

# **A CLOSE LOOK AT WELFARE TO WORK**

**A NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF  
SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT'S TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE POPULATION**

**PREPARED FOR  
THE WORKPLACE, INC.  
SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

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## ***I. Background on Assistance Programs and Needs Assessment***

### **A. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) on a Federal Level**

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program was initiated in August 1996 with the enactment of The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). TANF ended federal entitlement to assistance by replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC). This policy transition is commonly referred to as “Welfare Reform.”

TANF’s goal is to move clients off welfare and into the workforce, ensuring that welfare serves as a safety net and not as a way of life. The welfare reform bill focuses on 1) helping welfare clients able to work to secure jobs and 2) encouraging states to enable these families through creative programs.

**Securing Employment.** The program centers on the following regulations for families:

- **Five-Year Limit:** Families may receive cash assistance for up to five cumulative years.
- **Required Participation in Programs:** Clients are required to participate in unsubsidized or subsidized employment, on-the-job training, work experience, community service, vocational training, or provision of childcare services to those participating in community service.
- **Employment Requirements:** Clients must work after two years on assistance. Exemptions can be made for parents with children under age one.

**Creative Programs.** States have the opportunity to design and operate their own TANF programs (including the opportunity to determine eligibility, benefit levels and services for needy families), as long as the programs strengthen families and promote work, responsibility and self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

In designing and operating their programs, states must:

- Demonstrate 80% expenditure of non-federal funds from FY1994 on TANF and related activities.
- Develop personal employability plans to assess individuals and identify education, training and job placement service needs.
- Establish fair and equitable objectives.
- Provide waiver options to operate state cash assistance programs.

### **B. Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) in Connecticut**

In 1996, Connecticut submitted its statewide definition of the TANF program through the creation of the Jobs First program within the Department of Social Services. Jobs First was passed as a public assistance program designed to move clients rapidly off Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) into employment and toward financial independence.<sup>2</sup> With employment as the immediate goal of the

<sup>1</sup> There are no restrictions in the way states may use TANF funding in so far as it achieves the following purposes of TANF: a) To provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes; b) To reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; c) To prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and d) To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. The total federal block grant is \$16.8 billion each year until FY 2002. Maintenance of effort, or maintaining an historical level of state spending, is required of each state.

<sup>2</sup> The cash benefit portion of Connecticut’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is called Temporary Family Assistance (TFA).

participant, Jobs First includes a 21-month time limit for cash assistance and employment services requirements. The program also has a 'safety net' component to assist individuals that lose eligibility due to being sanctioned.

Previous welfare programs provided little incentive to find employment as most earnings were deducted from the cash benefit. Clients were not allowed to accumulate savings to plan for future emergencies. Jobs First was designed to reward work by providing self-support incentives. The program offers transitional assistance and supplies individuals with tools to become self-supporting within 21 months. Participants can retain their full cash grant and their earned income up to the federal poverty level and are allowed to accumulate limited assets without a reduction in benefits (e.g. an automobile). Participants are also eligible to receive other assistance (e.g., medical, childcare and food stamps). These reforms are designed to break the cycle of poverty and promote work and responsibility. The program is structured to provide both strict consequences for failure to pursue employment but also considerable reward for finding and keeping employment.

### **C. Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)**

All families a) receiving TFA assistance and b) with an employable adult, are limited to 21 months of assistance.<sup>3</sup> All time-limited TFA clients are required to participate in Jobs First Employment Services, overseen by the Connecticut Department of Labor and operated by eight Workforce Investment Boards.

Employment Services are designed to move TFA clients rapidly into employment and toward self-sufficiency. The emphasis on employment encourages able-bodied individuals to actively seek, obtain and retain employment.

The Balanced Work First approach has been implemented so that whenever possible, work and work related activities are combined with education and/or training to increase earnings potential and the probability of remaining independent of assistance.

### **D. TFA Needs Assessment**

The WorkPlace, Inc., as Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board, is charged with planning and implementing JFES for TFA clients in Connecticut's Southwestern Region under a contract with the Connecticut Department of Labor.

The WorkPlace, Inc. contracted with Holt, Wexler & Farnam, LLP (HWF) to conduct a Needs Assessment examining the demographic composition, current barriers to employment, service usage, and support service needs of the TFA client population. Its purpose is to inform first quarter 2002 planning by 1) providing a snapshot of TFA clients in the Southwestern region and 2) determining which services they need to obtain and retain jobs.

This study is part of a broader Community Audit Needs Assessment of the entire Southwestern Workforce Investment Area, to be completed in November 2002. Broader analysis of the labor market and key industry sectors that affect TFA clients will be included in the broader Community Audit.

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<sup>3</sup> Families without a mandatory Employment Services participant and families headed by a minor parent in school are exempt from the time limit. TFA clients are eligible for an exemption from time limits if they are any of the following: Children under 18 years old who are in school; Individuals aged 60 or over; Incapacitated individuals; Individuals who are needed to care for an incapacitated household member; Individuals caring for a child under age one if the child is not subject to the family cap; Pregnant and postpartum women who are unable to work; and those individuals deemed unemployable by DSS.

For the purposes of this TFA Needs Assessment report, HWF used the following information and data sources:

- Published reports and data on TFA clients and trends;
- Caseload data for TFA population in the Southwestern Region from the Connecticut Department of Social Services TANF Summary Reports;
- Client data for TFA clients in the Southwestern region from the Connecticut Department of Social Services Eligibility Management System (EMS) for November, 2001 [Universe: 1,895 client records];
- Client data for TFA clients in the Southwestern region from the Connecticut Department of Labor Case Management Information System (CMIS) for November, 2001 [Universe: 902 client records];
- Focus groups with TFA clients, Case Managers and other workforce development professionals; and
- Interviews with selected service providers in the region.

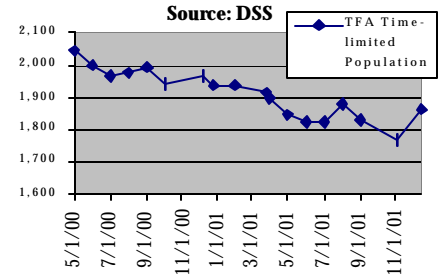
## II. Demographic Profile and Status of the TFA population

### A. Demographic Profile

The number of time-limited TFA clients in the Southwestern Workforce Investment Area has decreased from May 2000 to the present. See Figure 1.

This section describes the demographics of the current time-limited TFA population, 1,895 clients, within the twenty-town WorkPlace, Inc. service area. Demographic variables analyzed include gender, race, age, primary language spoken, and family composition. A summary data table of demographic information by town is below in Table 1. Please see Appendix Table I for data on all towns.

**Figure 1: TFA Time-limited Caseload (May, 2000 - December, 2001)**



**Table 1: Demographics by Town**

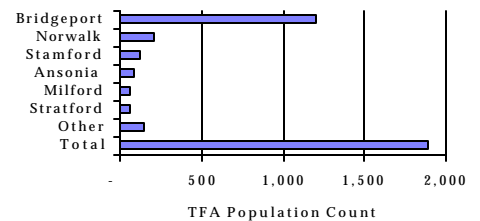
Town	Total	Gender		Race / Ethnicity								
		Female	%	Male	Black	%	Caucasian	%	Hispanic	%	Asian	%
Bridgeport	1,207	1,051	87%	156	446	37%	265	22%	476	39%	20	2%
Norwalk	207	193	93%	14	67	32%	48	23%	87	42%	5	2%
Stamford	125	111	89%	14	42	34%	27	22%	54	43%	2	2%
Ansonia	90	85	94%	5	44	49%	18	20%	26	29%	2	2%
Milford	60	56	93%	4	17	28%	13	22%	27	45%	3	5%
Stratford	58	51	88%	7	18	31%	16	28%	23	40%	1	2%
Other	148	132	89%	16	60	41%	31	21%	54	36%	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,895</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2%</b>

Eligibility Management System

#### 64% of TFA clients reside in Bridgeport.

**Geographic Distribution:** Bridgeport is home to the majority of TFA clients (64%). Remaining towns with significant numbers of TFA clients include Norwalk (11%), Stamford (7%), Ansonia (5%), Milford (3%), Stratford (3%), and the additional 14 towns (8%). See Table 1 and Figure 2.

**Figure 2: TFA Clients by Town**  
Source: EMS



#### 89% of TFA clients are female.

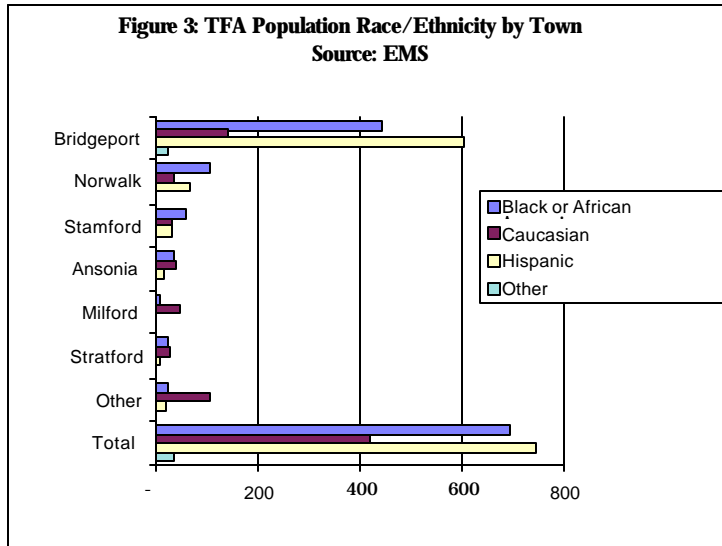
**Gender:** Across all towns, the percentage of female TFA clients is 89%. No town with more than 15 TFA clients has less than an 87% composition of female TFA clients. See Table 1 and Appendix I.

