

# SECURE JOBS, SECURE HOMES, SECURE FAMILIES

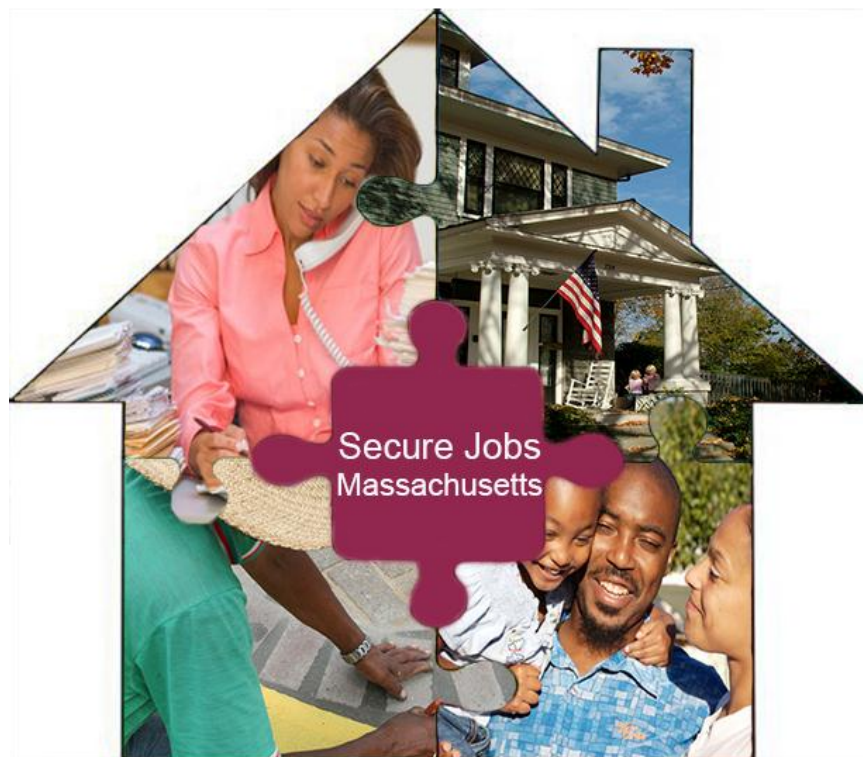
## Phase One Outcomes of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot

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Submitted to the Paul & Phyllis Fireman Foundation

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*Bridging the Gap between Homelessness and Employment*

## **About The Institute on Assets and Social Policy**

The Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP), a research institute at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, is dedicated to the economic well-being and social mobility of individuals and families, particularly to those traditionally left out of the economic mainstream. Working in close partnership with constituencies, state and federal policy makers, grassroots advocates, private philanthropies, and the media, IASP bridges the worlds of academic research, organizational practice, and government policy-making. IASP works to strengthen the leadership of lawmakers, practitioners, researchers and others by linking the intellectual and program components of asset-building policies. For more information, visit [www.iasp.brandeis.edu](http://www.iasp.brandeis.edu) or follow us on twitter @IASP\_Heller.

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## **Executive Summary**

Low-wages in low-skilled employment and lack of affordable housing are among the major reasons that families enter homelessness, and they provide great obstacles for families to leave their homelessness behind. In turn, siloed approaches to addressing homelessness tend to focus on just one aspect of the many challenges homeless families face and are often insufficient for families to exit from homelessness. Facing diminishing public funds to attend to the rise of family homelessness in Massachusetts, public-private partnerships are needed to fill the gap left behind.

The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation spearheaded a \$1.5 million demonstration project (leveraging over \$600,000 in additional funds for the pilot year), the Secure Jobs Initiative, which is designed to link homeless families who were participating in Massachusetts' HomeBASE program to the resources and services they needed to enter and sustain employment before their housing subsidies ran out. Starting in February 2013, this Initiative, in partnership with state agencies and housing and employment providers, has made possible the creation of an innovative service delivery approach in five regions across the state. Setting the ambitious goal of 80% of enrolled participants in employment within a year (much higher than the industry's standard of 60% for most low-income families), the Fireman Foundation set a high bar at the outset of this new initiative.

This report summarizes short-term employment and housing outcomes for Secure Jobs Phase One participants as well as participant, employer, trainer, and staff assessments of this new initiative.

***Secure Jobs Phase One Families*** are mostly:

- Single mothers in their late twenties.
- Disproportionately from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Families with one or two children; over half of these families (62.1%) have children under the age of 6.\*
- Compared to homeless families statewide,† Secure Jobs families tend to be more highly educated, with the majority carrying a high school diploma or GED and another quarter having engaged in some form of post-secondary education.

***Prior employment of heads of Secure Jobs families:***

- Almost two-thirds (64.1%) of Secure Jobs families reported a period of prior employment greater than 30 days.
- Employment was primarily in service industries including retail sales, food service, and health care.
- Wages in prior employment were, on average, between \$9 and \$10 an hour; weekly hours varied as well, with an average of about 28 hours per week.
- Major reasons for leaving prior employment included being laid off or job ending (28.5%), barriers such as health issues or lack of child care or transportation (20.1%), and issues with employers including insufficient hours and personal conflict (15.6%). Focus group data illustrate that often a combination of a number of different challenges impeded continued employment.
- Less than one-third were employed at entry to HomeBASE.

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\* Data on children's ages were under-reported.

† Comparison is to families in the 2009 Massachusetts HPRP-funded short-term rental support program. 29% of HPRP families had no High School Diploma or GED, compared to only 18% of Secure Jobs families. (Davis, T., & Lane, T. S. (2012). Rapid re-housing of families experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts: Maintaining housing stability. Retrieved from Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership and UMass Boston Center for Social Policy website: [http://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=csp\\_pubs](http://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=csp_pubs))

***Through Secure Jobs:***

- Just over a quarter of Secure Jobs families (27.3%) accessed training programs in fields including CNA, EMT, bartending, and insurance sales.
- Training programs that had direct links with employment opportunities yielded more jobs for participants.

***Employed Secure Jobs families:***

- In their first jobs through Secure Jobs, employed participants are making about \$11 per hour and working about 35 hours per week.
- Almost a third of these employed families have access to paid sick leave/vacation, and over a quarter receive health benefits
- First employment in Secure Jobs is primarily in service industries including sales, administration, and health care.
- Over half of employed participants have stayed in their new jobs for more than six months.

***Secure Jobs Families' Housing:***

- Almost half of all Secure Jobs participants accessed HomeBASE without spending any time in shelter or a motel.<sup>‡</sup>
- Those who stayed in a shelter or motel did so for an average of 33 weeks with a median stay of 29 weeks.
- At HomeBASE entry, over three-quarters of Secure Jobs participants (78.9%) received HomeBASE Rental Assistance.
- At the end of their Rental Assistance subsidies 49% of all Secure Jobs participants had transitioned to an additional year of Household Assistance and about a sixth returned to shelter.<sup>‡</sup>

***Recommendations:***

- Coordinate employment and housing services *beginning at the front door*.
- Build partnerships to leverage community resources, in particular One-Stop Centers.
- Reward work with housing subsidies, for families in entry-level work whose wage will not pay market rent.
- Standardize the Job Readiness Training curriculum.
- Assist skills training programs in developing regional employer partnerships.
- Assist employment programs in developing and maintaining employer partnerships.
- Facilitate regular communication between Secure Jobs staff and program partners.
- Ease and improve access to quality and affordable childcare, in particular for non-TAFDC recipients
- Improve transportation options both by increasing public transportation routes and by offering auto loan programs with terms that are reasonable for low-income families.
- Integrate financial education into employment programs.
- Improve data quality by integrating data collection practices into the service delivery process and promote frequent use of data.

***Evaluation Next Steps:***

- Document programmatic changes for Year 2 of Secure Jobs.
- Track short-term outcomes of new Year 2 Secure Jobs participants.
- Track employment and housing outcomes of Year 1 Secure Jobs participants one year post-employment placement.

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<sup>‡</sup> DHCD administrative data are used to generate these outcomes, and data on almost half the sample are missing.

# **SECURE JOBS, SECURE HOMES, SECURE FAMILIES**

## **One-Year Outcomes of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot**

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### **Jenny and Secure Jobs**

Jenny, a 28-year old woman, lives with her four-year-old son Max, her husband Ron, and their newborn, Jason. Jenny has a CORI from 2006 that makes it extremely difficult for her to find work. In the past, she had worked seasonal jobs in retail during the holidays, and had worked at a fast food chain for a few months, but had no long-term employment history. In September 2011, Jenny and Max became homeless after a dispute with Max's father forced her to leave the home that they had shared. Jenny and Max were placed in a motel and from there they were given HomeBASE Rental Assistance. They found a two-bedroom apartment and soon Jenny reconnected with Ron, an old friend.

A year later, Jenny and Ron were married and had a baby but neither of them had found work. Jenny's CORI continued to be a stubborn barrier. Ron had looked for a new career path; but saddled with \$16,000 in student loan debts, he could not find a training program that did not cost money. They knew that their time on HomeBASE was limited and feared having to go back to a shelter in another year's time. Jenny grew increasingly anxious and felt restless and alone.

Then, in February 2013, Jenny's HomeBASE Stabilization Worker arrived for her monthly visit with news of a new program, Secure Jobs, which could help Jenny and Ron find jobs. The Stabilization Worker told Jenny that she was being referred to the program because she was motivated to work but was struggling to get hired. Jenny was skeptical at first because she had been to the career center and could not see what else this program would have to offer. She decided to go to the intake session anyway.

At the intake session, Jenny met a Secure Jobs Employment Specialist named Mary. Jenny told Mary that she was interested in a career as a nursing aide and that in 2006 she had started a CNA training course but had never finished it. Jenny hoped to go back and complete the training course. Mary gave Jenny several assessment tests to determine where her career interests were. The tests determined that Jenny would be happy in a job that required her to move between multiple tasks and that kept her on her feet. Mary explained to Jenny that her CORI would prevent her from working in most health care facilities, nursing jobs require working odd hours, and it would be hard to find child care if Ron was not available. Mary told Jenny that nursing might not be the best option.

Jenny was frustrated by Mary's response because she knew that nursing was a field that offered steady jobs with good pay and she had already started the training. Desperate for work, Jenny felt that Mary was closing a door in her face. She decided not to go back to this program. Over the next three weeks, Mary called Jenny several times inviting her to come back. She also emailed Jenny job postings that she thought might interest Jenny. Finally, Jenny decided to give Mary another chance, returned to the office and sat down with Mary. Jenny told Mary that she needed to get a job right away and would do whatever it took.

Mary and Jenny started work on Jenny's resume and Mary showed Jenny how to filter online job postings to focus specifically on positions that would interest her. Meanwhile, they applied to Department for Transitional Assistance (DTA) for a childcare voucher. A week later, the voucher was approved and Mary helped Jenny find daycare sites for her children. Jenny sent out four cover letters and resumes each day for the next two weeks. One was to Move It, a local



packing and shipping business that was a Secure Jobs program partner. Mary called the manager of Move It and told him that she thought Jenny would be a great addition to their team. Mary explained that she understood that he might be concerned about Jenny's CORI but that it was in the past. Mary asked that he consider giving Jenny a chance.

The manager agreed to meet with Jenny for an interview. Mary coached Jenny for the interview, gave her mock interview questions, and then provided feedback on how Jenny presented herself. She told Jenny to make eye contact, sit up straight, be confident, and come prepared with questions because that showed that she had done research and understood what the business was about. Then, Mary took Jenny to Dress for Success, a non-profit organization that assists economically disadvantaged women with business attire, and they selected an outfit for the interview.

The following Monday, Mary picked Jenny up and took her to the interview. They arrived early and went through some of the potential interview questions again in the car. When Jenny went in to meet the manager she was nervous but also confident. The first question she was asked was one of the questions Mary had asked her in the mock interview so Jenny was prepared with an answer. When the manager asked her where she saw herself in five years Jenny replied that she wanted to move up in the business and become an expert in the field and that she hoped to go back to school and get an associate's degree while working.

The manager was impressed by Jenny's poise, her confidence, and her ambition. Later that day, he offered her the job. Once Jenny had been in her new job for a few weeks, and her children were adjusted to the new day care routine, Mary invited Ron to come in and discuss training options. Ron had worked in construction before the recession and was interested in improving his skills to get back into this field. Mary offered to get him into a welding course at the local community college. Ron, excited about this opportunity, gladly agreed.

