preemployment phase and through the earnings disregard period ended up being similar for the two groups.

Most program group members in Corpus Christi had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program, and one-quarter had contact within four weeks prior to the 12-month survey. About two-thirds of program group members participated in a job search activity. While participation in postemployment services was not as pervasive — reflecting the voluntary nature of those services — over one-quarter of program group members received help with retention or advancement in the first 12 months after study entry. Among the three Texas ERA sites, stipend receipt rates were highest in Corpus Christi, where 30 percent of all program group members received a stipend.

Compared with the control group, the ERA program in Corpus Christi increased the level of contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program and the proportion of clients who received assistance with employment retention and advancement issues, particularly when they were working. Reflecting the similarities in preemployment services across the two groups, ERA did not raise the level of participation in job search activities. But ERA doubled the percentage of program group members who received help with retention or advancement relative to the control group.

The ERA program in Corpus Christi produced increases in several measures of employment retention, earnings, and advancement relative to the control group in the four-year follow-up period. Moreover, the program was producing gains in employment retention and earnings through the end of the four-year follow-up period, even after program group members would have lost eligibility for the stipends and services. Indeed, the ERA program in Corpus

Christi had its largest effect on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting that the program may lead to even longer-term gains. The program in Corpus Christi also increased average annual income over the cumulative four-year follow-up period.

Fort Worth ERA Site

The ERA program in Fort Worth experienced some operational difficulties early in the study period, particularly in designing preemployment services and managing the client flow through program activities. Initially, the program had a strong emphasis on assessment and on removing employment barriers, which sometimes delayed program group members' movement into employment and postemployment services. The ERA program in Fort Worth made significant improvements over time, however, including adding more structured job search services and stronger postemployment services that included regular employer site visits.

Despite the early implementation problems in the Fort Worth program, levels of contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program were similar among Fort Worth and Corpus Christi program group members. Reported levels of both participation in job search activities and receipt of retention and advancement assistance were even higher among program group members in Fort Worth than among those in Corpus Christi. Stipend receipt rates in Fort Worth were lower than in Corpus Christi, with about 20 percent of all program group members ever receiving a stipend.

As was the case in Corpus Christi, the ERA program in Fort Worth increased the proportion of program group members who had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program as well as the proportion who received assistance with job advancement services — compared with the control group. Reflecting the similarities in preemployment services across the program and control groups, ERA did not raise the level of participation in job search activities. The ERA program in Fort Worth substantially increased the percentage of program group members who received help with retention or advancement relative to the control group.

The ERA program in Fort Worth increased employment retention, earnings, and advancement, particularly in the middle of the four-year follow-up period, but the effects were not as persistent as those for the program in Corpus Christi. The program in Fort Worth also increased average annual income over the cumulative four-year follow-up period.

Several factors may account for why the ERA program in Fort Worth had less persistent impacts on employment retention than the program in Corpus Christi. First, implementation of the program was less strong, and while it improved over time, this may have led to the later emergence and smaller scale of impacts in Fort Worth. (Many program group members went through the program before implementation had improved.) Second, the stipend take-up rate was lower in Fort Worth than in Corpus Christi: 22 percent of program group members ever

received a stipend in Fort Worth, compared with 30 percent of program group members in Corpus Christi. In addition, stipend receipt among those estimated to have met the eligibility criteria to receive it was lower in Fort Worth than in Corpus Christi.[13]

Houston ERA Site

Of the three Texas ERA sites, Houston moved the most slowly to get ERA's retention and advancement services off the ground. Furthermore, some components of the model were never implemented. For much of the study period, this program placed a high priority on providing preemployment services, rather than on developing postemployment services. While some postemployment services, such as career assessment, were eventually put in place, even then the services did not include some key elements, such as employer site visits, that were used in the other two Texas sites.

The program group members in Houston had similar levels of ever having contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program as the program groups in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, but the percentage having contact within four weeks prior to the survey was lower in Houston than in the other sites. While the level of participation in job search was high among program group members in Houston — reflecting the site's emphasis on preemployment services — a smaller percentage of program group members reported that they had received help with retention or advancement in the first 12 months after study entry, compared with program group members in the other sites. The percentage of program group members in Houston who ever received a stipend was approximately the same as in Fort Worth, but a much lower percentage received a significant number of stipends. Unlike the other Texas sites, the ERA program in Houston did not increase the proportion of program group members who reported having contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program or receiving help with retention or advancement, relative to control group members. The ERA program in Houston did not have an effect on employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement.

Cross-Site Conclusions

The results from the Texas ERA program reinforce a growing body of evidence showing that combining well-implemented services and financial incentives conditioned on employment can lead to positive employment and earnings impacts.[14] Corpus Christi had the strongest implementation of the Texas ERA program and the highest stipend receipt rate, and it had the largest and most persistent impacts on economic outcomes. In Fort Worth, initial

[13]Martinson and Hendra (2006).
[14]Michalopoulos (2005).

implementation difficulties and the lower stipend receipt rate may have led this program to have less consistent economic impacts than those in Corpus Christi. Implementation of the program improved over time in Fort Worth, which may account for the later emergence and smaller scale of impacts. In Houston, postemployment services and stipend take-up were weak compared with the other sites, which illustrates the importance of strong program implementation as well as design.

The economic impacts may have been diluted in the Texas ERA program to some extent by factors related to the research design. Program administrators wanted to enroll sample members into the Texas ERA program when they were not yet employed because it was thought that it might be helpful to encourage people to think about retention and advancement as they were looking for employment and to build relationships with staff that would persist after clients found jobs. However, both the preemployment and the postemployment services that were available during the earnings disregard period ended up being fairly similar for the program and control groups. The more intensive ERA postemployment services (such as employer site visits) did not generally start until the stipend phase of the program, after an individual had been working for four months. Therefore, the impacts may have been diluted, since some sample members did not stay in the program past the earnings disregard period and were not exposed to the key service differential between the ERA and control groups.[15] This delay in service differential also contributes to timing of the impacts, which were not large in Corpus Christi until later in the follow-up period and did not appear in Fort Worth until well into the follow-up period.

The main purpose of the stipend used in the Texas ERA program was to encourage employment retention. Another benefit, however, should be noted: additional income was provided to these low-income families through the stipend.

[15]Expectations about future stipends, however, might have affected the employment behavior of program group members before the end of the earnings disregard period.

Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club (EJC) ERA Findings

Los Angeles EJC ERA at a Glance

- Served unemployed TANF recipients who were required to search for employment
- Offered a job club that sought to place individuals in jobs more in line with their career interests
- Emphasized that individuals should seek jobs in their area of career interest and helped clients seek these types of jobs
- Was compared with a control group that was required to participate in a traditional job club, emphasizing seeking any type of job that could result in a quick placement
- Based on field research, appeared to deliver a different message than the traditional job club about the types of jobs to seek, but not supported by survey results among program group members a year later
- Resulted in no improvements in employment retention or advancement outcomes

Los Angeles EJC ERA Test: Introduction

The goal of the Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club (EJC) model was to increase employment retention and advancement among unemployed TANF recipients through the implementation of a distinct job club model that had a focus on career development. The job club was one component of the larger welfare-to-work program operated in Los Angeles, called Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) — a program that was strongly focused on placing welfare recipients quickly into jobs. The study enrolled sample members from June 2002 through December 2004.

Origins of the Test

In 2000, Los Angeles County sought to increase TANF recipients' employment retention as well as their long-term self-sufficiency. To foster these goals, the county developed an "enhanced" job club model that, in addition to imparting basic job search skills, featured career planning and used a "step-down" approach to connect clients to work. The step-down approach involved seeking employment within a specific occupational field of interest defined by the client. The EJC model sought to improve on Los Angeles County's previous success in offering highly effective "traditional" job clubs (TJC). The TJC model — which used a "work-first" approach and generally placed individuals in low-wage, low-skill jobs — had some of the

largest employment impacts among welfare-to-work programs studied, when compared with a control group that was not mandated to participate in employment services.[16]

In addition to the TJC model, another job club model that operated in Portland, Oregon, as part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), informed the design of the Los Angeles EJC model. The Portland model was also built on the hypothesis that the messages delivered in job clubs about what type of job a client might seek could make a difference in eventual economic outcomes. Unlike the EJC model studied in ERA, however, the Portland model emphasized seeking a job that had a relatively high rate of pay, fringe benefits, and an opportunity for advancement. The EJC model, in contrast, emphasized seeking the most desired job in an individual's area of interest, which might not necessarily be the highest-paying job. If that most desired job was not attainable, the individual could "step down" to the next most desired job in that field, which could potentially lead to the most desired job.

The five-week EJC model attempted to place individuals into jobs in their field of career interest from the outset, with the belief that this approach would enable them to keep their jobs longer, engage in career advancement activities, and ultimately move into better jobs along a career path. In contrast, the TJC model, which was the control condition in this test, was the conventional, but proven effective, three-week job club workshop that the county had been operating since 1995. The TJC model aimed to get clients into jobs quickly, regardless of the jobs' field, wage rates, or promotional opportunities. It was reasoned that getting people quickly into jobs would enable them to obtain earnings faster, develop a longer work history and positive work behavior habits, master occupational skills, and build a social network that could lead to better job opportunities.

Labor Market Context

The Los Angeles EJC ERA test began just as the area's labor market was exiting from a downturn caused by 2001 recession. Unemployment rates were declining from the high reached during the recession and were returning to prerecession levels, and the pace of the recovery in the area's labor market was faster than the national recovery. Thus, while the initial conditions faced by sample members at the beginning of the ERA test were challenging, the labor market was expanding for almost the entirety of the job clubs' operation and follow-up period.

Target Population

The Los Angeles EJC model targeted unemployed TANF recipients who were mandated to participate in the county's welfare-to-work program if they spoke either English or Spanish and were not involved in a second ERA program that operated in Los Angeles County

[16]Freedman, Knab, Gennetian, and Navarro (2000).

(the Reach for Success [RFS] program, discussed in Chapter 4). Table 3.2 shows characteristics of the sample at the time the study began. Over 40 percent of sample members had been receiving TANF for two years or more when they entered the study, and most had received TANF cash assistance before. Further, only 27 percent reported employment in the quarter prior to random assignment — the lowest among the sites in this target group. The duration of TANF receipt and the low prior employment rates indicate that this sample was disadvantaged.

Significance of the Test

The Los Angeles EJC ERA test examined whether changes in the design of a proven three-week job club, administered by a welfare agency, could improve job quality and increase employment retention and advancement for unemployed TANF recipients. Specifically, this site tested whether a mandatory job club that focused on career development activities could help individuals find jobs that they could retain longer and be more likely to use as a basis for advancement than the county's more traditional, mandatory job club. Chart 3.2 highlights important differences between the job clubs for the EJC group and the TJC group members.

Los Angeles EJC Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) jointly operated the enhanced and traditional job clubs. These job clubs were part of California's mandatory welfare-to-work program for unemployed TANF recipients, known as the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program.

This study took place in two welfare administration regions in Los Angeles County. These two regions included the San Gabriel Valley, which forms the eastern suburbs of the city of Los Angeles, and central Los Angeles, which encompasses downtown Los Angeles and part of the neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles.

Staffing

Job club facilitators were primarily responsible for the implementation of the EJC model, even though several other types of staff assisted. In fall 2002, an MDRC contractor trained these facilitators on career plan development using the step-down approach. Each of the two regions had approximately four to seven EJC facilitators and held four to five job club workshops per month, on average, with approximately 24 to 38 EJC clients attending each workshop. The TJC facilitators had a similar workshop frequency and average attendance.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 3.2

Program-Control Group Differences:

Los Angeles EJC Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Place unemployed TANF recipients in targeted and promotable jobs within identified field of interest	• Place unemployed TANF recipients in any job as quickly as possible
Staffing	• Access to job developer and job coach	• Limited access to job developer and no access to job coach
Staff-client engagement	• Formal process for identifying employment barriers and assessing career interests and feasibility of career goals • Career plan developed	• No formal process for identifying employment barriers and assessing career interests and feasibility of career goals • No career plan developed
Job preparation and placement	• Five-week job club workshop • Place unemployed TANF recipients in targeted and promotable jobs within identified field of interest ("step-down" job search approach)	• Three-week job club workshop • Place unemployed TANF recipients in any job as quickly as possible ("work-first" job search approach)
Retention services	• Job placement in field of interest	• Job placement in any job
Advancement services	• Career development guidance	• No career development guidance
Employer linkages	• Minimal links to employers through job developer	• No links to employers

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

Other LACOE and DPSS staff contributed to serving EJC clients, although the model did not use a team-based staffing structure, as was the case in some other ERA models, where multiple staff are jointly responsible for client progress. These staff included job coaches who helped program group members research potential career fields and job developers who matched individuals to specific job openings and provided one-on-one assistance with résumé preparation and the use of career development software. LACOE and DPSS staff were also the

TJC model facilitators. Other staff that assisted the EJC facilitators, however, rarely worked with control group members.

Individuals in both the EJC and the TJC group maintained their TANF case manager, who worked with them on issues related to eligibility and supportive services that were normally provided through the TANF program. The TANF case manager did not distinguish between or provide different types of services to individuals in the EJC or TJC groups.

The staff performance goals for the EJC and TJC facilitators in this study were the same. Staff leading both types of job clubs was expected to place 30 percent of their workshop clients in jobs (of any type) by the end of the job club session. In addition to the same performance goals, there was little to no distinction in staff skills, experience, or training between the EJC and TJC facilitators.

Staff-Client Engagement

Both the EJC and the TJC model were mandatory, and individuals were required to attend job club workshops in order to continue receiving their TANF grant. (There were no additional mandatory TANF participation requirements for program group members relative to control group members.) Because participation was mandatory, staff did not have to recruit individuals, as they would have needed to do in a voluntary postemployment program. After attending a program orientation, clients completed an appraisal interview with program staff and were randomly assigned to one of the job club models. The job clubs did not use financial incentives for participation or other outcomes, and workshops were always conducted during standard office hours at the program's offices. Staff did not attempt to engage sample members prior to the scheduled start date of their job club session, and if they did not show up for their session, they were rescheduled for another session. If sample members continued to not comply, they were sanctioned, meaning that their TANF grant could be reduced.[17]

Table 3.7 shows that, based on the 12-month survey, most measures of sample members' contact with any employment program staff show no differences between the groups. One key exception is that the EJC survey respondents reported a lower rate of contact than the TJC survey respondents, a 12 percentage point difference. The reason for this is not clear. The two groups did not differ in the amount of time that they received TANF in the year following random assignment, and thus both groups had equal opportunities for having contact with staff. The difference could possibly reflect that EJC clients found jobs more quickly than TJC clients (discussed further below), resulting in a faster exit from job clubs and less frequent staff contact.

[17]In California, an imposed sanction results in a reduction in the amount of an individual's TANF grant. In some other states, an imposed sanction can result in eventual forfeiture of the full TANF grant amount.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 3.7

Summary of Impacts:

Los Angeles EJC

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	42.1	53.9	-11.8 ***	0.004
Average number of contacts with staff	7.3	7.9	-0.6	0.701
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	16.2	20.1	-3.9	0.220
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	70.8	70.0	0.9	0.818
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	5.4	5.1	0.2	0.899
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	15.9	12.0	4.0	0.169
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	4.6	6.6	-2.0	0.303
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	36.2	41.5	-5.3	0.190
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	21.9	18.8	3.1	0.362
Sample size (total = 608)	311	297		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	82.6	82.8	-0.2	0.925
Average quarterly employment (%)	49.5	48.6	0.9	0.640
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	56.3	55.6	0.7	0.796
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	5.2	5.0	0.2	0.351
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.3	5.3	0.0	0.953
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	7,306	7,325	-18	0.967
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	23.5	23.9	-0.4	0.813
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	48.4	48.0	0.4	0.882
Earnings decreased by more than $250	15.3	11.7	3.7 *	0.065
Earnings changed by less than $250	4.1	3.8	0.3	0.764
Earnings increased by $250 or more	32.1	35.8	-3.7	0.168
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	4,037	3,926	111	0.443
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,213	2,125	88	0.240
Average annual income[c] ($)	13,556	13,376	181	0.664
Sample size (total = 1,183)	598	585		

(continued)

Table 3.7 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Activities

The Los Angeles EJC model's step-down approach used job search activities targeted at a specific range of jobs within an occupational field of interest defined by a client. The overall objective of the EJC model was to connect job-seekers with positions in a career field of their choosing rather than instructing them to take any available job.

For the first week of the five-week workshop, the EJC model involved clients in developing a career plan that identified their occupational field of interest and various levels of jobs within that field. Clients identified a "quality-of-life goal" that was the individual's ultimate career objective, which usually required additional experience or credentials. Clients also identified a list of "targeted jobs" (the highest-paying jobs in one's career field, given current education or work history) and a list of "promotable" jobs that could lead to a targeted job. In addition, the EJC workshop included activities to impart basic job search skills, such as résumé preparation and interviewing practice.

During the three subsequent weeks, EJC clients refined their career development plans and conducted the step-down targeted job search activities. First, individuals attempted to become employed in the highest-paying job in their field of interest that they could access (their targeted job). If they did not find a targeted job during the second week of job search, they expanded the search to include both targeted and promotable positions during the third week. Lastly, if clients were still unemployed by the fourth week of job search, then they aimed to find a skill-building job (any part-time position) that could improve their skills if combined with enrollment in education or training. The fifth week was voluntary and consisted of individualized job search assistance for those who wanted additional help finding work. Overall, field

research suggests that staff successfully implemented different activities in the EJC and the TJC workshops and conveyed distinctly different messages about the types of jobs to seek.

The nature of the two groups' job club experiences was expected to differ, and the EJC group, compared with the TJC group, was expected to have longer potential stays in the job clubs as well (five weeks compared with three weeks). However, according to the 12-month survey, the EJC and TJC sample members attended job clubs at similar rates and for similar amounts of time. About 60 percent of both groups participated in group job search activities in the first year (Appendix Table A.12), and each group attended for about 2.5 weeks in the first year (not shown).[18]

Despite the efforts of EJC staff, EJC clients did not retain the message of developing a long-term career development plan and finding jobs in their occupational field of interest. Findings from the 12-month survey show that the overall message recalled by the majority of EJC clients a year after they entered the model was that they should quickly find a job, and there were few differences between what the EJC and the TJC sample members recalled regarding the types of messages they received (not shown).[19] This could reflect that exposing clients to a message that is more nuanced than the immediate "work-first" message is difficult within an agency that has a strong employment focus. Also, according to field research, there were differences among EJC facilitators regarding how closely they followed the progression of job types — quality-of-life, targeted, promotable, and skill-building — and this also may have weakened the EJC message.

Retention Services

The Los Angeles EJC model stressed the importance of helping people find work in their field of interest as a key strategy for increasing employment retention rates, but it did not provide any specific services in this area. Both the EJC and the TJC model addressed retention issues in indirect ways, such as encouraging clients to learn and meet employers' expectations regarding work site behavior (especially interpersonal relationships between supervisors and employees) and ensuring that clients made sufficiently reliable arrangements for their child care and transportation needs in preparation for employment (Appendix Table A.12). And staff in both job clubs made no efforts to stay in contact with employed participants. Not surprisingly, Table 3.7 shows no differences between the two groups in terms of participation in employment retention services.

[18]Navarro, Azurdia, and Hamilton (2008).
[19]Navarro, Azurdia, and Hamilton (2008).

Advancement Services

The career development activities — especially the formulation of the career plan and the lists of targeted and promotable jobs that clients attempted to find — were critical elements of the Los Angeles EJC model. The career plan, in particular, acted as a repository of all the steps that individuals needed to undertake in order to obtain higher-quality jobs. In contrast, TJC did not offer any career development services and was not designed to discuss advancement in a specific manner. Yet there is no difference between the EJC and TJC sample members in client-reported rates of participation in career assessment services (Table 3.7).

If unable to find a desirable full-time job in the five-week program, the EJC clients had quicker access to education and training than their counterparts in the TJC model. EJC clients could undergo a vocational assessment near or at the end of the workshop, which was required in order to be referred to education or training. EJC staff also encouraged clients to blend part-time work with their participation in education or training. However, the survey data show that TJC and EJC group members enrolled in education and training at the same rates (Table 3.7).

Employer Linkages

The EJC model included only minimal efforts to involve employers in job placement or career development activities. To support EJC clients' job search efforts throughout the five-week workshop, job developers matched clients to specific job openings, coordinated weekly employer recruitments, and referred clients to job fairs.

Los Angeles EJC ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Los Angeles EJC program can be summarized as follows:

- Los Angeles EJC did not produce any changes in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement, compared with the TJC group, in the cumulative three-year follow-up period.
- EJC did not have any effect on the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or on the average annual income during this period.

Control Group Outcomes

Average earnings for TJC (control) group members in the Los Angeles EJC ERA study were the highest of all the control groups examined in this chapter, due to a substantial increase in earnings over the follow-up period. The average quarterly employment rate was under 50 percent, and average earnings were about $7,300 per year for TJC group members over the three-year follow-up period (Table 3.7). Average earnings almost doubled over the follow-up

period — without a corresponding increase in employment[20] — which suggests that there was some advancement over time in the TJC group (Appendix Table A.13). While most of the TJC group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, 57 percent of that group received at least one TANF payment in the third year of follow-up (Appendix Table A.13).

Employment and Employment Retention

In the cumulative three-year follow-up period, Los Angeles EJC did not lead to gains, relative to the TJC group, in any of the main measures of employment or employment retention (Table 3.7). However, EJC did produce an increase in the percentage of program group members who were continuously employed, an increase of about 5 percentage points (Appendix Table A.14). EJC also increased the length of time that individuals were employed at the jobs held in the first quarter after random assignment. These findings could indicate a positive effect of EJC on a small group of people — perhaps for people who were able to find a job in their career of interest.

Earnings and Advancement

EJC did not produce any increases in any of the main measures of earnings or advancement, compared with what was seen in the TJC group (Table 3.7).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

In the cumulative three-year follow-up period, EJC had no effect on the amount of TANF benefits received, on the amount of food stamp assistance received, or on the average annual income (Table 3.7).

Los Angeles EJC Program: Summary and Conclusions

Past research showed that the Traditional Job Club (TJC) model emphasizing immediate entry into any job was effective in increasing employment and earnings for welfare applicants and recipients, relative to not requiring participation in job clubs. Yet the model was not found to be effective in helping people to retain or advance in jobs. In an attempt to improve job quality and increase employment retention and advancement for unemployed TANF recipients, the Los Angeles EJC ERA model made alterations to this traditional job club model. Specifically, the EJC model added career development activities, promoted the use of targeted job searches that encouraged individuals to seek jobs in their career of interest, and extended the

[20]Because people who are not employed in a given quarter have earnings of zero, and because these zeros are included in average earnings, average earnings could increase over time as employment increased even if earnings did not increase at all for people who were employed.

length of the activity from three to five weeks, under the theory that this would help individuals find jobs that they would retain and use as a basis for advancement.

Staff implemented different types of activities in the EJC and the TJC workshops and conveyed distinctly different messages about the types of jobs that individuals were to seek. EJC staff worked closely with clients to identify their field of interest and the potential barriers they faced in acquiring a job in their ideal field, and then they tailored job searches to clients' interests. In contrast, TJC staff urged clients to seek and accept any type of job.

Despite the different messages conveyed by staff to individuals in the EJC and TJC groups, the overall message that was recalled one year later by both EJC and TJC group members was that they should find a job quickly. In addition, EJC and TJC group members attended job clubs for similar lengths of time, even though the EJC workshops were designed to last two weeks longer. No differences were expected between the two groups in the receipt of retention and advancement services as measured in the 12-month survey, and none were found.

While EJC did increase the average length of time that people were employed at the jobs they held in the first quarter after random assignment, compared with the average time for individuals served by TJC, it did not generate any changes in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. It appears that, despite the efforts of EJC staff, the overall message that was recalled by the majority of EJC survey respondents a year after they entered the study was that they should quickly find a job. This suggests that the "work-first" mandate in the overall program in which the EJC model was embedded may have been more influential than the job club message, content, or curriculum. Exposing clients to a message that is more nuanced than "find a job quickly" may be difficult within a work-focused welfare agency. ERA program group members may have also found it difficult to learn about and obtain "targeted" or "promotable" jobs in their fields of interest, particularly in the time frame available. And, even for those who did find such jobs, the jobs may not have paid well or may have otherwise not been "good" jobs (with full-time hours, benefits, and so on). Overall, although field research shows that the EJC model was implemented largely as it was designed, it did not prove to be more effective than the TJC model at promoting employment retention and advancement.

Salem ERA Findings

Salem ERA at a Glance

- Served unemployed TANF applicants who were required to search for employment
- Sought to provide individualized retention and advancement services both before and after employment
- In practice, provided preemployment services but had difficulty implementing postemployment services
- Was compared with a control group that participated in Oregon's standard welfare-to-work program
- Resulted in small-to-moderate increases in participation in employment retention and advancement services
- Produced no improvements in employment retention or advancement

Salem ERA Test: Introduction

Operating from May 2002 through June 2005, the Salem ERA program targeted TANF applicants who were unemployed. The program began with job search and placement services that focused on employment retention and advancement; once individuals were employed, the Salem ERA program intended to provide further services to promote employment retention and advancement.

Origins of the Test

The Oregon and Salem Departments of Human Services (DHS) were actively engaged in workforce retention and advancement issues prior to designing the ERA program in 2002 and, as part of this effort, had concluded that a strong client-staff relationship was integral to clients' participation in services and employment retention and advancement. Beginning services prior to employment was considered important in building this relationship. The importance of engaging employers was also identified.

The Salem ERA program was designed to be different from the standard welfare-to-work program that was offered to control group members. It differed in its emphasis on helping clients identify and work toward a job in their field of interest, its focus on customer service, the location of the program in a local One-Stop Center rather than the welfare office, and the availability of assistance and services after employment was secured.

Those who were assigned to the control group participated in the standard welfare-to-work program providing preemployment job search services. The control group services

embodied a "work-first" philosophy and essentially ended once clients found jobs and were determined no longer to be eligible for TANF assistance.

Labor Market Context

The Salem ERA program operated in a difficult environment. At the time of random assignment, the area's labor market was still suffering the effects of the 2001 recession, with rising unemployment rates and stagnant job growth. During the study period, the unemployment rate in the Salem area continued to increase through 2003. Further, the State of Oregon, Salem's largest employer, instituted a hiring freeze due to budget shortfalls, and this affected the types of job opportunities available to program group members as well as the program's staffing capacity. At the same time, funds for the TANF program were being reallocated to support other programs. As the area's labor market began to recover in 2004, unemployment declined, and job growth increased modestly, but unemployment still continued to be above the national rate. Thus, for most of the Salem ERA program's operating period, labor market conditions created a challenging environment for sample members looking for work, though there were some small improvements toward the end of the follow-up period.

Target Population

The Salem ERA program targeted low-income TANF applicants. Table 3.2 shows selected characteristics of the sample members at the time of random assignment. Sixty-nine percent of the Salem ERA sample had at least a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, and 45 percent had worked more than 24 months out of the last three years (both are the highest rates for sites within this target group). Nearly two-thirds of employed Salem ERA sample members earned $7.00 per hour or more at the jobs they held at the time of random assignment. This proportion is high compared with other sites in this target group, likely because Oregon's minimum wage ($6.50 to $6.90 per hour during most of the time the program was operating) was higher than the national minimum hourly wage at the time ($5.15).

Significance of the Test

The Salem ERA test examines whether mandatory preemployment and voluntary post-employment services can increase job placement, job quality, employment retention, and advancement in the labor market for TANF applicants, compared with a program limited to mandatory preemployment services. Chart 3.3 highlights important differences between the programs for the ERA group and the control group in Salem.

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Chart 3.3

Program-Control Group Differences:

Salem ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• To promote job placement, employment retention, and advancement among unemployed TANF applicants	• To promote job placement among unemployed TANF applicants
Staffing	• Initially team-based and later specialized staff structure • Staff routinely able to meet clients off-site • ERA staff located at One-Stop Center	• Generalist and not team-based staff structure • Staff unable to meet clients off-site • Staff located at DHS office
Staff-client engagement	• During preemployment, staff-to-client contact 2-3 times per week • Development of employment plan	• During preemployment, staff-to-client contact once per week • No employment plan developed
Job preparation and placement	• Job search assistance, including pre-employment workshops focused on retention and career advancement • Staff assistance with and easy access to One-Stop Center job search resources	• Job search assistance focused on quick placement with no regard for retention and career advancement • No staff assistance with One-Stop Center job search resources
Advancement services	• Preemployment workshops with career interest assessments and career path activities	• No advancement services

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

Salem ERA Program: Features

Program Resources and Organization

Building on an already strong working relationship among the welfare, workforce, and community college systems, the Salem ERA program was a collaborative effort between the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and Chemeketa Community College (Chemeketa) — the same organizations that operated the program for the control group. Staff from both organizations delivered ERA services at the Winema Career Center (the One-Stop Center in Salem), located on the Chemeketa campus.

Staffing

Each ERA client worked with a DHS staff member and with a training and employment specialist employed by Chemeketa. The DHS staff were responsible for all eligibility issues for TANF, food stamps, child care, transportation, and the Oregon Health Plan. The training and employment specialists were in charge of the client's job search, employment retention, and career advancement. Unlike the control group services that were housed at DHS, the Winema Career Center was designated as the physical home for the Salem ERA program and for both DHS staff and Chemeketa training and employment specialists. Although the two types of ERA staff had some distinct responsibilities, they were presented to clients as a team, any one of whom could be approached for help. Colocation of staff and the lack of specialization along pre- and postemployment lines were intended to make services seamless and the ERA program more customer friendly.

The Salem ERA program experienced high staff turnover early in the study period and was unable to fill its staff vacancies due to the statewide hiring freeze. As a result, while it was intended that staff would work with employed and unemployed clients, as caseloads grew and staffing levels dropped, staff focused primarily on preemployment services, such as eligibility issues and individual crises. Near the end of the study period, management responded to workload challenges by specializing some of the ERA staff responsibilities. Program managers designated a training and employment specialist and one other staff member as the career advancement team, which focused on the development of postemployment services.

ERA staff were expected to accommodate clients' schedules and locations, meeting clients at sites other than their offices at the Career Center. The training and employment specialists routinely made an effort to meet clients during their lunch hour (often buying them lunch) and at their job sites. The ERA staff had high levels of contact with clients during the preemployment job search period, partly because most clients were required to meet with staff once a week. Moreover, because the ERA program offered workshops four days per week, participants often dropped by informally after attending a workshop, and they accessed job search services at the Career Center.

The original ERA staff completed a 120-hour career development facilitation training course at Chemeketa Community College in addition to other training that was focused on marketing and client engagement strategies. Unfortunately, due to the high level of staff turnover, this knowledge was not retained.

Cultural differences between staff from the two organizations providing ERA services created some operational difficulties. Welfare and community college staff entered the Salem ERA program with different philosophies about program policies and goals, and they had different expectations for the program. Even though ERA program managers worked well

together, they were stretched across many commitments, which limited their ability to address these philosophical differences.

Staff-Client Engagement

TANF participation requirements were the same for individuals in the program group and those in the control group: participation in the preemployment phase was mandatory, but participation after employment was voluntary. (ERA-specific activities did not introduce any additional mandatory TANF participation requirements for program group members relative to control group members.) As mandated by the state, all welfare applicants, unless exempt, were required to participate in job search activities that occurred concurrently with applicants' eligibility determination. When they first applied for welfare, individuals were assigned either to the ERA program group or to the control group, which provided the standard welfare-to-work job search and preparation services.

Those assigned to the ERA program were referred to an intake meeting and orientation at the Winema Career Center. During these meetings, ERA program staff invested considerable time and effort into marketing the ERA program differences from regular welfare-to-work services, stressing the team approach, enhanced customer service, and ongoing services after job placement. After the orientation, clients met one-on-one with ERA staff who further explained the goals and benefits of the program. Subsequently, ERA staff worked closely with clients to develop an individual Personal Development Plan, which outlined the client's short- and long-term career goals. These goals were revisited and updated over the course of the program and even after the client became employed. Staff spent significant time assisting clients with eligibility issues and resolving employment barriers, such as concerns about child care, housing, or transportation.

ERA clients were required to meet with staff once a week, and they also would see staff when they attended preemployment workshops. Although the ERA program did not affect the proportion of clients who had any contact with staff from an employment program, the program did increase the average number of contacts made in the first 12 months. Table 3.8 shows that program group members had an average of 22 contacts in the year after random assignment, an increase of nearly 7 contacts over the control group average in that time frame.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Like all the programs that served unemployed TANF recipients, job preparation and placement services were a primary component of the Salem ERA program, which created a set of preemployment workshops that focused on future employment retention and career paths. These workshops were specifically designed to address longer-term career interests and to focus clients on their "dream job." Program staff reported some difficulties motivating clients to

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Table 3.8

Summary of Impacts:

Salem

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	84.9	79.0	5.9	0.197
Average number of contacts with staff	22.0	15.4	6.6 **	0.042
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	41.7	41.0	0.7	0.907
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	77.6	70.3	7.2	0.166
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	15.2	4.7	10.5 ***	0.003
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	16.7	9.9	6.8 *	0.098
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	9.2	3.4	5.9 **	0.036
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	28.6	32.8	-4.1	0.462
Received any help with retention/advancement[p] (%)	34.1	20.4	13.8 **	0.011
Sample size (total = 300)	152	148		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	81.3	80.4	0.8	0.666
Average quarterly employment (%)	42.4	44.9	-2.4	0.153
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	47.5	49.2	-1.7	0.494
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	4.3	4.6	-0.3	0.110
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.9	5.8	0.2	0.370
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,258	5,519	-260	0.425
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	16.7	18.2	-1.6	0.234
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	56.3	52.9	3.4	0.163
Earnings decreased by more than $250	11.0	11.4	-0.4	0.786
Earnings changed by less than $250	3.0	4.0	-1.0	0.283
Earnings increased by $250 or more	29.6	31.6	-2.0	0.395
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,602	1,304	298 ***	0.001
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,305	2,212	93	0.168
Average annual income[c] ($)	9,166	9,035	131	0.690
Sample size (total = 1,504)	742	762		

(continued)

Table 3.8 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

attend all the workshops available, but they encouraged clients to identify and work toward a job of interest or in their "field of fascination." In addition to the workshops, individuals in the ERA program received one-on-one assistance from program staff to address employment barriers and provide support services.

While the services at the Career Center were also available to individuals in the control group, the ERA clients had a stronger and more immediate access to these job-related resources because their program was located at the Career Center. The Salem ERA staff assisted clients in accessing these services, while individuals in the control group were less likely to know about or use them.

Overall, the Salem ERA program engaged a large majority of its clients in program services, although control group members had similarly high levels of participation. As shown in Table 3.8, about three-quarters of both groups participated in some type of job search in the first year of follow-up. However, participation in a particular type of job search — group job search or job club — was higher for the program group than for the control group, and program group members stayed in these activities longer. Sixty-three percent of program group members participated in a group job search or job club, a rate that is 13 percentage points greater than the control group rate (Appendix Table A.16). On average, program group members participated in these activities for 15 weeks in the first year, compared with 9 weeks among control group members (Appendix Table A.16).

Retention Services

The strength of the Salem ERA program's preemployment services — particularly the emphasis on career advancement and the staff's enhanced customer service — was intended to help clients who found employment stay engaged in the program and participate in its postemployment services. But the postemployment services were also to include immediate and ongoing follow-up with newly working clients, in order to revisit goals, address any barriers to employment retention, and make referrals to appropriate education or training activities or to jobs that paid more. In practice, however, staff were unable to provide these postemployment services consistently, although their ability to do so did increase toward the end of the study period. Overall, only 15 percent of the program group reported having received help dealing with problems on the job, but this was 11 percentage points greater than the control group rate (Table 3.8).

Advancement Services

For most of the study period, the primary advancement strategy in the Salem ERA program centered on the preemployment workshops that were infused with messages and activities related to career advancement. While the program had intended to involve education and training providers and to work with clients to explore education and training options, in practice, these activities occurred on a very limited basis.

Only when the program was nearing its end and random assignment had stopped did staff have the time and resources to turn attention to working clients and the program's postemployment objectives. At this point, staff shifted from the team-based approach into specialized positions and focused on advancement through regular meetings with working clients and "Career Night," a forum in which working clients convened to discuss issues that could affect their employment retention and prospects for advancement. Despite direct mailing and reminder phone calls, however, attendance at these workshops was low.

Overall, 34 percent of the program group reported having received help with retention or advancement services — 14 percentage points greater than the control group rate (Appendix Table A.16). Twenty-three percent of program group members, or nearly double the rate of control group members, reported that, while working, they participated in an employment activity (primarily, group or individual job search) (Table 3.8). Although the ERA program did increase the receipt of these services, the overall level of participation was still lower than expected.

The lower-than-expected level of participation in postemployment services may have reflected several factors. First, clients' availability and follow-through opportunities were limited, given the voluntary nature of the postemployment services. Because of the relatively

high minimum wage in Oregon, those who found employment were generally ineligible for cash assistance and were then no longer required to participate in program services, which weakened their link to the program. Second, many staff reported their own lack of skills and experience in delivering advancement services. They struggled to understand how to develop advancement services in general, the strategies and methods involved, and how to approach employers and clients regarding advancement. Finally, higher caseloads than anticipated made it difficult for staff to focus on postemployment services.

Employer Linkages

While a key goal of the Salem ERA program was to engage employers, this objective never materialized, and the program had little direct contact with employers. In part, the state's hiring freeze affected such linkages, since the public sector was expected to be a major employer of ERA participants. In addition, staff reported that they were unsure of how to approach employers and that most clients did not want program staff involved in their work relationships.

Salem ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Salem ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The Salem ERA program did not produce any improvements, relative to the control group, in the main measures of employment, employment retention, or earnings in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. There is also no evidence that ERA led to advancement gains, compared with the level of advancement seen in the control group.
- ERA increased the amount of TANF received but did not have any effect on the amount of food stamp assistance received or on average annual income, compared with the control group rates.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment for control group members in Salem was low — about 45 percent — and average earnings for the control group were $5,500 per year over the three-year follow-up period (Table 3.8). Both of these outcomes improved over the follow-up period (Appendix Table A.17). While over half of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, in the third year of follow-up, only 27 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table A.17).

Employment and Employment Retention

The Salem ERA program did not generate any positive changes, relative to the control group, in the main measures of employment or employment retention in the cumulative three-year follow-up period (Table 3.8). However, some additional measures (shown in Appendix Table A.18) suggest that ERA may have had a negative effect on employment retention, relative to the control group. ERA produced decreases in the average number of quarters in the first employment spell and in the percentage of people continuously employed during the three-year follow-up period. ERA also decreased average quarterly employment by almost 4 percentage points in the third year of follow-up (Appendix Table A.17). As discussed below, ERA also led to increases in the receipt of public assistance.

Earnings and Advancement

There is no evidence that the Salem ERA program produced any changes, either positive or negative, in any of the measures of earnings or advancement for the program group, compared with the control group.

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

Over the three-year follow-up period, the ERA program in Salem increased annual TANF payments by an average of about $300 over the levels for the control group (Table 3.8). The program did not increase food stamp receipt or average annual income for program group members, relative to control group members, in the cumulative follow-up period. The impacts on TANF receipt were largely concentrated in the first two years of follow-up, when the program increased the amount of TANF assistance received by 20 percent and 32 percent of control group levels in Years 1 and 2, respectively (not shown).

The increases in public assistance receipt may be due to the ERA staff's helping program group members navigate the application process. Because program staff could work with clients after they became employed, they may have been able to connect clients to government benefits more easily if they became eligible (for example, through job loss). Control group members would not have had access to this postemployment help.

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Despite the implementation finding that the postemployment component of the Salem ERA program was most fully implemented late in the evaluation period, there are no statistically significant differences in economic impacts when analyzed by study cohort.

Salem ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

The Salem ERA program was designed to be different from standard welfare-to-work programs in its emphasis on helping clients identify and work toward a job in their field of interest as well as in the availability of assistance and services after employment was secured. Therefore, the Salem ERA program included mandatory preemployment services and offered voluntary postemployment services to TANF applicants, with the services being jointly administered by the welfare agency and a community college. Job search and placement services included workshops focusing on future employment retention and career paths. Then, once clients secured employment, the Salem ERA program intended to continue with postemployment services to promote employment retention and career advancement. The control group's services were limited to mandatory preemployment services, also provided by the welfare and the community college staffs.

While the Salem ERA program was designed to provide both pre- and postemployment services, ERA staff had a difficult time managing both employed and unemployed clients, and the bulk of staff time was spent on preemployment responsibilities, particularly eligibility issues and individual client crises. The combination of increasing caseloads and a hiring freeze resulted in high caseloads for staff, and the postemployment services that were intended to promote employment retention and engagement in training were not fully implemented. During the preemployment period, however, the Salem ERA program delivered additional workshops and other services that had a strong retention and advancement message, compared with services for the control group.

Over four-fifths of program group members had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program, and nearly as high a proportion participated in group job search within a year following study entry. While participation in postemployment services was not as high — reflecting the voluntary nature of those services — about one-third of program group members received help with retention or advancement during that same time period.

The Salem ERA program did increase the levels of participation in some services, relative to the control group levels, but the increases were generally less than 10 percentage points. The one exception is that the program increased the percentage of program group members who reported that they received help dealing with problems on the job, by almost 11 percentage points over the control group rate.

The Salem ERA program did not lead to any changes in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. Staff had difficulty delivering retention and advancement services, particularly given their other job responsibilities, caseload sizes, and lack of experience in providing this type of service. The challenging external environment may have also contributed to operational

difficulties. A weak economy, state staffing cutbacks, staff turnover, a hiring freeze, and management staff whose time was divided among a number of competing duties impacted the program throughout the evaluation. The hiring freeze affected both clients and staff, in that clients were unable to find jobs in the public sector — a major employer of former TANF recipients in Salem — and staff were overextended as program positions went unfilled. Overall, a combination of factors made it difficult for ERA staff to implement this program and difficult for the program to produce large increases in participation in services, relative to the control group. Even under ideal circumstances, however, the Salem model may have been difficult to implement.

Chapter 4

Findings for ERA Programs Serving Employed TANF Recipients

Introduction

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programs that are presented in this chapter were designed to begin providing services to people when they were employed and receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and to help them retain employment and advance in the labor market. Four programs are included: the Chicago ERA program, the Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS) program, the Riverside (California) Work Plus program, and the Riverside Training Focused program.[1] Among these programs, only one produced gains in the main economic outcomes examined in this report: the Chicago ERA program increased employment retention, led to advancement, and reduced welfare receipt.

Overview of Program Designs in This Group

All the programs in this chapter prioritized advancement as a key program goal and, by definition, all targeted employed TANF recipients. The programs differed somewhat, however, in terms of how long, prior to program entry, target groups had been attached to the labor market.

With shared goals and target populations, some common strategies and structures existed across these four programs. Table 4.1 compares a selection of features of the ERA programs that are aimed at this target group — as they were actually implemented — and demonstrates that each program consisted of a bundle of features. Appendix B briefly describes each program (Appendix Boxes B.1, B.2 and B.3) and provides details on program administration (such as operation dates and funding). A fuller accounting of the model designs and implementation of the programs is provided in the ERA site-specific interim reports.[2]

Ongoing relationships between participants and program staff were central to all the programs described in this chapter. Within that context, program staff often provided flexibility to program group members, in terms of meeting locations and times, to promote more frequent contact. Outreach and marketing were emphasized in all four programs; however, in only one

[1]The Riverside Work Plus and Training Focused programs, together, are referred to as the Riverside "Phase 2" programs.

[2]For complete citations, see Appendix E, which also notes where the reports can be found on the Web.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4.1

Comparison of Program Features Across ERA Programs Targeting Individuals Employed and Receiving TANF

Program Feature	Chicago	Los Angeles RFS	Riverside Training Focused	Riverside Work Plus
Staffing				
Staff positions - team-based (vs. solo)				
Staff performance management (standards; incentives)	✓			
Flexible staff hours and/or locations		✓	✓	✓
Caseloads - low	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff/client engagement				
Participation requirements				
TANF participation requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓
ERA participation requirements beyond TANF ones	✓			
Initial outreach - intensive	✓	✓	✓	✓
Initial outreach - financial participation incentives	✓			
Program flow - client assessment and individualized service package	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ongoing - develop/maintain an employment plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Initial job preparation and placement services				
Retention services				
Reemployment services	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial work incentives	✓			
Emergency financial assistance				
Connections to other services (work supports, social services)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues		✓		
Advancement services				
Supported advancement through job change	✓			
Education and training referrals and/or incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues				
Employer linkages	✓			

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E. (For Riverside Phase 2 and Chicago ERA programs, reports were augmented by communication with MDRC field researchers.)

NOTES: The program features are defined in Chapter 2.

Check marks indicate that the feature is present in the ERA model.

The models and their implementation often evolved over the study period. This table presents the features experienced by the majority of the study participants for the greatest extent of time.

program (Chicago ERA) was participation in ERA-specific activities required (in addition to general TANF participation requirements) for individuals to remain eligible for full TANF benefits. Staff often conducted in-depth assessments of participants, which largely shaped the individualized services for program group members going forward. Advancement services dominated in all four programs in this group and included career and job development activities supporting advancement through job mobility, education and training referrals and/or incentives, and staff counseling on job-related issues. The emphasis placed on different types of services varied across the programs, however. For example, some programs prioritized advancement through work, and others emphasized education and training for skill development.

In addition to the programs' having common strategies and structures, the clients who were served by the programs described in this chapter also shared some characteristics. Table 4.2 presents selected characteristics of the sample members at baseline, or the time of random assignment. Among sample members, long-term receipt of public assistance was quite common — more than half had received public assistance for considerable periods of time, often as much as or more than two years, before they entered the study. In addition, roughly half the sample members had at least a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Finally, Table 4.2 also shows individuals' employment as of study entry. The chief reason that employment is not at 100 percent for sample members in all four ERA program tests in this chapter is because the employment measures are based on data from state unemployment insurance (UI) systems. Thus, jobs not covered by the UI systems are not accounted for in this table. As discussed in Chapter 2, UI coverage varies among states but generally excludes most federal, railroad, and agriculture employees as well as family workers, domestics, and independent contractors. While not accounted for in the UI system, employment in such non-UI-covered jobs did qualify people for inclusion in the ERA study.[3]

The clients served by the four programs described in this chapter do differ in an important way in terms of the types of jobs that they held as of random assignment. In the Los Angeles RFS and Riverside Phase 2 programs, most people worked in jobs covered by the UI system; jobs in Chicago, however, were far less likely to be recorded in UI records. Preliminary analysis conducted during the Chicago program's design phase indicated that many of the TANF recipients who were reporting full-time work were employed for less than the minimum wage in cash-paying jobs outside the formal labor market — for example, working as babysitters or housecleaners.

[3]The difference between client-reported employment and employment recorded in UI systems can be sizable. For example, results from the Chicago ERA 12-month survey show that approximately 84 percent of sample members reported having worked in the year since study entry. This exceeds the estimate provided by UI records over roughly the same time period, by about 15 percentage points.

Field research also suggested that sample members tended to quickly leave (either voluntarily or involuntarily) the job that they held as of random assignment. This was true for all the programs described in this and other chapters. By the third quarter after random assignment, half the control group members in the tests described in this chapter had left or lost their first jobs.[4] To the extent that this job loss was involuntary, sample members would have been in need of reemployment help, in addition to assistance with advancement.

The programs in this chapter also experienced common implementation challenges in working with employed TANF recipients. In the face of these challenges, sites were not always able to implement the programs as they were designed; the following sections discuss how the programs actually operated.

[4]This refers to the job held in the quarter following random assignment. This job either could have been secured before random assignment and continued into that quarter or could be a newly secured job.

Chicago ERA Findings

Chicago ERA at a Glance

- Targeted long-term TANF recipients in low-wage jobs
- Emphasized work-focused advancement strategies, such as finding better jobs, particularly while people were working
- Was operated by a for-profit company
- Was generally well implemented
- Compared with a control group that participated in a standard welfare-to-work program, increased program group members' contact with staff and their use of retention and advancement services (particularly, help in finding a better job while working)
- Increased employment stability, led to advancement, and reduced welfare receipt

Chicago ERA Test: Introduction

The Chicago ERA program, which operated from February 2002 to June 2004, aimed to advance employed TANF recipients into higher-paying jobs. The study enrolled sample members from February 2002 through June 2003. The program served sample members for up to 12 months after their date of random assignment, even if they left welfare.

Origins of the Test

When ERA began, Illinois had existing policies supporting TANF recipients who were working in low-paying jobs. A fairly large amount of recipients' earnings was disregarded when determining the amount of their TANF cash assistance grant (meaning that individuals could maintain a large portion of their welfare grant even while working). Also, working welfare recipients were exempt from TANF time limits (that is, their five-year TANF "clock stopped") as long as they were working. Together, these policies encouraged employment as well as ongoing TANF receipt. A growing number of TANF recipients were in this "stop-the-clock" status for long periods. Therefore, the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) sought a strategy to help employed recipients advance into higher-paying jobs, both to improve the clients' quality of life and to further reduce the state's TANF caseload. (The Illinois caseload dropped by 75 percent between 1996 and 2001.)

Before ERA, postemployment services for recipients of cash assistance were provided by local DHS offices in Chicago (and eventually these were the services that were available to control group members in the ERA study). DHS staff provided some encouragement or assis-

tance for advancement, but the intensity and nature of services varied substantially across the welfare offices, and, on the whole, DHS staff communicated with participants primarily about compliance issues.[5]

In contrast, the Chicago ERA program was a mandatory and more comprehensive program, emphasizing work-focused retention and advancement. The program included a combination of services provided through ongoing staff-client relationships, including targeted job search assistance and help identifying and accessing employers and jobs with opportunities for progression from entry-level positions to those with higher levels of pay, skill, responsibility, or authority.[6] The Chicago ERA program was operated by a for-profit company with strong linkages to firms in a variety of industries, including the fast-growing security industry. Moreover, this provider had previously played an employment intermediary role and had capitalized on its relationships with local employers to identify open jobs and facilitate targeted job search assistance for welfare recipients.

Labor Market Context

For most of the period when the Chicago ERA program was operating, the area's labor market was still feeling the effects of the 2001 recession; between 2001 and 2003, the unemployment rate for the Chicago area increased from 4.3 percent to 6.8 percent, and its total number of jobs declined by over 170,000. While labor market conditions began to improve in 2004, overall job growth was fairly sluggish. As of 2007, the unemployment rate and the total jobs in the area were still above prerecession levels. While the area's economic situation was difficult, the situation in Chicago itself (part of Cook County) was even more challenging. In particular, most of the jobs lost during the postrecession slump were in Cook County, but most of the job growth after 2004 in the Chicago area was in establishments located outside Cook County. So even though labor market conditions in the Chicago area did improve toward the end of the Chicago ERA program's operating period and throughout the study's follow-up period, conditions in sample members' immediate vicinity were (and remained) far more challenging.

[5]Working individuals who were receiving TANF were not required to participate in advancement-promoting services, but they were required to work or participate in services for a certain number of hours each week. In the event of job loss or reduced work hours, individuals were required to participate in services designed to help them find a new job (or increase their hours), provided either by DHS staff directly or by a contracted employment vendor.

[6]Such employment opportunities are later referred to as "career ladders."

Target Population

The Chicago ERA program targeted working TANF recipients who reported at least 30 hours per week of work for at least six consecutive months and who were served by select welfare offices in Cook County. Table 4.2 shows the characteristics of the Chicago ERA sample members at the time the study began. The Chicago sample had the highest average age among the ERA samples, at 33 years, and an above-average number of children, compared with the other ERA samples. This pattern is likely explained by the fact that recipients with larger families qualify for larger grant amounts and, therefore, are able to earn more and still maintain their eligibility for TANF benefits. Finally, unique to the Chicago ERA sample was the large proportion of sample members who were working outside the formal labor market, in low-paying jobs such as babysitting, housecleaning, and hair braiding.

Significance of This Test

The Chicago ERA test examines whether a work-focused, mandatory advancement program — provided by staff in a for-profit employer-intermediary — can move employed TANF recipients into better or higher-paying jobs, compared with a less intensive and more retention-oriented postemployment program provided by staff at the local welfare agency. Chart 4.1 presents the important differences between the situations for the program group and the control group in the Chicago ERA test.

Chicago ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

DHS developed Chicago ERA, and it was funded with resources from the state's Welfare-to-Work block grant. Considerable funding was available for the program initially. However, due to a congressional decision in early 2004 to rescind unspent funds in the block grant, the program experienced a brief gap in funding. The rescission did not officially occur until January 2004; however, it was widely discussed beginning in the fall of 2003. From that point forward, according to field research, the substantial uncertainty about the ERA program's future affected staff morale, and program services began to phase out. As a result, individuals who were randomly assigned to the program group in the last few months (April to June 2003) of the sample intake period received more limited exposure to the program than those who were assigned earlier.

For administration of ERA services, DHS contracted with Employment and Employer Services (E&ES), a for-profit firm with previous experience delivering job placement services to TANF recipients and other disadvantaged populations. Since its establishment in 1982,

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Table 4.2

Selected Characteristics of ERA Sample Members at the Time of Random Assignment: Employed and Receiving TANF

Characteristic[a]	Chicago	Los Angeles RFS	Riverside Phase 2
Female (%)	99.3	94.1	92.2
Average age (years)	33.3	30.8	30.2
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Hispanic	8.0	40.7	45.4
Black, non-Hispanic	87.5	50.5	20.5
White, non-Hispanic	3.9	5.2	31.2
Other	0.6	3.6	3.0
Average number of minor children	3.4	2.3	2.2
Age of youngest child (%)			
2 or under	26.0	40.3	46.4
3 to 5	23.3	25.1	22.0
6 or over	50.7	34.6	31.7
High school diploma/GED certificate or higher (%)	44.2	50.0	58.2
Total prior AFDC/TANF receipt[b](%)			
None	NA	9.9	5.5
Less than 2 years	NA	39.4	53.5
2 years or more	NA	50.8	41.0
Living in public or subsidized housing (%)	NA	12.0	12.6
Employed in quarter prior to random assignment[c](%)	58.7	46.1	57.2
Employed in quarter of random assignment[c](%)	59.5	78.9	87.2
Employment in the past 3 years (%)			
Did not work	NA	NA	5.6
Less than 6 months	NA	NA	25.2
7 to 12 months	NA	NA	19.8
13 to 24 months	NA	NA	22.5
More than 24 months	NA	NA	26.9
As of random assignment the number of hours worked per week among employed (%)			
1-19 hours	0.6	0.4	0.9
20-31 hours	50.6	1.0	43.4
32 or more hours	48.8	98.6	55.7
As of random assignment the hourly wage among employed (%)			
Less than $5.15	NA	0.1	0.0
$5.15 to $6.99	NA	31.2	48.5
$7.00 to $9.99	NA	55.3	43.6
$10.00 or more	NA	13.4	7.9
Sample size	1,728	5,700	3,029

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

SOURCES: Calculations from ERA baseline forms, automated records, and administrative data.

NOTES: NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.
[a]Statistics include both program and control group members.
[b]In constructing the total prior welfare receipt variable in the Riverside Training Focused and Riverside Work Plus sites, the measure is based on estimates of how much TANF sample members have received in the previous 10 years.
[c]This information is based on unemployment insurance (UI) records.

E&ES had developed strong connections with many local employers, particularly within the security industry.

Staffing

The Chicago ERA program had a relatively simple staffing structure, based largely on a single, "generic" staff position. Staff were responsible for all aspects of the ERA program, including the development of a client-specific employment plan and the identification of job openings with local employers. For most of the study period, there were seven to eight ERA staff working individually with participants, rather than in a team structure. ERA caseloads were small at the outset of the program but grew over time. Additional specialized staff served program group members' job development needs and provided workshops focusing on employability skills, computer training, and other topics.

The structure of the Chicago ERA program did not provide much flexibility for program group members in terms of meeting locations. Although E&ES operated programs in several locations, for most of the study period, all the ERA staff were based in the organization's main office in downtown Chicago. Each member of the ERA staff was assigned to work with participants from one or two of the ten participating DHS offices, which were dispersed around the city. Typically, ERA staff did not conduct home visits and only rarely visited participants at their workplaces. Thus, program group members generally had to travel downtown for face-to-face meetings with ERA staff.

The ERA staff were given specific quarterly performance goals related to the participation of program group members in education and training activities or to earnings increases, and staff could earn financial bonuses for meeting or exceeding these targets.[7] ERA staff members

[7]Initially, the targets were defined narrowly: staff needed to raise participants' hourly wages or increase their work hours to generate at least a 6 percent increase in gross earnings. Because of concerns that these goals did not fully reward the range of advancement-related services that staff provided, in early 2003, the perfor-
(continued)

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 4.1

Program-Control Group Differences:

Chicago ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Advance employed TANF recipients into higher-paying jobs	• Primarily retention; compliance with TANF work requirements
Program resources and structures	• Operated by for-profit company	• Operated by public welfare agency
Staffing	• Staff performance incentives (financial)	• No staff performance incentives
Staff-client engagement	• ERA-service participation requirements, beyond TANF participation requirements	• Only TANF participation requirements
	• Aggressive and multifaceted marketing and outreach, including financial participation incentives	• Primarily compliance-related outreach
	• Services tailored to participants	• Generic service package
	• Development and maintenance of client employment plan	• No employment plan
	• Follow-up after leaving TANF	• No follow-up after leaving TANF
Retention services	• Client employment incentives (financial)	• No client employment incentives
Advancement services	• Services for advancement through job change	• No advancement services
	• Limited education and training referrals/incentives	• No education and training referrals/ incentives, but achieved similar take-up rates as ERA
Employer linkages	• Strong relationships with local employers	• No links to employers
	• Staff identification of jobs with local employers	

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

mance measurement system was broadened to including enrolling in education or training, opening a bank account, or obtaining the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

also received internal training, as well as training from a consultant retained by MDRC (as in many of the other ERA programs). The MDRC-sponsored training focused on how to market ERA services to potential participants, how to develop employment plans for individuals, and how to document the staff's work with program group members.

Staff-Client Engagement

Ongoing staff-client relationships were central to the Chicago ERA program. A combination of incentives and mandates was used to contact program group members initially and to encourage their ongoing participation. The ERA program required clients to have regular contact with staff in addition to their existing 30-hour work requirement for ongoing TANF eligibility. Failure to participate could result in a sanction, meaning that their welfare grant could be reduced or ended.[8] However, because these working clients were receiving relatively small welfare checks, ERA staff reported that some program group members chose to leave cash assistance in order to avoid the requirement to participate in ERA. Thus, while the TANF enforcement process and the Chicago ERA participation requirement may have been useful in the initial recruitment process, it may have played less of a role in promoting ongoing engagement with the ERA program.

At the same time, Chicago ERA staff used aggressive marketing and recruitment strategies — including a dedicated telemarketer, a range of flyers, reminder letters, and newsletters — as part of their initial outreach. Financial incentives were also used to attract and engage ERA members. These incentives were offered for different types of activities. McDonald's gift certificates of $10, for example, accompanied the introductory letter to the ERA program group; $50 grocery-store gift certificates were given to those who attended the orientation and assessment; $25 to $125 one-time rewards in the form of grocery-store gift certificates were given to individuals who achieved specific milestones, such as completing a vocational training program, starting a better job, or retaining a better job for 90 days; and monthly transit passes worth $75 were offered to employed recipients who remained in contact with the program. According to field research, the ERA staff faced challenges engaging this employed population — a difficulty experienced by all the ERA programs serving this group. Staff had difficulty convincing individuals of the benefits of advancement. Staff reported that some clients resisted formal employment, which was often in the less familiar downtown Chicago neighborhoods and offered relatively small wage increases compared with the informal jobs they held. Field

[8]While ERA staff were initially hesitant to penalize noncompliance, field research suggests that sanctions were used increasingly over time. In Illinois, an imposed sanction can result in eventual forfeiture of an individual's full TANF grant, with reductions in the grant amount occurring initially. In some other states, an imposed sanction results in only a reduction in the amount of an individual's TANF grant.

research also suggested that many people in the program group were not interested in receiving program services or faced serious personal or family problems that hindered their participation.

Despite these challenges, more than half (61 percent) of the program group members reported having had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program, when surveyed 12 months following study entry. As shown in Table 4.3, this rate of contact is nearly twice the rate reported by control group members.

Chicago ERA staff had discretion in the types of services they provided. Expected to tailor services to individuals, staff conducted informal client assessments during initial meetings, which provided the foundation for the ongoing staff-client relationship. In particular, ERA staff developed an employment plan with their clients, identifying short- and long-term goals, barriers to achieving those goals, and steps and services for overcoming the barriers. The staff-client relationship in the Chicago ERA program often continued after people left TANF.

Survey data suggest that the Chicago ERA program increased the number of contacts that program group members — compared with control group members — had with staff from an employment program as well as the likelihood that contact would be ongoing. ERA program group members reported having three times the number of contacts, on average, with staff over the first 12 months after study entry (Table 4.3). Similarly, more than two times as many program group members as control group members reported having had recent contact.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services; Retention Services

The Chicago ERA program targeted TANF recipients who had six consecutive months of full-time work; therefore, program designers initially assumed that this population would not need immediate job placement services. Thus, neither initial job preparation and placement services nor retention services were priorities of the Chicago ERA program.

However, a substantial number of program group members in Chicago were, in fact, no longer employed when they first had contact with program staff, and staff provided reemployment services to them. The time lag between random assignment and first program contact may partially explain this level of unemployment. Initial ERA appointments often were not scheduled until six to eight weeks after random assignment. According to the 12-month survey, nearly 40 percent of respondents in the program group received help with job preparation — more than twice the proportion of respondents in the control group who reported receiving this service (Appendix Table B.1).

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Table 4.3

Summary of Impacts: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	61.0	31.3	29.8 ***	0.000
Average number of contacts with staff	9.8	2.8	6.9 ***	0.000
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	25.9	9.6	16.3 ***	0.000
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	56.5	35.7	20.7 ***	0.000
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	8.7	4.5	4.2 **	0.043
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	21.7	6.7	15.1 ***	0.000
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	28.0	5.2	22.8 ***	0.000
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	23.3	24.9	-1.6	0.648
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	37.0	12.6	24.5 ***	0.000
Sample size (total = 598)	306	292		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	80.5	79.2	1.3	0.434
Average quarterly employment (%)	55.0	52.4	2.6 *	0.069
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	64.8	62.9	1.8	0.342
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	7.7	7.3	0.4 *	0.091
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.5	6.9	-0.4 *	0.054
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	6,967	6,490	477 *	0.074
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	21.6	19.0	2.6 **	0.035
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	42.4	46.6	-4.2 **	0.027
Earnings decreased by more than $250	13.9	12.8	1.1	0.485
Earnings changed by less than $250	6.4	7.1	-0.7	0.570
Earnings increased by $250 or more	37.2	33.6	3.5 *	0.095
Public assistance and income (Years 1-3)				
Average annual TANF received ($)	778	1,010	-232 ***	0.000
Average annual food stamps received ($)	4,111	3,959	153 **	0.049
Average annual income[c] ($)	11,467	11,118	349	0.163
Sample size (total = 1,728)	854	874		

(continued)

Table 4.3 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

While retention services were not included in the original Chicago ERA model, ERA staff spent considerable time connecting participants with such assistance as social service referrals for mental health and substance abuse services, and they provided help with acquiring such work supports as child care subsidies.

Advancement Services

Despite these unforeseen demands for initial placement services, advancement services were the focus of the Chicago ERA program and its services. The primary advancement strategy in the program was to help individuals move fairly quickly to a new job that paid more than their current job, preferably in firms or sectors that offered access to career ladders. ERA staff identified appropriate job openings — usually among the employers that the Chicago ERA contracted agency had a history working with — and helped with résumé writing and the scheduling of and preparation for interviews.

According to field research, the ERA service provider had strong linkages with firms in the fast-growing security industry, and many program group members were referred to jobs in those firms. This focus on advancement through job mobility likely led to the significantly greater proportion of program group members who reported receiving help finding a better job while working in the first year after random assignment, compared with control group members (more than five times the proportion, as shown in Table 4.3).

The amount of time spent on career counseling and on the development and maintenance of employment plans in the Chicago ERA program was limited because staff also had to

address sample members' job search and retention needs. Perhaps reflecting this, less than a quarter of program group survey respondents reported receiving help with career assessment during the first year following study entry (Table 4.3). Nevertheless, a greater portion of program group members than control group members reported receiving career assessment help.

Education and training services (including referrals to outside service providers and assistance with tuition payments) were included in the Chicago ERA program. However, in the 12-month survey, less than one-quarter of program group members reported that they had participated in education and training programs — a proportion no different than in the control group. Reflecting the ERA service provider's connections to security industry employers, a higher proportion of program group members than control group members reported that they had received licenses and certifications in the security industry, according to the 42-month survey. This is the only statistically significant impact on education and training activity using the longer-term survey data (Appendix Table D.2).

Employer Linkages

As noted above, Chicago ERA staff in the private, for-profit firm that was contracted to operate the program had strong existing relationships with local employers. This enabled staff to direct participants to particular firms and positions. Moreover, ERA staff were also required to identify jobs as being appropriate for certain program group members as part of their ERA responsibilities.

Chicago ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Chicago ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The ERA program in Chicago generated improvements in several measures of employment retention and earnings in the cumulative four-year follow-up period. There is also evidence that ERA led to advancement in the four-year follow-up period.