**Age:** The median age for TFA clients across all towns is 27. Most are between the ages of 18 and 25 (41%). Those between 25 and 35 (33%) and between 35 and 45 (21%) comprise the remaining age ranges of significance. TFA clients under 18 and over 45 represent only 5% of the total. See Table 2.

**Table 2: Age**

Age Group	#	%
< 18	3	0%
18 < 25	770	41%
25 < 35	631	33%
35 < 45	396	21%
45 +	95	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,895</b>	<b>100%</b>

Eligibility Management System



**Hispanics and Black or African Americans comprise 39% and 37% of TFA clients respectively.**

**Race:** On average, the racial/ethnic composition of TFA clients is as follows: Black or African American (37%), Caucasian (22%), Hispanic (39%), and Asian (2%). The percentage of Black or African Americans surpasses the average in Norwalk (50%), Stamford (47%) and Stratford (41%). Caucasian percentages are greater than the average in Milford (75%), other towns (69%), Stratford (43%), Ansonia (43%) and Stamford (26%). The percentage of Hispanics in Bridgeport (50%) represents the only area where that population exceeds the

twenty-town average. See Figure 3.

**Table 3: Family Composition**

# of Children	Freq.	%	Total	%
0	36	4.0%	0	0%
1	412	45.7%	412	25%
2	254	28.2%	508	31%
3	115	12.7%	345	21%
4	54	6.0%	216	13%
5	26	2.9%	130	8%
6+	5	0.6%	41	2%
Total	902	100.0%	1,652	100%

**Family Composition:** Data on the number of children per client household is available for 866 (96%) of the 902 TFA clients within the Case Management Information System (CMIS) database. Of these 866 TFA clients, 46% of clients report one child and 41% report either two or three children. 10% of clients report four or more children. See Table 3.

Case Management Information System

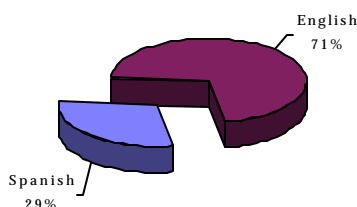
**87% of TFA clients speak English as a primary language.**

**Language:** Eighty-seven percent of TFA clients report English as their primary language spoken. Second is Spanish, with an overall average of 12% and highest in Bridgeport (15%), representing 84% of all Spanish primary language speakers. Other languages (e.g., French, Italian, Russian, etc.) are not statistically significant. See Table 4.

**Table 4: Primary Language Spoken by Town, Source: EMS**

Town	Total	Primary Language Spoken					
		English	%	Spanish	%	Other	%
Bridgeport	1,207	1,007	83%	184	15%	16	1%
Norwalk	207	191	92%	15	7%	1	0%
Stamford	125	114	91%	10	8%	1	1%
Ansonia	90	84	93%	5	6%	1	1%
Milford	60	58	97%	1	2%	1	2%
Stratford	58	58	100%	-	0%	-	0%
Other	148	144	97%	3	2%	1	1%
Total	1,895	1,656	87%	218	12%	21	1%

**Figure 4: Primary Language among Hispanics**  
Source: EMS



**71% of Hispanics speak English as a primary language.**

Among Hispanics, 29% self-report Spanish as the primary language spoken. See Figure 4.

**B. Work Record**

This section highlights TFA client work status, hours worked, earnings, current type of employment, and employment duration.

**Work status does not vary with primary language.**

**Work Status:** 28% of TFA clients are working. Regardless of primary language, 71% of employed TFA clients are working less than 30 hours per week. See Table 5.

TFA clients that speak Spanish as a primary language are more likely to be working over 30 hours than are TFA clients regardless of primary language (41% Spanish as a Primary Language compared to 28% for all clients). While this is statistically interesting, further research is necessary before drawing conclusions regarding the implications of such a discrepancy. See Table 5.

**Table 5: Job Status and Hrs/Wk by Primary Language**

	Status					Total
	Working	Hours Per Week			Not working	
		0-15	15-30	30+		
All Clients	527	113	265	149	1,368	1,895
%	28%	21%	50%	28%	72%	100%
SPL Clients	61	9	27	25	157	218
%	28%	15%	44%	41%	72%	100%

Eligibility Management System

**Table 6: Annual Income by Primary Language**

	Total	Income		Income Range			
		No	Yes	0 < 3K	3 - 6K	6 - 10K	10K+
		EPL	1,656	1,115	541	30	96
%		67%	33%	6%	18%	39%	38%
SPL	218	142	76	1	12	25	38
%		65%	35%	1%	16%	33%	50%

Eligibility Management System

**Income varies slightly with primary language.**

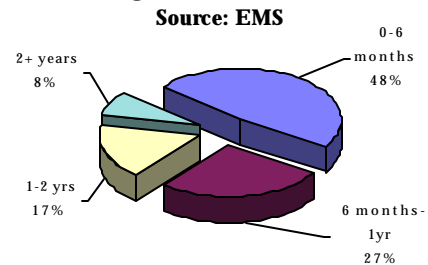
**Income:** 33% of TFA clients report annual incomes. 38% of English as a Primary Language (EPL) TFA clients make over \$10,000 while 50% of Spanish as a Primary Language (SPL) report the same. 57% of EPL TFA clients make between \$3,000 and \$10,000 per year. Just under half (49%) of SPL TFA clients fall within the same income range. See Table 6.

**Type of Employment:** EMS data does not offer substantive information on the current employment situation of TFA clients. Only 4% of currently employed TFA clients have an identifiable job category listed in their EMS entry.

**48% of working TFA clients have been employed less than six months while 8% have been working over two years and still do not have enough earnings to exit TFA assistance.**

**Job Duration:** Of the 28% of TFA clients that are working, 48% have been employed less than six months, 27% have been working between six months and one year. 25% (only 7% of all time-limited TFA clients) have held jobs for over one year and still receive TFA assistance. See Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Job Duration**



**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Focus groups with Case Managers indicate that a lack of/poor work history is significant among TFA clients. Those clients lacking a work history are largely younger clients. Older clients often have large gaps in their work history, sometimes involving penal or mental health issues which are difficult to incorporate into a resume. The most common work history is composed of many 1-2 month jobs

across many sectors (e.g. retail, health care and fast food). Issues relating to work history in clients often correspond with low self-confidence.

### C. Adaptation to the Workplace

This section examines how TFA clients have adapted to the workplace. As referenced in section IIB, only 28% of TFA clients are currently working and little data is recorded regarding how long they have been working, and their specific reasons for leaving employment, making it difficult to assess how clients are adapting to the workplace.

**Job Separation:** 400 TFA clients have a combined total of 940 employment records captured in the Case Management Information System (CMIS)<sup>4</sup> See Figure 6.

By design, CMIS does not allow the circumstances of job discontinuation to be recorded in detail. Of these employment records, the most common reasons recorded for job separation, or termination of employment, are the following:

- Laid Off (27%)
- Quit (25%)
- Fired (12%)
- Accepted New Job (10%)

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Case managers indicate that most TFA clients had difficulty adapting to the workplace and stopped working or were terminated soon after placement. Case managers perceived the principal reasons for this trend as the following:

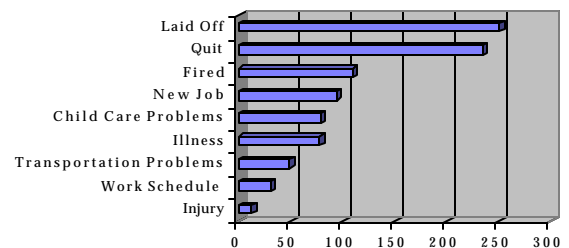
- Difficulty managing every day crises (e.g. problems with school, childcare, being sick);
- Lack of support systems in place (e.g. reliable friends and/or family);
- The shock associated with the transition from training to the job market leads to missed appointments and poor interviews (need earlier notification of job market expectations);
- Shortage of support for post-placement transition; and
- The rush to place clients results in a mismatch between the skills/interest of the client and the job.

### D. Impact of Legislation Changes

In addition to the 60-month lifetime limit imposed under the federal TANF legislation in 1996, the Connecticut General Assembly enacted additional restrictions in June 2001. Receiving extensions to the 21-month time limit were made more difficult, and the maximum number of extensions for a family was limited to three, unless the family meets certain defined barriers. Over 300 families statewide hit the five-year federal deadline on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 and close to 350 more in the three months after that. The Bridgeport Department of Social Services (DSS) Office estimates that only 50 TFA clients from the South West Region have had to exit TFA as a result of these changes. The DSS South West Region has had few exiting clients compared to comparably sized regions in Connecticut because of their strict adherence to the existing sanctioning policies.