Jenny has now been working for four months at her new job and she loves it. She is learning quickly and enjoying getting to know her co-workers. She has to commute by bus, 50 minutes each way, and does not get home until 6:30 pm. This was particularly difficult in the winter but it is getting easier as the days grow longer. Now she is starting to save money to buy a car. Fortunately, because Ron is not working, he is able to pick the children up from daycare each day before it closes. Ron is about to complete his course and is beginning to work with Mary on his resume so he can start applying for jobs. The adjustment to being back at school was difficult at first but he likes his teacher and eventually settled in and is doing quite well.

Halfway through Ron's semester, Jenny's HomeBASE ended and they had to move to a less expensive apartment. Jenny was able to weather this transition without missing work but Ron missed a week of classes. He was extremely anxious about this and feared that he may have to drop out of the course. Mary worked with the instructor to find a way for Ron to make up the material and he was able to get back on track. They are now living further from Jenny's workplace but they are close to a park and they like their new neighborhood. Mary continues to call Jenny every few weeks to check on her and Jenny stops by the office once a month to say hello.



## **Introduction to the Secure Jobs Initiative**

Homeless families face many barriers to employment.<sup>[5]</sup> In addition to unstable housing, they face limited work supports such as childcare and transportation. Many also have insufficient skills to enter into jobs paying more than the minimum wage or lack work experience all together. The changing nature of work in the twenty-first century also adds to their increasing vulnerability in the labor market. Due to a combination of technology, globalization, and retrenchment of workforce policy and workplace regulation, work has become increasingly precarious.<sup>[4]</sup> The growth of the service sector has led to a rise in demand for workers in low-wage service industries, but these jobs come with few worker protections and, due to the segmented nature of the labor market, there is very little chance for advancement to higher-paying jobs.<sup>[6]</sup> Because of these trends, many families who experience homelessness have struggled in low-wage service sector jobs for years, unable to make progress toward self-sufficiency.

In February 2013, the Secure Jobs Initiative launched a new program model in Massachusetts. Secure Jobs was designed to help families in HomeBASE,<sup>i</sup> who were racing against the clock of their time-limited housing support, to move into stable employment that would lead to self-sufficiency. Secure Jobs, a \$1.5 million (plus more than \$600,000 leveraged in additional funds) demonstration project seeded by The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation, is designed to link homeless families participating in Massachusetts' HomeBASE program, like Jenny, to the resources and services they need to overcome barriers and to enter and sustain employment. Secure Jobs envisions a new model of housing stabilization that includes *integrated employment services*. The Fireman Foundation constructed the Secure Jobs model with input from seven of the state's Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing (ICHH) regional networks to end homelessness on how best to move families towards self-sufficiency and worked closely with state agencies to implement the Initiative, most notably the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), and Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

Five sites across Massachusetts were selected and funded for the first phase. These include Boston (Jewish Vocational Services [JVS] and Metro Boston Housing Partnership), Brockton (Father Bill's and MainSpring [FBMS]), Lowell (Community Teamwork, Inc. [CTI]), Western Massachusetts (Corporation for Public Management [CPM]), and the South Coastal Region (SER-Jobs for Progress [SER]). Each site has, at its core, a homeless service provider and a workforce development agency; Secure Jobs is housed at one of these (whichever is the lead grantee.) Each Secure Jobs site has a staff composed of one Site Coordinator and one or more Employment Specialists. These staff members work closely with Secure Jobs participants to eliminate barriers to employment and provide whatever services are necessary to move into employment. Secure Jobs staff also work closely with participants' HomeBASE Stabilization Workers. At all sites, workforce development and homeless services are linked to offer a comprehensive and individualized set of services that addresses these families' barriers to

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<sup>i</sup> In its first year, Secure Jobs was open only to Massachusetts families in the HomeBASE program, a state-administered program for families facing homelessness, that offers either two years of rental assistance (no longer available) or a lump sum of up to \$4,000 in household assistance. All families in HomeBASE also receive two years of Housing Stabilization case management, regardless of type of support received.

employment, giving them both the tools they need to enter the workforce and the critical connections to employers.

Each site offers a different model, but all subscribe to the same core principles.<sup>ii</sup>

Core Secure Jobs program elements include:

- **Recruitment and Referral** by HomeBASE Stabilization Workers of the HomeBASE recipients who are most “ready, willing, and able” to work.
- **Intake and Assessment** by Secure Jobs staff, including testing for skills and career assessment, and development of an *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP) for each participant.
- **Enrollment** in services identified as necessary, including job readiness training, skills training, job search assistance, and, for those who need it, Vocational English Language Training (VELT) (See [Appendix A](#) for enrollment numbers and trends.)
- **Continued Communication across Services** between Employment Specialists, HomeBASE Stabilization Workers and other service providers (e.g., skills training instructors, VELT instructors, etc.)
- **Job Development** each site is constantly engaged in making connections with regional employers to facilitate introductions with Secure Jobs job applicants.
- **Flexible Funds** to pay small expenses that can act as large barriers, such as, licensing tests, RMV fees, MBTA passes, career wear for interviews, and uniforms for jobs.
- **Trusting Relationships** between Secure Jobs staff and participants, in which staff show participants sympathy and respect, listen to participants’ aspirations for the future, and offer continued, consistent support.
- **Retention Services** up to one year post employment placement.

In addition, key support elements include:

- **Leadership by the Fireman Foundation** conducting Learning Labs in which staff from all five sites plus state agency partners share best practices and lessons learned (monthly by phone and quarterly in person).
- **Designated State Agency Contacts** to assist with accessing state benefits programs and addressing barriers to employment.
- **Regional Legislative Engagement** to document program success to a wider audience and expand the reach of the Secure Jobs model.

Overall, Secure Jobs has been met with enthusiastic support by stakeholders ranging from participants, private industry employers, and state agency administrators. This report describes Secure Jobs participant’s experience in the first phase of the Initiative and their outcomes at the end of this pilot phase.

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<sup>ii</sup> For more information on Secure Jobs, see the first report in this series, *Secure Jobs, Secure Homes, Secure Families: Process Evaluation of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot* at <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2013/Fireman.pdf>.

## **The Evaluation: Data Collection and Management**

Selected by the Fireman Foundation, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management is carrying out a multi-method, multi-year evaluation of Secure Jobs, documenting its implementation and, in this report, short-term outcomes of Phase One participants. Drawing on a mix of different data sources, this report builds primarily on 1) individual-level data on all participants in the Initiative and 2) focus groups with participants at all five sites. In addition, this report incorporates data from the following sources: 1) interviews with staff and program partners; 2) notes from advisory committee meetings; 3) monthly reports documenting enrollment and implementation; and 4) notes from Fireman's monthly phone calls and quarterly Learning Labs.

High quality data on the implementation and outcomes of new initiatives are critical to understanding what program elements should be brought to scale and what challenges may arise in doing so. To accomplish this goal, the IASP evaluation team worked closely with the Fireman Foundation and all five sites from Secure Jobs' beginning to establish data collection practices and data expectations. To track participant outcomes, IASP distributed a shared data element protocol to each site, but, in order not to impose undue burdens on the sites, each site used its own data management software and integrated Secure Jobs data collection into its existing data program operation. Permitting sites to use their respective software meant that IASP had to manage and combine five very different databases. While this was a very time consuming task, the hope was that the use of each site's data tracking software would ensure better quality data and ultimately more use of the data by each site.

IASP communicated clear expectations about data from the beginning, conducted a review of data quality every three months, and provided detailed feedback for each site. In addition, IASP held two meetings with each site, one at the beginning of the first Secure Jobs year and one during the fourth quarter. The later meetings focused on a number of data quality and data entry issues; examples include a shared understanding between employment and housing staff about their respective responsibilities for data collection and entry, and review of data sharing agreements and data merging mechanisms. In addition, all sites sent a list of their Secure Jobs participants to DHCD, where these records were merged with Emergency Assistance entry and HomeBASE administrative data, and then shared with IASP.

The following presents a first look at all of the quantitative data shared with IASP.<sup>iii</sup> With the last data not received until the end of August, more in-depth analyses that compare subgroups of Secure Jobs participants (for example, those with longer homeless histories compared to those with shorter homelessness) were not possible due to time constraints. The following data on tracking Secure Jobs participants include 588 records submitted from the sites. Data submitted to the Fireman Foundation reflected 610 individuals enrolled in the first year; this discrepancy is most likely due to sites submitting incomplete data. Of the 588 received by IASP, around 13% are reported to have dropped out of Secure Jobs before program completion (more than half of these drop-outs occurred at one site, suggesting that this site reported data on potential participants rather than just those enrolled).

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<sup>iii</sup> As the Secure Jobs sites began implementation of their pilot projects at different times, the data cover somewhat different periods. The Brockton, Boston, and Lowell sites started a month or more earlier than the Western Massachusetts and South Shore Coastal region sites.

## Secure Jobs Participant Enrollment

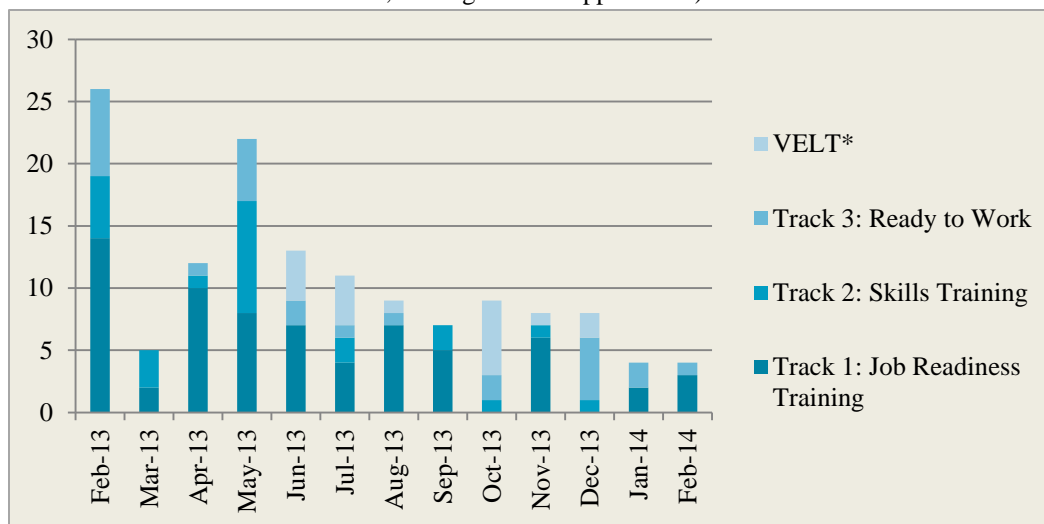
Accurate assessment and quick enrollment were key elements of Secure Jobs because it was targeted to a particular group whose housing support was ending soon: the limited pool of HomeBASE recipients. Therefore, as soon as Secure Jobs started, HomeBASE Stabilization Workers in each Secure Jobs region assessed their HomeBASE caseload and referred those they felt were right for Secure Jobs to their regional Secure Jobs Coordinator.

The bulk of referrals came in the first few months of program operation (see Figure 1), during which time HomeBASE Stabilization Workers combed their entire HomeBASE caseloads for those most ready, willing, and able to work.<sup>iv</sup> This initial spike in referrals caused a backlog for Employment Specialists who had to conduct intake sessions with these new referrals. Referrals dropped after this initial period because the state distributed most of its HomeBASE Rental Assistance vouchers in its first three months and very few new cases were added to HomeBASE Rental Assistance after this (the state terminated HomeBASE Rental Assistance in June 2012). And very few people were entering the HomeBASE Household Assistance Program, which continued past the end of Rental Assistance. This drop-off in eligible candidates created a challenge for all the sites.

Once enrolled, participants were assigned to Employment Specialists who conducted a detailed intake, and then participants began an individualized course towards employment. Initially, once participants completed the intake process they were assigned to one of three tracks as stipulated by the Fireman Foundation grant. Figure 1 delineates enrollment in each track in the Boston site. Overall, enrollment trends are similar in the other four sites; however the reported data were not of sufficient quality to represent enrollment numbers accurately.

**Figure 1: JVS Enrollment, First 12 Months**

(for JVS cumulative enrollment numbers, see Figure 7 in Appendix A)



\*JVS added a fourth track in June 2013, the Vocational English Language Training Track.

<sup>iv</sup> For more on the referral process, see the first report in this series, *Secure Jobs, Secure Homes, Secure Families: Process Evaluation of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot* at <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2013/Fireman.pdf>.

