



Strategies to Help Low-Wage Workers Advance

IMPLEMENTATION AND FINAL IMPACTS OF THE
WORK ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT CENTER
(WASC) DEMONSTRATION

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THE WORK ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT CENTER DEMONSTRATION

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Overview

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration was an innovative program designed to increase the incomes of low-wage workers. The program offered participating workers intensive employment retention and advancement services, including career coaching and access to skills training. It also offered them easier access to work supports, in an effort to increase their incomes in the short run and help stabilize their employment. Finally, both services were offered in one location — in existing One-Stop Career Centers created by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 — and by colocated teams of workforce and welfare staff. Services were provided to workers for two years between 2005 and 2010, and the program operated in three sites across the country: Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California.

WASC was evaluated using a randomized control trial, in which individuals who were interested in and eligible for the program were assigned at random to either the WASC group, eligible to receive WASC benefits and services, or a control group, not eligible for WASC services but eligible to seek out existing services in the community. This is the final report in a series of reports prepared for the demonstration, and it covers the effects of WASC on workers' benefit receipt and earnings for three to four years after study entry.

Key Findings

- The program increased workers' receipt of work supports, although the effects varied substantially across the three sites. The largest effects were in San Diego, which had the lowest work support receipt rates at baseline. In that site in Year 2, for example, WASC increased food stamp receipt by 8 percentage points and child care subsidy receipt by 14 percentage points.
- The two programs that were able to offer participants eased access to funds for training — in Dayton and Bridgeport — substantially increased workers' participation in education and training activities and their receipt of certificates and licenses. In Bridgeport, for example, WASC increased participation in education and training by 16 percentage points.
- The same two programs that increased participation in education and training also increased earnings in Year 3. In Dayton, individuals in the WASC group earned \$1,152 (or 8 percent) more than those in the control group. However, the effects in Dayton had faded somewhat by Year 4.

The findings provide a number of lessons for WIA and for advancement policies more generally. In particular, increased access to training for low-income workers like these appears to be a critical part of any advancement strategy. Yet the earnings gains associated with participation in training may be short-lived if participants are not given more guidance about the right types of training to pursue or opportunities for additional training.

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Preface

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration, started in 2005, was an innovative attempt to increase the incomes of low-wage workers. First, it expanded the mission of the One-Stop Career Centers (funded by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) to offer incumbent workers access to advancement services. Although there is a clear need for such services — most low-wage workers do not advance much over time on their own — these workers are typically not eligible for this type of help through public agencies. The One-Stop Centers, for example, focus largely on the unemployed. Second, it made the often-burdensome process of applying for benefits simpler for these workers. Many working individuals and families who are eligible for key benefits, such as food stamps and public health insurance, do not receive them. Finally, both of these services were offered in one location, at the participating One-Stop Centers, by teams of workforce development and welfare staff working together in the same unit.

This final report presents findings about the WASC program's effects on the use of work supports, participation in training, employment, and earnings for up to four years after individuals entered the study. WASC increased workers' receipt of work supports, although the effects varied substantially across the three sites, depending on how far the site could go toward simplification and how many workers in that site had already received work supports before the study began. Not surprisingly, the increases in work supports largely ended when the program ended, once these workers had to return to the existing benefits system. The two sites whose programs were able to offer participants easier access to funds for training substantially increased workers' participation in education and training activities and their receipt of certificates and licenses. These same two programs led to impacts on earnings that emerged by the third year, although there is some suggestion that the effects faded after that point.

The WASC demonstration will inform the next generation of advancement policies through its presentation of what kinds of work and training low-wage workers want, how they think about work supports and advancement, and what services work or do not work to help them advance. A key finding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), for example, is that the One-Stop Centers can broaden their mission and culture to serve low-wage workers but that access to funds for training may be a key component. More broadly, the findings speak to the efficacy of career coaching, the role that work supports can play in either supporting or hindering advancement, and the need for more guidance for workers as they pursue the training that has become increasingly necessary to move ahead in today's labor market.

Gordon L. Berlin
President

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MDRC's capacity to carry out a demonstration with an ambitious learning agenda depends heavily on the ongoing commitment of key funding partners. They are acknowledged at the front of the report.

WASC's Work Advancement Calculator was based in part on an earlier benefits estimator entitled "Oregon Helps," developed for Multnomah County, Oregon.

