

## Serving Low-Wage Workers at the Dayton Job Center (One-Stop)

Prepared by  
Michele Belev, Jacquelyn Anderson and David Seith, MDRC

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This paper describes the results of a survey of One-Stop customers entering the Job Center, a One-Stop like those established by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, in Montgomery County (Dayton), Ohio. The Job Center houses nearly 50 different agencies providing a wide array of services, including the county's workforce and welfare offices. This survey – one of the first of its kind – was conducted to inform program development for MDRC's national Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration. The project targets low-wage workers and their employers, and is aimed at increasing rates of job retention, job advancement, and receipt of financial work supports (including child care subsidies, Food Stamps, and government health insurance).<sup>1</sup> Together with the Chula Vista Career Center in San Diego, the Dayton Job Center is one of two "learning" sites, selected to develop and refine program services during the demonstration planning period, prior to selecting three to five additional sites.

### **Key Findings**

- Over one-third (35 percent) of the customers entering the Job Center are employed, a much higher proportion than many One-Stops across the country. Although most are working full-time (63 percent), they tend to have low-paying jobs with few employer-sponsored benefits.
- Employed customers are taking advantage of the wide range of services located at the Dayton Jobs Center, including both employment services and financial work supports. In fact, the most commonly cited reasons for visiting the Job Center are to access Food Stamps and publicly-financed health insurance for low-income families (Medicaid and the Child Health Insurance Program [CHIP]).
- On the other hand, relatively few employed customers are receiving all of the major work supports (the child care subsidy, Food Stamps, and Medicaid/CHIP). Among those most likely to be eligible<sup>2</sup>, only 10 percent are receiving all of these supports, and just 20 percent get any two supports. However, 61 percent are receiving at least one of them.

### **Working Customer Characteristics**

About one-third of the customers (35 percent) entering the Job Center are employed, and 63 percent of those employed are working full-time. Of those who are working, over 80 percent are supporting children and nearly a quarter are married. The average employed respondent has 2 children, and 58 percent of employed customers have at least one child under the age of five (see [Table 1](#)).

[Table 2](#) illustrates that most employees are working in jobs with low wages. Nearly half of working individuals (46 percent) are making \$8 per hour or less, and only 17 percent are earning more than \$12 per hour.

Not surprisingly, part-time workers tend to have lower wages than full-time workers (see [Table 2](#)) and are often *half* as likely to have employer-sponsored benefits (see [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#)). About half of workers who earn \$10 or less per hour do not receive benefits from their employer (not shown).

### **Receipt of Work Supports and Other Services**

The survey asked customers about the public benefits that they are receiving to supplement their income and support their work effort – including subsidized child care, Food Stamps, Medicaid/CHIP, and welfare. Employed customers seemed to understand that work supports can be accessed at the Job Center. When asked about why they came in that day, 41 percent said they were coming in for Food Stamps, 22 percent for Medicaid/CHIP, and 10 percent for child care assistance (see [Table 5](#)). In fact, working customers were *more likely* to be coming to the Job Center to access a major work support than to receive job placement/readiness services and education or training services (61 percent vs. 18 percent).<sup>3</sup>

In Ohio, a family of three (one adult and two children) with a full-time worker earning \$8 per hour or less could be eligible to receive a child care subsidy, Food Stamps, and children's health insurance, and yet the vast majority of workers earning \$8 per hour or less (90 percent) are not receiving the package of these supports, even though 61 percent are receiving at least one of them. The most common supports received by working individuals in this wage range are Food Stamps and medical insurance (47 and 36 percent, respectively). Nearly one out of four of these working individuals with children less than 12 years old is receiving government-sponsored child care assistance (23.5 percent), and few working individuals receive welfare (see [Table 6](#)).

Not surprisingly, overall, part-time workers are more likely than full-time workers to receive *any* major work support (63 percent vs. 49 percent). This reflects the lower earnings, and therefore, increased eligibility of part-time workers for work supports. However, this suggests that a considerable number of individuals and families who are eligible for work supports are not receiving them.