## The Secure Jobs Families

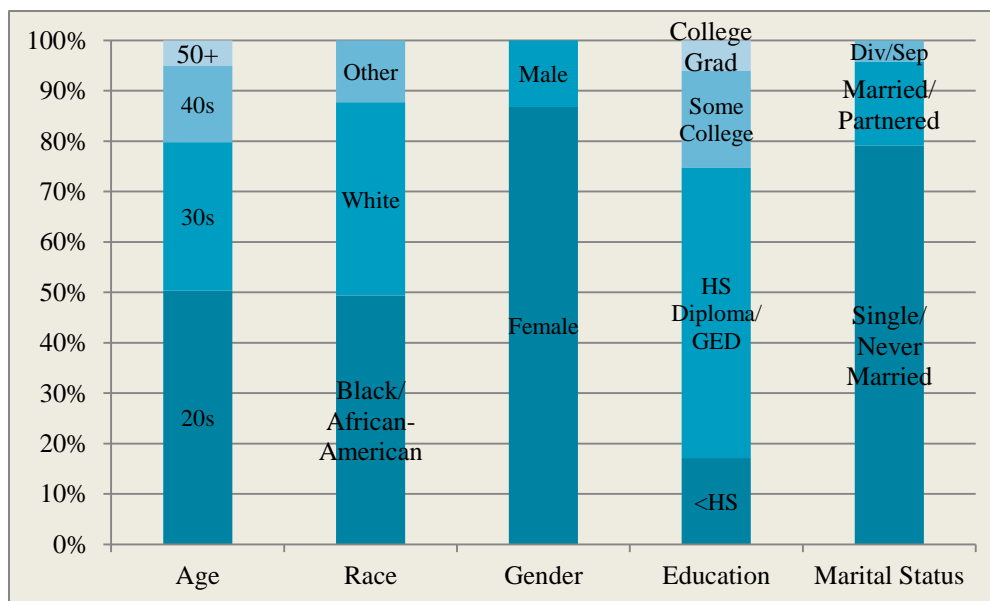
Families in the first phase of Secure Jobs resembled, for the most part, other local and national homeless families,<sup>[1; 3; 7]</sup> headed by a single mother mostly in her late twenties (see Figure 2). The vast majority (88.8%) were heads of household. Most (86.8%) were female. Over a third (35.2%) were in their late twenties (25-29 years old). About 15% were in their early thirties (30-34 years old) and another 14% were in their late thirties (35-39 years old). Only 15.1% were under twenty-five and only one participant from this group was less than twenty years old.

Just under half (49.4%) of the Secure Jobs participants in the first phase were white, and close to two-fifths (38.3%) were African American. The remaining 12.3% were from various racial groups, including Asian and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. About a quarter of the participants (23.9%) were Hispanic.<sup>v</sup> Racial composition of Secure Jobs participants varied widely by site, reflecting local demographics: two sites were predominantly African American, another two were predominantly white, and the third was split more evenly (see ; for a racial breakdown by site see Table 3 in [Appendix A.](#))

Educational attainment reported at program entry varied somewhat by site, but the overall trends were the same across all five sites with only 17.1% of the participants overall not having completed high school. More than half the sample (57.7%) had a high school degree, another 19.2% had attended some college, and 6.0% had either an associates or a bachelor's degree.

More than three quarters (79.1%) of participants were single and had never married at program entry. Another 16.6% were married or partnered. The remaining 4.3% were divorced or separated.

**Figure 2: Secure Jobs Participant Demographics**



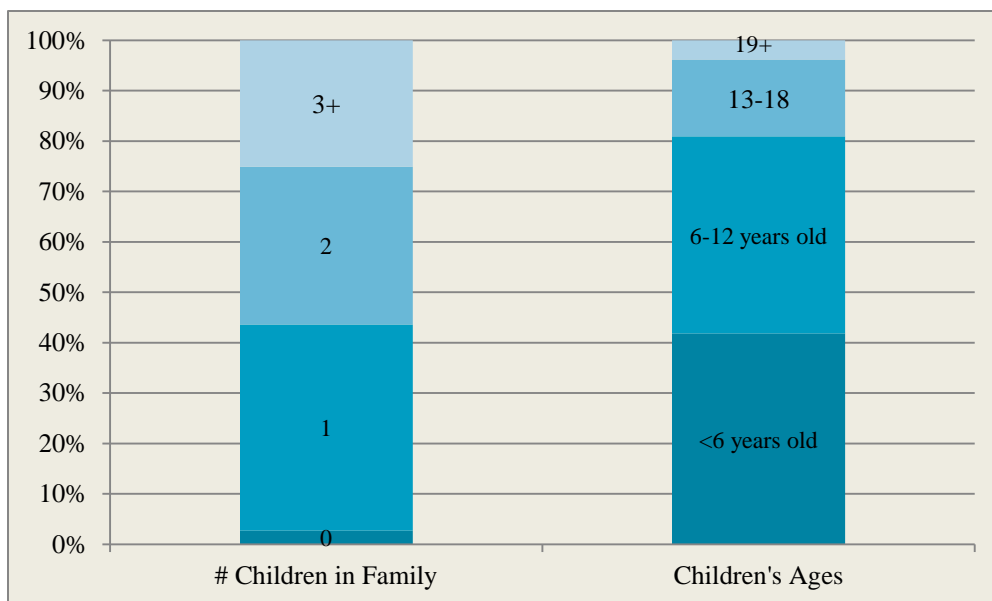
<sup>v</sup> Other ethnicities, such as Cape Verdean, are reflected in the dataset but we are unable to present statistics beyond Hispanic/non-Hispanic due to data quality issues.

The families in Secure Jobs tended to have one or two children at program entry (see Figure 3): 40.9% had one child and another 31.3% had two children (the median number of children in a Secure Jobs family is two). This pattern was quite consistent across all five sites. (For demographic information by site see Table 3 in [Appendix A](#)).

Data on children's ages were under-reported, but of those families for whom data were submitted (60% of all families with children), over half (62.1%) had children under the age of six at program entry. These children were not yet of school age, and, therefore, required childcare during working hours. Another third (30.9%) had children between the ages of six and twelve. For these families, after-school and weekend care would be crucial because these children were not old enough to be home alone, and work hours often extend beyond school hours.

Of the 627 children in Secure Jobs families, over a third (41.8%) were under the age of six at their parents' program entry, another third (39.1%) were between the ages of six and twelve, and only 19.1% were over twelve years old and, therefore, old enough to stay home alone.

**Figure 3: Secure Jobs Children**



Because very little demographic data on homeless families in Massachusetts exists, it is hard to get a sense of how similar these families are to the population as a whole. Compared to families in 2009 in the Massachusetts Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)—funded short-term rental support program<sup>[3]</sup>—Secure Jobs families were similar in age, race, gender, and family composition. Families participating in Secure Jobs are different on one important factor: higher educational attainment. While 29% of HPRP families had no high school diploma or GED, only 18.3% of Secure Jobs families in the first phase had not completed high school at program entry.



## Before Secure Jobs

While supported by HomeBASE before entering Secure Jobs, over two-thirds of participants (69.9%) were not working. Over three-quarters (78.8%) were receiving HomeBASE Rental Assistance and were concerned about their subsidy timing out; the rest had received HomeBASE Household Assistance, most of them in the Western and South Coastal part of the state.

In addition, many participants received support from a number of state and federal benefits programs. A majority (52.4%) counted on Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and three quarters (75.8%) relied on Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)—also known as food stamps—as income sources. A smaller number of participants received Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (11.0%),<sup>vi</sup> Unemployment Insurance (3.7%), and child support (12.2%) (see Table 4 in [Appendix B](#) for benefits receipt by site.)<sup>vii</sup> Monthly income from all sources, including wages, averaged under \$800 (mean \$800, median \$727).<sup>viii</sup> The following sections detail the families’ experience prior to entry into Secure Jobs.

## Employment Prior to Secure Jobs

Although less than a third were working at program entry, almost two-thirds (64.1%) had worked for 30 days or more at some point prior to entering Secure Jobs.<sup>ix</sup> On the whole, Secure Jobs participants had a range work experience, and previous employment varied in both tenure and occupation.

*On one end of the spectrum people have very sporadic, spotty work history, maybe without GED or high school diploma, having worked at Dunkin Donuts, Wendy’s. Others [who] have bachelor’s degrees... fell on hard times and are now trying to find job.*

-HomeBASE Stabilization Worker

The majority of their previous work was held in low-wage jobs, earning between \$2.15 and \$26 an hour, and on average about \$9.00 an hour (the median hourly wage was \$9.33, mode \$8). Most worked less than full time, on average 28.5 hours per week (median 30 hours a week, mode 40 hours a week) although as low as 2 hours a week, and as high as 55 hours. The distributions of wages and hours worked were consistent across all five sites (see Table 5 in [Appendix B](#) for a breakdown across the five sites.)

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<sup>vi</sup> SSI/SSDI receipt is much lower at one site, suggesting possible under-reporting at this site and, therefore, an artificially low total number.

<sup>vii</sup> Income source data missing on over 1/3 of participants at one site

<sup>viii</sup> 11.5% (N=66) reported having \$0 monthly income; one observation was removed because income reported was extremely high and skewed the distribution.

<sup>ix</sup> Of these, 22.3% still had these jobs at entry to Secure Jobs



Job tenure also varied widely, from a month up to more than ten years. The median job tenure for previous employment was about one year. The mean was longer (just over a year and a half); this was due to a few participants with very long work histories. The median job tenure varied across sites by about four months, ranging from eleven months at one site to fifteen months at another.

The majority of participants were employed in service industries.<sup>x</sup> About a quarter held jobs in health care organizations, such as hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities, medical and dental offices. In these businesses participants worked as nursing assistants, personal care aides, home health aides, and medical assistants, as well as secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, information clerks, and general office clerks. About a fifth had jobs in retail trade businesses, including clothing stores, food and beverage stores, and gas stations. Secure Jobs participants primarily held cashier jobs within these businesses. And another fifth had worked in accommodation (hospitality) and food service businesses, such as restaurants, fast food establishments, and hotels. Among these, fast food restaurants were the most frequent employer. Secure Jobs participant jobs in this sector include food preparation, serving, wait staff, counter attendant, and dishwasher.

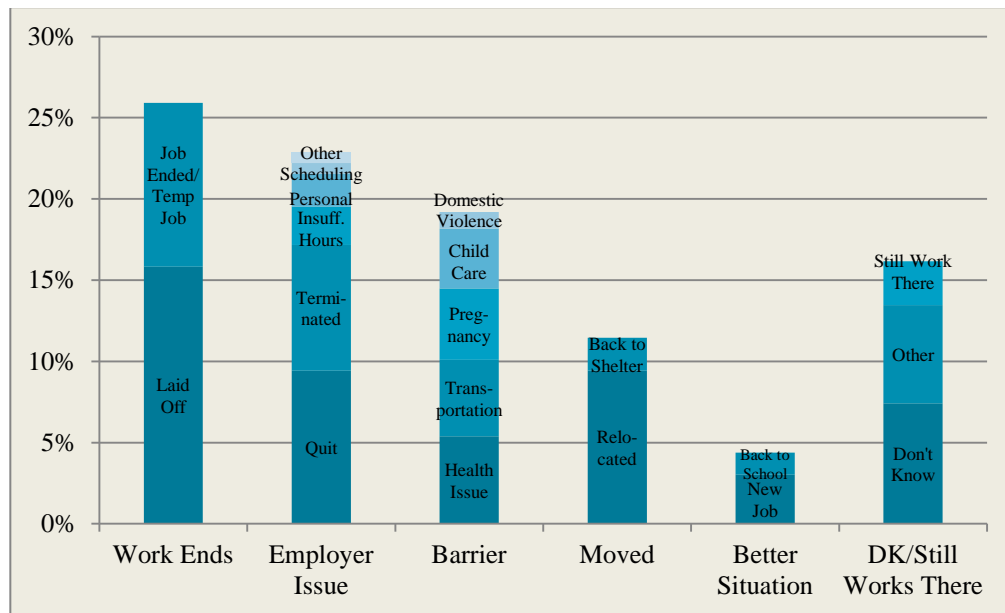
In Massachusetts, typical (median) wages for these occupations range from around \$9.00 an hour for cashiers, counter attendants and dishwashers, to between \$17 and \$20 an hour for medical assistants, administrative assistants and medical secretaries.<sup>[8]</sup> Nursing assistants and home health aides make between \$12 and \$14 an hour. These jobs generally do not require a high school diploma, but jobs in health care fields do require successful completion of short-term training programs, followed by a certification.

Participants cited several reasons for leaving prior employment (see Figure 4). The most frequently-cited reasons were being laid off or the job ending (including temporary jobs) (28.5%). Barriers to employment, such as insufficient childcare, transportation, or health issues, also caused many (20.1%) participants to have to leave their jobs. Some were terminated or quit due to some issue with the employer (15.6%), some left because they moved or became homeless (12.6%), and a few left their jobs for a better situation, either a better job opportunity or to go back to school (4.5%). The rest of the participants are either still with the employer or left for unknown reasons (17.8%). For a more detailed breakdown of reasons for leaving prior employment see Figure 8 in [Appendix B](#).

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<sup>x</sup> Participant occupations and their industries are categorized according to the US Census Bureau's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The NAICS offers a hierarchical classification system that allows for analysis at many levels. For more information on NAICS, see [www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm).

**Figure 4: Reasons for Leaving Prior Employment**



In the focus groups, Secure Jobs participants discussed the fact that not one reason alone but a combination of different factors contributed to their having left past employment. The factors they mentioned are typical challenges for single mothers in low wage employment that does not provide flexibility or sick leave.

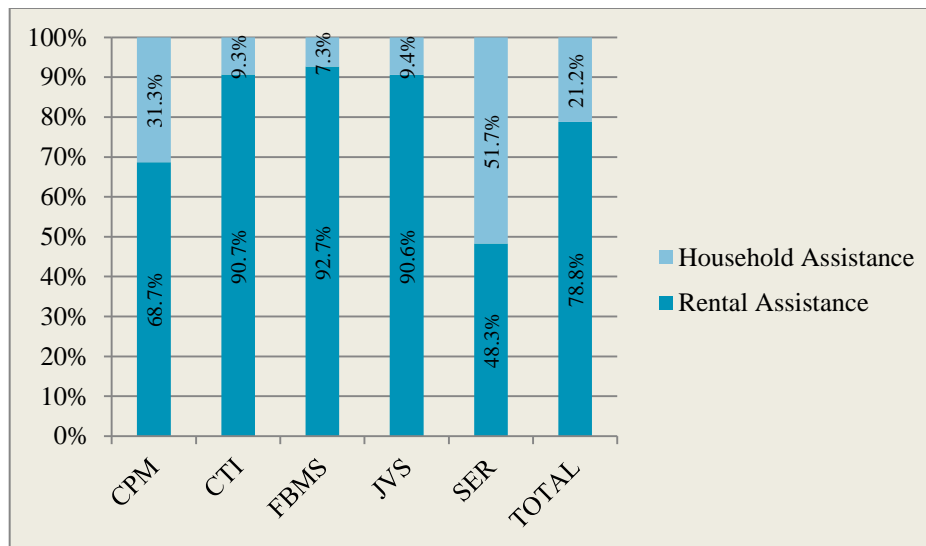
*I had two jobs [before Secure Jobs] and I lost both of the jobs, being stressed out, not having childcare, not having someone to pick up my child. I did lose two full-time jobs that I got on my own, before I even got to Secure Jobs. And not having the resources to say, “Well this is what we can do for your child. This is what we can do for you to help you as a single parent.” And you don’t have that person you can go to, to say “okay, my child is having school issues, I got to leave work.” And you lose the jobs, and then you have to start all over. So you don’t have the resources, you don’t know what to do! And then you’re back at square one, and that’s pretty much where I am. And I almost lost it.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## Housing Histories of Secure Jobs Participants

As required by the Fireman Foundation, all families in Secure Jobs were in HomeBASE at program entry. Over three-quarters of Secure Jobs participants (78.8%) were receiving HomeBASE Rental Assistance. Types of assistance received varied considerably across the five sites (see Figure 5): in three sites, over 90% of participants received HomeBASE Rental Assistance, and at the other two sites that joined Secure Jobs a month after the first three, the split was closer to even.

**Figure 5: Type of HomeBASE Assistance Received at Entry**



Before accessing EA support, families were most often either in a shelter/motel or doubled up with friends or family (see Table 1). About half of all Secure Jobs participants did not spend any time in a shelter or motel but were most likely doubled up with friends or family. Those who stayed in a shelter or motel did so for an average of 33 weeks with a median stay of 29 weeks.<sup>xi</sup>

**Table 1: Housing Status Prior to HomeBASE Entry**

Housing Status	CPM	CTI	FBMS	SER	JVS	Total
Shelter/Motel	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	38.8% (50)	3.9% (5)	47.0% (55)	18.7% (110)
Friends/Family and Doubled Up	55.8% (53)	0.0% (0)	24.0% (31)	5.4% (7)	18.0% (21)	19.1% (112)
Rental, No Subsidy	2.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	15.5% (20)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.9% (23)
Rental with Subsidy	12.6% (12)	0.0% (0)	17.1% (22)	0.0% (0)	24.8% (29)	10.7% (63)
Hotel/Motel, No Subsidy	5.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (5)
Out of Region/State	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (3)	0.5% (3)
Other	2.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (2)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (5)
Missing	22.1% (21)	100.0% (118)	3.1% (4)	89.2% (115)	7.7% (9)	45.4% (267)

<sup>xi</sup> These statistics on pre-HomeBASE housing represent rough estimates from analysis of DHCD administrative data. The quality of data reported from the Secure Jobs sites was not sufficient to report reliable estimates of prior housing here, and DHCD data were reported on less than half of the Secure Jobs Phase 1 sample.

## **A Closer Look at Secure Jobs Program Elements**

Once enrolled, Secure Jobs participants received a holistic set of services aimed at addressing their barriers to employment and equipping them with the skills, resources, and connections they needed to enter employment. They were entered into one or more of the following three tracks:

- **Track 1:** Job Readiness Training
- **Track 2:** Skills Training
- **Track 3:** Ready to Work/Job Search

For some sites the three tracks were mutually exclusive, while for others there was significant overlap as it quickly became clear that participants needed support in all three areas. Four of the five sites decided that all participants would go through job readiness training, so they were enrolled in track 1 and either track 2 or 3 simultaneously.

While some of these services were provided in-house, a key feature of the Secure Jobs model was the use of *regional partners*. Rather than construct an infrastructure in-house to offer all the services needed, Secure Jobs sites leveraged existing resources in their communities.

Each site connected with a host of regional service provider agencies that offered services that included skills training and certification, childcare, transportation, financial education, professional clothing, as well as internships, volunteer opportunities, and jobs. Developing and maintaining these partnerships can be a delicate and time-consuming task, as partners will only be willing to invest their resources as long as the partnerships is beneficial to them. All five sites worked hard at developing partnerships that were mutually beneficial. Ultimately, partnerships with skills training programs and employer partners proved to offer the most to Secure Jobs participants.

This section details use of these program elements, both in-house and with partners, and highlights their assessments from the perspectives of participants, training partners and employers.

### **Job Readiness Training**

Job readiness training in Secure Jobs included important job application skills, such as drafting a professional resume, cover letter, and thank you letter, mock-interviews (at some sites with real employer partners), soft skills training, and instruction on targeting a job search. Some participants, with no computers at home and returning to the workforce after a long break, faced a steep learning curve, particularly with regard to online job applications. With the guidance of Job Readiness Instructors, participants were able to access computers and direct support with creating these documents and using them strategically.

*[In Job Readiness Training, the instructor] gives you like a book, and we go through it, how to get a job, how to dress, how to talk when you go for an interview, how to present yourself, what to do, what not to do. So they prepare you before they get you a job. And it was really good. Everybody liked it. I think it helps you. Because sometimes you think you know everything, which you don't know...When it comes to dressing, I know how to dress really professional and everything, but it's some stuff that you still need, and this helps you.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

Four sites conducted job readiness training on-site and one contracted with the local One Stop Center to teach a four-week job readiness course specifically for Secure Jobs participants. This partnership offered participants a supportive introduction to One Stop Center resources.<sup>xii</sup>

*And let me start by saying this: I never knew anything about a cover letter, thank you letter or any of that until I came [to Job Readiness Training]. So I did my cover letter [in Job Readiness Training]. A week after we went to a job fair. Actually, that's how I got my job. She [the Job Readiness Instructor] took a group of us over to the career fair. We went to the job fair, we filled out [applications], [and] we had one-on-one interviews. And...a week later I came here and [the Job Readiness Instructor] taught me how to do a thank you letter. And two to three days later I got a call for a [second] interview...and a week later I was working.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## Skills Training

The explicit goal of Secure Jobs is to set participants on a path to higher incomes. Some participants came to Secure Jobs with few skills, or without the skill sets that are in demand in local labor markets. These participants needed to go through targeted skills trainings before they could enter employment. The Secure Jobs grant provided them with funds for short-term training programs.

Secure Jobs sites forged partnerships with local training organizations and community colleges. Leveraging these partnerships stretched Secure Jobs grant training dollars further and ultimately made it possible for over a quarter (27.3%) of participants to gain further education and skills, improving their job outlook and career path (see Table 6 in [Appendix C](#) for a breakdown by site). These training programs covered a range of fields, from the medical field to technical and service-oriented skills (see Table 2). Two sites reported drop-outs from training programs as well. Of these, one site had a 16% dropout rate and the other was much lower at 4%.

Training partners included vocational high schools, community colleges, and private training facilities run by nonprofit organizations such as the Red Cross and Lifestream, Inc. In addition, some employer partners provided on-the-job training. Secure Jobs site coordinators were able to make use of the flexibility of the grant to pay training tuition and to purchase the books and supplies for the courses. In some cases, training partners were willing to offer reduced tuition for Secure Jobs participants, allowing the Secure Jobs site to enroll more participants in training.

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<sup>xii</sup> It is worth noting that only 50% of participants at this site actually attended this job readiness course.

**Table 2: Training Programs Completed by Secure Jobs Participants, by Industry**

Medical	Technical	Services	Other
Caring for Seniors	Computer Numerical	Automotive	Early Learning Teacher Training
Blood Borne Pathogens	Control Machinist	Clerical Training	Social Media
Certified Nurse's Assistant	Electronic Assembly, Soldering and Inspection	Cosmetology	
CPR and First Aid	Precision Machinist	CVS Customer Service Training	
Emergency Medical Technician/Service	Welding	Notary Public	
Home Health Aide		Serv-Safe Food Prep	
Licensed Practical Nurse		Traffic Flagger	
Medical Administration			
Pharmacy Tech			
Phlebotomy			

**Participants' Assessment**

Participants were grateful for the opportunity to gain new skills and, for some, enter a new field. Some had started training programs in the past but had been unable to finish due to finances, childcare issues, and other obstacles. For many participants, the Secure Jobs partnership fostered a uniquely supportive environment where training instructors could work together with the participant and Secure Jobs staff to make sure participants were able to succeed.

Some training locations were structured to mimic the workplace, so that participants in a mixed-classroom with non-Secure Jobs students were expected to behave and learn as if they were at work. This format included requirements to dress professionally, refrain from cell phone use, and commit to being present for the full day. In other settings, participants were in a separate cohort of only Secure Jobs students in a more traditional, classroom-based learning environment. Some training partners used their own pre-set curriculum and requirements, while others worked with the Secure Jobs sites to adjust the curriculum to best fit the needs and resources of participants, while still assuring certification or advancement upon course completion.

**Training Partners' Assessment**

Training partners all expressed eagerness to enter into the partnership with Secure Jobs, and excitement about its potential. Secure Jobs offered a reliable source of participants and training programs, and partners were glad for the opportunity to boost their enrollments. Most training partners had some experience working with marginalized populations prior to this partnership.

*[When hearing about Secure Jobs,] I thought, "Why didn't somebody think of this sooner?" We offer everything they need: The kind of training for entry-level positions, enough to get someone into the job market, [someone] that has minimal skills, or marginal skills.*

-Training Partner

Training partners appreciated the opportunity to connect with Secure Jobs staff. Most training partners visited their Secure Jobs site at least once, often several times, to recruit participants for their programs. Some were also incorporated into Secure Jobs advisory committees. This contact allowed training partners to find out more about their participants and, in turn, support them more effectively as they moved through the training program. Training programs also had a positive assessment of Secure Jobs participants. They noted the wide range of skills they saw in new participants, and the remarkable progress that they saw Secure Jobs participants making in their classes. Overall, they found working with this group to be quite satisfying.

The importance of good communication between Secure Jobs staff and training staff is shown in cases where it was lacking. Limited communication inhibited the training staff's ability to cooperate around challenges in the classroom or those faced by particular participants. These programs reflected that more communication with Secure Jobs staff would have been helpful, both in order to serve students better and because they had developed close relationships with Secure Jobs participants.

*If a student is not showing up for class or failing to understand the course requirements, the material, then we immediately place a call to [Secure Jobs Site Coordinator], typically is the first person that I speak to.*

-Training Partner

*You're speaking of primarily young mom[s], often times with not a lot of support. I'm continually amazed at how successful some of the young women are that come through the program despite the barriers that they have to overcome.*

-Training Partner

*Something that I think now probably would have been helpful is if we did have more meetings with the [Secure Jobs Site] to know what's really happening...like right now I have no idea who's finishing, and if they are finishing, and if they got jobs or any of that sort of thing.*

-Training Instructor

Julie entered HomeBASE with a history of violent trauma. She was very nervous in public spaces, and, therefore, reluctant to enter training. Her Employment Specialist and the Training Instructor worked together to support her as she entered training, and she was able to complete the course successfully. At the end, her Training Instructor reported, “[She] wrote me a letter saying she actually felt safe coming in here...When she first came here, she asked for certain like things, ‘I don’t like my back towards anybody, do you mind if I sit with my back to the wall instead? Can you change my seat?’ So we actually cater their needs, to make them feel comfortable and at home.” Helping Julie to move forward in her life was gratifying for the instructor. And this attention to Julie’s specific needs helped Julie to excel in the course.



## Employer Partners

Employer partnerships have been an integral part of Secure Jobs' successes. Sites have partnered with a variety of employers, primarily in the service sectors. The largest group of employer partners is in the health care industry, including hospitals, nursing homes, and medical offices (see Figure 6). Retail trade business and hospitality industries make up another important category of employer partners. Many of these partners are from large chain stores, restaurants, and hotels. Other employer partners include professional services such as security and staffing agencies, and other services such as social service agencies, banks, and janitorial services (see Table 11 in [Appendix C](#) for employer partners by site).

**Figure 6: Employer Partner Industry Sectors**



It is especially important for sites to develop partnerships with employers that offer jobs in the fields in which Secure Jobs participants are trained. Otherwise, when these partnerships are lacking, participants finish training and struggle to take the next step into employment. In cases where strong partnerships are developed, participants can move seamlessly from training into employment.

## Internships

Four sites arranged for employer partners to provide internships to 44 Secure Jobs participants. This strategy was particularly useful for participants who had not worked for several years or who wanted to change career paths. Internships gave these participants a foot in the door and the opportunity to learn new skills; while for employers, internships were a low-risk way to try out a new employee. Internships were both paid and unpaid, though most were unpaid, and some internship graduates moved right into paid employment at the same firm. The Boston site, Jewish Vocational Services, accounted for the vast majority of internship placements (84%), with 34 participants in unpaid internships and 3 in paid internships.

## Participants' Assessment

Before Secure Jobs, those participants with little or no work experience struggled more than others to find job opportunities with an employer who was willing to accept an inexperienced employee. Secure Jobs helped these participants by connecting them with employer partners. Employer partners proved critical to participant success. These partners helped participants move quickly from job search or training into entry-level employment.

*My husband, he was trying to get into this security company since I've been with him, a couple years. And once he started working with [the Employment Specialist], he told [the Employment Specialist] that he wanted to get into that company [which was a Secure Jobs partner.] And [the Employment Specialist] got him in within three weeks of him working with [the Employment Specialist], and now he's working for that company.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

Participants struggled to make these connections with employers on their own in sites where employer partnerships in the field were not established.

*Like [Secure Jobs site] puts us in the [CNA training] class, but they don't have—they can't send us to [Employer Partner] and apply....They can't send us to—they tell us to go apply at [local hospital] or [local hospital] but it's up to us to get in.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## Employer Partners' Assessment

Employers that we spoke with responded positively to their relationship with the Secure Jobs sites.<sup>xiii</sup> They valued the regular connection with the Employment Specialists, who were able to work out any issues there may have been with the new employees. In addition, employers' regular check-ins with participants communicated the employers' commitment to the participants' success, both on and off the job. Establishing meaningful relationships with hired Secure Jobs participants has also been gratifying to employers and has aided in retention and participant success on the job.

*We've hired a few individuals that were still part of the [Secure Jobs] program, so they'll come and say "[Boss], are you going to come to my graduation?" [I respond,] "Of course! Are you going to give me an invitation? Of course I'll be there!" They're proud. And that's a lot of work. They've accomplished something really great.*

-Employer Partner

*I know that when I call [the Job Developer], if she's not right there picking the phone up, I'm going to get a call back. When I email her, I have to tell you, I almost get an instant email back. It'll be, "Okay, I'm in a meeting, but I'm getting back to you shortly" ...and I really value my relationship with the folks I've met through [the Secure Jobs site].*

-Employer Partner

<sup>xiii</sup> Due to difficulty reaching employers for interviews, the number of employer interviews is quite small.

## **Participant Outcomes One Year Into Secure Jobs**

Participants in the Secure Jobs pilot year weathered many transitions, including changes in their housing, job, and for some, career trajectories. In spite of these many challenges, most completed their training courses, applied for jobs, and thanks in some part to state intervention, remained stably housed.<sup>xiv</sup> Most remarkably, well over half have found new work.<sup>xv</sup> The following section details program outcomes on the 588 individuals on whom data were reported (this includes those who dropped out of Secure Jobs).

### **Employment Outcomes**

A year into Secure Jobs, many<sup>xvi</sup> Secure Jobs enrollees have found new employment, significantly more than the 29.1% that were working at HomeBASE entry. Data are reported here on the *first* job that participants received while in Secure Jobs. Since program entry, some participants have taken on second or even third jobs, some have left these first jobs and moved to better positions, and some have moved up within their workplace, in position or in wage. These transitions will not be reported here, but will be described in a subsequent report.

In their first jobs, employed participants made on average \$10.76 per hour (ranging from \$8.00 to \$18.90) (see Table 8 in [Appendix C](#) for regional average wages), and worked 32.7 hours per week (median 35 hours per week). A fifth of all working Secure Jobs families had access to sick leave and paid vacation in these first jobs. Health insurance access was provided to 21.9% of Secure Jobs workers, overall, and access to retirement benefits was lowest, at 7.1%. Paid sick leave and comprehensive health insurance are critical for these parents, many of whom are caring for young children on their own.

Secure Jobs participants also stayed in their first jobs for several months. About a quarter of working Secure Jobs family heads were employed for more than nine months, with another quarter having worked either six to nine months or three to six months at their first jobs (see Table 9 in [Appendix C](#) for job tenure by site).<sup>xvii</sup> Retention bonuses provided by each site at various 3-month intervals may have added to these employment tenures.

Participants' first jobs in Secure Jobs tended to be in service industries, similar to the industries in which they held jobs prior to program entry. Employer industry categories reflect the employer partner categories. About a third of those employed entered employment in the health care industry, in firms such as nursing homes, hospitals, nursing services, medical, and dental offices. Another third worked in retail and hospitality industries, including clothing, grocery and housewares stores, as well as restaurants, cafes, and hotels. Most of the rest are in professional services including security, employment, and personal assistance. Other employers in non-service industries include manufacturing, construction, and information technology. See Table 10 in [Appendix C](#) for a more detailed breakdown of new employment.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Due to poor data quality, it is impossible to report on housing outcomes post-HomeBASE. However, rough estimates show that very few participants have moved back to shelter.

<sup>xv</sup> The number of employed participants reported to IASP differs from the number reported to the Fireman Foundation, most likely due to sites under-reporting to IASP. See Table 5 in [Appendix C](#) for details on this disparity.

<sup>xvi</sup> This number represents the percentage of those *still enrolled* in Secure Jobs who have found new employment. Those who exited Secure Jobs prematurely are not included in this percentage.

<sup>xvii</sup> Job tenure is impacted by length of time in Secure Jobs: Those who entered the program later will have shorter tenure.

## Housing Status

A key goal of Secure Jobs was to help those with limited housing subsidies to maintain housing stability through steady employment. At the end of the pilot year, most participants remain housed. Data suggest that only a few returned to shelter and another handful moved out of state.

Housing supports via the HomeBASE program rolled out in August 2011. While eligible for one of two options, either short-term Rental Assistance for up to two years or a one-time Household Assistance payment of up to \$4,000, most HomeBASE participants enrolled in the rental assistance program. This was also true for Secure Jobs participants (see on page 14).

It is important to note that HomeBASE Rental Assistance was only offered until June 2012 and the bulk of Rental Assistance subsidies were distributed before December 2011. Secure Jobs, however, did not begin until the spring of 2013, when many families had already used 12 or more of their 24 months of Rental Assistance. Therefore, all Secure Jobs participants on Rental Assistance—more than three quarters of all Secure Jobs participants—faced the end of their housing support during the Secure Jobs pilot year.

The first Secure Jobs participants to reach the end of their Rental Assistance faced this deadline on July 31, 2013. In early August 2013, DHCD made an additional form of support available to those who had engaged fully in Secure Jobs and were making progress toward employment. These families had the option to transition to HomeBASE Household Assistance, in which they would receive an additional \$4,000 (to be disbursed in whatever way was most useful) as well as continued HomeBASE Stabilization Services.<sup>xviii</sup>

This stop-gap measure was extremely helpful to many families, as it allowed them either to stay in their apartments for one more year with some subsidy or to pay moving costs to move to a less expensive apartment. Half of all Secure Jobs participants moved from Rental to Household Assistance since the beginning of the Fall of 2013. Another 16 (18%) returned to shelter. The rest either doubled up with family or friends, transitioned to paying full rent themselves, or received another subsidy

*It was really hard for me to have started a new job and [then to] have to move into my new apartment. That was really hard. My boss did not even want to give me one day off to pack up my house. I packed up my house, a two-bedroom apartment, by myself in a week...so I'm trying to clean the house, move into a new one and work a new job. I was really, really stressed.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*That's my problem. Mine [HomeBASE] ends at the end of April, and so I'm kind of pushed to find something, because the place where I'm living, I can't afford it. My husband and I wouldn't be able to afford it at all...But it's like, I don't have any time for saving money, and I don't have time to go to school...I said "listen, if this doesn't work, I'll go to Dunkin' Donuts [to work]."*

-Secure Jobs Participant

<sup>xviii</sup> The only two requirements for accessing HB Household Assistance at the end of Rental Assistance were that the family 1) have a household income below 50% AMI and 2) be in good standing with the HomeBASE program (defined as not terminated or in the process of being terminated).

such as the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) or Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Exit data are provided by DHCD, and data quality is insufficient to present details on these housing outcomes.

Facing the end of their short-term rental vouchers created an incentive for some families to seek out the services offered by Secure Jobs. However, the intersection of the ending of HomeBASE and the timing of Secure Jobs also created logistical and emotional challenges that impacted Secure Jobs participants' ability to engage fully in the program. Coming up against a deadline when their housing subsidy would end, some participants felt the pressure to find work quickly, even at the expense of missing a training program opportunity.

Even participants who were able to transition into a stable housing situation after timing off of HomeBASE faced the time-consuming task of finding affordable housing and then moving, often within a very short time-period, and with limited transportation.

Other Secure Jobs participants were not as fortunate. In particular, some participants who re-entered shelter after timing-off of HomeBASE found their lives transferred to an entirely new city away from social support, the Secure Jobs site, skills training, and/or their employment. A few participants were able to secure permanent housing vouchers.

Taylor, a single mom supporting her four children came to Secure Jobs with very little work experience. Having not worked in 10 years, her only experience was one summer job during high school. In addition, she struggles with a learning disability and has less than a high school education. Through Secure Jobs, she was able to start work at a nearby restaurant chain where she could volunteer and gain work experience. In fact, after a couple of months volunteering, Taylor's manager offered her a full-time, paid position at another restaurant location. However, just a few short months into work, Taylor timed off of her HomeBASE assistance and was unable to afford to pay her rent and the expenses of her four children. As a result, Taylor was forced to re-enter shelter with her family. Unfortunately, the shelter was too far away for her to commute to work. In addition, she had to find new schools and daycare providers for her children. After such great success in Secure Jobs, the loss of stable housing and the disruption of returning to shelter left Taylor unemployed again.

## **Participants' Assessment of Secure Jobs**

Overall, Secure Jobs participants valued Secure Jobs highly, citing program staff's consistent attention and support, their comprehensive help with all barriers (especially childcare and transportation), their ability to connect participants to employers, and they help in navigating state bureaucracies for benefits as the most helpful program elements. IASP conducted focus groups with participants at all five sites to determine their opinions of the program. Program staff were not present during these focus groups. The sections below detail participants' impression of program specifics.

### **Staff Support: Consistent and Holistic**

Participants consistently reported the exceptional involvement of Secure Jobs staff that went "above-and-beyond" to help them. The staff's clear commitment helped build trusting staff-client relationships. Not only has a strong staff-participant relationship helped effectively address ongoing barriers to successful program participation, but it also modeled the motivation and determination that Secure Jobs staff expected participants to provide in return.

In the face of multiple barriers, the ending of HomeBASE, and a slow-growing job market, Secure Jobs participants were sometimes discouraged. When feeling overwhelmed, some participants would stop attending the Secure Jobs program without letting staff know. When this happened, the response of Secure Jobs staff played a critical role in re-engaging the participant. Reaching out and calling the participant or expressing genuine interest in the participants' well-being during these situations helped participants to feel more open to returning and helped establish a strong staff-participant bond. This finding demonstrates the high level of staff involvement needed at times to support participants' continued involvement with Secure Jobs.

*Every day when you call them [Secure Jobs staff] and you're down and out, all you can hear yourself say is 'I can't. I can't. I can't find a babysitter. I can't get a car. I can't get to a computer.' They said 'Yes, you can do this' and 'Yes, you can do that.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*I had given up. I was like 'I'm not going back over there.' And [the Secure Jobs coordinator] called me and left a message on my phone. And I'm just like 'Wow.' So I called her back. And I'm sitting there listening to her and she's like, 'Let's forget about the job search. Let's forget about all of that. What's going on with [you]?' And I'm like, 'Wow, she cares.' And she was just listening. It wasn't anything about work, it wasn't about [Secure Jobs], it was about me. And it made me comfortable and made me want to come back.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*And [you] see how much [the Employment Specialist] cares. A few times I've gone to the DMV and they tried to give me a hard time about getting my license. She [the Employment Specialist] goes... 'I will drive you, I will go by myself, I'll go with you, they have to give it to you.' And I'm not shy, but she goes 'I'll go with you, we're getting it today.*

-Secure Jobs Participant



### Tackling Barriers

Staff helped participants overcome barriers which arose in every part of their lives that impeded their ability to work. From setting up hair styling services to picking up kids from school in an emergency, staff stepped in wherever they could to keep participants on the path to employment. One particularly stubborn barrier is the Criminal Offender Record (CORI). Employers can run CORI checks and if they find that an applicant has a record, they often choose to reject the applicant before giving the applicant an interview. About 13.5% of Secure Jobs participants have outstanding CORIs.<sup>xix</sup> Staff helped them to identify occupations that would not hold this against them, and to work on sealing the records so that future employers would not see them.

Rhonda is in her twenties and a mother of a pre-school aged child. She was referred to Secure Jobs by her stabilization worker when the program began. With the help of the Secure Jobs Employment Specialist, Rhonda polished her resume and started to apply to a number of jobs. She has a long work history as a CNA but was unable to secure a job on her own because of a 7 year-old CORI Record. The Secure Jobs employment specialist helped Rhonda obtain a copy of her CORI so Rhonda would be informed about what employers could see on her record. Then she coached Rhonda about how to approach the subject of the CORI record during employer interviews. As a result, when Rhonda interviewed for a CNA position at a local hospital she was offered the job right away. However, after the employer officially ran the CORI, the offer for employment was withdrawn. Rhonda was told that there were no longer any open positions, despite there being multiple open CNA job positions posted online. Overwhelmed by the situation, Rhonda recalls, *“the Employment Specialist advocated for me, and she called [the interviewer] and...she was really upset, like I was. I cried.”* Rhonda kept working hard with the Employment Specialist and soon landed a higher-paying position at another medical facility.

### The Secure Jobs Edge

These instances where staff have gone the extra mile to engage and support participants set Secure Jobs apart from many other traditional employment programs. A number of Secure Jobs participants had been in other employment programs prior to joining Secure Jobs but still were not able to find and retain employment successfully. As with Secure Jobs, some participants disengaged from previous programs partway through but did not have concerned staff reach out to them. Therefore, unlike with Secure Jobs, they did not go back to these programs.

Once this relationship with staff has been established, it is important to maintain it. High staff turnover rates have decreased the ability for strong staff-participant relationships to be formed and required the participant to then begin the trust-building process over when a new staff member took over the position.

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<sup>xix</sup> Data are only reported from four sites. Among those four sites, between 7.4% and 15.5% report having CORIs, for a total of 59 participants with CORIs in those four sites.



In addition to the centrality of the staff-participant bond, Secure Jobs' comprehensive approach to employment also stood out in comparison to other programs. In particular, unrestricted funds were available to address the cost of removing barriers in each participant's unique situation, as well as pay for skills training.

*I went missing for about a month or so...I was dealing with my own personal problems. So I didn't call. I felt like they [Secure Jobs staff] were probably going to go ahead and drop me out of the program, because they didn't hear from me...Like usually, I've been in programs where when I disappeared they just thought I didn't want to do the program anymore...I've been in programs where I went missing and...they wouldn't even call to find out. But she [the Secure Jobs Coordinator] called me to see what was going on and that made me instill more trust in her.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*I think they help you more realistically than those [other employment] programs do. Whereas, as far as like, a lot of programs will just help you build up your resume and give you interview skills, they [Secure Jobs] will actually fund towards something that you want to do. Like they funded my [certification] test, they funded your test. They'll actually fund those things. And they'll help you with transportation, like giving you bus passes and stuff like that. I feel like it's a more realistic approach.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## Child Care

The time it takes to address and remove barriers for participants can also slow down the employment process. Before a participant can commit fully to job readiness training, jobs skills training, or work, childcare and transportation barriers, at the least, must be addressed. Obtaining a childcare voucher and finding an accessible and safe childcare facility takes time.

*They try to secure where your kids are first [i.e. childcare]. And that took forever because you know we have to wait on those [childcare] vouchers. And then [afterwards] that's when you get to come in and really sit in the program and job search, computer search, do your resumes and stuff like that.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

For those who entered Secure Jobs without a child care subsidy, securing a voucher was the first priority. Through partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) regional offices, local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies, and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), 85 participants were able to secure new child care subsidies quickly.<sup>xx</sup>

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<sup>xx</sup> Data on childcare vouchers were only reported from four sites. The percentage of participants who received childcare vouchers varied widely between these four sites, from 2.5% at one site to 40.7% at another.

While the state's involvement was enormously helpful to participants needing a child care voucher, many participants still relied on family and friends to help, either by watching the children or by helping to pay for daycare. This was largely due to the limited number of approved childcare slots, and the lack of public benefit support for after-hours childcare.

*I don't have a voucher. Preschool is like \$800 a month... Three people help me pay for my daughter's preschool. Me, her father and his parents. If one of us were to try to pay it, it would be impossible.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## Transportation

Adequate and reliable transportation is another requirement for HomeBASE to be able to get to and from work and take their children to and from childcare. For participants in more urban areas, Secure Jobs sites were able to provide MBTA bus passes as a quick, though temporary, solution to this challenge. In contrast, limited bus route and hours in Western Massachusetts and the South Coastal region meant that some participants needed access to a car in order for this to be possible. Some participants were able to reinstate their license, many by paying off overdue fines with help of the Fireman Foundation unrestricted funds. In other cases, participants didn't know how to drive and had to learn.

David, a young father of two sons, joined Secure Jobs at the beginning of the program. When he first got his job, David had to walk 3 ½ miles each way to get to work, because there was not transportation from the city where he was living to his new work location, and he didn't have a driver's license. David explained, "*So I used to get up at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning [and] get to work by 8 o'clock. From 8 to 5 I'm at work. I'd get out at 5 o'clock. Mind you, I'm on my feet all day. 8 to 5 [at work], [then] I get out at 5 and walk all the way home...but like I said, when you've got family and stuff to do—I'm not like some guys out there. I got to do what I got to do for my family.*" Once he was settled into his new job, his Employment Specialist helped him enroll in driving lessons. Now, not only does he have his driver's license, but he works 40-50 hours a week and receives full benefits for himself and his family.

The high cost of purchasing a car, combined with insurance and gas, has made independent transportation difficult to afford and maintain. As a result, participants had to rely on their social network of friends, family, and neighbors to help provide transportation. Others reported driving to their job interviews in an uninsured car because they were unable to afford insurance.

## **Challenges that Persist**

Secure Jobs participants at all five sites worked hard and made great strides toward housing and employment stability. At the end of the first year, many had regular work schedules, childcare routines in place, and even plans to further their education. However, most were far from secure at this point. Many challenges remained that have made their success vulnerable. Going forward, it is critical to protect their progress and institute plans to ensure continued success.

## **Working Non-Traditional Hours**

Even when participants have found employment and secured a childcare subsidy, childcare has continued to pose a challenge. Many jobs require participants to be at work before school starts, in the evening, and on weekends. And during the summer months, school-age children need alternate care.<sup>xxi</sup>

*[Childcare has] always has been an issue. Childcare is the first thing you get stuck, for a job...Especially when you and somebody are in competition, you go to a job, and you can work from 8 to 4, that's the hours you can work, but another person can come, and can do flexible hours for that job...Because they don't have kids. They're [i.e. the employers] going to go for them right off the bat.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

Furthermore, participants reported that employers prefer workers who are flexible in their schedule and can work nontraditional hours. This expectation of 24-hour availability means participants often required childcare during off hours, including before school, afterschool, and/or summer vacation childcare options.

## **Cliff Effects**

Participants relied on a number of public benefits programs in addition to their HomeBASE rental subsidies in order to make ends meet. These programs, including Temporary Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps) all have income-eligibility requirements. Therefore, as participants' income from their new jobs increases in the coming years, these benefits will drop off. This phenomenon, known as the Cliff Effect,<sup>[2]</sup> is a well-documented challenge for low-income families. Policy solutions that ease this transition off of benefits programs can buffer families as they attempt to increase their incomes to work toward self-sufficiency.

Rhonda's hard work paid off and she was hired fulltime as a CNA. However, now that she earns higher wages as a fulltime CNA, Rhonda no longer receives her cash benefits or food stamps. As a result, she still relies on the donations from a local food pantry to make ends meet. With this in mind, Rhonda plans to complete her prerequisites for a nursing program in the coming months and has already applied to a nursing school, with the employment specialist's help.

<sup>xxi</sup> Regional partnerships have helped with some of these challenges. For more on this, see the first report in this series, *Secure Jobs, Secure Homes, Secure Families: Process Evaluation of the Massachusetts Secure Jobs Pilot* at <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2013/Fireman.pdf>

## Ongoing Vulnerability

At the end of the first phase, Secure Jobs participants who were employed continued to live vulnerable lives, having to work very hard to make their bills, get to work on time, and make sure their kids get to daycare. While many had increased their incomes, they were still living on tight budgets and were unable to save for an emergency. As they enter the second year of Secure Jobs, it is important to document their ability to continue to build on the progress they have made and to weather additional challenges as they come up.

*One of our participants has been forced to leave her 3-year-old child with a neighbor that she barely knows when her child's daycare cancels transportation at 6 am. His daycare is in another town, (the only one with an opening that offered transportation) and the round trip would take over 3 hours via bus. Unfortunately she is at the mercy of the bus driver, who frequently calls out sick. She cannot miss any more work so she has to pay a virtual stranger to babysit. This same mother walked one mile home with her 7-year-old daughter every night, all winter; when it was dark, cold, snowing, raining, or icy. They were forced to walk in the street many times because the sidewalk was not cleared. We are trying to help this participant purchase a used car, but even though she is working 35 hours per week, she has a very tight budget. Compounding the problem is that the average car insurance policy in this area is between \$1,500 to \$2,500, and up. As a result, even those that may be able to afford a car payment cannot afford insurance*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

In addition, participants have had to work hard to make sure that they would continue to receive the supports they were relying on, were compliant with the program, and were up to date on program rules that could change often. This administrative work could take a lot of time from a parent who was already stretched thin between adjusting to a new job and caring for her family.

*This whole thing is a lot of work. Everything, it is, it's a lot of work. If you do everything you're supposed to, it's a lot of work. Like, even to—I don't know where everyone is on their HomeBASE or anything, but after it ends, then you apply for this and apply for that. To apply for that other stuff, after the HomeBASE ends, you have to get all those housing papers, send it in to subsidized housing and stuff, you have to stay on top of all that stuff, and you have to keep writing them and updating everything. And you have to have a job search log that is constantly filled out. Just for housing. And then looking for a job. And then going to school. This is a big process, all of it. But it's to better your life, so it's all worth it.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

## **Premature Program Exit**

Overall, retention in Secure Jobs was quite high. Participant data reveal that less than 13% of participants dropped out of the program prematurely.<sup>xxii</sup> Of these, less than a third were terminated for non-compliance and just over a third left voluntarily (some to move to another state). The rest left for various reasons including disability and return to shelter. Staff report that non-compliance was primarily defined as participants consistently failing to attend Job Readiness Training or to keep appointments with their case managers.

Even for those who were actively engaged in the program, some experienced an unexpected health crisis or family emergency that inhibited their ability to maintain consistent attendance. Some had surgery, or had family members or children fall ill, or left the program to address intensive mental health issues. While many of these situations made it impossible for a participant to continue in the program or find work, others were still able to utilize some of the connections they made through Secure Jobs once the crisis passed.

*You can sit down with a person, see potential in that person, develop the best possible plan. But getting them to buy in is what's really key. In any work, in order to be successful, you have to first establish a really great relationship...they'll come in and hear their HomeBASE is ending, they know they need to do something quick, so they'll "yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," knowing that it isn't really something that they can do...We're willing to work with a participant as much as we can. Even if they no-call, no-show three times, the message is communicated to the HomeBASE Stabilization Worker that this is where we are, that gives the Stabilization Worker the opportunity to try to re-engage that person, and if they're willing to come back, we're willing to take them back. There have been instances where people have no-call no-showed not only with us but with training providers, employers. When it gets to that point is where our limit is.*

-Secure Jobs Site Coordinator

Finally, when HomeBASE ended, a small number left the state to find more stable housing elsewhere, in some cases to live with family or other places where they had stronger social support and could find cheaper housing options. And a small number returned to shelter and were unable to continue the program in shelter because the distance from the shelter was too far to travel (some were placed in shelters in a different county from the city where they were receiving HomeBASE) or because the shelter requirements made program attendance impossible.

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<sup>xxii</sup> Data on drop-outs were only provided from three sites. Of these, one site had over half the drop-outs and another had only a handful.

## Participants' Plans for the Future

When asked about the future, Secure Jobs participants dreamed of housing stability, gainful employment and ultimately, wanting to improve their economic situation for their children. Fixing their credit and continuing to work were identified as key steps towards achieving housing stability and greater self-sufficiency.

Some participants also saw their success in Secure Jobs as a first step, or a foot-in-the-door, to the career path they were dreaming of. For example, a participant completed CNA training through Secure Jobs then planned on continuing her career by returning to school for her nursing degree.

Despite the day-to-day difficulty and the long-term nature of many of their dreams, participants were motivated by their wish to provide a “better life” for their children—one characterized by housing stability and improved economic self-sufficiency—so that their children would not have to continue to bear the burden of the economic hardships of homelessness.

*I want to get my own house. I want to get over my fear of driving. So my main goal is to buy my family a house, a nice house...in a good area. I don't want to leave [this city], but I want to travel more. If I get another job then I can save and take a weekend trip, because that's all I dream about.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*I just need to finish school. I just need to buckle down, bust it out, so that I'm not, you know, stuck in this god-awful minimum wage hell anymore.*

-Secure Jobs Participant

*For my future I just want to see my kids have it a little more easy than I had to do. The shelter was so stressful. I was in [one town] and one of my kids was in [another town] and the other in [a third town]. I want to make life not complicated, because you know we do have a habit of making things complicated. Not that we want to, but because we want everything to be right. And things aren't always going to be right. So I want them [my kids] to know: work now, save your money, and be independent.*

-Secure Jobs Participant



## **Conclusions and Next Steps**

After only one year of program implementation, Secure Jobs can look back on many lessons learned from this new model, and look forward to expanding its reach. With strong leadership by the Fireman Foundation, bringing together public and private partners and resources, this initiative underscores the importance of integrating employment supports with housing supports for homeless families, to set them on a path to self-sufficiency.

Successes of Secure Jobs sites during the pilot year were widely covered by the media (see Table 12 in Appendix D). Secure Jobs was featured on local news programs and in newspapers including The Boston Globe and the Channel 5 News. Staff, participants, and Fireman Foundation officers were all interviewed for these stories.

Media sources drew attention primarily to the opportunities offered through Secure Jobs for homeless parents in the HomeBASE program to access education, job skills training, and job readiness training, including help with interview skills and resume building.

*The program provides access to career exploration, education, skills and job readiness training, job placement and support to overcome the challenges homeless people face to achieving self-sufficiency*  
-Daily Hampshire Gazette

*The organization identifies the obstacles standing between a person and employment, whether it's daycare or job certification, then collaborates with other local agencies to address those issues and get participants ready for their interview.*  
-WGGB Channel 40

*Homeless folks do get a rap that they're not willing. They are willing. They just need direction.*  
-Participant quoted on Channel 5 News

As stakeholders plan for a second year of Secure Jobs, it is important to use lessons learned in the one-year pilot to improve the model and its delivery, generating more positive outcomes for participants.

### **Programmatic**

Secure Jobs is entering its second year with another site added and new participants being referred from shelters and motels. The state has endorsed the model and is eager to expand it, infusing \$1 million for the second year of Secure Jobs, matched by the Fireman Foundation by another \$1 million. These funds provide the resources to expand the model, including enrolling more participants, and to test new programmatic approaches. Furthermore, a line item has been proposed in the budget to fund one site's continuation of the model.

### **Evaluation**

As Secure Jobs continues and changes, it is critical that implementation and outcomes are documented carefully, so that the state can continue to learn from this pilot. The following plans are in place to evaluate the second year:

- Document programmatic changes in year 2 of Secure Jobs
- Track employment and housing outcomes of the first cohort of participants one year post-employment placement
- Describe and track new Secure Jobs participants



## Recommendations

Based on the data analyzed here, the following programmatic and policy recommendations are made:

- **Institute coordination of employment and housing services** as the best practice for families experiencing homelessness, *beginning at the front door*. The second year of Secure Jobs will allow for testing the feasibility of enrolling in Secure Jobs at Emergency Assistance (EA) entry, to integrate services from the front door.
- **Make use of local One-Stop Career Center resources**, building and expanding partnerships created in the first year of Secure Jobs. Career Centers have both resources to assist people in job search and job readiness and well-developed connections with local employers. However, they may not have the personnel to provide one-on-one support in navigating these resources. Secure Jobs staff can work with participants to make use of the Career Centers' wealth of resources.
- **Standardize the Job Readiness Training curriculum**. Currently, the content of Job Readiness courses varies widely and is largely determined by the trainer's discretion. Research can inform best practices for Job Readiness training, making the course more efficient and effective (the state's adoption of ACT's WorkReady computer-based job readiness training may assist in this process, though standardizing the method of delivering the course is critical.)
- **Assist skills training and employment programs in developing a variety of employer partnerships** and using these partners to inform development of a roster of courses and programs that are directly linked with job opportunities in the region (e.g., FBMS' Medical Administration course and JVS' partnership with CVS) and that will lead to higher paying jobs. Employer partners are critical to help applicants stand out from the crowd; Employment Specialists' contact with employers can help applicants get past issues such as CORIs and language barriers.

*I just encourage other organizations [i.e. employers] to really get involved. I think they would find that they'd be really happy, really happy with the level of applicant that they receive. [Secure Jobs applicants] do come very well prepared. They have a story to tell, they have set goals...and they want to achieve certain goals. I would encourage other [employers] to get involved. I think the hesitation, and this is my opinion, why people tend to hesitate, is they just, they get overwhelmed because they assume, "I'm going to have to do more work [if I choose to work with homeless people] ...and it's going to be a headache for me." It's not any of that. It truly isn't.*

-Employer Partner

- **Facilitate regular communication between Secure Jobs staff and program partners** about participants' progress, to help Secure Jobs clients to move through training programs, housing and employment transitions, and to work together with participants to address any crises that Secure Jobs families may face.
- **Ease access to quality and affordable childcare**, in particular for families not receiving TAFDC. As with any parent of young children, homeless parents can only go to work once they have secured affordable child care for their children. Access to vouchers has enabled many Secure Jobs families to place their children in quality care during the hours they work but even with a voucher in hand, some parents were not able to find approved child care facilities to use them. In addition, childcare that conforms to non-traditional working hours is necessary for some of the parents to continue their employment. Existing models of such care are rare and need to be expanded.
- **Improve transportation options.** Many of the Secure Jobs parents' training and employment choices are limited due to lack of transportation to and from training programs and workplaces. Increasing public transportation is critical and, in rural areas where public transportation is scarce and distances are long, auto loan programs that fund less expensive cars with more generous terms can open up opportunities to which families previously had no access. In addition, small grants that can help pay RMV registration fees and pay off fines can help families to increase their mobility.
- **Reward program participation and work with housing.** The high rents in Massachusetts make it impossible for those in entry-level work to pay market rent. Extending housing subsidies and continuing employment support for those who have participated in Secure Jobs to gain new employment will contribute to family stability and encourage participants to keep working toward self-sufficiency.
- **Integrate financial education into employment programs**, especially focusing on anticipating cliff effects when incomes increase (currently, only one Secure Jobs site has a curriculum addressing the financial literacy needs of Secure Jobs parents.)
- **Build on data collection practices.** Improve data quality by integrating data collection into instructional practices and begin using collected data to improve quality (for example, use of data to inform staff and stakeholders about participants' progress, as is done at advisory meetings in Western Massachusetts).

## Appendix A: Enrollment and Participant Demographics by Site

Figure 7: JVS Cumulative Enrollment, First 12 Month

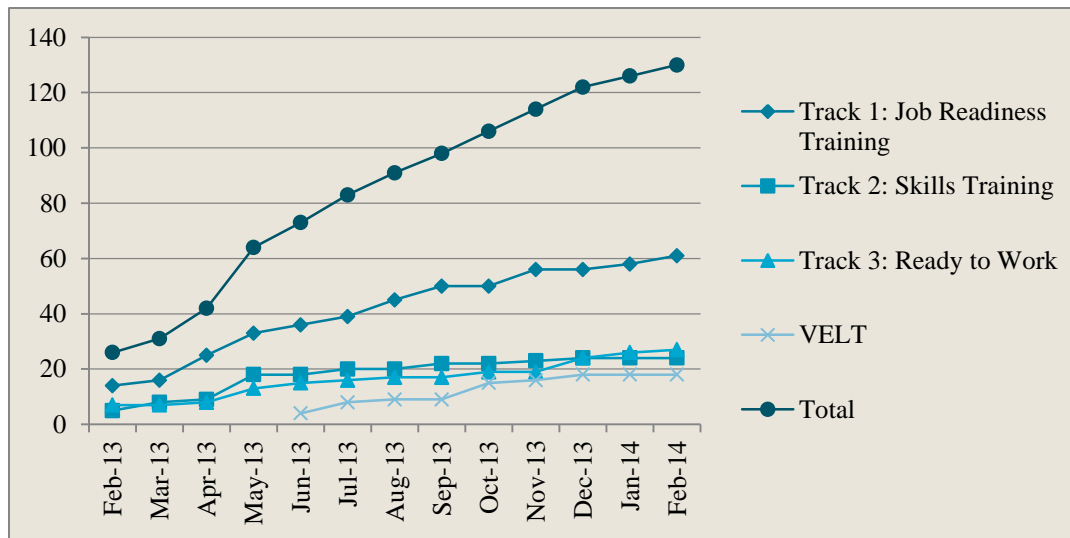


Table 3: Demographic Characteristics by Site and Total

Characteristic	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>N</i>	95	118	129	117	129	579
<i>Median Age (Years)</i>	29	29	29	31	29	29
<i>Race</i>						
White	74.7%	74.5%	29.9%	10.4%	66.1%	49.4%
Black	17.9%	14.3%	57.5%	63.5%	29.8%	38.3%
Other	7.4%	11.2%	12.6%	26.1%	4.0%	12.3%
<i>Ethnicity</i>						
Hispanic	47.4%	12.7%	10.2%	30.2%	24.8%	23.9%
<i>Gender</i>						
Female	88.4%	83.1%	84.5%	87.2%	87.6%	86.1%
<i>Marital Status</i>						
Single, never married	64.2%	76.9%	84.6%	82.5%	84.6%	79.1%
Married/Domestic Partnership	29.5%	21.4%	10.6%	10.5%	13.6%	16.6%
Divorced/Separated	6.3%	1.7%	4.9%	7.0%	1.8%	4.3%
<i>Education</i>						
< High School	16.8%	2.6%	16.8%	24.1%	25.0%	17.1%
High School/GED	45.3%	82.6%	58.4%	46.6%	53.5%	57.7%
Some College	24.2%	13.0%	16.8%	24.1%	19.0%	19.2%
College Degree	13.7%	1.7%	8.0%	5.2%	2.6%	6.0%
<i>Number of Children</i>						
1 child	40.0%	45.0%	42.2%	39.7%	38.1%	40.9%
2 children	28.4%	35.0%	30.5%	31.9%	31.0%	31.3%

## Appendix B: Participants' Income and Employment before Secure Jobs

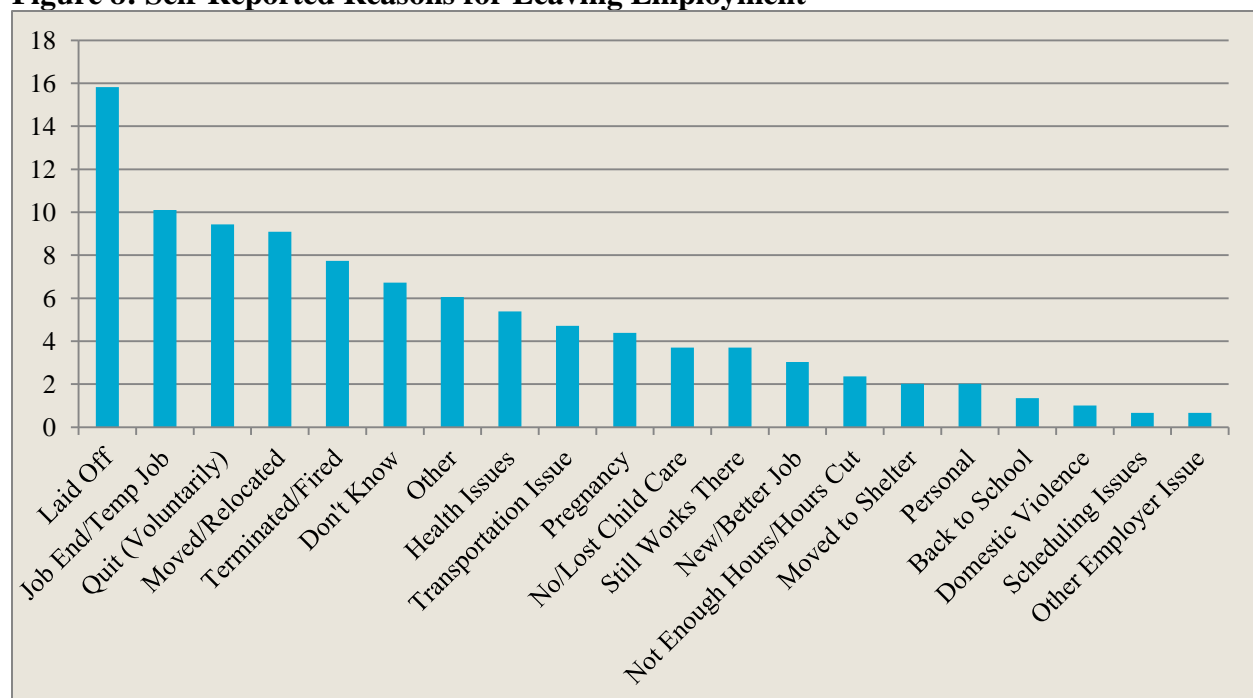
**Table 4: Participants' Receipt of Benefits by Site and Total**

Income Source	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>TAFDC</i>	51.6%	36.0%	38.7%	60.7%	80.2%	52.4%
<i>SNAP</i>	82.1%	69.8%	68.0%	no data	87.2%	75.8%
<i>SSI/SSDI</i>	12.6%	13.8%	0.8%	9.4%	25.0%	11.0%
<i>Unemployment Insurance</i>	2.1%	6.1%	0.8%	1.7%	11.7%	3.7%
<i>Child Support</i>	17.9%	9.4%	7.1%	6.0%	28.2%	12.2%

**Table 5: Participants' Prior Work Experience by Site and Total**

Characteristic	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>Working at Program Entry</i>	11.6%	37.0%	55.7%	21.4%	21.7%	30.1%
<i>Has Prvs Work Hist (30+ days)</i>	92.6%	42.4%	40.3%	73.5%	81.0%	64.5%
<i>Previous Job Wage (Mean)</i>	\$9.66	\$10.57	\$9.23	\$10.08	\$10.48	\$10.03
<i>Previous Job Hours/Week</i>	30.1	31.0	23.7	29.2	28.0	28.6
<i>Median Job Tenure (Months)</i>	~21	~18	~17	~19	~26	~21
<i>Reason for Leaving</i>						
Laid Off or Job Ended	27.0%	54.3%	9.1%	22.1%	25.3%	26.0%
Term/Quit/Issue w/Employer	39.2%	5.7%	9.1%	22.1%	24.0%	10.0%
Barrier to Employment	24.3%	22.9%	20.5%	8.8%	21.3%	19.3%
Moved (incl back to shelter)	8.1%	5.7%	4.6%	21.3%	10.3%	11.2%

**Figure 8: Self-Reported Reasons for Leaving Employment**



## Appendix C: Participant Employment Outcomes

**Table 6: Participants in Training by Site and Total**

Site	Entered Training	Dropped Out of Training
CPM	10.5%	no data
CTI	54.2%	25.0%
FBMS	30.9%	3.9%
SER	15.5%	no data
JVS	23.5%	no data
<b>TOTAL</b>	27.3%	18.9%

**Table 7: Number of Participants Employed by Site and Total**

Data Source	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>Reported to IASP</i>	55	63	68	66	59	311
<i>Reported to Fireman</i>	60	61	81	88	47	338
<i>Difference</i>	5	-2	13	22	-12	27

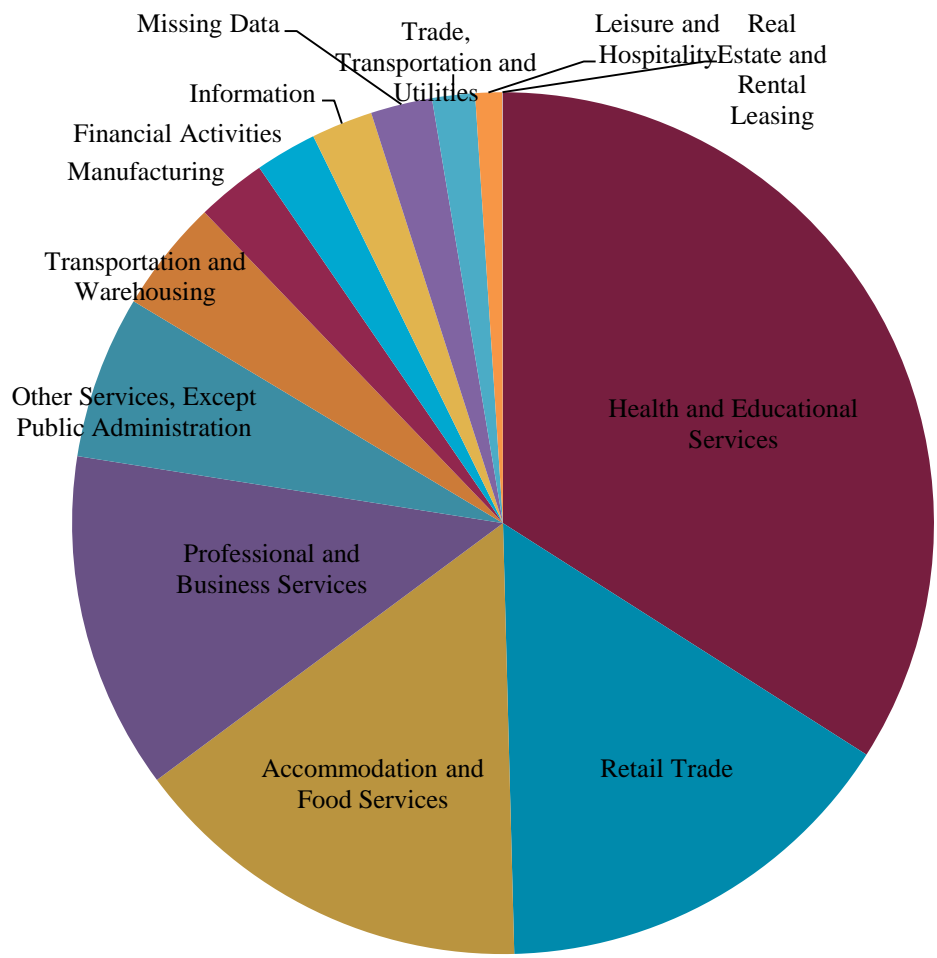
**Table 8: New Employment Characteristics by Site and Total**

New Employment Characteristics	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>Hourly wage (mean)</i>	\$9.88	\$11.34	\$10.90	\$11.17	\$10.19	\$10.76
<i>Hourly wage (median)</i>	\$10	\$11	\$11	\$10.75	\$10.13	\$11.00
<i>Weekly hours (mean)</i>	31.5	35.3	34.2	30.4	31.3	32.7
<i>Weekly hours (median)</i>	38	40	40	30	32	35
<i>Employment Benefits</i>						
Sick Leave Benefits	23.6%	46.0%	19.1%	6.1%	15.3%	21.9%
Vacation Benefit	25.5%	44.4%	19.1%	4.6%	15.3%	21.5%
Health Benefit	20.0%	12.7%	16.2%	10.6%	15.3%	14.8%
Retirement	16.4%	6.4%	2.9%	3.0%	8.5%	7.1%

**Table 9: Job Tenure by Site and Total**

Job Tenure	CPM	CTI	FBMS	JVS	SER	Total
<i>&lt;3 months</i>	37.0%	18.3%	11.1%	20.0%	52.4%	23.6%
<i>3-6 months</i>	11.1%	30.0%	27.0%	36.9%	19.1%	26.2%
<i>6-9 months</i>	20.4%	26.7%	30.2%	32.3%	14.3%	26.6%
<i>&gt;9 months</i>	31.5%	25.0%	31.7%	10.8%	14.3%	23.6%

**Table 10: Secure Jobs Participants’ New Employers**



**Table 11: Employer Partners by Site**

	Health Care and Educational Services	Retail Trade	Accommodation & Food Services	Professional & Business Services	Other Services, Except Public Administration
<b>CPM</b>	Highland Valley Elder Care The Arbors Advanced Home Care Services Square One Caregiver Homes	Dollar Tree Home Depot Savers Yankee Candle	Dennys Wingate D'Angelo's Clarion Hotel	Arrow Security Balance Staffing Monroe Staffing Premier Staffing	The Maids
<b>CTI</b>	Lowell General Hospital Commonwealth Nursing Windsor Place Blair House Acre Family Childcare Aspen Dental	Target Puma		Aramark	Lowell Career Center
<b>FBMS</b>	Signature Healthcare High Point Treatment Center Brockton Neighborhood Health Center Linden Ponds	Home Depot Lowes BJ's Wholesale Club TJX Companies	Stop & Shop Dunkin Donuts Walmart	Allied/Barton Security	USPS Verc Car Rental
<b>SER</b>	Southcoast Health Brandon Woods Nursing Home Northeast Hospital Old Colony Rest Home Kindred Health Care	Sam's Club Walmart TJ Maxx Michael's	Blount Seafood Dunkin Donuts Dollar Tree McDonald's PeaPod Starwood Hotel KFC	Crossmark, Inc	South Shore Housing United Way Justice Resource Institute Citizens for Citizens Steppingstone, Inc
<b>JVS</b>	Faxon Woods Neville Care Centers Beth Israel Deaconness Hospital Suburban Home Health Care	Clarks Shoes	Wholefoods Dancing Deer Bakery Omni Parker House	Northeast Security Chartwells Delaware North	State Street Bank Allen Daniel Associates



## Appendix D: Media Coverage of Secure Jobs

**Table 12: Secure Jobs Media Coverage by Site**

Site	Media Type	Media Source	Title
<b>CPM</b>	Television	WGGB Channel 40	Job program employs 156 parents
	Newspaper	The Springfield Republican	New program to combat homelessness – Secure Jobs Connect lauded by private and public sector
	Newspaper	Daily Hampshire Gazette	With jobs program homeless families find stability
	Television	CBS 3- Channel 3 Springfield	Program offers hope through education and work
	Television	Channel 22	Jobs for homeless families
<b>FBMS</b>	Newspaper	The Boston Globe	Job search help enables homeless to get back on feet
	Newspaper	Enterprise News	Brockton community college offers training for homeless people
<b>JVS</b>	Newspaper	The Boston Globe	Taking a new approach to end homelessness
<b>SER</b>	Newspaper	The Herald News	Homeless program celebrates six months of progress, success
<b>Fireman Foundation</b>	Television	Channel 5 News	Former Reebok chairman dedicated to giving homeless tools for success

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