- ERA decreased the amount of TANF and increased the amount of food stamps received during the first three years of follow-up (though the increase in food stamp assistance was smaller in magnitude than the decrease in TANF assistance). ERA did not produce any statistically significant impacts on average annual income during the cumulative three-year follow-up period in which TANF and food stamp data were available.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment and average earnings were lower for control group members in Chicago than for control group members in the other tests of programs serving employed TANF recipients. This may partially reflect the Chicago sample's higher rates of employment in jobs not covered by the UI system, compared with the samples studied in the other tests described in this chapter. Average quarterly employment was just over 50 percent, and average earnings were almost $6,500 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period (Table 4.3). Figure 4.1 shows that average earnings increased relatively steadily over the follow-up period — without a corresponding increase in employment[9] — which may indicate that there was some advancement over time in the control group. While most of the control group members received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, in the third year of follow-up, only 28 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table B.2).

Employment and Employment Retention

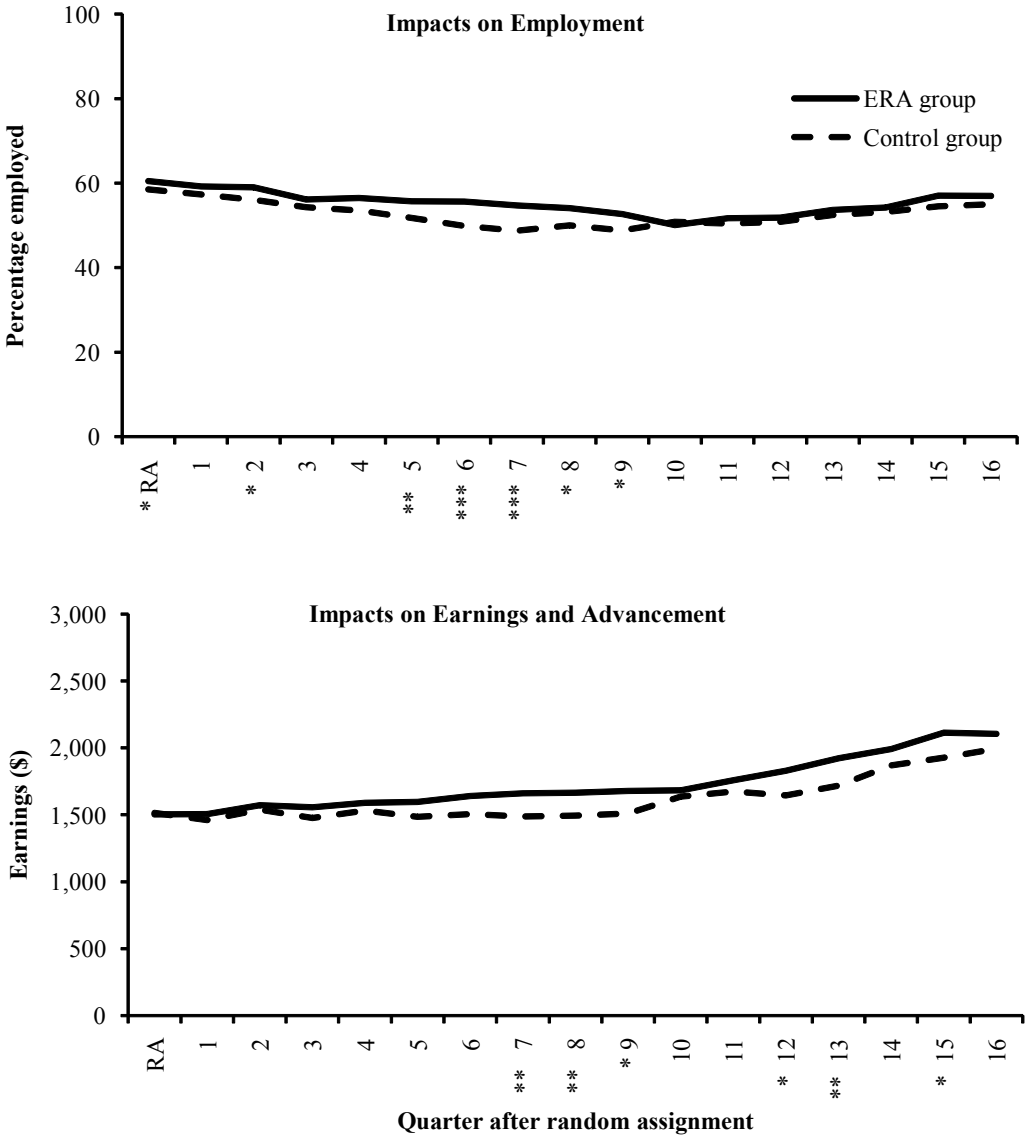
The Chicago ERA program produced gains, relative to the control group, in several measures of employment retention in the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 4.3). The program increased average quarterly employment by 2.6 percentage points in the four-year follow-up period. The program also increased the average length of the longest employment spell by 0.4 quarter, or by about 5 percent of the control group average.

The Chicago ERA program's early impacts appear to reflect that the program moved people from jobs not in the UI system to UI-covered jobs. This is important because UI-covered jobs typically pay higher wages and are more likely to offer fringe benefits and other mandatory benefits, such as Social Security and unemployment benefits and to qualify individuals for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). While the program did not have any effect on the percentage ever employed in UI-covered jobs in the cumulative four-year follow-up period, it did move people into UI-covered employment faster. The program decreased the number of quarters, relative to the control group, that elapsed before program group members started their first employment spell in a UI-covered job (Appendix Table B.3).[10] In addition, while the program produced increases in the percentage ever employed in Year 1 (Appendix Table B.2), the 12-month survey shows that when all jobs are considered (including those not reported to

[9]Because people who are not employed in a given quarter have earnings of zero, and because these zeros are included in average earnings, average earnings can increase over time as employment increases even if earnings did not increase at all for people who were employed.

[10]Sample members who were employed in a UI-covered job in the quarter of study entry would have a value of zero for this measure.

Figure 4.1
Impacts on Employment and Earnings Over Time: Chicago



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for the State of Illinois.

NOTES: "RA" refers to the quarter of random assignment.

Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings.

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

the UI system), the Chicago program did not increase employment in Year 1 (Appendix Table B.4). Finally, gains in the first two years of follow-up were concentrated among those who did not work in a UI-covered job in the six months prior to random assignment.[11] These findings strongly suggest that one of the program's primary accomplishments in Year 1 was to move people who had not been in UI-covered employment into UI-covered jobs.

There is also evidence that the Chicago ERA program helped people become reemployed more quickly after a loss of employment, particularly early on in program operations. In addition to increasing the length of employment spells, the program also decreased the average length of the longest unemployment spell by about 0.4 quarter, or by about 6 percent of the control group average (Table 4.3). There is evidence that at least part of this effect was due to the program's helping program group members become reemployed more quickly than control group members after loss of employment.[12] Most program and control group members left their initial jobs (the jobs they held at the time of random assignment) during the follow-up period, and they left these jobs at a roughly equivalent rate. Thus, there is no evidence that the Chicago ERA program had an effect on retention of this initial job. At the same time, in the first two years of follow-up, the program increased the average number of employers for program group members, compared with control group members (not shown).[13] Given that program group members left their initial job at the same rate as control group members and given that program group members had more employers early on in the follow-up period, this suggests that the Chicago program increased the proportion of people who quickly found a subsequent job or that it helped people switch to other jobs when they were already employed.[14] In addition, other evidence also supports the finding that the Chicago ERA program helped people become reemployed more quickly after a loss of employment.

The Chicago ERA program generated some gains in employment in the first year of follow-up, and these gains increased in magnitude in Year 2, growing to about 6 percentage points in its third quarter (Figure 4.1). Despite the fact that program group members were eligible for services only for one year following their entry into the study, the program had its greatest effect

[11]Bloom, Hendra, and Page (2006).

[12]Some of this decrease also could have resulted from the program's getting people into UI-covered employment more quickly or leading some people who would have had an unemployment spell without the program to be continuously employed throughout the follow-up period.

[13]Bloom, Hendra, and Page (2006), Appendix Table B.11.

[14]While the program did increase the average number of employers in the first two years of follow-up, it did not affect the average number of employers over the cumulative four-year follow-up period. However, it did appear to increase the percentage of program group members who had five to eight employers over the four-year follow-up period, compared with the percentage seen in the control group (Appendix Table B.3). This could provide further evidence that the program helped people with unstable jobs regain employment more quickly after job loss or that it helped people switch to better jobs.

on employment retention in Year 2, increasing the percentage employed in every quarter in Year 2 by 4.5 percentage points (Appendix Table B.2). Statistically significant impacts on employment and employment retention dissipated in the last two years of the follow-up period.

Earnings and Advancement

The ERA program in Chicago increased earnings and appears to have led to additional advancement, compared with the level for the control group. ERA produced gains in earnings over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, increasing average annual earnings by almost $500, or by about 7 percent more than the control group earnings level (Table 4.3). Statistically significant impacts on earnings appeared in the second half of Year 2 and were also present in some quarters of Years 3 and 4 (Figure 4.1). The earnings increased in the last two years of follow-up, when there were no gains in quarterly employment during that period, suggesting that these gains were due to advancement rather than just being the result of the program's effects on employment.[15] Further evidence of possible advancement over time can be seen by comparing the highest earnings quarter in Year 4 with the highest earnings quarter in Year 1. About 37 percent of program group members made at least $250 more in their highest-paying quarter in Year 4 than in their highest-paying quarter in Year 1, compared with only 34 percent of control group members (Table 4.3).

The survey data also provide evidence that the Chicago ERA program increased advancement, and they show that the earnings increases were at least partly due to increases in wage rates. As measured by the 12-month survey, the program appears to have shifted some people from making less than $7 per hour to making more than $7 per hour (Appendix Table B.4). Table 4.4 shows, however, that the program's effect on hourly wages is less clear for the survey sample by the time of the 42-month survey; while the program did decrease the percentage of program group members making less than $7 per hour, there is no statistically significant increase in the percentage of them making more than $7 per hour.

Despite the fact that program group members were eligible for services only for one year, the Chicago ERA program appears to have increased some measures of long-term advancement, compared with control group levels, based on 42-month survey results. The program increased the percentage of program group members who had ever received a raise and the percentage

[15]The Chicago ERA program appears to have affected employment retention earlier than it affected advancement. The fact that the program's main effects on advancement occurred after program group members would no longer have been eligible for program services and the fact that the program's effects on retention seem to have preceded its effects on advancement suggest that the program may have increased advancement over time partly through its early effects on boosting levels of employment and employment retention in UI-covered jobs.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4.4

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	92.9	89.6	3.3 *	0.063
Currently employed	66.6	67.7	-1.1	0.706
No longer employed	26.3	21.9	4.4	0.105
Hourly wage				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	7.9	9.2	-1.3	0.483
$5.00 - $6.99	12.1	16.1	-4.0 *	0.081
$7.00 - $8.99	21.3	20.1	1.2	0.654
$9.00 or more	23.3	21.4	1.9	0.503
Hours				
Average hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	10.7	14.1	-3.4	0.106
30-34	12.1	13.6	-1.5	0.489
35-44	38.0	35.6	2.4	0.428
45 or more	5.6	4.5	1.1	0.424
Schedule				
Typical schedule (%)				
Daytime schedule	33.9	37.4	-3.4	0.252
Evening shift	7.2	7.2	-0.1	0.956
Other schedule	23.8	21.0	2.8	0.281
Workweek includes at least 1 weekend day (%)	31.1	32.2	-1.1	0.710
Benefits				
Employer offers (%)				
Sick days with full pay	25.6	21.1	4.5 *	0.086
Paid vacation	35.5	31.0	4.5	0.119
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	31.7	28.9	2.8	0.324
A health plan or medical insurance	22.6	19.5	3.1	0.221
None of the above	24.1	28.2	-4.1	0.131
Work environment				
Percentage who agreed that they:				
Receive respect from superiors	50.9	54.9	-4.0	0.198
Receive respect from coworkers	55.4	55.8	-0.4	0.904
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	58.7	61.6	-2.9	0.353
Are allowed to contribute ideas	52.9	55.1	-2.2	0.485
Can count on keeping job	26.8	29.1	-2.3	0.417
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	60.3	62.0	-1.7	0.586
Think job is physically demanding	29.2	31.6	-2.4	0.400
Risk health or safety	24.2	24.6	-0.4	0.873

(continued)

Table 4.4 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Are members of labor union (%)	18.3	12.6	5.6 **	0.013
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	37.3	36.7	0.6	0.841
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)				
Reading and writing skills	48.3	44.7	3.6	0.250
Work with computers	22.9	21.6	1.3	0.604
Arithmetic skills	31.6	30.7	0.9	0.750
Customer contact	59.2	60.0	-0.7	0.815
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	26.3	21.9	4.4	0.105
0-15	14.8	19.4	-4.5 *	0.052
16-30	19.7	18.1	1.6	0.517
31-45	13.5	11.5	1.9	0.355
46 or more	18.6	18.7	-0.1	0.970
Advancement outcomes since random assignment				
Ever received a raise (%)	32.6	25.8	6.7 **	0.017
Ever received a promotion (%)	15.4	11.4	4.1 *	0.057
Found a different job while working (%)	21.2	20.4	0.7	0.773
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	20.6	18.8	1.7	0.486
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)				
Work enjoyment	21.9	22.5	-0.6	0.827
Earnings	24.4	20.8	3.6	0.166
Benefits	15.9	13.5	2.3	0.294
Number of hours	22.1	17.8	4.3 *	0.090
Start and end of workday	22.2	20.6	1.6	0.545
Commuting time	16.9	20.0	-3.0	0.214
Job security	20.4	18.6	1.8	0.484
Opportunity to advance	17.6	17.5	0.1	0.978
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

who had ever received a promotion. In addition, the program increased the percentage who, in their current or most recent job, were being offered sick days with full pay or who reported that they had experienced an improvement in the number of hours that they were working. Finally, the Chicago ERA program increased, by 5.6 percentage points, the percentage of program group members, relative to control group members, who were members of labor unions at the time of the 42-month survey.

Nonetheless, neither the 12-month nor the 42-month survey provided evidence that the Chicago ERA program increased advancement in terms of individuals' job schedules, the skills they used in their jobs, or their work environments. In addition, despite evidence of advancement for program group members, only 23 percent of employed program group members were making over $9 per hour at the job they held at the time of the 42-month survey. This indicates that the majority of employed program group members generally remained in low-paying jobs even after having been eligible for the program.

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

Since a major goal of the ERA program in Chicago was to reduce the proportion of the TANF caseload that was in "stop-the-clock" status, TANF receipt rates and payment amounts are key outcomes of this test. The Chicago ERA program reduced the average annual amount of TANF received over the cumulative three-year follow-up period by over $200 (Table 4.3).[16] Program group members received an average of 23 percent less in TANF cash assistance than the control group received.

The majority of sample members in the program and control groups received TANF for at least one month in the first year of follow-up; however, receipt rates decreased substantially over time for both groups. The program accelerated this trend, decreasing the percentage of people who ever received TANF by almost 15 percentage points in the second year of follow-up and by 8 percentage points in the third year of follow-up, compared with the control group levels (Appendix Table B.2). Interviews with staff suggest that some sample members in the program group may have left TANF in order to avoid meeting the participation requirements of ERA, which would have been added to the requirements for TANF receipt.

The program increased the amount of food stamp assistance received over the three-year follow-up period. Program group members received an average of 4 percent more in food stamps than the control group members during the follow-up period. Program group members

[16]While there are four years of follow-up earnings data available for the ERA test in Chicago, there are only three years of public assistance data available. Income was only calculated for the three years for which all types of data were available.

may have been eligible for larger food stamp grants because of their reduced use of TANF. Despite increases in earnings and food stamp assistance for the program group, ERA did not produce any changes in average annual income over the cumulative three-year follow-up period.

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Because much can change over the course of program operations — including changes in program services, the composition of the sample, and the external environment — impacts were examined separately by study cohort for a number of the ERA programs. This analysis was considered especially interesting for the Chicago ERA program because of the interruption in program funding that occurred midway through program operations and because of the growth in staff caseloads over time.

The employment retention and earnings gains generated by the Chicago ERA program were concentrated among those who entered the study in the first half of the enrollment period (the "early cohort") rather than people who entered the study in the second half of the enrollment period (the "late cohort").[17] Program group members in the early cohort experienced gains, relative to the control group, in most employment retention and earnings outcomes that were examined in the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Appendix Table B.5).[18] For the early cohort, the program increased the percentage of program group members who had an employment spell of at least four quarters by 5 percentage points, or by 9 percent of the control group level. The program also increased average annual earnings by over $900, or by 15 percent of control group earnings. In addition, it increased the percentage of quarters in which program group members were earning $3,500 or more by over 4 percentage points, or by 25 percent of the control group level. The program did not produce any statistically significant impacts on the main measures of employment retention or earnings for the late cohort.

The 42-month survey also provides evidence that the Chicago ERA program was more effective for the early cohort than for the late cohort. For several outcomes measured in this survey, program impacts for the early cohort are statistically significant, even when the impacts for the full sample are not. For the early cohort, the program increased the percentage of

[17]Because control group earnings were lower for the early cohort, subgroup impacts were run to see whether the cohort effects were due to the changing composition of the sample over time. This analysis found that the program produced gains only for people with below-average earnings in the quarter prior to study entry who were in the early cohort. The program did not produce gains for these low earners in the late cohort. Thus, it does not appear that the cohort effects are the result of the changing composition of the sample over time.

[18]There are statistically significant differences between the economic impacts for the early and late cohorts of sample members.

program group members who were working between 35 and 44 hours per week at the job they held at the time of the 42-month survey by 9 percentage points, or by almost 28 percent of the control group level (Appendix Table B.6). The Chicago ERA program also produced gains for the program group, relative to the control group, in the percentage of early cohort sample members who reported having various job benefits in the job they held at the time of the survey; increases were found in eligibility for paid sick days, paid vacation, paid holidays, and a health plan or medical insurance.

The study cohorts also show different patterns of impacts on public assistance receipt and income (Appendix Table B.5). Both the early and the late cohort experienced a decline in TANF assistance, relative to the control group, despite the fact that there were no gains in employment for the late cohort. This provides additional support to the idea that part of the decline in TANF assistance was due to program group members' leaving TANF to avoid the additional ERA participation requirements. The decline in TANF assistance for the late cohort was largely offset by an increase in food stamp assistance, and the program did not have an effect on average annual income for this cohort. While there were no statistically significant increases in food stamp receipt for the early cohort, the program did increase average annual income relative to the control group, by an average of $650 per year over the first three years of follow-up.

Several factors may explain why the Chicago ERA program's beneficial effects on economic outcomes were concentrated in the early cohort. This pattern of impacts could be related to the interruption in program funding that occurred roughly two years into program operations (discussed above). As a result, individuals who were randomly assigned in the last months of the sample intake period received more limited exposure to the program than those who were assigned earlier.[19] Another factor that could have contributed to these findings is that staff caseloads grew substantially over time, which may have affected service delivery in the later phases of the project. Finally, the composition of the ERA sample changed over time. Individuals who were randomly assigned later in the follow-up period had higher earnings and employment levels, which may have created a higher "bar" for impacts.

Chicago ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

When ERA began, Illinois had existing policies that supported low-wage work: a relatively generous earned income disregard policy that encouraged employment while remaining eligible for TANF, and a policy whereby months of working and receiving TANF did not count

[19]The 12-month survey sample came entirely from the late cohort, so differences in participation between the study cohorts, which require survey data, cannot be examined.

toward individuals' TANF time limit. As a result, a growing number of recipients remained in a "stop-the-clock" status for long periods. In the Chicago ERA program, the Illinois Department of Human Services sought to help these employed recipients advance into higher-paying jobs, both to improve the clients' quality of life and to reduce the state's TANF caseload. Compared with the limited and voluntary postemployment services previously available to working individuals receiving TANF, the Chicago ERA program was a mandatory and more comprehensive model, emphasizing work-focused retention and advancement. Operated by a for-profit organization with strong linkages to local employers, the Chicago ERA model incorporated a combination of services, including ongoing staff-client relationships, financial incentives to participate, targeted job search assistance, and help identifying and accessing employers and jobs with opportunities for advancement. Although no formal advancement services were provided to the control group, they could access any services available in the community.

Field research showed that the Chicago ERA program provided a clearly defined set of advancement-focused services and that the most common approach was to help individuals move fairly quickly to a new job that paid somewhat more than their current job. At the same time, the ERA program experienced some difficulty providing advancement services, given unexpected levels of job loss among program group members. ERA staff were, however, well equipped to turn job loss into an opportunity for clients to move toward their career goals.

More than half of all program group members had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program within the year following study entry. Over a third of program group members reported receiving help with retention and advancement over this same period, with a quarter receiving help finding a better job while working.

Compared with control group members, a far larger proportion of the program group reported contact, and ongoing contact, with ERA staff or staff from an employment program within the year following study entry. Furthermore, the Chicago ERA program tripled the rate at which program group members participated in retention and advancement services, compared with control group levels (which were quite low). The program increased both the percentage of program group members who participated in job search activities and the percentage who received help finding a better job while working, by over 20 percentage points relative to the control group levels.

The Chicago ERA program produced gains in several measures of employment retention, earnings, and advancement in the cumulative four-year follow-up period. The program appears to have assisted individuals to move into UI-covered employment from non-UI-covered employment, to become reemployed more quickly after loss of employment, and, possibly, to move to better jobs when they were already employed. The program also generated positive effects on many broad measures of advancement — such as job-offered benefits and union

membership. Earnings gains were larger for those who entered the study in the first half of the enrollment period (the early cohort) than the earnings gains for the program group as a whole. While the program increased earnings and the amount of food stamp assistance received, it decreased the amount of TANF received, compared with the control group levels. Some recipients appear to have left TANF to avoid the ERA program's participation requirement.

Several factors likely contributed to the economic effects of the Chicago ERA program. The program was strongly implemented, and it increased participation in employment retention and advancement services, relative to the levels of participation for the control group. The Chicago ERA service provider appeared well suited to implement this particular type of program model because of its strong relationships with many local employers. The program's requirement that individuals participate in postemployment services (a requirement that the control group members did not face) and its incentives for participation may also have contributed to its increases in participation in services beyond the levels of the control group.

The results of this test show that it is possible to help employed TANF recipients — particularly those working outside the formal labor market — advance in the labor market. The results also suggest that requiring employed recipients to participate in retention and advancement services can generate substantial reductions in TANF receipt.

Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS) ERA Findings

Los Angeles RFS ERA at a Glance

- Targeted recently employed (full-time) TANF recipients
- Provided strongly marketed, individualized, and flexible postemployment services
- Was operated by the TANF agency
- Experienced difficulties with unexpectedly high reemployment needs and limited staff skills in providing career counseling
- Was compared with a control group that participated in a less intensive postemployment program
- Produced limited increases in the use of retention and advancement services
- Did not increase employment retention or advancement

Los Angeles RFS ERA Test: Introduction

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program, which operated from March 2002 through June 2005, aimed to promote job retention and advancement among employed individuals who were receiving TANF by providing them with individualized and flexible retention and advancement services. The study enrolled sample members from July 2002 through June 2004.

Origins of the Test

When ERA began, TANF clients in California were required to work full time (at least 32 hours per week) in order to receive benefits, unless they were otherwise exempt. California also provided relatively high TANF grant levels and disregarded a relatively large portion of earnings when determining the grant levels for those who were working. As a result, many clients who secured full-time work were still eligible for a cash grant.

In the late 1990s, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) started to provide some small-scale, postemployment services to help full-time working TANF recipients sustain their employment and increase their earnings. These services — for which the control group in the ERA test was eligible once the study started — included work supports for full-time employed TANF recipients, most commonly, child care and transportation assistance. In addition, individuals were encouraged to pursue education and training and were provided with tuition assistance if they were interested. (DPSS staff did not pursue work-based strategies for advancement with these individuals or provide counseling on retention issues.)

DPSS assessments of participation levels in these postemployment services, however, indicated that the take-up rate was low. In response, DPSS developed the Reach for Success (RFS) program, which sought to increase the take-up of services by full-time employed TANF recipients through implementing an intensive and multifaceted outreach and marketing strategy as well as offering highly individualized services that could be provided outside the welfare office and during evenings and weekends. To allow for these expanded activities, the caseloads of staff in the RFS program were set at roughly half the size of the caseloads of staff in the control group program.

Labor Market Context

At the time that random assignment for the Los Angeles RFS test began, the Los Angeles area's labor market was still suffering the effects of the 2001 recession, with a rising unemployment rate and declining job levels. As with the national trend, the area's labor market began to improve after 2003. By 2005, the unemployment rate and number of jobs had returned to prerecession levels, indicating a faster recovery rate for the area than for the nation as a whole. Thus, while the economic environment was difficult at the beginning of the Los Angeles RFS test, conditions were slightly better than national levels for much of the program's operation and follow-up period.

Target Population

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program targeted TANF recipients who had been working (generally for 30 days) in a full-time job for 32 hours or more per week and were living in three of Los Angeles County's seven administration regions. Table 4.2 shows selected characteristics of the Los Angeles RFS ERA sample members as of their study entry. About half the sample members reported that they had received TANF for more than two years (cumulatively) as of study entry, and about half had at least a high school diploma, a GED certificate, or a higher education credential.

Significance of This Test

The Los Angeles RFS test examines whether an intensely marketed, individualized, and flexible advancement program, administered by a welfare agency, can increase service receipt by employed TANF recipients and move them into higher-paying jobs, compared with a less intensive and more "rule-bound" postemployment program, also provided by welfare agency staff. Chart 4.2 provides a succinct presentation of important differences between the program and control group situations.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 4.2

Program-Control Group Differences:

Los Angeles RFS Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Program resources and structures	• Operated by public welfare agency	• Operated by public welfare agency
Staffing	• Staff exclusively responsible for ERA clients	• Staff responsible for both unemployed and employed clients
	• Flexible staff schedules and meeting locations; flexibility for clients	• Traditional staff schedules and locations; limited flexibility
Staff-client engagement	• Proactive and dynamic outreach and marketing strategies	• Minimal outreach, but achieved similar rates of contact as ERA
	• Services tailored to participants	• Less individualized services
	• Limited use of employment plans	• No consistent use of employment plans.
	• Monthly, ongoing contacts	• Quarterly ongoing contacts; primarily compliance-focused
Retention services	• Reemployment services prioritized better jobs (wages, benefits, and career prospects) and available for 30-45 days after job loss	• Reemployment services prioritized finding *any* job and available for 30 days after job loss; achieved comparable proportions of people participating in job search activities as ERA
	• Provision of work supports and social service referrals and as-needed assistance accessing benefits	• Provision of work supports and social service referrals with miminal assistance accessing benefits
Advancement services	• Frequent education and training referrals	• Limited education and training referrals, triggered by client initiation, but achieved similar take-up rates as ERA

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

Los Angeles RFS ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program was operated by Los Angeles DPSS in three of the Los Angeles DPSS's seven regional welfare-to-work offices and was funded by TANF resources. Although DPSS did not work directly with other organizations to operate the program, staff occasionally referred participants to outside agencies for services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services, and housing assistance.

Staffing

Staff in "generic" staff positions primarily delivered RFS program services, and the program group members were their sole responsibility (rather than also serving clients in the existing postemployment program, for example). There were five or six of these positions per office location. The staff in each regional office also included a job developer, who was primarily responsible for working with program group members who lost their jobs. Originally, the job developers were to focus on helping employed clients find better jobs; in reality, they spent a very small portion of their time on this. Finally, ERA unit supervisors in each office directly monitored day-to-day activities, focusing primarily on compliance with larger welfare-to-work program rules about work participation and reporting earnings.

Although Los Angeles RFS ERA staff were based in their regional DPSS offices, they occasionally met with program group members off-site and after hours in order to facilitate engagement and ongoing participation. Responsibilities and caseload sizes (from 40 to 85 clients) varied across staff and regions and over time. There was some degree of specialization; for example, some select staff worked with Spanish-speaking clients or with clients who had particular service needs. Finally, although ERA staff did not have specific performance standards (or performance incentives), participation and employment outcomes for program group members were monitored. Program staff, for the most part, did not have previous experience or training in career counseling. As was the case in the majority of ERA programs, MDRC provided training and technical assistance to help ERA staff develop tools that they could use to help participants advance. This training focused on engaging and motivating program group members and working with them to outline very specific steps to take toward advancement.

Staff-Client Engagement

Highly individualized and flexible, ongoing staff-client relationships were central to the Los Angeles RFS ERA program. In order first to engage individuals, program staff did intense outreach and marketing, employing various strategies that evolved over time. This was partially necessitated by the fact that ERA-specific activities did not introduce any additional mandatory

TANF participation requirements.[20] The full-time work schedules of program group members may have also made such outreach efforts critical.

Despite outreach efforts, engagement was a challenge, according to ERA staff. Field research suggests that engagement in the program may have been hampered by a reluctance of TANF recipients, in some cases, to be involved with a welfare program after they were working. Table 4.5 shows that about half (54 percent) of program group members reported that they had any contact with staff in an employment program during the first year after they entered the study; however, this rate is no different from the level of contact with employment program staff that was reported by control group members.

Once contact with program group members was made, ERA staff developed employment plans with participants, based on an informal assessment in initial meetings. With these plans, ERA staff directed action steps and service options (such as participating in education or training services or providing work supports) for program group members. At the program's outset, ERA staff lacked experience in some of these areas, such as career-oriented counseling. Staff did develop some skills over time through experience and through county- and MDRC-facilitated professional training. The program did result in a higher take-up of career assessment services by the program group than the control group, although the difference is small: the 12-month survey indicates that almost 15 percent of program group members reported receiving help with career assessment, compared with 10 percent of control group members (Table 4.5).

Maintaining individuals' participation in the Los Angeles RFS program was difficult. In field research interviews, ERA staff described themselves as more likely to work with individuals who were motivated to participate, and they reported that they found it difficult to engage individuals who were less interested in pursuing advancement. Among those individuals with whom ERA or control group staff were actively working, field research indicates that the intensity of the staff-client relationship was greater with program group members than with control group members and that contacts were more personalized and substantive with program group members. According to the 12-month survey, only a fifth of program group members had had recent contact with staff of an employment program. There were no differences in the rate of recent contact or average contacts with staff between program and control group members (Table 4.5).

[20]The work requirement under TANF rules was 32 hours per week. Therefore, in the event of job loss, individuals had 30 days to find another job. At that point, they lost eligibility for postemployment services and were required to return to the TANF preemployment program. The ERA staff, however, had flexibility in enforcing this requirement if clients were making good progress in their job search as of 30 days.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4.5

Summary of Impacts:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	54.0	50.5	3.5	0.304
Average number of contacts with staff	7.3	6.2	1.1	0.252
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	20.3	18.9	1.4	0.605
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	60.4	55.2	5.2	0.130
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	5.5	3.7	1.8	0.221
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	14.4	9.9	4.5 **	0.045
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	7.9	5.8	2.2	0.221
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	35.9	34.2	1.7	0.602
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	21.6	17.5	4.1	0.134
Sample size (total = 848)	428	420		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	92.3	91.5	0.8	0.279
Average quarterly employment (%)	63.6	64.2	-0.6	0.453
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	70.5	70.6	-0.2	0.893
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.931
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	3.8	3.7	0.1	0.556
Earning and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,833	9,837	-4	0.985
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	32.9	33.6	-0.7	0.427
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	32.6	30.9	1.7	0.159
Earnings decreased by more than $250	18.9	19.3	-0.4	0.671
Earnings changed by less than $250	6.5	7.4	-0.9	0.191
Earnings increased by $250 or more	41.8	42.2	-0.4	0.752
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	3,313	3,216	97	0.137
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,055	2,012	43	0.244
Average annual income[c] ($)	15,202	15,065	137	0.473
Sample size (total = 5,700)	2,857	2,843		

(continued)

Table 4.5 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Initial job preparation and placement services were not a priority of the Los Angeles RFS ERA program, inasmuch as its target population was TANF recipients who were already employed (and, therefore, were assumed not to need initial job placement). Job search services in the context of reemployment and advancement are discussed below.

Retention Services

Job loss was common in the Los Angeles RFS ERA program (and also among control group members), and a large portion of ERA resources were directed to job search services for reemployment. However, there were no differences between program and control group members in terms of their participation in job search activities during the first year after study entry (according to the survey; Table 4.5). According to field research, the approach to reemployment differed slightly for program and control group members, however, in that the services for ERA program group members focused on securing them better jobs (in terms of wages, benefits, or career prospects) while the services for control group members prioritized finding any job. Also, as suggested above, ERA job developers worked with unemployed program group members a little longer than the 30-day limit to which staff working with the control group had to adhere.

Beyond job search services for reemployment, retention services in the RFS ERA program included connections to other services, such as child care and transportation (and as-needed help securing such benefits), aimed at supporting ongoing employment. The ERA

program also provided help with ancillary costs for such things as books, school fees, and clothing for work or school. In the 12-month survey, more than half of program group members reported receiving help with support services — a greater proportion than in the control group (Appendix Table B.8). Similarly, almost two-thirds of program group members reported receiving help accessing public benefits — also a greater proportion than in the control group.

Advancement Services

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program used both work-based and education- or training-focused strategies in its advancement approach. In seeking to help people advance, customer service and flexibility were the cornerstones of the approach, and staff supported and encouraged participants to pursue their own career goals. Despite being a priority of the ERA program, advancement services consumed relatively little staff time, because reemployment needs consumed a higher level of program staff resources than expected.

Depending on the individual's employment plans, ERA staff sometimes encouraged and directed program group members to education and training providers. The 12-month survey indicates that a little more than a third of program group members reported that they had participated in education and training activities — a proportion no greater than that of the control group (Table 4.5). The 42-month survey, however, suggests that one type of increase eventually occurred: program group members were more likely than control group members to report in the later survey that they had attended a college class since study entry (not shown).[21]

Employer Linkages

While the Los Angeles RFS ERA program included a work-focused approach to advancement, there were no formal connections between ERA staff and local employers. ERA job developers did visit local employers, however, and they developed relationships with them to better understand their employees' job responsibilities and to identify job openings.

Los Angeles RFS ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Los Angeles RFS program can be summarized as follows:

- The Los Angeles RFS ERA program did not produce gains in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement, relative to the levels seen in the control group.

[21] Anderson, Freedman, and Hamilton (2009).

- ERA also did not have any effects, relative to the control group levels, on the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or on average annual income over the three-year follow-up period.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment and average earnings for control group members in the Los Angeles RFS ERA test were comparable to the levels seen in control groups in the other programs serving individuals who were already employed at study entry (presented in Chapters 4 and 5). Average quarterly employment was almost 65 percent, and average earnings were just under $10,000 per year for control group members over the three-year follow-up period (Table 4.5). Average earnings increased relatively steadily over the follow-up period without a corresponding increase in employment, which may indicate that there was some advancement over time in the control group (Appendix Table B.9). While most of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, in the third year of follow-up, 54 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table B.9).

Employment and Employment Retention

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program did not generate any statistically significant impacts, relative to the control group, on any measure of employment or employment retention shown in Table 4.5 for the three-year follow-up period. However, as discussed further below, ERA did produce some gains in measures of employment during the first year of follow-up.

Earnings and Advancement

ERA did not increase earnings, and there is no evidence that it led to any additional advancement, compared with the levels seen in the control group. There were some indications of early effects of the program both in the 12-month survey data and in the unemployment insurance (UI) data. According to the 12-month survey, ERA produced some gains in employment at the time of the 12-month survey (Appendix Table B.11). In addition, looking at UI data, there were statistically significant impacts on earnings early in the follow-up period for a cohort of individuals who enrolled early in the Los Angeles RFS ERA test.

The early impacts were not large enough or persistent enough to produce improvements in any of the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement over the cumulative three-year follow-up period. However, the early positive signs led MDRC to field a 42-month survey to examine the longer-term effects of the Los Angeles RFS ERA program. As shown in Table 4.6, this longer-term survey showed that the program had not produced gains in most measures of employment, advancement, or job characteristics at the time of the survey.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4.6

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	91.2	89.0	2.2	0.244
Currently employed	60.0	59.2	0.8	0.791
No longer employed	31.2	30.1	1.1	0.704
Hourly wage				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	2.3	0.9	1.4	0.114
$5.00 - $6.99	3.6	4.4	-0.8	0.567
$7.00 - $8.99	16.6	15.6	1.1	0.664
$9.00 or more	36.3	37.5	-1.2	0.708
Hours				
Average hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	8.0	4.1	3.9 **	0.012
30-34	7.2	7.4	-0.2	0.908
35-44	36.7	37.2	-0.5	0.874
45 or more	7.9	10.2	-2.3	0.219
Schedule				
Typical schedule (%)				
Regular	34.6	38.9	-4.3	0.164
Evening shift	5.2	3.6	1.6	0.222
Other schedule	18.8	15.4	3.4	0.168
Workweek includes at least 1 weekend day (%)	28.4	26.5	1.8	0.527
Benefits				
Employer offers (%)				
Sick days with full pay	29.9	30.7	-0.8	0.783
Paid vacation	37.6	35.7	1.9	0.538
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	35.4	32.8	2.6	0.391
A health plan or medical insurance	37.2	35.9	1.2	0.690
None of the above	14.5	14.1	0.3	0.881
Work environment				
Percentage who agreed that they:				
Receive respect from superiors	48.8	46.6	2.2	0.497
Receive respect from coworkers	52.9	50.4	2.5	0.431
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	56.0	53.7	2.3	0.462
Are allowed to contribute ideas	52.7	49.5	3.2	0.317
Can count on keeping job	24.4	25.9	-1.5	0.593
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	55.2	54.3	0.9	0.773
Think job is physically demanding	24.5	24.3	0.3	0.926
Risk health or safety	20.6	19.6	1.0	0.703

(continued)

Table 4.6 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Are members of labor union (%)	9.9	9.5	0.4	0.838
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	39.4	36.3	3.1	0.323
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)				
Reading and writing skills	44.4	44.9	-0.6	0.861
Work with computers	30.1	29.4	0.7	0.803
Arithmetic skills	28.0	28.6	-0.6	0.832
Customer contact	49.0	50.6	-1.7	0.604
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	31.2	30.1	1.1	0.704
0-15	24.3	21.1	3.3	0.233
16-30	22.9	22.7	0.2	0.949
31-45	7.1	7.8	-0.6	0.708
46 or more	5.5	7.8	-2.3	0.160
Advancement outcomes since random assignment				
Ever received a raise (%)	37.4	38.5	-1.1	0.715
Ever received a promotion (%)	23.2	22.3	0.9	0.728
Found a different job while working (%)	29.3	25.8	3.5	0.219
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	24.5	29.4	-4.9 *	0.087
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)				
Work enjoyment	32.2	32.8	-0.5	0.860
Earnings	30.9	31.6	-0.8	0.798
Benefits	25.0	23.8	1.2	0.654
Number of hours	26.2	29.2	-3.0	0.300
Start and end of workday	28.7	29.1	-0.4	0.883
Commuting time	25.4	23.2	2.1	0.452
Job security	27.5	27.2	0.2	0.934
Opportunity to advance	27.6	26.7	0.9	0.768
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The Los Angeles RFS ERA program had no effect on the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or on average annual income in the three years of follow-up, compared with the control group (Table 4.5). While the program did increase the percentage of program group members receiving TANF in the second and third years of follow-up (Appendix Table B.9), the effects were not large enough to generate an increase in the amount of TANF assistance received over the cumulative follow-up period.

Los Angeles RFS ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

In the late 1990s, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) initiated a number of small-scale, postemployment services to help working TANF recipients sustain employment and increase their earnings. DPSS assessments indicated that the take-up rate of such activities was low. Designed to increase the engagement of individuals in services, the Los Angeles RFS ERA program — operated by the county welfare agency — included intensive and multifaceted outreach and marketing as well as highly individualized staff-client relationships provided outside the welfare office setting and outside "normal" welfare office hours. TANF recipients who were randomly assigned to the control group were eligible to request the county's standard postemployment services at their own initiative.

Field research suggests that customer service and individualized attention were important aspects of RFS services for those individuals who engaged with the program. The services that were provided included helping participants access work supports, assisting them with reemployment after job loss, and developing work-based and education- or training-based strategies for advancement. Reemployment activities, however, were a bigger part of the Los Angeles RFS ERA program than originally anticipated, due to clients' quick and high levels of job loss, and they often required the redirection of staff time from providing advancement services to providing reemployment services. In addition, staff often lacked training and experience in providing in-depth career counseling.

The Los Angeles RFS ERA staff initially engaged many full-time working welfare recipients in the program, but they had difficulty keeping them engaged on an ongoing basis. Over a third of program group members reported participating in an education or training activity, but only a fifth of program group members reported receiving any retention and advancement services.

The RFS program did not increase levels of participation in most services among the program group, compared with the control group. Considering the activities in which program group members were participating at high rates, such as education and training, control group levels tended to be quite high as well, and the program did not increase participation in those

services. Considering other types of services that were generally not accessed by control group members, such as help finding a better job while working, the program still was not able to boost levels of participation, as program group levels of receipt also tended to be low. Relative to the control group, the program increased participation in only one type of retention and advancement service — career assessment — and this increase was under 5 percentage points.

ERA did not generate any improvements in employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement, relative to the control group, in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. In the end, despite the fact that the Los Angeles RFS ERA program was implemented largely as designed, it did not prove to be more effective than control group services.

Riverside Work Plus and Training Focused (Phase 2) ERA Findings

Riverside Phase 2 ERA at a Glance

- Targeted newly employed TANF recipients
- Tested two education- and training-focused advancement programs, one operated by the welfare agency and the other operated by the workforce development agency
- Provided referrals to education and training programs; one program more flexible than the other in meeting TANF participation requirements through these activities
- Compared both programs with a control group that participated in a less flexible program without a focus on education and training
- Produced no substantial increases in education and training participation for the whole sample above unexpectedly high levels for the control group
- Resulted in no increases in employment retention or advancement

Riverside Phase 2 ERA Test: Introduction

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs aimed to promote advancement among employed TANF recipients, using two approaches. The two approaches offered a different mix of services, had different participation requirements, and conveyed different messages. However, they shared the same operating principle: that to advance in the labor market, low-wage workers need to attain skills and credentials beyond what they can acquire on the job. The Work Plus program embodied one approach, and the Training Focused program embodied the other approach; together, these two programs are referred to here as the Riverside "Phase 2" programs, as they both represented the second phase of Riverside County's overall welfare-to-work program. Services for the Riverside Training Focused program started in September 2000 and continued through October 2006; the Riverside Work Plus program started in January 1998 and is still operating. Sample members enrolled in the study from January 2001 to October 2003.

Origins of the Test

In California, TANF clients are required to work full time (32 hours per week) in order to receive benefits unless they are otherwise exempt. California also provides relatively high TANF grant levels and disregards a relatively large portion of earnings when determining the grant levels for those who are working. As a result, many clients who secure full-time work are still eligible for a cash grant.

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs were created in response to the fact that, statewide, many working welfare recipients who move into employment often subsequently leave their jobs and rarely advance to better jobs. These programs sought to improve access to education and training as a way to promote the advancement of employed TANF recipients. The Riverside Work Plus ERA program encouraged enrollees to meet the welfare system's quid pro quo participation requirements by combining at least 20 hours of employment per week with up to 12 additional hours of attendance in remedial education, postsecondary education, or vocational training. The Riverside Training Focused ERA program allowed enrollees to substitute additional hours in school or training for hours on the job, or even to forgo employment temporarily and participate full time in approved skill-building activities. Further, while the Work Plus ERA program was operated by the county welfare agency, the Training Focused ERA program was operated by the county workforce development agency (which also ran the county's Workforce Investment Act [WIA] One-Stop Center).

A program providing more limited services, called "Work Focused," was available to members of the control group. Similar to postemployment programs run by states and localities (including Riverside County) in the mid- to late 1990s, the Work Focused program made available, on request, staff assistance related to job retention and payments to defray enrollees' child care, transportation, and other work-related expenses. The Work Focused program did not encourage individuals to enroll in education or training activities.

Labor Market Context

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA test began operating shortly before the beginning of the national 2001 economic recession. Prior to the recession, the Riverside area's unemployment rate was considerably higher than the national rate. While unemployment did increase in the area after the end of the 2001 recession, the rate of increase was much lower in the area than it was nationally. In addition, the number of jobs in the Riverside labor market increased every year during the recession. Overall, while Riverside's labor market did show a downturn due to the recession, for most of the Riverside Phase 2 programs' operation and follow-up period, conditions were positive, although competitive, for workers.

Target Population

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs targeted employed TANF recipients. Specifically, this included individuals who were working at least 20 hours per week and had held such jobs for at least 30 days but who were still receiving a TANF grant. Table 4.2 shows selected characteristics of the Riverside Phase 2 ERA sample members when they entered the study.

Significance of This Test

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA test examines whether either or both of two education- and training-focused advancement programs (one with more flexibility for balancing work and training and based at a workforce development agency) can help employed TANF recipients move into higher-paying jobs, compared with a welfare agency-based program that did not encourage individuals to participate in education and training and did not allow trade-offs between training and work hours in meeting the state's TANF participation requirement. Chart 4.3 presents important differences between the program and control group situations in the Riverside Phase 2 ERA test.

Riverside Phase 2 ERA Programs: Features and Client Experiences

The two Riverside Phase 2 programs had the same goals and target populations. This section presents the program features for the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs overall, identifying differences between the Work Plus and Training Focused ERA programs, as relevant.

Program Resources and Organization

The Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) developed the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs. State TANF funds were allocated for their administration. However, DPSS did not pay for education and training services. Therefore, in the Work Plus ERA program, participants were steered toward providers that possessed other funding sources to pay for education and training slots. In the Training Focused ERA program, other funding sources (including a Welfare-to-Work grant from the U.S. Department of Labor) were used to pay for some education and training slots.

DPSS operated the Work Plus ERA program from its Adult Services Division, which also houses the state's preemployment TANF program, in its 11 regional offices. The Training Focused ERA program was operated by the Welfare-to-Work Division within the county's Economic Development Agency (EDA), which was also the county's Workforce Investment Agency, in five offices.

Staffing

The Work Plus ERA program used a multipronged staffing structure. First, "generic" frontline staff were responsible for initial outreach to program group members and for providing various retention and advancement services to them; they did not provide preemployment services to any clients. In contrast, DPSS staff members serving control group members provided these individuals with postemployment services but also were responsible for providing preemployment services to other TANF recipients who were not involved in the ERA test.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 4.3

Program-Control Group Differences:

Riverside Phase 2 ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Program resources and structures	• *Training Focused:* Operated by public workforce agency • *Work Plus:* Operated by public welfare agency	• Operated by public welfare agency
Staffing	*Both Training Focused and Work Plus:*	
	• Staff primarily responsibile for providing post-employment services	• Staff responsible for pre- and post-employment services to TANF recipients
Staff-client engagement	*Both Training Focused and Work Plus:*	
	• No service participation requirements beyond standard TANF work requirements; however, work-training flexibility in meeting TANF work requirements	• Standard TANF work requirements
	• Active and multifaceted outreach	• No active recruitment of TANF recipients for program services
	• Services tailored to participants	• Services not tailored
	• Development and maintenance of employment plan	• No employment plans; however, comparable take-up of assessment services as ERA
	• Regular follow-up for compliance and further service referrals	• Periodic, compliance-oriented follow-up
Advancement services	*Both Training Focused and Work Plus:*	
	• Flexibility for education and training while working	• Education and training not a priority; however, supports for client-initiated training
	• Education and training referrals	• Comparable take-up of education and training relative to Work Plus group; slightly less take-up relative to Training Focused group

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

While these approximately 65 full-time Work Plus ERA staff members were primarily generalists, they informally developed specialized functions. For example, the Work Plus ERA program in each participating DPSS office had a lead ERA staff person who carried relatively few cases and had other responsibilities, including serving as a liaison to community colleges. Some Work Plus offices also had a technician who ran job clubs (job search workshops for approximately 10 to 30 clients). In addition, Work Plus staff in each office had access to a colocated DPSS job developer, who worked with both preemployment TANF recipients and ERA participants.

Staff in the Training Focused ERA program also played a generalist role and provided a range of ERA services. Operating at a relatively small scale, the program had only five staff members. They could, however, call on specialized staff, such as job developers from the colocated WIA One-Stop office, if they needed their expertise.

Through this staffing structure and related operating procedures, the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs provided flexibility for program group members in terms of meeting locations and scheduling, and staff held meetings in person or over the phone.

Staff-Client Engagement

Ongoing staff-client relationships were at the center of the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs. Participation in the services offered by the ERA programs was voluntary, provided that individuals met general TANF participation requirements. Enrollees in both Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs (as was also the case for control group members) were subject to California's statewide TANF rules, which required recipients to work or engage in approved employment preparation activities for a total of 32 hours per week. Work Plus ERA enrollees could meet this requirement with a combination of work and attendance in approved education or training activities, but they had to work at least 20 hours per week. Training Focused enrollees were able to substitute additional hours in school or training for hours on the job or, with approval, could forgo employment temporarily to participate full time in education or training activities.

In order to contact and engage individuals, the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs used intensive outreach strategies. These included personalized recruitment efforts, which were customized to participants' career and family characteristics. As shown in Table 4.7, outreach efforts appear to have paid off: according to the 12-month survey, a greater proportion of program group members than control group members (58 percent versus 50 percent, respectively) reported having had contact with staff from an employment program during their first year after study entry. But these figures also indicate that a considerable proportion of program group members did not respond to outreach efforts.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 4.7

Summary of Impacts:

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Implementation outcomes							
Engagement							
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	58.2	58.6	50.2	7.9 *	0.081	8.3 *	0.069
Average number of contacts with staff	9.8	8.5	8.0	1.8	0.271	0.5	0.762
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	23.7	23.6	21.8	1.9	0.617	1.8	0.638
Retention services							
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.1	64.4	60.3	1.9	0.675	4.1	0.356
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	4.7	6.7	7.1	-2.4	0.279	-0.5	0.831
Advancement services							
Received help with career assessment (%)	13.5	15.3	10.5	3.0	0.330	4.8	0.124
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	9.9	11.4	9.5	0.4	0.891	2.0	0.488
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	41.4	37.3	31.9	9.5 **	0.033	5.4	0.225
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	24.2	28.9	21.5	2.6	0.513	7.4 *	0.066
Sample size (total = 712)	234	237	241				
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)							
Employment measures							
Ever employed (%)	93.9	94.3	95.0	-1.0	0.372	-0.6	0.526
Average quarterly employment (%)	60.6	60.1	62.1	-1.4	0.378	-2.0	0.157
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	73.9	72.7	75.3	-1.5	0.507	-2.6	0.174
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	8.0	7.9	8.2	-0.3	0.311	-0.4	0.113
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.2	5.3	5.1	0.1	0.720	0.2	0.349

(continued)

Table 4.7 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Earnings and advancement measures							
Average annual earnings ($)	9,038	8,494	8,873	166	0.672	-379	0.262
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	30.2	27.4	28.4	1.8	0.240	-1.0	0.468
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)							
Not employed in one or both years	34.8	37.1	35.5	-0.8	0.747	1.5	0.462
Earnings decreased by more than $250	16.3	18.0	18.4	-2.1	0.286	-0.4	0.814
Earnings changed by less than $250	6.6	4.1	5.4	1.2	0.299	-1.4	0.166
Earnings increased by $250 or more	42.2	40.8	40.4	1.8	0.464	0.4	0.844
Public assistance and income							
Average annual TANF received ($)	2,195	2,060	2,020	175 *	0.092	40	0.652
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,235	1,233	1,205	31	0.609	29	0.581
Average annual income[c] ($)	12,469	11,788	12,098	371	0.318	-310	0.333
Sample size (total = 3,029)	744	1,532	753				

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.
The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.
[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.
[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.
[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

After initially engaging program group members, Riverside Phase 2 ERA staff assessed participants to understand their vocational aptitude and interests and to develop client-specific employment plans, which included identifying education and training needs (discussed further below). Both Work Plus and Training Focused ERA staff sought to contact program group members at least once a month to verify employment hours and arrange support services as needed. Staff in both programs routinely monitored clients' progress in their activities.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services; Retention Services

Neither job preparation and placement services nor retention services were priorities of the Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs. Since the target population was TANF recipients who had held jobs for at least 30 days, sample members did not need initial job placements.

Employment instability, however, was a common problem in the target population. Both Work Plus and Training Focused ERA staff had to spend more time on employment retention activities than they had anticipated. In order to maintain ERA eligibility, sample members who became unemployed had to find a new job within 30 days, and failure to do so would result in their transfer back to the preemployment TANF program.[22] Newly unemployed program group members typically received help from ERA staff in the form of job leads, résumé assistance, and direction to DPSS resources, such as job clubs. According to the 12-month survey, nearly two-thirds of individuals in both Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs participated in a job search activity in the first year after study entry — a proportion similar to that of the control group (Table 4.7).

ERA staff also connected program group members to other services, such as child care, transportation subsidies, and ancillary payments to support participation in program activities. They also occasionally made social service referrals (for example, for mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence services). According to the 12-month survey, the Work Plus program increased by 7 percentage points the percentage of individuals who received any type of retention or advancement services, relative to the control group; no increase was found for the Training Focused program (Table 4.7).

[22]This reemployment period was extended to 60 days in the fall of 2001. Field research suggests that ERA staff lacked sufficient time to help with reemployment within 30 days, as they often discovered job loss several weeks after it had occurred.

Advancement Services

Advancement services were the key feature of both Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs. The programs emphasized education and training services to build job skills, rather than job-changing strategies.

Riverside Phase 2 ERA staff regularly encouraged participation in education and training programs as part of their career counseling with ongoing clients, but their strategies for doing so differed somewhat. Program group members in the Work Plus ERA program were urged to participate in education and training on top of their 20 hours of required employment per week, while Training Focused ERA program group members were allowed to reduce their required weekly employment hours to as low as zero, replacing hours of work with education and training. In addition, Work Plus staff encouraged program group members to explore and select the education or training institutions and programs that they thought were most appropriate for themselves, while Training Focused staff directed individuals to specific programs and providers. Work Plus ERA program staff also identified providers that did not require payment for education and training slots, while the Training Focused ERA staff could access Department of Labor funding to actually pay for slots if needed. Moreover, Work Plus ERA staff emphasized developing individuals' basic skills before vocational training, while the Training Focused ERA staff supported addressing individuals' basic education needs concurrently with skills training. Training Focused ERA staff also encouraged individuals to attend training courses for up to two years — longer than what was encouraged in the Work Plus program. Finally, Work Plus staff developed relationships with education and training providers in their communities, with the intention of increasing the marketing of programs and services to participants' particular needs, while Training Focused staff were not as outreach-oriented in this way.

Due to fluctuations in funding resources for education and training, both the Work Plus and the Training Focused ERA administrators and staff had some difficulty projecting the number and type of education and training slots to which they could refer participants. For part of the follow-up period, a shortage of funds that was intended to pay for specialized opportunities reduced the number of openings in longer-term training programs, especially for Training Focused ERA program group members. Inasmuch as alternative referrals were available, the program, on the whole, was not disrupted.

A fairly high proportion of control group members attended education or training activities on their own initiative during the year following study entry (Table 4.7). This was likely influenced, in part, by the setting of Riverside, where a large number of public and private education institutions enroll unemployed and low-wage workers and offer support for attendees.

Considering all sample members, the Training Focused ERA program increased education and training participation beyond the levels of the control group, but the Work Plus ERA

program did not. For the Training Focused program, the overall increase was approximately 10 percentage points, and most of the increase was in participation in adult basic education classes rather than in training or college classes.

Slightly different results were found by examining education and training participation increases for two key subgroups: those who, as of study entry, either did have or did not have a high school diploma or a GED certificate. Among sample members who had a diploma or GED certificate at the time of random assignment, the Work Plus and Training Focused programs had little or no effect on participation in any type of education or training. Among sample members who did not have a diploma or GED certificate at the time of random assignment, both programs increased participation in adult basic education classes: about 38 percent of Training Focused program group members reported participating in basic education or GED classes — a statistically significant increase of 18 percentage points above the control group average (Appendix Table B.16). Similarly, about 37 percent of nongraduates in the Work Plus ERA program also reported participating in basic education or GED classes — a 17 percentage point increase over the control group level. For these nongraduates, neither program increased participation in training or college classes.

In all three program groups, only about 10 percent to 13 percent of all sample members were still participating in an education or training activity at the end of the first year of follow-up, according to the 12-month survey, and similar percentages across the three program groups had attained a degree or vocational certificate by that time (results not shown).

Employer Linkages

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs did not emphasize work-based strategies for advancement and did not seek formal connections between staff and local employers. These features were also absent from the DPSS services that were provided to control group members.

Riverside Phase 2 ERA Programs: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Riverside Phase 2 programs can be summarized as follows:

- Neither the Training Focused ERA program nor the Work Plus ERA program generated any increases in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement in the four-year follow-up period, relative to the levels seen in the control group.
- The Training Focused ERA program increased the amount of TANF received but did not have any effect on the amount of food stamp assistance received or on average annual income during this time.

- The Work Plus ERA program did not produce any changes in the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or in average annual income.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment and average earnings for control group members in the Riverside Phase 2 ERA study are comparable to the levels seen for control groups in the tests of other programs serving individuals who were already employed at study entry (presented in Chapters 4 and 5). Over the four-year follow-up period, the average quarterly employment rate was 62 percent, and average earnings were just under $9,000 per year for control group members (Table 4.7). Average earnings increased relatively steadily over the follow-up period, without a corresponding increase in employment — which may indicate that there was some advancement over time in the control group (Appendix Table B.13). While most of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, in the fourth year of follow-up, less than 30 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table B.13).

Employment and Employment Retention

Neither the Training Focused ERA program nor the Work Plus ERA program was able to produce improvements in any of the main measures of employment or employment retention in the cumulative four-year follow-up period, compared with the levels seen in the control group (Table 4.7).[23] The Training Focused ERA program decreased employment retention in the first year of follow-up, but those effects disappeared by Year 2 (Appendix Table B.13). This negative effect is likely a result of the policy that allowed Training Focused program group members to reduce their weekly work hours in order to participate in education and training. Due to this policy, it is likely that some program group members substituted training for work hours. The program had no effects on employment or employment retention after the first year of follow-up.

Earnings and Advancement

There is no evidence that either the Work Plus ERA program or the Training Focused ERA program led to earnings or advancement gains in the four-year follow-up period, beyond

[23]The Work Plus ERA program did have a few scattered statistically significant impacts on the measures shown in Appendix Table B.14. Given the large number of outcomes shown in this table, however, some impacts may be statistically significant by chance and may not be due to any real effect of the program. Given that there are no statistically significant impacts on any of the primary measures of employment retention or advancement for the Work Plus ERA program, these other impacts should be viewed with caution.

what was achieved in the control group. As discussed above, among sample members who did not have a GED certificate or high school diploma at the time they entered the study, the Work Plus and Training Focused ERA programs both produced impacts on the percentage of program group members who participated in adult basic education or GED preparation classes (Appendix Table B.16). Despite these increases, the programs did not lead to advancement gains for the full sample or for these subgroups (Appendix Table B.17).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The Training Focused ERA program group received 9 percent more ($175), on average, per year in TANF cash assistance than the control group (Table 4.7). Program group members substituting education and training for employment — thereby qualifying for greater TANF benefits — may have caused this difference. There are no other statistically significant impacts on the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or on average annual income for either of the Riverside Phase 2 ERA program groups, relative to the control group.

Riverside Phase 2 ERA Programs: Summary and Conclusions

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs were created in response to the problem that many working welfare recipients were unable to retain their jobs or move up to better jobs. Therefore, these programs — which were voluntary and delivered services through ongoing staff-client relationships — were designed to increase retention and advancement through improved access to education and training. The Riverside Work Plus ERA program encouraged enrollees to meet the welfare system's quid pro quo participation requirements by combining at least 20 hours of employment per week with up to 12 additional hours of attendance in basic education, postsecondary education, or vocational training. The Riverside Training Focused ERA program allowed enrollees to substitute additional hours in school or training for hours on the job or to forgo employment temporarily and instead participate full time in approved skill-building activities. The Work Plus ERA program was operated by DPSS, while the Training Focused ERA program was operated by the county workforce development agency. DPSS also operated the Work Focused program — a limited-services program that was available to members of the control group; this program made available, on request, staff assistance with job retention issues and payments to defray enrollees' child care, transportation, and other work-related expenses.

Both the Work Plus and the Training Focused ERA staff intensively marketed the ERA programs and recruited program group members; thereafter, staff contacted engaged group members monthly to verify employment hours, arrange support services, and monitor participants' progress in their activities. Riverside Phase 2 ERA staff developed client-specific employment plans and encouraged participation in education and training programs. However,

due to individuals' employment instability, staff in both programs spent more time on employment retention activities than they had anticipated.

Over half of program group members in both Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program; less than a quarter had had recent contact with staff as of the 12-month survey. Around 40 percent of program group members in both programs participated in education or training in the first 12 months after study entry, but few had received a new degree or certificate by the end of this period.

Almost one-third of the control group participated in an education or training activity during the first year following random assignment. The Training Focused program increased the percentage of program group members, relative to the control group, who participated in education or training during this year, but the increase was less than 10 percentage points and is almost entirely explained by an increase in participation in adult basic education (not in training or college) by a subgroup of program group members who did not have a high school diploma or GED certificate at the time of study entry. The Work Plus program also increased participation in adult basic education for this subgroup. Few program group members in this subgroup (less than 5 percent) actually received a GED certificate within a year of study entry.

The Riverside Phase 2 ERA programs were implemented largely as designed. However, neither the Work Plus nor the Training Focused ERA program produced any statistically significant impacts for the full sample or the above subgroup on the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement in the cumulative four-year follow-up period, compared with the levels seen in the control group.

There are limitations to what the evaluation of the Riverside Phase 2 ERA test can say about the link between participation in education and training and job advancement. This test examines whether or not strategies that are meant to boost participation in education and training can lead to advancement. Thus, in interpreting the test's results, one first must examine whether the strategies did, in fact, boost such participation and in what types of programs. As noted above, increases in participation in education and training were not large for the full sample and were driven primarily by increases among non-high school graduates who did have substantial increases in participation — but only participation in adult basic education courses, and the increases rarely resulted in the receipt of new education credentials. Thus, the strategies boosted participation in education in only a limited way and for the least-skilled sample members.

Possible reasons for the programs' limited effects on participation in education and training are suggested by field research. ERA staff reported difficulty in convincing many employed single parents — especially those working full time — to cut back on their hours of work (and thus their earnings) or on time devoted to family in order to attend school or training.

They also reported that some other program group members, when they left employment, stopped participating in education or training or chose not to enroll in education or training programs, opting instead to look for work.

Furthermore, as has been shown in prior research, the type of education participation that was increased among non-high school graduates — adult basic education classes — may not have a large and/or immediate payoff in terms of economic benefits unless these classes are accompanied or followed by postsecondary education or training.[24] Annual impacts on economic outcomes do not indicate any trend toward positive effects for the two ERA programs, however, even by the fourth year of follow-up.

Finally, the Riverside Phase 2 ERA test was not a test of whether or not participation in education and training can lead to advancement. Rather, it was a test of whether or not strategies that are meant to boost participation in education and training lead to advancement.

[24]See Bos et al. (2001); and Murnane, Willett, and Boudett (1995).

Chapter 5

Findings for ERA Programs Serving Individuals Who Were Employed and Not Receiving TANF

Introduction

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programs that are presented in this chapter generally began providing services to people when they were employed and were not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This category includes five programs: the Cleveland ERA program; the ERA programs in Eugene and Medford, Oregon; the Riverside, California, Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) program; and the South Carolina ERA program. Among these programs, only the Riverside PASS ERA program led to increased employment retention and advancement.

Overview of Program Designs in This Group

The programs in this chapter prioritized both employment retention and advancement, to varying degrees, for low-wage workers. Only the South Carolina ERA program explicitly included the additional goal of placing into jobs unemployed individuals who had left TANF. The target populations for these five programs, on the whole, had relatively recent work experience when services were first provided to them. While they were not receiving TANF when they enrolled in the program, the target populations included both former beneficiaries as well as some who had never received TANF.[1]

With shared goals and target populations, some common program strategies and structures existed across these five programs. Table 5.1 compares a selection of features implemented in the ERA programs serving this target group and demonstrates that each program consisted of a bundle of features. Appendix C provides brief summaries of each program (Appendix Boxes C.1 through C.5) and provides details on program administration (such as operation dates and funding). A fuller description of the model designs and the programs' implementation is provided in the ERA site-specific interim reports.[2]

Participation in ERA services was entirely voluntary in all these programs. Because all were serving low-wage workers or individuals who were not receiving TANF, it was not

[1] In Medford, the target group also included low-wage workers who were current or former recipients of food stamps or state child care subsidies.

[2] For complete citations, see Appendix E, which also notes where the reports can be found on the Web.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.1

Comparison of Program Features Across ERA Programs Targeting Individuals Employed and Not Receiving TANF

Program Feature	Cleveland	Eugene	Medford	Riverside PASS	South Carolina
Staffing					
Staff positions - team-based (vs. solo)		✓	✓		
Staff performance management (standards; incentives)	✓	✓		✓	
Flexible staff hours and/or locations		✓	✓		✓
Caseloads - low	✓		✓		✓
Staff/client engagmenet					
Participation requirments					
TANF participation requirements					
ERA participation requirements beyond TANF ones					
Initial outreach - intensive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Initial outreach - financial participation incentives					✓
Program flow - client assessment and individualized service package	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ongoing - develop/maintain an employment plan		✓	✓	✓	✓
Initial job preparation and placement services					✓
Retention services					
Reemployment services		✓	✓	✓	
Financial work incentives					✓
Emergency financial assistance		✓	✓		
Connections to other services (work supports, social services)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues	✓	✓	✓		✓
Advancement services					
Supported advancement through job change			✓		
Education and training referrals and/or incentives		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff counseling on job-related issues		✓	✓		✓
Employer linkages	✓				

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTES: The program features are defined in Chapter 2.
Check marks indicate that the feature is present in the ERA program.
The models and their implementation often evolved over the study period. This table presents the features experienced by the majority of the study participants for the greatest extent of time.

possible to mandate participation in program services. Program administrators often identified eligible individuals through state welfare management information systems that recorded TANF case closures, and intensive outreach and marketing strategies were enlisted in all programs.[3]

Ongoing relationships between clients and program staff were central in all the programs described in this chapter. ERA program staff often provided flexibility to clients, in terms of meeting locations and times, in order to allow for frequent contact. Among the ERA program features, retention and advancement services dominated the programs in this group. Typically, retention activities included reemployment services and staff coaching on job-related issues, and advancement services included career counseling and education and training referrals.