Several people provided help with securing the necessary data: Fran Hersh, Vickie Maddux, Mary Lou Owens, Staci Wise, David Bastian, Ernest Jackson, Michelle Albast, Steven H. Hufford, and Robert Bergin at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; Heath MacAlpine, Erthale Barnes, and Vickie Mosier from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services in Ohio; Aileen Douglas from the Employment Development Department in California; Patrick Valdivia, Roxanne Brown, Diane Francis, Donna Rodriguez, and Michael Cargal at the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency; Jolie Buberl at the Child Development Associates San Diego; Kathleen Ferenchak at the YMCA Childcare Resource Service San Diego; Jessica Mosier at the Workforce Partnership; Raphael A. Kassman, Louis V. Polzella, Craig Tyler, Theresa Emery, Peter J. Palermino, Ellen Tracy, and Rose T. Ciarcia at the Department of Social Services in Connecticut; Tony Lapenta and Bob Nashner at the Affiliated Computer Services Connecticut; and Liam McGucken and Andrew Conden at the Connecticut Department of Labor.

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with the exchange, logging, and archiving of data files for the project. Albert Fang, Anne Warren, Aaron Hill, and Paulette Staum programmed the data and assisted in the analysis. Daniel Schlaff coordinated production of the report. Robert Weber edited the report, and David Sobel and Stephanie Cowell prepared it for publication.

Finally, we extend our deep appreciation to the people who participated in the study and gave generously of their time to respond to a survey and participate in focus groups.

The Authors

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration, which studied a program designed to increase the incomes of low-wage workers. The program offered participating workers intensive employment retention and advancement services, including career coaching and access to skills training. It also offered them easier access to work supports, in an effort to increase their incomes in the short run and help stabilize their employment. A unique feature of WASC is that all of its services were provided in a single location: the One-Stop Career Centers created by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.

MDRC developed and managed the WASC demonstration and was responsible for its evaluation. The demonstration has been funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Ford Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project also received grants from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

The program was run in One-Stop Centers in three cities across the United States — Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California — and it offered services to participating workers for two years. It was evaluated using a random assignment research design, in which individuals eligible for the demonstration were assigned at random to the WASC group or to a control group. The WASC group was eligible to receive WASC benefits and services, while the control group was not eligible for WASC services but could seek out existing services in the community. The impact of WASC is assessed by comparing outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. This is the final report in a series of reports prepared for the demonstration, covering effects on workers' benefit receipt, employment, and earnings for three to four years after study entry.

Key findings include:

- The program increased workers' receipt of work supports, although the effects varied substantially across the three sites. The largest effects were in the site that had the lowest rates of work support receipt at baseline.
- The two programs that succeeded in simplifying access to funds for training substantially increased workers' participation in education and training activities and their receipt of certificates and licenses.

- The two programs that increased participation in education and training also increased earnings in Year 3, although the effects in one of those sites had faded somewhat by Year 4.

The WASC Model

The WASC model included the provision of retention and advancement services and simplified access to financial work supports — all offered in one location by colocated units of workforce and welfare staff. Key work supports included food stamps, medical insurance for adults (Medicaid) and for children (Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP), subsidized child care, and both the federal and the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC).¹ Services were offered to participants for up to two years. Key elements of the model include the following:²

- **Career coaching.** Coaches worked with participants to identify and pursue short- and long-term advancement goals; move up at their current employers or find better jobs elsewhere; or, for those with unstable employment, identify and address barriers to job retention.
- **Skills development.** Staff referred participants to education and training programs and helped them secure funding to cover the costs, through WIA or other funds, which typically paid full tuition costs.
- **Education about available work supports.** Staff used a Web-based tool called the “Work Advancement Calculator,” which uses household information to identify all the benefits for which participants appeared to be eligible and to calculate the likely effect of these benefits on household income.
- **Simplified procedures to apply for work supports.** Staff assisted participants with applications for all programs, reduced the amount of documentation required across different programs, extended the interval between recertification for benefits, and offered nonstandard office hours.

¹The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

²WASC planners had hoped that a key feature of the model would be to offer services to groups of participants at their workplaces, which would make participation more convenient and would strengthen ties with employers. For reasons discussed in an earlier report, however, providing services at the workplace did not turn out to be a key feature of the WASC model as it was actually implemented. See Cynthia Miller, Betsy L. Tessler, and Mark van Dok, *Strategies to Help Low-Wage Workers Advance: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) Demonstration* (New York: MDRC, 2009).

- **Services provided in one place.** Staff from the workforce and welfare systems were colocated not just in the same One-Stop Center but within the same unit within the center.

Although all three sites successfully implemented the general WASC model, the variation in resources available at each site led to some differences in terms of what features were emphasized. This variation suggests that the sites can be thought of as three different versions of the WASC model.

- **WASC in Dayton: Strong combination of coaching and access to training.** Access to very generous training dollars through WIA; discretionary funds to support additional training; incentives for training and sustained work; easier access to work supports, especially in redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in San Diego: Mostly coaching.** Very limited access to funds for training; referral to free or low-cost training in community; focus on career coaching and advancing at current employer; easier access to work supports, particularly access to child care funding and application and redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in Bridgeport: Mostly access to training.** Some access to funds for training through WIA; discretionary funds to pay for training outside WIA, available for broader range of training programs; easier access to work supports, including access to a work support specialist

The WASC Evaluation

Study enrollment began in Dayton and San Diego in fall 2005 and continued through early 2007 and late 2007, respectively. Bridgeport enrolled individuals into the study between fall 2006 and early 2008. WASC services were available to individuals in the WASC group for two years after study entry.

MDRC tracked outcomes for the study participants using a variety of data sources. A 12-month survey covers participation in education and training, benefit receipt, and work experiences in the first year after study entry. Administrative records data capture employment and earnings through Year 3 in Bridgeport and through Year 4 in San Diego and Dayton. Finally, records data provide information on food stamp receipt through Year 2 in Bridgeport and Year 3 in San Diego and Dayton.

WASC recruited two broad and sometimes overlapping target groups: (1) low-wage workers and (2) reemployed dislocated workers, or those who have lost a job and become reemployed at a lower wage rate. Data collected at study entry indicate that the program recruited a diverse segment of the low-wage worker population. For example, a majority of study participants are women, although only about half were single parents at enrollment. A majority of study participants are black or Hispanic, and a large fraction in one site are foreign born. Finally, less than half of all study participants were working full time when they entered the study, and most did not receive key fringe benefits from employers.

Key Findings

Overall, all three sites implemented WASC largely as designed, although they did it in different ways and to varying degrees. The program succeeded in delivering more streamlined and more integrated workforce development and work support services to its customers, although there were some challenges along the way. Staff sometimes had higher-than-desired caseloads, and they were hard pressed to provide as high-quality advancement coaching as was expected. The Bridgeport program struggled more than the other two programs, facing a smaller staff, repeated staff turnovers, and less flexibility, which hindered their ability to serve a working population; for example, staff were not able to extend their work hours to meet with working people after business hours or to meet them outside the WASC office.

Nevertheless, managers and staff at all three sites were able to implement a program that provided more proactive, more personalized attention than customers would likely have received in the absence of the program.

- **WASC staff provided easier access to work supports for customers.** WASC eased access to work supports by providing customers with more immediate access to staff who could help them with eligibility determination and the application process. These staff were able to reduce the amount of paperwork, consolidate forms, and conduct eligibility determinations across multiple work supports. On the 12-month survey, individuals in the WASC groups were much more likely than those in the control groups to respond that site staff both encouraged and helped them apply for key work supports, such as food stamps, Medicaid, child care, and the EITC.
- **WASC increased individuals' receipt of work supports, although the effects varied, with large and widespread effects in San Diego and no effects in Bridgeport.** In San Diego, WASC increased individuals' receipt of food stamps by 8 percentage points (from 29 percent for the control group to 37 percent for the WASC group). The program had similarly large effects in

San Diego on the use of publicly funded health care and on the receipt of child care subsidies. The primary effect in Dayton was a modest increase in food stamp receipt. Bridgeport's program had no effects on the receipt of any of the key work supports.

- **WASC staff provided a range of advancement services to participants.** At all three sites, individuals in the WASC group were more likely than those in the control group to say that they received help and encouragement with advancement, such as going to school or training, setting career goals, and getting a better job. The program in San Diego had the most widespread effects in terms of encouragement and help with advancement, including advancing at one's current employer. Yet that program was not able to offer eased access to funds for training, given that applying for funds through WIA was especially burdensome for working individuals.
- **WASC increased participation in education and training and the receipt of vocational licenses or certificates in Dayton and Bridgeport.** WASC in these two sites led to large increases in participation in education or training — increases of 23 percentage points in Dayton and 16 percentage points in Bridgeport. The increase in Dayton was in both vocational training and college courses, while much of the increase in Bridgeport was in vocational training. Both programs increased the fraction of individuals who had obtained a vocational license or certificate by the time of the 12-month survey.
- **WASC increased earnings in Year 3 in Dayton and Bridgeport. Effects in Dayton did not persist through Year 4, while data for Year 4 are not available for Bridgeport.** During the third year of follow-up in Dayton, individuals in the WASC group earned \$14,752, or \$1,152 more than their control group counterparts — an increase of 8 percent. The WASC program in Bridgeport led to a similar increase in earnings that emerged in Year 3. The effect on earnings in Dayton was somewhat smaller and was no longer statistically significant in Year 4.

Lessons from the WASC Demonstration

The WASC program represents an ambitious attempt to build the capacity of the workforce development system's One-Stop Career Centers to recruit a new population of low-wage workers into their offices, to help them obtain access to work supports, and to provide them with advancement services to increase their earnings. The findings offer lessons and suggestions

for the Workforce Investment Act as it serves incumbent workers but also for policies in general that aim to help these workers advance.

The One-Stop Career Centers created by WIA can broaden their mission and achieve the culture change necessary to serve low-wage workers. However, an important part of serving these workers is providing access to funds for training.

The One-Stop Centers participating in the demonstration were generally successful in implementing the WASC model, offering workers advancement and work support services in one location and with teams of staff. However, given the varying program rules across the localities, the sites differed in the extent to which they could offer these workers assistance with training. In particular, rules at the San Diego site made access to these funds very difficult. Findings from the other two sites suggest what might have occurred for participants in San Diego had they been able to get help with the costs of training.

A significant share of the workers who enrolled in the demonstration would have received one or more work supports on their own (in the absence of the program) or would have been ineligible to receive them. However, simplifying access to them can increase the use of work supports among workers who would have had low participation rates.

WASC had its biggest and most widespread effects on the receipt of work supports in San Diego, where the take-up of these benefits would have been relatively low, as indicated by take-up rates among individuals in the control group. The program in this site increased the receipt of food stamps, publicly provided health care coverage, and child care subsidies. In contrast, in Dayton and Bridgeport, where effects were either more modest or zero, control group receipt rates were higher, owing to state and local policies and possibly to the type of individuals who signed up for WASC services in these sites, which left no room for WASC to make a difference. The findings suggest additional consideration of where to target WASC services and whether they complement or duplicate ongoing state and county efforts. One aspect of how they might be complementary is the way in which they were offered as part of a package. The implementation findings suggest that offering access to work supports along with advancement services proved to be more convenient for low-wage workers and helped to reduce the stigma sometimes associated with applying for these benefits. In addition, many workers were drawn to the program because of the advancement services it provided, suggesting that simply offering easier access to work supports by itself might not attract many low-wage workers who would nonetheless be eligible.

Increasing the take-up of certain work supports that are not tied to work, such as food stamps, does not appear to promote advancement and may even discourage it.

Evidence from the San Diego site — where the WASC program increased the receipt of both food stamps and publicly provided health care coverage — suggests that these work supports, which are not conditioned on work, may have encouraged some individuals to reduce their work hours or not to move back into work as quickly as they would have otherwise. These findings are consistent with other research suggesting that benefit use discourages work because these benefits are taxed away as earnings increase.³ In addition, the implementation findings from all three sites suggest that some staff found it difficult to connect participants to work supports only to later try to convince them that they would be better off in the long run without these supports.⁴ The findings raise the question of whether receipt of work supports should be a key component of a program designed to promote advancement. At a minimum, this component should be coupled with strong retention and advancement services in order to counteract any potential work disincentives.

Generic career coaching, especially coaching focused on moving up in the current job, is unlikely to help individuals achieve earnings gains.

The San Diego site focused its advancement services largely on the coaching component, particularly coaching that focused on how to move up within one's current employer. The findings suggest that this service had little impact. Even in the other two sites, however, the type of coaching offered was fairly general and unlikely to have had much effect on advancement. In Dayton and Bridgeport, staff either facilitated access to funding for training — for those individuals who knew that they wanted to pursue training — or provided job listings and helped participants define goals and hone their interview skills. Few coaches possessed an in-depth knowledge of the local labor market, and none had connections to local employers.

Easier access to funding for training can increase participation rates. However, the earnings gains associated with this participation may be short-lived if participants are not given more guidance about the right types of training to pursue or about opportunities for additional training.

In both Dayton and Bridgeport, where WASC increased participation in education and training (much of it for the health care sector), positive effects on earnings emerged in Year 3. The timing of the effects suggests that they were caused by the increased training. In Dayton, however, where there is longer follow-up, these effects diminished somewhat by Year 4 and were no longer statistically significant. While the economic downturn may have played a role in the diminishing impacts, the findings suggest that individuals may need more assistance in terms of the types of training to pursue — particularly, training that is recognized by employers

³For evidence from the Food Stamp Program, see, for example, Hilary Williamson Hoynes and Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, “Work Incentives and the Food Stamp Program,” Working Paper 16198 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010).

⁴Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

and that leads to jobs in higher-paying, in-demand industries. Finally, workers may have trained for jobs that ultimately do lead to advancement, but advancing may require additional training beyond that obtained through their time in WASC. The Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) certificate, for example, is certainly one step on the way to a higher-paying nursing position, but it is just the first step of a ladder on which the rungs are quite far apart. Staying ahead in today's labor market requires continuous skill building, and WASC may have offered low-wage workers an important first step.

Chapter 1

The WASC Model and Evaluation

Introduction

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration was an innovative program designed to increase the incomes of low-wage workers. The program offered participating workers intensive employment retention and advancement services, including career coaching and access to skills training. It also offered them easier access to work supports, in an effort to increase their incomes in the short run and help stabilize their employment. Finally, both services, which were provided for two years to program participants, were offered in one location — in existing One-Stop Career Centers — and by colocated teams of workforce and welfare staff. The program operated in three sites across the country between 2005 and 2010.

The program was innovative in several respects. First, it offered incumbent workers access to advancement services. Low-wage workers are typically not eligible for these types of services through public agencies, although the data indicate a clear need for such services. About one in four workers in the United States earn less than \$11 per hour, and most of them are unlikely to see large gains in earnings over time.¹ For example, the One-Stop Centers — established through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, with the aim of helping individuals find jobs or acquire the skills needed to find jobs — focus largely on the unemployed. Second, although some states and agencies have attempted to make access to work supports easier for eligible families, WASC went further in an attempt to make the process of applying even simpler for the group of low-wage, low-income workers that it targeted. Participation rate data show that many families who are eligible for key benefits, such as food stamps and public health insurance, do not receive them.² Finally, what makes WASC most unique is that the program offered both types of services in one location.

WASC was evaluated using a randomized control trial, in which individuals who were interested in and eligible for the program were assigned at random to either the WASC group, eligible to receive WASC benefits and services, or a control group, not eligible for WASC services but eligible to seek out existing services in the community. This is the final report in a series of reports prepared for the demonstration, and it covers the effects of WASC on workers' benefit receipt and earnings for three to four years after study entry. The demonstration,

¹U.S. Department of Labor (2011); Andersson, Holzer, and Lane (2005).

²The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

run in three sites — Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California — was funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Ford Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project has also been supported by earlier grants from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

An earlier report presented WASC's interim effects for low-wage workers enrolled in the Dayton and San Diego sites.³ After one year, the WASC program in both sites had increased low-wage workers' receipt of food stamps and publicly funded health care coverage. In addition, the program in Dayton led to a notable increase in participation in education and training activities. Individuals who were eligible for WASC in Dayton were also more likely to have received a vocational certificate or license by the one-year point. The program did not increase employment or earnings in either site through Year 1, and, in San Diego, it led to a small reduction in employment covered by the unemployment insurance (UI) system. The lack of earnings gains was largely expected, since advances from career coaching and/or training typically take longer than one year to emerge.

This final report on WASC presents a longer-term look at the program's effects, including results after four years in Dayton and San Diego — or two years after program services ended — and results after three years in Bridgeport. For the first two sites, the report assesses whether the increases in food stamp receipt were sustained beyond Year 1 and whether the programs began to have an effect on earnings, especially given the early effects on training that were observed in Dayton. For the Bridgeport site, this report presents a first look at the program's effects.

WASC was an ambitious program that set out to build the capacity of the workforce system's One-Stop Career Centers to serve a new population and to develop new practices to serve them. Findings from the demonstration can inform the debate over the structure of WIA services and over the most effective ways to connect low-income individuals to work supports. In addition, although the immediate focus of policy is largely on the unemployed, given the recent economic downturn, the longer-term issue of how to help low-wage workers advance will remain. In fact, the recession may heighten the need for such services, since many displaced workers will feel the effects of the recession, in terms of reduced wages, for years to come.⁴

³See Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

⁴von Wachter, Song, and Manchester (2007).

The WASC Model

The WASC model consisted of two key components: employment retention and advancement services and easier access to financial work supports. WASC’s primary goal, however, was focused on employment and earnings — that is, on helping low-wage workers stay employed, build skills, and advance. “Advancement” is defined for this evaluation more broadly than an increase in earnings and also includes increases in wages, work hours, and employer-provided benefits or an improved work schedule.

Advancement Services

The WASC program was designed to promote advancement in two key ways:⁵

- **Career coaching.** Career coaches worked with participants to identify short- and long-term advancement goals and the steps necessary to reach them. For example, participants received guidance about securing promotions, raises, and increased hours and benefits in their current jobs. WASC staff also helped participants find higher-paying positions elsewhere, with job developers sometimes identifying such positions. To increase participants’ knowledge about career opportunities, WASC staff used skills and interest assessments and set up informational interviews with employers. Finally, for those participants whose employment was unstable, career coaches worked to help them identify and address barriers to job retention.
- **Skills development.** Participants could increase their skills to qualify for better-paying jobs through traditional classroom-based training, on-the-job training opportunities, and paid work experience. WASC referred participants to other workforce development providers, some of whom may have been based in the One-Stop Center. In addition, the WASC sites set aside resources, through WIA and other sources, for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and to underwrite a variety of education and training costs.

Table 1.1 summarizes the advancement services available to WASC participants and how these differed from services that typically would be available to low-wage workers. The table illustrates that, within the broad parameters of the WASC model, sites had leeway to offer

⁵Another component of the model that was envisioned by WASC designers was employer-based services, premised on the idea that providing services to groups of participants at their workplaces would make participation more convenient, would strengthen ties with employers, and would facilitate advancement within the current firm. However, for various reasons, this feature of the model was not implemented in the three participating sites. For more information about the employer-based model, see Schultz and Seith (2011).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Table 1.1

Advancement Services in WASC Sites Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Type of Service	Services Available Under WASC	Typical Services Before WASC
Active advancement coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent contact with staff - Develop advancement plan - Discuss interaction of advancement and work supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No advancement coaching available - Case management at One-Stop Career Centers focused on job placement only - Bridgeport: Advancement services to low-wage workers through the Academy for Career Advancement
General employment assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff-assisted career assessments, labor market information, and job search assistance - Dayton: Generous cash incentives for maintaining steady employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career assessments, labor market information, and job search assistance available at One-Stop Career Centers, but largely self-directed for working individuals - Dayton: One-Stop Career Center serves working individuals
Training assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance applying for existing training funds, some of which are through WIA - Dayton and Bridgeport: Streamlined application for WIA funds - Dayton: Generous cash incentives for participating in training while working and for completing training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WIA funds for training generally not available to working individuals, except in Dayton, where access to training funds is still very limited for workers

NOTE: WIA = Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

services to fit their local needs or to take advantage of existing funding opportunities. As a result, the three sites are considered throughout this report as distinct programs. For example, the Dayton site had considerable discretionary funding and was able to offer generous cash incentives for training enrollment and completion. In addition, that site was able to provide incentives, in the form of transportation assistance and child care subsidies, for sustained employment. Table 1.1 also highlights that, in the absence of WASC, few services are typically available for low-wage workers at the One-Stop Centers, although individuals can seek out services from within the community — for example, through community-based organizations or community colleges. Although workers are free to enter the One-Stops and take advantage of

job boards and other information, more intensive services and training are largely reserved for unemployed clients.

In the San Diego site, in contrast, access to WIA funding for training proved very burdensome for WASC clients. (See Chapter 2.) Also, many of the training providers that could serve customers with these funds operated during the day, making attendance more difficult. For this reason, the San Diego site focused its advancement services most heavily on career coaching and strategies to advance at one's current employer.