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<sup>1</sup> The project is being supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Ford, Rockefeller, Casey, Irvine, and Packard foundations. The survey was administered at the Dayton Job Center between November 5 and December 2, 2003. A total of 783 customers were surveyed (every tenth customer that entered the Job Center); 274 of these were employed.

<sup>2</sup> The survey provides a very rough approximation of the proportion of low-wage workers who are not receiving the work supports for which they may be eligible. The lower the wage rate, the more likely the worker and his/her family is to be eligible. In this case, we looked specifically at workers earning \$8 per hour or less, rather than \$10 or less, because it increases the likelihood that the family is eligible. The child care subsidy was not included as a work support for workers with no children or those aged 12 and older. Importantly, however, the survey did not ask for household income or composition, which are two major factors for determining eligibility for most work supports. Also, for this paper, we are not including work supports administered through the tax system: the Earned Income Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit.

<sup>3</sup> Another 26 percent came in for "Other" reasons that were not specified.

## APPENDIX

**Table 1 – Working People**

	Percent
Employed	
Part-time	37.1
Full-time	62.9
Have at least one child less than 19 years old	81.0
Age of youngest child	
aged 0-4	57.5
aged 5-11	29.5
aged 12-18	13.0
Married	22.9
Sample Size*	274

\*Sample size varies across items; maximum sample size reported.

**Table 2 – Wages**

%	Working Full-time	Working Part-time	Total
Wage			
Less than \$8	38.5	60.2	46.4
\$8-\$10	26.6	26.5	26.6
\$10.01-\$12	10.1	9.2	9.7
More than \$12	24.9	4.1	17.2
Sample Size*	169	98	267

\*Sample size includes working respondents who answered items about hours and wages.

**Table 3 – Employer-sponsored benefits by wage**

	Working Full-time			Working Part-time		
	Under \$8	\$8.01-\$10.00	Over \$10	Under \$8	\$8.01-\$10.00	Over \$10**
Health insurance	31.1	41.2	82.5	21.2	43.5	-
Paid sick leave	21.8	48.6	71.4	6.5	31.6	-
Paid vacation	39.0	65.7	81.0	18.4	50.0	-
Paid holidays	43.3	63.2	76.8	24.0	59.1	-
Sample Size*	65	45	59	59	26	-

\*Sample size includes all working respondents who answered items about hours and wages.

Within this sample the number of non-missing responses varies by item.

\*\*Sample size too small to provide reliable percentages for this column.

**Table 4 – Employer-sponsored benefits (FT/PT/Total)**

	Working Full-time	Working Part-time	Total
Health insurance	52.6	27.8	43.3
Paid sick leave	47.3	13.9	35.5
Paid vacation	61.7	25.9	48.8
Paid holidays	60.3	32.6	50.2
Sample Size*	169	98	267

\*Sample size includes all working respondents who answered items about hours. Within this sample the number of non-missing responses varies by item.

**Table 5 – Reasons Why Employed Respondents Came to the Job Center**

Why did you come to the Job Center today? (Check all that apply)	Percent
For Food Stamps	40.6
For Medical Insurance	21.9
For Job Placement or Job Readiness Services	15.7
For Child Care	10.2
For Education or Training Services	9.1
For TANF	8.0
For Unemployment Insurance	0.7
For “Other” Reason	25.6
Percent who mentioned more than one reason for coming to the Job Center	13.2
<b>Percent who came for work supports vs. job placement/job readiness, education, or training services</b>	
Came for one of the three major work supports (Food Stamps, Medical Insurance, Child Care)	61.4
Came for job placement / job readiness, education, or training services, not above work supports	17.7
Sample Size*	274

\*Sample size includes all working respondents.