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Focus groups reported, with measurable surprise, that they had received no complaints from clients regarding time limits. Front line workers also reported that time limits in general have resulted in:

**Figure 6: Reasons for Job Separation**  
Source: CMIS



<sup>4</sup> Some of the employment records captured in the Case Management Information System reference employment preceding entry into the public assistance system.

- Increased domestic violence claims;
- Increased medical physical disability claims;
- TFA clients rushing to take any job available, often without training;
- Increased use of services immediately before expiration dates; and
- Little outside/increased support (e.g., family and friends) for remaining TFA clients.

**TFA Client Opinion:** A focus group of TFA clients indicated that time limits were generally perceived to be a good thing. However, clients feel they are being asked to accomplish much with little support in terms of information, quality of training, interim assistance (both financial and non-financial), and placement assistance.

### ***III: Barriers to Employment for the Southwestern Region's TFA Population***

#### **A. Barriers to Employment**

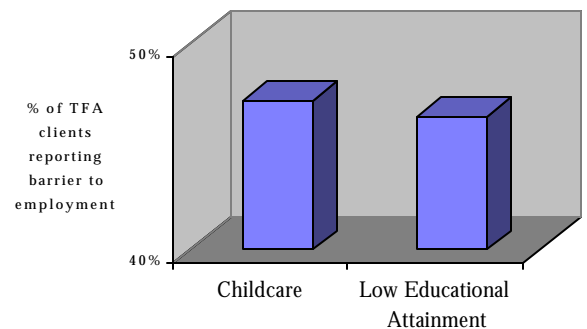
This section details the barriers to employment experienced by the 902 time-limited TFA clients captured in the Case Management Information System database in the WorkPlace, Inc.'s service area (data was extracted for analysis for the month of November, 2001). Barriers analyzed include the following:

- Educational Attainment
- Childcare
- Domestic Violence
- Health Issues
- Housing
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health Issues
- Speaking English
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation

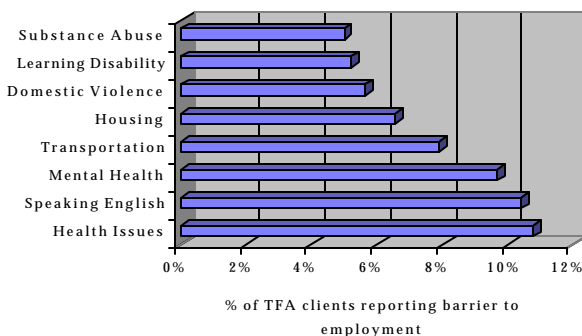
#### ***Childcare and Low Educational Attainment are the most common barriers to employment for TFA clients.<sup>5</sup>***

47% of TFA clients (426) report childcare as a barrier to employment during their assessments with Case Managers. 46% of TFA clients (419) were recorded as having educational attainment below the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level. See Figures 7 and 8.

**Figure 7: Primary Barriers to Employment**  
Source: CMIS



**Figure 8: Secondary Barriers to Employment**  
Source: CMIS



**Front Line Worker Opinion:** During focus groups, Case Managers and other front line workers reported similar importance in the area of low educational attainment and childcare. Two other barriers that Case Managers identified as significant, but are difficult to analyze using available data, are the following:

- **Poor Life Skills** (e.g., time and stress management, parenting, problem solving); and
- **Lack of and/or Poor Work History.** Long periods of unemployment and/or an inability to hold a job for any significant length of time.

**TFA Client Opinion:** TFA clients identified childcare as the single most significant barrier to employment. The other barriers identified as significant include transportation, lack of job skill training and depression/other mental health issues.

**Childcare:** Case Managers and TFA clients identified and agreed upon the following childcare issues:

- Not enough childcare slots, especially for children ages 0-3, and non-traditional slots (e.g. nighttime);
- Payment demands of providers (often an entire month in advance) are difficult given the disbursement structure of childcare assistance payments; and
- TFA clients did not universally know that childcare assistance is available during job search.

<sup>5</sup> For this evaluation, Low Educational Attainment is defined as less than a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education and without a high school equivalency.

**Other Significant Barriers:** Other significant barriers identified by both Case Managers and TFA clients:

- **Transportation:** General lack of information and frequency of bus routes make relying on public transportation difficult, especially when childcare and employment/job training are in different places; and
- **Undiagnosed Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Issues:** Learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia) and mental health issues (e.g., depression) often are undiagnosed and therefore, necessary support services are not provided.

**B. Impact of Skill Deficits on Ability to Work**

This section highlights the basic skill levels of TFA clients and explores the skill deficits most likely to result in loss of employment. The EMS database records educational attainment levels reported by TFA clients. The source for Connecticut Competency System (CCS) scores, the state’s chosen assessment system for basic skills in math and reading, is the Case Management Information System database, which includes 1,141 CASAS records.

*Educational attainment varies slightly with primary language spoken.*

**Educational Attainment as Reported by TFA Clients:** As measured by EMS, 53% of EPL TFA clients report graduating from high school or attaining their General Education Degree (GED). Only 36% of Spanish as a Primary Language TFA clients report the same. Regardless of primary language spoken, 9% report some level of schooling below 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 40% report some level of high school education and 51% report graduating high school or attaining their GED. The lack of a high school degree or equivalent represents a significant barrier to employment for 49% of clients. See Table 7.

*Work status varies with educational attainment.*

31% (293 of 960) of TFA clients with a high school degree or equivalency are working (representing 56% of all those working) compared to 25% of those with less than a high school degree. See Table 8.

**Table 7: Educational Attainment by Primary Language**

Primary Language	Grade Passed				Total
	None	< 9	9 < 12	12+	
EPL	11	121	652	872	1,656
%	1%	7%	39%	53%	100%
SPL	3	44	92	79	218
%	1%	20%	42%	36%	100%
Other	0	6	6	9	21
%	0%	29%	29%	43%	100%
Total	14	171	750	960	1,895
%	1%	9%	40%	51%	100%

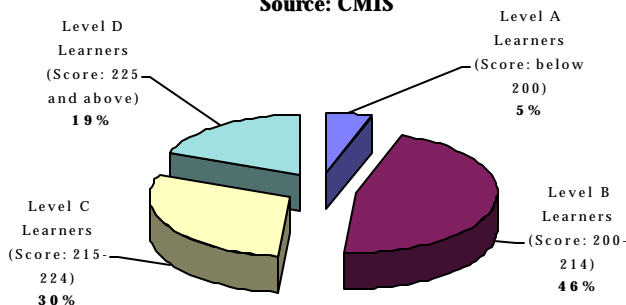
**Table 8: Educational Attainment by Work Status**

Work Status	Grade Passed				Total
	None	< 9	9 < 12	12+	
Not Working	11	131	559	667	1,368
%	1%	10%	41%	49%	100%
Working	3	40	191	293	527
%	1%	8%	36%	56%	100%
Total	14	171	750	960	1,895
%	1%	9%	40%	51%	100%

Eligibility Management System (both tables)

**Figure 9: CCS Appraisal Scores (Math)**

Source: CMIS



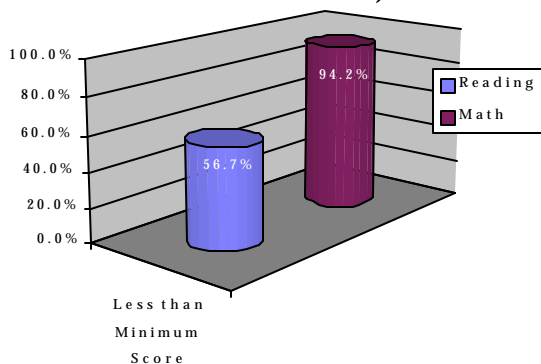
**Only 19% of TFA clients are functioning at a high school level in math. 51% are functioning below a 7<sup>th</sup> grade level in math. See Figure 9.**

**Basic Skill Levels as Tested by CASAS:** All TFA Clients assessed through Connecticut Competency System (CCS) receive a basic skill functional level of A-D based on a scaled scoring

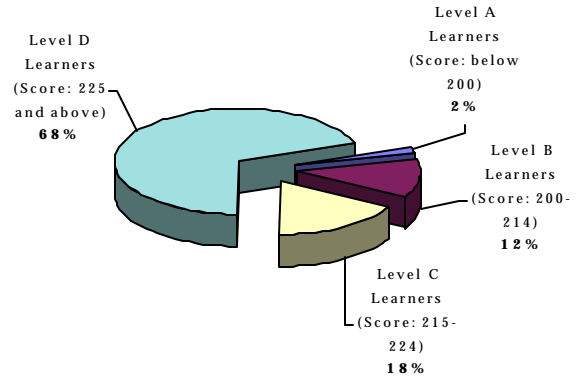
system.<sup>6</sup> Case Management Information System data on 1,141 TFA clients indicates that 81% of TFA clients are functioning below a high school entry level in math while only 32% score below the same level in reading.

**68% of TFA clients are functioning at a high school level in reading. 14% are functioning below a 7th grade level in reading. See Figure 10.**

**Figure 11: CCS Appraisal Scores (Basic Skills Deficient Threshold Score: 235)**



**Figure 10: CCS Appraisal Scores (Reading)**  
Source: CMIS



**Only 6% of TFA clients surpass the CCS threshold to be eligible for Workforce Investment Act training services.**

Clients with scores of 235 or lower on both parts of the CCS appraisal are not likely to qualify for Individual Training Accounts provided through Workforce Investment Act. See Figure 11.

**43% of clients pass this mark in reading while only 6% achieve the same in math.**

**A significant gap exists between educational attainment reported by TFA clients and their skill levels as measured by CCS scores.**

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Case managers and TFA clients identified the following characteristics necessary to obtain entry-level positions:

- Basic skills training (English and math);
- Life skills;
- High School Diploma or General Education Degree as minimum educational certification;
- Coherent work history;
- Job skill training linked to local job market;
- Assistance in job placement, including personal/basic communication skills;
- Intensive coaching and assistance in multiple-issue management (e.g. childcare, transportation, housing);
- Understanding of expectations of the workplace; and
- Longer-term job retention support.

<sup>6</sup> Level A: difficulty providing basic personal identification in written form such as on job applications. Level B: below 7<sup>th</sup> grade level functioning. Level C: below high school level functioning. Level D: at or above high school level functioning.

**C: Trends in Barriers to Employment**

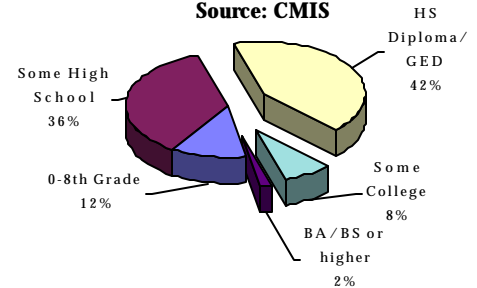
This section combines reports of both Case Managers and TFA clients with available data from the Case Management Information System (CMIS) database to probe into the most significant trends in barriers to employment.

As the numbers of TFA clients have decreased in the past three years, the remaining caseload is increasingly composed of the “hardest-to-serve” population.

**Low Educational Attainment:** 48% of TFA clients have less than a completed high school education, with 12% percent not reaching high school. Case managers report that the resulting lack of basic reading and math skills, especially when coupled with multiple additional barriers, makes servicing this population difficult as clients are often prevented from accessing job training programs and other services requiring a minimum skills assessment test score for entry. See Figure 12.

**Figure 12: Educational Attainment**

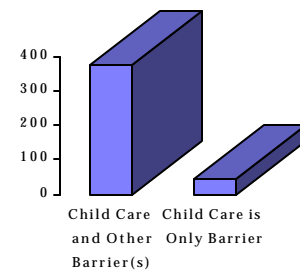
Source: CMIS



**Multiple Barriers:** National research demonstrates that clients experiencing multiple barriers to employment face a disproportionately low rate of success in employment. While TFA clients identified childcare as the single most significant barrier to employment, many reported experiencing multiple barriers simultaneously. For example, of the 426 TFA clients needing help with childcare, 89% reported experiencing additional barriers, while only 11% identified childcare as the only current barrier to employment. See Figure 13.

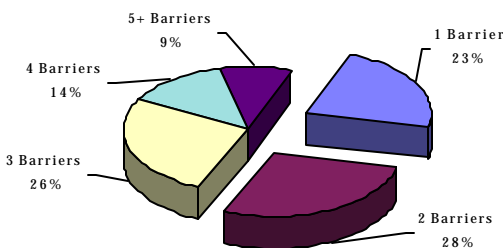
**Figure 13: Child Care and Other Barriers**

Source: CMIS



**Figure 14: TFA Clients Experiencing Multiple Barriers to Employment**

Source: CMIS



**49% of TFA clients experience three or more barriers to employment.**

Case Management Information System (CMIS) data for 902 TFA clients active during the month of November, 2001 shows that almost half of TFA clients experience three or more barriers to employment. See Figure 14.

While exact probability figures range slightly, national research<sup>7</sup> demonstrates that welfare clients experiencing three barriers to employment are in a very high-risk

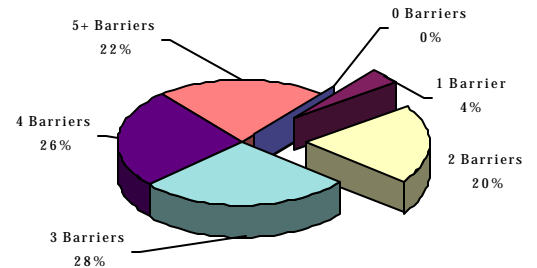
category, having well below a 50% probability of employment. Clients experiencing four barriers have less than a 25% probability of employment, and those facing five or more barriers demonstrate virtually zero probability of employment. Case managers confirm that current TFA clients experiencing multiple barriers (especially those profiles including low basic educational and life skills) are very difficult to serve effectively, and require more time and intensive services.

<sup>7</sup> Danziger, Sheila (1999): Barriers to the employment of welfare recipients; Zedlewski, Sheila (1999): Work Activity and Obstacles to Work among TANF clients; Canny, Priscilla (2000): Barriers to employment in the Connecticut Safety Net Population.

**76% of Non-English speaking TFA clients experience three or more barriers to employment.**

The issue of multiple barriers is particularly acute among non-English speaking TFA clients, with two-thirds of this sub-population falling into the high-risk category of three or more barriers. While these findings seem alarming, further research into this sub-population is recommended (data for non-English speaking TFA clients in the WorkPlace Inc.'s service area was limited to 94 cases). See Figure 15.

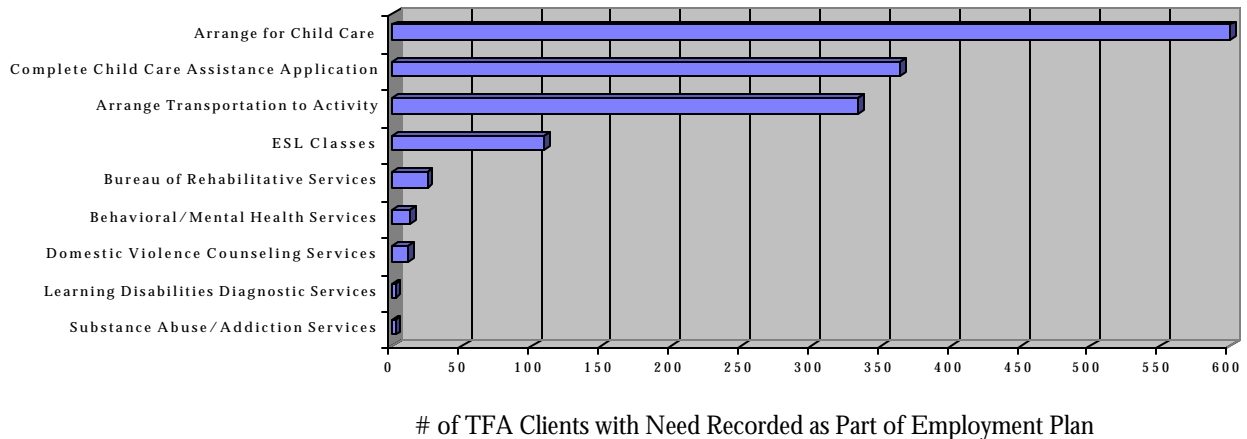
**Figure 15: Multiple Barriers for the Non-English Speaking TANF Population**  
Source: CMIS



**IV. TFA Support Services**

The following represents the utilization of support services by TFA clients as reported through the Case Management Information System (CMIS). See Figure 16.

**Figure 16: Support Services Utilized:**  
Source: CMIS



**A: Transportation Utilization**

Of the 902 time-limited TFA clients captured in the Case Management Information System (CMIS) database in the Southwestern region, 37% (334) recorded utilizing assistance with transportation services through their Case Manager. The WorkPlace Inc.'s People to Jobs Initiative estimates that 94% of TFA clients are dependent on public transportation, and 2,499 TFA clients utilize public transportation quarterly.<sup>8</sup>

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Case managers identified the following issues with transportation utilization:

- The cost of public transportation is prohibitive to TFA clients (especially clients with multiple children, and there are no bulk-rate or monthly rates to reduce costs);

<sup>8</sup> People to Jobs, *Quarterly Report ending March 31, 2001*, estimate of TANF clients' ridership is determined using a formula based on total ridership, because a tracking system for TANF clients is not available.

- Public transportation does not meet all of the transportation needs of TFA clients (e.g. night service, inter-city routes); and
- Information about bus routes is not widely available.

**TFA Client Opinion:** Two thirds of TFA clients participating in the focus group identified transportation as a significant barrier to employment and noted the following issues with transportation assistance:

- Bus service is too infrequent to allow transport from home to childcare, school, service centers, and work;
- Clients receiving assistance for transportation report the amount of funds to be sufficient, but the automatic deposits occur on an irregular schedule, making financial planning difficult; and
- One third of clients present where not aware that assistance was available for transportation.

## **B. Childcare Utilization**

Childcare assistance is the most-utilized support service recorded by the Case Management Information System (CMIS). 67% (600) TFA clients needed assistance in arranging for childcare, and 40% (364) needed assistance in completing the Childcare Assistance Program (Care 4 Kids) application.<sup>9</sup>

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** In addition to a general shortage of quality affordable childcare, focus groups generated the following specific issues in childcare services:

- General childcare quality is low largely because of minimum training requirements, but quality improvements lead to increased costs;
- Many TFA clients use other TFA clients or family members for childcare, leading to issues of scheduling and reliability;
- There is a general shortage of childcare sites and a shortage of childcare for non-daytime hours;
- The shortage of available childcare slots (especially slots for children aged 0 - 3) causes extreme difficulties for families with multiple children in placing all children in the same childcare location;
- Childcare is cost-prohibitive for clients with multiple children; and
- Payment schedules for childcare, usually one month in advance, is cost prohibitive. Assistance is not given based on this payment schedule.

**TFA Client Opinion:** Two-thirds of TFA clients identified childcare as a significant barrier to employment, and one-third identified childcare as the most significant barrier. TFA clients noted the following childcare issues as significant barriers:

- Assistance for childcare is needed while clients are searching for employment;
- Childcare assistance is not sufficient to cover the actual costs of childcare;
- Up-front payment demands from providers are cost prohibitive, assistance is needed in the form of stop-gap loans or mediation with providers;
- Lack of slots and providers for children ages 0-3; and
- The only referral service available is Infoline (211).

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<sup>9</sup> As of 1/1/02 there were changes to the Childcare Regulations as well as a revised payment standard which increased the payment to licensed providers but decreased the payment to unlicensed providers.

## C. Other Support Services

While Transportation and Childcare continue to have the largest need and highest utilization rates, TFA clients require assistance and utilize services for several other significant barriers.

### Housing

Nearly half of Case Managers identified housing as a significant barrier to employment, noting the following issues:

- Shortage of emergency housing or shelters;
- Public assistance money not sufficient for adequate housing;
- Case Managers believed that pooling resources with family members or other TFA clients is not allowed;
- Available housing is in distressed areas with poor conditions leading to increased preoccupation with health, safety, childcare and transportation issues; and
- Lack of knowledge of tenant rights and avenues of action regarding housing conditions and problems with landlords.

### Mental Health Services

2% of clients (13) had Behavioral/Mental Health services as a part of their employment plan. This is far below the predicted need for these services based simply on the percentage of the general population requiring them.

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Front line workers identified counseling as a significant need of clients.

**TFA Client Opinion:** Nearly half of TFA clients identified counseling as a significant need. TFA clients noted that significant time out of work can lead to depression, further impeding the ability to attain and retain employment. Clients suggested that there is a need for support groups.

### Substance Abuse Treatment

Yale University conducted a survey in 2001 to assess the prevalence of substance abuse among Connecticut's adult welfare populations.<sup>10</sup> The study interviewed TFA and SAGA clients in Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven. The study found that for the TFA clients interviewed, based on self-reporting and adjusted for underreporting using hair testing<sup>11</sup>:

- 35% of TFA women interviewed currently use cocaine or opiates; and
- 48% of TFA women interviewed currently use marijuana.

The study further noted that:

- TFA women have a current substance abuse and dependence rate that is greater than women in the general population (12% vs. 4%);
- Current cocaine or opiate use is highly correlated with length of stay on welfare and Department of Children and Families involvement. Current and childhood history of sexual or physical abuse, depression and anxiety disorders are also common among TFA women with current cocaine or opiate use;
- Only 18% of TFA women with cocaine abuse or dependence and 43% of those with opiate dependence were currently receiving substance abuse treatment; and
- Providing substance abuse treatment for welfare clients is effective. There was a 19% increase in employment for women in the study who received treatment services.

<sup>10</sup> DMHAS/DSS Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)/ State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) Collaborative Study (2001): Schottenfeld MD, Richard, Yale University.

<sup>11</sup> The numbers of TFA women found to use cocaine, opiates, and marijuana is thought to be a conservative estimate as many of those refusing hair testing may have been users of illicit drugs fearful of sanctions.

Only about 5% of the Connecticut Department of Social Services' TFA caseload was also found to be in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' caseload. This means that only 5% of the TFA caseload statewide is receiving substance abuse treatment from those programs reporting to DMHAS.<sup>12</sup>

### **English as a Second Language**

12% (109) of clients recorded in the Case Management Information System (CMIS) database receive English as a Second Language services as a part of their employment plan.

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Front line workers identified limited English as a significant barrier to employment. Case managers reported the following issues regarding sub-populations with limited English skills:

- Limited English skills are present in both newly-arrived and long-term resident groups; and
- Many non-English speaking immigrants arrive via a social network that helps provide initial employment, but does not result in improved English skills. This skill deficiency does not manifest itself until the individual loses employment.

### **Disability Assistance / Vocational Rehabilitation**

Only 3% (25) of clients utilized the services of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) as a part of their employment plan. Less than 1% (2) of clients utilized learning disability diagnostic services.

No utilization of the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) was recorded, while several BESB clients were served by CT Works, they were not TFA clients.

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Case managers noted that many TFA clients have undiagnosed learning disabilities or mental health conditions that receive no treatment and continue to be barriers to employment.

### **Child Support Enforcement**

**TFA Client Opinion:** The clients interviewed as a part of our focus groups perceive a lack of effort to involve and or obtain support from fathers, and to insure that fathers are employed and capable of paying child support.

### **Clothing**

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** No front line worker identified clothing as an important need for clients entering the workforce.

### **Food Assistance**

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Very few Case Managers identified Food as a need of TFA clients entering the workforce.

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<sup>12</sup> Draft Report on Caseload Overlap Between Alcohol and Drug Programs and Temporary Family Assistance in Connecticut During FY 1999 and FY 2000, Prepared for the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services by the Bristol Observatory, June 2001.

## V. Local Education and Training Opportunities and Market Conditions

### A. Economic Outlook for Entry Level Jobs<sup>13</sup>

This section addresses the economic outlook for industry sectors where TFA clients historically have been employed (e.g., retail, healthcare, and other service sector industries) and highlights which industry sectors with appropriate entry-level work have the best economic outlook.

As measured by growth in annual job openings, the Services industry sector is projected to grow the most and yield roughly half of the total job openings across all industry sectors. See Table 9.

**Table 9: Employment Trends for Industry Sectors of Likely Employment**  
Southwestern Workforce Investment Board Service Area

Industries	Current Employment	Projected Employment	Annual Openings			Total
	1998	2008	Net Change	% Change	Growth	
Retail Trade	64,598	69,286	4,688	7.26%	467	2,604
Services	186,670	218,436	31,766	17.02%	3,191	7,136
<b>Total</b>	251,268	287,722	36,454	0	3,658	9,740

Connecticut Department of Labor

These figures are encouraging for TFA clients seeking entry-level jobs, as positions within this sector often require minimal training relative to its industry sector counterparts, and employers have expressed continuing concerns about filling these jobs. Since these projections were computed prior to the recent economic downturn, they must be understood only as estimations of future economic activity. These trends do suggest that the challenge for TFA clients is addressing barriers to employment rather than the availability of jobs.

### B. Promising Entry Level Jobs

This section highlights the most accessible entry-level jobs in the Southwestern Region and the types of entry-level positions projected to grow and offer career advancement opportunities according to the Connecticut Department of Labor. See Table 10.

Job opening projections for these occupations must be taken in the context of the recent economic downturn. Both TFA clients and Case Managers reported a low availability of entry-level jobs as of December, 2001.

TFA clients have difficulty in competing for anything but entry-level positions. To make matters worse, the tightening job market has resulted in previously vacant entry-level positions across all occupations being filled by more highly skilled laborers.

These short-term trends do not affect the central

**Table 10: Entry-level Jobs with the Most Openings**  
Southwestern Workforce Investment Board Service Area

Occupation	Annual Job Openings	Entry Level Wage/Hour	Average Wage/Hour
Cashiers	2,668	\$6.70	\$7.69
Retail Salespersons	2,373	\$6.70	\$9.72
Waiters & Waitresses	1,403	\$4.74 + tips	\$4.74 + tips
Food Prep Workers	851	\$6.70	\$8.08
Nursing Aides/Attendants	744	\$9.03	\$11.69
Janitors & Cleaners	739	\$6.70	\$9.60
Counter Attendants (e.g. Cafeteria)	656	\$6.70	\$7.00
Combined Food Prep and Service	574	\$6.70	\$8.08
Guards	544	\$7.24	\$9.08
Helpers/Laborers/Movers	499	\$7.07	\$11.52
Landscaping/Groundskeeping	447	\$7.23	\$10.56
Child Care Workers	408	\$6.70	\$8.96
Counter and Rental Clerks	399	\$6.70	\$7.94
Home Health Aides	393	\$7.95	\$9.65
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	358	\$6.81	\$8.58
Social/Human Services Assistants	328	\$8.65	\$11.93

Connecticut Department of Labor

<sup>13</sup> The information for this section was taken from the Connecticut Department of Labor's latest employment projections for the labor market areas (Bridgeport and Stamford LMAs) in the Southwestern Region. It is provided to give context to the discussion of what entry-level jobs are plentiful in the region.

message that the challenge is to prepare TFA clients with the basic literacy and life management skills that will enable them to fill a wide range of entry-level jobs that are projected to be available over time in the region.