Table 5.2 shows that sample members in the target group described in this chapter also shared similar demographic characteristics at baseline, or the time of random assignment. For example, in addition to being employed when they enrolled in the program, sample members in this target group were likely to have an education credential, with between 56 percent and 81 percent having at least a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. This is a higher overall percentage than found for the other two target groups, described in Chapters 3 and 4.

With their common focus on individuals who were not receiving TANF and who were working or recently employed, the programs described in this chapter also shared a number of implementation challenges in providing services to this population. Given these challenges, sites were not always able to operationalize certain program elements. The following sections present the services that staff actually provided, not the program features as they were designed.

[3]South Carolina was the only program in this group to use financial incentives to encourage participation.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.2

Selected Charateristics of ERA Sample Members at the Time of Random Assignment: Employed and Not Receiving TANF

Characteristic[a]	Riverside PASS	Cleveland	Eugene	Medford	South Carolina
Female (%)	90.0	81.9	92.5	91.1	98.1
Average age (years)	31.5	32.7	29.4	31.3	31.7
Race/ethnicity (%)					
Hispanic	49.4	5.7	6.3	4.6	0.4
Black, non-Hispanic	16.4	56.4	3.1	1.4	81.0
White, non-Hispanic	31.6	34.4	84.8	89.9	17.9
Other	2.6	3.4	5.9	4.1	0.7
Average number of minor children	2.1	1.3	1.8	1.9	2.3
Age of youngest child (%)					
2 or under	36.1	30.9	44.6	34.9	17.7
3 to 5	23.9	22.1	22.3	24.0	32.7
6 or over	40.1	47.0	33.1	41.2	49.6
High school diploma/GED certificate or higher (%)	57.3	73.7	80.5	79.0	56.0
Total prior AFDC/TANF receipt (%)					
None	4.8	NA	12.5	37.4	0.0
Less than 2 years	51.6	NA	57.2	47.3	45.2
2 years or more	43.6	NA	30.4	15.3	54.8
Living in public or subsidized housing (%)	12.0	16.0	24.3	24.6	NA
Employed in quarter prior to random assignment[b](%)	76.9	93.1	47.5	77.2	50.8
Employed in quarter of random assignment[b](%)	74.5	99.4	89.6	91.2	50.3
Employment in the past 3 years (%)					
Did not work	4.4	NA	7.5	0.9	NA
Less than 6 months	23.9	NA	15.0	6.0	NA
7 to 12 months	20.1	NA	19.8	11.3	NA
13 to 24 months	22.3	NA	29.3	18.1	NA
More than 24 months	29.3	NA	28.5	63.7	NA
As of random assignment the number of hours worked per week among employed (%)					
1-19 hours	4.1	0.1	0.0	11.5	NA
20-31 hours	32.2	8.4	47.9	34.7	NA
32 or more hours	63.6	91.5	52.1	53.8	NA
As of random assignment the hourly wage among employed (%)					
Less than $5.15	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.8	NA
$5.15 to $6.99	38.9	3.9	23.7	20.0	NA
$7.00 to $9.99	50.2	72.9	66.9	63.8	NA
$10.00 or more	10.8	23.1	8.9	14.4	NA
Sample size	2,770	697	1,179	1,164	2,776

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

SOURCES: Calculations from ERA baseline forms, automated records, and administrative data.

NOTES: NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.
[a]Statistics include both program and control group members.
[b]This information is based on unemployment insurance (UI) records.

Cleveland ERA Findings

Cleveland ERA at a Glance

- Targeted low-wage workers in the long-term nursing care industry
- Offered retention services at the work site
- Was implemented strongly, but participation levels were affected by staff difficulties navigating workplace rules and space constraints
- Was compared with a control group that had no special on-site retention initiatives
- Increased participation in retention and advancement services but had only modest levels of overall participation
- Did not increase employment retention or advancement

Cleveland ERA Test: Introduction

The Cleveland ERA program, which operated between 2002 and 2005, aimed to increase job retention among low-wage, entry-level workers in the long-term nursing care industry. The program served sample members for as long as they remained employed at the firm, for up to about one year.

Origins of the Test

A common challenge for programs providing retention and advancement services is the difficulty of engaging workers, whose job and family responsibilities often leave them with limited time to participate in a program. The driving force behind the Cleveland ERA program was to take services to the workers at their place of employment for the sake of convenience.

The Cleveland ERA program targeted low-wage workers in long-term nursing care facilities, an industry with traditionally high turnover rates.[4] The long-term care industry has historically had serious issues with worker retention and has taken a number of steps to address it, including setting up Employee Assistance Programs (typically offering employees confidential evaluation, treatment, and referrals to services for a range of problems, such as substance abuse, mental health, and other personal problems) or programs to reward and

[4]"Turnover" is defined as the number of worker resignations and terminations in a given period divided by the total workforce. For a review and discussion of turnover rates in the long-term care workforce, see Stone (2001).

recognize employees for their achievements. Such initiatives, however, are not consistently in place across the industry.

The Cleveland ERA program was a voluntary, employer-based retention program that offered ongoing staff-client relationships, weekly information sessions covering a variety of topics, and supervisory trainings for the supervisors of low-wage workers. The program's chief goal was to help individuals retain the specific jobs that they held as of entry into the program, through addressing mainly employee-level factors that contribute to job turnover. On the whole, the program did not seek to fundamentally change employers' work environments, workplace rules and practices, or general ethos, even though the services were based at the work site. Rather, the program focused on the workers themselves, and not on employer or industry practices that may be associated with employment retention or turnover.

The program was operated by a community-based, nonprofit social service organization. Unlike other tests in the ERA project, firms (rather than individuals) were randomly assigned either to have ERA services provided to their workers or to continue with their standard practices. While it was difficult to recruit a large number of firms to participate, 44 firms were eventually part of the study, and 21 long-term nursing facilities and one manufacturing firm were randomly placed in each of the two research groups.[5] The ERA study compares the outcomes of workers at the firms providing ERA services (that is, the program group firms) with the outcomes of workers at the firms that did not provide these services (that is, the control group firms).[6]

Labor Market Context

For most of the period when the Cleveland ERA program was operating, the area's labor market was struggling. Between 2000 and 2003, the unemployment rate for the Cleveland area increased from roughly 3.9 percent to 6.0 percent; and from 2000 to 2007 (the end of the study period), the total number of jobs declined by almost 80,000. While the national unemployment rate began to fall in 2004, the Cleveland area rates did not decrease substantially. In 2007, the Cleveland area's unemployment rate was 6.0 percent, compared with the national rate of 4.6 percent.

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[5]There are several reasons why the recruitment of firms was difficult. Many of the approached firms did not meet the study's main eligibility criterion: having at least 15 recently hired, low-wage employees. In addition, among eligible firms, some were not interested in participating because of anticipated difficulties in implementing the services; some lacked interest in addressing retention issues; and some had concerns about having to provide data for the study if they were assigned to the control group.

[6]An examination of the characteristics of study sample members confirmed that the demographic characteristics of those in the program group firms were very similar to the characteristics of those in the control group firms at the time of random assignment.

Target Population

The target population for the Cleveland ERA program consisted of workers who earned less than $13 per hour and had been hired within the six months prior to random assignment at 42 small to medium-size, long-term nursing care firms. (Two firms that were brought into the study toward the end of intake were in the manufacturing sector.) The firms involved in the study were required to employ at least 15 low-wage, newly hired workers, and the firms had to operate in the Cleveland metropolitan area. Among the participating firms, over 40 percent had 150 to 200 employees. Most of these firms had high turnover among their entry-level employees, with nearly a third having a turnover rate of 50 percent or higher, prior to study entry. Table 5.2 shows selected characteristics, as of study entry, of the individuals in these firms who made up the Cleveland ERA sample.

Significance of This Test

The Cleveland ERA test examines whether an employer-based retention and advancement program — providing services at the work site through ongoing staff-client relationships, peer support groups, and supervisory trainings — can decrease turnover among low-wage workers in the long-term care industry, compared with workers in similar firms without such on-site services. Thus, in this test, unlike the other tests in ERA, the focus was on maintaining employment in the job held as of study entry, rather than on maintaining employment in general (including employment that might be at a different employer). Chart 5.1 provides a succinct presentation of important differences between the services available to program group and control group members in the Cleveland ERA test.

Cleveland ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

A community-based social service organization with experience providing employment services in the Cleveland area developed and operated the Cleveland ERA program.[7] The program was funded through a variety of public and private sources, including county funds and private donations (through United Way), and with funding raised by the community-based organization.

[7]Random assignment occurred in stages: eight firms were randomly assigned in September 2002; 14 firms were randomly assigned in November 2002; eight firms were randomly assigned in February 2004; and 14 firms were randomly assigned in May 2004.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 5.1

Program-Control Group Differences: Cleveland ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Increase retention among low-wage, entry-level workers in the long-term nursing care industry	
Program resources and structures	• Operated by community-based, social service organization	• Limited and inconsistent employer-specific initiatives aimed at reducing turnover among low-wage employees (such as Employee Assistance Plans or programs to reward and recognize employees for achievements)[a]
	• Employer-based delivery of services	
Staffing	• Services provided by generalist staff	
	• Staff regularly stationed at employers; flexibility for clients	
Staff-client engagement	• Aggressive marketing and outreach	
	• Services tailored to participants	
	• Limited ongoing contact	
Retention services	• Weekly group, life skills information sessions	
	• Provision of work supports and social service referrals, as needed	
	• Help with problems on the job	
Employer linkages	• Supervisory trainings for supervisors of entry-level employees	

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: [a]Employment-related and supportive services were available through Workforce Investment Act providers, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations.

Staffing

Services in the Cleveland ERA program were provided by three to four staff (the number varied over the study period) who provided services at all the firms in the program group. All staff had professional backgrounds in social work and/or experience in supportive services and/or crisis intervention programs. On average, each full-time staff member was assigned to work with three ERA firms, and the firms worked with the same staff person over the course of the study. Staff had a performance goal of making at least two contacts per month with each program group member at each firm (a goal established partway through the study), although there were no financial incentives associated with achieving this target.

ERA staff members received training from their employer (the community-based organization) as well as from a consultant retained by MDRC as part of the ERA evaluation. The MDRC-sponsored training focused on how to market ERA services to potential employers and individual participants, how to engage participants, and how to deliver retention services to participants.

ERA staff were stationed at employers' work sites during regularly scheduled "Office Hours" and provided assistance to employees on work-related issues during this time. Office Hours were scheduled on one specific day per week in each firm, for a total of three to four hours per week. In order to meet the diverse work schedules of program group members, ERA staff also provided activities during the evenings and during third (night) shifts.

Providing both paid release time to workers to meet with ERA staff and physical space for meetings was not a requirement for employers during the early stages of the study, and this hindered early employee participation in the program. During later stages of the study, firms were required to provide paid release time to all participating employees, space for both individual and group sessions, and assistance in scheduling activities.

Staff-Client Engagement

The voluntary nature of the Cleveland ERA program required staff to use aggressive marketing and recruitment strategies, including initial "intake" meetings to engage employees and recruit them into the program. There were no financial incentives for employees to participate. In order to ensure that employees had an opportunity to attend an intake session, multiple intake sessions were held over the course of a few weeks and outside traditional work hours. In these one-on-one meetings, ERA staff collected background information on the employee and explained the main ERA services.

During the established Office Hours, staff provided one-on-one assistance to workers on a range of factors that might affect retention, including issues at the workplace as well as

housing, transportation, and child care matters. Cleveland ERA staff had discretion in the type of assistance that they provided to workers, and this could include referrals to services offered by public agencies and by the community.

It was challenging to secure ongoing participation from employees, given their work schedules. Long-term nursing home facilities had round-the-clock shifts that required staff to be on call for patient care throughout their shifts. In addition, given the physical constraints of nursing homes, it was often difficult to secure appropriate space for meetings. Over time, in an effort to engage more employees, ERA staff increasingly sought them out in the hallways of the nursing home facilities.

Table 5.3 shows, according to 12-month survey data, that program group members, compared with control group members, had more than double the average number of contacts with staff from an employment program in the first 12 months following random assignment, with about seven average contacts per program group member. Similarly, program group members were twice as likely as control group members to have had recent contact with staff from an employment program.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Initial job preparation and placement services were not a priority of the Cleveland ERA program, as the target population was defined as low-wage workers newly hired in long-term nursing care facilities. Similarly, given the program's focus on maintaining employment in the jobs that sample members held as of study entry — rather than on finding a job at a different employer — the Cleveland ERA program did not include any job search assistance.

Nonetheless, the 12-month survey found a higher rate of participation in a job search activity by program group members than control group members (Table 5.3). Moreover, employees starting out in the firms assigned to the program group reported that they were generally less satisfied with their work environment at the one-year mark than employees starting out in the control group firms. This lower level of job satisfaction may partially explain why program group members were participating in job search services at greater rates than control group members. Although data are not available to test this hypothesis, the Cleveland ERA program may have raised employees' awareness of retention issues at their employers and led them to expect more from their supervisors. This, in turn, may have led them to begin to examine employment opportunities outside the job they held as of study entry.

Retention Services

Retention services were a central component of the Cleveland ERA program. Weekly group sessions led by ERA staff, called "Lunch and Learns," provided life skills education in

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Table 5.3

Summary of Impacts:

Cleveland

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	52.4	30.2	22.2 ***	0.000
Average number of contacts with staff	6.8	3.1	3.8 ***	0.007
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	16.6	8.4	8.2 **	0.035
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	44.6	34.2	10.4 **	0.086
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	17.9	7.7	10.2 ***	0.005
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	9.0	5.6	3.5	0.178
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	6.3	3.9	2.4	0.330
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	28.9	37.3	-8.3 *	0.152
Received any help with retention/advancement[p] (%)	38.5	27.5	11.0 **	0.025
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	99.1	98.2	0.9	0.296
Average quarterly employment (%)	83.3	81.9	1.3	0.664
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	88.9	89.7	-0.8	0.712
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	9.1	9.0	0.1	0.849
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	1.8	1.9	-0.2	0.689
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	14,462	14,566	-105	0.858
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	54.6	54.3	0.3	0.920
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	14.2	14.2	-0.1	0.986
Earnings decreased by more than $250	35.3	36.5	-1.2	0.752
Earnings changed by less than $250	9.4	7.1	2.3	0.433
Earnings increased by $250 or more	40.9	41.5	-0.6	0.873
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316		

(continued)

Table 5.3 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

four broad areas — Workplace Success, Money Matters, Personal Wellness, and Continuing Education — and covered such topics as problem solving, time management, goal setting, conflicts in the workplace, credit repair, budgeting, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

During Office Hours, Cleveland ERA staff also provided advice on a wide range of topics, including job-related problems, issues with supervisors, referrals to services in the community, and access to supportive services, such as payments for the employees' work uniforms, eyeglasses, and college enrollment fees. The 12-month survey shows that 18 percent of program group members received help dealing with problems on the job. While this rate is more than double the rate of help received by the control group, it is low, given that this population is known to experience many problems on the job.

Advancement Services

Job advancement services were not a priority of the Cleveland ERA program. Advancement-focused discussions between Cleveland ERA program staff and program group members rarely occurred, and the 12-month survey shows no differences between the program and control group in terms of their likelihood of receiving help with advancement.

Employer Linkages

In addition to Office Hours, the Cleveland ERA program included training for the supervisors of entry-level employees in the ERA firms. The supervisory training sought to address some of the broader factors that contribute to worker turnover, such as poor supervisor-supervisee relationships and conflict-ridden work environments. These voluntary training

sessions were designed to help supervisors enhance their supervisory skills and achieve better relationships with entry-level staff. Conducted by ERA staff members, the training consisted of various activities, such as role-playing to help the supervisors learn new skills and techniques and to gain support and insight from other supervisors who dealt with similar workplace situations.

Cleveland ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Cleveland ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The Cleveland ERA program did not produce any changes in the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement, relative to the control group, in the three-year follow-up period.
- Data on TANF or food stamp receipt were not collected, as most sample members did not have a recent connection to TANF. Thus, an analysis of the program's effects on public assistance receipt or average annual income is not possible.

Control Group Outcomes

Average earnings and average quarterly employment for control group members in Cleveland were greater than the levels seen in any of the other ERA control groups examined in this report. The average quarterly employment rate was over 80 percent, and average earnings were about $14,500 per year for control group members over the three-year follow-up period (Table 5.3). Average annual earnings and average quarterly employment both decreased steadily over the follow-up period (Appendix Table C.2).

Employment and Employment Retention

While the Cleveland ERA program could have produced economic impacts if it had been able to stop or slow the above-mentioned decline in employment over time, there were no changes in the program group relative to the control group in any of the main measures of employment or employment retention in the three-year follow-up period. The ERA program did produce effects on job retention at the firms where program group members were employed at the time of random assignment, increasing the proportion employed at that firm in the quarter after random assignment by 5 percentage points. However, this effect disappeared by the next quarter (not shown).

Earnings and Advancement

The Cleveland ERA program did not generate increases in any measures of earnings or advancement, compared with the control group levels.

Cleveland ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

The Cleveland ERA program sought to increase job retention among newly hired, entry-level workers in the long-term nursing care industry. A common challenge for programs providing retention and advancement services to those who are working is that the workers have limited time to participate in program services. In response, the Cleveland ERA model situated services at the workplace, making it more convenient for workers to take advantage of them. The Cleveland ERA program was voluntary and was operated by a community-based nonprofit social service organization that offered ongoing staff-client relationships, weekly information and peer support sessions covering a variety of topics, and supervisory trainings for the supervisors of low-wage workers. Although no formal services were provided to the control group, these individuals could access services offered by their employer or in the community.

Overall, field research suggests that the Cleveland ERA staff used aggressive strategies to engage employees and recruit them into the program. Securing ongoing participation from employees was challenging, however, particularly given the schedules of program group members: employees in long-term nursing care facilities have round-the-clock shifts and are always on call for patient care.

Over half the program group members had contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program, but less than one-fifth had had recent contact with staff at the 12-month follow-up point. More than one-third reported receiving help with retention or advancement. Given that services were provided at the workplace, however, participation was not as pervasive as initially expected.

Compared with control group members, program group members had more frequent contact and more recent contacts with staff from an employment program, so it appears that the program's employer-based location and/or efforts to increase ERA staff-employee contact did pay off to some extent. While the program more than doubled the percentage of program group members who received help dealing with problems on the job, relative to the control group, the overall receipt rate of this service was low, given the emphasis on it in the program design.

The Cleveland program did not generate any improvements in employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement, relative to the control group, during the cumulative three-year follow-up period. There are several possible explanations for why the program did not produce impacts on these economic outcomes, and two of them are presented

here. First, even with services located at the employer, sustained engagement of workers was difficult to achieve. Although many of the problems that the program faced in engaging workers in services were specific to the nursing home industry, some were not. Even in environments that have less demand for patient and floor coverage than in nursing homes, workers may not have the time to leave their work to attend activities. Second, the underlying assumption of offering services to employees at their workplace, and encouraging employees to work through problems at their jobs, is that it is in the employees' best interest to stay in these jobs. This, however, may not be the case: other jobs may have more advancement potential or other advantages. In the end, although the Cleveland ERA program was implemented largely as designed, it was not effective at promoting employment retention and advancement.

Eugene ERA Findings

Eugene ERA at a Glance

- Targeted employed individuals who had left TANF
- Provided individualized services through staff-client interactions that focused on employment retention and advancement
- Was operated by a welfare agency in partnership with a community college that ran a One-Stop Center
- Was compared with a control group that had access to employment-related services in the community, if individuals chose to pursue them
- Experienced unanticipated demands to provide reemployment services, which impeded staff's ability to provide career counseling
- Produced some effects on employment rates but did not increase employment retention or advancement

Eugene ERA Test: Introduction

The Eugene ERA program aimed to improve employment retention and advancement among low-wage workers who had previously received TANF but were no longer receiving assistance. The study enrolled sample members from June 2002 through June 2004, and it offered sample members services for one year after enrollment.

Origins of the Test

At the state level in Oregon, an interest in employment retention and advancement services developed as program administrators recognized that their "work-first" welfare policies, while largely successful in connecting TANF recipients to employment, were not resulting in long-term economic success for working families. State policymakers perceived that services were needed to move working families into stable employment and better and higher-paying jobs. At the time, there were a range of employment-related and supportive services available through Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations. These services focused on helping people to find jobs. Employment retention and advancement services for working individuals, however, were largely lacking. Furthermore, those that were available were limited, and individuals had to identify and pursue them on their own.

The Eugene ERA program was designed to augment the services available for working individuals who left TANF, by providing individualized assistance, referrals to services, and

advancement-focused career counseling. The ERA program in Eugene was also designed to capitalize on the distinct resources — financial and human — available in the welfare and workforce development systems, through joint management of the program by the State of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and a community college that also operated the WIA One-Stop Center.

Labor Market Context

In Eugene, the ERA study began in June 2002, shortly after the end of the national 2001 recession. Even prior to this recession, the unemployment rate in Eugene was higher than the national rate — 5.4 percent in Eugene in 2000, compared with 4.0 percent nationally. In 2003, Eugene's rate peaked at 8.0 percent, compared with the national peak in 2003 of 6.0 percent. As a result, program group members in Eugene initially faced challenging conditions for securing and retaining employment and advancing to better jobs. Economic conditions did improve over the study period: Eugene's unemployment rate fell to 5.3 percent in 2007. At the time of the study, the minimum wage in Oregon was one of the highest in the nation at $6.50 to $6.90 per hour, compared with a national minimum wage of $5.15 per hour.

Target Population

The Eugene ERA program served employed individuals who had left TANF up to one year prior to when the program began and who were working at least 20 hours per week. Individuals entered the study sample when they submitted an employment verification form to the welfare department to request access to food stamp benefits and TANF's postemployment "transitional" benefits — child care, Medicaid, and transportation assistance that can be made available to people for a period of time after they leave welfare for work. Table 5.2 shows selected characteristics of the Eugene ERA sample members at the time of random assignment. The Eugene sample is distinct among the ERA sites for its relatively high proportion of people with an education credential; more than 80 percent of sample members had a high school diploma or a GED certificate when they entered the study. This rate is among the highest of all the ERA program samples.

Significance of This Test

The Eugene ERA test examines whether a voluntary program that provided intensive retention and advancement services and individualized career counseling to low-wage workers, through a collaboration between welfare and workforce agencies, can improve employment and retention for those who leave TANF, compared with the standard postemployment services available in the community. Chart 5.2 presents the important differences between the services available to program group and control group members in the Eugene ERA test.

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Chart 5.2

Program-Control Group Differences: Eugene ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Help former TANF recipients retain their jobs and advance to better jobs and wages	
Program resources and structures	• Operated by welfare office partnership with a community college/WIA contractor	• No single retention- and advancement-oriented program for employed individuals in community; however, could access various employment-related community services should they choose to pursue them[a]
Staffing	• Two-person, colocated teams' including welfare agency staff and community college career development specialists • Staff schedules and meeting locations flexible for clients	
Staff-client engagement	• Aggressive marketing and outreach • Services tailored to participants • Development and maintenance of employment plans • Monthly contact during first 3 months; declining frequency thereafter	• Required to pursue services; however, similar reported contact rates as ERA group
Retention services	• Reemployment services (targeted job leads, résumé building, application help, career counseling, skills assessments, and referrals to training dollars) available for 30 days after loss of job • Provision of work supports and social service referrals	
Advancement services	• Goals-focused career counseling • Limited education and training referrals	• Required to pursue education and training opportunities; however, similar reported take-up of education and training as ERA group

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: [a]Employment-related and supportive services were available through Workforce Investment Act providers, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations.

Eugene ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

The Eugene ERA program was funded primarily by TANF resources[8] and was jointly managed and operated by the State of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and a local community college (Lane Community College) that also ran the local One-Stop Center. The Eugene ERA program operated in three DHS branch offices. The two agencies had worked together as part of a local consortium focused on workforce issues; however, this was the first time that they had collaborated in operating a service program.

Staffing

Each of the three Eugene ERA program offices was staffed by a two-person team of DHS staff and community college career development specialists who were both located at the welfare office. DHS staff were primarily responsible for helping participants access such support services as food stamps and "extended benefits" (primarily child care, transportation assistance, and Medicaid subsidies that are available for a period of time after someone leaves TANF for work). DHS staff also took the lead in directing individuals to social service providers in the community. Community college staff focused on career counseling and helping clients move up career ladders, although this did not include job development or outreach to employers. These staff had a background in counseling as well as knowledge of the local labor market and local services and institutions. The ERA program in Eugene was also managed through this organizational partnership, with each agency assigning one person to the management team.

The ERA staff in Eugene were held to specific performance benchmarks (although without financial incentives for achieving them) in terms of client contact and take-up of ERA activities. The ERA program in Eugene provided flexibility when accommodating program group members' schedules, including phone contacts in the evening and meeting locations outside the office. Over the course of the study, however, this flexibility was eventually limited by high caseloads and ERA personnel policies, which restricted the ability of staff to make schedule adjustments and to conduct home visits.

Prior to the ERA program, neither the welfare agency nor the community college had experience in providing career advancement or job retention services to low-income workers after they found jobs. To address this issue, MDRC sponsored a series of staff training sessions

[8]Some support for the program was also provided by the U.S. Department of Labor.

that focused on marketing and client engagement, working with employers, and techniques to help participants advance.

Because the program group members were required to check in with program staff for supportive services, this also helped ERA staff maintain regular contact with individuals on their caseload. However, as field research suggests, this staffing structure presented some challenges, particularly in terms of working through cultural differences between the two partnering organizations. In particular, community college staff had a difficult time transitioning to the welfare office environment — which placed a strong emphasis on understanding and adhering to welfare rules and regulations — and adjusting to the ERA target population, which had more employment-related barriers than other populations that they served. These factors strained working relationships between team members.

Staff-Client Engagement

A strong ongoing relationship between staff and clients was central to the Eugene ERA program. Because participation in ERA was voluntary, the ERA staff teams in Eugene made a concerted effort to schedule initial intake meetings with sample members, through persistent phone and mail contacts. In these contacts, Eugene ERA staff emphasized several aspects of the program to "sell" it to potential participants, such as the staff's focus on advancement and their ability to provide career assistance.

Table 5.4 shows that program group members reported high levels of contact with staff from an employment program; about 85 percent reported any contact with such a person in the 12-month survey. However, although the program had rigorous outreach and marketing efforts, the survey also found that control group members were as likely as their program group counterparts to have had contact with staff from an employment program within the year. Both groups also reported a similar number of average contacts and were similarly likely to have had recent contacts.

According to field research, ERA staff in Eugene focused on providing individualized assistance that met the specific needs of each client. Staff developed a strong rapport with clients, encouraged disclosure about personal or family challenges, sought to provide immediate assistance, and maintained an open-door policy. Eugene program staff sought to maintain an overall focus on job-related and retention and advancement issues while simultaneously addressing personal and family challenges through referrals to community resources.

During initial meetings (often with both team members), ERA teams used different tools (including goal exercises, job search strategy assessments, skills statements, and worksheets) to create "retention and career plans" outlining the individual's need for services, career goals, and any need for vocational assessments. Subsequent meetings focused on conducting any

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Table 5.4

Summary of Impacts:

Eugene

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	83.5	85.6	-2.2	0.537
Average number of contacts with staff	21.3	17.6	3.7	0.142
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	44.3	39.4	4.9	0.311
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	74.5	67.3	7.3 *	0.094
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	9.6	5.9	3.6	0.158
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	17.8	9.5	8.3 **	0.014
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	15.5	6.8	8.8 ***	0.004
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	21.7	25.1	-3.4	0.416
Received any help with retention/advancement[p] (%)	38.0	22.0	16.0 ***	0.000
Sample size (total = 440)	220	220		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	95.9	93.7	2.2 *	0.086
Average quarterly employment (%)	61.2	62.7	-1.5	0.431
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	66.9	68.8	-1.9	0.481
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	6.4	6.6	-0.2	0.401
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	4.0	3.8	0.2	0.396
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	8,191	8,404	-213	0.601
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	27.3	27.0	0.3	0.882
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	38.7	32.0	6.7 **	0.014
Earnings decreased by more than $250	19.9	23.9	-4.0	0.103
Earnings changed by less than $250	6.8	6.9	-0.1	0.954
Earnings increased by $250 or more	34.5	37.1	-2.6	0.352
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	657	674	-17	0.792
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,253	2,252	1	0.992
Average annual income[c] ($)	11,101	11,330	-229	0.551
Sample size (total = 1,179)	585	594		

(continued)

Table 5.4 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

additional assessments and helping the individual move toward the goals that they had outlined. ERA staff reviewed the plan on an ongoing basis, updating the plan accordingly.

Frequent contact (with a goal of at least monthly contact during the first 90 days after enrollment) was also emphasized in the Eugene ERA program. In field research interviews, ERA staff reported that they were in regular contact with most individuals for the initial three months. Follow-up after this period was less consistent, and more time was spent on individuals in crisis or on those who were most motivated to receive services.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Initial job preparation and placement services were not a priority of the Eugene ERA program, as the target population was employed former TANF recipients (who therefore were assumed to have few job placement needs).

Retention Services

Employment retention was a priority of the Eugene ERA program. Staff provided a number of services, including work supports and social service referrals, to help program group members stay in their jobs.

Despite these efforts, job loss emerged as an acute issue in the Eugene ERA program. By the time of their initial meeting with ERA staff, many clients had already lost the job that they had reported to the welfare department and that had triggered their entry into the study. As a result, ERA staff in Eugene devoted substantial attention to job search activities with "new"

clients. The teams worked closely with clients on finding a new job within 30 days, particularly as program eligibility was contingent on employment.[9] Staff often tried to turn job loss into an opportunity for the individual to move toward his or her career goals. Services included targeted job leads, résumé-building, assistance with job applications, career counseling, skills assessments, and referrals to training programs. The Eugene ERA program also offered a series of classes that focused on job search activities that incorporated advancement-related topics, such as career ladders. However, while program group members reported high levels of participation in job search activities in the 12-month survey, this rate of participation was only slightly higher than the rate reported by control group members (Table 5.4).

Staff in the Eugene ERA program also provided assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits, such as assistance with food stamps, transitional child care, subsidized health insurance, gas vouchers, and car repair money. Program group members were also able to access emergency funds for housing crises, car repairs, and other urgent needs.

Finally, ERA staff in Eugene made efforts to address problems that clients reported they were experiencing on the job. ERA staff could contact employers, with permission from their client, in order to discuss retention issues; however, ERA staff reported that few workers were comfortable with these contacts. Overall, the 12-month survey found that program and control group members had similar rates of receiving help to deal with problems on the job.

Advancement Services

The Eugene ERA program included work-based and human capital approaches to advancement, relying largely on career specialist staff to provide these services. As indicated above, Eugene ERA staff began working on advancement from the first time they met with a program group member. Goals-focused career counseling was the central feature of ERA, designed to help program group members consider their long-term goals and begin moving forward in their career and educational paths. The ERA career specialists, largely responsible for career counseling, were well suited to this role, and interviews with DHS staff suggest that they brought knowledge of the local labor market, of Eugene's workforce and community college systems, and their career counseling experience. ERA staff identified job leads or suggested how the individual might advance on the job, such as by taking on additional job responsibilities or hours in order to demonstrate a strong work ethic to their employer. As described above, however, unexpected job losses redirected resources toward reemployment

[9]If the program group members reapplied for TANF when they lost their job, they were directed back to the state TANF program and became ineligible for the Eugene ERA services until they found a job. When the individuals became employed, they could be transferred back to the Eugene ERA staff and again begin to receive retention and advancement services.

activities and detracted from the career counseling that was envisioned in the Eugene ERA program.

Education — particularly vocational and skill training programs — was a component of advancement services, although it was used selectively and was based on individual needs and abilities. Where appropriate, staff counseled program group members about the need for additional education or skills to achieve their career goals and helped individuals access appropriate programs and financial aid. Overall, in the 12-month survey, program group members reported slightly higher levels of participation in vocational training, compared with control group members, but they reported similar levels of participation in other types of education (Appendix Table C.5).

Based on the 12-month survey, program group members were more likely than the control group to receive help with any employment retention or advancement services. About 38 percent of the program group reported receiving help keeping a job or advancing to a better job, compared with about 22 percent of the control group (Table 5.4).

Employer Linkages

The ERA program in Eugene was not designed to market its services to employers or to develop career advancement opportunities at employers, and staff did not undertake efforts in these areas.

Eugene ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Eugene ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The ERA program in Eugene did not affect most measures of employment retention or earnings in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. ERA also did not produce gains in advancement, compared with the control group.
- ERA did not generate any changes in the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or changes in average annual income, compared with the control group levels.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment rates and average earnings for control group members in the Eugene ERA study were comparable to the outcomes for control groups in other programs serving individuals who were already employed at study entry (presented in Chapters 4 and 5). Average quarterly employment was 63 percent, and average earnings were almost $8,500 per year over the three-year follow-up period (Table 5.4). Average annual earnings were

steady over this period, but the average quarterly employment rate decreased over time (Appendix Table C.6). While almost 40 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, in the third year of follow-up, less than 20 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment (Appendix Table C.6).

Employment and Employment Retention

The ERA program in Eugene boosted the percentage of program group members who were ever employed in the three-year follow-up period, by about 2 percentage points, compared with the control group. ERA did not, however, generate gains in the main measures of employment retention in the cumulative three-year follow-up period.

There were reductions in employment levels late in the follow-up period for the program group, relative to the control group. While there were no decreases in employment retention for the program group in the first two years of follow-up, in the final year, the Eugene ERA program decreased several measures of employment and employment retention by 6 to 7 percentage points (Appendix Table C.6). Programs can produce negative impacts on employment if they have the effect of encouraging TANF receipt or participation in education or training at the expense of employment. However, the ERA program in Eugene did not include services that would directly promote these outcomes, and the effects did not occur early in the follow-up period, when participants were most likely to receive services. Other analyses did not reveal explanations for this result.[10]

Earnings and Advancement

Measures of earnings and advancement based on quarterly UI records are similar for the program and control groups (Table 5.4), suggesting that the Eugene ERA program did not produce improvements in advancement. In fact, there is evidence that the control group experienced more advancement than the program group did in the first year of follow-up;

[10] A few hypotheses were examined to see whether they might account for the strange pattern of results. One factor that could result in this outcome would be if program group members left the state at a higher rate in the third year of follow-up, compared with the control group, leading to a larger decrease in the number of UI records received for the program group compared with the control group. In the third year of follow-up, however, receipt of TANF, food stamps, and unemployment benefits increased among the program group members, as the rate of employment decreased. Although not statistically significant, the pattern of increase in these benefit levels suggests that there was a real decrease in employment for the program group in the third year of follow-up and that the decrease cannot be fully explained by program group members' leaving the state at a higher rate than control group members. Another factor that could have led to a large decrease in employment levels among the program group is if a large employer of program group members laid off a large proportion of its labor force. An analysis of employer identification numbers available through UI records did not support this hypothesis.

according to the 12-month survey, fewer program group members were making more than $9 per hour, and fewer had jobs that offered retirement plans, compared with control group members (Appendix Table C.8).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The ERA program in Eugene generated no changes in the amount of TANF or food stamp benefits received and no changes in average annual income, relative to the control group, over the cumulative three-year follow-up period (Table 5.4).

Eugene ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

While the "work-first" TANF policies in Oregon connected individuals to employment, state policymakers perceived that additional services were needed to move working families toward stable employment and better and higher-paying jobs. In response, the Eugene ERA program was designed to enhance the services available to working TANF leavers, and the program provided individualized assistance, referrals to services, and advancement-focused career counseling. Participation in the Eugene ERA program was voluntary, and the program was administered by a partnership between a welfare agency and a community college that also operated the local One-Stop Center. Although no formal services were provided to control group members, they could access standard community services that were available to low-wage workers.

Overall, field research suggests that the Eugene ERA program enhanced the services available to working participants. Early in the program operations period, ERA staff achieved a high level of participant engagement in services. Focused on providing individualized assistance, the ERA staff developed a strong rapport with participants and encouraged disclosure about personal or family challenges while maintaining a focus on job-related and retention and advancement issues. ERA staff developed career plans outlining the individual's need for services and reviewed them on an ongoing basis. But as caseloads and workloads expanded over the course of program operations, staff found themselves unable to be as proactive as they had been at the outset. When job losses required staff to redirect their efforts to rapid reemployment and detracted from the intense career counseling that had been envisioned, staff often tried to turn job loss into an opportunity for clients to move toward their career goals.

Most program group members reported contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program, and nearly half of those had been in recent contact with staff as of the 12-month follow-up point. Three-quarters of program group members participated in a job search activity, and over one-third received help with retention or advancement in the first 12 months after study entry.

While the program group had contact with staff and received services at relatively high levels, control group members received services at similar levels. Control group members were just as likely as their program group counterparts to have initial and ongoing contacts with staff from an employment program within the year following study entry. In addition, although the Eugene ERA program did increase levels of participation in some services relative to the control group, the increases were generally less than 10 percentage points.

Overall, the ERA program in Eugene did not increase most of the main measures of employment retention, earnings, or advancement in the cumulative three-year follow-up period. One possible reason for the lack of economic impacts is that the program operated in an environment where extensive services appear to have been available, as reflected in the high proportion of control group members who received employment-related assistance from non-ERA service providers. A second reason is that sample members in the Eugene ERA program frequently experienced job loss, which made it difficult for staff to focus on providing advancement services.

Through a collaboration between managing agencies, the Eugene ERA program provided intensive retention and advancement services and individualized career counseling to low-wage workers. Although the program was implemented largely as designed, it did not substantially increase participation in retention or advancement services, and, probably as a result, it did not increase employment retention or advancement outcomes beyond those achieved through the control group's participation in existing services in the community.

Medford ERA Findings

Medford ERA at a Glance

- Targeted working individuals — those who had left TANF or current recipients of the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and/or the Employment Related Day Care program
- Provided individualized services through staff-client interactions that focused on job retention and advancement
- Was operated by a partnership between the welfare agency and a nonprofit employment agency
- Compromised service delivery by funding cuts and the program's initial focus on crisis intervention
- Was compared with a control group that had access to employment-related services in the community, if individuals choose to pursue them
- Minimally increased participation in some key services — career assessment and education and training — amid low overall participation rates
- Did not increase employment retention or advancement

Medford ERA Test: Introduction

The Medford ERA program aimed to promote employment retention and advancement among employed low-wage workers with a past connection to TANF or a current connection to other public benefits. The study enrolled sample members from February 2002 through April 2004, and services were provided from February 2002 through 2005 for up to one year after enrollment in the program.

Origins of the Test

Like the Eugene ERA program, the Medford ERA program developed as state-level program administrators in Oregon recognized that their "work-first" welfare policies, while largely successful in connecting TANF recipients to employment, were not resulting in long-term economic success for working families. State policymakers perceived that services were needed to move working families into stable employment and better and higher-paying jobs. At the time, retention and advancement services for working individuals were limited to those provided locally through Oregon's welfare and workforce agencies. In Medford, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) provided postemployment services — some of which helped individuals gain access to support services — to those who left TANF. But individuals

had to be proactive in seeking out these services. Employment-related services for low-wage workers also were available through One-Stop Centers or in the community at large, but, again, their receipt was contingent on client motivation and knowledge of their availability.

The Medford ERA program was viewed as the logical next step in DHS's welfare-to-work efforts. Through ERA, DHS sought to help former welfare clients — as well as current recipients of other public benefits program — not just to retain their jobs but to progress to better-paying jobs. The program offered retention and advancement services tailored to clients' long-term employment goals and individual circumstances. Participation in services was voluntary, and the program was operated by a partnership between DHS and The Job Council, a nonprofit employment service provider and the operator of a One-Stop Career Center.

Labor Market Context

The Medford ERA program operated in difficult labor market conditions, which were worse than conditions nationally. In 2003, Medford's unemployment rate peaked at 7.7 percent, compared with the national rate of 6.0 percent. Medford's unemployment rate followed national trends and declined, to 5.7 percent in 2007. As noted above, Oregon's minimum wage rate at the time was one of the highest in the nation: $6.50 to $6.90 per hour, compared with a national minimum wage of $5.15 per hour.

Target Population

The Medford ERA program targeted employed individuals who were former recipients of TANF or current recipients of the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and/or the Employment Related Day Care program. Potential sample members were identified via lists of people who had left TANF and were working or who were current recipients of these other benefits and were working. When staff contacted individuals on the lists, they explained the ERA program and asked individuals if they were interested in potentially participating. Those who were interested were subsequently randomly assigned to a research group. Table 5.2 shows selected characteristics of the Medford ERA sample members at the time the study began.

Significance of This Test

The Medford ERA test examines whether a voluntary program that is administered through a welfare agency partnership with a nonprofit organization and that provides individualized staff assistance, advancement-focused career counseling, and referrals to postemployment services can improve employment retention and advancement outcomes for former TANF recipients and other low-wage workers, compared with outcomes achieved through standard postemployment services in the community. Chart 5.3 presents important

differences between the services available to program and control group members in the Medford ERA test.

Medford ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

The Medford ERA program operated with funding primarily from TANF.[11] Partway through the study period, the program experienced a reduction in resources due to TANF funding cuts in Oregon. As a result, staff hours and pay were reduced, and management turnover reduced supervision of the ERA program — all adversely affecting staff morale. Funding for supportive services also diminished over the course of the study period.

The program was jointly run by DHS and The Job Council, a nonprofit employment service provider and the operator of a One-Stop Career Center. DHS and The Job Council had a strong collaborative working relationship that predated ERA. Through this partnership, DHS intended to leverage The Job Council's expertise and workforce development network, as well as to distance the ERA program from the welfare agency.

Staffing

Medford ERA program services were delivered by one five-member team located at The Job Council's administrative offices. This team comprised a generalist frontline staff member, a job coach, a job counselor, a job developer, and a learning specialist, and the team was supervised by a project manager. These staff were initially drawn from four partner agencies: DHS, The Job Council, the Oregon Employment Department (ED), and Rogue Community College (RCC).[12] The colocation of staff and services facilitated communication among team members.

The team shared the program caseload. Because program group members did not have a specific ERA staff member assigned to them, this structure gave program participants the flexibility of receiving assistance from any staff member. Within this structure, the ERA staff were viewed as generalists who were able to provide a wide range of services. As the program progressed and more clients enrolled, staff began to specialize in their respective areas of expertise. For example, DHS staff addressed issues relating to accessing supportive services, and the job counselor concentrated on providing job retention services. To provide flexibility,

[11]Some support for the program was also provided by the U.S. Department of Labor.

[12]Midway through the study period, the ED and RCC staff withdrew from the team due to funding cuts.

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Chart 5.3

Program-Control Group Differences: Medford ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Help low-wage working people retain their jobs and advance to better jobs and wages	
Program resources and structures	• Operated through partnership between a welfare agency and a nonprofit employment service provider	• No single retention- and advancement-oriented program for employed individuals in community; however, control group members could access various employment-related services in the community should they choose to pursue them[a]
Staffing	• Five-member, colocated team: generialist front-line staff, job coach, job counselor, job developer, and learning specialist • Staff schedules provided flexible for clients	
Staff-client engagement	• Aggressive marketing and outreach	• Required to pursue services; however, similar reported contact rates as ERA group
	• Services tailored to participants • Developed and maintained employment plans • Limited ongoing contacts.	
Retention services	• Partway through operations, emphasis redirected from attending to crises and employment barriers to employment-focused retention activities	
	• Job search assistance (preparing résumé, job applications, identifying job leads)	• Required to pursue services; however, reported similar rates of participation in job search activities as ERA group
	• Assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits; social service referrals as needed	• Required to pursue services; however, reported similar rates of receiving support services and help with basic needs as ERA group
	• Discussed problems on the job	
Advancement services	• Counseling for work-based advancement • Limited services for advancement through job change • Education and training referrals	

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: [a]Employment-related and supportive services were available through Workforce Investment Act providers, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations.

three of the five ERA team members worked nonstandard hours in the early morning, in the evening, and/or during weekends.

The Medford ERA staff were selected for their positions based more on personal qualifications — including familiarity with programs serving low-income individuals and approaches to work with the target population — and less on credentials or agency seniority (though all members of the team had a bachelor's or a master's degree). MDRC-sponsored sessions gave team members additional training in the areas of marketing and participant engagement, working with employers, and techniques to help participants advance in their jobs.

Staff-Client Engagement

An ongoing staff-client relationship was central to the Medford ERA program. Sample members in Medford were not receiving TANF, and, as a result, participation in ERA was voluntary. Medford ERA staff took a proactive approach to engage individuals both before and after their first meetings. The ERA team sought to meet with program group members within 15 days of their enrollment into the program.

Table 5.5 shows that many program group members did have contact with employment program staff in the first year following study entry; about 73 percent reported any contact with a staff member from an employment program in the 12-month survey — a rate about 11 percentage points greater than the percentage who reported such contact in the control group.

The ERA program services and referrals were driven largely by individuals' career interests and support needs. During the first meeting with program group members, Medford ERA staff spent time learning about individuals' work histories, their personal situations, and their motivations and goals for participating in the program. This first meeting culminated in the development of a Personal Development Plan, delineating the next steps that individuals agreed to take in order to realize their goals. Subsequent meetings were generally conducted one-on-one, and they revisited progress on previously identified action steps.

Frequent contact with clients was a priority in the Medford ERA program, and staff had a minimal contact goal of once a month. Staff used a variety of methods to keep program group members engaged, including establishing trust and rapport to encourage participation, making phone calls or sending letters when program group members missed meetings, and finding motivational hooks when participation started to wane. Program group members had, on average, about ten contacts with a staff member from an employment program in the first year — nearly four more contacts, on average, than control group members had (Table 5.5).

Interviews with ERA staff indicated that contact levels with clients diminished over time. The 12-month survey data show that rates of recent contact for both program and control

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.5

Summary of Impacts:

Medford

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	73.1	62.3	10.8 **	0.039
Average number of contacts with staff	10.1	6.4	3.8 **	0.023
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	24.2	24.5	-0.3	0.953
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	46.4	43.0	3.4	0.532
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	6.0	3.9	2.2	0.372
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	16.5	7.0	9.6 ***	0.006
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	10.9	3.3	7.6 ***	0.007
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	30.3	21.6	8.7 *	0.074
Received any help with retention/advancement[p] (%)	24.8	16.1	8.8 **	0.049
Sample size (total = 345)	167	178		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-3)				
Employment stability measures				
Ever employed (%)	94.8	97.9	-3.1 ***	0.005
Average quarterly employment (%)	71.5	72.8	-1.3	0.457
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	80.4	80.1	0.3	0.885
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	7.6	7.8	-0.1	0.532
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	3.0	2.8	0.2	0.249
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	10,010	10,487	-476	0.225
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	35.2	36.7	-1.4	0.432
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	24.8	23.8	1.0	0.695
Earnings decreased by more than $250	23.2	24.1	-0.8	0.739
Earnings changed by less than $250	6.8	7.7	-0.9	0.564
Earnings increased by $250 or more	45.2	44.5	0.8	0.793
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	216	199	17	0.651
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,906	1,872	34	0.627
Average annual income[c] ($)	12,132	12,558	-426	0.257
Sample size (total = 1,164)	590	574		

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

group members were low (less than 25 percent of sample members reported talking with an employment program staff person within the previous four weeks), and there was no difference in these rates between the two research groups. Staff reported that this was due to difficulties in motivating clients to participate and also to a reduction in staff levels.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Initial job preparation and placement services were not a priority of the Medford ERA program, as the target population consisted of employed individuals (who were assumed to have relatively few job placement needs).

Retention Services

The Medford ERA program design initially called for staff to assist clients in the retention of their employment situations by focusing on addressing personal crises and removing specific barriers to work. Advancement efforts were to be made after job retention had been achieved. However, after an initial operational period, field research showed that Medford ERA staff had redirected their attention and were focusing more on providing employment-focused retention and advancement activities and less on doing crisis intervention and solving personal problems. Overall, according to the 12-month survey, program group members were more likely to receive some type of help with employment retention and advancement than control group members were.

Job search assistance became a major component in the program when job loss emerged as an acute issue. Some program group members who came in for the first meeting

with the Medford ERA team had already lost the jobs that had originally placed them on the ERA-eligibility lists. Program staff spent considerable time working with unemployed individuals, identifying job leads and providing assistance in preparing résumés and applications. ERA staff also counseled employed clients about not quitting their current job before they had a new job. According to the 12-month survey, a considerable portion of program group members (46 percent) reported participating in a job search activity, although a similar proportion of control group members also reported that they participated in a job search (Table 5.5).

Medford ERA staff also provided assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits to encourage employment retention, including assistance with food stamps, transitional child care, subsidized health insurance, gas vouchers, and car repair money. In limited circumstances, program group members were also able to access emergency funds for housing crises, car repairs, and other urgent needs. Medford ERA staff also made social service referrals, such as to mental health and substance abuse services, for those program group members who identified these needs. Despite these efforts, the 12-month survey results do not show high rates of receipt of support services, help with basic needs, or help with personal problems that made it hard to keep a job; moreover, these rates of receipt do not differ between the program and the control groups (Table 5.5 and Appendix Table C.9).

Advancement Services

While the Medford ERA program lacked a focus on advancement issues initially, over time the program included services that promoted both work-based and human capital job advancement. ERA staff assisted individuals in advancing in their current jobs and/or helping them identify better jobs in the labor market. The Personal Development Plan described above that detailed concrete steps toward career goals was central to the career counseling services provided by the program. While a relatively small portion of program group members (about 17 percent) reported receiving help with career assessment according to the 12-month survey, this was more than twice as many as reported it in the control group (Table 5.5).

As appropriate, program group members were also coached on how to speak with their employers about asking for more hours, a pay raise, or a promotion. Program group members were also taught about the workplace behaviors that could make them strong candidates for advancement opportunities. Those who were interested in a new job were provided such assistance in making this change as job listings and referrals. While a small portion of program group members (11 percent) reported receiving help finding a better job while working within the first year after random assignment, this is more than triple the rate reported by the control group (Table 5.5).

The Medford ERA program also encouraged participation in training and education as a route to job advancement. Program staff helped participants identify short-term vocational training programs that would allow them to gain the skills needed to advance at their current employer or to obtain a new job in an industry, but they also allowed individuals to pursue a GED certificate or other more education-focused activities. The Medford ERA program limited funding to directly pay for these opportunities, but ERA team members helped individuals apply for financial aid. The 12-month survey shows that almost one-third of the program group members at least started an education or training activity within the year after random assignment — a participation rate that is 9 percentage points higher than the rate of the control group.

Employer Linkages

A final feature of the Medford ERA program was staff efforts to contact employers on behalf of their clients to discuss retention and advancement issues. This goal never fully materialized, due to the ERA staff's lack of experience working with employers and to the program group members' preference that staff not contact their employers. According to field research, staff were not proactive in suggesting that they contact employers but, rather, waited for clients to ask for such intervention. ERA staff reported in interviews that participants rarely asked them to contact employers, and staff respected the wishes of their clients in this regard.

Medford ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Medford ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The Medford ERA program decreased the percentage of program group members who were ever employed in the three-year follow-up period, but it did not generate changes in the main measures of employment retention or earnings during that period relative to the control group. There is no evidence that ERA produced advancement gains, compared with the level of advancement seen in the control group.
- ERA in Medford did not affect either the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or participants' average annual income.

Control Group Outcomes

Average earnings and average quarterly employment for control group members in Medford were higher than the levels seen in all but one of the other ERA control groups examined in this report — the control group in Cleveland. Average quarterly employment was over 70 percent, and average earnings were almost $10,500 per year for control group members

over the three-year follow-up period (Table 5.5). Average annual earnings remained fairly steady, as average quarterly employment decreased steadily over the follow-up period (Appendix Table C.10). Just under 10 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment in each of the three years of follow-up (Appendix Table C.10).

Employment and Employment Retention

The Medford ERA program did not generate any increases in any of the measures of employment retention, relative to the control group, in the cumulative three-year follow-up period (Table 5.5). However, ERA produced a decrease of 3 percentage points in the proportion of program group members who were ever employed in the three-year follow-up period, reducing it to 95 percent from a control group level of 98 percent. It appears that this decrease was concentrated in the first year of follow-up (Appendix Table C.10).

Earnings and Advancement

There is no evidence that the Medford ERA program led to earnings or advancement gains, compared with the control group levels (Table 5.5).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

In the cumulative three-year follow-up period, the ERA program in Medford had no effect on the amount of public assistance received or on participants' average annual income (Table 5.5).

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Despite the funding interruption that occurred midway through operations in the Medford ERA program, there are no statistically significant differences in impacts when analyzed by study cohort (not shown).

Medford ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

While the "work-first" welfare policies operating in Oregon at the time of the ERA study connected individuals to employment, state policymakers perceived that additional services were needed to move working families into stable employment and better and higher-paying jobs. The Medford ERA program, which was voluntary for clients, was designed to help former TANF recipients and current recipients of other public benefits retain their jobs and progress in the labor market. The program was administered by a partnership between the welfare agency and a nonprofit organization, with services provided by an interagency team. The model components included individualized relationships between clients and staff, advancement-focused career counseling, and referrals to postemployment services. Control

group members could access retention and advancement services available in the community through welfare offices, One-Stop Centers, or other organizations. However, to gain access to these services, control group members had to know what to ask for and had to take the initiative to seek the services.

Field research suggests that staff in the Medford ERA program focused on providing individualized assistance in order to meet the specific needs of each participant. ERA staff initially focused much of their effort on intervening to help participants solve personal crises rather than on providing a broader set of retention and advancement services. After a series of training sessions, staff reoriented their approach more toward retention and advancement services and further away from crisis intervention. Staff provided support services and promoted advancement through advancement on the job, changing jobs, or participating in education and training. However, participants experienced frequent job loss, requiring staff to redirect their efforts to rapid reemployment and detracting from the career counseling that was envisioned for the program. In addition, cuts in funding and staffing in the partner agencies limited the ability of ERA staff to provide the full array of services throughout the period of program operations.

Three-quarters of program group members reported having contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program in the first year after study entry. Yet only a quarter of the program group participated in any retention or advancement services in this first year. Despite the fact that personalized career counseling services were central to the Medford model, less than one-fifth of program group members reported receiving help with career assessment. Staff in the Medford ERA program also encouraged education and training, and almost one-third of the program group members at least started an education or training activity within the year after study entry.

Compared with control group members, program group members were more likely to have contact and to have more frequent contact with staff from an employment program. The program also produced some increases in individuals' levels of participation in some key services, such as career assessment, job search activities, and education and training, but the increases were less than 10 percentage points. Field research and survey data suggest that client contact and engagement suffered toward the end of program operations — perhaps exacerbated by funding-related staffing problems.

The Medford ERA program did not lead to any improvements in the main measures of employment retention, earnings, or advancement during the cumulative three-year follow-up period. Overall, it appears that a combination of factors — including the time it took to focus staff on retention and advancement issues, funding losses that hampered program management

and staffing, and higher-than-expected job loss among clients — presented challenges to the implementation of the ERA program.

But other factors may have also contributed to the lack of program effects. Like the Eugene ERA program, the Medford ERA program operated in an environment where control group members received high levels of employment-related assistance from existing service providers. In addition, given that all those enrolled in the study sample — program group as well as control group members — were interested in receiving retention and advancement services, the Medford control group members may have been particularly likely to seek out available community services on their own initiative. Both of these factors probably made it difficult for the program to significantly boost the participation levels of the program group above the levels of the control group.

In its implementation, the Medford ERA program was similar to the ERA program operated in Eugene. The Medford ERA program is thus another example of a program that provided intensive retention and advancement services and individualized career counseling to low-wage workers via collaborating organizations. The Medford ERA program did not substantially increase participation in retention or advancement services, and, probably as a result, it did not increase employment retention or advancement outcomes beyond those achieved through the control group's participation in existing services in the community.

Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) ERA Findings

Riverside PASS ERA at a Glance

- Targeted employed individuals who had left TANF
- Provided multifaceted retention and advancement services, including job search activities, career development services, supportive service payments, and referrals to education and training
- Was operated by a different organization in each location — primarily, community-based organizations and a community college
- Was compared with a control group that had access to limited, ongoing postemployment services through the welfare agency, if individuals chose to pursue them
- Encountered unexpected demands to help clients with reemployment and funding issues that caused services to end earlier than planned
- Measured increases in participation not large, but based on data for a cohort that had were few positive economic impacts
- Increased employment retention, earnings, and advancement through the end of the follow-up period

Riverside PASS ERA Test: Introduction

The Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) ERA program in Riverside County, California, aimed to promote job retention and advancement among employed individuals who had recently left TANF. The study enrolled sample members from July 2002 through June 2003, and it offered program group members services for up to 12 months after they enrolled in the program.

Origins of This Test

The Riverside PASS ERA program was initiated in response to recognition by the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) that services to help working former TANF recipients stay employed and to enhance their career development were lacking. In fact, prior to program development for ERA, there were only limited postemployment services for those leaving TANF in Riverside County.

Designed as a voluntary program that provided multifaceted postemployment services and built on staff-client relationships, the Riverside PASS ERA program offered job search activities, career development services, referrals to education and training slots, life skills

workshops, arrangements for supportive service payments, and referrals to social service programs. Based on the assumption that organizations other than the welfare agency would be more familiar with the jobs and services available in their communities and that those who were leaving TANF would be more willing to work with organizations other than the welfare agency, several community-based organizations and a community college were chosen to provide Riverside PASS ERA services.

Labor Market Context

The Riverside PASS ERA program began shortly after the end of the 2001 recession. The unemployment rate in Riverside County followed national trends, falling to 5.1 percent by 2006. The number of jobs in the Riverside area grew every year during this period.

Target Population

The Riverside PASS ERA program targeted employed individuals who had left TANF. Individuals were eligible for random assignment for the ERA study if they were (1) employed and (2) ineligible for TANF in the current month but had been eligible in the prior month.[13] Table 5.2 shows selected characteristics of the Riverside PASS ERA sample members at the time the study began.

Significance of This Test

The Riverside PASS ERA test examines whether a voluntary program of postemployment services and supportive service payments — provided through ongoing relationships between clients and staff in different nonprofit sector agencies (including community-based organizations and a community college) — can result in better employment retention and advancement outcomes for former TANF recipients, compared with less intensive postemployment services provided by local welfare agency staff. Chart 5.4 presents the key differences in the services available to program group and control group members in the Riverside PASS ERA test.

Riverside PASS ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

The Riverside County DPSS developed the PASS program in 2001. Five service providers (three community-based organizations [CBOs], one community college, and one DPSS office) were selected to deliver the program at various locations in Riverside County. (Each

[13]The individual (not necessarily the entire TANF case) had to be ineligible in the current month.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 5.4

Program-Control Group Differences: Riverside PASS ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Employment retention and advancement among employed individuals who recently left TANF	
Program resources and structures	• Operated primarily by community-based organizations and a community college, as well as one welfare agency office	• No single retention- and advancement-oriented program for employed individuals in community; however, could access various employment-related community services should they choose to pursue them[a]
Staffing	• Various service delivery models, including coordination among partnering organizations	
Staff-client engagement	• Aggressive marketing and outreach • Services tailored to participants	• Required to pursue services; however, similar reported contact rates as ERA group
Retention services	• Job search assistance (one-on-one job search assistance, résumé assistance, and providing job leads) following job loss • Assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits; social service referrals as needed	• Required to pursue services; however, similar reported rates of participation in job search activities as ERA group
Advancement services	• Education and training referrals	• Required to pursue education and training opportunities; however, similar reported take-up of education and training as ERA group

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: [a]Employment-related and supportive services were available through Workforce Investment Act providers, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations.

program group member was served by just one provider.) Except for the DPSS site, these contractors were expected to have familiarity with the jobs and services available in their communities as well as experience working with employed former-TANF recipients. It was also expected that former TANF recipients would be more likely to work with such private organizations than with the welfare agency.

To pay for program operations, DPSS allocated state TANF funds to each of the four contracted service providers, and it paid directly for the DPSS program. While funding was consistent for the majority of the program operations period, the Riverside PASS ERA program was impacted by significant budgetary problems late in the study period. As a result, DPSS decided to end the contracts with ERA providers earlier than intended, that is, in December 2003. Program group members could continue to receive services from local DPSS office staff through June 2004. Evidence from program tracking data suggest that this cutback in funding did not reduce the extent to which program group members received services.

Staffing

The staffing of the Riverside PASS ERA program varied across the service providers, ranging from one to five dedicated ERA staff per provider. While none of the providers used a team structure, staff within or among partnering organizations often did work together. One CBO formally partnered with two other CBOs to serve program group members, and it defined specialized roles for each agency, including separate responsibilities for job search and job development. One DPSS staff person provided overall management of the Riverside PASS ERA program.

Providing flexibility and convenience in the provision of services was generally not a priority in the program. According to a time study of Riverside PASS ERA staff, most staff met with program group members during regular work hours (rather than during night and weekend shifts) and a majority of in-person contacts were office visits. However, a portion of in-person contacts included home visits, and one CBO provider did equip "mobile" staff with laptop computers and cell phones so they could more easily connect with program group members.

While Riverside PASS ERA providers were familiar with their local communities, the ERA staff were largely (although not entirely) inexperienced at running postemployment programs for former TANF recipients. Staff had performance standards for contacts and service provision, and staff performance was monitored through a computerized tracking system created by DPSS. ERA staff received technical assistance and feedback if they did not meet these standards.

Staff-Client Engagement

Ongoing staff-client relationships were central to the Riverside PASS ERA program. Sample members were all former TANF recipients, and participation in the program was voluntary. All five of the Riverside PASS ERA service providers made a concerted effort to contact program group members through a combination of flyers, brochures, and phone calls to encourage them to enroll in the program. The ERA service providers used different recruitment approaches and tools, such as unsolicited home visits; offering services and activities to the children of potential participants; advertising such participation incentives as vision care, movie passes, and diapers; and sponsoring an event where goods and services were provided to potential clients' families.

Despite these efforts, engaging program group members was challenging. Program staff initially could not locate some sample members due to incomplete or out-of-date contact information received from DPSS. Once contact was made, ERA staff struggled to convince program group members to participate, as many staff did not know how to "sell" the ERA services. Table 5.6 shows that while more than half of the program group reported in the 12-month survey that they had had contact with staff from an employment program since study entry, the rate was similar for the control group. However, both the participation levels and the impacts on participation for the Riverside PASS ERA program should be interpreted with caution. The participation data presented above are from the 12-month survey, which was administered only to a subset of sample members from an early cohort of the study, for whom there were few positive economic effects. The low participation levels captured by the survey may not reflect the participation levels at the time that the program was producing economic benefits for program group members. This caution extends to all the participation results discussed for this ERA program.[14]

Once program group members were contacted, the staff in the Riverside PASS ERA program provided — as observed in field research — individualized services that were tailored to program group members' needs and interests. Each of the five program providers developed its own approach, variously using letters, phone calls, and home visits to assess program group members and prepare individual career development plans. For example, staff-client interactions at one CBO revolved around arranging supportive service payments, and there was little effort to further engage clients when this was completed. In contrast, at another CBO provider, ongoing participation was more comprehensive and included the formulation of career development plans

[14]Analysis of data from the program's management information system, reported in the site-specific report on the Riverside PASS program (cited in Appendix E), suggest that the program may have increased the use of a broader range of services. These data are not used in this report because they only capture services reported to the welfare department.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.6

Summary of Impacts:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes (early cohort[a] only)				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	52.2	55.2	-3.0	0.664
Average number of contacts with staff	9.5	6.9	2.7	0.410
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	22.4	23.2	-0.8	0.899
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.2	53.3	8.9	0.190
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.998
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	17.9	6.3	11.6 **	0.013
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	7.6	5.7	1.8	0.606
Participated in an education/training activity[b] (%)	42.1	39.9	2.2	0.749
Received any help with retention/advancement[c] (%)	24.4	20.0	4.4	0.454
Sample size (total = 224)	120	104		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	90.5	88.8	1.7	0.136
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.7	56.3	3.4 ***	0.006
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	71.9	69.4	2.4	0.146
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	8.1	7.6	0.6 ***	0.006
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.4	6.0	-0.6 ***	0.002
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,711	8,843	868 ***	0.006
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.5	29.5	4.1 ***	0.001
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	39.4	43.0	-3.6 **	0.045
Earnings decreased by more than $250	17.2	15.7	1.5	0.317
Earnings changed by less than $250	5.0	4.3	0.7	0.429
Earnings increased by $250 or more	38.1	36.7	1.4	0.457
Public assistance and income				
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,257	1,289	-33	0.644
Average annual food stamps received ($)	933	978	-44	0.340
Average annual income[d] ($)	11,901	11,110	790 **	0.010
Sample size (total = 2,770)	1,627	1,143		

(continued)

Table 5.6 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]The 12-month survey was fielded within the early cohort of sample members who were randomly assigned from July to December 2002.

[b]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[c]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[d]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

and participation in job search activities, education and training classes, and life skills workshops. In addition, gasoline vouchers, ancillary payments, counseling, and referrals to social service agencies were provided.

Overall, the Riverside PASS ERA program had difficulty maintaining ongoing participation. According to case file reviews conducted six months after random assignment began, only about three-fifths of the program group members were found to have participated in ERA activities consistently. Results from the 12-month survey are similar: less than a quarter of the program group members reported that they had recently talked with staff from an employment program (Table 5.6).

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Initial job preparation and placement services were not a priority of the Riverside PASS ERA program, as the target population included employed former TANF recipients (who were assumed not to need job placement assistance). Job search services in the context of reemployment and advancement are discussed below.

Retention Services

Job retention was a priority of the Riverside PASS ERA program. A number of services — including job search assistance, work supports, and social service referrals — were provided to help program group members maintain their employment and to prevent their return to the TANF rolls.

Job search assistance, in particular, was a major service component in the program due to participants' need for reemployment. By the time ERA staff contacted program group members following random assignment, many had lost or left the initial jobs that had established their eligibility for the study. While job search services varied by ERA provider, these services included one-on-one job search assistance, help with creating or updating a résumé, and providing job leads. For example, field research suggests that the community college provider permitted program group members to use the college's Job Resource Center, which contained office equipment, job search tools, and job leads and was staffed by a full-time job search specialist.

All the Riverside PASS ERA agencies also provided a variety of supportive service assistance to program group members. These supports included assistance payments for rent and utilities, transportation services (gasoline vouchers and car repair), assessment of child care needs and help with processing payments, food assistance, referrals to legal services, paying for books and other school supplies, and parking fees. ERA providers referred program group members to social service agencies to address issues of domestic violence, emotional and mental health, and substance abuse — if individuals disclosed such problems to staff.

Advancement Services

While advancement in the labor market was a goal of the Riverside PASS ERA program, advancement services represented a relatively small service component, compared with retention services. The primary advancement activities were career counseling and education and training referrals.

Staff at all the Riverside PASS ERA agencies provided some form of career development advice, although the content varied across providers. For example, staff at several agencies provided career counseling as part of the participants' career development plans. Yet formal client assessments, goal setting, and the identification of action steps and regular monitoring of progress were not common practices. Furthermore, field research suggests that ERA staff at some organizations lacked skills and experience in this area. While a low percentage of program group members reported in the 12-month survey that they had received a career assessment (18 percent), this was nearly three times the rate reported by control group members (Table 5.6).

For education and training services (including educational and vocational training, office skills, and life skills workshops), Riverside PASS ERA providers referred clients to partner agencies. One CBO provider made referrals by taking advantage of its linkages with education and training providers in the community. Another provider was a community college; its referrals emphasized educational activities on its campus. According to MDRC field research, most education and training referrals were made at program group members' request,

and some were included as part of a career development plan. While a considerable number of program group members (42 percent) reported participating in an education or training activity according to the 12-month survey, this rate was not significantly different from the rate reported by control group members (Table 5.6).

The Riverside PASS ERA program did not promote changing jobs as a strategy for labor force advancement. Most job search services were focused on reconnecting out-of-work individuals with employment, with less emphasis on upgrading to jobs with better pay, hours, or career opportunities. Less than 10 percent of program group members reported receiving help finding a better job while they were working — a rate that is comparable to the control group's (Table 5.6).

Employer Linkages

The Riverside PASS ERA program did not include formal connections with local employers. However, job developers at one of the CBOs providing ERA did work with community employers to identify jobs that had career ladders.

Riverside PASS ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the Riverside PASS ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The Riverside PASS ERA program produced increases in several measures of employment retention and earnings. In addition, there are some indications that ERA may have led to gains in advancement, compared with the level seen in the control group.
- The economic gains produced by the Riverside PASS ERA program were concentrated among those who entered the study in the second half of the enrollment period rather than people who entered the study in the first half of the enrollment period. For the later cohort, ERA generated increases in hourly wages and work hours.
- The Riverside PASS ERA program did not affect public assistance receipt, but earnings gains helped to produce increases in average annual income over the cumulative four-year follow-up period.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment rates and average earnings of control group members in the Riverside PASS ERA study were similar to those of control groups in the other programs that served individuals who were already employed at study entry (presented in Chapters 4 and

5). Average quarterly employment was just over 55 percent, and average earnings were just under $9,000 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period (Table 5.6). Average annual earnings increased steadily over time even though average quarterly employment decreased slightly over the follow-up period; this may indicate that there was some advancement over time among the control group members (Appendix Table C.14). Despite the fact that the Riverside PASS ERA sample comprises those who had left TANF, almost half the control group received at least one TANF payment in the first follow-up year, and about 20 percent did so in the fourth year of follow-up (Appendix Table C.14).[15]

Employment and Employment Retention

The Riverside PASS ERA program produced gains, relative to the control group, in several measures of employment retention in the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 5.6). The program increased average quarterly employment by 3.4 percentage points, or by about 6 percent of the control group level. It also increased the average length of the longest employment spell by 0.6 quarter, or by about 8 percent of the control group average. In addition, the program increased the percentage of program group members who were employed during the entire follow-up period by 3.4 percentage points, or by almost 17 percent of the control group level (Appendix Table C.15).

There is evidence that the Riverside PASS ERA program helped program group members' reemployment efforts after the loss of employment. In addition to increasing the length of employment spells, the program also decreased the average length of the longest unemployment spell by about 0.6 quarter, or by almost 10 percent of the control group average (Table 5.6). It appears that at least part of this effect was due to the program's helping program group members become reemployed more quickly than control group members after the loss of employment.[16] Most program and control group members left their initial jobs (the jobs they held at the time of random assignment) at some point during the follow-up period, and they left these jobs at a roughly equivalent rate. Thus, there is no evidence that the Riverside PASS ERA program had an effect on retention of the initial job. The program generated its early increases in employment primarily by increasing the proportion of program group members — relative to control group members — who quickly found a subsequent job.

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[15]In Riverside, a person who leaves a welfare case — even if still getting a child-only grant — is defined as a welfare leaver. Since public assistance data were collected by case numbers, some of the welfare receipt reported here may reflect payments to child-only cases.

[16]Some of this decrease also could have resulted from the program's leading some people who would have had an unemployment spell without the program to remain continuously employed throughout the follow-up period.

In addition to helping people regain employment after loss of employment, the program appears to have helped individuals who were not employed in UI-covered jobs at the time of study entry move into UI-covered employment more quickly than they would have without the program. This is important because UI-covered jobs typically pay higher wages and are more likely to offer fringe benefits and other mandatory benefits, such as Social Security and unemployment benefits, than jobs not covered by the UI system. The Riverside PASS ERA program decreased by 0.4 quarter the average number of quarters that elapsed before program group members started their first employment spell in a UI-covered job, or by about 18 percent of the control group average (Appendix Table C.15).

Figure 5.1 shows that the Riverside PASS ERA program began having an effect on employment levels at the end of Year 1 and that it continued to increase employment, relative to the control group, through the first half of Year 4. During that time, statistically significant impacts on employment ranged from 4 to 5 percentage points, representing increases of about 7 to 8 percent of the control group's average quarterly employment levels.

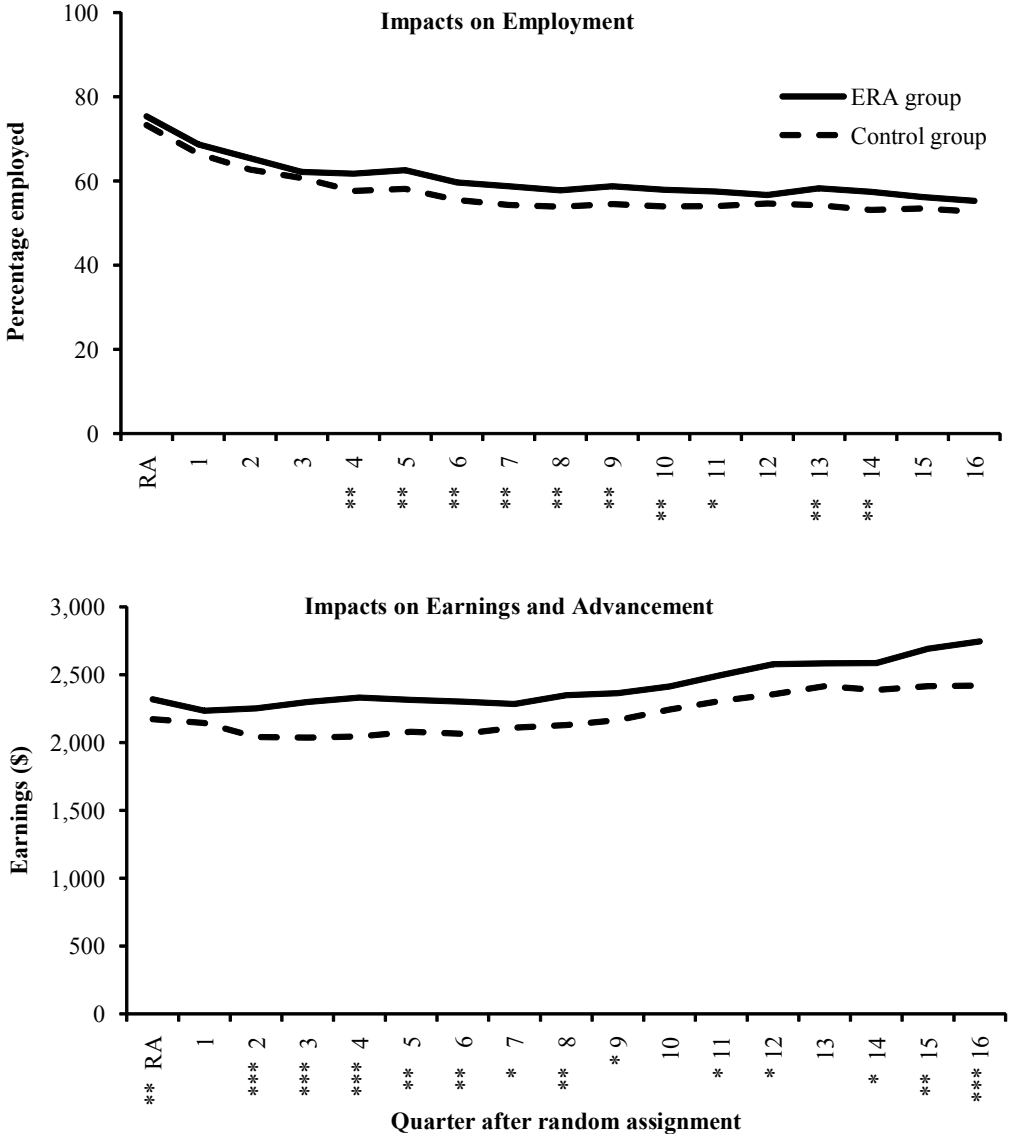
Earnings and Advancement

The Riverside PASS ERA program increased earnings and led to additional advancement, compared with the experiences of the control group (Figure 5.1). The program produced earnings gains, relative to the control group, in almost every quarter in the four-year follow-up period. The statistically significant gains ranged from $175 to $330 per quarter, representing about 8 percent to 14 percent increases relative to the control group's quarterly earnings. Some of the earnings increases were due to the program's effects on employment retention. However, throughout the follow-up period, the program's effect on earnings was greater (in terms of percentage gains relative to control group levels) and more persistent than its effect on quarterly employment. In the last two quarters of follow-up, the program increased earnings by $275 and $325, respectively, compared with the control group average, but it did not have a statistically significant impact on employment in those quarters. The fact that the Riverside PASS ERA program had a greater effect on earnings than on employment suggests that the program may have led to advancement.

The Riverside PASS ERA program produced gains in employment and earnings through the end of the four-year follow-up period (Appendix Table C.14). In fact, the program had its largest effect on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting that the program may lead to even longer-term gains.

In the cumulative four-year follow-up period, the Riverside PASS ERA program produced gains in earnings and several measures of advancement for the program group, compared with the control group. The program increased average annual earnings by almost $900, or by 10 percent of control group earnings (Table 5.6). It also increased the percentage of

Figure 5.1
Impacts on Employment and Earnings Over Time: Riverside PASS



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for the State of California.

NOTES: "RA" refers to the quarter of random assignment.

Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings.

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

quarters in which program group members were earning more than $3,500 by almost 14 percent of the control group level, and it increased the percentage making over $10,000 per year, on average, in Years 1 to 4 by about 18 percent of the control group level (Appendix Table C.15). In addition, the nonexperimental measure of average earnings per quarter employed is higher for program group members than for control group members, which provides another piece of evidence that there may have been some advancement gain for program group members (Appendix Table C.15). The program did not have a statistically significant impact, however, on one of the main measures of long-term advancement: the percentage of people who made at least $250 or more in their highest-earning quarter in the fourth year of follow-up as compared with their highest-earning quarter in the first year.

Table 5.7 shows that, despite large and sustained impacts on measures based on UI records, the Riverside PASS ERA program did not generate statistically significant impacts for the full sample on most of the broader measures of advancement examined in the 42-month survey, including the benefits, job schedules, job duties, or work environments of sample members' most recent jobs. The program did lead to beneficial impacts on the wage distribution in these jobs, however, decreasing the percentage of program group members making low hourly wages in the job that they held at the time of the 42-month survey. In addition, the program led to gains in many measures of advancement for a cohort that enrolled later in the study (discussed below).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

Driven by the earnings impacts, the Riverside PASS ERA program increased average annual income by nearly $800, or by 7 percent of the control group income level (Table 5.6). The earnings gains did not lead, however, to decreases in the amounts of public assistance received by program group members; the program did not affect TANF or food stamp benefits in the four-year follow-up period (Table 5.6).

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Because much can change over the course of program operations — including changes in the program or control services, in the composition of the sample, and in the external environment — impacts were examined separately by study cohort for a number of the ERA programs. This analysis was considered especially interesting for the Riverside PASS ERA program because early implementation research suggested that program group members may not have been receiving substantially more services than control group members, and yet the program produced increases in several of the key economic outcomes examined in this study. In addition, budgetary problems caused Riverside PASS ERA program services to be curtailed six months earlier than planned, with the result that some individuals enrolling later in the study were eligible for program services for less than one year. However, further analysis of auto-

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.7

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	96.1	96.3	-0.1	0.923
Currently employed	62.5	62.0	0.6	0.860
No longer employed	33.6	34.3	-0.7	0.826
Hourly wage				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.6	1.1	0.5	0.541
$5.00 - $6.99	3.6	8.8	-5.2 ***	0.003
$7.00 - $8.99	13.8	13.9	-0.1	0.975
$9.00 or more	43.2	37.4	5.7 *	0.100
Hours				
Average hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	9.8	9.9	0.0	0.989
30-34	6.3	8.7	-2.4	0.190
35-44	35.1	33.9	1.3	0.700
45 or more	11.1	9.5	1.6	0.460
Schedule				
Typical schedule (%)				
Regular	42.9	39.7	3.2	0.350
Evening shift	5.0	6.2	-1.1	0.486
Other schedule	12.8	14.5	-1.7	0.486
Workweek includes at least 1 weekend day (%)	28.3	30.4	-2.1	0.504
Benefits				
Employer offers (%)				
Sick days with full pay	33.0	30.5	2.5	0.437
Paid vacation	39.7	36.9	2.8	0.417
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	36.9	34.7	2.3	0.495
A health plan or medical insurance	38.1	40.4	-2.3	0.495
None of the above	16.7	14.1	2.6	0.326
Work environment				
Percentage who agreed that they:				
Receive respect from superiors	51.2	51.0	0.2	0.948
Receive respect from coworkers	55.3	52.1	3.2	0.356
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	57.6	57.8	-0.1	0.969
Are allowed to contribute ideas	53.1	54.2	-1.1	0.742
Can count on keeping job	22.2	18.9	3.3	0.242
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	58.8	58.3	0.5	0.889
Think job is physically demanding	30.5	33.5	-3.0	0.366
Risk health or safety	23.3	20.8	2.5	0.400

(continued)

Table 5.7 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Are members of labor union (%)	10.8	12.5	-1.7	0.440
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	38.8	40.4	-1.6	0.641
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)				
Reading and writing skills	45.5	47.9	-2.4	0.476
Work with computers	32.2	31.2	1.1	0.735
Arithmetic skills	36.1	32.1	4.0	0.217
Customer contact	53.6	55.7	-2.1	0.543
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	33.6	34.3	-0.7	0.826
0-15	32.7	32.7	0.0	0.998
16-30	20.7	18.2	2.4	0.385
31-45	5.2	6.3	-1.2	0.473
46 or more	3.7	4.5	-0.8	0.569
Advancement outcomes since random assignment				
Ever received a raise (%)	48.0	46.3	1.6	0.641
Ever received a promotion (%)	28.5	27.7	0.8	0.790
Found a different job while working (%)	36.5	32.6	3.9	0.245
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	29.4	31.7	-2.4	0.468
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)				
Work enjoyment	38.6	34.9	3.7	0.276
Earnings	38.1	35.4	2.7	0.435
Benefits	28.7	27.4	1.3	0.676
Number of hours	34.8	30.9	3.9	0.242
Start and end of workday	38.7	34.8	3.9	0.249
Commuting time	27.9	26.0	1.9	0.552
Job security	33.8	31.3	2.4	0.466
Opportunity to advance	34.3	29.7	4.7	0.159
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

mated participation data found that these cutbacks did not affect the extent to which program group members received services.

The economic gains produced by the Riverside PASS ERA program were concentrated among those who entered the study in the second half of the enrollment period (the "late cohort") rather than people who entered the study in the first half of the enrollment period (the "early cohort"). Program group members in the late cohort experienced gains in several outcomes, relative to the control group, in the cumulative four-year follow-up period.[17] As can be seen in Table 5.8, the program generated increases in almost all measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, and advancement that were examined for the late cohort, compared with the levels for the control group. For the late cohort, the program increased average annual earnings by $1,500, or by 19 percent of control group earnings. It also increased the percentage of quarters in which program group members were earning $3,500 or more by almost 7 percentage points, or by 25 percent of the control group level. The program did not produce any statistically significant impacts on any of these measures for the early cohort.

It is unclear why the impacts were larger for the late cohort. One possibility is that the composition of the sample changed. In particular, because control group earnings were lower for the late cohort than for the early cohort, a couple of tests were run to see whether changes in the composition of the sample over time contributed to the differential economic effects by study cohort.[18] Neither test suggests that this was the case. Another possibility is that the late cohort experienced larger participation impacts. Unfortunately, because 12-month survey participation data are available only for the early cohort, it is not known how large participation differences were for the late cohort.[19]

The 42-month survey also provides evidence that the Riverside PASS ERA program was more successful for the late cohort. As Table 5.9 shows, for several outcomes measured in the 42-month survey, program impacts for the late cohort are statistically significant, when the impacts for the full sample are not. Among the late cohort, for example, the program increased the percentage of program group members who were earning $9 per hour or more at the job they held at the time of the 42-month survey by almost 9 percentage points, or by 26 percent of the control group level. For the late cohort, the program also increased the percentage of

[17]There are statistically significant differences between the economic impacts for the early and late cohorts of sample members.

[18]First, baseline characteristics were compared for sample members in the early and late cohorts; no differences were found. Second, a subgroup analysis found that the program produced gains for the late cohort for both the groups with above and below-average earnings prior to study entry. For the early cohort, the program produced gains only for the group with above-average earnings prior to study entry.

[19]As described elsewhere in the chapter, the automated participation data are not used to measure the impacts on service receipt because they only capture participation that took place at a provider's location.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.8

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4), by Cohort:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Early cohort					
Employment retention measures					
Ever employed (%)	89.8	89.7	0.1	0.948	†
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.2	57.9	1.4	0.426	†
Had employment spell of at least four quarters (%)	71.2	71.2	0.0	0.995	
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	9,789	9,416	373	0.397	†
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	42.1	38.2	3.9 *	0.100	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.6	31.6	2.1	0.209	†
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,241	1,162	79	0.398	†
Average annual food stamps received ($)	909	856	53	0.384	††
Average annual income[a] ($)	11,939	11,435	505	0.235	
Sample size (total = 1,537)	899	638			
Late cohort					
Employment retention measures					
Ever employed (%)	91.6	87.5	4.1 **	0.015	†
Average quarterly employment (%)	60.3	54.1	6.2 ***	0.001	†
Had employment spell of at least four quarters (%)	72.7	67.3	5.4 **	0.032	
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	9,627	8,100	1,526 ***	0.001	†
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	40.1	31.1	9.0 ***	0.001	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.4	26.8	6.6 ***	0.000	†
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,276	1,450	-174	0.111	†
Average annual food stamps received ($)	962	1,134	-172 **	0.018	††
Average annual income[a] ($)	11,864	10,684	1,180 ***	0.008	
Sample size (total = 1,233)	728	505			

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

NOTES: The early cohort was randomly assigned between July and December 2002. The late cohort was randomly assigned between January and June 2003.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

[a]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.9

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for the Early and Late Cohorts:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Early cohort					
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	97.7	96.8	0.9	0.643	
Currently employed	61.1	68.0	-6.8	0.184	†
No longer employed	36.5	28.8	7.7	0.129	†
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	1.7	1.3	0.5	0.765	
$5.00 - $6.99	3.3	8.3	-5.1 *	0.079	
$7.00 - $8.99	15.1	16.4	-1.3	0.765	
$9.00 or more	41.6	42.6	-1.0	0.865	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	10.7	8.1	2.7	0.427	
30-34	6.5	10.5	-4.0	0.208	
35-44	35.6	36.7	-1.2	0.819	
45 or more	8.1	12.7	-4.6	0.175	††
Sample size (total = 369)	207	162			
Late cohort					
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	95.0	95.9	-0.9	0.658	
Currently employed	62.8	58.5	4.4	0.323	†
No longer employed	32.2	37.4	-5.2	0.224	†
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.616	
$5.00 - $6.99	3.8	9.1	-5.3 **	0.020	
$7.00 - $8.99	13.0	12.1	0.9	0.789	
$9.00 or more	43.6	34.7	8.9 *	0.050	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	9.3	11.0	-1.7	0.538	
30-34	6.3	7.3	-0.9	0.688	
35-44	34.0	32.9	1.0	0.814	
45 or more	13.1	7.3	5.8 **	0.043	††
Sample size (total = 523)	297	226			

(continued)

Table 5.9 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The early cohort was randomly assigned between July and December 2002. The late cohort was randomly assigned between January and June 2003.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

program group members who were working more than 45 hours per week by almost 6 percentage points, or by 80 percent of the control group level. These results provide evidence that at least part of the UI-based earning impacts produced by the Riverside PASS ERA program may have been a result of increased wages and hours worked. Among the late cohort, ERA also boosted the percentage of program group members working a "regular" schedule, the percentage who reported having an opportunity to advance at their jobs, and the percentage regularly using computers and arithmetic, compared with the percentages for the control group (Appendix Table C.18).

Economic Impact Findings, by Service Provider

One of the key features of the Riverside PASS ERA program was its use of contractors outside a government social service agency — three community-based organizations (CBOs) and one community college — to provide program services. Because variation in service provider was a key feature of this program and because random assignment of sample members was conducted within each provider's catchment area, impacts are presented separately by type of service provider.

The economic gains produced by the Riverside PASS ERA program were concentrated among people in the areas served by CBOs rather than among people in the area served at the community college. (The sample that was served by the welfare office is not large enough to be included as a subgroup.)[20] Program group members who were served by CBOs experienced improvements in several outcomes, relative to their control group counterparts, in the

[20]There are statistically significant differences across subgroups based on type of service provider.

cumulative four-year follow-up period.[21] The CBO-operated programs increased all measures of employment retention, earnings, and advancement that were examined (Appendix Table C.19). These programs increased average annual earnings by almost $1,200, or by 14 percent of control group earnings. They also increased the percentage of quarters in which program group members were earning $3,500 or more by 6 percentage points, or by 20 percent of the control group level. The community college-operated program did not generate any improvements in the main measures of employment retention or advancement.

It is not possible to determine the specific reasons why the CBOs produced better results than the community college. One possibility is that the CBOs were able to provide stronger services, given their knowledge of their neighborhoods and their staff's skill sets. Clients also may have been more willing to participate in services at these providers because they viewed them as more supportive of individuals in low-income communities. Data that could support or refute these hypotheses are not available.

Riverside PASS ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

The Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) initiated the PASS ERA program in response to the recognition that services to help working former TANF recipients stay employed and enhance their career development were largely lacking. The Riverside PASS ERA program was a voluntary program that was designed to provide multifaceted employment retention and advancement services. With a focus on individualized services provided along with ongoing staff-client relationships, the program offered job search activities, career development services, referrals to education and training slots, life skills workshops, arrangements for supportive service payments, and referrals to social service programs. Based on the assumption that private organizations were more familiar with the jobs and services available in their communities than the welfare agency and that individuals leaving TANF would be more likely to work with nonwelfare agencies other than DPSS, several community-based organizations and a community college were chosen to market and provide Riverside PASS ERA services. In contrast, the postemployment services available to control group members were not actively marketed, although control group members could request services from designated welfare agency staff or could avail themselves of other services offered in the community.

By the time Riverside PASS ERA staff initially contacted program group members following their enrollment in the program, many had lost their jobs. Program staff actively

[21]The 42-month survey results do not look different for the sample served by CBOs than they do for the full sample; there are very few statistically significant differences between program and control groups in either the full sample or the sample served by CBOs (Appendix Table C.20).

worked with these individuals to reconnect them with employment. For individuals who were working, staff provided individualized career development services, but these services were sometimes limited by the staff's skills and experience. Data from the 12-month survey suggest that Riverside PASS ERA staff were unable to engage a substantial proportion of program group members. Although program group members participated in a job search and education and training activities at fairly high rates within the first year after study entry, levels of receipt of other types of retention and advancement assistance during that time period were much lower.

According to the 12-month survey, the Riverside PASS ERA program generally did not appear to boost program group members' engagement or participation in services above control group levels. Program group members did receive help with career assessment at a rate of almost triple the rate of control group members, but the absolute level of receipt of this help was relatively low for both groups.

Both participation levels and program impacts on participation, however, should be interpreted with caution for the Riverside PASS ERA program. The participation data presented above are from the 12-month survey, which was given only to a subset of sample members from an early cohort of the study, and few positive economic effects were found for the early cohort. Therefore, the low participation levels captured by the survey may not reflect the participation levels at the time that the program was producing economic benefits for program group members. Analysis of data from the program's management information system — presented in the site-specific report on the Riverside PASS program (cited in Appendix E) — suggest that the program may have increased the use of a broader range of services. These data are not used in this report because they only capture services reported to the welfare department.

The Riverside PASS ERA program increased several measures of employment retention, earnings, and advancement, relative to the control group, over the four-year follow-up period. The program produced gains in employment retention and earnings through the end of the four-year follow-up period. In fact, the program had its largest effect on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting that the program may lead to even longer-term gains. The Riverside PASS ERA program did not generate any impacts on public assistance receipt during the follow-up period, but earnings gains helped to produce increases in average annual income.

The program's effect on earnings primarily reflects that it helped the program group members get reemployed more quickly than the control group members if they left a job, rather than extending the length of time that the program group members were employed at their initial jobs. There is also evidence that the earnings gains for the late cohort may have been a result of increased hours worked and increased wages. The program's economic effects were concentrated among sample members in the areas served by CBOs, perhaps reflecting DPSS's

original expectation that CBOs had greater experience in working with employed individuals and better knowledge of the community and the labor market and/or that clients would be more willing to participate in services offered by these organizations.

South Carolina ERA Findings

South Carolina ERA at a Glance

- Targeted employed and unemployed individuals who had left TANF
- Provided individualized assistance from program staff for issues relating to job placement, retention, and advancement
- Was operated by a welfare agency
- Was compared with a control group that had access to employment-related services in the community, if individuals chose to pursue them
- Was implemented inconsistently across county welfare offices; service delivery affected by funding cuts, management issues, and engagement challenges
- Increased receipt of retention and advancement services relative to the control group but take-up rate very low
- Did not increase employment retention or advancement

South Carolina ERA Test: Introduction

The South Carolina ERA program sought to help former welfare recipients obtain jobs, increase employment retention, and move up in the labor market. The study enrolled sample members from September 2001 through January 2003, and program services were offered between September 2001 and April 2005 in six rural and economically disadvantaged counties in the northeast part of the state.

Origins of the Test

The South Carolina ERA program (referred to as "Moving Up") was developed by the state's Department of Social Services (DSS) in response to concerns about sustained poverty among those who had left the welfare rolls — specifically, that some were not working; many were working but not steadily; and others were in low-wage jobs. Moreover, prior to ERA, there were no formal programs in South Carolina for those who left TANF. Instead, motivated individuals had to seek out various employment-related services offered in the community, as they also had to do to access public benefits.

The South Carolina ERA program sought to enhance the services available for those who had previously received TANF and to encourage individuals to utilize these services and succeed in the labor market through the provision of modest financial incentives. The South Carolina ERA program offered ongoing staff-client relationships, with staff providing or

connecting participants with a range of services, including job search assistance, short-term vocational training, and support services.

Labor Market Context

The South Carolina ERA program and sample members faced challenging conditions for securing and stabilizing employment and advancing to better jobs. In South Carolina, random assignment began roughly in the middle of the 2001 recession. At this time, the area had an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent, compared with the national rate of 4.0 percent. While the national rate peaked in 2003 at 6.0 percent, the rate in the six-county area continued to grow until 2005, reaching a high of 9.6 percent. The unemployment rates in counties included in the study began to decline in 2006, but the 2007 area rate of 7.8 percent was higher than the 2007 national rate of 4.6 percent.

Target Population

The South Carolina ERA program targeted a broad group of individuals who had left TANF. The sample included all those living in the six-county area who had left TANF for any reason between October 1997 and December 2000 and who did not return to the TANF rolls. By targeting people who left TANF and had not returned for a considerable period, regardless of whether they were currently employed or not, the South Carolina ERA program chose a target population that, for the most part, was making do without services from the TANF program.

Table 5.2 shows selected characteristics of the South Carolina ERA sample members at the time the study began. At random assignment, sample members had been off TANF for between nine months and five years. Only a little more than half the sample (56 percent) had a high school diploma or a GED certificate on entering the study — the lowest rate of all the samples in the ERA tests discussed in this chapter.

Significance of This Test

The South Carolina ERA test examines whether a voluntary program that is administered through a welfare agency — using ongoing staff-client relationships to connect participants with a range of services, including job search assistance, short-term vocational training, support services, and modest financial incentives — can improve job placement, retention, and advancement for individuals who had previously received TANF, compared with the standard postemployment services available in the community. Chart 5.5 presents the important differences between the services available to program group and control group members in the South Carolina ERA test.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Chart 5.5

Program-Control Group Differences:

South Carolina ERA Test

	ERA Group	Control Group
Goals	• Place former welfare recipients in jobs, help them sustain employment and advance, and increase their earnings	
Program resources and structures	• Operated by welfare agency	• No single retention- and advancement-oriented program for employed individuals in community; however, could access various employment-related community services should they choose to pursue
Staffing	• Staff worked one-on-one with individuals; agencywide workforce consultants available • Staff schedules and meeting locations flexible for clients	
Staff-client engagement	• Aggressive marketing and outreach (with modest participation incentives) • Services tailored to participants • Developed and maintained employment plans. • Limited ongoing contacts	
Initial job preparation and placement	• Multifaceted help; preparing a résumé, one-on-one assistance with job search, referrals to job search classes, and an assessment of potential barriers to employment	• Could pursue services on their own; however, similar reported rates of participation in job search activities as ERA group
Retention services	• Job search assistance (preparing résumés and job applications, identifying job leads)	• Could pursue services on their own; however, similar reported rates of participation in job search activities as ERA group
	• Assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits; social service referrals as needed	• Could pursue services on their own; however, similar reported rates of receiving help with basic needs as ERA group
	• Discussed problems on the job	
Advancement services	• Counseling for work-based advancement • Limited services for advancement through job change • Education and training referrals	

SOURCES: Site-specific reports. For citations, see Appendix E.

NOTE: [a]Employment-related and supportive services were available through Workforce Investment Act providers, One-Stop Centers, community colleges, adult schools and other education providers, and employment and training organizations.

` South Carolina ERA Program: Features and Client Experiences

Program Resources and Organization

DSS developed and operated the South Carolina ERA program in six counties: Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion, and Marlboro. Administration of the program also included some informal coordination with WIA One-Stop Centers, although this varied over time and across DSS offices. Financed with TANF funds, the program was fully funded when the study began. However, South Carolina's budget situation deteriorated over time, leading to funding cuts. ERA staff remained on the job, but, for a period from late 2002 through summer 2003, most counties froze or limited spending for some ERA services, including financial incentives, education and training tuition payments, and transportation assistance.

Staffing

Services in the South Carolina ERA program were primarily provided by DSS staff. These staff were responsible for developing ongoing (one-on-one) staff-client relationships and for connecting program group members with other services as needed. The largest county in the study had four ERA staff; the next-largest county had two; and the other four counties each had one staff person. DSS workforce staff — who built relationships with local employers, developed jobs, and assembled job listings — were also available to work with the ERA staff.

The overall management of the program was the responsibility of a full-time program coordinator, and DSS directors in each participating office oversaw the program's daily operations. There were, however, operational differences across the counties.

Most of the ERA staff had previously worked for DSS in some capacity — many, in the state's TANF program — and all had some prior experience in social services. But ERA staff members and the DSS as a whole had more experience working with unemployed individuals, rather than those who were employed. As a result, new management tools were developed for the program. Performance standards were established for ERA staff that focused on the number of contacts between staff and participants, the number of individuals participating in the program, the number of individuals who were placed in jobs, and the number who received a raise or increased their work hours. The ERA program coordinator also encouraged staff to contact at least 75 percent of their cases at least once and to keep at least 35 percent participating in the program at any given time. An automated client tracking system was developed which allowed the program coordinator to monitor the performance of staff and to provide feedback to them (although there were no specific incentives for achieving performance goals).

The ERA staff were often available — either in the office or by phone — beyond the standard 9-to-5 workday, in order to help program group members who worked or had other responsibilities during the day.

Staff-Client Engagement

Ongoing staff-client relationships were at the core of the South Carolina ERA program. Because these sample members were not receiving TANF, participation in the ERA program was entirely voluntary. Reflecting this, South Carolina ERA management emphasized the importance of effective outreach and marketing, and all ERA staff received training on engaging clients in program activities.

Locating individuals often took considerable effort, because contact information in the state's database was often outdated. Once this information was obtained, ERA staff sent an invitation letter that included a brochure about the program and typically was followed by phone calls and additional letters. The South Carolina ERA program also used modest financial incentives to encourage program participation. For example, individuals received $10 for attending an initial meeting with ERA staff and $50 for completing a job search class. Table 5.10 shows that, according to the study's 12-month survey, less than half the program group members (43 percent) reported having had contact with employment program staff — a rate that is 14 percentage points greater than the rate of contact with employment program staff that was reported by control group members.

ERA staff faced challenges in marketing the program to individuals who were not required to take part in it and who may not have wanted the program's assistance. Staff encouraged participation in the South Carolina ERA program by describing its individualized nature and emphasizing clients' broader goals for themselves and their families. In field research interviews, ERA staff reported that some of the people they spoke with said that they were "doing fine" and did not need or want help.

After program group members agreed to participate, ERA staff held meetings to assess individuals' employment, education, and family situations; discuss employment goals and barriers; and develop a Career Enhancement Plan. The goal was to develop such a plan within 10 days of individuals' agreement to participate. The program did not use standardized assessments of skills or testing, and it relied on staff expertise to develop these plans, based on discussions with the clients. About 8 percent of program group members received a career assessment — roughly twice the rate reported by the control group (Appendix Table C.21).

Each program group member's activities and services were based on his or her career plan. ERA staff worked with individuals to help them prepare for and find a job, stay in their current job, or move up to a better job. Program group members were typically referred to

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 5.10

Summary of Impacts:

South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Implementation outcomes				
Engagement				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	43.0	29.1	13.9 ***	0.001
Average number of contacts with staff	4.4	2.7	1.7 *	0.077
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	16.0	10.8	5.3 *	0.077
Retention services				
Participated in a job search activity (%)	42.4	44.2	-1.9	0.654
Received help dealing with problems on the job (%)	4.6	2.3	2.3	0.153
Advancement services				
Received help with career assessment (%)	7.5	4.1	3.4 *	0.094
Received help finding a better job while working (%)	12.8	3.9	8.9 ***	0.000
Participated in an education/training activity[a] (%)	26.0	19.7	6.3 *	0.080
Received any help with retention/advancement[b] (%)	17.6	8.2	9.4 ***	0.001
Sample size (total = 552)	276	276		
Cumulative economic outcomes (Years 1-4)				
Employment measures				
Ever employed (%)	74.9	75.1	-0.2	0.875
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.1	47.0	1.1	0.303
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	55.6	55.6	0.1	0.974
Length of longest employment spell, in quarters	6.5	6.3	0.2	0.281
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	7.3	7.5	-0.2	0.210
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	6,054	6,121	-67	0.733
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	18.1	18.5	-0.3	0.686
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4 (%)				
Not employed in one or both years	50.7	51.2	-0.5	0.737
Earnings decreased by more than $250	16.2	16.0	0.2	0.879
Earnings changed by less than $250	7.3	6.4	0.9	0.347
Earnings increased by $250 or more	25.9	26.3	-0.4	0.780
Public assistance and income[c]				
Average annual TANF received ($)	74	67	8	0.403
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,973	1,982	-9	0.866
Average annual income[d] ($)	8,157	8,217	-60	0.760
Sample size (total = 2,776)	1,382	1,394		

(continued)

Table 5.10 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 12-Month Survey and state administrative records.

NOTES: Averages for dollar amounts include zero values for sample members who had no earnings, TANF grants, or food stamp benefits.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

[b]This measure includes numerous forms of retention and advancement help, including help finding a better job while working, enrolling in life skills classes, help with career assessment, help with problems on the job, and addressing personal problems.

[c]Data on public assistance are missing for 156 sample members. Therefore, the measure for public assistance and income is available only for 2,620 sample members.

[d]This measure represents the sum of UI-reported earnings, TANF, and food stamps.

structured activities, such as job search classes and short-term vocational training. ERA staff were expected to meet with participants at least once a month to monitor their progress.

Initial Job Preparation and Placement Services

Field research suggests that job placement was the strongest component of the South Carolina ERA program. This was due, in part, to the considerable experience that DSS and most staff members had with helping people prepare for and find jobs. Typically, program group members who were not working received assistance preparing for and searching for a job, such as help preparing a résumé, one-on-one assistance with the job search process, referrals to job search classes at DSS, and an assessment of potential barriers to employment. However, while more than 40 percent of the program group members reported in the 12-month survey that they had participated in a job search activity, this rate is no different from the rate reported by control group members.

Retention Services

The South Carolina ERA program included multiple tools for stabilizing employment among program group members, including financial incentives, assistance with work supports, referrals to social services, and coaching on the resolution of work-place problems (see below). As discussed, South Carolina ERA staff had little experience serving employed individuals.

Despite training in this area, delivery of retention services remained challenging and was inconsistent across the six counties.

The ERA program in South Carolina provided modest financial incentives to encourage and reward employment-related achievements, including holding a job and getting a promotion. The program established benchmarks of providing $50 to participants if they remained in a new job for a month, another $50 after three months, and another $50 after six months. Likewise, the program provided financial incentives for advancing in the labor market, including $50 to participants who increased their wage by 8 percent or more, moved from a part-time job to a full-time one, or moved to a job with benefits. While these incentive payments were made during the early parts of the study period, the state's budget problems prevented most counties from paying any incentives between late 2002 and mid-2003. Overall, 47 percent of the program group received at least one incentive payment within a year after entering the study, and 16 percent received at least one payment of $50 or more. Among individuals who received at least one payment, the average amount received during the year was $62.

Assistance with supportive services and transitional benefits was also provided in the South Carolina ERA program. As public transportation in the study region was limited, transportation assistance was an important component of the program. South Carolina ERA staff also referred program group members to mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, or services for victims of domestic violence, and some participants obtained TANF, food stamps, Medicaid, and other work supports. While it was intended that the program would have funds available for child care, state budget problems prevented the allocation of those funds. The 12-month client survey found that the ERA program resulted in an increase in the receipt of support services: 22 percent of the program group reported receiving such help —a rate that is 8 percentage points greater than the rate reported by the control group (Appendix Table C.21).

To foster job retention, ERA staff coached program group members on workplace issues and held periodic check-ins to allow participants to discuss work-related concerns. Based on the 12-month survey, however, less than 5 percent of program group members reported receiving help with problems on the job during their first year in the program (Table 5.10).

Advancement Services

Advancement to better jobs was one of the goals of the South Carolina ERA program. Although the delivery of these services was difficult and inconsistent across the six program offices, it could include instruction in how to approach a supervisor to discuss a raise or how to learn about promotion opportunities. In field research interviews, ERA staff reported that it was challenging to convince working individuals to participate in postemployment services — particularly advancement services — because they were juggling work, family, and other

responsibilities or they were comfortable in their current job and did not want to switch jobs. The 12-month survey shows that the program produced gains in the take-up of retention and advancement services; 18 percent of program group members reported that they received help with retention and advancement — more than double the rate reported by the control group (Table 5.10).

The South Carolina ERA program included some referrals for both employed and unemployed program group members to short-term education and training. For example, if a program group member did not have a high school diploma or a GED certificate, staff would recommend GED preparation classes, if appropriate. The 12-month survey shows that the program produced a small increase in participation in education and training.

Employer Linkages

There was no formal connection between the South Carolina ERA program and local employers. ERA staff did not have close connections with employers and did not work to identify local job opportunities that would be appropriate for individuals on their caseload. ERA staff did work with DSS job development staff located in each of the welfare offices. These DSS staff identified job openings at local employers, primarily for the benefit of TANF clients, although they often shared job openings with the ERA staff.

South Carolina ERA Program: Economic Impacts

Economic impacts of the South Carolina ERA program can be summarized as follows:

- The South Carolina ERA program did not generate any changes, relative to the control group, in the main measures of employment or employment retention for the full sample in the four-year follow-up period. In addition, there is no evidence that the program led to earnings or advancement gains, compared with the levels seen in the control group.
- The South Carolina ERA program did not produce any changes in the amount of TANF or food stamp assistance received or in participants' average annual income.

Control Group Outcomes

Average quarterly employment and average earnings for control group members in the South Carolina ERA test were much lower than the levels found in the other control groups examined in Chapters 4 and 5, reflecting that many were not employed at the time they entered the study. Average quarterly employment was less than 50 percent, and average earnings were just over $6,000 per year for control group members over the four-year follow-up period (Table

5.10). Average annual earnings and average quarterly employment remained fairly steady over the follow-up period (Appendix Table C.22). Less than 10 percent of the control group received at least one TANF payment in each of the three years of follow-up (Appendix Table C.22).

Employment and Employment Retention

The South Carolina ERA program did not have any effects, relative to the control group, on the main measures of employment or employment retention in the four-year follow-up period (Table 5.10).

Earnings and Advancement

The South Carolina ERA program did not lead to increases in any measures of earnings or advancement, compared with the control group (Table 5.10).

Public Assistance and Average Annual Income

The South Carolina ERA program had no effect, relative to the control group, on the receipt of TANF or food stamp assistance or participants' average annual income during the cumulative four-year follow-up period (Table 5.10).

Economic Impact Findings, by Prior Labor Force Attachment

The South Carolina ERA program was the only program in the ERA study that explicitly targeted both employed and unemployed individuals. Therefore, impacts were examined for sample members who had a lot, some, or no employment in the year prior to study entry. This analysis shows that there were statistically significant increases, relative to the control group, in average quarterly employment and average earnings for program group members who had some recent labor market experience (employed one to three quarters in the year prior to study entry) (Appendix Table C.25). However, program group members who were employed in either none or all of the quarters in the year prior to study entry experienced no gains, compared with their counterparts in the control group.

Economic Impact Findings, by Study Cohort

Despite the funding problems that occurred midway through operations in the South Carolina ERA program, there are no statistically significant differences in impacts on the main measures of employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement when analyzed by study cohort (not shown).

South Carolina ERA Program: Summary and Conclusions

The South Carolina ERA program was developed by the state's Department of Social Services (DSS) in response to concerns about sustained poverty among those who had left TANF and about the lack of programs and services available to this population. The program was voluntary and was operated by welfare agency staff. Building on ongoing staff-client relationships, the model included connecting program group members with a range of services. Although no formal services were provided to the control group, these sample members could access standard services available in the community.

Ongoing staff-client relationships represented the core of the South Carolina ERA program. Staff worked with participants to understand their employment goals and develop an employment plan. Staff also provided or connected participants with a range of services (including one-on-one job search assistance, job search classes, and short-term vocational training) and support services (such as transportation assistance). However, the program's services varied somewhat across the six counties that operated it. Funding cutbacks partway through the program as well as limits to staff training and experience resulted in limits on some services.

Despite extensive outreach efforts, less than half the program group members reported that they had had contact with employment program staff within their first year after study entry. Maintaining ongoing engagement proved even more challenging, as less than one-fifth of program group members reported having contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program within four weeks prior to the 12-month survey. While over a third of program group members participated in a job search activity, less than one-fifth of them reported receiving help with retention and advancement in the first year.

Even though levels of engagement among members of the program group were fairly low, the rates of contact and recent contact with ERA staff or staff from an employment program were greater than those reported by control group members. In addition, the program increased the proportion of program group members who reported receiving help with retention and advancement — to more than double the rate reported by the control group, although the overall levels remained low for both groups. Although job search assistance was an important aspect of the South Carolina ERA program, the program failed to increase rates of participation in this activity.

In the four-year follow-up period, the South Carolina ERA program did not generate any changes, relative to the control group, in employment, employment retention, earnings, or advancement.

The South Carolina ERA program encountered several implementation challenges. It was difficult for staff to address the needs of both employed and unemployed individuals who

had left TANF. Staff did not appear to have the appropriate skills to address the different needs of the relatively broad target group, despite the training that was provided. In particular, providing services to those who were working was new to most staff involved in the program. Funding constraints made it difficult to offer the full range of services, particularly financial incentives for participation. And some potential participants were hard to locate and physically dispersed, making outreach and recruitment efforts difficult. Furthermore, the poor state economy and the focus on rural areas with limited job opportunities may have made it difficult for the program to help people find jobs, or find better jobs than the ones that they held at the time of the study. Finally, it may be that the individuals who were targeted for this intervention — people who had left TANF up to several years earlier — were in less immediate need of services than other potential target populations might have been.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the findings for the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) programs, grouping them by target populations, and then presents a cross-site summary and the conclusions of the report.

Summary of Findings, by Target Group

This section presents a summary of the findings for each of the three groupings of ERA programs discussed in Chapters 3 through 5. First, the programs' overall service strategies are discussed. Then, impacts on contact and engagement with clients are summarized. This is followed by a review of impacts on "traditional" employment and education services (defined in this study as job search and education and training). The patterns of findings for these services are different from the patterns for other retention and advancement services, so they are described separately. Finally, each of the target group summaries concludes with a discussion of economic impacts.

Programs Serving Unemployed TANF Recipients

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Texas, Los Angeles Enhanced Job Club (EJC), and Salem ERA programs served unemployed TANF recipients.

Service Strategies

The programs serving this target group had some common strategies, primarily providing preemployment services (such as job preparation and job search) in which individuals were mandated to participate as a condition of receiving cash assistance. However, the programs also had notable variation. For example, the Los Angeles EJC model did not include any postemployment services, by design, but hoped to achieve retention and advancement goals by initially placing participants in jobs in their career of interest. In contrast, the Salem and Texas ERA programs included postemployment services through ongoing staff-client interactions as a key component. The Texas program was unique in this target group (and in ERA) in that it provided a substantial financial incentive of $200 per month to those who left Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF leavers) and were working full time.

Contact and Engagement

As shown in the set of bars to the left in Figure 6.1, among the programs serving unemployed TANF recipients, only the Corpus Christi and Fort Worth sites operating the Texas ERA program produced increases in contacts with staff of a welfare or employment program. These sites also increased ongoing contact (as measured by the percentage of sample members who spoke with staff in the four weeks prior to responding to the 12-month survey). While the Salem program did not increase the percentage who ever had a contact, it did increase the overall number of contacts (not shown).[1] The Houston and Los Angeles EJC ERA programs did not increase any measures of client engagement.

Traditional Employment and Education Services

The set of bars to the left in Figure 6.2 shows that the rates of participation in job search by control group members in these three ERA programs were quite high, which is not surprising, because these programs served unemployed people. The program in Houston was the only one to produce increases in job search participation above the control group levels. Control group levels of participation in education and training were also relatively high, and no program groups exceeded these levels.

Other Retention and Advancement Services

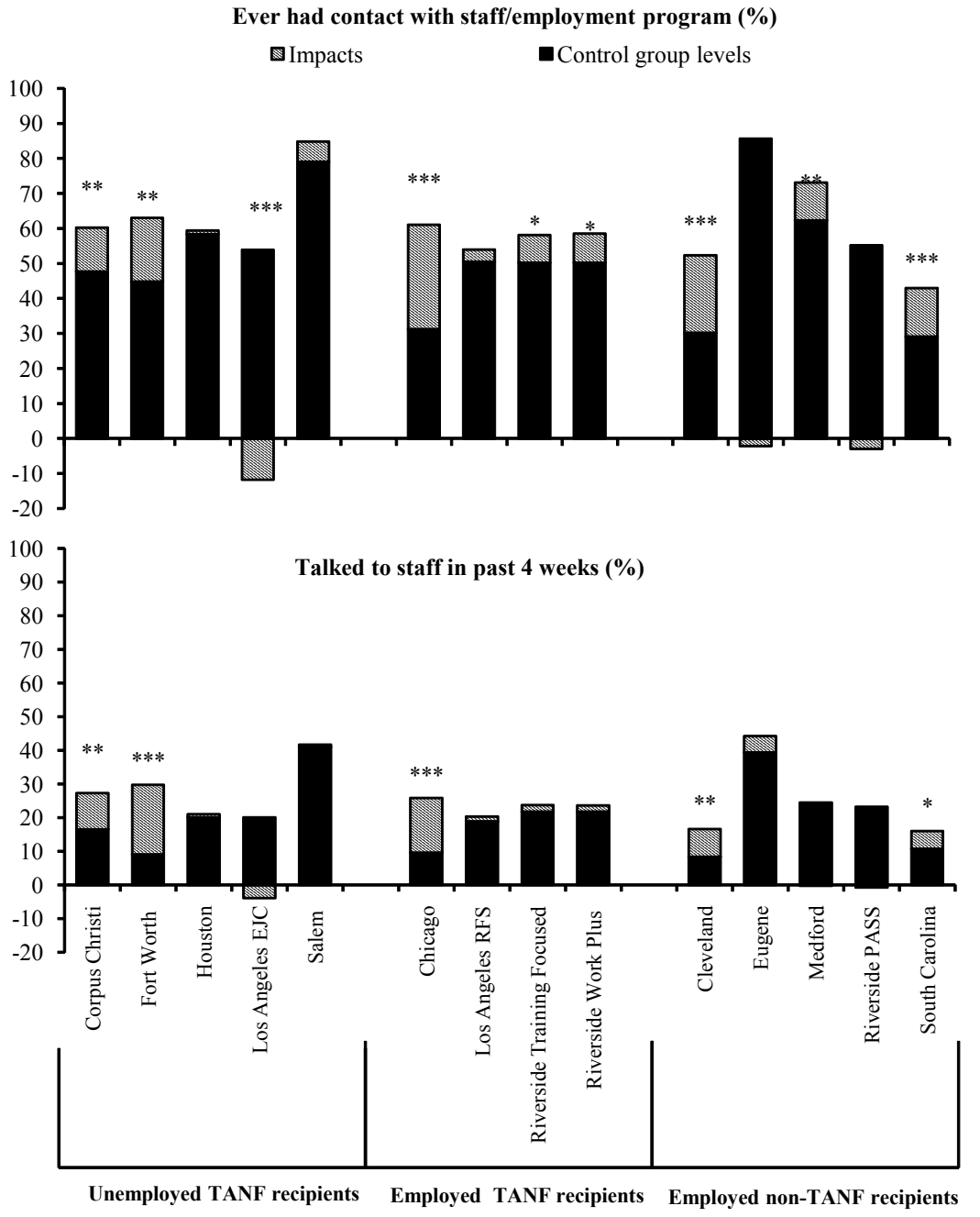
Two measures of postemployment retention and advancement "help" are shown in Figure 6.3: the percentage of people reporting that they received help finding a better job while working and the percentage of people reporting that they received help with problems on the job. Take-up of these services was very low (close to zero) among the control groups. For these measures of retention and advancement help, participation rates among ERA group members generally ranged from the single digits to under 20 percent. Given that the focus of the ERA programs was on providing assistance with retention and advancement, the rates of receipt of these types of assistance among ERA program group members were fairly low.[2] The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Salem sites produced small-to-moderate impacts on the receipt of these services, while the Houston site did not. Take-up of the Texas stipend varied by site: 30 percent of all program group members took up the stipend in Corpus Christi, compared with 20 percent in the other two Texas sites.

[1]Molina, Cheng, and Hendra (2008).

[2]Figure 6.3 and most of this section focus on only two measures of postemployment retention and advancement services; results for other such measures that are presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 show similar patterns.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Figure 6.1
Impacts on Client Engagement



(continued)

Figure 6.1 (continued)

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

NOTES: See site summary tables for the supporting numbers for these figures.
A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites are all part of the Texas ERA model.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.
The survey samples are small in Fort Worth and Riverside PASS, and some response bias was noted in Riverside PASS and Medford. See Appendix D.

Economic Impacts

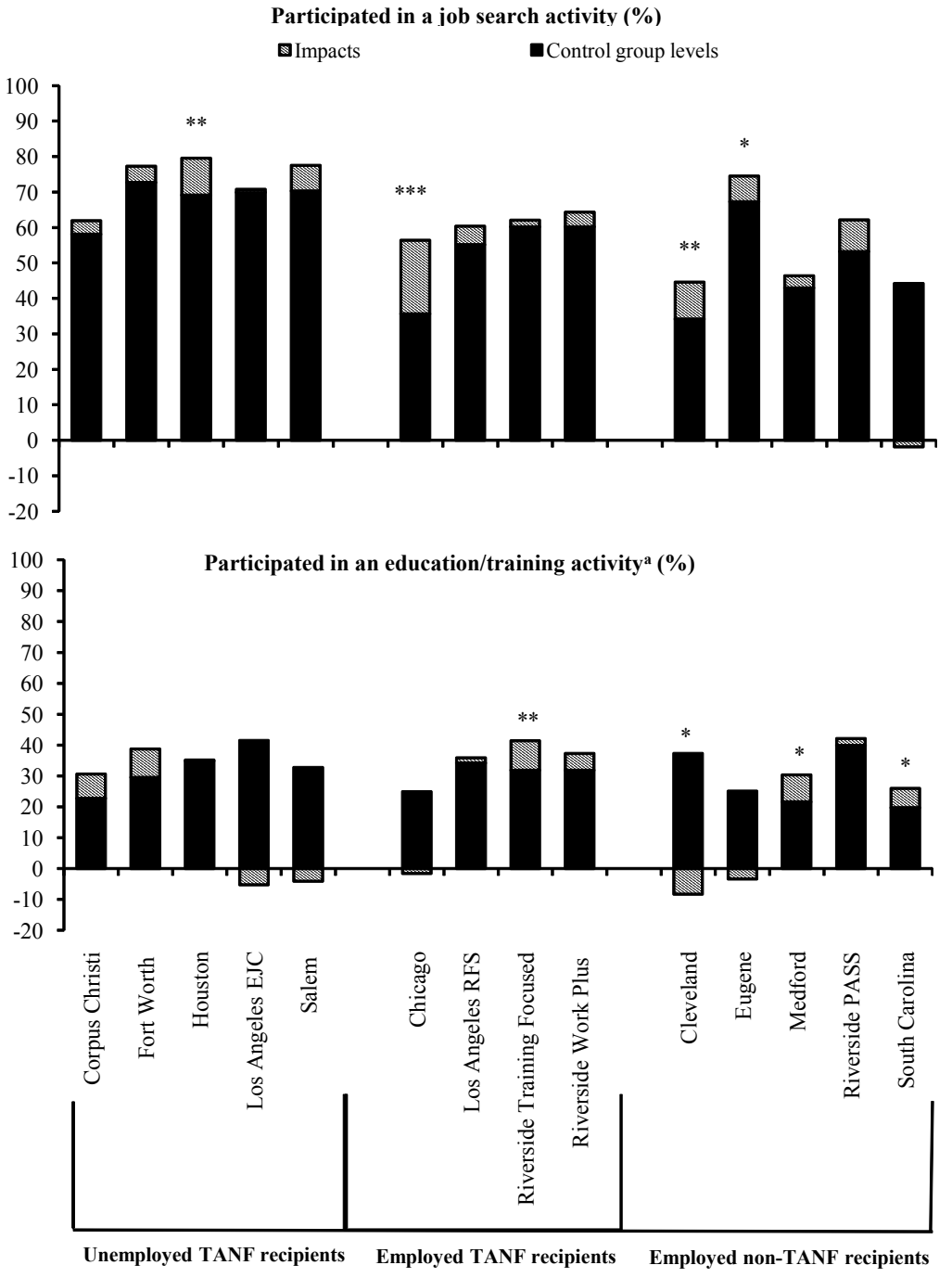
As shown in Table 6.1 and Figure 6.4, the Texas ERA program was the only one to produce increases in employment retention and earnings for unemployed TANF recipients. Among the three Texas ERA sites, the Corpus Christi program had the most consistent impacts on employment retention and earnings. There, ERA increased average annual earnings by $640 over the four-year follow-up period, or by almost 15 percent of control group earnings. In addition, the program generated its largest effects on earnings in the fourth year of follow-up, when it increased earnings by $900, or by 18 percent of the control group level. This suggests that the impacts may continue in the longer term. The Texas ERA program in Fort Worth also produced increases in these measures, but the impacts were concentrated in Years 2 and 3 of follow-up. In Fort Worth, ERA increased earnings in the third year of follow-up by $900, or by 17 percent of the control group level, but the effects were not persistent enough to lead to positive impacts over the cumulative follow-up period. The implementation of the Texas program in Fort Worth started out weak and improved over time, which may have diluted the strength of impacts there because many program group members went through the program before implementation had improved. There is evidence in both Corpus Christi and Fort Worth that the ERA program led to advancement gains: the earnings impacts are larger in percentage terms than the employment impacts, suggesting that ERA increased hours or weeks worked or wage rates, relative to the control group levels. The ERA programs in Houston, Los Angeles EJC, and Salem did not improve employment retention or advancement outcomes.

Programs Serving Employed TANF Recipients

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Chicago, Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS), Riverside Work Plus, and Riverside Training Focused ERA programs served employed TANF recipients.[3]

[3]The Riverside Work Plus and Training Focused programs, together, are referred to as the Riverside "Phase 2" programs.

Figure 6.2
Impacts on Job Search and Education/Training



(continued)

Figure 6.2 (continued)

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

NOTES: See site summary tables for the supporting numbers for these figures.
A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites are all part of the Texas ERA model.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.
The survey samples are small in Fort Worth and Riverside PASS, and some response bias was noted in Riverside PASS and Medford. See Appendix D.
[a]This measure includes participation in any of the following activities: English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, adult basic education (ABE) or General Educational Development (GED) classes, college courses, or vocational training.

Service Strategies

All the ERA programs that served this target group prioritized advancement. These programs provided individualized services in the form of in-depth client assessments; flexibility in hours and location of services; and intensive, ongoing staff-client contact. Advancement services included career and job development activities, education and training referrals and/or incentives, and staff counseling on job-related issues. The relative emphasis placed on different routes toward advancement varied across programs; some programs prioritized advancement through building up work experience, and others sought to foster advancement by increasing skills through education and training.

Contact and Engagement

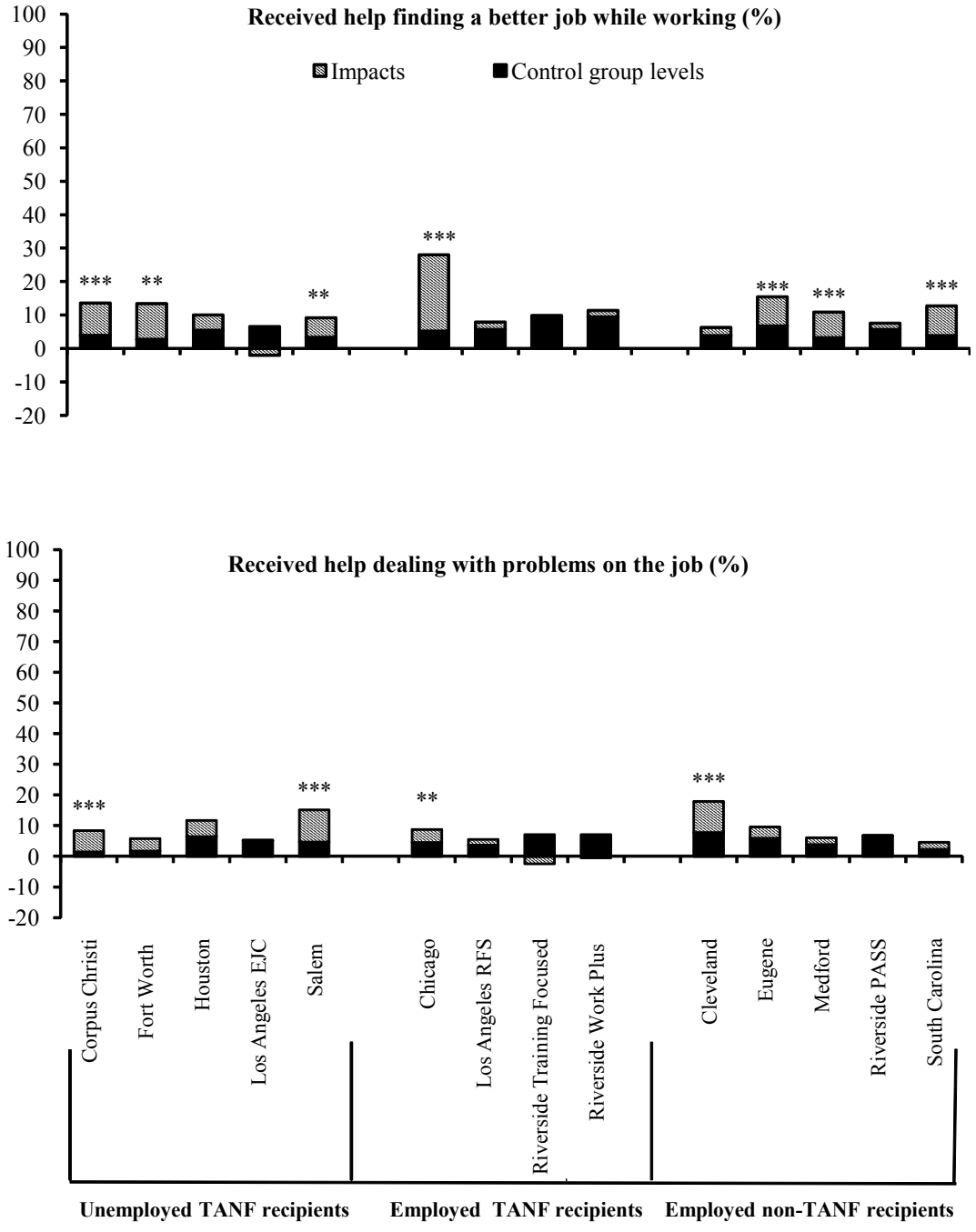
The middle set of bars in Figure 6.1 shows that while three of the ERA programs serving employed TANF recipients increased the percentage of people who ever spoke with staff from an employment program, the percentage of people with recent contact — that is, contact within four weeks of responding to the 12-month survey — increased only in the Chicago site. This highlights the difficulty encountered by staff in trying to engage working people in ERA services — a pervasive finding in the ERA field research (as is discussed below).

Traditional Employment and Education Services

Control group members in this grouping of ERA tests participated in job search and in education and training at higher-than-expected levels (the middle set of bars in Figure 6.2). Since all sample members in this target group were working when they entered ERA, it was not expected that so many would be engaged in job search. Given their work status, it also was not expected that many sample members would be able to accommodate work, single-parenting,

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Figure 6.3
Impacts on Retention and Advancement Services



(continued)

Figure 6.3 (continued)

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

NOTES: See site summary tables for the supporting numbers for these figures.
A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites are all part of the Texas ERA model.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.
The survey samples are small in Fort Worth and Riverside PASS, and some response bias was noted in Riverside PASS and Medford. See Appendix D.

and participation in school or training. Comparing the program and control groups, only the Chicago program increased levels of participation in job search. With regard to education and training, both of the Riverside Phase 2 programs focused specifically on increasing participation in education and training; only the Riverside Training Focused program, however, produced an increase — a modest one — in participation in education and training.[4]

Other Retention and Advancement Services

Control group members' receipt of other retention and advancement services was relatively low (the middle set of bars in Figure 6.3). Nevertheless — and despite a substantial marketing effort — with the exception of the Chicago ERA program, these programs did not increase the take-up of these services beyond the levels of the control groups. The Chicago ERA program achieved large increases (relative to the control group) in participation in employment retention and advancement services. For example, nearly 30 percent of Chicago ERA group members reported that they received help finding a better job while working, compared with approximately 5 percent of control group members. (This is the highest rate of receiving help in any of the key postemployment services across all the ERA models, including the rates for the other target groups.)