**Table 6 – Work Support Receipt**

	Under \$8	\$8.01- \$10.00	Over \$10**	Total
<b>Working Full-time</b>				
Food Stamps	43.1	37.8	15.3	32.2
Medicaid/CHIP	36.9	28.9	13.6	26.3
Child care <sup>1</sup>	17.1	33.3	17.9	23.1
Any of the above 3	56.9	62.2	28.8	49.1
Any 1 of the above 3	30.8	37.8	22.0	30.4
Any 2 of the above 3	18.5	20.0	5.1	14.0
The full package <sup>2</sup>	8.5	4.7	2.1	5.3
Welfare	3.1	0.0	1.7	1.8
Sample Size*	65	45	59	169
<b>Working Part-time</b>				
Food Stamps	50.8	42.3	-	45.5
Medicaid/CHIP	35.6	34.6	-	35.6
Child care	30.0	35.3	-	29.0
Any of the above 3	64.4	69.2	-	63.4
Any 1 of the above 3	32.2	42.3	-	33.7
Any 2 of the above 3	22.0	23.1	-	21.8
The full package	11.1	4.0	-	8.5
Welfare	8.5	7.7	-	6.9
Sample Size*	59	26	-	98
<b>Working (Total)</b>				
Food Stamps	46.8	39.4	18.1	36.9
Medicaid/CHIP	36.3	31.0	18.1	29.6
Child care	23.5	34.0	18.4	25.3
Any of the above 3	60.5	64.8	31.9	54.0
Any 1 of the above 3	31.5	39.4	20.8	31.4
Any 2 of the above 3	20.2	21.1	8.3	16.8
The full package	9.7	4.4	3.4	6.5
Welfare	5.6	2.8	1.4	3.6
Sample Size*	124	71	72	267

\*Sample size includes all working respondents who answered items about hours and wages. Within this sample the number of non-missing responses varies by item.

\*\*Sample size too small to provide reliable percentages for Part-Time Workers in this column.

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of respondents receiving child care is calculated among those with children less than 12 years old, although the actual cutoff for receiving a child care subsidy in Dayton is the day before a child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, unless s/he qualifies as having special needs.

<sup>2</sup> For respondents with children younger than 12 years old, “the full package” of major work supports includes a child care subsidy, Food Stamps, and Medicaid/CHIP, while for respondents without children younger than 12 years old “the full package” of major work supports includes Food Stamps and Medicaid.

This information is for a study of the [INSERT LOCATION NAME HERE].  
THANK YOU for your help.

*Please do not provide your name or any other identifying information.*

1. Is this your first visit to [LOCATION]?

Yes       No

2. How did you hear about [LOCATION]?  
(Check all that apply) [MAY VARY FOR YOUR LOCATION; ADD OR EDIT AS NEEDED]

- a. Friend or family member
- b. Advertisement on the bus
- c. TV
- d. Community- or faith-based organization, or [LOCAL PARTNER] referral
- e. Walking or riding by [LOCATION]
- f. Internet
- g. Other

3. Why did you come to [LOCATION] today?  
(Check all that apply)

- a. For education or training services
- b. For job placement or job readiness services
- c. For unemployment insurance
- d. For welfare (LOCAL PROGRAM NAME)
- e. For public medical insurance (LOCAL PROGRAM NAME)
- f. For child care
- g. For Food Stamps
- h. Other

4. Are you currently receiving any of these kinds of government assistance?  
(Check all that apply)

- a. Child care assistance benefits
- b. Food Stamps
- c. Medical insurance (LOCAL PROGRAM NAME)
- d. Welfare (LOCAL PROGRAM NAME)
- e. Help with transportation costs
- f. WIA
- g. Not receiving any of the above

5. Are you married?

Yes       No

6. How many children do you have in each of these age groups?

Check here to indicate **NO** children and go on to Question 7.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. 0 – 4 years old
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. 5 – 11 years old
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. 12 – 18 years old
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. 19 years and over

7. Are you enrolled in school or training now?

Yes       No

8. Are you working now?

Yes (If Yes, please go to Question 9)  
 No (If No, please **STOP** here.)

9. What is your hourly wage? (If more than one job, check highest wage.)

- Less than \$6.00
- \$6.00 - \$8.00
- \$8.01 - \$10.00
- \$10.01 - \$12.00
- \$12.01 or more

10. How many hours per week do you work? (Count the total for all jobs)

Total hours worked per week

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What benefits do you get from your employer(s)? (Please check yes or no)

- |                             | <u>Yes</u>            | <u>No</u>             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Medical/health insurance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Paid sick leave          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Paid vacation            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Paid holidays            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |