

The Connecticut Department of Labor RBA Report Card: Jobs First Employment Services Program

Quality of Life Result to Which Program Contributes: To enable individuals to become and remain independent of welfare through employment by the end of the 21-month durational limit on cash assistance.

Program's Contribution to Results: Jobs First Employment Services provides employment services such as case management, job search assistance, vocational education, subsidized work experience, adult basic education and support services to families in receipt of time-limited Temporary Family Assistance (TFA).

Partners: CT Departments of Labor, Social Services and Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition Family Services and Adult Education; Five Regional Workforce Investment Boards; CT Employment & Training Commission; Office of Workforce Competitiveness and numerous contracted service providers.

Performance Measure 1: Number of participants to obtain employment during the State Fiscal Year

Time Period SFY	Caseload	Obtained Employment	
		#	% of Caseload
2008-09	16,704	7,047	42%
2007-08	15,915	7,264	46%
2006-07	16,272	7,724	48%
2005-06	17,451	6,523	37%
2004-05	16,371	6,452	39%

Story behind the baseline: Participation in the JFES program is mandatory for recipients of TFA which is limited to 21 months (for some there is a possibility of 2 six-month extensions). The majority of the JFES families have multiple, serious barriers to participating in the program and becoming employed (e.g., lack of access to transportation, lack of child care or funds to pay for child care, no high school diploma or GED, no work history, non-English speaking, no stable housing, health and/or behavior health issues. Lower case managers' caseloads to assist participants resolve barriers, increased appropriations in SFY 2007 and 2008 positively impacted performance during this time period. Performance in SFY 2009 was negatively impacted by the down turn in the economy and decrease in appropriations. Performance and service delivery were further impacted in June 2009 due to uncertainty of continued funding for this program. The interruption in JFES services at the beginning of SFY 2010, the decrease in the program budget and the general lack of jobs will negatively impact performance for SFY 2010.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: A motivational approach to service delivery has been recently initiated. Continue to coordinate with other programs/ agencies to maximize existing resources.

Performance Measure 2: Number of participants and percentage of JFES caseload to obtain employment with wages higher than the cash benefit that they receive during the State Fiscal Year

Time Period SFY	Caseload	Wages Above TFA	
		#	% of Caseload
2008-09	16,704	5,194	31%
2007-08	15,915	5,638	35%
2006-07	16,272	5,932	36%
2005-06	17,451	6,080	35%
2004-05	16,371	5,379	33%

Story behind the baseline: JFES case managers are trained to develop individualized employment plans that help participants obtain employment before the end of their 21-month time limit. If at the end of the 21-month time-limit participants are earning \$90 more than their cash benefit amount, they are not eligible for an extension and their assistance ends. Employment plan development includes arranging for child care, child care benefits, assistance with transportation costs, job search assistance, vocational education, adult basic education and subsidized employment. Onerous and restrictive Federal TANF work participation and verification requirements that became effective in SFY 2006 and 2007 consume program resources making it more difficult for case managers to focus on resolving barriers to participation and employment.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Centralized the verification function required to meet Fed requirements and streamlined the intake process to free-up case managers' time and allow them to focus on providing participants with the assistance overcoming barriers to employment rather than obtaining documentation and data entry.

Performance Measure 3: Number of participants and percentage of JFES caseload to obtain employment with wages higher than the federal poverty level for their family size during the State Fiscal Year

Time Period SFY	Caseload	Wages Above FPL	
		#	% of Caseload
2008-09	16,704	1,961	12%
2007-08	15,915	2,105	13%
2006-07	16,272	2,594	16%
2005-06	17,451	2,777	16%
2004-05	16,371	2,639	16%

Story behind the baseline: The economy has made it more difficult for a single parent, without a high school diploma, no skills, no work history, no child care, and no transportation to obtain a job when she is competing with the skilled and experienced unemployed for those same jobs. To increase the number of JFES participants obtaining jobs with wages that are higher than the federal poverty level, the JFES program provides vocational education opportunities. To increase the number of JFES participants who can benefit from vocational education, some of the training is tailored to simultaneously address low reading or math abilities, lack of a high school diploma or GED or the lack of English proficiency. Participants acquire certification in vocations such as nursing assistant, medical and dental assistant, computer skills, business services/accounting, office and administrative skills, customer service, and truck and bus operator.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Continue to leverage training vouchers through the Workforce Investment systems and adult basic education and/or English as a Second Language classes through local adult basic education programs.