Economic Impacts

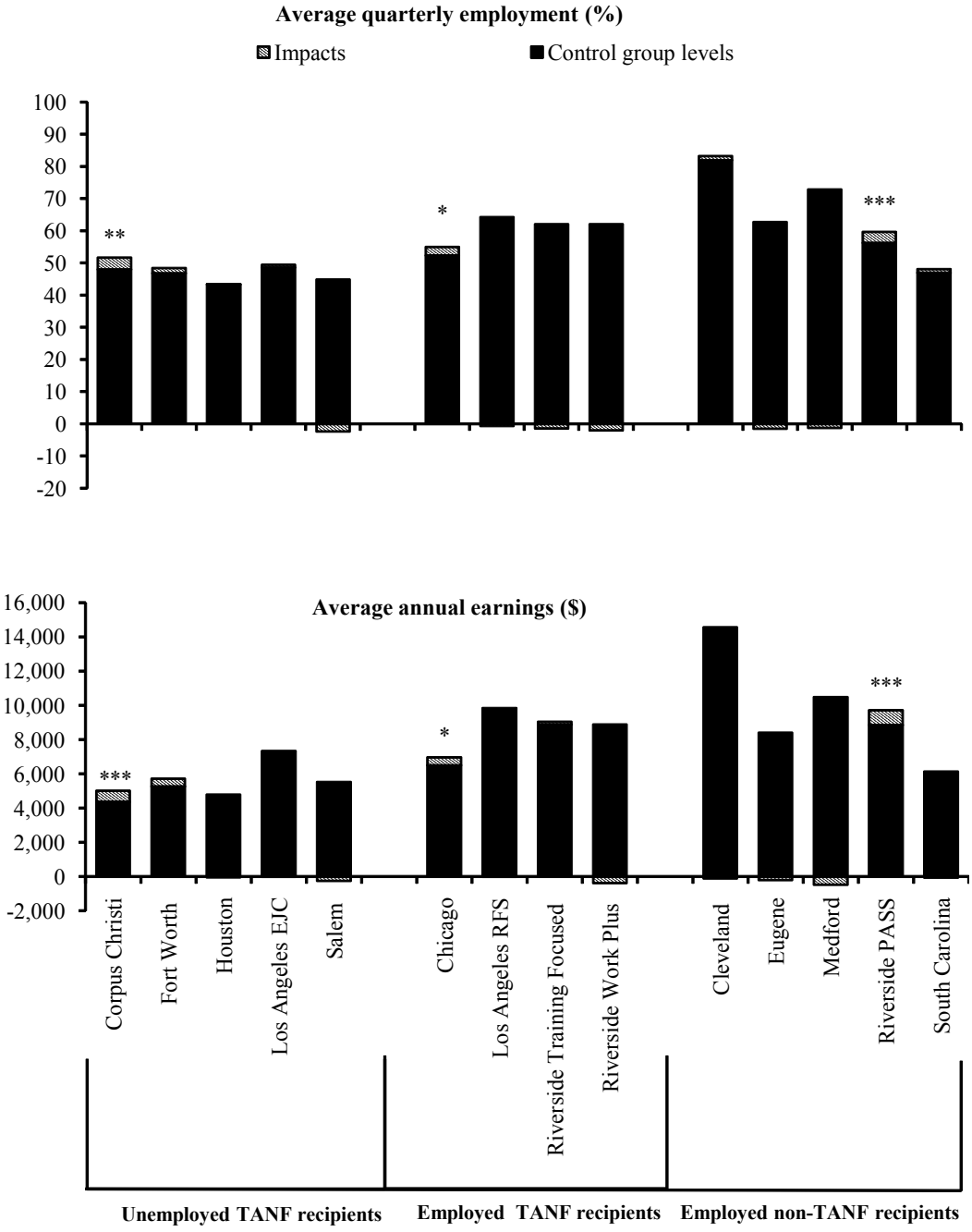
The ERA program in Chicago was the only one serving employed TANF recipients that produced increases in employment retention and earnings. It also achieved the largest reductions in welfare receipt among all the programs; its welfare receipt rates were approximately 25

[4]Participation increases relative to control group members were larger among Riverside Training Focused and Riverside Work Plus sample members who were more disadvantaged, including individuals lacking a high school diploma or a GED certificate. For these individuals, increases in participation in adult basic education or GED classes were the primary types of increases.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Figure 6.4

Impacts on Average Quarterly Employment and Earnings



(continued)

Figure 6.4 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES: See site summary tables for the supporting numbers for these figures.
A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
The Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston sites are all part of the Texas ERA model.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

percent lower than control group levels. While the Chicago ERA program raised average annual earnings by almost $500 over the cumulative four-year follow-up period, or by 7 percent of the control group level, these effects weakened over time. Impacts on employment were no longer statistically significant during the whole of follow-up Year 4, but positive earnings impacts persisted in some quarters, suggesting that the program may have had a long-term effect on advancement (Table 6.1 and Figure 6.4).

Programs Serving Individuals Who Were Employed and Not Receiving TANF

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Cleveland, Eugene, Medford, Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS), and South Carolina ERA programs served employed non-TANF recipients.

Service Strategies

The ERA programs that served this target group prioritized both employment retention and advancement. Since none of these programs served current TANF recipients, participation was not mandatory in any type of services, and all the programs used intensive outreach and marketing strategies. Most programs emphasized specializing services to clients' needs and interests as well as flexibility in the scheduling and location of staff-client meetings. Retention services often included reemployment services and staff counseling on job-related issues, in addition to help with traditional work supports and social service referrals. Advancement services for this target group included career counseling and referrals to education and training services — except in Cleveland. The Cleveland ERA program focused on employment retention, offered services at work sites, and provided services to low-wage workers as well as trainings for the supervisors of low-wage workers.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 6.1

ERA Models: Summary of Economic Impact Results

Model	Average Quarterly Employment					Employed 4 Consecutive Quarters					Average Annual Earnings				
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Cumulative follow-up
Not employed and receiving TANF															
Texas															
Corpus Christi	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Fort Worth		•						•					•		
Houston															
Los Angeles EJC				—		•			—					—	
Salem				—					—					—	
Employed and receiving TANF															
Chicago	•	•			•		•					•			•
Los Angeles RFS				—					—					—	
Riverside Phase 2															
Riverside Training Focused[a]															
Riverside Work Plus															
Employed and not receiving TANF															
Cleveland				—					—					—	
Eugene[a]				—					—					—	
Medford				—					—					—	
Riverside PASS	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
South Carolina															

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES: A dash indicates "not available" or that the sample size is too small to yield meaningful results.

Bullets indicate positive statistically significant differences between outcomes for the program and control groups up to the 10 percent level.

[a]The negative impacts for the Eugene and Riverside Training Focused programs are not shown on this table. See site-specific summary tables for negative impacts.

Contact and Engagement

The set of bars to the right in Figure 6.1 shows that three of the five ERA programs that served employed non-TANF recipients increased the percentage of individuals ever contacted by employment program staff. Yet only two ERA programs (those in Cleveland and South Carolina) increased ongoing contacts, and the increases were small.[5]

Traditional Employment and Education Services

In all the ERA programs serving this target group, increases in job search or education and training were either modest or nonexistent (the set of bars to the right in Figure 6.2). There were modest increases in job search in the Cleveland and Eugene programs and modest increases in education and training in the Medford and South Carolina programs. Thus, as was found for programs serving the other two target groups, participation increases in these types of services among employed non-TANF recipients — beyond what control group members were already doing on their own — were small.

Other Retention and Advancement Services

Most programs serving this target group increased participation in other employment retention or advancement services above the levels of the control group (the set of bars to the right in Figure 6.3). However, the impacts were never larger than 10 percentage points. In addition, four of the five programs produced increases in career assessment — a much more consistent finding than for the other target groups (not shown).

Economic Impacts

The Riverside PASS ERA program produced large and consistent increases in employment retention and earnings (Table 6.1 and Figure 6.4). The program also appears to have generated gains in advancement, relative to the control group. It increased average annual earnings by $870 over the four-year follow-up period, or by 10 percent of the control group level. In addition, the program generated its largest effects on earnings ($970) in the fourth year of follow-up, suggesting the possibility that the Riverside PASS ERA program may lead to even longer-term earnings gains. Other programs serving this target group did not produce

[5]Although the engagement and, as discussed below, participation impacts are not large for the Riverside PASS program, it is important to consider that survey-based participation data for that program were collected for a small sample for which the program did not achieve economic impacts. In general, data from the program-maintained management information system suggest that the participation impacts for the Riverside PASS program may have been larger than what is indicated by 12-month survey data.

statistically significant positive impacts on the main measures of employment retention or advancement.

Cross-Site Summary

This section summarizes the common themes in the implementation, participation, and economic impacts analysis across the three target groups.

Implementation Findings

- **Engaging individuals in employment and retention services was a consistent challenge.**

Staff in the ERA programs expended considerable energy trying to engage individuals in program activities. Many ERA programs, particularly those targeting individuals outside the TANF system, included intensive marketing and outreach strategies. The ERA programs also used a variety of strategies to maintain staff-client relationships and encourage ongoing participation in program activities, including, in some programs, offering financial incentives to encourage contact and working with individuals at their workplaces. However, while most program group members reported having at least one contact with ERA program staff, maintaining contact over the course of the first year following random assignment was less common. Only five programs increased the percentage of program group members, compared with control group members, who were having contact with staff from an employment program as of the end of the first year of follow-up. Moreover, even in these five programs, increases in ongoing engagement were modest.

- **Rates of job loss were very high, and job loss occurred quickly in all the ERA programs, requiring staff to spend a significant amount of their time providing reemployment services.**

In a number of the ERA programs that attempted to provide services to individuals when they were employed (referred to as "postemployment programs" in this report), high levels and fast rates of job loss had several implications. One implication was that staff had less time available to work with individuals on advancement services. Another implication was that the volume of demands for reemployment services disrupted programs' staffing plans. Staff in postemployment programs were prepared for and anticipated working with employed clients to aid their placement into better jobs or ones positioned for advancement. Staff were also prepared to provide employment retention services to attempt to prevent job loss. In practice, many individuals had lost their jobs by the time program staff first made contact with them, forcing staff to focus on immediate placement needs instead.

- **The staffing of the ERA programs was critical, as most services hinged on staff actions and many welfare agency staff lacked skills and experience relevant to retention and advancement aims.**

In most of the ERA programs, staff were responsible for providing a range of services, rather than specializing in one or a few. Many of these services — such as recruitment, career counseling, labor market assessment, and job development — were not typically provided in standard welfare-to-work programs. Thus, the ERA programs often demanded skill sets and facilities in arenas or with populations that were new to staff. Despite efforts to train and hire qualified staff, providing the various retention and advancement services was a struggle for many ERA program staff.

Participation Findings

- **Increases in participation beyond control group levels were not consistent or large, which may have made it difficult for the programs to achieve impacts on employment retention and advancement.**

Overall, most of the ERA programs produced relatively small impacts on participation in program activities and on the receipt of various types of retention and advancement assistance, but the reasons for this differed by the type of activity or "help" provided in the programs. Many of the control groups in this study were eligible for welfare-to-work programs that often provided such services as job search and education and training referrals. Therefore, the control group levels of participation in these services were often high (with participation levels in education and training being unexpectedly high in the case of programs serving employed individuals), and few ERA programs significantly raised participation above these levels.

In addition to encouraging participation in job search and education and training, most ERA programs offered other types of retention and advancement assistance, such as help resolving problems on the job or help finding a better job while working. While a 12-month client survey showed that few control group members received these types of assistance, few ERA programs increased the levels of receipt of these services by a substantial amount above the control group levels.

While the impacts on participation in ERA services in a number of program tests were infrequent and small for two different reasons — high levels of control group participation in some activities and low levels of program group participation in others — the end result was the same: the little impact on participation in services in these tests made it unlikely that these particular programs would improve economic outcomes (though there is no guarantee that these programs would have improved economic outcomes even if they had been able to boost participation more substantially). A few programs, however, did produce some sizable partici-

pation impacts and also increased employment retention and advancement, as discussed in more detail below.

Effectiveness Findings

- **Out of the twelve ERA programs included in the report, three programs — one in each target grouping — produced positive economic impacts: the Texas (Corpus Christi and Fort Worth sites), Chicago, and Riverside PASS ERA programs.**

Table 6.1 indicates which ERA programs produced impacts on three key outcomes: average quarterly employment, working four consecutive quarters, and total earnings. (Survey-based impacts are not shown because they cover only one year of follow-up for all 12 models and because longer-term survey data are available only for three programs.) Increases in employment retention and earnings were largest and most consistent over time in the Texas ERA program in Corpus Christi, in the Chicago ERA program, and in the Riverside PASS ERA program. The Texas ERA program in Fort Worth improved over time and produced gains in Years 2 and 3. Each of these three ERA programs served a different target group, which suggests that employment retention and advancement programs can work for a range of populations.

- **In the Chicago and Riverside PASS ERA programs, which provided services to employed individuals, impacts were driven by entering another job after random assignment — not by staying stably employed at the original job.**

Of the three programs that produced positive impacts, two of them initiated services after people had found jobs (postemployment programs), and one of them (referred to here as a "preemployment program") initiated services before people found jobs. It might be expected that the postemployment programs would achieve their impacts by lengthening the amount of time that people stayed in the job they held when they entered the program. However, in both of these postemployment programs, the impacts reflect participants' entering new jobs at greater rates than control group members, either directly from another job or after a period of unemployment.

This result suggests that even programs designed to affect employment retention and advancement among those already working should be very deliberate about how job change and job loss are addressed. Job changes and reemployment needs may present opportunities to improve outcomes. Job losses, for example, can be analyzed to understand the reasons why people lost their jobs and can lead to developing plans to avoid job loss in the future. Similarly, job changes can be used as a way to place individuals into better jobs. In addition, this result

suggests that a focus on employment retention, rather than job retention, may be more effective or more realistic.

Conclusions

This section makes several points regarding the effectiveness of the ERA programs in increasing employment retention and advancement goals. Then, reflections from the implementation analysis are presented.

- **The results revealed some strategies that can be effective in promoting employment retention and advancement for welfare recipients and other low-income groups.**

Table 6.2 highlights the features of these three programs. Caution should be exercised when trying to identify promising program features, however, as some of the programs lacking positive impacts also contained some of these features and it is not clear which features "drove" the impacts in any given site. Two findings from the research literature can help place these findings in context. With regard to the Texas findings, several studies have now shown that programs that provide financial incentives to supplement earnings in combination with services can promote employment retention among low-wage workers.[6] With regard to the Chicago program, nonexperimental work has suggested that low-wage workers often advance by changing jobs, and that matching individuals with jobs in particular firms that pay higher wages can be an effective strategy to promote advancement.[7] The fact that these strategies have been found to be effective in previous research as well as in this study lends additional evidence that these are promising strategies to promote employment retention and advancement.

- **Improving employment retention and advancement remains a challenge.**

Three-fourths of the ERA programs included in this report did not produce gains in the targeted outcomes beyond what control group members were able to attain on their own with the existing set of services and supports. This suggests that, despite a range of programs and approaches and significant effort by staff and program managers, gains in employment retention and advancement are difficult to attain. In addition, even among the programs that produced improvements in retention and advancement outcomes, wages remained very low, and many of

[6]Gennetian, Miller, and Smith (2005); Huston et al. (2003); Michalopoulos et al. (2002); Riccio et al. (2008).

[7]Andersson, Holzer, and Lane (2005). Indeed, a recent nonexperimental analysis of the employment patterns of ERA sample members confirmed that job change was associated with higher wages for median-earnings ample members (Miller, Deitch, and Hill, 2009).

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Table 6.2

Highlights of Programs That Increased Employment Retention and Advancement

	Corpus Christi, Texas Fort Worth, Texas	Chicago	Riverside Pass
Strategy	Placement, retention, and advancement: job search assistance, stipend for employed former TANF recipients, reemployment assistance, and work site visits	Advancement: job search assistance, career counseling, and reemployment assistance	Retention and advancement: reemployment assistance, career counseling, and referrals to education and training
Target population	Unemployed TANF applicants and recipients	TANF recipients who had worked at least 30 hours per week for at least 6 consecutive months	Employed former TANF recipients who recently left TANF
Service providers	Local workforce development boards under contract with nonprofit organizations	Experienced, for-profit, employment intermediary	Primarily community-based organizations and a community college
Control services	Relatively strong welfare-to-work program	Standard welfare-to-work program	Limited postemployment services
Participation highlights	In Corpus Christi, 30 percent took up the financial incentive; 20 percent did so in the other Texas sites. Increased percentages receiving help with retention and advancement in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth.	Increased percentages receiving help in finding a better job while working and in getting other forms of retention and advancement help.	While increases in participation were not large, participation data are for a cohort that had few positive economic impacts.[a]
Economic impacts	Increased employment retention and advancement in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth but not in Houston	Increased employment retention and advancement and reduced welfare receipt	Increased employment retention and advancement

SOURCES: ERA 12-Month Survey, administrative records, and interim reports.

NOTES: [a]Participation impacts in this report are based on client survey data. As detailed in the text, survey response issues were present in the Riverside PASS site. Analysis of program data suggested that only the Riverside PASS program may have increased the use of a broader range of services. These data are not used in this report because they only capture services reported to the welfare department by ERA service providers.

these families remained in poverty at the end of the follow-up period. It is also important to consider, however, that ERA was a test of multiple strategies rather than a demonstration of a few promising programs. Chapter 1 notes that before the ERA project began, there was not much evidence of programs that could improve employment retention and advancement outcomes for current or former welfare recipients. The ERA evaluation has revealed three distinct approaches that seem promising and worthy of further exploration.

* * *

While this report presents the final impact estimates of many of the ERA programs, it is not the final word from the ERA project. Further analysis is being conducted of the rich ERA databases to try to shed light on which program features, participant characteristics, institutional arrangements, or economic contexts were most associated with improvements in employment retention and advancement. In addition, other publications will consider the costs and benefits of selected ERA programs, the employment and training dynamics of the ERA sample, and the employment patterns of ERA sample members in two-parent families. A series of practice briefs will also probe more deeply and extract lessons for those who operate and staff retention and advancement programs. Finally, a synthesis document will consider the policy, practice, and research lessons learned from the whole of the ERA project.

Appendix A

Supplementary Exhibits for Chapter 3: Programs Serving Unemployed TANF Recipients

Appendix A presents supplementary boxes and tables relating to the Texas, Los Angeles EJC, and Salem ERA tests.

Box

Table

Table

Appendix Box A.1

Program Summary: The Texas ERA Program in Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston

"Combining financial incentives with postemployment services for work and retention"

Goal: Job placement, job retention, and career advancement for unemployed TANF applicants and recipients

Locations: Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Houston

Target population: Unemployed TANF applicants and recipients

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth from October 2000 to January 2003 and in Houston from March 2001 to December 2002. All sites operated the ERA program from the beginning of random assignment to August 2004.

Management structure: Operated by local nonprofit organizations contracted by Local Workforce Development Boards

Participation requirements: Preemployment programs were mandatory for individuals while they were receiving TANF; however, participation was not required after leaving TANF. In order to receive the stipend, individuals were required to exhaust their TANF earnings disregard, work 30 hours per week, submit necessary documentation, and attend some type of employment-related activity each month.

Outreach and marketing: Due to low initial take-up of the stipend, staff developed new marketing strategies. Stipend marketing was strong in Corpus Christi, was initially limited in Fort Worth, and was very weak until late in Houston.

Staff-client engagement:

- The staff-client relationship was initiated during preemployment services and continued after individuals found employment.
- Services were tailored to individual participants, with limited flexibility in meeting times and locations.
- Client assessment was aimed toward development of career plans.

Initial job preparation and placement services: One-week job search workshop, including job search resources, résumé development, and interviewing techniques, followed by three to five weeks of directed individual job search

Retention services:

- Individualized assistance with job-related issues
- Monthly stipend of $200 for former TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week

Advancement services: Corpus Christi staff discussed participants' career paths and the requirements to obtain the ideal job, and they made site visits to employers. Similar services developed over time in Fort Worth and Houston.

(continued)

Appendix Box A.1 (continued)

Employer linkages: Strong in Corpus Christi, gained strength in Fort Worth, and limited in Houston

Key funding source: State TANF program; stipend funded by AFDC sanction resettlement funds

Implementation challenges:

- All the sites faced staffing shortages and caseloads that were higher than intended.
- Stipend receipt rates were lower than expected.

Appendix Box A.2

Program Summary:
Los Angeles EJC (Enhanced Job Club)

"A mandatory, enhanced job club focused on finding jobs within careers of interest"

Goal: Place unemployed TANF recipients in targeted and promotable jobs within an identified field of interest

Locations: San Gabriel Valley region and Central Los Angeles region of Los Angeles County

Target population: Unemployed TANF recipients

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from June 2002 through September 2004. Job clubs ran from the beginning of random assignment through December 2004.

Management structure: Jointly operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services and the Los Angeles County Office of Education

Participation requirements: Mandatory participation in job club workshops in order to continue receiving the TANF grant

Outreach and marketing: Because participation was mandatory, staff did not recruit individuals or attempt to engage participants prior to the scheduled start date of their job club.

Staff-client engagement:

- Workshops were conducted during standard office hours at the program workshop offices.
- Ongoing staff-client relationships were not a priority of the model, and staff did not attempt to stay in contact with participants (employed or not) after they left the job club.

Initial job preparation and placement services: Job search activities were organized as a step-down approach, targeting a specific range of jobs within an occupational field of interest defined by the participant.

Retention services: Did not provide specific services in this area but addressed it in indirect ways, such as encouraging participants to meet employers' expectations for work site behavior and ensuring that participants made arrangements for child care and transportation needs in preparation for employment.

Advancement services:

- Career development activities — formulation of a career plan and a list of targeted and promotable jobs that participants attempted to find
- Quick access to education and training if unable to find suitable employment
- Encouraged blending part-time work with participation in education or training

Employer linkages: Minimal strategies to involve employers in job placement or career development activities

Key funding source: State TANF program

Implementation challenges: Implemented largely as designed

Appendix Box A.3

Program Summary: Salem

"Combining pre- and postemployment services for success in a field of interest"

Goal: Job placement, job retention, and career advancement among unemployed TANF applicants

Location: Salem, Oregon

Target population: Unemployed TANF applicants

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from May 2002 to May 2004, and the program operated from the beginning of random assignment to June 2005.

Management structure: Jointly operated by the welfare agency (DHS) and Chemeketa Community College. Staff were colocated at the Winema Career Center (a WIA One-Stop Career Center).

Participation requirements: Mandatory participation in the preemployment job search to continue to receive TANF grant; postemployment services were voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: Staff conducted intake meetings and orientation sessions with the marketing of ERA program services, emphasizing the program's enhanced customer service and ongoing postemployment services.

Staff-client engagement: Services were tailored to individual participants' interests and employment barriers, with flexibility in the scheduling and location of staff-client meetings. Frequent contact was made with engaged participants through workshops and regular check-ins.

Initial job preparation and placement services: Preemployment workshops and one-on-one assistance from program staff to address long-term career interests and employment barriers and provide support services

Retention services: Staff were unable to provide postemployment services consistently.

Advancement services: Preemployment workshops, including advancement messages, career interest assessments, and career path activities

Employer linkages: Staff were unsure of how to approach employers. Participants repeated that they did not want program staff involved in their work relationships.

Key funding source: State TANF program

Implementation challenges:

- Staff lacked experience in providing retention and advancement services.
- Higher-than-anticipated caseloads made it difficult for staff to focus on postemployment services.
- State hiring freeze affected job opportunities available to participants as well as the program's staffing.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.1

Impacts on Contacts, Services and Participation at the 12-Month Survey

Corpus Christi

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	60.2	47.7	12.5 **	0.041
Average number of contacts with staff	6.6	6.4	0.3	0.889
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	27.2	16.5	10.7 **	0.036
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	17.8	2.1	15.7 ***	0.000
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	43.6	33.2	10.4 *	0.063
Received help with basic needs (%)	38.6	46.1	-7.5	0.229
Received help with public benefits (%)	74.8	71.5	3.3	0.548
Received help with job preparation (%)	43.2	39.6	3.6	0.562
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	28.5	14.0	14.6 ***	0.003
Finding a better job while working	13.6	3.9	9.7 ***	0.006
Other activities while working	11.8	2.2	9.6 ***	0.002
Career assessment	17.8	7.4	10.4 **	0.010
Dealing with problems on the job	8.4	1.5	6.9 ***	0.009
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	8.1	5.1	3.0	0.338
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	74.0	67.6	6.4	0.250
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	62.0	58.2	3.8	0.531
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.0	58.2	3.8	0.531
Group job search/job club	48.3	42.9	5.3	0.382
Individual job search	49.9	42.7	7.2	0.245
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	30.6	22.7	7.9	0.150
ABE/GED and ESL	12.0	8.1	3.9	0.273
College courses	15.0	12.0	3.1	0.436
Vocational training	5.3	4.4	1.0	0.719
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	4.3	1.3	2.9	0.157
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	19.2	13.4	5.9	0.200
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	17.1	15.3	1.8	0.695
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	3.9	3.6	0.3	0.743
Education/training activities	5.7	5.2	0.5	0.760
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.4	0.4	0	0.940
Sample size (total = 290)	141	149		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, on-the-job training, or had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.2

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Corpus Christi

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1						
Ever employed (%)	72.7	73.8	-1.0		0.610	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	52.5	49.6	2.9	*	0.099	1.7
Employed every quarter (%)	30.0	26.1	3.9	*	0.057	2.0
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	11.7	10.7	1.0		0.486	1.4
Annual earnings ($)	3,990	3,563	428	**	0.044	212
Ever received TANF (%)	81.8	78.3	3.6	*	0.061	1.9
Ever received food stamps (%)	95.9	95.9	0.0		0.969	0.9
Total income[a] ($)	7,758	7,413	344	*	0.089	202
Follow-Up Year 2						
Ever employed (%)	70.3	68.2	2.1		0.325	2.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	52.1	49.2	2.9		0.117	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	33.2	31.1	2.0		0.333	2.1
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	17.7	15.5	2.2		0.184	1.7
Annual earnings ($)	4,738	4,279	460	*	0.086	267
Ever received TANF (%)	37.4	43.4	-6.0	***	0.008	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	82.8	85.1	-2.3		0.173	1.7
Total income[a] ($)	7,655	7,455	200		0.440	259
Follow-Up Year 3						
Ever employed (%)	69.1	63.7	5.5	**	0.011	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	50.6	46.5	4.1	**	0.029	1.9
Employed every quarter (%)	32.2	29.8	2.4		0.251	2.1
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	23.0	17.5	5.5	***	0.002	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	5,399	4,624	775	**	0.014	316
Ever received TANF (%)	24.3	28.1	-3.8	*	0.064	2.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	77.1	79.4	-2.2		0.234	1.9
Total income[a] ($)	8,183	7,623	560	*	0.069	307
Follow-Up Year 4						
Ever employed (%)	67.5	63.0	4.5	**	0.038	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	51.5	46.7	4.8	**	0.012	1.9
Employed every quarter (%)	34.3	29.8	4.5	**	0.036	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	21.4	19.4	2.0		0.268	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	5,915	5,018	896	**	0.013	360
Ever received TANF (%)	17.7	18.3	-0.6		0.741	1.8
Ever received food stamps (%)	75.8	77.0	-1.2		0.548	1.9
Total income[a] ($)	8,699	7,904	795	**	0.025	354
Sample size (total = 1,727)	870	857				

(continued)

Appendix Table A.2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Total income does not include the value of the stipend.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.3

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Corpus Christi

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	1.8	1.6	0.3 *	0.063
Average quarterly employment (%)	51.7	48.0	3.7 **	0.012
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	11.6	10.7	0.9	0.535
1-25	18.7	26.1	-7.4 ***	0.000
26-50	21.1	18.4	2.7	0.156
51-75	19.2	18.5	0.7	0.706
76-100	29.5	26.4	3.1	0.130
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	11.6	9.0	2.6 *	0.068
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	63.4	56.9	6.5 ***	0.003
Average number of employers during follow-up period	4.3	4.1	0.2	0.201
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	11.6	10.7	0.9	0.535
1 to 2	25.9	29.3	-3.4	0.112
3 to 4	23.7	24.2	-0.5	0.802
5 to 8	25.2	24.6	0.7	0.744
More than 8	13.7	11.3	2.3	0.135
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	5.3	4.8	0.5 **	0.038
Number of quarters until first employment spell	3.3	3.1	0.2	0.393
Average number of employment spells	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.922
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	6.4	6.0	0.4 **	0.044
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	11.6	10.7	0.9	0.535
1 to 2	16.6	23.6	-7.0 ***	0.000
3 to 4	16.7	15.9	0.8	0.637
5 to 8	24.4	21.7	2.7	0.179
9 to 12	13.2	13.0	0.3	0.870
13 to 16	17.5	15.2	2.3	0.178

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.7	1.8	-0.1	0.184
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.1	6.6	-0.4 *	0.057
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	11.6	9.0	2.6 *	0.068
1 to 2	20.4	18.9	1.5	0.416
3 to 4	17.6	16.2	1.5	0.409
5 to 8	21.5	24.1	-2.6	0.197
9 to 12	12.0	13.5	-1.5	0.337
13 to 16	17.0	18.4	-1.4	0.414
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,011	4,371	640 ***	0.007
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	11.6	10.7	0.9	0.535
$1-$1,999	30.3	37.4	-7.1 ***	0.001
$2,000-$4,999	21.7	19.8	1.9	0.326
$5,000-$9,999	20.0	18.3	1.7	0.356
$10,000-$14,999	8.7	8.3	0.4	0.750
$15,000-$19,999	5.0	3.9	1.2	0.236
$20,000 or higher	2.6	1.7	1.0	0.134
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	16.4	13.8	2.6	0.108
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	12.8	10.9	1.9 **	0.045
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	11.6	10.7	0.9	0.535
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	50.8	54.4	-3.5	0.127
1 to 2	14.2	14.0	0.2	0.914
3 to 4	6.6	5.4	1.2	0.309
5 to 8	7.1	7.9	-0.8	0.523
9 to 12	5.4	6.0	-0.6	0.611
13 to 16	4.3	1.7	2.6 ***	0.001
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	15.1	15.8	-0.7	0.653
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	17.4	21.2	-3.8 **	0.046
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.5	2.8	0.7	0.419
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	15.8	15.7	0.1	0.934
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	12.2	10.4	1.8	0.243
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.5	4.2	-0.7	0.450
Earnings increased by $250 or more	32.5	29.8	2.6	0.224
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*2,424*	*2,277*	*147*	
Sample size (total = 1,727)	870	857		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. Zeroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.4

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Corpus Christi

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	76.8	70.2	6.6	0.227
Currently employed	53.0	47.8	5.2	0.399
No longer employed	23.8	21.8	2.1	0.699
Current working status (%)				
Full time	37.3	33.8	3.5	0.531
Part time	15.7	14.0	1.6	0.716
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	10.3	9.7	0.6	0.862
Hours				
Average hours per week	17.2	16.5	0.7	0.738
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	15.7	14.0	1.6	0.716
30-34	12.0	6.8	5.3	0.147
35-44	20.3	20.4	-0.2	0.974
45 or more	5.1	6.6	-1.6	0.574
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	5.6	8.8	-3.2	0.322
$5.00 - $6.99	23.9	20.4	3.5	0.496
$7.00 - $8.99	14.8	11.5	3.4	0.416
$9.00 or more	8.7	7.2	1.5	0.656
Average weekly earnings ($)	123	110	13	0.466
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	22.5	19.7	2.8	0.579
$201-$300	20.3	16.4	3.9	0.401
$301-$500	7.0	10.9	-3.9	0.270
$500 or more	3.3	1.0	2.3	0.159
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	13.0	11.9	1.1	0.792
Paid vacation	18.6	11.2	7.4 *	0.083
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	16.5	15.3	1.2	0.784
Dental benefits	13.2	11.0	2.2	0.585
A retirement plan	13.3	10.2	3.1	0.429
A health plan or medical insurance	16.1	12.9	3.2	0.446

(continued)

Appendix Table A.4 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	30.1	27.9	2.2	0.690
Split shift	-0.1	1.4	-1.5	0.159
Irregular	2.2	3.3	-1.1	0.588
Evening shift	5.7	7.4	-1.7	0.579
Night shift	1.8	3.0	-1.2	0.533
Rotating shift	10.4	1.5	8.9 ***	0.002
Other schedule	1.1	1.0	0.1	0.928
Odd job	1.8	2.4	-0.6	0.727
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	38.3	32.9	5.4	0.352
Work with computers	24.8	16.8	7.9	0.104
Arithmetic skills	30.4	21.6	8.7	0.102
Customer contact	47.7	42.8	4.9	0.422
Sample size (total = 290)	141	149		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.5

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Fort Worth

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Contacts					
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	63.0	44.9	18.1	**	0.014
Average number of contacts with staff	14.0	5.2	8.9	***	0.007
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	29.7	9.0	20.7	***	0.001
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	8.4	1.4	7.0	**	0.035
Services					
Received help with support services (%)	54.6	43.5	11.2		0.122
Received help with basic needs (%)	40.6	48.6	-8.0		0.309
Received help with public benefits (%)	66.0	71.1	-5.1		0.478
Received help with job preparation (%)	52.1	42.8	9.4		0.231
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	31.0	10.9	20.1	***	0.002
Finding a better job while working	13.5	2.7	10.7	**	0.012
Other activities while working	13.3	2.9	10.4	**	0.015
Career assessment	20.9	6.0	14.9	***	0.005
Dealing with problems on the job	5.8	1.7	4.1		0.177
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	5.4	3.2	2.2		0.480
Participation					
Participated in any activity (%)	88.7	77.5	11.2	*	0.060
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	78.1	74.2	3.9		0.570
Participated in a job search activity (%)	77.4	72.7	4.6		0.500
Group job search/job club	62.7	49.3	13.4	*	0.086
Individual job search	67.2	66.9	0.2		0.974
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	38.7	29.5	9.2		0.193
ABE/GED and ESL	20.7	16.7	4.0		0.464
College courses	11.9	10.5	1.4		0.762
Vocational training	11.1	7.0	4.1		0.362
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	14.7	11.9	2.8		0.595
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	12.9	10.6	2.3		0.608
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	20.7	16.6	4.1		0.507
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	15.3	12.4	2.9		0.365
Education/training activities	7.7	6.6	1.1		0.634
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	2.8	1.5	1.2		0.329
Sample size (total = 188)	92	96			

(continued)

Appendix Table A.5 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.6

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Fort Worth

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	1.4	1.4	0.1	0.609
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.5	46.9	1.6	0.274
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	13.1	15.0	-2.0	0.226
1-25	21.4	21.6	-0.2	0.934
26-50	19.5	19.0	0.5	0.796
51-75	20.1	19.3	0.8	0.692
76-100	26.0	25.2	0.8	0.682
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	8.5	8.4	0.1	0.943
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	61.3	58.5	2.8	0.214
Average number of employers during follow-up period	4.0	4.1	-0.1	0.625
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	13.1	15.0	-2.0	0.226
1 to 2	28.7	27.4	1.3	0.576
3 to 4	21.3	19.0	2.3	0.266
5 to 8	25.7	26.4	-0.7	0.737
More than 8	11.3	12.1	-0.8	0.596
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	5.0	4.5	0.4 *	0.063
Number of quarters until first employment spell	3.6	3.9	-0.3	0.249
Average number of employment spells	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.971
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	6.1	5.8	0.3	0.153
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	13.1	15.0	-2.0	0.226
1 to 2	18.9	18.7	0.2	0.918
3 to 4	15.5	16.0	-0.5	0.792
5 to 8	23.4	22.6	0.8	0.714
9 to 12	12.4	14.2	-1.7	0.306
13 to 16	16.8	13.5	3.2 *	0.063

(continued)

Appendix Table A.6 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.654
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.6	6.9	-0.3	0.160
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	8.5	8.4	0.1	0.943
1 to 2	20.2	18.3	1.9	0.329
3 to 4	18.0	18.0	0.0	0.996
5 to 8	22.1	22.0	0.1	0.960
9 to 12	11.5	11.7	-0.2	0.913
13 to 16	19.7	21.6	-1.9	0.305
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,706	5,256	449	0.148
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	13.1	15.0	-2.0	0.226
$1-$1,999	28.8	29.2	-0.4	0.871
$2,000-$4,999	20.5	20.5	0.0	0.986
$5,000-$9,999	17.4	16.9	0.5	0.796
$10,000-$14,999	8.7	10.2	-1.5	0.301
$15,000-$19,999	6.0	3.9	2.2 **	0.048
$20,000 or higher	5.4	4.2	1.2	0.254
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	20.2	18.4	1.8	0.324
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	17.1	15.5	1.7	0.154
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	13.1	15.0	-2.0	0.226
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	41.5	39.3	2.3	0.343
1 to 2	14.8	16.0	-1.2	0.512
3 to 4	7.9	7.7	0.2	0.877
5 to 8	8.9	11.7	-2.8 *	0.069
9 to 12	7.0	5.5	1.4	0.232
13 to 16	6.8	4.8	2.0 *	0.074
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	18.0	19.8	-1.8	0.336
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	18.1	18.0	0.2	0.938
Earnings decreased by less than $250	2.5	2.3	0.2	0.834
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	14.7	14.1	0.7	0.712
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	13.6	11.8	1.8	0.285
Earnings increased by less than $250	2.6	2.6	0.0	0.963
Earnings increased by $250 or more	30.3	31.5	-1.2	0.601
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*2,943*	*2,805*	*138*	
Sample size (total = 1,572)	784	788		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.6 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. Zeroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.7

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Fort Worth

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	72.1	74.7	-2.6	0.708
Currently employed	43.1	38.9	4.3	0.580
No longer employed	29.0	35.8	-6.8	0.352
Current working status (%)				
Full time	36.5	31.7	4.7	0.525
Part time	6.7	7.1	-0.5	0.911
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	15.6	9.1	6.5	0.195
Hours				
Average hours per week	16.0	14.3	1.7	0.566
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	6.7	7.1	-0.5	0.911
30-34	2.9	7.7	-4.8	0.164
35-44	27.6	17.3	10.3	0.123
45 or more	6.0	6.8	-0.8	0.840
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	5.8	9.1	-3.3	0.417
$5.00 - $6.99	11.3	10.0	1.2	0.797
$7.00 - $8.99	13.7	10.8	2.9	0.556
$9.00 or more	12.4	9.0	3.4	0.460
Average weekly earnings ($)	131	101	31	0.264
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	12.0	10.4	1.6	0.752
$201-$300	13.5	17.3	-3.8	0.505
$301-$500	12.5	9.9	2.6	0.589
$500 or more	5.2	1.3	4.0	0.150
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	13.0	7.3	5.7	0.208
Paid vacation	12.6	10.8	1.8	0.716
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	10.7	7.5	3.2	0.483
Dental benefits	12.1	8.2	4.0	0.393
A retirement plan	7.2	8.7	-1.5	0.722
A health plan or medical insurance	14.4	9.1	5.2	0.296

(continued)

Appendix Table A.7 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	21.2	21.4	-0.2	0.970
Split shift	0.7	2.5	-1.8	0.350
Irregular	1.6	3.7	-2.1	0.382
Evening shift	1.7	4.6	-2.9	0.305
Night shift	5.4	1.1	4.4	0.114
Rotating shift	7.2	0.4	6.9 **	0.019
Other schedule	1.2	-0.1	1.3	0.265
Odd job	4.2	5.4	-1.2	0.707
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	31.1	25.4	5.8	0.395
Work with computers	18.6	7.2	11.4 **	0.015
Arithmetic skills	23.7	13.8	9.9 *	0.088
Customer contact	38.3	33.1	5.3	0.487
Sample size (total = 188)	92	96		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.8

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Houston

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	59.5	58.4	1.1	0.853
Average number of contacts with staff	9.7	6.1	3.6	0.118
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	21.0	20.1	1.0	0.836
Staff/case manager ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	5.4	8.9	-3.5	0.252
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	42.7	41.5	1.1	0.842
Received help with basic needs (%)	43.6	50.8	-7.2	0.212
Received help with public benefits (%)	57.7	71.1	-13.4 **	0.017
Received help with job preparation (%)	42.0	40.8	1.2	0.834
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	24.0	18.3	5.7	0.233
Finding a better job while working	10.0	5.4	4.6	0.135
Other activities while working	14.7	3.4	11.3 ***	0.001
Career assessment	12.4	11.2	1.1	0.756
Dealing with problems on the job	11.7	6.4	5.3	0.111
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	7.5	7.3	0.1	0.967
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	82.8	78.8	4.1	0.378
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	80.1	70.7	9.4 *	0.059
Participated in a job search activity (%)	79.6	69.1	10.4 **	0.038
Group job search/job club	59.8	51.9	7.9	0.172
Individual job search	67.7	59.5	8.1	0.141
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	35.2	34.9	0.3	0.960
ABE/GED and ESL	19.4	21.7	-2.2	0.606
College courses	12.8	10.1	2.8	0.441
Vocational training	7.9	9.6	-1.6	0.626
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	6.9	10.7	-3.8	0.254
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	14.9	10.0	4.9	0.206
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	24.6	15.1	9.5 **	0.033
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	10.1	7.0	3.1 **	0.033
Education/training activities	6.1	4.3	1.8	0.193
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	1.3	1.4	-0.2	0.823
Sample size (total = 297)	150	147		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.8 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.9

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Houston

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1						
Ever employed (%)	64.4	63.8	0.6		0.758	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	42.6	43.7	-1.1		0.476	1.6
Employed every quarter (%)	21.2	23.2	-2.1		0.239	1.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	12.4	13.9	-1.6		0.268	1.4
Annual earnings ($)	3,806	3,936	-130		0.572	230
Ever received TANF (%)	85.7	84.0	1.7		0.256	1.5
Ever received food stamps (%)	91.5	91.6	-0.2		0.878	1.2
Total income[a] ($)	7,857	7,888	-31		0.888	220
Follow-Up Year 2						
Ever employed (%)	60.0	58.8	1.3		0.537	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	43.3	41.7	1.6		0.359	1.7
Employed every quarter (%)	26.1	24.5	1.5		0.411	1.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	17.1	17.5	-0.4		0.804	1.6
Annual earnings ($)	4,576	4,568	7		0.980	282
Ever received TANF (%)	56.0	51.3	4.8	**	0.022	2.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	82.1	80.2	1.9		0.232	1.6
Total income[a] ($)	8,070	8,011	59		0.827	269
Follow-Up Year 3						
Ever employed (%)	59.4	60.3	-1.0		0.642	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	43.0	43.3	-0.2		0.896	1.7
Employed every quarter (%)	26.6	25.9	0.8		0.681	1.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	17.6	19.9	-2.3		0.159	1.6
Annual earnings ($)	4,986	5,006	-20		0.950	314
Ever received TANF (%)	42.7	42.5	0.2		0.932	2.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	79.6	80.5	-0.9		0.599	1.7
Total income[a] ($)	8,418	8,417	2		0.995	302
Follow-Up Year 4						
Ever employed (%)	59.3	59.9	-0.6		0.763	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	44.8	44.7	0.0		0.981	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	29.6	29.6	0.0		0.990	1.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	21.5	22.4	-1.0		0.580	1.7
Annual earnings ($)	5,519	5,600	-80		0.809	333
Ever received TANF (%)	32.8	30.6	2.2		0.273	2.0
Ever received food stamps (%)	77.7	77.1	0.6		0.736	1.8
Total income[a] ($)	9,029	8,893	136		0.673	322
Sample size (total = 2,032)	1,009	1,023				

(continued)

Appendix Table A.9 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Total income does not include the value of the stipend.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.10

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Houston

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	1.4	1.6	-0.2	0.140
Average quarterly employment (%)	43.4	43.3	0.1	0.963
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	18.0	16.9	1.2	0.461
1-25	23.0	23.8	-0.8	0.653
26-50	19.2	19.6	-0.5	0.798
51-75	16.7	17.9	-1.2	0.454
76-100	23.1	21.8	1.4	0.431
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	7.5	8.5	-1.0	0.385
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	54.9	53.4	1.6	0.443
Average number of employers during follow-up period	3.2	3.2	0.0	0.815
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	18.0	16.9	1.2	0.461
1 to 2	31.0	33.2	-2.2	0.292
3 to 4	24.3	24.1	0.2	0.920
5 to 8	20.6	20.9	-0.3	0.861
More than 8	6.2	5.0	1.2	0.254
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	4.2	4.4	-0.2	0.349
Number of quarters until first employment spell	4.5	4.5	0.1	0.817
Average number of employment spells	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.696
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	5.3	5.4	-0.1	0.656
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	18.0	16.9	1.2	0.461
1 to 2	19.8	20.6	-0.8	0.637
3 to 4	16.5	16.9	-0.5	0.776
5 to 8	23.2	21.4	1.8	0.321
9 to 12	9.9	10.8	-0.9	0.511
13 to 16	12.7	13.5	-0.8	0.594

(continued)

Appendix Table A.10 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.8	1.7	0.1	0.142
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	7.5	7.5	0.0	0.990
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	7.5	8.5	-1.0	0.385
1 to 2	18.1	15.7	2.4	0.134
3 to 4	14.3	14.0	0.3	0.853
5 to 8	20.8	23.1	-2.4	0.193
9 to 12	13.7	13.5	0.3	0.869
13 to 16	25.6	25.2	0.4	0.817
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	4,722	4,777	-56	0.819
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	18.0	16.9	1.2	0.461
$1-$1,999	31.6	31.2	0.4	0.857
$2,000-$4,999	17.2	19.6	-2.5	0.146
$5,000-$9,999	17.6	15.6	2.0	0.215
$10,000-$14,999	9.1	8.7	0.4	0.777
$15,000-$19,999	3.2	4.9	-1.7 *	0.053
$20,000 or higher	3.4	3.1	0.3	0.720
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	15.7	16.7	-1.0	0.484
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	12.9	13.8	-0.9	0.303
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	18.0	16.9	1.2	0.461
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	43.9	43.6	0.3	0.897
1 to 2	12.7	13.9	-1.1	0.451
3 to 4	7.0	7.2	-0.2	0.848
5 to 8	9.8	8.2	1.6	0.204
9 to 12	5.2	5.9	-0.6	0.524
13 to 16	3.4	4.4	-1.0	0.187
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	22.5	21.4	1.0	0.538
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	18.2	18.7	-0.4	0.803
Earnings decreased by less than $250	2.6	1.4	1.2 **	0.045
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	13.8	15.2	-1.4	0.351
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	13.2	14.8	-1.7	0.282
Earnings increased by less than $250	2.5	2.2	0.4	0.602
Earnings increased by $250 or more	27.0	26.1	0.9	0.631
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*2,719*	*2,755*	*-36*	
Sample size (total = 2,032)	1,009	1,023		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.10 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. Zeroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.11

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Houston

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	62.4	64.2	-1.8	0.753
Currently employed	40.9	35.2	5.7	0.327
No longer employed	21.6	29.0	-7.4	0.143
Current working status (%)				
Full time	32.6	23.8	8.8 *	0.094
Part time	8.2	11.4	-3.2	0.370
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	15.1	9.8	5.3	0.174
Hours				
Average hours per week	14.2	11.7	2.4	0.245
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	8.2	11.4	-3.2	0.370
30-34	6.3	1.8	4.5 *	0.054
35-44	22.4	19.3	3.2	0.513
45 or more	4.0	2.8	1.2	0.575
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	5.5	4.6	0.9	0.732
$5.00 - $6.99	8.0	10.9	-3.0	0.387
$7.00 - $8.99	17.9	10.3	7.6 *	0.064
$9.00 or more	9.5	9.4	0.1	0.976
Average weekly earnings ($)	104	98	6	0.736
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	13.0	11.9	1.1	0.783
$201-$300	14.7	9.5	5.2	0.180
$301-$500	13.2	10.4	2.8	0.470
$500 or more	0.0	3.4	-3.4 **	0.025
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	12.8	14.2	-1.4	0.729
Paid vacation	16.0	15.0	1.0	0.812
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	16.6	10.9	5.7	0.161
Dental benefits	13.4	10.1	3.3	0.388
A retirement plan	10.7	8.8	1.9	0.594
A health plan or medical insurance	16.1	12.2	3.9	0.342

(continued)

Appendix Table A.11 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	24.6	18.5	6.1	0.204
Split shift	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.455
Irregular	0.6	2.1	-1.6	0.234
Evening shift	3.2	5.6	-2.5	0.311
Night shift	2.0	2.7	-0.7	0.713
Rotating shift	7.7	4.4	3.4	0.232
Other schedule	2.0	0.0	2.0 *	0.095
Odd job	0.2	1.8	-1.6	0.155
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	26.7	26.5	0.2	0.976
Work with computers	16.4	13.9	2.6	0.544
Arithmetic skills	22.7	23.1	-0.4	0.939
Customer contact	38.1	32.5	5.6	0.327
Sample size (total = 297)	150	147		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.12

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey:

Los Angeles EJC

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	42.1	53.9	-11.8 ***	0.004
Average number of contacts with staff	7.3	7.9	-0.6	0.701
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	16.2	20.1	-3.9	0.220
Staff/case manager ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	7.2	5.8	1.4	0.487
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	46.4	48.4	-2.0	0.629
Received help with basic needs (%)	42.2	45.0	-2.8	0.485
Received help with public benefits (%)	59.8	63.0	-3.2	0.429
Received help with job preparation (%)	47.4	46.0	1.5	0.717
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	21.9	18.8	3.1	0.362
Finding a better job while working	4.6	6.6	-2.0	0.303
Other activities while working	5.6	3.6	2.0	0.250
Career assessment	15.9	12.0	4.0	0.169
Dealing with problems on the job	5.4	5.1	0.2	0.899
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	6.9	4.9	2.0	0.296
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	77.3	76.6	0.7	0.850
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	71.4	70.4	1.1	0.781
Participated in a job search activity (%)	70.8	70.0	0.9	0.818
Group job search/job club	62.1	61.2	0.9	0.824
Individual job search	48.1	48.9	-0.8	0.848
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	36.2	41.5	-5.3	0.190
ABE/GED and ESL	17.1	17.1	0.0	0.997
College courses	13.5	17.6	-4.1	0.158
Vocational training	14.8	13.8	1.0	0.743
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	6.9	5.9	0.9	0.650
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	11.4	12.9	-1.5	0.571
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	10.4	11.0	-0.6	0.805
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	5.4	6.3	-0.9	0.215
Education/training activities	7.4	7.8	-0.4	0.734
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.9	1.5	-0.5	0.308
Sample size (total = 608)	311	297		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.12 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discuseed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.13

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Los Angeles EJC

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	65.7	65.7	-0.1	0.982	2.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	46.4	43.9	2.5	0.248	2.2
Employed every quarter (%)	28.1	23.8	4.3 *	0.080	2.4
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	23.5	20.3	3.3	0.159	2.3
Annual earnings ($)	5,429	5,031	397	0.322	401
Ever received TANF (%)	99.3	99.2	0.1	0.815	0.5
Ever received food stamps (%)	93.6	93.0	0.6	0.635	1.3
Total income ($)	13,740	13,316	424	0.258	375
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	64.8	67.1	-2.3	0.383	2.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	49.7	50.3	-0.6	0.809	2.4
Employed every quarter (%)	34.9	33.8	1.1	0.679	2.7
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	30.8	33.9	-3.1	0.240	2.6
Annual earnings ($)	7,615	7,845	-230	0.672	542
Ever received TANF (%)	81.0	80.5	0.5	0.831	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	73.4	74.5	-1.1	0.650	2.5
Total income ($)	13,504	13,343	160	0.751	505
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	65.7	66.1	-0.4	0.881	2.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	52.2	51.5	0.7	0.760	2.4
Employed every quarter (%)	37.4	37.0	0.3	0.906	2.7
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	33.7	36.2	-2.5	0.354	2.7
Annual earnings ($)	8,875	9,098	-223	0.715	610
Ever received TANF (%)	58.2	57.3	0.9	0.757	2.8
Ever received food stamps (%)	55.2	52.3	2.9	0.291	2.8
Total income ($)	13,425	13,467	-42	0.943	583
Sample size (total = 1,183)	598	585			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.14

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Los Angeles EJC

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	1.8	1.4	0.4 **	0.011
Average quarterly employment (%)	49.5	48.6	0.9	0.640
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	17.4	17.2	0.2	0.925
1-25	17.7	19.2	-1.5	0.516
26-50	18.0	17.5	0.5	0.818
51-75	17.2	19.7	-2.5	0.261
76-100	29.7	26.4	3.3	0.188
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	16.4	11.3	5.1 ***	0.010
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	56.3	55.6	0.7	0.796
Average number of employers during follow-up period	2.5	2.7	-0.2	0.175
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	17.4	17.2	0.2	0.925
1 to 2	40.8	39.5	1.3	0.645
3 to 4	26.5	25.4	1.2	0.645
5 to 8	14.1	15.2	-1.1	0.601
More than 8	1.1	2.8	-1.6 **	0.043
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	4.7	4.3	0.3	0.190
Number of quarters until first employment spell	3.4	3.5	-0.2	0.461
Average number of employment spells	1.2	1.3	0.0	0.495
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	5.2	5.0	0.2	0.351
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	17.4	17.2	0.2	0.925
1 to 2	19.4	19.1	0.3	0.909
3 to 4	13.6	14.1	-0.5	0.787
5 to 8	22.0	24.6	-2.6	0.285
9 to 12	27.6	24.9	2.7	0.275

(continued)

Appendix Table A.14 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.3	1.4	-0.1 **	0.047
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.3	5.3	0.0	0.953
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	16.4	11.3	5.1 ***	0.010
1 to 2	18.9	21.7	-2.8	0.221
3 to 4	14.0	17.0	-3.1	0.149
5 to 8	24.1	23.7	0.4	0.876
9 to 12	26.7	26.3	0.4	0.867
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	7,306	7,325	-18	0.967
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	17.4	17.2	0.2	0.925
$1-$1,999	22.1	22.2	0.0	0.997
$2,000-$4,999	14.6	12.5	2.1	0.291
$5,000-$9,999	17.2	19.5	-2.3	0.311
$10,000-$14,999	10.5	12.0	-1.5	0.411
$15,000-$19,999	8.8	9.9	-1.1	0.504
$20,000 or higher	9.4	6.8	2.6 *	0.086
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	28.6	28.7	0.0	0.992
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	23.5	23.9	-0.4	0.813
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	17.4	17.2	0.2	0.925
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	30.6	28.1	2.5	0.338
1 to 2	13.3	13.7	-0.4	0.854
3 to 4	10.5	12.3	-1.8	0.328
5 to 8	15.5	16.8	-1.4	0.522
9 to 12	12.7	11.8	0.8	0.650
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	20.2	20.2	0.1	0.983
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	14.0	13.7	0.4	0.862
Earnings decreased by less than $250	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.745
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	15.3	11.7	3.7 *	0.065
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	14.1	14.1	0.0	0.995
Earnings increased by less than $250	2.0	1.9	0.1	0.927
Earnings increased by $250 or more	32.1	35.8	-3.7	0.168
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,695*	*3,773*	*-79*	
Sample size (total = 1,183)	598	585		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.14 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. Zeroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.15

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Los Angeles EJC

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	56.4	57.1	-0.7	0.868
Currently employed	37.1	36.3	0.8	0.838
No longer employed	19.4	20.8	-1.5	0.659
Current working status (%)				
Full time	27.1	27.2	-0.1	0.974
Part time	10.0	9.1	0.9	0.705
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	15.3	14.3	1.0	0.719
Hours				
Average hours per week	12.8	12.6	0.2	0.901
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	10.0	9.1	0.9	0.711
30-34	3.3	5.3	-2.0	0.224
35-44	20.3	17.9	2.4	0.449
45 or more	2.8	4.2	-1.5	0.336
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.2	1.4	-0.2	0.860
$5.00 - $6.99	5.3	6.3	-1.0	0.604
$7.00 - $8.99	14.1	11.8	2.3	0.401
$9.00 or more	16.4	16.8	-0.4	0.902
Average weekly earnings ($)	121	123	-2	0.889
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	8.2	6.9	1.3	0.562
$201-$300	10.7	9.7	0.9	0.711
$301-$500	14.4	14.3	0.1	0.969
$500 or more	3.8	5.5	-1.7	0.343
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	12.9	13.2	-0.3	0.908
Paid vacation	16.2	17.1	-0.9	0.759
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	16.2	15.1	1.1	0.715
Dental benefits	11.3	12.4	-1.1	0.674
A retirement plan	12.9	12.5	0.4	0.875
A health plan or medical insurance	13.4	15.3	-2.0	0.492

(continued)

Appendix Table A.15 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	20.2	20.7	-0.5	0.884
Split shift	1.2	1.8	-0.6	0.545
Irregular	2.3	4.3	-2.0	0.169
Evening shift	3.7	3.9	-0.3	0.857
Night shift	2.3	2.0	0.3	0.824
Rotating shift	4.1	3.1	0.9	0.545
Other schedule	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.159
Odd job	2.3	0.7	1.6	0.107
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	25.1	27.3	-2.2	0.547
Work with computers	19.0	18.5	0.5	0.873
Arithmetic skills	19.5	18.3	1.2	0.716
Customer contact	33.8	30.3	3.5	0.362
Sample size (total = 608)	311	297		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.16

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Salem

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	84.9	79.0	5.9	0.197
Average number of contacts with staff	22.0	15.4	6.6 **	0.042
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	41.7	41.0	0.7	0.907
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	12.8	9.6	3.2	0.409
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	55.0	46.9	8.1	0.167
Received help with basic needs (%)	58.3	57.1	1.2	0.838
Received help with public benefits (%)	83.1	78.2	4.8	0.303
Received help with job preparation (%)	51.0	49.6	1.4	0.815
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	34.1	20.4	13.8 **	0.011
Finding a better job while working	9.2	3.4	5.9 **	0.036
Other activities while working	20.8	12.5	8.3 *	0.067
Career assessment	16.7	9.9	6.8 *	0.098
Dealing with problems on the job	15.2	4.7	10.5 ***	0.003
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	15.8	8.1	7.6 **	0.047
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	86.5	78.1	8.4 *	0.063
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	78.1	70.5	7.7	0.140
Participated in a job search activity (%)	77.6	70.3	7.2	0.166
Group job search/job club	62.9	49.6	13.2 **	0.021
Individual job search	67.0	61.0	6.0	0.292
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	28.6	32.8	-4.1	0.462
ABE/GED and ESL	10.8	6.5	4.3	0.190
College courses	15.8	18.9	-3.0	0.494
Vocational training	5.7	11.0	-5.3	0.110
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	15.0	13.7	1.2	0.758
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	12.0	14.0	-2.0	0.618
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	23.2	12.7	10.5 **	0.023
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	14.9	8.9	6.0 ***	0.001
Education/training activities	5.0	5.5	-0.5	0.745
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	3.4	2.6	0.8	0.490
Sample size (total = 300)	152	148		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.16 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.17

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Salem

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference Impact		P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1						
Ever employed (%)	62.6	62.8	-0.2		0.939	2.4
Average quarterly employment (%)	39.9	42.3	-2.4		0.211	1.9
Employed every quarter (%)	19.2	22.0	-2.8		0.164	2.0
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	15.0	16.3	-1.3		0.483	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	3,840	4,095	-254		0.376	287
Ever received TANF (%)	64.4	57.7	6.7	***	0.007	2.5
Ever received food stamps (%)	93.5	92.3	1.2		0.339	1.3
Total income ($)	8,813	8,564	249		0.397	294
Follow-Up Year 2						
Ever employed (%)	62.0	61.1	0.9		0.715	2.4
Average quarterly employment (%)	42.8	43.9	-1.1		0.597	2.0
Employed every quarter (%)	25.4	27.6	-2.2		0.320	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	22.7	24.3	-1.6		0.448	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	5,342	5,588	-247		0.522	385
Ever received TANF (%)	42.0	35.6	6.5	***	0.008	2.4
Ever received food stamps (%)	78.4	78.3	0.1		0.958	2.0
Total income ($)	9,160	8,900	260		0.499	385
Follow-Up Year 3						
Ever employed (%)	58.6	61.7	-3.1		0.211	2.5
Average quarterly employment (%)	44.6	48.4	-3.7	*	0.082	2.2
Employed every quarter (%)	30.9	34.2	-3.4		0.151	2.3
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	27.6	29.4	-1.7		0.432	2.2
Annual earnings ($)	6,593	6,873	-280		0.528	444
Ever received TANF (%)	29.8	26.6	3.1		0.167	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	69.6	70.7	-1.1		0.622	2.3
Total income ($)	9,524	9,642	-118		0.789	439
Sample size (total = 1,504)	742	762				

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome meaures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.18

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Salem

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	1.3	1.4	-0.1	0.385
Average quarterly employment (%)	42.4	44.9	-2.4	0.153
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	18.7	19.6	-0.8	0.666
1-25	23.9	21.8	2.2	0.323
26-50	19.0	17.2	1.8	0.364
51-75	18.2	17.7	0.5	0.787
76-100	20.2	23.8	-3.7 *	0.079
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	10.1	12.9	-2.8 *	0.086
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	47.5	49.2	-1.7	0.494
Average number of employers during follow-up period	2.5	2.6	-0.1	0.333
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	18.7	19.6	-0.8	0.666
1 to 2	40.3	37.7	2.7	0.297
3 to 4	24.7	25.0	-0.3	0.879
5 to 8	13.8	15.1	-1.3	0.469
More than 8	2.5	2.7	-0.2	0.834
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	3.7	4.0	-0.4 *	0.068
Number of quarters until first employment spell	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.969
Average number of employment spells	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.349
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	4.3	4.6	-0.3	0.110
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	18.7	19.6	-0.8	0.666
1 to 2	25.8	22.5	3.3	0.132
3 to 4	14.8	15.6	-0.8	0.660
5 to 8	22.8	20.6	2.1	0.317
9 to 12	17.9	21.7	-3.8 *	0.058

(continued)

Appendix Table A.18 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.4	1.4	0.1 **	0.038
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.9	5.8	0.2	0.370
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	10.1	12.9	-2.8 *	0.086
1 to 2	16.9	16.0	0.9	0.632
3 to 4	18.1	16.9	1.3	0.525
5 to 8	23.3	23.8	-0.4	0.842
9 to 12	31.6	30.5	1.1	0.645
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	5,258	5,519	-260	0.425
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	18.7	19.6	-0.8	0.666
$1-$1,999	28.5	26.0	2.5	0.279
$2,000-$4,999	15.9	15.6	0.3	0.877
$5,000-$9,999	17.3	17.1	0.2	0.928
$10,000-$14,999	9.4	10.5	-1.1	0.492
$15,000-$19,999	5.7	6.8	-1.1	0.375
$20,000 or higher	4.4	4.4	0.1	0.956
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	19.5	21.7	-2.1	0.293
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	16.7	18.2	-1.6	0.234
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	18.7	19.6	-0.8	0.666
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	37.2	36.3	0.9	0.720
1 to 2	16.6	13.4	3.2 *	0.083
3 to 4	9.0	10.0	-1.0	0.516
5 to 8	10.5	12.7	-2.2	0.179
9 to 12	8.0	8.0	-0.1	0.967
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	22.5	22.6	-0.2	0.931
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	18.9	15.7	3.2	0.101
Earnings decreased by less than $250	1.9	2.4	-0.6	0.466
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	11.0	11.4	-0.4	0.786
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	14.9	14.6	0.4	0.844
Earnings increased by less than $250	1.2	1.6	-0.5	0.429
Earnings increased by $250 or more	29.6	31.6	-2.0	0.395
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,098*	*3,077*	*21*	
Sample size (total = 1,504)	742	762		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.18 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. Zeroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table A.19

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Salem

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	74.8	75.9	-1.1	0.835
Currently employed	40.4	44.3	-3.9	0.489
No longer employed	34.4	31.5	2.9	0.608
Current working status (%)				
Full time	30.2	33.2	-2.9	0.588
Part time	10.2	11.2	-1.0	0.781
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	14.3	15.8	-1.5	0.720
Hours				
Average hours per week	13.6	14.6	-1.0	0.636
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	10.2	11.2	-1.0	0.781
30-34	8.0	10.0	-1.9	0.571
35-44	16.3	19.0	-2.7	0.550
45 or more	5.8	4.1	1.7	0.514
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	2.7	3.3	-0.6	0.757
$5.00 - $6.99	3.1	4.3	-1.2	0.607
$7.00 - $8.99	18.9	18.4	0.5	0.922
$9.00 or more	15.7	18.3	-2.6	0.551
Average weekly earnings ($)	120	132	-11	0.599
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	9.1	12.3	-3.2	0.390
$201-$300	14.6	12.0	2.6	0.532
$301-$500	11.5	17.2	-5.7	0.164
$500 or more	5.1	2.8	2.3	0.311
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	11.6	17.8	-6.2	0.134
Paid vacation	16.1	21.3	-5.2	0.256
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Years	12.9	17.2	-4.3	0.312
Dental benefits	14.0	16.7	-2.7	0.525
A retirement plan	11.3	14.7	-3.4	0.397
A health plan or medical insurance	15.2	20.9	-5.6	0.212

(continued)

Appendix Table A.19 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	22.9	22.4	0.5	0.924
Split shift	0.5	3.5	-3.0 *	0.077
Irregular	3.5	1.8	1.6	0.381
Evening shift	4.3	5.7	-1.4	0.601
Night shift	3.9	2.8	1.1	0.613
Rotating shift	3.3	6.7	-3.4	0.185
Other schedule	0.0	0.7	-0.7	0.310
Odd job	2.0	0.7	1.3	0.323
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	31.1	38.3	-7.2	0.187
Work with computers	17.2	17.5	-0.2	0.956
Arithmetic skills	24.7	30.7	-6.0	0.225
Customer contact	34.9	38.5	-3.6	0.512
Sample size (total = 300)	152	148		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

Appendix B

Supplementary Exhibits for Chapter 4: Programs Serving Employed TANF Recipients

Appendix B presents supplementary boxes and tables relating to the Chicago, Los Angeles RFS, and Riverside Phase 2 ERA tests.

Box

Table

Table

Appendix Box B.1

Program Summary: Chicago

"Mandatory, multifaceted services provided through an employment intermediary"

Goal: Advance employed TANF recipients into higher-paying jobs

Locations: Selected welfare offices in Cook County (Chicago area)

Target population: TANF recipients who worked at least 30 hours per week for at least six consecutive months

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from February 2002 to June 2003, and the program operated from the beginning of random assignment to June 2004.