### C. Training Opportunities Utilized and Training Needs

**Training offered through funding streams specific to TANF.** Appendix Table II at the conclusion of this report represents all training opportunities offered through the WorkPlace, Inc. with Welfare to Work, TANF, and JFES funding between 1998 and 2001. The training programs are categorized according to those sectors and specific job titles identified above as having the most entry-level positions available annually. All funding streams either specifically for TFA clients and those overwhelmingly utilized by TFA clients were catalogued. Table 11 provides a summary of overall training utilization rates for each category of training provided.

**Table 11: Training Utilization Rates**

Type of Training	slots	filled	% utilized
Customer Service	762	505	66%
Food Service	12	12	100%
Health Care	56	58	104%
Child Care	89	70	79%
Social/Human Services	35	30	86%
Job Search	1,397	906	65%
Total	2,351	1,581	67%

The WorkPlace, Inc.

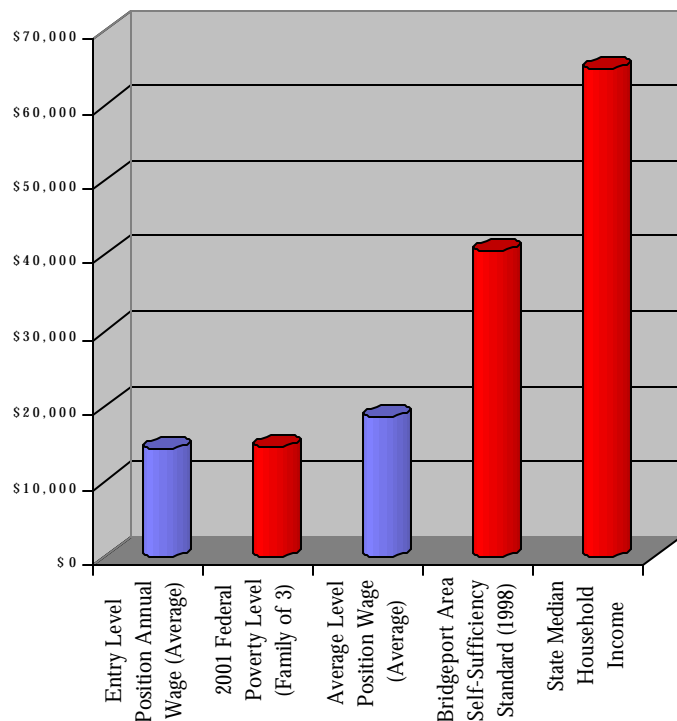
**The WorkPlace Inc. is correctly emphasizing Customer Service as the most pressing local area for training.** Customer Service related openings (Cashier, Retail Sales, Counter and Rental Clerks), have 5,440 openings annually in the Southwestern Region. The demand for these workers has been planned for, with 762 slots for customer-service related training programs, of which 505 were filled.

**The WorkPlace may want to solicit proposals and programming in the Food Service, Health Care, and Cleaning Services.** There are an estimated 5,718 annual entry-level positions in these sectors. All programming that has been offered in these sectors has been utilized completely. Training in these areas could benefit TFA customers to the extent that these positions require entry-level workers to have specific skills to be competitive. It is likely that while customer service/basic skills programming gives many TFA clients access to many of these positions, specific training may enhance the likelihood of success on the job, or movement up the career ladder.

**The WorkPlace should evaluate the need for training in the Security Services, Childcare, and Social Service sectors.** There are 2,226 entry-level positions available in these areas. The WorkPlace should assess if additional training would assist TFA customers in accessing these potential entry-level jobs. It is likely that these positions do not require a great amount of training for TFA clients to gain access to them. In this case, The WorkPlace may choose to focus job development efforts in these areas to place TFA clients directly into these positions without training.

**Figure 17: Wage Estimates for Entry Level Positions**  
Source: DOL\*

**The WorkPlace should focus on sectors with career ladders, and provide specific programming to upgrade entry-level workers.** The WorkPlace may want to offer programming designed to boost entry-level TFA clients up the career ladder in those occupations that have good career advancement prospects. Of those fields with many entry-level jobs, Health Related Occupations appear to have the best prospects for career advancement. Service Sector occupations (e.g., clerks, retail sales, etc.) offer the potential for promotion to management positions if the service industry realizes growth projections. Cashiers and Laborers have diminished prospects for advancement as traditional career paths (e.g., bank tellers and construction/manufacturing) are not projected to grow as they have done in the past. See Figure 17.



The only prospect of earning sufficient income to raise a family above the federal poverty line is to upgrade skills to the point where they can access the average-level position wage.

\* Entry-level and Average-level position Wages calculated using average wage of all jobs listed in Table 11, assuming 40 hours per week at 50 weeks per year;

\* State Median Household Income figures drawn from U.S. Census 2000 Supplementary Survey for Fairfield County;

\* Self-sufficiency Standard for Bridgeport Area drawn from 1998 State of CT report, for a single parent with one pre-school age child and one elementary school child.

**Front Line Worker Opinion:** Focus group participants identified stronger pre-employment counseling as the largest area of unmet training need. The workers identified the following needs in terms of pre-employment counseling:

- More strenuous individual assessment of client needs and assets early in the assistance process. This must incorporate the possibility that employment might not be the best short-term goal, but rather treatment for mental health issues or resolving childcare issues might take first priority;
- Increased support for basic and soft skills;
- Better matching of job training and job markets; and
- Better matching of client assets and placement possibilities/career path.

Front line workers mentioned that various training opportunities are being utilized by TFA clients, but expressed perceived problems such as the following:

- Short-term training, especially certificate programs such as Certified Nurse’s Aide training, are in high demand; however, clients do not fully understand the job responsibilities and job prospects; and
- Inaccurate and/or incomplete assessments of client needs prevent effective referral of clients into necessary services.

**TFA Client Opinion:** Over half of TFA clients identified specific job skills as a significant barrier to employment. TFA clients noted the following specific job skills as significant barriers:

- **Access:** Clients’ low basic skills and/or low test scores prevent access to training, but there is no support for math, reading and other basic skills other than “take home” training. Little information is available regarding assistance for purchasing necessary equipment (e.g., uniforms, stethoscopes for CNA training).
- **Lack of Information:** There is no centralized location or list of available services, and clients report having to talk to several people to obtain necessary information. Information available to clients on potential support services varies widely depending on Case Managers.
- **Effectiveness:** Training programs are not catered to individual client needs (e.g., too much or too little remedial work) and there is no connection (e.g., support, links to employers or placement) between training and employment.
- **Quality:** There is little or no quality control of approved training programs apparent to participants and there is no established vehicle of feedback from clients on the quality of training programs.

**Other Training Opportunities**

TFA customers can take advantage of training opportunities outside of those offered through the WorkPlace using Jobs First Employment Services or Welfare to Work funding. The following are other opportunities for employment and training utilized by TFA clients:

**CT Works Centers:** Ninety-six TFA clients accessed Individual Training Accounts (ITA) through the CT Works Centers during the past fiscal year. The specific types of training procured with TFA customers’ ITAs are listed in Table 12. 52% of ITAs issued to TFA clients were in Certified Nurse’s Aide or Home Health Aide vocational training. In addition to accessing ITAs, 1,837 TFA clients are members of CT Works Centers.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 12: Individual Training Accounts**

Number	Training Type
40	Certified Nurses' Aide
15	Computer Training
10	Home Health Aide
9	Dental Assistant
9	Medical Office Assistant
5	Human Services Assistant
4	Tractor Trailer Training
3	Culinary Arts
1	Administrative Assistant
96	Total

JobLink, Inc.

**Adult Education:** The Southwestern Region saw a 66% increase in TFA customers’ utilization of Adult Education between 2000 and 2001 (compared to a 13% decrease statewide). Table 13 indicates the number of TFA clients utilizing Adult Education services in the region.

The utilization is still low in light of the fact that only 19% of TFA clients tested proficient in

**Table 13: Adult Education Utilization**

	2000 #	2001 #	2000-01 Change
Ansonia	3	1	-2
Bridgeport	117	255	138
Norwalk	4	0	-4
Shelton	6	4	-2
Stamford	35	17	-18
Stratford	2	0	-2
total	167	277	110
statewide	1,531	1,328	-203
% of TFA clients	11%	21%	10%

<sup>14</sup> Information provided by JobLink, Inc. for Program year 2000-2001

CT State Department of Education

February, 2002

both Math and Reading Comprehension (see section IIIB).

Most Adult Education students came from Bridgeport (372); Stamford was home to the second largest number of students (52). Roughly half the towns in the region had some utilization of adult education services.<sup>15</sup> See Table 12.