Management structure: Operated by a for-profit company, Employment and Employer Services (E&ES), under contract to DHS; included staff performance incentives

Participation requirements: Besides standard participation requirements to continue to receive the TANF grant, ERA added the additional requirement of regular contact with program staff.

Outreach and marketing: Aggressive marketing and outreach strategy with tailored messaging to participants and financial participation incentives

Staff-client engagement:

- Generic staff (not team-based) provided intense monitoring and follow-up.
- Services were tailored to individual participants, with little flexibility in meeting times and locations.

Job preparation and placement services: Though not a priority of the model, staff provided reemployment services because a substantial number of program group members were no longer employed when they first had contact with program staff.

Retention services: Though not a priority of the model's design, staff connected participants with social services and helped provide such work supports as child care subsidies.

Advancement services:

- Job search activities — Staff identified job openings with comparable or greater pay and helped with résumé writing and scheduling of and preparation for interviews.
- Career counseling — An employment plan was developed and used to identify short- and long-term goals, barriers to achieving them, and resources for overcoming them.
- Education and training — Though not a priority of the model, discussions about and referrals to these services increased over the study period.

Employer linkages: Staff had strong preexisting relationships with local employers and were required to identify jobs within those firms as part of their ERA responsibilities.

Key funding source: State TANF program, with special U.S. Department of Labor grant after unspent TANF funds were rescinded, resulting in a brief funding gap.

(continued)

Appendix Box B.1 (continued)

Implementation challenges:

- Difficulty engaging participants and maintaining their ongoing participation
- Unexpected retention and reemployment needs, which hampered advancement services
- Ever-increasing caseloads (Service eligibility was open-ended and distinct from TANF receipt.)

Appendix Box B.2

Program Summary:
Los Angeles RFS (Reach For Success)

"Highly individualized and flexible"

Goal: Help working TANF recipients retain their employment and secure better jobs

Locations: Region 1 (western Los Angeles County and neighborhoods surrounding LA airport), Region 5 (including South Central Los Angeles), and Region 6 (including East Los Angeles) of the Los Angeles County Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program

Target population: Single-parent welfare recipients who were GAIN participants and who had been working in a full-time job of 32 hours for generally more than 30 days

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from July 2002 to June 2004, and the program operated from the beginning of random assignment to June 2005.

Management structure: Operated by the Welfare-to-Work Division of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services

Participation requirements: ERA-specific activities did not introduce any additional mandatory TANF participation requirements.

Outreach and marketing: Staff conducted multifaceted outreach and marketing strategies that included the development of marketing materials, offers of off-site meetings with clients, and emphasis on the voluntary and individualized nature of services.

Staff/Client Engagement:

- Generic staff (not team-based) provided intense monitoring and follow-up.
- Services were tailored to individual participants, with considerable flexibility in meeting times and locations.

Job preparation and placement services: Not a priority of the model and not pursued by staff

Retention services:

- Due to high rates of job loss, staff provided considerable reemployment services, which focused on securing better jobs (wages, benefits, career prospects) rather than any job.
- Staff facilitated the securing of work supports and provided social service referrals.

Advancement services:

- Career counseling — Staff developed and maintained employment plans and identified short- and long-term goals, barriers to achieving those goals, and steps and services for overcoming them.
- Education and training — Staff encouraged and directed clients to education and training providers within the context of their employment plan.

Employer linkages: Not part of the model and not pursued by staff

(continued)

Appendix Box B.2 (continued)

Key funding source: TANF grant money

Implementation challenges:

- Difficulty engaging clients and maintaining their ongoing participation
- High demand for reemployment services, which often precluded delivery of advancement services
- Limited career counseling skills among staff

Appendix Box B.3

Program Summary:
Riverside Phase 2: Training Focused Group and Work Plus Group

"Balancing work and training for advancement"

Goal: Employment retention and advancement among employed TANF recipients

Locations: Riverside County, California

Target population: TANF recipients who had worked at least 20 hours per week for at least 30 days

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from January 2001 to October 2003. The Training Focused program started in September 2000 and continued through October 2006. The Work Plus program started in January 1998 and is still in operation.

Management structure: The Training Focused program was operated by the Welfare-to-Work Division of the Economic Development Agency (EDA). The Work Plus program was operated by the county welfare agency.

Participation requirements: Riverside "Phase 2" was subject to standard TANF rules that required 32 hours per week of work. Work Plus required at least 20 hours of work per week and the remaining 12 additional hours could be fulfilled by education and training participation and/or job search activities. Training Focused had no specific mix of activities that were to fulfill the weekly work requirement; in other words, all 32 weekly required hours could be fulfilled by hours of education and training participation, at least temporarily.

Outreach and marketing: Staff conducted intensive outreach, including recruitment pitches customized to participants' career and family characteristics.

Staff-client engagement:

- Generic staff (not team-based structure)
- Services tailored to individual participants
- Client assessment leading to development of employment plans
- Intense ongoing contact, with flexibility in their means, timing, and location

Job preparation and placement services: Not a priority of the model and not pursued by staff.

Retention services: Other than facilitating work supports and social service referrals, not a priority of the model and not pursued by staff

Advancement services: Education and training was the focus of both models. Work Plus staff recommended a number of providers from which participants could choose, while Training Focused staff directed participants to particular providers and programs. Work Plus prioritized addressing basic education needs before vocational training, while Training Focused supported addressing basic education needs in the context of particular skill-training programs.

(continued)

Appendix Box B.3 (continued)

Employer linkages: Not included in the model and not pursued by staff

Key funding source: Both programs were primarily funded with TANF grant money. A key resource for providing education and training services to the Training Focused program was ACCESS, a welfare-to-work grant won by EDA from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Implementation challenges:

- Difficulty engaging participants and maintaining their ongoing participation
- Unexpected retention and reemployment needs among participants
- Fluctuations in the education and training funding streams

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.1

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	61.0	31.3	29.8 ***	0.000
Average number of contacts with staff	9.8	2.8	6.9 ***	0.000
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	25.9	9.6	16.3 ***	0.000
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	12.8	4.3	8.5 ***	0.000
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	39.6	35.9	3.7	0.347
Received help with basic needs (%)	32.1	34.2	-2.1	0.591
Received help with public benefits (%)	48.0	54.8	-6.8 *	0.099
Received help with job preparation (%)	38.2	17.9	20.3 ***	0.000
Received any help with retention/advancement (%)	37.0	12.6	24.5 ***	0.000
Finding a better job while working	28.0	5.2	22.8 ***	0.000
Other activities while working	13.9	2.3	11.6 ***	0.000
Career assessment	21.7	6.7	15.1 ***	0.000
Dealing with problems on the job	8.7	4.5	4.2 **	0.043
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	7.1	1.8	5.4 ***	0.002
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	64.0	47.6	16.4 ***	0.000
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	57.1	37.8	19.4 ***	0.000
Participated in a job search activity (%)	56.5	35.7	20.7 ***	0.000
Group job search/job club	43.7	18.6	25.1 ***	0.000
Individual job search	43.4	28.5	14.9 ***	0.000
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	23.3	24.9	-1.6	0.648
ABE/GED and ESL	13.9	13.8	0.1	0.972
College courses	6.4	6.6	-0.2	0.922
Vocational training	4.5	8.0	-3.5 *	0.075
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	7.0	7.4	-0.4	0.862
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	15.4	15.0	0.4	0.904
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	22.6	11.9	10.7 ***	0.001
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	7.2	4.9	2.3 **	0.029
Education/training activities	2.9	3.3	-0.5	0.510
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.807
Sample size (total = 598)	306	292		

(continued)

Appendix Table B.1 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.2

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	69.7	66.2	3.5 **	0.031	1.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	57.7	55.3	2.4 *	0.087	1.4
Employed in every quarter (%)	45.2	43.1	2.1	0.246	1.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	30.1	27.0	3.1 *	0.084	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	6,221	6,008	214	0.354	231
Ever received TANF (%)	85.1	88.1	-3.0 *	0.067	1.6
Ever received food stamps (%)	99.5	98.8	0.8 *	0.073	0.4
Total income ($)	11,625	11,650	-26	0.909	224
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	65.4	60.8	4.6 **	0.018	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	55.0	50.1	4.9 ***	0.005	1.8
Employed in every quarter (%)	43.4	38.9	4.5 **	0.027	2.0
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	30.1	28.5	1.6	0.412	2.0
Annual earnings ($)	6,564	5,973	591 **	0.048	298
Ever received TANF (%)	31.9	46.3	-14.5 ***	0.000	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	92.0	90.8	1.1	0.393	1.3
Total income ($)	11,329	10,793	536 *	0.070	295
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	61.8	59.4	2.5	0.229	2.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	51.6	50.2	1.3	0.480	1.9
Employed in every quarter (%)	41.5	39.9	1.7	0.434	2.1
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	33.2	31.1	2.1	0.300	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	6,949	6,467	481	0.158	341
Ever received TANF (%)	20.5	28.2	-7.7 ***	0.000	2.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	86.0	84.0	2.0	0.241	1.7
Total income ($)	11,448	10,911	537	0.119	344
Follow-Up Year 4					
Ever employed (%)	65.4	64.3	1.2	0.576	2.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	55.5	53.8	1.7	0.373	1.9
Employed in every quarter (%)	44.6	43.1	1.5	0.504	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	37.9	34.4	3.4	0.106	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	8,135	7,511	624	0.108	387
Sample size (total = 1,728)	854	874			

(continued)

Appendix Table B.2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.3

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	4.5	4.4	0.2	0.417
Average quarterly employment (%)	55.0	52.4	2.6 *	0.069
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	19.5	20.8	-1.3	0.434
1-25	13.8	15.2	-1.4	0.391
26-50	13.0	12.8	0.2	0.902
51-75	12.8	13.1	-0.3	0.868
76-100	40.9	38.1	2.8	0.159
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	25.7	23.0	2.7	0.137
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	64.8	62.9	1.8	0.342
Average number of employers during follow-up period	2.1	2.0	0.1	0.329
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	19.5	20.8	-1.3	0.434
1 to 2	51.6	52.0	-0.4	0.867
3 to 4	17.7	18.6	-0.9	0.614
5 to 8	9.7	7.1	2.6 *	0.051
More than 8	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.994
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	7.0	6.6	0.4	0.149
Number of quarters until first employment spell	4.1	4.5	-0.4 *	0.072
Average number of employment spells	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.457
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	7.7	7.3	0.4 *	0.091
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	19.5	20.8	-1.3	0.434
1 to 2	10.6	11.6	-1.0	0.486
3 to 4	9.9	10.3	-0.4	0.766
5 to 8	17.5	18.2	-0.7	0.696
9 to 12	11.4	10.0	1.4	0.344
13 to 16	31.2	29.1	2.1	0.299

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.836
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	6.5	6.9	-0.4 *	0.054
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	25.7	23.0	2.7	0.137
1 to 2	13.4	13.5	-0.2	0.922
3 to 4	12.3	11.0	1.4	0.368
5 to 8	12.8	14.6	-1.7	0.293
9 to 12	10.6	9.9	0.7	0.632
13 to 16	25.2	28.1	-2.9	0.107
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	6,967	6,490	477 *	0.074
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	19.5	20.8	-1.3	0.434
$1-$1,999	15.8	16.5	-0.6	0.727
$2,000-$4,999	13.3	14.1	-0.8	0.620
$5,000-$9,999	20.2	19.4	0.8	0.666
$10,000-$14,999	17.6	18.0	-0.4	0.809
$15,000-$19,999	9.6	7.9	1.8	0.181
$20,000 or higher	4.0	3.5	0.5	0.542
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	31.2	29.3	1.9	0.340
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	21.6	19.0	2.6 **	0.035
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	19.5	20.8	-1.3	0.434
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	29.7	32.5	-2.8	0.195
1 to 2	12.9	12.3	0.6	0.694
3 to 4	7.3	7.7	-0.4	0.756
5 to 8	12.6	11.2	1.4	0.370
9 to 12	9.3	7.8	1.5	0.248
13 to 16	8.6	7.7	0.9	0.464
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	22.6	22.9	-0.4	0.814
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	12.1	12.8	-0.8	0.630
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.0	3.5	-0.5	0.596
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	13.9	12.8	1.1	0.485
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	7.8	10.8	-3.1 **	0.021
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.4	3.6	-0.2	0.797
Earnings increased by $250 or more	37.2	33.6	3.5 *	0.095
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,170*	*3,099*	*71*	
Sample size (total = 1,728)	854	874		

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.4

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	82.9	84.7	-1.9	0.536
Currently employed	67.8	67.6	0.2	0.956
No longer employed	15.0	16.8	-1.8	0.559
Current working status (%)				
Full time	54.2	55.9	-1.7	0.682
Part time	13.6	11.8	1.9	0.496
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	13.8	9.8	4.0	0.121
Hours				
Average hours per week	23.5	23.7	-0.2	0.910
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	13.6	11.8	1.9	0.496
30-34	12.8	14.0	-1.2	0.673
35-44	36.3	36.3	0.0	0.998
45 or more	5.1	4.6	0.5	0.786
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	8.3	11.1	-2.8	0.230
$5.00 - $6.99	20.6	26.7	-6.1 *	0.081
$7.00 - $8.99	26.7	18.6	8.1 **	0.018
$9.00 or more	12.2	11.2	1.0	0.708
Average weekly earnings ($)	167	159	8	0.503
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	23.7	25.8	-2.1	0.554
$201-$300	28.6	29.7	-1.1	0.770
$301-$500	13.9	9.7	4.2	0.112
$500 or more	1.6	2.4	-0.8	0.483
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	20.0	16.0	4.1	0.194
Paid vacation	29.3	29.9	-0.6	0.875
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	28.9	26.2	2.7	0.451
Dental benefits	14.5	12.6	2.0	0.481
A retirement plan	11.8	7.8	4.0 *	0.095
A health plan or medical insurance	18.5	15.6	2.9	0.334

(continued)

Appendix Table B.4 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	38.9	39.7	-0.8	0.846
Split shift	1.0	1.4	-0.4	0.626
Irregular	3.1	2.5	0.6	0.667
Evening shift	10.5	6.5	3.9 *	0.087
Night shift	2.7	5.1	-2.4	0.140
Rotating shift	9.0	10.7	-1.7	0.493
Other schedule	0.6	0.8	-0.2	0.740
Odd job	2.1	0.9	1.2	0.241
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	44.5	43.1	1.5	0.725
Work with computers	16.6	19.0	-2.4	0.448
Arithmetic skills	31.0	34.0	-3.1	0.429
Customer contact	54.9	60.7	-5.8	0.157
Sample size (total = 598)	306	292		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.5

Impacts on Employment Retention, Advancement, and TANF Receipt in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4), by Study Cohort:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Early cohort					
Employment measures					
Ever employed (%)	79.3	78.3	1.0	0.657	
Average quarterly employment (%)	55.3	50.9	4.3 **	0.026	
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	65.3	60.2	5.1 **	0.049	†
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	7,055	6,122	933 **	0.011	†
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	32.4	28.3	4.1	0.137	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	22.2	17.8	4.4 **	0.011	
Public assistance and income (Years 1-3)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	790	1,007	-217 ***	0.001	
Average annual food stamps received ($)	3,951	3,853	98	0.358	
Average annual income ($)	11,425	10,772	653 *	0.059	
Sample size (total = 866)	430	436			
Late cohort					
Employment measures					
Ever employed (%)	81.6	80.4	1.1	0.625	
Average quarterly employment (%)	54.6	53.8	0.8	0.715	
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	64.1	65.8	-1.7	0.553	†
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	6,872	6,861	11	0.977	†
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	30.0	30.3	-0.3	0.920	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	21.0	20.1	0.9	0.605	
Public assistance and income (Years 1-3)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	768	1,012	-244 ***	0.000	
Average annual food stamps received ($)	4,272	4,065	207 *	0.069	
Average annual income ($)	11,505	11,468	37	0.919	
Sample size (total = 862)	424	438			

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.6

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for the Early Cohort:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	91.2	88.0	3.3	0.207	
Currently employed	65.8	63.2	2.7	0.518	
No longer employed	25.5	24.8	0.6	0.868	
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	7.8	10.3	-2.5	0.343	
$5.00 - $6.99	10.8	15.6	-4.8	0.123	
$7.00 - $8.99	21.4	20.0	1.5	0.691	
$9.00 or more	23.1	17.3	5.9	0.110	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	8.3	14.2	-5.9 **	0.033	
30-34	11.2	11.5	-0.4	0.892	
35-44	41.3	32.4	9.0 **	0.031	††
45 or more	4.9	4.8	0.0	0.984	
Schedule					
Typical schedule (%)					
Regular	34.4	33.1	1.3	0.752	†
Evening shift	7.2	7.3	-0.1	0.966	
Other schedule	23.5	20.5	2.9	0.416	
Workweek included at least 1 weekend day (%)	29.8	30.6	-0.8	0.847	
Benefits					
Employer offers (%)					
Sick days with full pay	25.3	18.1	7.2 **	0.042	
Paid vacation	35.7	27.2	8.5 **	0.030	
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	29.6	23.4	6.2 *	0.093	
A health plan or medical insurance	24.1	14.4	9.6 ***	0.004	†††
None of the above	23.7	28.9	-5.2	0.171	
Work environment					
Percentage who agreed that they:					
Receive respect from superiors	47.3	49.6	-2.3	0.594	
Receive respect from coworkers	53.3	50.0	3.3	0.437	
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	58.3	56.2	2.0	0.635	†
Are allowed to contribute ideas	51.9	47.6	4.3	0.318	††
Can count on keeping job	25.9	25.2	0.7	0.852	
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	59.7	57.2	2.5	0.558	
Think job is physically demanding	28.1	27.0	1.1	0.785	
Risk health or safety	21.7	21.7	-0.1	0.985	

(continued)

Appendix Table B.6 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Are members of labor union (%)	19.4	13.3	6.1 *	0.053	
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	36.7	32.3	4.3	0.293	
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)					
Reading and writing skills	48.9	39.2	9.6 **	0.026	††
Work with computers	21.3	19.7	1.6	0.632	
Arithmetic skills	27.6	25.7	1.9	0.613	
Customer contact	58.7	57.1	1.6	0.702	
Transportation					
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)					
Not currently working	25.5	24.8	0.6	0.868	
0-15	15.4	19.6	-4.2	0.198	
16-30	20.1	15.0	5.1	0.116	
31-45	12.6	11.8	0.8	0.777	
46 or more	17.6	16.9	0.7	0.831	
Advancement outcomes since random assignment					
Ever received a raise (%)	29.3	23.7	5.7	0.133	
Ever received a promotion (%)	14.0	11.3	2.8	0.328	
Found a different job while working (%)	19.2	18.6	0.5	0.875	
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	17.7	14.9	2.9	0.367	
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)					
Work enjoyment	17.8	22.8	-5.0	0.151	†
Earnings	20.9	20.0	0.9	0.795	
Benefits	13.1	10.5	2.6	0.344	
Number of hours	20.8	19.5	1.3	0.717	
Start and end of workday	20.4	21.1	-0.7	0.842	
Commuting time	14.4	22.0	-7.6 **	0.022	††
Job security	17.2	19.1	-1.9	0.569	
Opportunity to advance	15.8	14.4	1.4	0.650	
Sample size (total = 545)	280	265			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.7

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for the Late Cohort:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	94.5	91.7	2.8	0.240	
Currently employed	67.2	73.0	-5.8	0.159	
No longer employed	27.3	18.7	8.6 **	0.025	
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	7.9	7.9	0.0	0.997	
$5.00 - $6.99	13.7	16.7	-3.0	0.396	
$7.00 - $8.99	21.0	20.5	0.4	0.915	
$9.00 or more	23.5	26.0	-2.5	0.551	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	13.5	13.9	-0.4	0.891	
30-34	13.0	16.1	-3.1	0.343	
35-44	34.1	39.4	-5.4	0.230	††
45 or more	6.5	4.0	2.5	0.222	
Schedule					
Typical schedule (%)					
Regular	33.1	42.3	-9.2 **	0.039	†
Evening shift	7.0	7.3	-0.3	0.898	
Other schedule	24.2	21.4	2.8	0.476	
Workweek included at least 1 weekend day (%)	32.3	34.2	-1.9	0.667	
Benefits					
Employer offers (%)					
Sick days with full pay	26.0	24.3	1.8	0.661	
Paid vacation	35.2	35.3	-0.1	0.987	
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	34.0	35.1	-1.1	0.794	
A health plan or medical insurance	21.0	25.1	-4.1	0.288	†††
None of the above	24.3	27.9	-3.6	0.362	
Work environment					
Percentage who agreed that they:					
Receive respect from superiors	54.5	61.2	-6.7	0.134	
Receive respect from coworkers	57.8	62.3	-4.6	0.303	
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	59.0	67.8	-8.8 **	0.046	†
Are allowed to contribute ideas	53.9	63.6	-9.7 **	0.030	††
Can count on keeping job	28.1	33.3	-5.1	0.228	
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	60.8	67.7	-6.9	0.113	
Think job is physically demanding	30.1	36.9	-6.8	0.119	
Risk health or safety	26.9	28.1	-1.2	0.772	

(continued)

Appendix Table B.7 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Are members of labor union (%)	17.2	11.7	5.4 *	0.094	
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	37.7	42.1	-4.4	0.328	
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)					
Reading and writing skills	47.5	50.9	-3.5	0.452	††
Work with computers	24.7	23.8	1.0	0.804	
Arithmetic skills	35.9	36.6	-0.7	0.872	
Customer contact	59.5	63.4	-3.9	0.386	
Transportation					
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)					
Not currently working	27.3	18.7	8.6 **	0.025	
0-15	14.1	19.1	-5.0	0.137	
16-30	19.1	21.7	-2.7	0.472	
31-45	14.1	11.5	2.7	0.382	
46 or more	19.9	20.5	-0.7	0.859	
Advancement outcomes since random assignment					
Ever received a raise (%)	36.1	28.5	7.6 *	0.080	
Ever received a promotion (%)	17.1	11.4	5.7 *	0.076	
Found a different job while working (%)	23.8	22.2	1.5	0.692	
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	23.9	23.3	0.7	0.868	
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)					
Work enjoyment	26.9	22.0	4.8	0.228	†
Earnings	28.5	21.7	6.7 *	0.097	
Benefits	19.1	16.9	2.1	0.553	
Number of hours	23.7	15.9	7.8 **	0.034	
Start and end of workday	24.3	20.0	4.3	0.267	
Commuting time	19.8	17.7	2.2	0.556	††
Job security	24.2	18.0	6.2	0.103	
Opportunity to advance	19.5	21.1	-1.5	0.681	
Sample size (total = 478)	241	237			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.8

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	54.0	50.5	3.5	0.304
Average number of contacts with staff	7.3	6.2	1.1	0.252
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	20.3	18.9	1.4	0.605
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	9.7	10.8	-1.1	0.602
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	59.1	52.6	6.5 *	0.055
Received help with basic needs (%)	44.2	38.7	5.5	0.110
Received help with public benefits (%)	62.1	55.1	7.0 **	0.039
Received help with job preparation (%)	35.4	29.4	6.1 *	0.059
Received any help with retention/advancement (%)	21.6	17.5	4.1	0.134
Finding a better job while working	7.9	5.8	2.2	0.221
Other activities while working	7.9	5.5	2.4	0.159
Career assessment	14.4	9.9	4.5 **	0.045
Dealing with problems on the job	5.5	3.7	1.8	0.221
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	4.0	3.8	0.2	0.867
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	72.0	68.1	3.9	0.226
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	62.8	56.8	6.0 *	0.079
Participated in a job search activity (%)	60.4	55.2	5.2	0.130
Group job search/job club	41.3	41.7	-0.4	0.915
Individual job search	45.2	41.9	3.3	0.341
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	35.9	34.2	1.7	0.602
ABE/GED and ESL	13.7	12.0	1.8	0.433
College courses	16.2	19.4	-3.2	0.226
Vocational training	12.5	9.7	2.8	0.209
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	7.1	6.8	0.3	0.849
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	19.3	18.2	1.2	0.667
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	12.5	9.2	3.3	0.123
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	5.4	4.6	0.8	0.219
Education/training activities	7.0	7.1	-0.1	0.906
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.9	1.4	-0.5	0.285
Sample size (total = 848)	428	420		

(continued)

Appendix Table B.8 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

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Appendix Table B.9

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1						
Ever employed (%)	84.7	84.3	0.4		0.664	0.9
Average quarterly employment (%)	68.0	67.5	0.5		0.627	0.9
Employed every quarter (%)	50.5	48.5	2.0		0.106	1.3
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	42.0	41.0	1.0		0.422	1.2
Annual earnings ($)	9,139	9,037	103		0.611	202
Ever received TANF (%)	93.9	93.0	0.9		0.154	0.7
Ever received food stamps (%)	91.3	90.8	0.5		0.494	0.7
Total income ($)	15,590	15,358	232		0.188	176
Follow-Up Year 2						
Ever employed (%)	76.1	77.1	-1.0		0.343	1.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	61.8	62.9	-1.1		0.275	1.0
Employed every quarter (%)	46.5	47.3	-0.7		0.560	1.3
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	41.3	43.0	-1.7		0.167	1.3
Annual earnings ($)	9,599	9,799	-200		0.417	246
Ever received TANF (%)	70.5	66.5	4.0	***	0.001	1.2
Ever received food stamps (%)	70.4	67.3	3.0	***	0.010	1.2
Total income ($)	14,945	14,917	28		0.900	225
Follow-Up Year 3						
Ever employed (%)	74.2	75.4	-1.3		0.254	1.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	61.0	62.2	-1.2		0.250	1.1
Employed every quarter (%)	46.6	47.1	-0.5		0.727	1.3
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	44.0	44.1	-0.1		0.920	1.3
Annual earnings ($)	10,762	10,677	85		0.763	282
Ever received TANF (%)	55.9	53.8	2.1	*	0.099	1.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	57.1	54.7	2.5	*	0.052	1.3
Total income ($)	15,070	14,920	150		0.570	264
Sample size (total = 5,700)	2,857	2,843				

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table B.10

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	3.6	3.5	0.0	0.825
Average quarterly employment (%)	63.6	64.2	-0.6	0.453
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	7.7	8.5	-0.8	0.279
1-25	14.7	13.3	1.4	0.120
26-50	15.1	14.0	1.0	0.274
51-75	18.3	18.8	-0.6	0.590
76-100	44.3	45.4	-1.1	0.367
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	29.1	28.3	0.8	0.473
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	70.5	70.6	-0.2	0.893
Average number of employers during follow-up period	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.645
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	7.7	8.5	-0.8	0.279
1 to 2	41.9	40.6	1.3	0.325
3 to 4	28.0	28.1	-0.1	0.932
5 to 8	19.3	19.1	0.2	0.869
More than 8	3.2	3.8	-0.6	0.214
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	6.1	5.9	0.1	0.256
Number of quarters until first employment spell	1.5	1.6	-0.1	0.520
Average number of employment spells	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.414
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.931
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	7.7	8.5	-0.8	0.279
1 to 2	15.3	13.2	2.1 **	0.024
3 to 4	13.8	14.2	-0.4	0.636
5 to 8	23.8	24.8	-1.0	0.393
9 to 12	39.4	39.3	0.1	0.952

(continued)

Appendix Table B.10 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.920
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	3.8	3.7	0.1	0.556
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	29.1	28.3	0.8	0.473
1 to 2	20.6	22.7	-2.0 *	0.061
3 to 4	15.2	15.3	-0.1	0.959
5 to 8	18.3	17.1	1.1	0.258
9 to 12	16.8	16.7	0.1	0.898
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,833	9,837	-4	0.985
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	7.7	8.5	-0.8	0.279
$1-$1,999	15.9	14.5	1.5	0.117
$2,000-$4,999	14.3	14.1	0.3	0.780
$5,000-$9,999	20.0	20.2	-0.2	0.844
$10,000-$14,999	16.5	17.2	-0.7	0.510
$15,000-$19,999	12.0	12.4	-0.5	0.598
$20,000 or higher	13.5	13.1	0.3	0.696
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	42.0	42.8	-0.8	0.532
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	32.9	33.6	-0.7	0.427
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	7.7	8.5	-0.8	0.279
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	26.0	24.7	1.4	0.218
1 to 2	16.7	16.9	-0.2	0.871
3 to 4	12.0	10.8	1.3	0.134
5 to 8	17.2	18.5	-1.3	0.216
9 to 12	20.3	20.8	-0.5	0.627
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	8.6	9.4	-0.8	0.285
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	17.2	15.2	2.0 **	0.036
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.1	3.5	-0.5	0.341
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	18.9	19.3	-0.4	0.671
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	6.8	6.4	0.4	0.560
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.4	3.9	-0.4	0.388
Earnings increased by $250 or more	41.8	42.2	-0.4	0.752
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,866*	*3,829*	*37*	
Sample size (total = 5,700)	2,857	2,843		

(continued)

Appendix Table B.10 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.11

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	81.1	78.0	3.1	0.263
Currently employed	58.6	53.1	5.5	0.107
No longer employed	22.5	24.9	-2.4	0.420
Current working status (%)				
Full time	48.0	43.5	4.5	0.185
Part time	10.6	9.7	1.0	0.649
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	27.3	25.3	2.0	0.498
Hours				
Average hours per week	21.3	18.9	2.5 *	0.063
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	10.6	9.7	1.0	0.649
30-34	6.8	8.1	-1.4	0.460
35-44	33.7	29.0	4.6	0.143
45 or more	6.8	4.7	2.1	0.191
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	3.0	1.9	1.1	0.317
$5.00 - $6.99	7.3	5.2	2.2	0.197
$7.00 - $8.99	21.0	23.3	-2.3	0.428
$9.00 or more	27.2	22.7	4.5	0.116
Average weekly earnings ($)	199	181	19	0.187
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	9.3	7.9	1.4	0.478
$201-$300	17.6	16.6	1.0	0.698
$301-$500	24.1	20.5	3.6	0.207
$500 or more	7.6	8.2	-0.6	0.767
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	21.4	20.1	1.4	0.625
Paid vacation	27.4	27.8	-0.3	0.916
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	28.6	26.9	1.7	0.579
Dental benefits	21.1	19.7	1.4	0.618
A retirement plan	19.3	16.0	3.3	0.205
A health plan or medical insurance	25.0	22.6	2.5	0.403

(continued)

Appendix Table B.11 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	36.3	31.1	5.2	0.103
Split shift	1.9	2.6	-0.6	0.543
Irregular	2.5	3.0	-0.5	0.659
Evening shift	6.5	5.1	1.4	0.404
Night shift	3.2	3.9	-0.8	0.549
Rotating shift	6.7	4.9	1.9	0.256
Other schedule	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.201
Odd job	0.9	2.4	-1.6 *	0.082
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	42.4	42.6	-0.2	0.952
Work with computers	26.8	24.2	2.6	0.378
Arithmetic skills	25.2	27.0	-1.9	0.543
Customer contact	49.6	44.9	4.7	0.173
Sample size (total = 848)	428	420		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.12

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey:

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Contacts							
Ever had contact with staff employment program[a] (%)	58.2	58.6	50.2	7.9 *	0.081	8.3 *	0.069
Average number of contacts with staff	9.8	8.5	8.0	1.8	0.271	0.5	0.762
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	23.7	23.6	21.8	1.9	0.617	1.8	0.638
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	7.8	10.2	7.0	0.8	0.745	3.2	0.222
Services							
Received help with support services (%)	61.2	64.0	59.8	1.4	0.744	4.2	0.336
Received help with basic needs (%)	35.3	38.3	42.3	-7.0	0.122	-4.0	0.379
Received help with public benefits (%)	67.4	62.2	64.7	2.7	0.543	-2.6	0.564
Received help with job preparation (%)	47.8	45.8	39.2	8.6 *	0.059	6.7	0.148
Received any help with retention/advancement (%)	24.2	28.9	21.5	2.6	0.513	7.4 *	0.066
Finding a better job while working	9.9	11.4	9.5	0.4	0.891	2.0	0.488
Other activities while working	4.2	7.7	8.7	-4.4 *	0.057	-1.0	0.663
Career assessment	13.5	15.3	10.5	3.0	0.330	4.8	0.124
Dealing with problems on the job	4.7	6.7	7.1	-2.4	0.279	-0.5	0.831
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	8.1	8.5	9.5	-1.5	0.577	-1.0	0.701
Participation							
Participated in any activity (%)	75.3	78.6	73.3	1.9	0.620	5.2	0.184
Participated in any employment-related activity (%)	64.7	65.7	61.4	3.3	0.446	4.3	0.331
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.1	64.4	60.3	1.9	0.675	4.1	0.356
Group job search/job club	38.6	44.9	44.6	-6.0	0.189	0.3	0.950
Individual job search	50.7	51.2	48.6	2.1	0.649	2.7	0.564

(continued)

Appendix Table B.12 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	41.4	37.3	31.9	9.5 **	0.033	5.4	0.225
ABE/GED and ESL	16.1	17.6	9.0	7.2 **	0.016	8.7 ***	0.004
College courses	19.9	18.1	17.3	2.6	0.455	0.8	0.819
Vocational training	12.2	8.2	8.3	3.8	0.158	-0.1	0.974
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	9.6	3.6	6.2	3.4	0.137	-2.6	0.244
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	26.0	29.7	22.4	3.6	0.376	7.3 *	0.074
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	13.4	15.3	15.2	-1.8	0.582	0.1	0.981
Average number of weeks participating in							
Job search activities	5.4	4.0	4.9	0.5	0.560	-0.9	0.289
Education/training activities	6.9	8.7	5.1	1.8	0.148	3.6 ***	0.005
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	1.2	0.4	1.5	-0.3	0.563	-1.1 **	0.038
Sample size (total = 712)	234	237	241				

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

NOTES: The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
The outcome measures are discuseed in Chapter 2.
[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.13

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Training Focused Group Standard Error	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1									
Ever employed (%)	87.3	88.7	89.5	-2.2	0.165	1.6	-0.8	0.570	1.4
Average quarterly employment (%)	68.0	70.1	72.5	-4.5 **	0.011	1.8	-2.4	0.119	1.5
Employed every quarter (%)	47.3	48.9	51.9	-4.6 *	0.069	2.5	-3.0	0.172	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	35.3	35.9	37.1	-1.9	0.435	2.4	-1.3	0.536	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	8,080	8,079	8,344	-263	0.458	355	-265	0.387	306
Ever received TANF (%)	86.6	86.6	84.1	2.6	0.148	1.8	2.6 *	0.094	1.5
Ever received food stamps (%)	81.7	83.5	80.3	1.4	0.437	1.8	3.2 **	0.043	1.6
Total income ($)	12,787	12,665	12,764	23	0.943	321	-99	0.719	277
Follow-Up Year 2									
Ever employed (%)	76.5	75.5	77.2	-0.7	0.737	2.2	-1.6	0.378	1.9
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.5	60.0	61.5	-2.0	0.345	2.1	-1.5	0.407	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	41.6	42.8	44.8	-3.1	0.212	2.5	-1.9	0.371	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	38.4	35.9	38.4	0.1	0.980	2.4	-2.5	0.236	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	8,760	8,138	8,308	452	0.310	445	-170	0.657	383
Ever received TANF (%)	53.2	52.8	51.4	1.8	0.477	2.5	1.4	0.521	2.2
Ever received food stamps (%)	55.5	57.9	56.4	-1.0	0.694	2.5	1.5	0.494	2.1
Total income ($)	12,301	11,515	11,606	695	0.102	425	-92	0.803	366

(continued)

Appendix Table B.13 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group			Work Plus Group		
				Impact	P-Value	Standard Error	Impact	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 3									
Ever employed (%)	73.7	71.2	72.2	1.5	0.496	2.3	-1.0	0.603	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	57.7	56.4	58.2	-0.4	0.844	2.1	-1.8	0.329	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	41.2	40.7	43.0	-1.8	0.479	2.5	-2.2	0.300	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	38.8	36.6	38.7	0.1	0.955	2.4	-2.1	0.322	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	9,355	8,524	9,103	252	0.617	505	-579	0.184	436
Ever received TANF (%)	39.5	39.5	36.9	2.6	0.296	2.4	2.5	0.230	2.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	44.4	47.1	44.7	-0.4	0.885	2.5	2.4	0.259	2.1
Total income ($)	12,363	11,311	11,867	497	0.315	494	-556	0.192	426
Follow-Up Year 4									
Ever employed (%)	70.5	66.6	69.3	1.3	0.593	2.4	-2.7	0.190	2.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	57.2	53.7	56.0	1.1	0.607	2.2	-2.3	0.218	1.9
Employed every quarter (%)	43.3	40.3	42.8	0.5	0.843	2.5	-2.5	0.244	2.2
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	40.8	38.4	38.1	2.6	0.283	2.5	0.3	0.904	2.1
Annual earnings ($)	9,958	9,235	9,736	222	0.695	565	-502	0.303	487
Ever received TANF (%)	29.6	30.5	29.0	0.6	0.782	2.3	1.5	0.453	2.0
Ever received food stamps (%)	37.7	38.4	37.3	0.5	0.853	2.4	1.1	0.582	2.1
Total income ($)	12,422	11,660	12,153	269	0.625	551	-494	0.299	475
Sample size (total = 3,029)	744	1,532	753						

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

NOTES: The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.
The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.14

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Employment measures							
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	3.6	3.5	3.9	-0.3	0.263	-0.4 *	0.074
Average quarterly employment (%)	60.6	60.1	62.1	-1.4	0.378	-2.0	0.157
Percentage of quarters employed (%)							
Never employed	6.1	5.7	5.0	1.0	0.372	0.6	0.526
1-25	15.0	18.2	16.1	-1.1	0.552	2.1	0.195
26-50	18.3	16.3	17.6	0.7	0.726	-1.3	0.445
51-75	21.5	20.3	21.1	0.5	0.820	-0.8	0.677
76-100	39.2	39.5	40.2	-1.1	0.669	-0.7	0.726
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	19.3	18.8	21.7	-2.3	0.253	-2.8	0.104
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	73.9	72.7	75.3	-1.5	0.507	-2.6	0.174
Average number of employers during follow-up period	3.6	3.7	3.9	-0.3 *	0.072	-0.1	0.356
Number of employers (%)							
Never employed	9.0	9.0	7.9	1.1	0.441	1.1	0.357
1 to 2	32.8	31.8	32.3	0.5	0.850	-0.5	0.793
3 to 4	28.9	27.9	26.8	2.1	0.367	1.2	0.564
5 to 8	23.7	24.7	24.0	-0.2	0.917	0.7	0.699
More than 8	5.6	6.6	9.1	-3.4 ***	0.009	-2.5 **	0.028
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	6.5	6.6	6.9	-0.4	0.169	-0.3	0.173
Number of quarters until first employment spell	1.6	1.5	1.4	0.2	0.207	0.1	0.510

(continued)

Appendix Table B.14 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	37.5	37.0	35.7	1.9	0.440	1.3	0.530
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	30.2	27.4	28.4	1.8	0.240	-1.0	0.468
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)							
Never employed	6.1	5.7	5.0	1.0	0.372	0.6	0.526
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	25.1	30.3	27.5	-2.5	0.279	2.8	0.159
1 to 2	16.2	14.3	18.3	-2.1	0.270	-4.0 **	0.013
3 to 4	10.4	10.5	10.3	0.0	0.991	0.1	0.940
5 to 8	16.9	17.1	15.1	1.8	0.352	2.0	0.225
9 to 12	12.3	12.8	12.4	-0.1	0.937	0.4	0.785
13 to 16	13.1	9.4	11.3	1.8	0.245	-1.9	0.169
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4							
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	7.4	7.6	5.7	1.7	0.179	1.9 *	0.086
Earnings decreased (%)							
No longer employed	22.0	25.8	25.0	-3.0	0.176	0.8	0.693
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.2	1.7	2.1	1.1	0.138	-0.4	0.549
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	16.3	18.0	18.4	-2.1	0.286	-0.4	0.814
Earnings increased (%)							
Became employed	5.3	3.7	4.8	0.5	0.647	-1.1	0.211
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.4	2.4	3.3	0.1	0.949	-1.0	0.196
Earnings increased by $250 or more	42.2	40.8	40.4	1.8	0.464	0.4	0.844
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,729*	*3,536*	*3,576*	*153*		*-40*	
Sample size (total = 3,029)	744	1,532	753				

(continued)

Appendix Table B.14 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	37.5	37.0	35.7	1.9	0.440	1.3	0.530
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	30.2	27.4	28.4	1.8	0.240	-1.0	0.468
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)							
Never employed	6.1	5.7	5.0	1.0	0.372	0.6	0.526
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	25.1	30.3	27.5	-2.5	0.279	2.8	0.159
1 to 2	16.2	14.3	18.3	-2.1	0.270	-4.0 **	0.013
3 to 4	10.4	10.5	10.3	0.0	0.991	0.1	0.940
5 to 8	16.9	17.1	15.1	1.8	0.352	2.0	0.225
9 to 12	12.3	12.8	12.4	-0.1	0.937	0.4	0.785
13 to 16	13.1	9.4	11.3	1.8	0.245	-1.9	0.169
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4							
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	7.4	7.6	5.7	1.7	0.179	1.9 *	0.086
Earnings decreased (%)							
No longer employed	22.0	25.8	25.0	-3.0	0.176	0.8	0.693
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.2	1.7	2.1	1.1	0.138	-0.4	0.549
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	16.3	18.0	18.4	-2.1	0.286	-0.4	0.814
Earnings increased (%)							
Became employed	5.3	3.7	4.8	0.5	0.647	-1.1	0.211
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.4	2.4	3.3	0.1	0.949	-1.0	0.196
Earnings increased by $250 or more	42.2	40.8	40.4	1.8	0.464	0.4	0.844
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,729*	*3,536*	*3,576*	*153*		*-40*	
Sample size (total = 3,029)	744	1,532	753				

(continued)

Appendix Table B.14 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discuseed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.15

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey:

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Employment status							
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	90.4	93.6	89.0	1.4	0.597	4.6 *	0.085
Currently employed	58.8	70.2	63.0	-4.2	0.342	7.2	0.102
No longer employed	31.6	23.4	25.6	6.0	0.139	-2.2	0.592
Current working status (%)							
Full time	45.5	54.0	50.5	-5.0	0.279	3.5	0.444
Part time	13.3	16.3	12.6	0.8	0.806	3.7	0.253
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	26.2	29.5	25.2	1.0	0.802	4.3	0.296
Hours							
Average hours per week	20.5	25.1	22.6	-2.1	0.238	2.5	0.151
Total hours per week (%)							
Less than 30	13.3	16.3	12.6	0.8	0.806	3.7	0.253
30-34	6.7	12.0	10.0	-3.3	0.227	2.0	0.455
35-44	34.6	33.6	33.0	1.6	0.715	0.6	0.892
45 or more	4.2	8.4	7.5	-3.3	0.154	0.9	0.698
Earnings							
Average hourly wage (%)							
Less than $5.00	2.8	2.3	2.1	0.6	0.661	0.2	0.909
$5.00 - $6.99	7.8	10.8	12.9	-5.1 *	0.074	-2.1	0.456
$7.00 - $8.99	23.1	36.6	26.6	-3.5	0.402	10.0 **	0.018
$9.00 or more	25.1	20.6	21.3	3.8	0.315	-0.7	0.845

(continued)

Appendix Table B.15 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Average weekly earnings ($)	190	215	200	-11	0.548	15	0.407
Total earnings per week (%)							
Less than $200	12.4	14.9	13.2	-0.9	0.784	1.7	0.602
$201-$300	17.9	21.5	22.9	-5.0	0.177	-1.5	0.697
$301-$500	22.3	31.2	20.3	2.1	0.602	11.0 ***	0.006
$500 or more	6.3	2.7	6.6	-0.3	0.866	-4.0 *	0.054
Benefits							
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)							
Sick days with full pay	23.1	26.7	20.2	2.9	0.450	6.5 *	0.098
Paid vacation	27.1	34.3	30.3	-3.2	0.450	4.0	0.345
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	23.3	29.9	29.3	-6.0	0.147	0.7	0.875
Dental benefits	20.6	24.1	20.2	0.3	0.930	3.9	0.311
A retirement plan	17.6	23.4	20.0	-2.4	0.516	3.4	0.351
A health plan or medical insurance	24.3	30.4	27.5	-3.1	0.442	2.9	0.480
Schedule[b] (%)							
Regular	36.4	42.4	33.3	3.1	0.479	9.1 **	0.040
Split shift	0.5	1.6	0.5	0.0	0.991	1.2	0.171
Irregular	5.8	4.6	5.3	0.5	0.812	-0.7	0.730
Evening shift	2.9	12.0	7.8	-4.9 **	0.043	4.3 *	0.079
Night shift	5.5	4.4	2.0	3.6 **	0.044	2.4	0.175
Rotating shift	5.5	3.1	11.1	-5.6 **	0.015	-8.0 ***	0.001
Other schedule	0.9	1.2	2.5	-1.5	0.176	-1.2	0.281
Odd job	1.4	0.9	0.3	1.1	0.213	0.6	0.499

(continued)

Appendix Table B.15 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
Job skills							
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly							
Reading and writing skills	44.4	52.9	49.7	-5.3	0.245	3.1	0.496
Work with computers	27.0	36.1	28.4	-1.5	0.724	7.6 *	0.071
Arithmetic skills	32.8	43.6	36.5	-3.6	0.409	7.1	0.107
Customer contact	50.3	60.8	55.2	-4.9	0.280	5.6	0.224
Sample size (total = 712)	234	237	241				

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

NOTES: The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 perecent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
The outcome measures are discused in Chapter 2.
[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.
[b]A split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular schedule is defined as one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to nights.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.16

Impacts on Services, Participation, and Receipt of Education Credentials at the 12-Month Survey:

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
No high school diploma or GED certificate							
Received any help with retention/advancement (%)	28.1	33.8	14.2	14.0 **	0.030	19.7 ***	0.002
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	48.6	40.7	30.8	17.9 **	0.016	9.9	0.173
ABE/GED and ESL	37.9	36.8	19.7	18.1 ***	0.010	17.1 **	0.014
College courses	9.8	5.0	7.7	2.1	0.595	-2.7	0.494
Vocational training	7.7	8.5	6.3	1.4	0.736	2.2	0.586
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	30.7	26.9	16.5	14.2 **	0.026	10.4	0.101
Received an education credential after random assignment (%)							
High school diploma	1.3	0.8	0.1	1.2	0.335	0.7	0.559
GED certificate	1.5	4.2	0.7	0.8	0.697	3.5 *	0.098
Trade or occupational license or certificate	7.8	3.8	4.6	3.3	0.341	-0.7	0.825
Sample size (total = 281)	90	95	96				
High school diploma or GED certificate							
Received any help with retention/advancement (%)	21.5	26.6	25.8	-4.4	0.407	0.8	0.885
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	38.1	32.6	32.8	5.3	0.356	-0.2	0.976
ABE/GED and ESL	2.5	4.5	1.5	1.0	0.611	2.9	0.145
College courses	27.7	25.0	24.0	3.7	0.482	1.0	0.849
Vocational training	14.9	7.4	9.3	5.6	0.127	-1.9	0.610
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	23.9	29.8	26.6	-2.7	0.611	3.1	0.566
Received an education credential after random assignment (%)							
High school diploma	0.7	0.0	-0.1	0.8	0.182	0.1	0.898
GED certificate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.0	0.000
Trade or occupational license or certificate	15.7	10.0	15.1	0.6	0.880	-5.1	0.223
Sample size (total = 426)	141	141	144				

(continued)

Appendix Table B.16 (continued)

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

NOTES: The p-value indicates the likelihood that the difference between the program and control groups arose by chance.
Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.
The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table B.17

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4), by Educational Attainment:

Riverside Phase 2

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group Impact	Training Focused Group P-Value	Work Plus Group Impact	Work Plus Group P-Value
No high school diploma or GED certificate							
Employment measures							
Ever employed (%)	93.0	94.2	95.9	-2.8	0.120	-1.7	0.284
Average quarterly employment (%)	57.6	57.2	60.0	-2.4	0.331	-2.8	0.194
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	67.9	69.7	74.0	-6.1 *	0.082	-4.3	0.153
Earnings and advancement measures							
Average annual earnings ($)	7,624	7,434	7,479	145	0.782	-45	0.921
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	31.9	31.6	28.5	3.4	0.332	3.2	0.295
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	24.4	23.2	22.5	1.8	0.391	0.6	0.723
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)							
Average annual TANF received ($)	2,640	2,233	2,258	382 **	0.022	-25	0.859
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,520	1,381	1,419	102	0.309	-37	0.666
Average annual income ($)	11,785	11,049	11,156	629	0.215	-107	0.806
Sample size (total = 1,255)	620	305	330				
High school diploma or GED certificate							
Employment retention measures							
Ever employed (%)	94.5	94.7	94.7	-0.2	0.904	0.0	0.992
Average quarterly employment (%)	62.5	62.4	64.2	-1.7	0.441	-1.8	0.346
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	77.8	75.3	76.7	1.0	0.719	-1.5	0.548
Advancement measures							
Average annual earnings ($)	9,981	9,348	9,999	-19	0.974	-651	0.182
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	41.6	41.2	41.4	0.1	0.971	-0.2	0.935
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	34.2	30.8	33.0	1.2	0.584	-2.3	0.229

(continued)

Appendix Table B.17 (continued)

Outcome	Training Focused Group	Work Plus Group	Control Group	Training Focused Group		Work Plus Group	
				Impact	P-Value	Impact	P-Value
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)							
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,905	1,945	1,819	86	0.519	126	0.276
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,044	1,134	1,029	15	0.838	105	0.106
Average annual income ($)	12,930	12,427	12,847	83	0.876	-420	0.358
Sample size (total = 1,746)	898	435	413				

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

Appendix C

Supplementary Exhibits for Chapter 5: Programs Serving Employed Non-TANF Recipients

Appendix C presents supplementary boxes and tables relating to the Cleveland, Eugene and Medford, Riverside PASS, and South Carolina ERA tests.

Box

Table

Table

Appendix Box C.1

Program Summary: Cleveland

"Voluntary, employer-based retention services through intensive staff-client engagement"

Goal: Increase retention among low-wage, entry-level workers in the long-term nursing care industry

Location: Cleveland, Ohio

Target population: Workers earning less than $13 per hour, hired within the past six months, and employed by 42 long-term nursing care firms and two manufacturing firms

Implementation schedule: Eight firms were randomly assigned in September 2002, followed by 36 firms in three more stages — 14 firms in November 2002, eight firms in February 2004, and 14 firms in May 2004. The program was operated between September 2002 and May 2005.

Management structure: Operated by Towards Employment, a community-based social service organization

Participation requirements: Participation was voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: Staff heavily marketed services, using strategically placed flyers and facilitywide loudspeaker announcements encouraging attendance and garnering enthusiasm for the program.

Staff-client engagement:

- Generalist staff (not team-based) were stationed at the employers' sites with regularly scheduled office hours. Staff also provided activities during all three shifts (day, evening, and night).
- Staff tailored services to individual participants.
- Staff increased the frequency of contacts with participants.

Job preparation and placement services: Not a priority of the model and not pursued by staff

Retention services:

- Lunch and Learn sessions — led by either Cleveland ERA staff or one of Towards Employment's training facilitators — provided life skills education.
- Staff provided help dealing with problems that might put individuals at risk of losing their job, such as transportation or child care needs.
- Staff provided work supports and social service referrals.

Advancement services: Advancement was not a priority of the model and was not pursued by staff.

Employer linkages: Being an employer-based program, it therefore had strong connections with participants' employers.

(continued)

Appendix Box C.1 (continued)

Key funding source: Public and private grant funding raised by Towards Employment

Implementation challenges:

- Participation challenges due to the round-the-clock nature of duties in the long-term nursing care industry
- Difficulty navigating workplace rules and space constraints in the delivery of services

Appendix Box C.2

Program Summary: Eugene

"Individualized assistance and career counseling for advancement, through welfare and community college partnership"

Goal: Help former TANF recipients retain their jobs and advance to better jobs and wages

Location: Eugene, Oregon

Target population: Employed individuals who had left TANF within the year and who were working more than 20 hours per week

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from June 2002 to June 2004. The program operated from February 2002 to July 2005.

Management structure: Jointly operated by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) and Lane Community College, with services provided in the DHS offices

Participation requirements: Participation was voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: Through mail and phone, staff sought to schedule intake meetings, emphasizing the program's advancement focus.

Staff-client engagement:

- Staffed by two-person, colocated teams that provided flexibility when accommodating participants.
- Staff-client interactions were highly personalized and frequent.

Job preparation and placement services: Not part of the model and not pursued by staff.

Retention services:

- Job loss emerged as an acute issue for the program. Staff provided job search assistance, including one-on-one job search assistance, help with creating or updating a résumé, and providing job leads.
- Staff provided assistance securing food stamps, transitional child care, and subsidized health insurance, and they gave participants gas vouchers and car repair money.
- Staff provided social service referrals.
- Job-specific retention services were informal — usually when ERA staff discovered that a participant was having a problem on the job.

Advancement services:

- Staff provided referrals to education programs, particularly for vocational and skills training.
- Staff provided job leads and suggestions for job advancement, as appropriate.
- Staff provided goals-focused career counseling.

Employer linkages: Not part of the model design and not pursued by staff.

(continued)

Appendix Box C.2 (continued)

Key funding source: State TANF program. Although state funding was reduced during the 2001-2003 and 2003-2005 state bienniums, funds from the Department of Labor allowed services to continue.

Implementation challenges:

- Cross-organizational cultural differences hampered working relationships and institutional support.
- High caseloads and ERA staff policies restricted flexibility for participant meetings.
- Demands for reemployment services detracted from the career counseling envisioned in the model.

Appendix Box C.3

Program Summary: Medford

"Individualized assistance and career counseling for advancement, through welfare and workforce partnership"

Goals: Help low-wage working people retain their jobs and advance to better jobs and wages

Location: Medford, Oregon

Target population: Employed individuals who had left TANF or who were currently participating in the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training program or the Employment Related Day Care program

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from February 2002 to April 2004, and the program operated from the beginning of random assignment to July 2005.

Management structure: Jointly operated by the Oregon Department of Human Services, The Job Council, the Employment Department, and Rogue Community College

Participation requirements: Participation was voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: Staff used a proactive approach to engagement.

Staff-client engagement:

- Staff teams provided group members with flexibility in whom they met with, and frequent contact was emphasized.
- Services were driven by participants' career interests and participant-defined goals.

Job preparation and placement services: Not part of the model and not pursued by staff

Retention services:

- Job loss emerged as an acute issue; therefore, staff provided assistance in preparing résumés and job applications and identifying job leads.
- Staff provided assistance securing food stamps, transitional child care, and subsidized health insurance, and they gave participants gas vouchers and car repair money.
- Staff made social service referrals for program group members who identified needs.
- Staff spoke with participants about problems that they were having on the job.

Advancement services:

- Staff and participants developed and used Personal Development Plans.
- Staff assisted participants with career moves or asking employers for raises or promotions, as needed.
- Staff encouraged training and education as an advancement strategy.

Employer linkages: Originally the service delivery model called for staff to reach out to area employers on behalf of clients, but this goal never fully materialized due to the staff's lack of experience.

(continued)

Appendix Box C.3 (continued)

Key funding source: State TANF program. Although state funding was reduced during the 2001-2003 and 2003-2005 state bienniums, funds from the Department of Labor allowed services to continue.

Implementation challenges:

- The program was beset with funding difficulties and staff turnover.
- Reemployment consumed more time than originally anticipated.
- Staff initially struggled to define advancement and determine how to help clients progress.

Appendix Box C.4

Program Summary:
Riverside PASS (Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency)

"Intensive and multifaceted postemployment services provided by nonprofit organizations in most locations"

Goal: Job retention and advancement among employed individuals who recently left TANF

Location: Riverside County, California

Target population: Employed former TANF recipients who recently left TANF

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from July 2002 to June 2003. The program operated from the beginning of random assignment to December 2003.

Management structure: Operated by three community-based organizations, a community college, or a Department of Public Social Services office — depending on clients' residence.

Participation requirements: Participation was voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: All five service providers made a concerted, sustained effort to contact program group members and encourage them to enroll in the program.

Staff-client engagement:

- The program used various service delivery models, including coordination among partnering organizations.
- Staff met with program group members during regular work hours (rather than during night and weekend shifts) and within the office.
- Services were tailored to participants' needs and interests.

Job preparation and placement services: Varied by provider but could include one-on-one job search assistance, help with creating or updating a résumé, or providing job leads.

Retention services:

- Job loss emerged as an acute issue for the program. As a result, staff devoted considerable attention to rapid reemployment services.
- Staff provided assistance payments for rent and utilities, transportation services (gasoline vouchers and car repair), assessment of child care needs and help with processing payments, food assistance, referrals to legal services, and payments for books and other school supplies and parking fees.
- Staff made social service referrals for program group members who identified needs.

Advancement services: Staff provided some career counseling and development of employment plans; however, such services were varied across providers and were largely informal. Referrals for education and training services were offered.

Employer linkages: Not included in the model and not pursued by staff

(continued)

Appendix Box C.4 (continued)

Key funding source: State TANF funds

Implementation challenges:

- Some providers were inexperienced at running postemployment programs for former TANF recipients.
- Staff had difficulty locating sample members due to incomplete or out-of-date contact information.
- It was difficult to convince participants to use services.

Appendix Box C.5

Program Summary: South Carolina

"Pre- and postemployment services for sustained employment and advancement of former TANF recipients"

Goal: Place former welfare recipients in jobs, help them sustain employment and advance, and increase their earnings

Location: Pee Dee, a region that includes six South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) offices (in Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion, and Marlboro Counties)

Target population: Former welfare recipients who had left welfare between October 1997 and December 2000 and had not returned to welfare

Implementation schedule: Random assignment occurred from September 2001 to January 2003, and the program operated from the beginning of random assignment to April 2005.

Management structure: Operated by each of the six county DSS offices listed above

Participation requirements: Participation was voluntary.

Outreach and marketing: Staff worked hard to engage participants, after receiving marketing and outreach training, and offered modest participation incentives to participants.

Staff-client engagement:

- Generalist staff (not team-based structure) were available — either in the office or by phone — beyond the standard 9 to 5 workday.
- Services were tailored to individual participants.
- Staff provided career assessments and developed participant employment plans.

Job preparation and placement services: Unemployed participants received assistance preparing for and searching for a job.

Retention services:

- Staff provided modest financial incentives for employment achievements, such as retaining a job for three months or advancing from part-time to full-time employment.
- Staff provided assistance with securing work supports and help getting TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid.
- Staff provided social service referrals, as needed.
- Staff held periodic check-ins and talked about workplace problems and concerns.

Advancement services:

- Staff provided some referrals to short-term education and training.
- Staff strategized with some participants on how to ask for a raise or how to learn about promotion opportunities.