**Accessing College through Pell Grants:** Data for TFA client utilization of Housatonic Community College, Norwalk Community College, and University of Bridgeport through Pell Grants is only available for the 1997 and 1998 school years<sup>16</sup>. In 1997, 254 TFA clients attended Housatonic Community College, 97 attended Norwalk Community College, and 29 attended University of Bridgeport; for a total of 380. In 1998, 209 TFA clients attended Housatonic Community College, 55 attended Norwalk Community College, and 26 attended Bridgeport University, for a total of 290.

### Vocational/Technical Schools:

TFA customers do not appear to avail themselves of training through the Vocational Technical Schools despite the fact that these schools feature a number of skills training

programs for adults. Table 14 shows TFA enrollment at all regional vocational/technical schools<sup>17</sup> for the period 1997 – 2001. In total, just 27 TFA clients have utilized the 4 regional Vocational/Technical schools over the past five years. TFA clients can access training at Vocational/Technical Schools through Individual Training Accounts.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 14: Vocational School Attendance**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Attendance	7	8	4	4	4

US Department of Education

**Table 15: Job Corps Arrivals 2001**

Number	City of Origin
19	Bridgeport
4	Stamford
4	Norwalk
2	Stratford
1	Fairfield
30	Total

Connecticut Job Corps Center

**Job Corps:** A total of 30 students from the Southwestern Region arrived at the Connecticut Job Corps Center in 2001. There is no information available on whether these students were TFA clients, but many Job Corps students report that they receive public assistance. The Connecticut Job Corps Center in New Haven is home to a program unique within the federal Job Corps system, which allows single mothers to live on campus with their children. The program has approximately 30 slots that are utilized by low-income (largely TFA) mothers on a rolling basis. At the Center, students can receive training in basic reading and math,

GED, Advanced Bakery/Pastry, Building Maintenance, Business Clerical, Carpentry, Computer Aided Drafting, Culinary Arts, Driver's Education, and Health Occupations.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Welfare Status at Program Entry Fiscal Years 2000-01; State Department of Education; Division of Educational Programs and Services, Bureau of Career and Adult Education. Only those towns in the region with Adult Education students are listed. All other towns had no activity.

<sup>16</sup>Mr. Steve Carter of the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education provided these numbers from the US DOE Database.

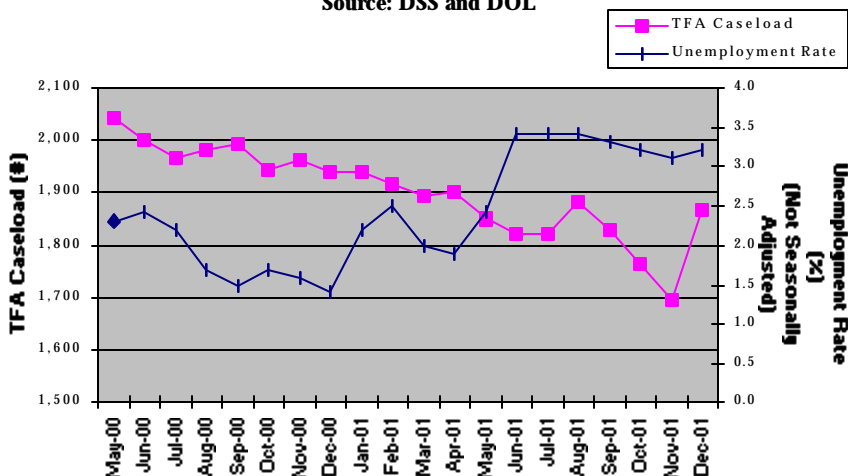
<sup>17</sup> Schools surveyed included O'Brien, Bullard-Havens, Wright, Pratt, and the Stratford School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians.

<sup>18</sup> The following programs are approved training programs under the Workforce Investment Act: Bullard-Havens: (Auto Mechanics, Culinary Arts, Electro-Mechanical, Welding, and Medical Assistant); J.M. Wright: (Advanced Technology, Auto Body, Auto Mechanics, Culinary Arts, Electrician, Hair Dressing & Cosmetology, Machine Tool, and Plumbing) and School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians (Airframe and Powerplant, and Avionics) and Platt Regional Vocational Technical School: (Medical Assistant, Signal and Communication).

**D: Impact of the Recession**

**Figure 18: Unemployment Rate and the TFA Time-limited Caseload**

Source: DSS and DOL



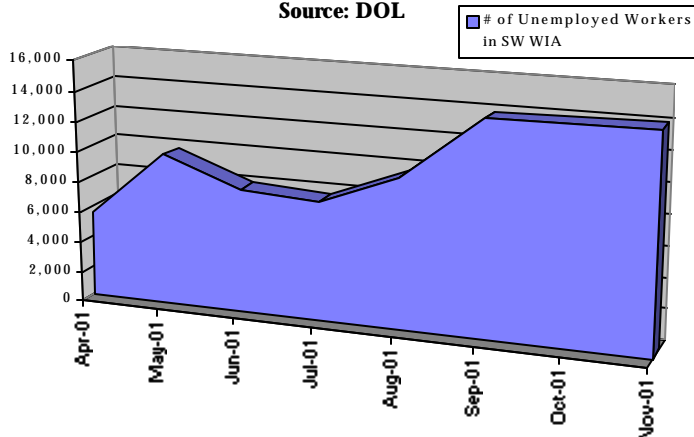
This section addresses how regional layoffs have affected former TFA clients and examines the ratio between increases in the unemployment rate and TFA caseload.

**After a sustained decline of the TFA caseload, levels have increased in December.**

**Rising Unemployment Rate:** The dramatic rise in area unemployment from June 2001 – December 2001, starting with the economic downturn in early summer of 2001, coincides with the end of the declining trend in TFA caseload. It is not yet possible to accurately measure the impact of rising unemployment on TFA caseload numbers as December is a traditional time of increase because of seasonal lay-offs.

**Figure 19: Impact of Unemployment on the Job Market**

Source: DOL



**Remaining TFA Population:**

The static nature of the existing caseload comes from the challenges involved in servicing a population experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

In the seven months between April and November of 2001, the number of unemployed persons in the Southwestern Region increased by 65%. The logical assumption to be made is that rising unemployment has created a highly competitive job market, decreasing the placement options for TFA clients.

While these factors offer a sensible argument, it is still too early to draw definite conclusions regarding the effect of increasing unemployment on the TFA caseload.

**Front line worker opinion:** Case managers indicated the following impacts attributable to a recessive economy:

- With rising unemployment, TFA clients are unable to compete for anything but entry-level positions;
- TFA clients and ex-TFA clients are having trouble with advancement or career-laddering;

- Ex-TFA alumni of various service programs are returning for assistance as they are recently out of work;
- Layoffs are occurring in manufacturing and hospitality/tourism sectors; and
- Seasonal hiring is increasing, but long-term and full-time employment is decreasing.

Case managers described their caseloads as follows:

- In Bridgeport, the caseload is actually declining, cooperation (e.g., clients are proactive about scheduling appointments and accessing services) is increasing;
- In Stamford and Ansonia, the caseload is remaining fairly constant; and
- In Norwalk, the caseload is increasing.

## **VI. Conclusions**

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### **Demographic Profile and Status of the Southwestern Region's TFA Population**

- 64% of TFA clients reside in Bridgeport; 89% of TFA clients are female; and Hispanics and Black or African Americans comprise 39% and 37% of TFA clients respectively.
- 87% of TFA clients speak English as a primary language; and 71% of Hispanics speak English as a primary language.
- Work status does not vary with primary language, but income does vary slightly with primary language.
- 48% of working TFA clients have been employed less than six months, while 8% have been working over two years and still do not earn enough to exit TFA assistance.
- Most TFA clients had difficulty adapting to the workplace and stopped working or were terminated soon after placement.
- The Department of Social Services South West Region has had few exiting clients compared to comparably sized regions in Connecticut because of DSS's strict adherence to existing sanctioning policies.

### **Barriers to Employment for the Southwestern Region's TFA Population**

- Childcare and Low Educational Attainment are the most common barriers to employment for TFA clients.
- Educational attainment varies slightly with primary language spoken.
- Work status varies with educational attainment.
- Only 19% of TFA clients are functioning at a high school level in math. 51% are functioning below a 7th grade level in math.
- Only 6% of TFA clients surpass the CCS threshold to be eligible for Workforce Investment Act training services.
- A significant gap exists between educational attainment reported by TFA clients and their skill levels as measured by CCS scores.
- 49% of TFA clients experience three or more barriers to employment, and 76% of Non-English speaking TFA clients experience three or more barriers to employment.

### **TFA Support Services**

- 94% of TFA clients are dependent on public transportation, and 2,499 TFA clients utilize public transportation quarterly.
- 67% (600) TFA clients needed assistance in arranging for childcare, and 40% (364) needed assistance in completing the Childcare Assistance Program (Kid Care) application.
- While Transportation and Childcare continue to have the largest need and highest utilization rates, TFA clients require assistance and utilize services for several other significant barriers, most notably housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services.