Employer linkages: No formal connection between the program and local employers

(continued)

Appendix Box C.5 (continued)

Key funding source: State TANF funds

Implementation challenges:

- Some staff lacked experience working with employed former TANF recipients.
- Funding interruptions presented operations challenges.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.1

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Cleveland

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Contacts					
Ever had contact with staff/employment program[a] (%)	52.4	30.2	22.2	***	0.000
Average number of contacts with staff	6.8	3.1	3.8	***	0.007
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	16.6	8.4	8.2	**	0.035
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	13.9	7.5	6.4	**	0.048
Services					
Received help with support services (%)	19.5	16.6	2.9		0.389
Received help with basic needs (%)	24.5	28.1	-3.6		0.395
Received help with public benefits (%)	41.0	39.8	1.2		0.791
Received help with job preparation (%)	18.5	13.7	4.8		0.187
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	38.5	27.5	11.0	**	0.025
Finding a better job while working	6.3	3.9	2.4		0.330
Other activities while working	18.4	1.9	16.5	***	0.000
Career assessment	9.0	5.6	3.5		0.178
Dealing with problems on the job	17.9	7.7	10.2	***	0.005
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	11.3	6.5	4.9	*	0.135
Participation					
Participated in any activity (%)	61.0	58.8	2.2		0.643
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	45.2	35.3	9.9	**	0.103
Participated in a job search activity (%)	44.6	34.2	10.4	**	0.086
Group job search/job club	25.7	13.0	12.7	***	0.004
Individual job search	30.5	29.6	0.9		0.853
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	28.9	37.3	-8.3	*	0.152
ABE/GED and ESL	12.3	8.0	4.3		0.262
College courses	15.3	25.1	-9.8	***	0.031
Vocational training	8.9	11.9	-3.0		0.547
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	2.5	3.8	-1.3		0.454
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	22.7	29.8	-7.2	*	0.232
Participated in an employment activitiy while working (%)	14.2	12.9	1.4		0.643
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	5.8	3.5	2.3	**	0.112
Education/training activities	5.6	6.9	-1.3		0.362
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.4	0.5	-0.1		0.780
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225			

(continued)

Appendix Table C.1 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.2

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Cleveland

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	98.8	97.4	1.4	0.192	1.0
Average quarterly employment (%)	90.6	87.7	2.8	0.308	1.7
Employed every quarter (%)	78.4	71.6	6.9	0.214	3.4
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	73.6	72.0	1.7	0.654	3.4
Annual earnings ($)	15,335	15,018	317	0.637	569
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	90.4	91.9	-1.5	0.474	2.2
Average quarterly employment (%)	81.9	82.1	-0.2	0.861	2.5
Employed every quarter (%)	70.0	69.4	0.6	0.914	3.6
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	65.0	64.0	1.1	0.798	3.7
Annual earnings ($)	14,273	14,536	-263	0.709	719
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	86.2	86.3	-0.1	0.979	2.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	77.4	76.0	1.4	0.659	2.8
Employed every quarter (%)	65.8	63.1	2.7	0.482	3.6
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	60.9	58.8	2.1	0.648	3.7
Annual earnings ($)	13,777	14,146	-368	0.642	781
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.3

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Cleveland

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	5.4	5.2	0.3	0.429
Average quarterly employment (%)	83.3	81.9	1.3	0.664
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	0.9	1.8	-0.9	0.296
1-25	6.2	5.5	0.7	0.652
26-50	8.7	7.0	1.7	0.429
51-75	11.2	16.5	-5.3 *	0.064
76-100	73.0	69.2	3.8	0.289
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	52.9	47.4	5.5	0.167
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	88.9	89.7	-0.8	0.712
Average number of employers during follow-up period	4.1	4.1	0.0	0.900
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	0.9	1.8	-0.9	0.296
1 to 2	37.6	33.8	3.8	0.395
3 to 4	26.5	27.8	-1.3	0.791
5 to 8	24.7	27.5	-2.7	0.443
More than 8	10.3	9.1	1.1	0.736
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	8.6	8.4	0.2	0.621
Number of quarters until first employment spell	0.2	0.4	-0.2 *	0.071
Average number of employment spells	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.823
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	9.1	9.0	0.1	0.849
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	0.9	1.8	-0.9	0.296
1 to 2	6.6	4.4	2.3	0.234
3 to 4	8.9	7.6	1.3	0.564
5 to 8	19.1	25.4	-6.3 *	0.103
9 to 12	64.5	60.9	3.6	0.446

(continued)

Appendix Table C.3 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	0.6	0.7	-0.1	0.288
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	1.8	1.9	-0.2	0.689
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	52.9	47.4	5.5	0.167
1 to 2	23.6	28.8	-5.1	0.150
3 to 4	7.3	9.3	-2.0	0.506
5 to 8	10.3	8.2	2.1	0.436
9 to 12	6.0	6.4	-0.5	0.959
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	14,462	14,566	-105	0.858
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	0.9	1.8	-0.9	0.296
$1-$1,999	5.8	5.4	0.4	0.778
$2,000-$4,999	8.2	8.4	-0.2	0.934
$5,000-$9,999	16.0	19.0	-3.0	0.415
$10,000-$14,999	24.1	18.7	5.4 *	0.132
$15,000-$19,999	21.6	19.3	2.3	0.486
$20,000 or higher	23.5	27.4	-4.0	0.219
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	69.1	65.4	3.7	0.410
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	54.6	54.3	0.3	0.920
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	0.9	1.8	-0.9	0.296
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	9.4	11.1	-1.7	0.634
1 to 2	12.9	10.7	2.3	0.395
3 to 4	13.6	13.4	0.2	0.948
5 to 8	24.9	23.5	1.5	0.675
9 to 12	38.3	39.6	-1.3	0.731
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	0.9	2.1	-1.3	0.182
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	12.9	11.6	1.3	0.612
Earnings decreased by less than $250	4.4	3.2	1.2	0.570
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	35.3	36.5	-1.2	0.752
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.837
Earnings increased by less than $250	5.0	3.8	1.1	0.510
Earnings increased by $250 or more	40.9	41.5	-0.6	0.873
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*4,342*	*4,445*	*-103*	
Sample size (total = 697)	381	316		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.4

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Cleveland

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	90.0	90.2	-0.2	0.956
Currently employed	71.7	77.6	-6.0	0.188
No longer employed	18.4	12.6	5.8 *	0.105
Current working status (%)				
Full time	64.1	64.1	0.0	0.996
Part time	7.1	13.6	-6.5 **	0.039
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	50.0	49.8	0.1	0.976
Hours				
Average hours per week	27.1	28.8	-1.7	0.344
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	7.1	13.6	-6.5 **	0.039
30-34	6.6	8.4	-1.8	0.485
35-44	51.1	46.3	4.9	0.379
45 or more	6.4	9.5	-3.0	0.262
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.767
$5.00 - $6.99	4.7	5.7	-1.0	0.654
$7.00 - $8.99	20.7	20.1	0.7	0.865
$9.00 or more	44.8	51.3	-6.5	0.175
Average weekly earnings ($)	259	273	-15	0.409
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	6.2	8.0	-1.8	0.486
$201-$300	11.7	15.8	-4.1	0.277
$301-$500	46.9	48.4	-1.5	0.752
$500 or more	6.4	5.5	0.9	0.712
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	47.5	46.0	1.5	0.748
Paid vacation	57.0	57.7	-0.7	0.877
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	57.0	53.7	3.3	0.483
Dental benefits	48.6	49.6	-1.0	0.791
A retirement plan	45.1	44.4	0.7	0.912
A health plan or medical insurance	54.0	55.9	-1.9	0.662

(continued)

Appendix Table C.4 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	35.4	33.3	2.1	0.744
Split shift	1.6	1.8	-0.2	0.883
Irregular	1.2	3.9	-2.7 *	0.094
Evening shift	17.1	17.6	-0.5	0.893
Night shift	9.1	14.0	-4.9	0.119
Rotating shift	5.5	6.5	-1.0	0.671
Other schedule	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.332
Odd job	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.332
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	58.7	62.9	-4.2	0.392
Work with computers	17.3	17.0	0.3	0.864
Arithmetic skills	25.2	29.2	-4.0	0.393
Customer contact	66.3	72.7	-6.4	0.193
Sample size (total = 485)	260	225		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.5

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Eugene

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Contacts					
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	83.5	85.6	-2.2		0.537
Average number of contacts with staff	21.3	17.6	3.7		0.142
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	44.3	39.4	4.9		0.311
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	10.4	9.6	0.8		0.787
Services					
Received help with support services (%)	65.8	58.8	7.0		0.124
Received help with basic needs (%)	58.2	49.6	8.6	*	0.076
Received help with public benefits (%)	79.8	73.8	6.0		0.142
Received help with job preparation (%)	49.9	40.5	9.4	*	0.053
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	38.0	22.0	16.0	***	0.000
Finding a better job while working	15.5	6.8	8.8	***	0.004
Other activities while working	17.9	6.7	11.2	***	0.000
Career assessment	17.8	9.5	8.3	**	0.014
Dealing with problems on the job	9.6	5.9	3.6		0.158
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	11.4	9.1	2.4		0.421
Participation					
Participated in any activity (%)	80.9	74.1	6.8	*	0.094
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	75.0	68.7	6.3		0.141
Participated in a job search activity (%)	74.5	67.3	7.3	*	0.094
Group job search/job club	56.1	49.8	6.3		0.182
Individual job search	68.3	62.6	5.7		0.207
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	21.7	25.1	-3.4		0.416
ABE/GED and ESL	4.2	5.8	-1.6		0.439
College courses	13.8	18.9	-5.1		0.154
Vocational training	5.1	1.7	3.4	*	0.054
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	17.7	20.0	-2.3		0.539
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	14.0	14.2	-0.2		0.942
Participated in an employment activitiy while working (%)	27.8	20.9	6.9	*	0.091
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	11.1	10.8	0.3		0.848
Education/training activities	3.8	4.9	-1.2		0.300
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	2.1	2.8	-0.7		0.344
Sample size (total = 440)	220	220			

(continued)

Appendix Table C.5 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.6

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Eugene

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	91.4	88.9	2.5	0.151	1.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	71.0	69.0	2.1	0.300	2.0
Employed every quarter (%)	49.9	48.2	1.8	0.535	2.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	39.0	37.4	1.7	0.543	2.7
Annual earnings ($)	8,406	8,365	40	0.919	398
Ever received TANF (%)	34.7	38.6	-3.9	0.147	2.7
Ever received food stamps (%)	95.3	96.1	-0.8	0.523	1.2
Total income ($)	11,733	11,779	-46	0.901	366
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	76.5	76.6	-0.1	0.966	2.4
Average quarterly employment (%)	61.3	61.4	-0.1	0.969	2.3
Employed every quarter (%)	42.9	45.5	-2.7	0.341	2.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	37.4	37.9	-0.4	0.874	2.7
Annual earnings ($)	8,479	8,303	176	0.710	474
Ever received TANF (%)	22.2	22.4	-0.2	0.934	2.4
Ever received food stamps (%)	82.6	81.6	1.1	0.633	2.2
Total income ($)	11,249	11,170	79	0.861	453
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	65.1	72.1	-7.0 ***	0.009	2.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	51.3	57.8	-6.5 ***	0.008	2.4
Employed every quarter (%)	35.9	42.6	-6.6 **	0.017	2.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	34.1	35.8	-1.7	0.532	2.7
Annual earnings ($)	7,689	8,543	-854	0.104	526
Ever received TANF (%)	19.9	19.1	0.8	0.718	2.3
Ever received food stamps (%)	74.5	74.1	0.4	0.884	2.5
Total income ($)	10,322	11,042	-721	0.156	508
Sample size (total = 1,179)	585	594			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.7

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Eugene

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	3.3	3.4	-0.1	0.791
Average quarterly employment (%)	61.2	62.7	-1.5	0.431
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	4.1	6.3	-2.2 *	0.086
1-25	18.7	16.2	2.5	0.260
26-50	17.7	16.7	1.0	0.659
51-75	19.5	17.5	2.0	0.372
76-100	40.0	43.3	-3.3	0.236
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	23.3	27.9	-4.7 *	0.060
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	66.9	68.8	-1.9	0.481
Average number of employers during follow-up period	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.739
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	4.1	6.3	-2.2 *	0.086
1 to 2	47.2	45.6	1.6	0.598
3 to 4	28.4	28.0	0.4	0.888
5 to 8	18.0	18.3	-0.2	0.916
More than 8	2.4	1.9	0.5	0.526
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	5.8	5.9	-0.1	0.630
Number of quarters until first employment spell	0.9	1.2	-0.3 *	0.094
Average number of employment spells	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.913
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	6.4	6.6	-0.2	0.401
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	4.1	6.3	-2.2 *	0.086
1 to 2	19.1	16.9	2.1	0.340
3 to 4	16.6	15.0	1.6	0.466
5 to 8	25.1	23.4	1.6	0.515
9 to 12	35.2	38.4	-3.1	0.254

(continued)

Appendix Table C.7 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.293
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	4.0	3.8	0.2	0.396
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	23.3	27.9	-4.7 *	0.060
1 to 2	24.0	23.3	0.7	0.767
3 to 4	15.8	13.6	2.2	0.282
5 to 8	20.3	18.4	2.0	0.388
9 to 12	16.6	16.9	-0.3	0.882
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	8,191	8,404	-213	0.601
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	4.1	6.3	-2.2 *	0.086
$1-$1,999	21.9	19.5	2.5	0.292
$2,000-$4,999	19.0	18.2	0.8	0.720
$5,000-$9,999	19.3	20.7	-1.4	0.545
$10,000-$14,999	17.5	16.9	0.6	0.804
$15,000-$19,999	10.9	10.8	0.2	0.930
$20,000 or higher	7.3	7.6	-0.4	0.809
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	35.7	35.4	0.4	0.891
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	27.3	27.0	0.3	0.882
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	4.1	6.3	-2.2 *	0.086
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	37.9	34.7	3.2	0.245
1 to 2	16.5	17.8	-1.3	0.553
3 to 4	9.5	9.9	-0.4	0.824
5 to 8	15.7	15.5	0.2	0.939
9 to 12	16.4	15.8	0.6	0.773
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	4.9	7.0	-2.1	0.120
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	30.1	20.9	9.2 ***	0.000
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.1	3.0	0.0	0.967
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	19.9	23.9	-4.0	0.103
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	3.7	4.1	-0.3	0.764
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.8	3.9	-0.1	0.910
Earnings increased by $250 or more	34.5	37.1	-2.6	0.352
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,344*	*3,350*	*-5*	
Sample size (total = 1,179)	585	594		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.7 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.8

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Eugene

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	94.3	92.5	1.9	0.436
Currently employed	65.3	68.8	-3.5	0.440
No longer employed	29.1	23.7	5.4	0.210
Current working status (%)				
Full time	49.1	49.6	-0.5	0.912
Part time	16.2	19.2	-3.0	0.425
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	28.4	28.0	0.5	0.913
Hours				
Average hours per week	22.0	22.8	-0.8	0.642
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	16.2	19.2	-3.0	0.425
30-34	11.7	13.3	-1.7	0.606
35-44	30.8	28.3	2.6	0.561
45 or more	5.6	8.1	-2.5	0.290
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.4	1.8	-0.3	0.784
$5.00 - $6.99	2.7	5.5	-2.8	0.141
$7.00 - $8.99	41.8	33.2	8.5 *	0.073
$9.00 or more	19.4	28.3	-8.9 **	0.027
Average weekly earnings ($)	194	209	-15	0.368
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	13.1	16.0	-3.0	0.393
$201-$300	23.8	19.4	4.4	0.266
$301-$500	24.3	26.6	-2.3	0.586
$500 or more	4.1	6.8	-2.7	0.213
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	17.8	22.3	-4.5	0.241
Paid vacation	29.8	32.5	-2.7	0.538
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	28.5	28.4	0.1	0.977
Dental benefits	23.7	28.6	-5.0	0.244
A retirement plan	19.3	27.5	-8.2 **	0.045
A health plan or medical insurance	29.2	35.4	-6.2	0.171

(continued)

Appendix Table C.8 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	39.0	42.4	-3.4	0.478
Split shift	1.5	0.3	1.1	0.223
Irregular	4.6	5.4	-0.8	0.690
Evening shift	8.3	9.0	-0.8	0.780
Night shift	4.8	3.0	1.8	0.340
Rotating shift	4.4	5.6	-1.1	0.601
Other schedule	2.3	0.5	1.8	0.111
Odd job	0.5	2.2	-1.7	0.135
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	52.6	58.3	-5.6	0.242
Work with computers	26.7	31.1	-4.4	0.316
Arithmetic skills	39.8	43.3	-3.5	0.470
Customer contact	57.2	57.8	-0.5	0.915
Sample size (total = 440)	220	220		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.9

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Medford

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	73.1	62.3	10.8 **	0.039
Average number of contacts with staff	10.1	6.4	3.8 **	0.023
Talked with staff in past 4 weeks (%)	24.2	24.5	-0.3	0.953
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	9.5	7.3	2.2	0.475
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	38.8	38.9	-0.1	0.981
Received help with basic needs (%)	40.5	37.3	3.2	0.561
Received help with public benefits (%)	55.2	66.2	-10.9 **	0.042
Received help with job preparation (%)	26.3	19.2	7.1	0.115
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	24.8	16.1	8.8 **	0.049
Finding a better job while working	10.9	3.3	7.6 ***	0.007
Other activities while working	10.3	2.7	7.7 ***	0.005
Career assessment	16.5	7.0	9.6 ***	0.006
Dealing with problems on the job	6.0	3.9	2.2	0.372
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	4.4	6.0	-1.6	0.518
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	63.4	55.7	7.6	0.163
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	48.1	43.7	4.4	0.416
Participated in a job search activity (%)	46.4	43.0	3.4	0.532
Group job search/job club	25.3	20.6	4.7	0.315
Individual job search	39.8	39.7	0.1	0.987
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	30.3	21.6	8.7 *	0.074
ABE/GED and ESL	6.1	3.9	2.2	0.325
College courses	20.5	13.3	7.2 *	0.084
Vocational training	6.4	5.3	1.1	0.669
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	8.7	7.6	1.0	0.722
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	28.0	15.3	12.7 ***	0.005
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	21.5	13.5	8.0 *	0.059
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	4.9	5.1	-0.2	0.853
Education/training activities	6.5	4.4	2.1	0.147
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.980
Sample size (total = 345)	167	178		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.9 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.10

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Medford

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	90.4	93.1	-2.7 *	0.083	1.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	76.7	79.4	-2.7	0.143	1.8
Employed every quarter (%)	59.6	62.8	-3.2	0.247	2.7
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	44.0	49.5	-5.5 **	0.042	2.7
Annual earnings ($)	9,935	10,351	-416	0.270	377
Ever received TANF (%)	9.6	8.7	0.9	0.586	1.7
Ever received food stamps (%)	88.3	91.3	-2.9 *	0.086	1.7
Total income ($)	12,228	12,665	-436	0.222	357
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	83.3	85.2	-1.9	0.363	2.1
Average quarterly employment (%)	70.5	71.3	-0.8	0.699	2.2
Employed every quarter (%)	55.3	55.2	0.1	0.986	2.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	45.3	47.9	-2.6	0.348	2.8
Annual earnings ($)	9,763	10,259	-496	0.285	464
Ever received TANF (%)	8.5	9.1	-0.6	0.709	1.6
Ever received food stamps (%)	78.2	78.3	-0.1	0.979	2.3
Total income ($)	11,856	12,338	-482	0.278	444
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	79.6	80.0	-0.4	0.853	2.3
Average quarterly employment (%)	67.4	67.8	-0.3	0.881	2.3
Employed every quarter (%)	53.8	54.0	-0.2	0.952	2.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	45.1	49.5	-4.5	0.117	2.9
Annual earnings ($)	10,333	10,851	-517	0.336	538
Ever received TANF (%)	11.0	7.9	3.2 *	0.062	1.7
Ever received food stamps (%)	70.1	63.5	6.7 **	0.013	2.7
Total income ($)	12,312	12,670	-359	0.489	519
Sample size (total = 1,164)	590	574			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.11

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-3):

Medford

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	4.1	4.6	-0.5 **	0.049
Average quarterly employment (%)	71.5	72.8	-1.3	0.457
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	5.2	2.1	3.1 ***	0.005
1-25	10.6	11.0	-0.4	0.812
26-50	10.7	12.7	-2.0	0.291
51-75	17.5	19.4	-1.9	0.400
76-100	56.0	54.7	1.3	0.653
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	33.9	36.4	-2.5	0.356
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	80.4	80.1	0.3	0.885
Average number of employers during follow-up period	3.3	3.0	0.2 *	0.085
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	5.2	2.1	3.1 ***	0.005
1 to 2	40.7	45.6	-4.9 *	0.089
3 to 4	29.2	33.1	-3.9	0.155
5 to 8	21.3	16.6	4.8 **	0.038
More than 8	3.6	2.6	1.0	0.339
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	6.8	7.2	-0.3	0.203
Number of quarters until first employment spell	1.0	0.7	0.4 **	0.012
Average number of employment spells	1.4	1.5	-0.1	0.192
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	7.6	7.8	-0.1	0.532
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	5.2	2.1	3.1 ***	0.005
1 to 2	9.1	11.6	-2.5	0.169
3 to 4	13.2	13.6	-0.3	0.866
5 to 8	26.2	24.8	1.4	0.597
9 to 12	46.3	47.9	-1.7	0.560

(continued)

Appendix Table C.11 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.690
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	3.0	2.8	0.2	0.249
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	33.9	36.4	-2.5	0.356
1 to 2	26.4	25.1	1.3	0.617
3 to 4	13.9	13.1	0.8	0.706
5 to 8	13.7	15.6	-1.9	0.352
9 to 12	12.2	9.8	2.4	0.187
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	10,010	10,487	-476	0.225
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	5.2	2.1	3.1 ***	0.005
$1-$1,999	10.2	12.5	-2.3	0.214
$2,000-$4,999	15.4	14.5	0.9	0.652
$5,000-$9,999	24.6	23.4	1.2	0.635
$10,000-$14,999	20.3	20.2	0.1	0.965
$15,000-$19,999	14.1	14.7	-0.6	0.765
$20,000 or higher	10.2	12.6	-2.4	0.166
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	44.6	47.5	-2.9	0.291
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	35.2	36.7	-1.4	0.432
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	5.2	2.1	3.1 ***	0.005
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	24.6	26.6	-2.0	0.416
1 to 2	16.8	17.6	-0.9	0.700
3 to 4	11.7	12.3	-0.6	0.745
5 to 8	20.6	18.7	1.9	0.420
9 to 12	21.1	22.6	-1.5	0.511
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 3				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 3	5.2	3.0	2.2 *	0.058
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	15.2	17.0	-1.8	0.414
Earnings decreased by less than $250	4.1	2.9	1.3	0.250
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	23.2	24.1	-0.8	0.739
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	4.4	3.9	0.5	0.649
Earnings increased by less than $250	2.6	4.8	-2.1 *	0.056
Earnings increased by $250 or more	45.2	44.5	0.8	0.793
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,498*	*3,600*	*-102*	
Sample size (total = 1,164)	590	574		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.11 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.12

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Medford

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	93.8	90.1	3.7	0.222
Currently employed	74.1	70.4	3.6	0.466
No longer employed	19.7	19.7	0.0	0.993
Current working status (%)				
Full time	57.3	55.2	2.1	0.703
Part time	16.7	15.2	1.5	0.720
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	38.8	30.4	8.4	0.100
Hours				
Average hours per week	26.7	24.1	2.6	0.206
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	16.7	15.2	1.5	0.720
30-34	9.1	12.8	-3.7	0.301
35-44	36.7	35.2	1.5	0.775
45 or more	11.5	7.2	4.3	0.184
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	3.6	2.8	0.7	0.715
$5.00 - $6.99	4.1	2.9	1.1	0.584
$7.00 - $8.99	30.2	38.6	-8.4	0.115
$9.00 or more	36.3	26.1	10.2 **	0.033
Average weekly earnings ($)	254	212	41 **	0.041
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	13.9	14.5	-0.7	0.861
$201-$300	16.8	21.3	-4.6	0.292
$301-$500	35.0	31.7	3.3	0.517
$500 or more	8.4	2.8	5.6 **	0.020
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	28.8	25.2	3.6	0.449
Paid vacation	41.2	37.2	4.0	0.433
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	39.3	36.2	3.1	0.546
Dental benefits	37.9	30.1	7.8	0.106
A retirement plan	30.8	30.1	0.7	0.891
A health plan or medical insurance	39.4	34.4	5.0	0.313

(continued)

Appendix Table C.12 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	52.1	39.9	12.3 **	0.025
Split shift	1.7	3.4	-1.7	0.346
Irregular	6.3	8.7	-2.5	0.410
Evening shift	5.2	8.6	-3.4	0.245
Night shift	3.0	2.8	0.1	0.953
Rotating shift	3.9	4.8	-0.9	0.698
Other schedule	1.9	1.6	0.2	0.877
Odd job	0.0	0.6	-0.6	0.355
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	60.6	61.7	-1.1	0.837
Work with computers	41.4	35.9	5.6	0.294
Arithmetic skills	52.1	47.2	5.0	0.369
Customer contact	67.6	65.3	2.3	0.664
Sample size (total = 345)	167	178		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.13

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Contacts				
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	52.2	55.2	-3.0	0.664
Average number of contacts with staff	9.5	6.9	2.7	0.410
Talked with staff manager in past 4 weeks (%)	22.4	23.2	-0.8	0.899
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	5.9	8.0	-2.1	0.569
Services				
Received help with support services (%)	49.0	50.2	-1.2	0.858
Received help with basic needs (%)	35.1	31.6	3.5	0.601
Received help with public benefits (%)	52.6	58.5	-5.9	0.410
Received help with job preparation (%)	38.3	28.0	10.3	0.119
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	24.4	20.0	4.4	0.454
Finding a better job while working	7.6	5.7	1.8	0.606
Other activities while working	5.0	4.8	0.2	0.939
Career assessment	17.9	6.3	11.6 **	0.013
Dealing with problems on the job	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.998
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	6.3	7.2	-0.9	0.805
Participation				
Participated in any activity (%)	76.9	70.0	6.9	0.251
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	62.1	55.3	6.7	0.319
Participated in a job search activity (%)	62.2	53.3	8.9	0.190
Group job search/job club	35.7	31.9	3.7	0.565
Individual job search	48.2	45.3	3.0	0.674
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	42.1	39.9	2.2	0.749
ABE/GED and ESL	15.9	12.5	3.4	0.473
College courses	20.8	18.3	2.4	0.651
Vocational training	10.7	13.6	-2.9	0.521
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	2.7	6.5	-3.7	0.209
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	31.0	27.7	3.3	0.599
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	17.8	13.1	4.8	0.351
Average number of weeks participating in				
Job search activities	5.1	4.4	0.7	0.574
Education/training activities	9.6	9.4	0.1	0.955
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.6	1.2	-0.6	0.410
Sample size (total = 224)	120	104		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.13 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.14

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1						
Ever employed (%)	80.0	77.2	2.8	*	0.057	1.5
Average quarterly employment (%)	64.5	61.9	2.6	*	0.061	1.4
Employed every quarter (%)	47.9	45.2	2.8		0.123	1.8
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	40.9	37.7	3.2	*	0.060	1.7
Annual earnings ($)	9,121	8,269	852	***	0.003	287
Ever received TANF (%)	41.4	44.2	-2.7		0.143	1.9
Ever received food stamps (%)	47.2	47.9	-0.7		0.701	1.9
Total income ($)	11,671	10,808	863	***	0.002	281
Follow-Up Year 2						
Ever employed (%)	74.2	69.4	4.8	***	0.004	1.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.7	55.5	4.2	***	0.007	1.6
Employed every quarter (%)	44.1	40.9	3.2	*	0.087	1.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	40.1	36.1	4.0	**	0.026	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	9,254	8,385	869	**	0.015	356
Ever received TANF (%)	34.2	35.2	-1.0		0.605	1.8
Ever received food stamps (%)	41.6	43.2	-1.7		0.372	1.9
Total income ($)	11,562	10,822	741	**	0.033	348
Follow-Up Year 3						
Ever employed (%)	71.3	67.1	4.3	**	0.014	1.7
Average quarterly employment (%)	57.7	54.3	3.4	**	0.035	1.6
Employed every quarter (%)	43.9	40.6	3.4	*	0.073	1.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	40.2	36.0	4.2	**	0.021	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	9,857	9,076	782	*	0.054	405
Ever received TANF (%)	26.2	28.4	-2.3		0.190	1.7
Ever received food stamps (%)	33.8	35.4	-1.6		0.368	1.8
Total income ($)	11,922	11,318	603		0.131	399
Follow-Up Year 4						
Ever employed (%)	68.5	65.2	3.3	*	0.065	1.8
Average quarterly employment (%)	56.8	53.4	3.4	**	0.041	1.7
Employed every quarter (%)	43.9	40.2	3.7	**	0.048	1.9
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	41.7	37.9	3.8	**	0.040	1.8
Annual earnings ($)	10,610	9,643	967	**	0.032	451
Ever received TANF (%)	22.4	22.8	-0.3		0.836	1.6
Ever received food stamps (%)	30.1	32.2	-2.1		0.229	1.8
Total income ($)	12,448	11,493	955	**	0.032	445
Sample size (total = 2,770)	1,627	1,143				

(continued)

Appendix Table C.14 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.15

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	4.0	3.7	0.3	0.117
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.7	56.3	3.4 ***	0.006
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	9.5	11.2	-1.7	0.136
1-25	15.9	18.1	-2.2	0.137
26-50	15.8	15.2	0.6	0.702
51-75	17.8	18.6	-0.8	0.602
76-100	41.1	36.9	4.1 **	0.022
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	23.7	20.3	3.4 **	0.029
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	71.9	69.4	2.4	0.146
Average number of employers during follow-up period	3.6	3.5	0.1	0.616
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	9.5	11.2	-1.7	0.136
1 to 2	35.4	36.6	-1.2	0.532
3 to 4	26.0	23.5	2.5	0.156
5 to 8	22.2	21.3	0.9	0.564
More than 8	6.9	7.5	-0.5	0.611
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	7.1	6.5	0.6 ***	0.004
Number of quarters until first employment spell	2.4	2.8	-0.4 **	0.017
Average number of employment spells	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.954
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	8.1	7.6	0.6 ***	0.006
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	9.5	11.2	-1.7	0.136
1 to 2	12.4	13.5	-1.1	0.422
3 to 4	12.0	13.2	-1.2	0.363
5 to 8	21.5	23.1	-1.6	0.345
9 to 12	14.8	12.2	2.6 *	0.062
13 to 16	29.8	26.9	3.0 *	0.080

(continued)

Appendix Table C.15 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.3	1.4	0.0	0.205
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	5.4	6.0	-0.6 ***	0.002
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	23.7	20.3	3.4 **	0.029
1 to 2	17.6	18.6	-1.0	0.519
3 to 4	13.9	12.7	1.2	0.382
5 to 8	17.7	17.1	0.6	0.690
9 to 12	11.5	12.1	-0.7	0.591
13 to 16	15.6	19.1	-3.5 **	0.012
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,711	8,843	868 ***	0.006
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	9.5	11.2	-1.7	0.136
$1-$1,999	17.7	17.1	0.6	0.694
$2,000-$4,999	14.6	16.4	-1.8	0.213
$5,000-$9,999	17.0	20.3	-3.4 **	0.030
$10,000-$14,999	14.0	12.7	1.4	0.308
$15,000-$19,999	12.6	9.0	3.6 ***	0.004
$20,000 or higher	14.6	13.3	1.3	0.328
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	41.3	35.0	6.3 ***	0.000
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.5	29.5	4.1 ***	0.001
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	9.5	11.2	-1.7	0.136
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	24.2	24.2	0.0	0.979
1 to 2	12.9	14.9	-2.0	0.148
3 to 4	9.6	9.3	0.3	0.827
5 to 8	13.8	16.1	-2.3	0.110
9 to 12	11.6	10.1	1.5	0.232
13 to 16	18.4	14.2	4.3 ***	0.002
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	12.1	14.6	-2.5 **	0.048
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	19.4	20.2	-0.8	0.610
Earnings decreased by less than $250	2.0	2.4	-0.4	0.459
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	17.2	15.7	1.5	0.317
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	7.9	8.2	-0.3	0.752
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.0	1.9	1.1 *	0.083
Earnings increased by $250 or more	38.1	36.7	1.4	0.457
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*4,069*	*3,931*	*137*	
Sample size (total = 2,770)	1,627	1,143		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.15 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.16

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	84.7	88.8	-4.1	0.359
Currently employed	66.3	76.3	-10.0	0.102
No longer employed	18.4	12.5	5.9	0.251
Current working status (%)				
Full time	56.9	63.3	-6.4	0.334
Part time	9.5	13.1	-3.6	0.413
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	32.5	41.4	-9.0	0.160
Hours				
Average hours per week	24.8	29.2	-4.4 *	0.094
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	9.5	13.1	-3.6	0.413
30-34	9.4	5.5	3.9	0.304
35-44	38.9	44.6	-5.7	0.395
45 or more	8.6	13.2	-4.5	0.306
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	3.4	0.9	2.5	0.226
$5.00 - $6.99	5.4	11.1	-5.7	0.135
$7.00 - $8.99	29.6	27.4	2.2	0.736
$9.00 or more	28.0	37.0	-9.0	0.156
Average weekly earnings ($)	222	272	-50 *	0.063
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	10.8	11.5	-0.7	0.875
$201-$300	15.2	16.1	-0.8	0.872
$301-$500	32.3	39.7	-7.4	0.249
$500 or more	8.0	9.0	-1.0	0.792
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	26.3	31.2	-4.8	0.431
Paid vacation	36.9	43.0	-6.0	0.354
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	32.9	42.8	-9.9	0.125
Dental benefits	28.3	33.7	-5.5	0.387
A retirement plan	22.7	29.6	-6.9	0.248
A health plan or medical insurance	33.2	36.7	-3.5	0.592

(continued)

Appendix Table C.16 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	36.2	44.8	-8.6	0.219
Split shift	0.9	-0.1	1.0	0.283
Irregular	7.7	3.6	4.2	0.189
Evening shift	5.4	9.2	-3.8	0.296
Night shift	6.7	7.6	-0.9	0.813
Rotating shift	7.1	8.2	-1.1	0.779
Other schedule	1.5	3.1	-1.6	0.449
Odd job	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.494
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	45.2	60.3	-15.1 **	0.025
Work with computers	33.7	37.1	-3.4	0.587
Arithmetic skills	42.5	47.1	-4.5	0.497
Customer contact	54.5	57.3	-2.9	0.668
Sample size (total = 224)	120	104		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.17

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for the Early Cohort:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	97.7	96.8	0.9	0.643	
Currently employed	61.1	68.0	-6.8	0.184	†
No longer employed	36.5	28.8	7.7	0.129	†
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	1.7	1.3	0.5	0.765	
$5.00 - $6.99	3.3	8.3	-5.1 *	0.079	
$7.00 - $8.99	15.1	16.4	-1.3	0.765	
$9.00 or more	41.6	42.6	-1.0	0.865	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	10.7	8.1	2.7	0.427	
30-34	6.5	10.5	-4.0	0.208	
35-44	35.6	36.7	-1.2	0.819	
45 or more	8.1	12.7	-4.6	0.175	††
Schedule					
Typical schedule (%)					
Regular	42.3	46.9	-4.7	0.394	†
Evening shift	3.0	6.1	-3.2	0.182	
Other schedule	13.9	12.5	1.5	0.705	
Workweek included at least 1 weekend day (%)	23.6	32.5	-8.9 *	0.075	
Benefits					
Employer offers (%)					
Sick days with full pay	31.0	34.3	-3.2	0.537	
Paid vacation	37.7	40.7	-3.0	0.582	
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	35.8	38.0	-2.3	0.674	
A health plan or medical insurance	35.1	43.0	-8.0	0.135	
None of the above	18.6	16.3	2.3	0.606	
Work environment					
Percentage who agreed that they:					
Receive respect from superiors	50.5	55.3	-4.8	0.372	
Receive respect from coworkers	54.1	59.4	-5.3	0.336	†
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	56.3	62.5	-6.2	0.251	
Are allowed to contribute ideas	53.2	60.8	-7.6	0.164	
Can count on keeping job	23.7	18.6	5.1	0.270	
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	56.4	62.9	-6.5	0.213	
Think job is physically demanding	29.0	35.4	-6.5	0.227	
Risk health or safety	20.0	21.4	-1.4	0.762	

(continued)

Appendix Table C.17 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Are members of labor union (%)	9.8	12.5	-2.6	0.456	
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	38.9	44.9	-6.1	0.262	
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)					
Reading and writing skills	42.5	55.9	-13.4 **	0.014	†††
Work with computers	30.3	38.8	-8.5	0.100	††
Arithmetic skills	35.2	38.2	-3.1	0.555	†
Customer contact	50.1	61.1	-10.9 **	0.039	†
Transportation					
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)					
Not currently working	36.5	28.8	7.7	0.129	†
0-15	31.0	33.6	-2.6	0.611	
16-30	18.5	19.3	-0.8	0.857	
31-45	7.7	7.6	0.0	0.991	
46 or more	3.8	7.5	-3.7	0.154	
Advancement outcomes since random assignment					
Ever received a raise (%)	49.2	49.1	0.1	0.983	
Ever received a promotion (%)	26.6	31.2	-4.5	0.372	
Found a different job while working (%)	39.2	29.8	9.5 *	0.084	
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	31.6	28.2	3.5	0.509	
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)					
Work enjoyment	40.3	36.1	4.2	0.448	
Earnings	37.7	35.0	2.8	0.615	
Benefits	26.7	21.8	4.8	0.325	
Number of hours	36.2	34.8	1.4	0.793	
Start and end of workday	38.1	39.0	-0.9	0.870	
Commuting time	28.7	24.8	3.8	0.449	
Job security	32.2	34.2	-2.0	0.712	
Opportunity to advance	32.7	31.7	1.0	0.849	
Sample size (total = 369)	207	162			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.18

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for the Late Cohort:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	95.0	95.9	-0.9	0.658
Currently employed	62.8	58.5	4.4	0.323 †
No longer employed	32.2	37.4	-5.2	0.224 †
Hourly wage				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.616
$5.00 - $6.99	3.8	9.1	-5.3 **	0.020
$7.00 - $8.99	13.0	12.1	0.9	0.789
$9.00 or more	43.6	34.7	8.9 *	0.050
Hours				
Average hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	9.3	11.0	-1.7	0.538
30-34	6.3	7.3	-0.9	0.688
35-44	34.0	32.9	1.0	0.814
45 or more	13.1	7.3	5.8 **	0.043 ††
Schedule				
Typical schedule (%)				
Regular	42.9	35.1	7.8 *	0.085 †
Evening shift	6.1	6.7	-0.6	0.782
Other schedule	12.4	15.6	-3.2	0.311
Workweek included at least 1 weekend day (%)	30.6	30.3	0.3	0.948
Benefits				
Employer offers (%)				
Sick days with full pay	33.9	28.5	5.4	0.207
Paid vacation	40.4	35.1	5.2	0.243
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	37.3	32.6	4.7	0.286
A health plan or medical insurance	39.6	39.3	0.2	0.960
None of the above	15.1	12.9	2.2	0.507
Work environment				
Percentage who agreed that they:				
Receive respect from superiors	51.0	48.7	2.2	0.627
Receive respect from coworkers	55.1	48.3	6.8	0.141 †
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	57.9	55.3	2.6	0.559
Are allowed to contribute ideas	52.3	50.3	2.0	0.660
Can count on keeping job	20.9	19.4	1.5	0.690
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	59.8	55.9	3.9	0.386
Think job is physically demanding	31.7	32.0	-0.3	0.949
Risk health or safety	24.7	21.4	3.3	0.396

(continued)

Appendix Table C.18 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Are members of labor union (%)	11.4	12.6	-1.2	0.690
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	38.4	37.5	0.9	0.839
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)				
Reading and writing skills	47.3	42.4	4.9	0.275 †††
Work with computers	33.7	25.6	8.2 **	0.047 ††
Arithmetic skills	36.5	28.0	8.6 **	0.045 †
Customer contact	55.3	52.8	2.5	0.582 †
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	32.2	37.4	-5.2	0.224 †
0-15	33.1	33.2	-0.2	0.967
16-30	22.5	17.0	5.5	0.141
31-45	3.3	5.5	-2.1	0.253
46 or more	3.6	2.4	1.3	0.441
Advancement outcomes since random assignment				
Ever received a raise (%)	46.8	44.7	2.1	0.640
Ever received a promotion (%)	29.3	25.9	3.5	0.398
Found a different job while working (%)	35.1	34.0	1.1	0.798
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	28.2	33.8	-5.6	0.189
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)				
Work enjoyment	37.1	34.7	2.4	0.591
Earnings	38.2	36.0	2.2	0.621
Benefits	30.6	30.8	-0.3	0.952
Number of hours	33.7	28.5	5.2	0.218
Start and end of workday	38.9	32.1	6.8	0.126
Commuting time	27.4	26.8	0.6	0.887
Job security	34.9	29.2	5.7	0.192
Opportunity to advance	35.6	28.1	7.6 *	0.080
Sample size (total = 523)	297	226		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.19

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4), by Type of Service Provider: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Community-based organization				
Employment retention measures				
Ever employed (%)	90.6	89.0	1.6	0.237
Average quarterly employment (%)	59.3	54.5	4.8 ***	0.001 †
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	71.9	67.4	4.5 **	0.024 ††
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,627	8,445	1,182 ***	0.001 †
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	41.0	32.6	8.4 ***	0.000 ††
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.5	28.0	5.5 ***	0.000 ††
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)				
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,296	1,307	-11	0.894
Average annual food stamps received ($)	961	989	-28	0.615
Average annual income ($)	11,884	10,741	1,143 ***	0.001 ††
Sample size (total = 2,068)	1,246	822		
Community college				
Employment retention measures				
Ever employed (%)	91.4	88.9	2.5	0.276
Average quarterly employment (%)	60.9	61.3	-0.4	0.877 †
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	72.6	76.2	-3.6	0.294 ††
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	9,894	10,260	-366	0.612 †
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	40.6	42.8	-2.2	0.552 ††
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	33.7	34.4	-0.7	0.797 ††
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)				
Average annual TANF received ($)	1,095	1,198	-103	0.464
Average annual food stamps received ($)	842	898	-56	0.542
Average annual income ($)	11,832	12,356	-525	0.450 ††
Sample size (total = 590)	295	295		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.20

Impacts on Current Job Characteristics and Advancement at the 42-Month Survey for Study Participants Eligible to Be Served by a Community-Based Organization:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Employment status					
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	96.0	95.8	0.2	0.907	
Currently employed	60.1	62.9	-2.8	0.464	
No longer employed	35.9	32.9	3.0	0.425	†
Hourly wage					
Average hourly wage (%)					
Less than $5.00	1.5	1.1	0.4	0.665	
$5.00 - $6.99	4.0	10.3	-6.3 ***	0.003	
$7.00 - $8.99	14.4	13.9	0.5	0.866	
$9.00 or more	40.6	36.5	4.1	0.308	
Hours					
Average hours per week (%)					
Less than 30	9.5	11.3	-1.8	0.468	
30-34	5.9	8.7	-2.8	0.184	
35-44	35.1	33.0	2.1	0.582	
45 or more	9.5	9.9	-0.4	0.860	†
Schedule					
Typical schedule (%)					
Regular	42.1	39.8	2.4	0.554	
Evening shift	4.4	6.9	-2.5	0.186	
Other schedule	11.5	15.2	-3.6	0.185	
Workweek included at least 1 weekend day (%)	26.7	32.1	-5.3	0.152	
Benefits					
Employer offers (%)					
Sick days with full pay	32.3	29.8	2.5	0.516	
Paid vacation	38.3	36.8	1.5	0.705	
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	36.1	33.1	2.9	0.449	
A health plan or medical insurance	37.4	41.4	-4.0	0.307	
None of the above	16.2	15.1	1.1	0.711	
Work environment					
Percentage who agreed that they:					
Receive respect from superiors	49.7	51.7	-2.0	0.619	
Receive respect from coworkers	53.1	52.2	1.0	0.812	
Receive proper equipment needed to do job	54.9	58.3	-3.4	0.389	
Are allowed to contribute ideas	51.2	54.6	-3.4	0.395	
Can count on keeping job	21.1	19.9	1.2	0.704	
Think job requires a lot of responsibility	56.6	58.6	-2.0	0.615	
Think job is physically demanding	29.1	35.2	-6.1	0.110	†
Risk health or safety	22.7	20.1	2.6	0.434	

(continued)

Appendix Table C.20 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Are members of labor union (%)	11.7	13.1	-1.4	0.591	
Have possibility of a promotion (%)	37.9	39.5	-1.6	0.689	
Duties/requirements, at least once per month (% reporting)					
Reading and writing skills	44.3	48.8	-4.5	0.256	
Work with computers	30.6	32.4	-1.8	0.614	
Arithmetic skills	34.5	33.6	0.9	0.817	
Customer contact	51.9	55.9	-4.0	0.311	
Transportation					
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)					
Not currently working	35.9	32.9	3.0	0.425	†
0-15	33.9	32.3	1.5	0.688	
16-30	18.2	18.9	-0.7	0.820	
31-45	3.8	7.0	-3.1 *	0.087	
46 or more	4.0	4.6	-0.6	0.728	
Advancement outcomes since random assignment					
Ever received a raise (%)	49.8	46.1	3.7	0.355	†
Ever received a promotion (%)	29.3	29.6	-0.3	0.927	
Found a different job while working (%)	36.9	36.7	0.3	0.943	
Left a job to go into a higher-paying one (%)	30.2	31.0	-0.8	0.832	
Compared with previous jobs since random assignment, percentage who reported current job improvements in (%)					
Work enjoyment	39.3	34.3	5.0	0.212	
Earnings	39.3	35.4	3.9	0.331	
Benefits	31.5	26.5	5.0	0.179	††
Number of hours	36.2	30.0	6.2	0.108	
Start and end of workday	41.1	35.1	6.0	0.131	
Commute time	29.0	28.0	1.1	0.768	
Job security	34.7	32.0	2.7	0.484	
Opportunity to advance	35.7	31.1	4.6	0.239	
Sample size (total = 690)	404	286			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Industry type, firm size, occupation, and other measures from the ERA 42-Month Survey are presented in Appendix D.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.21

Impacts on Contacts, Services, and Participation at the 12-Month Survey: South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)		P-Value
Contacts					
Ever had contact with staff/employment program (%)	43.0	29.1	13.9	***	0.001
Average number of contacts with staff	4.4	2.7	1.7	*	0.077
Talked with staff manager in past 4 weeks (%)	16.0	10.8	5.3	*	0.077
Staff ever talked with respondent's employer (%)	5.9	3.3	2.6		0.164
Services					
Received help with support services (%)	21.9	13.7	8.2	***	0.010
Received help with basic needs (%)	29.2	29.5	-0.4		0.922
Received help with public benefits (%)	55.3	57.4	-2.1		0.625
Received help with job preparation (%)	20.8	16.6	4.2		0.204
Received help with retention/advancement (%)	17.6	8.2	9.4	***	0.001
Finding a better job while working	12.8	3.9	8.9	***	0.000
Other activities while working	6.5	3.3	3.2	*	0.080
Career assessment	7.5	4.1	3.4	*	0.094
Dealing with problems on the job	4.6	2.3	2.3		0.153
Addressing a personal problem that makes it hard to keep a job	4.4	2.5	2.0		0.218
Participation					
Participated in any activity (%)	54.3	53.0	1.4		0.747
Participated in any employment-related activity[a] (%)	44.5	44.6	-0.1		0.991
Participated in a job search activity (%)	42.4	44.2	-1.9		0.654
Group job search/job club	18.4	16.1	2.3		0.480
Individual job search	37.3	38.5	-1.2		0.767
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	26.0	19.7	6.3	*	0.080
ABE/GED and ESL	10.0	9.6	0.4		0.883
College courses	11.3	9.3	2.0		0.436
Vocational training	8.7	3.2	5.5	***	0.006
Participated in unpaid work/subsidized employment (%)	5.7	2.6	3.1	*	0.072
Participated in an education activity while working (%)	14.2	9.0	5.3	*	0.055
Participated in an employment activity while working (%)	12.5	7.8	4.7	*	0.071
Average number of weeks participating in					
Job search activities	4.9	4.3	0.6		0.528
Education/training activities	3.8	2.4	1.4	*	0.083
Unpaid work/subsidized employment	0.7	0.4	0.3		0.220
Sample size (total = 552)	276	276			

(continued)

Appendix Table C.21 (continued)

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure includes respondents who participated in individual or group job searches, job clubs, or on-the-job training, or who had an unpaid or subsidized job.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.22

Impacts on UI-Covered Employment, Public Assistance, and Measured Income: South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference Impact	P-Value	Standard Error
Follow-Up Year 1					
Ever employed (%)	63.2	63.2	0.1	0.972	1.4
Average quarterly employment (%)	50.3	49.7	0.6	0.570	1.1
Employed every quarter (%)	37.7	36.2	1.5	0.288	1.4
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	25.7	25.8	-0.1	0.939	1.3
Annual earnings ($)	5,916	6,063	-147	0.411	179
Ever received TANF (%)	7.5	7.0	0.6	0.577	1.0
Ever received food stamps (%)	62.5	61.5	1.0	0.461	1.3
Total income ($)	7,838	8,000	-162	0.355	175
Follow-Up Year 2					
Ever employed (%)	59.0	58.1	0.9	0.553	1.5
Average quarterly employment (%)	47.9	46.5	1.4	0.291	1.3
Employed every quarter (%)	36.0	34.0	2.0	0.183	1.5
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	25.4	26.1	-0.8	0.566	1.4
Annual earnings ($)	5,947	5,959	-12	0.958	217
Ever received TANF (%)	8.4	8.4	0.0	0.974	1.1
Ever received food stamps (%)	62.5	62.6	0.0	0.984	1.5
Total income ($)	8,020	8,043	-23	0.915	212
Follow-Up Year 3					
Ever employed (%)	58.4	56.1	2.3	0.146	1.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	47.4	45.6	1.7	0.213	1.4
Employed every quarter (%)	35.6	34.0	1.6	0.316	1.6
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	26.6	25.7	1.0	0.500	1.4
Annual earnings ($)	6,089	6,095	-6	0.981	248
Ever received TANF (%)	7.9	6.1	1.7 *	0.075	1.0
Ever received food stamps (%)	61.7	61.1	0.6	0.718	1.6
Total income ($)	8,212	8,167	44	0.855	243
Follow-Up Year 4					
Ever employed (%)	57.6	57.3	0.4	0.826	1.6
Average quarterly employment (%)	46.7	46.0	0.6	0.652	1.4
Employed every quarter (%)	34.1	33.8	0.3	0.851	1.6
Employed with annual earnings over $10,000 (%)	27.1	26.0	1.2	0.413	1.4
Annual earnings ($)	6,265	6,367	-102	0.706	271
Ever received TANF[a] (%)	6.7	5.9	0.8	0.424	1.0
Ever received food stamps[a] (%)	59.2	58.5	0.7	0.677	1.7
Total income[a] ($)	8,400	8,532	-131	0.632	275
Sample size (total = 2,776)	1,382	1,394			

(continued)

Appendix Table C.22 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]156 sample members do not have four years of follow-up on food stamps, TANF, and total income. Because of this, the sum of earnings, TANF, and food stamps does not equal total income in Year 4.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.23

Impacts on Employment Retention and Advancement in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4):

South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment measures				
Number of quarters employed at jobs held in the quarter after random assignment[a]	3.5	3.3	0.2	0.341
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.1	47.0	1.1	0.303
Percentage of quarters employed (%)				
Never employed	25.1	24.9	0.2	0.875
1-25	15.7	17.1	-1.4	0.295
26-50	12.4	13.0	-0.6	0.641
51-75	12.5	12.6	-0.1	0.956
76-100	34.3	32.4	1.9	0.193
Employed entire follow-up period (%)	18.6	18.7	0.0	0.973
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	55.6	55.6	0.1	0.974
Average number of employers during follow-up period	2.4	2.4	0.1	0.392
Number of employers (%)				
Never employed	25.1	24.9	0.2	0.875
1 to 2	36.8	37.1	-0.3	0.852
3 to 4	21.0	21.7	-0.7	0.656
5 to 8	13.9	13.2	0.7	0.612
More than 8	3.3	3.2	0.2	0.810
Average number of quarters in first employment spell	5.7	5.6	0.1	0.485
Number of quarters until first employment spell	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.851
Average number of employment spells	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.726
Average length, longest employment spell (quarters)	6.5	6.3	0.2	0.281
Quarters in longest employment spell (%)				
Never employed	25.1	24.9	0.2	0.875
1 to 2	14.1	14.0	0.2	0.907
3 to 4	9.1	10.9	-1.8	0.107
5 to 8	16.7	17.6	-0.9	0.529
9 to 12	11.3	9.9	1.4	0.233
13 to 16	23.8	22.8	1.0	0.492

(continued)

Appendix Table C.23 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average number of unemployment spells	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.822
Length of longest unemployment spell, in quarters	7.3	7.5	-0.2	0.210
Quarters in longest unemployment spell (%)				
Never unemployed	18.6	18.7	0.0	0.973
1 to 2	16.5	13.8	2.7 **	0.039
3 to 4	8.8	9.9	-1.1	0.329
5 to 8	16.0	15.4	0.7	0.628
9 to 12	9.0	11.2	-2.2 *	0.052
13 to 16	31.1	31.1	0.0	0.985
Earnings and advancement measures				
Average annual earnings ($)	6,054	6,121	-67	0.733
Average annual earnings (%)				
$0	25.1	24.9	0.2	0.875
$1-$1,999	20.6	21.0	-0.4	0.787
$2,000-$4,999	12.9	13.2	-0.3	0.811
$5,000-$9,999	15.8	16.2	-0.3	0.810
$10,000-$14,999	12.5	11.2	1.3	0.267
$15,000-$19,999	8.3	7.9	0.4	0.675
$20,000 or higher	4.8	5.7	-0.9	0.210
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	25.6	24.7	0.8	0.531
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more (%)	24.2	24.6	-0.5	0.686
Number of quarters earning above $3,500 (%)				
Never employed	25.1	24.9	0.2	0.875
No quarters with earnings above $3,500	36.5	35.5	1.0	0.556
1 to 2	9.7	9.7	0.0	0.996
3 to 4	5.5	5.8	-0.3	0.704
5 to 8	7.2	7.8	-0.7	0.506
9 to 12	6.5	7.1	-0.6	0.544
13 to 16	9.6	9.2	0.4	0.710
Comparison of quarter with highest earnings in Year 1 and quarter with highest earnings in Year 4				
Not employed in either Year 1 or Year 4	28.5	28.4	0.1	0.936
Earnings decreased (%)				
No longer employed	13.9	14.4	-0.5	0.726
Earnings decreased by less than $250	3.5	2.9	0.6	0.334
Earnings decreased by $250 or more	16.2	16.0	0.2	0.879
Earnings increased (%)				
Became employed	8.3	8.5	-0.2	0.881
Earnings increased by less than $250	3.8	3.6	0.3	0.725
Earnings increased by $250 or more	25.9	26.3	-0.4	0.780
Average earnings per quarter employed ($)	*3,084*	*3,196*	*-112*	
Sample size (total = 2,776)	1,382	1,394		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.23 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from state administrative records.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

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

"Year 1" refers to Quarters 2 to 5. Quarter 1 is the quarter in which random assignment took place.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This measure counts the number of quarters employed at any jobs held in the quarter after random assignment, even among those who were working at these jobs previously. eroes were given to those who were not employed in this quarter.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.24

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 12-Month Survey: South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employment status				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	77.3	75.3	2.0	0.578
Currently employed	54.8	50.6	4.2	0.306
No longer employed	22.5	24.6	-2.2	0.550
Current working status (%)				
Full time	46.7	44.9	1.8	0.653
Part time	8.1	5.7	2.3	0.290
Currently employed at a "good job"[a] (%)	18.8	19.2	-0.4	0.893
Hours				
Average hours per week	20.1	19.3	0.8	0.633
Total hours per week (%)				
Less than 30	8.1	5.7	2.3	0.290
30-34	9.7	6.3	3.4	0.151
35-44	29.4	30.7	-1.3	0.734
45 or more	7.7	7.9	-0.3	0.902
Earnings				
Average hourly wage (%)				
Less than $5.00	4.3	5.5	-1.3	0.505
$5.00 - $6.99	16.7	18.1	-1.3	0.683
$7.00 - $8.99	17.9	14.4	3.5	0.267
$9.00 or more	15.9	12.7	3.3	0.240
Average weekly earnings ($)	160	155	5	0.730
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	14.2	13.0	1.3	0.673
$201-$300	19.2	19.9	-0.7	0.824
$301-$500	18.3	14.0	4.3	0.153
$500 or more	3.1	3.8	-0.6	0.665
Benefits				
Currently employed and receiving employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	18.8	21.4	-2.7	0.404
Paid vacation	32.2	31.6	0.6	0.865
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	24.6	26.5	-1.9	0.595
Dental benefits	21.4	25.4	-4.0	0.226
A retirement plan	20.7	24.6	-3.9	0.230
A health plan or medical insurance	26.0	30.2	-4.1	0.229

(continued)

Appendix Table C.24 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Schedule[b] (%)				
Regular	31.7	32.4	-0.7	0.865
Split shift	0.7	0.8	-0.1	0.915
Irregular	3.4	2.4	1.0	0.493
Evening shift	4.9	4.8	0.1	0.956
Night shift	4.4	4.3	0.1	0.965
Rotating shift	8.5	4.9	3.7 *	0.088
Other schedule	0.4	0.7	-0.3	0.606
Odd job	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.517
Job skills				
Percentage reporting that job requires each at least monthly				
Reading and writing skills	37.9	35.3	2.7	0.486
Work with computers	22.5	16.6	5.9 *	0.062
Arithmetic skills	24.7	26.4	-1.6	0.651
Customer contact	43.7	41.8	1.9	0.639
Sample size (total = 552)	276	276		

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]This definition of a good job is adapted from Johnson and Corcoran (2003). A "good job" is a job in which a respondent works 35 or more hours per week and either (1) pays $7.00 or more per hour and offers health insurance or (2) pays $8.50 or more per hour.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table C.25

Impacts on Employment Retention, Advancement, and TANF Receipt in the Cumulative Follow-Up Period (Years 1-4), by Labor Force Attachment Status:

South Carolina

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Not attached to the labor market					
Employment retention measures					
Ever employed (%)	42.2	42.4	-0.2	0.951	
Average quarterly employment (%)	14.2	15.0	-0.9	0.588	
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	17.9	19.9	-2.0	0.437	
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	1,186	1,366	-180	0.387	
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	3.0	3.7	-0.7	0.529	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more	2.8	3.6	-0.8	0.330	
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	74	65	9	0.576	
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,699	1,703	-4	0.967	
Average annual income ($)	2,987	3,153	-166	0.478	††
Sample size (total = 953)	484	469			
Partially attached to the labor market					
Employment retention measures					
Ever employed (%)	83.9	85.5	-1.6	0.533	
Average quarterly employment (%)	48.3	43.7	4.5 *	0.052	
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	57.8	54.2	3.6	0.304	
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	4,962	4,331	631 *	0.098	
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	17.2	13.1	4.1 *	0.090	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more	12.7	10.5	2.2	0.159	
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	100	90	10	0.647	
Average annual food stamps received ($)	2,616	2,643	-27	0.827	
Average annual income ($)	7,855	7,031	825 **	0.032	††
Sample size (total = 752)	379	373			

(continued)

Appendix Table C.25 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Attached to the labor market					
Employment retention measures					
Ever employed (%)	97.5	97.3	0.2	0.851	
Average quarterly employment (%)	78.2	77.4	0.8	0.650	
Had employment spell of at least 4 quarters (%)	87.7	88.2	-0.5	0.788	
Earnings and advancement measures					
Average annual earnings ($)	11,182	11,568	-386	0.322	
Average annual earnings of $10,000 or more (%)	51.8	51.3	0.4	0.878	
Quarters with earnings of $3,500 or more	35.8	37.2	-1.5	0.409	
Public assistance and income (Years 1-4)					
Average annual TANF received ($)	56	53	3	0.768	
Average annual food stamps received ($)	1,786	1,746	41	0.614	
Average annual income ($)	12,984	13,432	-448	0.241	††
Sample size (total = 1,071)	519	552			

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

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The H-statistic test was used to test for statistically significant differences in impact estimates across different subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

A small number of sample members are missing TANF and food stamp data from the last quarter of the follow-up period. These people are excluded from impact estimates on the following measures: Average annual TANF received ($); Average annual food stamps received ($); and Average annual income ($).

Appendix D

Exhibits Showing Additional Outcomes from the 42-Month Survey and the 42-Month Survey Response Analysis

Appendix D presents supplementary exhibits from the 42-month survey and includes the 42-month survey response analysis for the Chicago, Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS), and Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) programs in the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project.

Table

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The 42-Month Survey Response Analysis

Box

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Table

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.1

Impacts on Participation in Job Search, Education, and Training at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment (%)				
Ever participated in any activity[a]	57.3	55.4	1.9	0.540
Participated in group job search[b]	40.3	36.8	3.4	0.263
Participated in an education/training activity				
ABE/GED	16.7	14.9	1.7	0.436
ESL	4.1	3.3	0.9	0.468
College courses	14.0	14.5	-0.5	0.825
Vocational training	17.4	18.6	-1.2	0.617
During past year				
Ever participated in any activity[a] (%)	34.7	36.1	-1.4	0.647
Participated in group job search[b] (%)	18.6	20.0	-1.4	0.576
Participated in an education/training activity (%)				
ABE/GED	10.9	9.6	1.3	0.495
ESL	1.7	2.2	-0.5	0.552
College courses	9.1	8.5	0.7	0.701
Vocational training	9.3	9.9	-0.6	0.762
Average number of weeks participating in				
Group job search[b]	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.905
Education/training activities	3.7	3.5	0.2	0.731
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Sample members are counted as participating in any activity if they participated in a job club, ESL training, high school/GED/ABE enrollment, college enrollment, or vocational training.

[b]Group job search is also known as a "job club."

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.2

Impacts on Educational Attainment at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment				
Received any type of diploma, degree, license, or certificate (%)	24.9	19.9	5.0 *	0.058
Received a GED certificate (%)	2.5	3.0	-0.4	0.668
Received a high school diploma (%)	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.983
Received a bachelor's or graduate degree (%)	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.173
Received a trade license or trade certificate (%)	21.3	16.3	5.0 **	0.042
Number of trade licenses or trade certificates received	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.973
Type of trade license received (%)				
CNA/nursing	4.4	3.5	0.9	0.489
Child care	2.5	1.2	1.3	0.121
Food preparation	2.8	1.6	1.2	0.200
Home care	1.5	2.7	-1.2	0.184
Janitor/housekeeping	0.6	0.8	-0.2	0.745
Security	3.5	1.0	2.5 ***	0.008
Cosmetics	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.339
Computers	0.8	1.2	-0.4	0.495
Other	3.5	1.8	1.8 *	0.083
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.3

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Characteristics of current job				
Working status (%)				
Full time	55.8	53.7	2.1	0.512
Part time	10.7	14.1	-3.4	0.106
Seasonal, temporary, or odd job (%)	12.7	15.7	-3.0	0.175
Out-of-state job (%)	1.5	1.0	0.5	0.474
Hours				
Average hours worked per week	23.9	23.1	0.7	0.525
Average days worked per week	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.846
Earnings				
Average hourly pay ($)	5.42	5.30	0.12	0.707
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*8.42*	*7.92*	*0.49*	*NA*
Average weekly earnings ($)	193	178	15	0.213
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than $200	16.6	21.8	-5.2 **	0.046
$201-$300	20.5	22.9	-2.4	0.386
$301-$500	21.7	18.7	3.0	0.252
$500 or more	5.4	3.5	2.0	0.150
Average weekly earnings among those employed ($)	*299*	*266*	*33*	*NA*
Health insurance benefits (%)				
Employer offered a health plan or medical insurance	22.6	19.5	3.1	0.221
Enrolled in employer's health insurance plan	7.5	6.2	1.4	0.391
Reasons why not enrolled in employer's health insurance plan				
Covered by Medicaid	5.4	5.0	0.4	0.788
Covered by other health insurance	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.645
Too expensive	5.9	4.7	1.2	0.410
Had not worked long enough	2.4	2.6	-0.3	0.766
Other reason	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.184
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.4

Impacts on Type of Industry, Type of Occupation, and Firm Size in Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of industry (%)				
Construction	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.547
Manufacturing	1.1	1.7	-0.5	0.484
Transportation and utilities	4.3	2.8	1.6	0.187
Wholesale trade	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Retail trade	8.6	8.9	-0.4	0.840
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.5	2.3	-0.8	0.374
Services	48.2	49.2	-1.0	0.755
Other industries	2.1	2.6	-0.5	0.601
Type of occupation (%)				
Sales	10.0	10.7	-0.6	0.744
Clerical	7.1	8.9	-1.7	0.317
Services	35.9	34.8	1.1	0.726
Operatives/laborers	9.7	8.4	1.3	0.457
Other	3.8	4.7	-0.8	0.511
Number of workers (%)				
1-4	15.3	14.1	1.2	0.581
5-49	22.8	24.0	-1.2	0.674
50-99	5.2	4.1	1.1	0.426
100-249	6.2	7.8	-1.6	0.341
250-499	4.9	5.7	-0.8	0.581
500 or more	11.1	11.9	-0.7	0.731
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.5

Impacts on Employment Retention at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Current job				
Currently employed (%)	66.6	67.7	-1.1	0.706
Average months employed in current job	19.8	19.4	0.4	0.759
Total months employed in current job (%)				
0	34.4	33.1	1.3	0.668
1 to 6	8.0	11.3	-3.2 *	0.084
7 to 12	6.2	6.0	0.2	0.918
12 to 24	10.4	9.4	1.1	0.579
More than 24	41.0	40.3	0.8	0.806
Prior year (%)				
Employed in year prior to interview	79.1	79.6	-0.5	0.850
Total months employed in prior year				
0	14.5	16.6	-2.1	0.346
1 to 6	18.1	16.7	1.4	0.561
7 to 11	12.7	12.1	0.7	0.750
12	54.7	54.6	0.1	0.977
Since random assignment (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	92.9	89.6	3.3 *	0.063
Number of jobs since random assigment				
0	7.2	10.4	-3.2 *	0.067
1	41.5	41.3	0.2	0.942
2 or 3	41.2	39.9	1.3	0.683
4 to 6	9.6	7.6	2.0	0.260
More than 6	0.6	0.8	-0.2	0.645
Ever worked for one employer for 6 months or more	58.5	53.5	5.0	0.108
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.6

Impacts on Household Income and Savings at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household income				
Percentage with each income source				
Own earnings	67.2	69.9	-2.8	0.345
Earnings of other members	12.8	12.7	0.1	0.981
Child support	11.4	10.7	0.7	0.730
Public assistance	83.8	80.6	3.1	0.183
Cash assistance	12.0	17.1	-5.1 **	0.021
Food stamps	80.8	79.2	1.7	0.503
SSI or disability benefits	17.9	18.1	-0.3	0.907
Total household income in prior month[a] ($)	1,301	1,269	33	0.560
Household income				
$0 in the prior month	0.4	1.7	-1.2 *	0.061
$1-$1,000	45.9	41.8	4.0	0.200
$1,001-$2,000	39.4	45.4	-6.1 *	0.055
$2,001-$3,000	11.3	8.7	2.5	0.192
More than $3,000	3.1	2.3	0.7	0.489
Percentage of household income that is respondent's	84.5	82.1	2.3	0.203
Below poverty level[b] (%)	80.2	82.6	-2.4	0.332
Household savings				
Total household savings in prior month ($)	140	83	58	0.382
Distribution of household savings (%)				
$0 in the prior month	95.0	93.8	1.3	0.396
$1-$250	1.2	2.1	-0.9	0.250
$251-$500	0.8	1.1	-0.3	0.646
More than $501	3.0	3.1	0.0	0.969
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Total household income is defined as the sum of *all* sources of income from *all* household members, including earnings, public assistance, child support, and any other sources of income.

[b]The 2005 U.S. Census Bureau poverty thresholds (which are based on household income, household size, and number of related minor children) were used to determine whether sample members were living at or below the poverty level.

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Appendix Table D.7

Impacts on Household Composition, Housing, and Housing Expenditures at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household composition				
Number of people in household	4.9	4.8	0.0	0.879
New child in household since random assignment (%)	17.5	17.6	-0.2	0.950
Marital status				
Married or cohabitating (%)				
Married and living with spouse	3.7	3.3	0.4	0.755
Cohabitating with partner	10.1	6.8	3.3 *	0.060
Single (%)				
Divorced or separated				
Divorced	6.1	8.6	-2.5	0.128
Separated	8.3	9.9	-1.7	0.356
Never married	69.9	69.8	0.2	0.958
Widowed	1.9	1.2	0.6	0.410
Housing				
Current housing status (%)				
Owns home	2.9	2.4	0.5	0.608
Rents home or apartment	83.8	80.2	3.5	0.139
Lives with family or friend	11.1	15.6	-4.5 **	0.034
Lives in some other arrangement	2.3	1.9	0.4	0.644
Household expenditures				
Total housing expenditures in rent or mortgage ($)	546	523	23	0.329
Housing cost as percentage of household income (%)	45.6	44.1	1.4	0.461
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.8

Impacts on Health and Health Care Coverage at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Health				
Self-rated health (%)				
Excellent	20.8	19.8	1.0	0.683
Very good	20.3	20.1	0.2	0.929
Good	35.0	32.2	2.8	0.343
Fair	18.6	21.0	-2.4	0.346
Poor	5.3	7.0	-1.7	0.255
Respondent or family member has serious health problems that limit activities or work (%)	16.5	19.2	-2.7	0.267
Psychologicial Distress Scale[a] (K6)	5.7	5.7	0.0	0.908
Experienced serious psychological distress in the past month[a] (%)	11.0	11.3	-0.3	0.877
Health care coverage				
Respondent has health care coverage	89.3	89.4	-0.1	0.953
Publicly funded	84.4	86.0	-1.7	0.456
Privately funded	10.4	8.6	1.9	0.306
All dependent children have health care coverage	89.4	87.1	2.3	0.228
Respondent and all children have health care coverage	85.1	83.8	1.3	0.555
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Based on the K6 scale that includes six questions about how often a respondent experienced symptoms of psychological distress during the past 30 days. The response codes (0-4) of the six items for each person are summed to yield a scale with a 0-24 range. A value of 13 or more for this scale is used here to define serious psychological distress (Web site: http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/k6_scales.php).

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Appendix Table D.9

Impacts on Child Care and Transportation at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Child care				
During past month				
Any child care (%)	29.8	26.8	3.0	0.260
Any informal child care[a] (%)	2.7	2.9	-0.2	0.854
Child care expenses (%)	25.4	22.8	2.6	0.315
Paid entirely by respondent	2.4	4.3	-1.9 *	0.098
Paid partially by respondent	18.6	13.6	5.0 **	0.028
Not paid by respondent	4.4	4.8	-0.4	0.783
Child care expenses ($)				
Paid by respondent	28	22	7	0.211
Paid by someone else	39	34	5	0.557
Working with child care arrangement (%)	27.3	24.0	3.3	0.218
Working without child care arrangement (%)	36.3	41.3	-5.0 *	0.098
During past year				
Child care was a barrier to school, job training, or work (%)	9.9	12.9	-3.0	0.136
Respondent quit or refused job, school, or training because of child care problems (%)	4.7	6.3	-1.6	0.251
Respondent missed work because of child care problems (%)	1.3	2.6	-1.3	0.151
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	33.4	32.3	1.1	0.706
0-15	14.8	19.4	-4.5 *	0.052
16-30	19.7	18.1	1.6	0.517
31-45	13.5	11.5	1.9	0.355
46 or more	18.6	18.7	-0.1	0.970
Respondent has valid driver's license (%)	40.7	44.1	-3.5	0.247
Respondent has access to a car (%)	20.8	22.2	-1.4	0.578
Method of transportation to current job[b] (%)				
By car	13.0	16.3	-3.3	0.131
By bus or other transportation	40.8	38.6	2.2	0.470
Gets a ride	16.1	12.9	3.1	0.158
Walks	5.4	4.9	0.5	0.724
During past month, missed work due to problems with transportation (%)	1.9	2.1	-0.2	0.804
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.9 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Informal child care is defined as a regular child care arrangement for which neither the respondent nor any other person or institution paid.

[b]Respondents can select more than one method of transportation.