### **Local Education and Training Opportunities and Market Conditions**

- The economic outlook for the Southwestern region shows thousands of job openings over the next 7—8 years, however both clients and Case Managers reported very low availability of entry-level jobs in December 2001.
- The WorkPlace Inc. is correctly emphasizing Customer Service as the most pressing local area for training, and may want to solicit proposals and programming in the Food Service, Health Care, and Cleaning Services.
- The WorkPlace should focus on sectors with career ladders, and provide specific programming to upgrade entry-level workers.
- One thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven TFA clients were members of CT Works, and ninety-six TFA clients accessed Individual Training Accounts (ITA) through the CT Works Centers during the past fiscal year.
- Utilization of Adult Education services has increased significantly over the past year, but is still under-utilized given the population's need for basic skills.
- After a sustained decline of the TFA caseload, levels have increased in December.

<b>Appendix Table I: Demographics of all Southwestern Region Towns</b>
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<b>Appendix Table 1: Demographics of TFA Clients in the Southwestern Region Towns</b>
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Town	Total	Gender			Race / Ethnicity							
		Female	%	Male	Black/African American	%	Caucasian	%	Hispanic	%	Asian	
<b><i>Bridgeport Labor Area</i></b>												
Bridgeport	1,207	1,051	87%	156	446	37%	265	22%	476	39%	20	2%
Easton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fairfield	14	12	86%	2	5	36%	4	29%	5	36%	-	0%
Milford	60	56	93%	4	17	28%	13	22%	27	45%	3	5%
Monroe	4	4	100%	-	1	25%	-	0%	3	75%	-	0%
Stratford	58	51	88%	7	18	31%	16	28%	23	40%	1	2%
Trumbull	9	7	78%	2	2	22%	3	33%	3	33%	1	11%
<b><i>Stamford Labor Area</i></b>												
Darien	2	2	100%	-	-	0%	-	0%	2	100%	-	0%
Greenwich	18	16	89%	2	8	44%	5	28%	5	28%	-	0%
New Canaan	2	1	50%	1	1	50%	1	50%	-	0%	-	0%
Stamford	125	111	89%	14	42	34%	27	22%	54	43%	2	2%
<b><i>Valley Service Area</i></b>												
Ansonia	90	85	94%	5	44	49%	18	20%	26	29%	2	2%
Derby	40	35	88%	5	23	58%	5	13%	12	30%	0	0%
Oxford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seymour	19	18	95%	1	5	26%	4	21%	10	53%	-	0%
Shelton	31	28	90%	3	12	39%	6	19%	11	35%	2	6%
<b><i>Norwalk Service Area</i></b>												
Norwalk	207	193	93%	14	67	32%	48	23%	87	42%	5	2%
Weston	2	2	100%	-	1	50%	1	50%	-	0%	-	0%
Westport	5	5	100%	-	2	40%	1	20%	2	40%	-	0%
Wilton	2	2	100%	-	-	0%	1	50%	1	50%	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,895</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2%</b>

Eligibility Management System

<b>Appendix Table II: Utilization of Training Programs</b>
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The following represents training opportunities offered through the WorkPlace, Inc. during calendar year 2001 utilizing Welfare to Work, TANF, and JFES funding. The training programs are categorized according to those sectors and specific job titles identified above as having the most entry-level positions available annually. The funding streams catalogued are either specifically for TFA clients or are overwhelmingly utilized by TFA clients.

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Slots available</b>	<b>Slots filled</b>	<b>Planned Placements</b>	<b>Actual Placements</b>
<b>Customer Service (Cashier, Retail Sales, Counter and Rental Clerks)</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings: 5,440</b>					
Career TEAM – Customer Service	WtW-F 98-00	38	35	30	23
Career TEAM – Customer Service	WtW-C 98-02	50	23	36	23
Career Resources – Bilingual Customer Service	JFES 00--01	46	21	29	10
Career TEAM – Service Sector	JFES 00-01	52	22	34	11
AIM (OJT w/CVS) – Photo Tech & Pharmacy Ass't*	JFES 01-02	25	11	19	4
Career Resources – Step Up*	JFES 01-02	85	58	56	3
NEON – Bilingual Customer Service*	JFES 01-02	20	2	13	0
TEAM – Customer Service*	JFES 01-02	12	7	8	0
Career TEAM – Customer Service	WtW-F 99-01	79	42	47	17
Career Resources – Computer*	WtW-F 99-02	50	30	30	23
Goodwill – Office (Stamford)*	WtW-F 99-02	10	11	6	6
Goodwill – Office (Norwalk)*	WtW-F 99-02	22	28	13	14
Goodwill – Office (Bridgeport)*	WtW-F 99-02	40	42	24	17
<i>Computer Skills (presumed to be related to the customer service/office job titles listed above)</i>					
Career Resources – Career Map	JFES 00-01	67	51	44	30
TEAM – PC Literacy	JFES 00-01	26	17	17	7
Workforce Readiness – Computer Literacy	JFES 00-01	15	9	10	2
Women's Mentoring Network – Pilot Vouchers	JFES 00-01	15	11	10	1
Women's Mentoring Network – Upgrade Vouchers	JFES 00-01	15	2	N/A	0
TEAM – PC Literacy*	JFES 01-02	10	4	7	4
Family & Children's Agency – Training Vouchers*	JFES 01-02	20	14	13	0
A First Step – Computer*	WtW-F 99-02	40	24	24	8
NEON – Computer*	WtW-F 99-02	15	21	8	6
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE TOTALS</b>		<b>752</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>Food Service (Wait Staff, Food Prep, Counter Attendants, Combined Service &amp; Food Prep)</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings: 3,484</b>					
ETI – Culinary	WtW-F 99-01	12	12	7	6
<b>FOOD SERVICE TOTALS</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health Care (Nursing Aids, Home Health Aids)</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings: 1,137</b>					
Progressive Training Assoc. – Training Vouchers*	JFES 01-02	20	25	13	3
Milford ETA – Certified Nurse Aide *	JFES 01-02	16	13	11	5
Milford ETA – Certified Nurse Aide	WtW-F 99-01	20	20	12	18
<b>HEALTH CARE TOTALS</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26</b>

\*Program is ongoing and outcomes are not final.

Vendor	Funding Source	Slots available	Slots filled	Planned Placements	Actual Placements
<b>Cleaning Services (Janitors &amp; Cleaners, Maids &amp; Housekeeping Cleaners)</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings 1,097</b>					
<i>No Programs Identified</i>					
<b>Physical Labor (Helpers/Laborers/Movers, and Landscaping/Groundskeeping)</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings: 946</b>					
<i>No Programs Identified</i>					
<b>Manufacturing</b>					
<b>Annual Openings: 941</b>					
TEAM – Microboard Processing	JFES 00-01	10	0	7	0
MANUFACTURING TOTALS		10	0	7	0
<b>Child Care Workers &amp; Social/Human Services Assistants</b>					
<b>Combined Annual Openings: 736</b>					
HNH – Day Care/ Social Service Assistant	JFES 00-01	15	15	10	11
HNH – Day Care/ Social Service Assistant*	JFES 01-02	20	15	13	2
TEAM – Child Care Worker*	JFES 01-02	10	1	7	0
Hall Neighborhood House – Day Care Assistant	WtW-F 98-00	44	42	35	32
CHILD CARE/SOCIAL SERVICE TOTALS		<b>89</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Security Services (Guards)</b>					
<b>Annual Openings: 544</b>					
<i>No Programs Identified</i>					
<b>Job Search Skills</b>					
City of Bridgeport*	WtW-C 98-02	65	82	37	44
Career Resources*	WtW-C 98-02	233	126	141	101
NEON, Inc. *	WtW-C 98-02	40	8	29	0
City of Stamford*	WtW-C 98-02	90	101	51	55
CTE, Inc. *	WtW-C 98-02	41	30	31	9
TEAM, Inc. Regional*	WtW-C 98-02	41	22	31	23
TEAM, Inc. Local*	WtW-C 98-02	41	31	23	23
Goodwill	WtW-F 98-01	55	87	44	53
Career Resources	WtW-F 98-01	50	51	40	47
Goodwill	WtW-F 98-01	5	5	4	0
NEON	WtW-F 98-01	38	30	30	4
Family and Children's Agency	WtW-F 98-01	38	17	30	14
TEAM	WtW-F 98-01	25	25	20	18
University School – Home Study H.S. Diploma	WtW-F 98-01	80	80	N/A	N/A
Ansonia DOL – Job Search*	JFES 01-02	120	44	60	15
Bridgeport DOL – Job Search (English)*	JFES 01-02	165	76	83	14
Bridgeport DOL - Job Search (Spanish)*	JFES 01-02	150	46	75	11
Stamford DOL (in Norwalk) – Job Search*	JFES 01-02	60	21	30	4
Stamford DOL – Job Search*	JFES 01-02	60	24	30	5
<b>JOB SEARCH TOTALS</b>		<b>1,397</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>440</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>					
<b>TOTAL ALL CATEGORIES</b>		<b>2,351</b>	<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,405</b>	<b>739</b>

\*Program is ongoing and outcomes are not final.

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