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Appendix Table D.10

Impacts on Child Care for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of child care arrangement in past month				
Currently in any child care (%)	57.3	44.3	13.0 **	0.013
Number of child care arrangements	0.6	0.5	0.2 ***	0.008
Any home-based care (%)	50.3	40.4	9.9 *	0.060
Family daycare	3.0	5.9	-2.9	0.183
Other biological parent	1.8	1.7	0.1	0.947
Sibling	7.5	3.1	4.3 *	0.081
Other relative	32.2	24.1	8.0 *	0.098
Spouse/partner	0.4	0.8	-0.4	0.676
Nonrelative in child's home	8.2	6.7	1.5	0.598
Any center-based care (%)	7.8	3.4	4.4 *	0.080
Head Start	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Preschool, nursery, or daycare center	6.2	2.8	3.4	0.128
After-school program	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.173
Summer camp	0.5	0.7	-0.2	0.862
Extent of child care in a typical week				
Number of hours in child care	14	10	4 **	0.026
0 hours in child care (%)	44.1	56.4	-12.4 **	0.020
Fewer than 20 hours in child care (%)	22.1	17.9	4.3	0.330
20 or more hours in child care (%)	33.8	25.7	8.1	0.103
Sample size (total = 353)	189	164		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.11

Impacts on School Outcomes and Behavioral Problems for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	63.3	74.0	-10.6 **	0.037
Below average	7.8	8.1	-0.4	0.896
Ever in special education	9.6	6.6	3.0	0.321
Ever repeated a grade	6.3	8.6	-2.3	0.429
Ever suspended	8.7	9.6	-0.9	0.785
Ever expelled	3.4	4.1	-0.7	0.745
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	10.6	9.2	1.4	0.677
Sample size (total = 353)	189	164		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.12

Impacts on School Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	47.8	49.7	-1.9	0.686
Below average	16.8	11.7	5.1	0.131
Ever in special education	20.7	12.8	7.9 **	0.028
Ever repeated a grade	18.9	20.9	-2.0	0.597
Ever suspended	29.7	36.5	-6.8	0.132
Ever expelled	7.6	7.8	-0.2	0.934
Ever dropped out of school	6.8	5.9	1.0	0.682
Sample size (total = 443)	221	222		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.13

Impacts on Behavioral Problems and Police Involvement Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	8.3	5.7	2.6	0.288
Ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.468
Police involvement outcomes[a] (%)				
Ever in juvenile court	10.0	9.5	0.6	0.841
Ever in trouble with the police	6.8	8.2	-1.5	0.570
Sample size (total = 443)	221	222		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.14

Impacts on Participation in Job Search, Education, and Training at the 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment[a] (%)				
Ever participated in any activity	66.7	59.2	7.5 **	0.015
Participated in group job search[b]	42.0	40.3	1.8	0.574
Participated in an education/training activity				
ABE/GED	11.9	9.5	2.4	0.228
ESL	5.2	3.7	1.5	0.247
College courses	27.7	22.8	4.9 *	0.070
Vocational training	26.1	22.5	3.6	0.194
During past year				
Ever participated in any activity[a] (%)	39.2	35.7	3.4	0.267
Participated in group job search[b] (%)	17.2	16.9	0.3	0.913
Participated in an education/training activity (%)				
ABE/GED	5.4	6.7	-1.3	0.387
ESL	2.7	2.6	0.1	0.899
College courses	17.0	13.5	3.5	0.132
Vocational training	11.6	10.4	1.2	0.552
Average number of weeks participating in				
Group job search[b]	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.893
Education/training activities	6.3	5.6	0.7	0.457
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are disucssed in Chapter 2.

[a]Sample members are counted as participating in any activity if they participated in a job club, ESL training, high school/GED/ABE enrollment, college enrollment, or vocational training.

[b]Group job search is also known as a "job club."

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Appendix Table D.15

Impacts on Educational Attainment at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment				
Received any type of diploma, degree, license, or certificate (%)	24.8	25.7	-1.0	0.729
Received a GED certificate (%)	1.3	2.5	-1.2	0.164
Received a high school diploma (%)	1.6	1.7	-0.1	0.946
Received a bachelor's or graduate degree (%)	0.5	0.6	-0.1	0.791
Received a trade license or trade certificate (%)	21.3	21.1	0.2	0.955
Number of trade licenses or trade certificates received	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.886
Type of trade license received (%)				
CNA/nursing	5.8	4.1	1.6	0.246
Child care	1.9	1.2	0.8	0.344
Food preparation	0.2	0.7	-0.5	0.222
Home care	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.267
Janitor/housekeeping	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.302
Security	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.967
Cosmetics	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.876
Computers	1.6	1.5	0.2	0.851
Other	5.6	7.4	-1.8	0.275
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.16

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Characteristics of current job				
Working status (%)				
Full time	51.8	54.7	-3.0	0.349
Part time	8.0	4.1	3.9 **	0.012
Seasonal, temporary, or odd job (%)	14.0	12.1	1.9	0.386
Out-of-state job (%)	1.8	1.3	0.5	0.503
Hours				
Average hours worked per week	22.4	23.2	-0.8	0.515
Average days worked per week	2.9	3.0	0.0	0.774
Earnings				
Average hourly pay ($)	6.40	6.25	0.15	0.719
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*10.90*	*10.72*	*0.18*	*NA*
Average weekly earnings ($)	240	251	-11	0.514
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than 200	6.9	3.8	3.1 **	0.046
$201-$300	12.5	10.0	2.5	0.250
$301-$500	24.5	29.1	-4.6	0.119
$500 or more	15.0	15.7	-0.7	0.764
Average weekly earnings among those employed ($)	*410*	*428*	*-18*	*NA*
Health insurance benefits (%)				
Employer offered a health plan or medical insurance	37.2	35.9	1.2	0.690
Enrolled in employer's health insurance plan	16.8	16.0	0.8	0.725
Reasons why not enrolled in employer's health insurance plan				
Covered by Medicaid	7.6	7.5	0.1	0.967
Covered by other health insurance	2.1	1.7	0.4	0.651
Too expensive	6.0	7.4	-1.4	0.388
Had not worked long enough	3.3	1.9	1.5	0.162
Other reason	0.6	0.7	-0.1	0.829
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.16 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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

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Appendix Table D.17

Impacts on Type of Industry, Type of Occupation, and Firm Size in Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of industry (%)				
Construction	0.1	2.0	-1.9 ***	0.004
Manufacturing	4.6	5.3	-0.7	0.633
Transportation and utilities	7.7	4.7	2.9 *	0.066
Wholesale trade	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.582
Retail trade	7.0	6.1	0.9	0.603
Finance, insurance, and real estate	3.2	3.3	-0.1	0.904
Services	33.0	33.5	-0.5	0.867
Other industries	3.1	3.5	-0.4	0.756
Type of occupation (%)				
Sales	7.5	5.0	2.5	0.114
Clerical	14.7	17.5	-2.8	0.230
Services	21.6	21.2	0.5	0.867
Operatives/laborers	11.5	11.9	-0.4	0.841
Other	4.4	3.4	1.0	0.415
Number of workers (%)				
1-4	8.5	7.0	1.5	0.397
5-49	18.4	20.0	-1.6	0.544
50-99	6.0	6.8	-0.8	0.629
100-249	10.5	8.9	1.5	0.436
250-499	4.7	5.0	-0.3	0.864
500 or more	11.6	12.1	-0.5	0.808
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.18

Impacts on Employment Retention at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Current job				
Currently employed (%)	60.0	59.2	0.8	0.791
Average months employed in current job	14.3	13.0	1.3	0.221
Total months employed in current job (%)				
0	41.5	41.9	-0.4	0.902
1 to 6	11.0	14.8	-3.8 *	0.083
7 to 12	7.5	6.7	0.9	0.609
12 to 24	11.4	9.5	1.9	0.349
More than 24	28.6	27.1	1.4	0.610
Prior year (%)				
Employed in year prior to interview	79.0	78.5	0.5	0.836
Total months employed in prior year				
0	14.7	16.8	-2.0	0.377
1 to 6	26.0	23.1	2.9	0.296
7 to 11	14.6	16.7	-2.1	0.371
12	44.7	43.4	1.2	0.692
Random assignment (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	91.2	89.0	2.2	0.244
Number of jobs since random assigment				
0	8.9	11.2	-2.3	0.227
1	29.7	29.2	0.5	0.869
2 or 3	46.9	43.3	3.6	0.262
4 to 6	13.6	14.9	-1.3	0.557
More than 6	1.0	1.5	-0.5	0.509
Ever worked for one employer for 6 months or more	60.4	62.1	-1.7	0.587
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.19

Impacts on Household Income and Savings at the 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household income				
Percentage with each income source				
Own earnings	60.4	63.4	-3.0	0.335
Earnings of other members	26.5	31.3	-4.8 *	0.095
Child support	12.2	13.4	-1.3	0.567
Public assistance	62.3	58.6	3.6	0.238
Cash assistance	36.5	34.3	2.2	0.477
Food stamps	56.4	53.0	3.4	0.265
SSI or disability benefits	12.5	11.9	0.7	0.760
Total household income in prior month[a] ($)	1,710	1,837	-127	0.129
Household income				
$0 in the prior month	0.9	1.1	-0.3	0.693
$1-$1,000	29.3	29.1	0.2	0.947
$1,001-$2,000	44.2	39.2	5.0	0.126
$2,001-$3,000	15.9	17.8	-1.9	0.438
More than $3,000	9.8	12.8	-3.0	0.150
Percentage of household income that is respondent's	77.8	76.8	1.0	0.629
Below poverty level[b] (%)	57.4	54.6	2.7	0.403
Household savings				
Total household savings in prior month ($)	221	380	-159	0.119
Distribution of household savings (%)				
$0 in the prior month	83.8	83.6	0.2	0.929
$1-$250	7.5	5.9	1.7	0.311
$251-$500	1.6	2.9	-1.3	0.204
$501 or more	7.0	7.7	-0.6	0.715
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Total household income is defined as the sum of *all* sources of income from *all* household members, including earnings, public assistance, child support, and any other sources of income.

[b]The 2005 U.S. Census Bureau poverty thresholds (which are based on household income, household size, and number of related minor children) were used to determine whether sample members were living at or below the poverty level.

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Appendix Table D.20

Impacts on Household Composition, Housing, and Housing Expenditures at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household composition				
Number of people in household	3.9	4.0	-0.1	0.105
New child in household since random assignment (%)	22.8	26.3	-3.5	0.182
Marital status				
Married or cohabitating (%)				
Married and living with spouse	8.1	7.7	0.4	0.808
Cohabitating with partner	9.5	15.1	-5.6 ***	0.008
Single (%)				
Divorced or separated				
Divorced	10.1	9.7	0.4	0.823
Separated	12.3	10.1	2.2	0.282
Never married	57.9	55.9	2.0	0.503
Widowed	1.8	0.9	1.0	0.199
Housing				
Current housing status (%)				
Owns home	3.7	2.7	1.1	0.354
Rents home or apartment	66.4	67.8	-1.5	0.615
Lives with family or friend	26.0	27.7	-1.8	0.520
Lives in some other arrangement	4.0	1.8	2.2 **	0.044
Household expenditures				
Total housing expenditures in rent or mortgage ($)	778	806	-28	0.375
Housing cost as percentage of household income (%)	51.2	49.6	1.6	0.394
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.21

Impacts on Health and Health Care Coverage at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Health				
Self-rated health (%)				
Excellent	19.5	24.0	-4.5 *	0.090
Very good	19.7	19.5	0.2	0.933
Good	36.2	34.5	1.7	0.597
Fair	18.9	17.6	1.3	0.598
Poor	5.8	4.5	1.3	0.351
Respondent or family member has serious health problems that limit activities or work (%)	18.3	14.7	3.6	0.127
Psychologicial Distress Scale[a] (K6)	5.7	5.3	0.4	0.247
Experienced serious psychological distress in the past month[a] (%)	12.4	11.5	0.9	0.663
Health care coverage				
Respondent has health care coverage	86.4	85.5	0.9	0.688
Publicly funded	75.2	72.8	2.4	0.393
Privately funded	20.9	20.4	0.4	0.866
All dependent children have health care coverage	82.6	82.7	-0.1	0.982
Respondent and all children have health care coverage	79.7	77.8	2.0	0.456
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Based on the K6 scale that includes six questions about how often a respondent experienced symptoms of psychological distress during the past 30 days. The response codes (0-4) of the six items for each person are summed to yield a scale with a 0-24 range. A value of 13 or more for this scale is used here to define serious psychological distress (Web site: http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/k6_scales.php).

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Appendix Table D.22

Impacts on Child Care and Transportation at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Child care				
During past month				
Any child care (%)	38.4	35.7	2.7	0.364
Any informal child care[a] (%)	8.2	5.3	2.9 *	0.082
Child care expenses (%)	27.8	27.7	0.1	0.984
Paid entirely by respondent	8.8	8.3	0.5	0.803
Paid partially by respondent	5.4	6.9	-1.5	0.330
Not paid by respondent	13.6	12.3	1.2	0.565
Child care expenses ($)				
Paid by respondent	46	48	-2	0.798
Paid by someone else	30	42	-12	0.248
Working with child care arrangement (%)	30.1	28.4	1.8	0.540
Working without child care arrangement (%)	26.2	29.1	-2.8	0.311
During past year				
Child care was a barrier to school, job training, or work (%)	25.4	23.8	1.6	0.560
Respondent quit or refused job, school, or training because of child care problems (%)	15.3	14.6	0.7	0.764
Respondent missed work because of child care problems (%)	5.3	5.0	0.3	0.848
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	40.0	40.8	-0.8	0.791
0-15	24.3	21.1	3.3	0.233
16-30	22.9	22.7	0.2	0.949
31-45	7.1	7.8	-0.6	0.708
46 or more	5.5	7.8	-2.3	0.160
Respondent has valid driver's license (%)	75.2	69.6	5.6 *	0.052
Respondent has access to a car (%)	59.7	54.0	5.7 *	0.069
Method of transportation to current job[b] (%)				
By car	40.8	40.0	0.7	0.816
By bus or other transportation	14.4	12.3	2.2	0.321
Gets a ride	9.2	10.5	-1.3	0.510
Walks	3.6	1.9	1.7	0.119
During past month, missed work due to problems with transportation (%)	1.9	1.8	0.0	0.966
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.22 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Informal child care is defined as a regular child care arrangement for which neither the respondent nor any other person or institution paid.

[b]Respondents can select more than one method of transportation.

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Appendix Table D.23

Impacts on Child Care for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of child care arrangement in past month				
Currently any child care (%)	51.4	52.2	-0.8	0.869
Number of child care arrangements	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.725
Any home-based care (%)	43.1	44.9	-1.8	0.714
Family daycare	8.8	6.5	2.2	0.406
Other biological parent	0.4	2.5	-2.1 *	0.073
Sibling	1.9	3.8	-2.0	0.235
Other relative	28.1	28.6	-0.5	0.909
Spouse/partner	0.5	1.4	-0.9	0.360
Nonrelative in child's home	5.4	3.2	2.2	0.289
Any center-based care (%)	9.1	8.6	0.5	0.865
Head Start	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.278
Preschool, nursery, or daycare center	4.2	5.3	-1.1	0.608
After-school program	3.8	3.4	0.4	0.813
Summer camp	0.5	-0.1	0.6	0.240
Extent of child care in a typical week				
Number of hours in child care	12	12	0	0.967
0 hours in child care (%)	49.8	49.7	0.1	0.982
Fewer than 20 hours in child care (%)	19.8	25.7	-6.0	0.167
20 or more hours in child care (%)	30.4	24.6	5.8	0.203
Sample size (total = 422)	206	216		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.24

Impacts on School Outcomes and Behavioral Problems for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	71.4	71.9	-0.5	0.904
Below average	4.6	7.6	-3.0	0.207
Ever in special education	7.9	7.8	0.1	0.968
Ever repeated a grade	4.1	6.8	-2.7	0.232
Ever suspended	3.9	2.7	1.2	0.502
Ever expelled	1.5	0.4	1.0	0.286
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	5.8	6.1	-0.3	0.889
Sample size (total = 422)	206	216		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.25

Impacts on School Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	52.1	50.3	1.8	0.792
Below average	10.9	13.2	-2.3	0.587
Ever in special education	12.3	16.7	-4.4	0.360
Ever repeated a grade	9.8	15.1	-5.3	0.236
Ever suspended	31.3	29.0	2.3	0.708
Ever expelled	10.3	7.0	3.3	0.393
Ever dropped out of school	1.4	4.5	-3.2	0.145
Sample size (total = 243)	126	117		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.26

Impacts on Behavioral Problems and Police Involvement Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	11.1	6.0	5.2	0.171
Ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs	0.7	3.5	-2.8	0.145
Police involvement outcomes[a] (%)				
Ever in juvenile court	9.6	11.1	-1.4	0.730
Ever in trouble with the police	6.9	4.6	2.4	0.464
Sample size (total = 243)	126	117		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.27

Impacts on Participation in Job Search, Education, and Training at the 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment (%)				
Ever participated in any activity[a]	62.2	62.6	-0.4	0.906
Participated in group job search[b]	35.4	44.8	-9.4 ***	0.006
Participated in an education/training activity				
ABE/GED	10.0	8.0	2.1	0.298
ESL	5.0	2.3	2.7 **	0.044
College courses	28.3	24.2	4.2	0.160
Vocational training	18.0	21.5	-3.5	0.215
During past year				
Ever participated in any activity[a] (%)	35.5	38.9	-3.4	0.314
Participated in group job search[b] (%)	13.3	21.9	-8.6 ***	0.001
Participated in an education/training activity (%)				
ABE/GED	5.0	4.1	0.8	0.582
ESL	2.0	0.8	1.2	0.143
College courses	17.6	14.6	3.0	0.232
Vocational training	7.0	11.1	-4.1 **	0.040
Average number of weeks participating in				
Group job search[b]	0.3	0.8	-0.5 ***	0.001
Education/training activities	5.0	6.3	-1.3	0.162
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Sample members are counted as participating in any activity if they participated in a job club, ESL training, high school/GED/ABE enrollment, college enrollment, or vocational training.

[b]Group job search is also known as a "job club."

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Appendix Table D.28

Impacts on Educational Attainment at the 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Since random assignment				
Received any type of diploma, degree, license, or certificate (%)	20.6	24.6	-4.0	0.163
Received a GED certificate	1.7	1.2	0.5	0.567
Received a high school diploma	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.503
Received a bachelor's or graduate degree	1.1	2.1	-1.0	0.258
Received a trade license or trade certificate	16.9	20.5	-3.6	0.180
Number of trade licenses or trade certificates received	0.7	0.8	-0.1	0.133
Type of trade license received (%)				
CNA/nursing	4.2	4.4	-0.2	0.913
Child care	0.8	1.5	-0.7	0.339
Food preparation	0.0	0.5	-0.5	0.117
Home care	0.0	0.5	-0.5	0.138
Janitor/housekeeping	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Security	1.2	0.8	0.4	0.561
Cosmetics	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.933
Computers	1.2	1.4	-0.2	0.769
Other	6.4	6.0	0.4	0.836
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.29

Impacts on Characteristics of Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Characteristics of current job				
Working status (%)				
Full time	52.5	52.1	0.4	0.902
Part time	9.8	9.9	0.0	0.989
Seasonal, temporary, or odd job (%)	9.8	10.0	-0.2	0.926
Out-of-state job (%)	3.6	3.9	-0.4	0.791
Hours				
Average hours worked per week	23.7	22.8	1.0	0.487
Average days worked per week	3.1	3.0	0.1	0.681
Earnings				
Average hourly pay ($)	6.91	6.60	0.31	0.485
Average hourly wage among those employed ($)	*11.07*	*10.87*	*0.20*	*N/A*
Average weekly earnings ($)	261	241	21	0.247
Total earnings per week (%)				
Less than 200	6.8	8.8	-2.0	0.308
$201-$300	11.3	13.3	-2.0	0.407
$301-$500	29.5	23.9	5.6 *	0.087
$500 or more	14.8	15.3	-0.5	0.839
Average weekly earnings among those employed ($)	*417*	*398*	*19*	*NA*
Health insurance benefits (%)				
Employer offered a health plan or medical insurance	38.1	40.4	-2.3	0.495
Enrolled in employer's health insurance plan	19.5	17.7	1.9	0.493
Reasons why not enrolled in employer's health insurance plan				
Covered by Medicaid	7.1	7.4	-0.3	0.867
Covered by other health insurance	2.5	2.3	0.2	0.838
Too expensive	5.2	8.0	-2.8	0.109
Had not worked long enough	2.8	4.1	-1.3	0.301
Other reason	0.4	0.8	-0.4	0.433
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.29 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

NA = not available. In this case, the data for these measures were not collected.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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

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Appendix Table D.30

Impacts on Type of Industry, Type of Occupation, and Firm Size in Current Job at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of industry (%)				
Construction	1.9	3.8	-1.9	0.103
Manufacturing	4.8	2.7	2.0	0.137
Transportation and utilities	4.6	3.2	1.4	0.321
Wholesale trade	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.924
Retail trade	9.5	8.8	0.8	0.716
Finance, insurance, and real estate	2.9	2.5	0.4	0.750
Services	35.5	36.2	-0.7	0.831
Other industries	3.0	4.0	-1.1	0.409
Type of occupation (%)				
Sales	9.2	9.5	-0.3	0.896
Clerical	13.9	12.3	1.5	0.520
Services	21.4	22.8	-1.4	0.623
Operatives/laborers	13.1	10.7	2.4	0.271
Other	5.0	6.5	-1.6	0.339
Number of workers (%)				
1-4	8.9	7.4	1.5	0.436
5-49	23.9	20.5	3.4	0.252
50-99	6.0	7.7	-1.7	0.344
100-249	6.9	7.5	-0.6	0.764
250-499	4.3	5.8	-1.5	0.344
500 or more	13.0	13.1	-0.1	0.981
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.31

Impacts on Employment Retention at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Current job				
Currently employed (%)	62.5	62.0	0.6	0.860
Average months employed in current job	13.9	14.0	-0.1	0.929
Total months employed in current job (%)				
0	39.7	40.9	-1.2	0.722
1 to 6	13.4	15.7	-2.3	0.354
7 to 12	10.6	6.9	3.7 *	0.068
12 to 24	11.2	10.0	1.2	0.583
More than 24	25.1	26.5	-1.4	0.641
Prior year (%)				
Employed in year prior to interview	84.4	82.8	1.6	0.524
Total months employed in prior year				
0	9.0	11.3	-2.2	0.290
1 to 6	25.5	24.3	1.3	0.674
7 to 11	19.0	22.9	-4.0	0.163
12	46.5	41.5	4.9	0.144
Since random assignment (%)				
Ever employed since random assignment	96.1	96.3	-0.1	0.923
Number of jobs since random assigment				
0	4.0	3.8	0.2	0.901
1	24.6	28.2	-3.6	0.238
2 or 3	51.0	43.1	7.9 **	0.026
4 to 6	18.4	21.6	-3.2	0.260
More than 6	2.1	3.4	-1.3	0.248
Ever worked for one employer for 6 months or more	71.2	70.5	0.7	0.828
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.32

Impacts on Household Income and Savings at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household income				
Percentage with each income source				
Own earnings	67.1	63.4	3.7	0.259
Earnings of other members	40.2	39.0	1.2	0.725
Child support	16.1	17.2	-1.1	0.673
Public assistance	51.2	55.6	-4.4	0.195
Cash assistance	25.2	28.9	-3.7	0.218
Food stamps	39.9	42.1	-2.2	0.504
SSI or disability benefits	18.3	18.1	0.2	0.950
Total household income in prior month[a] ($)	2,036	2,074	-38	0.700
Household income	1.3	2.2	-0.9	0.327
$0 in the prior month				
$1-$1,000	22.9	22.0	0.9	0.773
$1,001-$2,000	36.5	39.9	-3.5	0.328
$2,001-$3,000	21.4	19.5	2.0	0.509
More than $3,000	18.0	16.4	1.6	0.569
Percentage of household income that is respondent's	71.5	67.4	4.1	0.101
Below poverty level[b] (%)	49.5	48.4	1.1	0.754
Household savings				
Total household savings in prior month ($)	265	444	-179	0.493
Distribution of household savings (%)				
$0 in prior month	84.1	83.5	0.6	0.832
$1-$250	8.3	6.7	1.6	0.400
$251-$500	2.5	1.8	0.7	0.512
$501 or more	5.1	8.0	-2.9 *	0.096
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Total household income is defined as the sum of *all* sources of income from *all* household members, including earnings, public assistance, child support, and any other sources of income.

[b]The 2005 U.S. Census Bureau poverty thresholds (which are based on household income, household size, and number of related minor children) were used to determine whether sample members were living at or below the poverty level.

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Appendix Table D.33

Impacts on Household Composition, Housing, and Housing Expenditures at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Household composition				
Number in household	4.3	4.2	0.1	0.393
New child in household since random assignment (%)	26.7	29.0	-2.3	0.432
Marital status				
Married or cohabitating (%)				
Married and living with spouse	17.0	16.1	0.9	0.722
Cohabitating with partner	16.7	15.4	1.3	0.614
Single (%)				
Divorced or separated				
Divorced	18.3	14.1	4.3 *	0.093
Separated	13.9	14.6	-0.7	0.790
Never married	32.6	37.1	-4.5	0.177
Widowed	1.2	2.6	-1.4	0.143
Housing				
Current housing status (%)				
Owns home	9.2	12.1	-2.9	0.185
Rents home or apartment	57.4	55.1	2.4	0.491
Lives with family or friend	28.6	28.0	0.6	0.849
Lives in some other arrangement	4.7	4.8	-0.1	0.940
Household expenditures				
Total housing expenditures in rent or mortgage ($)	735	817	-83 *	0.060
Housing cost as percentage of household income (%)	40.9	43.0	-2.0	0.304
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.34

Impacts on Health and Health Care Coverage at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Health				
Self-rated health (%)				
Excellent	18.3	15.5	2.8	0.290
Very good	20.9	19.9	1.0	0.730
Good	33.8	37.0	-3.2	0.339
Fair	19.0	19.7	-0.7	0.791
Poor	8.1	7.9	0.2	0.929
Respondent or family member has serious health problems that limit activities or work (%)	20.1	24.4	-4.3	0.132
Psychologicial Distress Scale[a] (K6)	6.2	6.6	-0.4	0.309
Experienced serious psychological distress in the past month[a] (%)	14.0	17.8	-3.8	0.141
Health care coverage (%)				
Respondent has health care coverage	79.5	81.4	-2.0	0.479
Publicly funded	61.1	66.8	-5.7 *	0.086
Privately funded	25.2	22.9	2.3	0.434
All dependent children have health care coverage	78.6	77.1	1.5	0.596
Respondent and all children have health care coverage	72.5	70.5	1.9	0.534
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Based on the K6 scale that includes six questions about how often a respondent experienced symptoms of psychological distress during the past 30 days. The response codes (0-4) of the six items for each person are summed to yield a scale with a 0-24 range. A value of 13 or more for this scale is used here to define serious psychological distress (Web site: http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/k6_scales.php).

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Appendix Table D.35

Impacts on Child Care and Transportation at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Child care				
During past month				
Any child care (%)	35.5	34.1	1.5	0.649
Any informal child care[a] (%)	8.1	6.9	1.1	0.559
Child care expenses (%)	26.0	25.3	0.7	0.817
Paid entirely by respondent	8.6	8.1	0.5	0.784
Paid partially by respondent	6.1	6.6	-0.5	0.787
Not paid by respondent	11.3	10.7	0.6	0.774
Child care expenses ($)				
Paid by respondent	42	40	2	0.846
Paid by someone else	43	48	-5	0.711
Working with child care arrangement (%)	31.2	28.0	3.2	0.306
Working without child care arrangement (%)	29.6	28.2	1.3	0.667
During past year				
Child care was a barrier to school, job training, or work (%)	19.9	25.2	-5.3 *	0.060
Respondent quit or refused job, school, or training because of child care problems (%)	11.3	15.3	-4.0 *	0.085
Respondent missed work because of child care problems (%)	2.2	2.1	0.1	0.939
Transportation				
Commuting time to current job, in minutes (%)				
Not currently working	37.5	38.1	-0.6	0.860
0-15	32.7	32.7	0.0	0.998
16-30	20.7	18.2	2.4	0.385
31-45	5.2	6.3	-1.2	0.473
46 or more	3.7	4.5	-0.8	0.569
Respondent has valid driver's license (%)	76.3	74.9	1.4	0.631
Respondent has access to a car (%)	68.3	67.4	0.9	0.767
Method of transportation to current job[b] (%)				
By car	49.5	48.6	0.9	0.796
By bus or other transportation	4.9	5.8	-0.8	0.611
Gets a ride	8.6	10.9	-2.3	0.266
Walks	4.0	2.3	1.7	0.183
During past month, missed work due to problems with transportation (%)	2.0	1.5	0.5	0.594
Sample size (total = 892)	504	388		

(continued)

Appendix Table D.35 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]Informal child care is defined as a regular child care arrangement for which neither the respondent nor any other person or institution paid.

[b]Respondents can select more than one method of transportation.

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Appendix Table D.36

Impacts on Child Care for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Type of child care arrangement in past month				
Currently any child care (%)	56.8	51.8	5.0	0.383
Number of child care arrangements	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.336
Any home-based care (%)	45.0	45.6	-0.6	0.921
Family daycare	6.2	6.2	0.1	0.982
Other biological parent	4.6	0.7	3.8 *	0.051
Sibling	6.6	3.6	3.0	0.231
Other relative	24.9	31.2	-6.3	0.217
Spouse/partner	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.669
Nonrelative in child's home	4.5	5.1	-0.7	0.786
Any center-based care (%)	11.7	6.3	5.4	0.116
Head Start	0.6	-0.1	0.6	0.329
Preschool, nursery, or daycare center	8.4	2.4	6.0 **	0.029
After-school program	2.7	4.0	-1.2	0.555
Summer camp	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Extent of child care in a typical week				
Number of hours in child care	15	11	4 *	0.059
0 hours in child care (%)	43.7	48.8	-5.1	0.378
Fewer than 20 hours in child care (%)	30.0	22.6	7.4	0.144
20 or more hours in child care (%)	26.3	28.6	-2.3	0.663
Sample size (total = 338)	197	141		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

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Appendix Table D.37

Impacts on School Outcomes and Behavioral Problems for Children Ages 5 to 8 at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	67.4	69.4	-1.9	0.715
Below average	6.7	9.2	-2.5	0.415
Ever in special education	9.8	14.8	-5.0	0.191
Ever repeated a grade	17.7	10.2	7.6 *	0.062
Ever suspended	7.0	8.7	-1.7	0.574
Ever expelled	2.2	0.5	1.7	0.244
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	11.6	14.4	-2.8	0.472
Sample size (total = 338)	197	141		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.38

Impacts on School Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
School outcomes[a] (%)				
School performance				
Above average	45.6	43.1	2.5	0.756
Below average	19.9	18.5	1.4	0.837
Ever in special education	19.1	17.1	2.0	0.740
Ever repeated a grade	14.8	12.6	2.3	0.698
Ever suspended	31.6	23.2	8.4	0.243
Ever expelled	11.4	9.7	1.7	0.739
Ever dropped out of school	2.5	6.1	-3.5	0.265
Sample size (total = 189)	98	91		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

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Appendix Table D.39

Impacts on Behavioral Problems and Police Involvement Outcomes for Children Ages 13 to 17 at the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Behavioral problems[a] (%)				
Child has behavior that is hard to control	11.9	11.3	0.6	0.914
Ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs	6.7	6.0	0.7	0.861
Police involvement outcomes[a] (%)				
Ever in juvenile court	10.3	9.7	0.6	0.906
Ever in trouble with the police	5.8	9.2	-3.4	0.454
Sample size (total = 189)	98	91		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the ERA 42-Month Survey.

NOTES: The sample comprises children between the ages of 5 and 18 who were selected at random by MDRC at the time of the interview.

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

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

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

The outcome measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

[a]As reported by respondent.

Response Analysis for the ERA 42-Month Survey

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) 42-Month Survey is a source of data on the research sample members' employment, educational activities, household characteristics, housing, health and health care coverage, income, and child outcomes.

To be eligible for participation in the 42-month survey, individuals had to meet the following criteria: membership in the report sample for the given site, age 18 or older, single parent, and fluency in English or Spanish. The survey was conducted only for three ERA tests — those examining the Chicago, Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS), and Riverside Post-Assistance Self-Sufficiency (PASS) programs. The number of 42-month survey completions ranged from 892 (in the Riverside PASS test) to 1,023 (in the Chicago test). These sample sizes are adequate for the purposes of detecting statistically significant effects on survey outcomes.

The survey response analysis described in this appendix evaluates the generalizability and unbiasedness of the 42-month survey findings to each of the three test's research samples. For each of the three ERA tests, the analysis explains the process of survey sample selection, reports the survey response rates, and compares the background characteristics of respondents with those of eligible nonrespondents and the background characteristics of program group respondents with those of control group respondents. The analysis also compares the administrative records impacts for those in the survey-eligible sample, the fielded sample, the respondent sample, and the report sample. Box D.1 defines the key samples used in the analysis. For the final set of comparisons, consistent impacts are considered to be the best result, providing evidence that the survey respondent sample is representative of other samples and that the survey results can be generalized to the broader full report sample.

Background: Survey Response Analysis

Random assignment ensures that the only systematic difference between the program group and the control group is that one group was assigned to the program and the other was not. As a result, differences that emerge after random assignment can be attributed to the program being studied, with some degree of confidence. This argument holds, however, only if one observes outcomes for the entire program group and the entire control group or outcomes for subgroups defined by baseline characteristics.

By contrast, surveys that rely on individuals volunteering information do not guarantee that respondents in the program and control groups will be similar to each other. Because only a subset of the full sample responds to a survey, survey-based impacts might yield different results than if one has information on the entire sample. For example, the first survey respondents might be easier to find and be more willing to participate in a survey because they are less likely to have moved since entering the study. In addition, program group members are some-

times easier to find than control group members because the program can provide more recent contact information for them.

Box D.1

Terms Used in the Survey Response Analysis

Report sample. Sample members included in the impact analysis for this report.

Survey-eligible (eligible) sample. Research sample members who met the survey eligibility criteria. For the 42-month survey, survey-eligible sample members were randomly selected from all months of random assignment in the Los Angeles RFS and Riverside PASS tests and from a majority of months of random assignment in the Chicago test.

Fielded sample. Survey-eligible sample members who were randomly selected to be interviewed. Because of the expense of fielding a survey, it is common for research projects such as ERA to select only a portion of the total research sample for a survey. The fielded sample contains the individuals to be located and interviewed.

Respondent sample. Fielded sample members who completed the survey. Attempts are made to contact all individuals in the fielded sample, but (as always) not everyone can be located and interviewed. The proportion of the fielded sample that completes an interview represents the response rate.

Nonrespondent sample. Fielded sample members who were not interviewed because they could not be located, refused to be interviewed, or were unable to be interviewed for other reasons.

It is common to find some differences in response rates or baseline characteristics between program and control group survey respondents or some differences in program impacts between respondents and nonrespondents. It is important to determine how large these differences are and whether and how they might affect the results of the analysis.

Two important concepts to consider regarding the validity of survey results are generalizability and bias. If differences are found between survey respondents and nonrespondents, concerns emerge that the results in the survey are not applicable, or "generalizable," to the full report sample. Comparisons are also made between program and control group members who responded to the survey. If program group respondents entered the evaluation with substantially different background characteristics than control group respondents, the results may not accurately represent the effects of the program, and, therefore, the results of the survey may be "biased." This can happen, for example, if program group members are more motivated to respond to the survey because they had a positive experience with the program. If this were the

case, different types of program group members would be compared with control group members, which would undermine the key analytical underpinning of random assignment: that the groups were identical at the time they entered the study.

The following section presents an analysis that evaluates the generalizability and unbiasedness of the 42-month survey findings for each of the three ERA tests in which that survey was administered: Chicago, Los Angeles RFS, and Riverside PASS.

Chicago

Survey Sample Selection

The Chicago report sample includes 1,729 individuals who were randomly assigned to either the program group or the control group between February 2002 and March 2003. (This time frame includes almost all of the random assignment period in Chicago, which extended from February 2002 to June 2003.)

Box D.2 shows that 1,613 sample members were eligible for the survey in Chicago (93 percent of the report sample) and that 1,314 were randomly selected to be part of the fielded sample (658 program group members and 656 control group members).

Box D.2

Key Analysis Samples: Chicago

Report sample. Sample members who were randomly assigned during the sample intake period, which ranged from February 2002 through March 2003. (N = 1,729)

Survey-eligible sample. Research sample members who met the following eligibility criteria: residence in Cook County, minimum age of 18, single-parent status, and ability to speak English or Spanish. (N = 1,613)

Fielded sample. Eligible sample members who were randomly selected from the survey-eligible sample to be interviewed. (N = 1,314)

Respondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who completed the ERA 42-Month Survey. (N = 1,023)

Nonrespondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who were not interviewed because they were not located, refused to be interviewed, were located after the fielded period expired, were incarcerated, or were unable to be interviewed for other reasons. (N = 291)

Survey Response Rates

Appendix Table D.40 shows that, overall, 1,023 sample members (78 percent of the fielded sample) responded to the survey. Among the 291 fielded sample members who were not interviewed, 258 could not be located; 22 refused to respond; 9 were located after the fielded period had expired; 1 was incarcerated; and 1 did not respond for other reasons. Response rates for the two research groups are similar: 79 percent for the ERA group and 77 percent for the control group.

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Respondents and Nonrespondents in the Fielded Sample

As described above, it is important to examine whether any differences exist between the background characteristics of survey respondents and nonrespondents in order to determine whether the survey results are adequately generalizable to the full report sample. To determine whether systematic differences exist between survey respondents and nonrespondents, an indicator of survey response was created, and multivariate regression analysis was used to identify whether baseline characteristics — related to age, gender, race/ethnicity, number and age of children, educational attainment, prior employment and earnings, receipt of public benefits, and research group — are significantly associated with survey response.

Appendix Table D.41 shows the logistic regression coefficients and p-values for the probability of being a survey respondent. The parameter estimates in the first column provide a measure of the relationship between each baseline variable and survey response, and the asterisks and p-values show the statistical significance of these relationships. Statistically significant effects were found for employment in the quarter prior to random assignment, total grant amount from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in the month prior to random assignment, and length of TANF receipt in the prior year — indicating that survey respondents, compared with nonrespondents, had slightly higher rates of employment and TANF receipt prior to random assignment.

Although statistically significant associations between baseline characteristics and survey response are cause for concern, the coeffecients for these associations for the Chicago survey are small, and the overall model shows minimal differentiation in baseline characteristics between survey respondents and nonrespondents. Consequently, baseline differences between survey respondents and nonrespondents were deemed to be unlikely to negatively affect the generalizability of the survey results.

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Program and Control Group Members in the Survey Respondent Sample

Because ERA was a random assignment study, program and control group members in the report sample had similar characteristics. As discussed above, however, this does not assure that, *among survey respondents,* program and control group members will share similar characteristics. Using difference of means t-tests and chi-square analysis, Appendix Table D.42 compares the means of baseline variables related to respondents' children, race/ethnicity, gender, age, English fluency, prior employment, prior earnings, and prior receipt of TANF for program and control group members who responded to the survey.

In general, differences between program and control group respondents are small and not statistically significant. The exception is *age of youngest child,* for which the mean for the program group is 5.7 years and the mean for the control group is 6.3 years. This moderate difference was deemed to be unlikely to greatly affect the unbiasedness of the survey results because of the small size of the difference and because it is unclear how or whether the age of youngest child would affect sample members' interactions with the Chicago ERA program under study.

Finally, a multivariate analysis was conducted — one similar to the analysis discussed in the preceding section, except that the dependent variable of this model is research group status and the model was run among survey respondents only. Overall, this model is not statistically significant, providing further assurance that the survey results are unbiased.

Comparison of the Economic Impacts for the Survey-Eligible, Fielded, Respondent, and Report Samples

The final aspect of the analysis used data from administrative records to compare impacts across the eligible, fielded, respondent, and report samples.

Appendix Table D.43 shows research group means and impacts on employment, earnings, and TANF receipt for the four samples, using several key measures from the report. The table shows that most impacts are similar in direction and magnitude across these samples. There are minor exceptions; for example, impacts on average quarterly employment and cumulative earnings are generally largest for the report and the survey-eligible samples and smallest for the respondent sample.

Conclusions: Chicago

This analysis shows that survey respondents and nonrespondents have similar baseline characteristics, as do program group survey respondents and control group survey respondents. Although some differences in the characteristics of program and control group respondents

exist, the differences are not large enough to cause concern about the validity of survey results. Accordingly, there are no major hesitations about generalizing the survey results to the report sample or about whether the survey impacts are unbiased. Further confidence derives from the observation that four-year impacts are generally similar across the four analysis samples.

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Appendix Table D.40

Response Rates for the ERA 42-Month Survey: Chicago

	ERA Group	Control Group	Total
Number from survey-eligible sample	800	813	1,613
Number from fielded sample	658	656	1,314
Number who responded to the survey	521	502	1,023
Response rate (%)	79.2	76.5	77.9

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on sampling and survey administration results for the ERA 42-Month Survey.

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Appendix Table D.41

Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of Being a Respondent to the ERA 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

	Survey Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
ERA group	0.177	0.193
Female	0.199	0.819
Age	0.035	0.181
31-40 years old	-0.121	0.632
41 years old or older	-0.445	0.361
Black, non-Hispanic	0.397	0.173
Hispanic	-0.086	0.821
No high school diploma or GED certificate	0.081	0.573
Speak limited English	0.551	0.341
Age of youngest child	-0.002	0.916
Number of children	-0.015	0.825
Employed in the prior year	-0.366	0.278
Employed in the prior quarter	0.579 *	0.079
Number of quarters employed in the prior year	0.081	0.564
Ever employed in past 3 years	-0.211	0.143
Earnings in the prior year	< .001	0.213
Total TANF grant	0.001 **	0.030
Received TANF in the prior year	0.182 **	0.048
Relative month of random assignment	0.003	0.851
R-square (0.0251)		
Wald-statistic (32.6711)		
P-value of Wald-statistic (0.0262)		
Sample size	1,314	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from ERA baseline forms and administrative data.

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

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Appendix Table D.42

Background Characteristics of 42-Month Survey Respondents: Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	
Female (%)	99.6	99.4	
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Black, non-Hispanic	89.1	88.7	
Hispanic	6.7	7.0	
Age			
31-40 years old (%)	46.5	48.2	
40 years old or over (%)	16.7	16.9	
Average age (years)	33	34	
No high school diploma or GED certificate (%)	54.9	56.2	
Speak limited English (%)	1.2	2.4	
Ever employed (%)	59.3	55.8	
Employed in prior year (%)	66.4	66.5	
Employed in prior quarter (%)	59.9	59.2	
Number of quarters employed in prior year	2.3	2.3	
Earnings in prior year ($)	5,416	5,461	
Number of children (%)	3.3	3.2	
Age of youngest child (years)	5.7	6.3	**
Total TANF grant ($)	170	177	
Received TANF in prior year (%)	11.9	11.9	
Sample size (total = 1,023)	521	502	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from baseline data and administrative records.

NOTES: Chi-square (categorical) tests and two-tailed (continuous) t-tests were used to assess the difference in characteristics between the ERA and control groups.

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

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Appendix Table D.43

Comparision of Impacts for the Report, Fielded, Eligible, and Respondent Samples with the 42-Month Survey:

Chicago

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Quarters 2-17				
Ever employed (%)				
Report sample	80.5	79.3	1.2	0.447
Eligible sample	80.3	79.1	1.2	0.473
Fielded sample	79.7	78.1	1.6	0.416
Respondent sample	80.8	79.7	1.2	0.586
Average quarterly employment (%)				
Report sample	55.0	52.3	2.7	0.055 *
Eligible sample	55.1	52.8	2.3	0.119
Fielded sample	54.1	52.8	1.3	0.422
Respondent sample	56.1	54.9	1.2	0.521
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)				
Report sample	25.8	22.9	2.9	0.111
Eligible sample	26.6	23.4	3.2	0.097 *
Fielded sample	25.5	23.6	1.9	0.365
Respondent sample	26.0	24.6	1.5	0.543
Number of quarters employed				
Report sample	8.8	8.4	0.4	0.056 *
Eligible sample	8.8	8.4	0.4	0.120
Fielded sample	8.7	8.4	0.2	0.422
Respondent sample	9.0	8.8	0.2	0.521
Average annual earnings ($)				
Report sample	6,979	6,479	500	0.061 *
Eligible sample	7,007	6,562	445	0.109
Fielded sample	6,960	6,661	299	0.333
Respondent sample	7,108	6,815	292	0.398
Quarters 2-13				
Ever received TANF (%)				
Report sample	86.1	89.2	-3.1	0.052 *
Eligible sample	86.7	89.3	-2.6	0.107
Fielded sample	86.0	89.5	-3.5	0.051 *
Respondent sample	87.2	90.2	-3.0	0.126
Average annual TANF received ($)				
Report sample	4,111	3,958	153	0.050 **
Eligible sample	4,081	3,930	151	0.060 *
Fielded sample	4,115	3,891	225	0.013 **
Respondent sample	4,226	4,109	116	0.229

(continued)

Appendix Table D.43 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average annual income ($)				
Report sample	11,480	11,106	374	0.132
Eligible sample	11,474	11,170	304	0.239
Fielded sample	11,444	11,228	216	0.456
Respondent sample	11,709	11,618	91	0.769

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES: The research sample includes 1,728 sample members; ERA group: 854; control group: 874. The eligible sample includes 1,613 sample members; ERA group: 800; control group: 813. The fielded sample includes 1,314 sample members; ERA group: 658; control group: 656. The respondent sample includes 1,023 sample members; ERA group: 521; control group: 502.

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

Los Angeles RFS

Survey Sample Selection

The report sample for the Los Angeles Reach for Success (RFS) test includes 5,702 sample members who were randomly assigned to the ERA program group or to the control group between July 2002 and July 2004 (the full random assignment period). Box D.3 shows that 73 percent of the report sample members met the survey eligibility criteria and that, of those eligible, 1,344 were randomly selected for the fielded sample, split evenly between the program group (N = 674) and the control group (N = 670).

Box D.3

Key Analysis Samples: Los Angeles RFS

Report sample. Sample members who were randomly assigned during the sample intake period, which ranged from July 2002 through July 2004. (N = 5,702)

Survey-eligible sample. Research sample members who met the following criteria for inclusion: minimum age of 18, single-parent status, and ability to speak English or Spanish. (N = 4,142)

Fielded sample. Eligible sample members who were randomly selected from the survey-eligible sample to be interviewed. (N = 1,344)

Respondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who completed the ERA 42-Month Survey. (N = 982)

Nonrespondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who were not interviewed because they were not located, refused to be interviewed, were located after the fielded period expired, were incarcerated, or were unable to be interviewed for other reasons. (N = 362)

Survey Response Rates

Appendix Table D.44 shows that 982 sample members, or 73 percent of the fielded sample, were interviewed for the survey. Among the 360 fielded sample members who were not interviewed, 275 could not be located; 62 refused to respond; 21 were located after the fielded period had expired; and 2 were incarcerated; in addition, 2 sample members completed only

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Respondents and Nonrespondents in the Fielded Sample

Appendix Table D.45 shows the parameter estimates and p-values for the probability of responding to the survey. There are some differences between survey respondents and nonrespondents. For example, survey respondents were more likely to be black, Hispanic, and long-term recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and they were less likely to be residing in Regions 1 and 5 of the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program — California's mandatory welfare-to-work program. However, these differences are not large, which is highlighted by the fact that the regression model described above is not statistically significant overall. (In other words, the overall model is unable to distinguish statistically between survey respondents and nonrespondents; the Wald-statistic is not statistically significant.) Consequently, the differences were deemed to be unlikely to affect the generalizability of the survey results.

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Program and Control Group Members in the Survey Respondent Sample

Appendix Table D.46 compares the program and control group respondents' means for baseline variables related to race/ethnicity, gender, age, number of children, English fluency,

prior employment, prior earnings, and prior receipt of public assistance — to check whether the background characteristics of program and control group respondents are similar. There are two statistically significant differences between program and control group respondents. Survey respondents in the program group received TANF for fewer months prior to random assignment and were less likely to be residing in GAIN Region 5 than respondents in the control group. These differences do not relate to background characteristics that are expected to moderate program impacts and, therefore, were deemed to be unlikely to greatly influence the validity of the survey impact results.

Finally, a multivariate analysis was conducted to determine whether several background characteristics could predict research group status among the survey respondent sample. Overall, this model is not statistically significant, providing further assurance that the survey results are unbiased.

Comparison of the Economic Impacts for the Survey-Eligible, Fielded, Respondent, and Report Samples

Appendix Table D.47 shows research group means and impacts on employment, earnings, TANF, and food stamp outcomes for the four analysis samples. With small exceptions, the results are generally consistent across the four analysis samples, providing additional assurance about the generalizability of the survey results.

Conclusions: Los Angeles RFS

These findings suggest that the survey results can be generalized from the survey respondent sample to the broader report sample. The fact that survey respondents and survey-eligible nonrespondents as well as program group and control group respondents share similar baseline characteristics suggests that little, if any, response bias exists and that the survey respondent sample is representative of other analysis samples. This analysis found no grounds for concern about the generalizability or unbiasedness of the survey results in Los Angeles RFS.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.44

Response Rates for the ERA 42-Month Survey: Los Angeles RFS

	ERA Group	Control Group	Total
Number from survey-eligible sample	2,079	2,063	4,142
Number from fielded sample	674	670	1,344
Number who responded to the survey	498	484	982
Response rate (%)	73.9	72.2	73.1

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on sampling and survey administration for the ERA 42-Month Survey.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.45

Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of Being a Respondent to the ERA 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

	Survey Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
ERA group	0.068	0.591
Female	0.020	0.941
Age	0.015	0.150
No high school diploma or GED certificate	0.060	0.655
Black, non-Hispanic	0.722 ***	0.001
Hispanic	0.418 *	0.057
Other race/ethnicity	0.560	0.283
Youngest child age 3-5	0.082	0.623
Younges child age 6-12	-0.105	0.623
Youngest child age 13-18	-0.171	0.584
Number of children	-0.007	0.388
Employed in the prior year	0.009	0.964
Employed in the prior quarter	-0.204	0.329
Received food stamps in the prior year	-0.501	0.218
Received TANF in the prior year	-0.009	0.771
Long-term TANF receipt	0.308 **	0.026
GAIN Region 1	-0.625 ***	0.001
GAIN Region 5	-0.375 **	0.028
Relative month of random assignment	-0.005	0.641
R-square (0.0257)		
Wald-statistic (33.7751)		
P-value of Wald-statistic (0.2899)		
Sample size	1,347	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from ERA baseline forms and administrative data.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.46

Background Characteristics of 42-Month Survey Respondents: Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	
Female (%)	93.2	94.6	
Race/ethnicity (%)	47.8	46.8	
Hispanic	42.0	43.9	
Black	2.2	1.2	
Other			
Average age (years)	31	31	
No high school diploma or GED certificate (%)	51.2	49.2	
Employed during the quarter prior to random assignment (%)	48.6	44.0	
Employed during the year prior to random assignment (%)	68.3	65.1	
Number of quarters employed in the prior 3 years (%)	5.4	5.1	
Earnings in the 3 years prior to random assignment ($)	14,009	13,082	
Number of children (%)	2.0	2.0	
Age of youngest child (%)			
Under 3 years	39.0	39.7	
3-5 years	42.2	39.7	
6-12 years	55.8	55.2	
13-18 years	32.3	28.9	
TANF receipt history (%)			
Received TANF in year prior to random assignment	96.0	96.1	
Number of months received TANF in prior year	8.7	9.2	*
Received TANF 2 years or more prior to random assignment	50.4	53.5	
Received food stamps in prior year (%)	90.2	89.9	
GAIN Region 1	27.9	25.8	
GAIN Region 5	41.6	47.3	*
Sample size (total = 982)	498	484	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from baseline data and administrative records.

NOTES: Chi-square (categorical) tests and two-tailed (continuous) t-tests were used to assess the difference in characteristics between the ERA and control groups.

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

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from baseline data and administrative records.

NOTES: Chi-square (categorical) tests and two-tailed (continuous) t-tests were used to assess the difference in characteristics between the ERA and control groups.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.47

Comparision of Impacts for the Report, Fielded, Eligible, and Respondent Samples with the 42-Month Survey:

Los Angeles RFS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Quarters 2-13				
Ever employed (%)				
Report sample	92.3	91.5	0.7	0.285
Eligible sample	91.5	91.9	-0.4	0.657
Fielded sample	92.3	93.2	-0.9	0.531
Respondent sample	92.4	93.8	-1.3	0.400
Average quarterly employment (%)				
Report sample	63.6	64.2	-0.6	0.495
Eligible sample	64.1	65.0	-0.9	0.368
Fielded sample	65.1	65.0	0.1	0.972
Respondent sample	66.4	66.5	-0.2	0.929
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)				
Report sample	29.1	28.2	0.9	0.423
Eligible sample	29.5	29.4	0.1	0.923
Fielded sample	31.6	28.5	3.1	0.196
Respondent sample	32.8	29.8	3.0	0.287
Number of quarters employed				
Report sample	7.6	7.7	-0.1	0.497
Eligible sample	7.7	7.8	-0.1	0.370
Fielded sample	7.8	7.8	0.0	0.967
Respondent sample	8.0	8.0	0.0	0.935
Average annual earnings ($)				
Report sample	9,841	9,830	11	0.961
Eligible sample	10,061	10,168	-107	0.674
Fielded sample	10,380	9,779	600	0.180
Respondent sample	10,518	10,036	482	0.361
Average annual TANF received ($)				
Report sample	95.1	94.0	1.1	0.058 *
Eligible sample	95.7	94.0	1.7	0.013 **
Fielded sample	95.1	94.7	0.5	0.711
Respondent sample	95.0	95.3	-0.3	0.825
Amount of food stamps received ($)				
Report sample	2,056	2,011	46	0.224
Eligible sample	2,080	1,999	80	0.070 *
Fielded sample	2,025	2,086	-61	0.440
Respondent sample	2,115	2,176	-62	0.511

(continued)

Appendix Table D.47 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average annual income ($)				
Report sample	15,210	15,056	155	0.417
Eligible sample	15,417	15,353	64	0.779
Fielded sample	15,574	15,177	397	0.325
Respondent sample	15,962	15,723	239	0.608

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES:The research sample includes 5,700 sample members; ERA group: 2,857; control group: 2,843. The eligible sample includes 4,145 sample members; ERA group: 2,081; control group: 2,064. The fielded sample includes 1,347 sample members; ERA group: 676; control group: 671. The respondent sample includes 982 sample members; ERA group: 498; control group: 484.

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

Riverside PASS

Survey Sample Selection

The report sample for the Riverside PASS test includes 2,770 individuals who were randomly assigned to either a program group (N = 1,627) or a control group (N = 1,143) between July 2002 and June 2003 (the full random assignment period). Box D.4 shows that the survey-eligible sample consists of 1,957 single parents. Of those eligible, 1,310 were randomly selected to be in the fielded sample (67 percent of the survey-eligible sample). More program group members were selected than control group members, reflecting the uneven distribution of program and control group members in the overall report sample.

Box D.4

Key Analysis Samples: Riverside PASS

Report sample. Sample members who were randomly assigned during the sample intake period, which ranged from July 2002 to June 2003. (N = 2,770)

Survey-eligible sample. Research sample members who met the following criteria for inclusion: minimum age of 18, single-parent status, and fluency in English or Spanish. (N = 1,957)

Fielded sample. Eligible sample members who were randomly selected from the survey-eligible sample to be interviewed. (N = 1,310)

Respondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who completed the ERA 42-Month Survey. (N = 892)

Nonrespondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who were not interviewed because they could not be located, refused to be interviewed, were located after the fielded period expired, were incarcerated, were deceased, or were unable to be interviewed for other reasons. (N = 418)

Survey Response Rates

Appendix Table D.48 shows that approximately 68 percent of the fielded sample members (N = 892) responded to the survey. Among the 417 sample members who were not interviewed, 339 could not be located; 48 refused to be interviewed; 20 were located after the fielded period expired; 3 were institutionalized; and 7 were deceased; in addition, 1 sample member completed only a partial interview. Response rates differ somewhat between research groups: 66 percent of program group members and 70 percent of control group members responded to the survey.

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Respondents and Nonrespondents in the Fielded Sample

Appendix Table D.49 shows the parameter estimates and p-values for the probability of responding to the 42-month survey. Overall, the regression model is statistically significant (which implies that survey respondents differed in some respects from nonrespondents). Specifically, respondents were less likely than nonrespondents to be Hispanic and to be served at the Center for Employment Training site, but they were employed for more quarters in the prior three years. Because of these differences, the comparison of impacts across the four analysis samples is particularly important (discussed below).

Comparison of the Background Characteristics of Program and Control Group Members in the Survey Respondent Sample

Appendix Table D.50 compares several baseline characteristics of program and control group respondents. In general, baseline variables are similar across the two research groups. One exception is that program group members are somewhat less likely to have received food stamps in the year prior to random assignment: 84.7 percent of program group members received food stamps, compared with 89.4 percent of control group members. Since this difference is not large and is not directly related to employment retention and advancement measures, it is not of major concern.

Finally, a multivariate analysis found that, within the respondent sample, a series of baseline characteristics is not associated with research group status, providing further assurance that the survey results are unbiased.

Comparison of the Economic Impacts for the Survey-Eligible, Fielded, Respondent, and Report Samples

Appendix Table D.51 shows research group means and impacts for the survey-eligible, fielded, respondent, and report samples. In general, impacts are consistent in magnitude and

direction, suggesting that the survey results can be generalized beyond the survey respondent sample. While not all samples show statistically significant differences for all the measures, these impacts are broadly similar across the four analysis samples. Public assistance and income impacts are largely consistent as well. For example, the Riverside PASS program reduced TANF receipt and food stamp benefit amounts for all four samples. Impacts on earnings and total income are consistent in direction and magnitude across the four samples, though impacts for the respondent sample fail to achieve statistical significance for these particular outcomes.

Conclusion: Riverside PASS

In sum, these findings show that the survey findings can be validly generalized to the report sample in Riverside PASS and that the survey impact estimates are unbiased. There are few differences in the baseline characteristics of survey respondents and nonrespondents or of program group and control group respondents. In addition, impacts are largely consistent across outcomes and analysis samples.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.48

Response Rates for the ERA 42-Month Survey: Riverside PASS

	ERA Group	Control Group	Total
Number from survey-eligible sample	1,129	828	1,957
Number from fielded sample	757	553	1,310
Number who responded to the survey	504	388	892
Response rate (%)	66.1	70	68.1

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on sampling and survey administration results for the ERA 42-Month Survey.

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.49

Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of Being a Respondent to the ERA 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

	Survey Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
ERA group	-0.033	0.800
Female	0.075	0.723
Age	-0.002	0.822
Black, non-Hispanic	0.107	0.559
White	-0.226	0.121
Hispanic	-0.678 *	0.051
No high school diploma or GED certificate	-0.075	0.587
Age of the youngest child	-0.023	0.217
Number of children	-0.100	0.141
Employed in the prior year	-0.443	0.101
Employed in the prior quarter	0.195	0.358
Number of quarters employed in prior 3 years	0.072 **	0.013
Earnings in the prior 3 years	< .001	0.718
Received food stamps in the prior year	< .001	0.219
Center for Employment Training	-0.452 **	0.013
Valley Restart	-0.068	0.697
Volunteer Center	0.214	0.260
Relative month of random assignment	0.012	0.612
R-square (0.0329)		
Wald-statistic (42.2073)		
P-value of Wald-statistic (0.001)		
Sample size	1,310	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from ERA baseline forms and administrative data.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.50

Background Characteristics of 42-Month Survey Respondents:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group
Female (%)	92.1	89.4
Race/ethnicity (%)		
Black, non-Hispanic	17.3	20.6
White, non-Hispanic	31.4	28.9
Hispanic	48.0	49.2
Other	3.0	1.3 *
Age (%)		
20 or younger	9.7	9.8
21-30	43.5	42.5
31-40	32.9	30.7
41 or older	13.9	17.0
Average age (years)	30.7	31.1
High school diploma (%)	61.1	56.4
Employed during the quarter prior to random assignment (%)	79.2	78.4
Employed during the year prior to random assignment (%)	87.1	86.3
Number of quarters employed in the prior 3 years (%)	7.1	7.1
Earnings in the 3 years prior to random assignment ($)	17,085	17,473
Number of children (%)		
0	0.8	0.3
1	38.7	39.4
2	33.1	29.6
More than 3	27.4	30.7
Average number of children	2.1	2.1
Age of youngest child (%)		
Under 3 years	38.7	36.9
3-5 years	24.0	22.2
6 years and older	36.5	40.7
TANF receipt history (%)		
Never	3.6	3.6
Less than 3 months	33.1	34.0
3 months or more and less than 2 years	11.1	10.3
2 years or more and less than 5 years	20.4	22.7
5 years or more and less than 10 years	11.7	11.6
10 years or more	7.3	6.7
Received food stamps in prior year (%)	84.7	89.4 **
Sample size (total = (892)	504	388

(continued)

Appendix Table D.50 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from baseline data and administrative records.

NOTES: Chi-square (categorical) tests and two-tailed (continuous) t-tests were used to assess the difference in characteristics between the ERA and control groups.

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

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

Appendix Table D.51

Comparision of Impacts for the Report, Fielded, Eligible, and Respondent Samples with the 42-Month Survey:

Riverside PASS

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Quarters 2-17					
Ever employed (%)					
Report sample	90.5	88.8	1.7	0.131	
Eligible sample	91.4	89.3	2.0	0.121	
Fielded sample	91.8	88.9	2.9	0.071	*
Respondent sample	95.9	90.2	5.7	0.001	***
Average quarterly employment (%)					
Report sample	59.7	56.3	3.4	0.007	***
Eligible sample	61.0	56.3	4.7	0.001	***
Fielded sample	62.0	56.9	5.1	0.005	***
Respondent sample	65.6	60.4	5.2	0.015	**
Employed 4 consecutive quarters (%)					
Report sample	23.6	20.4	3.2	0.037	**
Eligible sample	24.1	20.9	3.2	0.080	*
Fielded sample	25.0	21.7	3.2	0.164	
Respondent sample	26.0	25.0	1.1	0.714	
Number of quarters employed					
Report sample	9.5	9.0	0.5	0.007	***
Eligible sample	9.8	9.0	0.8	0.001	***
Fielded sample	9.9	9.1	0.8	0.005	***
Respondent sample	10.5	9.7	0.8	0.015	**
Average annual earnings ($)					
Report sample	9,705	8,852	853	0.007	***
Eligible sample	9,949	8,959	990	0.009	***
Fielded sample	10,104	9,097	1,007	0.032	**
Respondent sample	10,479	9,577	902	0.104	
Ever received TANF (%)					
Report sample	53.7	55.8	-2.1	0.279	
Eligible sample	53.2	55.5	-2.4	0.293	
Fielded sample	53.5	55.0	-1.4	0.608	
Respondent sample	57.8	59.4	-1.6	0.626	
Average annual TANF received ($)					
Report sample	934	977	-43	0.362	
Eligible sample	931	1,036	-104	0.063	*
Fielded sample	904	1,033	-130	0.059	*
Respondent sample	1,036	1,187	-151	0.082	*

(continued)

Appendix Table D.51 (continued)

Outcome	ERA Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average annual income ($)				
Report sample	11,896	11,117	778	0.012 **
Eligible sample	12,095	11,296	799	0.030 **
Fielded sample	12,187	11,468	719	0.117
Respondent sample	12,885	12,279	606	0.248

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the state administrative records.

NOTES:The research sample includes 2,770 sample members; ERA group: 1,627; control group: 1,143. The eligible sample includes 1,957 sample members; ERA group: 1,129; control group: 828. The fielded sample includes 1,310 sample members; ERA group: 757; control group: 553. The respondent sample includes 892 sample members; ERA group: 504; control group: 388.

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

Appendix E

Site-Specific Publications for the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Project Tests Discussed in This Report

The following site-specific publications on ERA are referenced in this report and can be found on the Web sites for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and MDRC.

ACF
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/employ_retention/index.html

MDRC
http://www.mdrc.org/project_publications_14_9.html

Programs Serving Unemployed TANF Recipients (Chapter 3)

Texas

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

Los Angeles EJC

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

Salem (Oregon)

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

Programs Serving Employed TANF Recipients (Chapter 4)

Chicago

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

Los Angeles RFS

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project: Results from the Los Angeles Reach for Success Program. 2009. Jacquelyn Anderson, Stephen Freedman, Gayle Hamilton.

Riverside (California) Phase 2

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

South Carolina

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project: Results from the South Carolina ERA Site. 2005. Susan Scrivener, Gilda Azurdia, Jocelyn Page.

Programs Serving Employed Non-TANF Recipients (Chapter 5)

Cleveland

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project: Findings for the Cleveland ACHIEVE Model: Implementation and Early Impacts of an Employer-Based Approach to Encourage Employment Retention Among Low-Wage Workers. 2009. Cynthia Miller, Vanessa Martin, Gayle Hamilton with Lauren Cates, Victoria Deitch.

Eugene and Medford (Oregon)

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project: Findings for the Eugene and Medford, Oregon, Models: Implementation and Early Impacts for Two Programs That Sought to Encourage Advancement among Low-Income Workers. 2009. Frieda Molina, Mark van Dok, Richard Hendra, Gayle Hamilton, Wan-Lae Cheng.

Riverside (California) PASS

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

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

Bloom, Howard S., James A. Riccio, and Nandita Verma with Johanna Walter. 2005. *Promoting Work in Public Housing: the Effectiveness of Jobs-Plus.* New York: MDRC.

Bos, Johannes M., Susan Scrivener, Jason Snipes, and Gayle Hamilton with Christine Schwartz and Johanna Walter. 2002. *Improving Basic Skills: The Effects of Adult Education in Welfare-to-Work Programs.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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