Work Supports

WASC's second goal was to increase low-wage workers' take-up of available work supports, including food stamps, medical insurance for adults (Medicaid) and for children (Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP), subsidized child care, both the federal and the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC). As discussed below, increasing access to work supports was viewed as a way to help workers' efforts to advance.

The program was designed to ease access to work supports in the following ways:

- **Educating customers about work supports.** WASC staff used a Web-based tool developed for the demonstration, the Work Advancement Calculator, to inform customers about supports for which they are eligible. Staff first entered information into the calculator about the participant's household income and size. The calculator then presented all the supports for which the participant appeared eligible and the combined effect of these supports on household income. The calculator could also be used to estimate how changes in earnings would affect the amount of benefits that participants might receive.
- **Simplifying enrollment and recertification procedures.** WASC sites had dedicated staff responsible for assisting with work support applications for all programs, reducing the need for participants to travel to several different offices and fill out several different applications. WASC sought to eliminate multiple, sometimes conflicting eligibility requirements by, whenever possible, creating common eligibility criteria for work supports, reducing the number of procedures and face-to-face interviews and the amount of documentation required to enroll in these programs, and extending the intervals between required recertification of benefits.

Table 1.2 compares the work support services that were available to WASC participants with those typically available to low-wage workers. A key benefit of WASC was the availability of one staff person, in one location, to guide the customer through the application process for multiple benefits. Without WASC, in contrast, clients were required to visit multiple offices, often during work hours, and to wait in long lines to apply. Another key feature of WASC, which differs from other simplification efforts, is that WASC staff were human services workers, meaning that they were able to open an individual's case and start benefits.

Since Dayton and Bridgeport already had fairly simple application procedures, WASC in San Diego represented the biggest change from business as usual. Finally, WASC guaranteed immediate access to child care assistance for all eligible families. This program feature was relevant primarily to the San Diego site, since Dayton and Bridgeport did not have child care waiting lists. In fact, WASC in San Diego avoided waiting lists entirely by subsidizing clients' child care with its own discretionary funds.

To deliver these services, WASC brought the complementary expertise of staff from the workforce system and the welfare system together under one roof and as one unit within the WIA One-Stop Center. Colocating staff in this way increases the convenience of taking advantage of available services and may also reduce any stigma associated with receiving work supports, since services are offered within a workforce development agency. Another potential benefit of colocation is that staff may develop new approaches to serving participants as they relinquish their individual agency affiliations and assume a new identity as a unit.⁶

Three Versions of WASC

As discussed in Chapter 2 and in earlier reports, each of the three sites participating in the WASC demonstration successfully implemented the basic program model, including colocation of workforce and welfare staff, easier access to work supports, and services for advancement. However, the variation in resources available at each site, particularly for the advancement component of the model, led to some differences in terms of what features were emphasized or offered. This variation suggests that the sites can be thought of as three different versions of the WASC model. For this reason, the effects for each site are examined separately. Thus, findings from the three versions provide opportunities to learn about the effectiveness of different strategies and to test different hypotheses underlying the WASC model.

⁶Although colocation of staff from these two agencies is not typical, there has been a move in recent years towards colocation. Even in One-Stop Centers where staff are colocated, however, including in Dayton, staff from these different agencies are not located within the same unit, as they were under the WASC approach.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Table 1.2

Work Support Services in WASC Sites

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Type of Service	Services Available Under WASC	Typical Services Before WASC
Education and information	- Work Advancement Calculator to estimate eligibility for all relevant work supports	- Not available
Physical access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible office hours, including evenings and weekends; staff available to meet outside the office at convenient locations for customers - Application for all relevant work supports at one location - One staff person determines eligibility for all programs and helps customers with applications - Quick access to a staff person - Face-to-face meeting for food stamp redetermination waived 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usually open only during standard work hours - Multiple offices, staff, and applications (except in Dayton) - Long waiting lines - Must go to food stamp office for redetermination meeting
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - San Diego: Three-page application for all work supports replaced the 21 pages of applications needed to apply for food stamps, Medicaid, and child care - Dayton and Bridgeport already simplified - San Diego: Deferred requirement for fingerprinting until customer visited a county food stamp office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple applications in San Diego^a - Simplified application in Dayton and Bridgeport - San Diego: Customer required to be fingerprinted immediately
Waiting lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate access to subsidized child care - San Diego: Child care subsidized using discretionary funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often must join waiting list for subsidized child care although Connecticut and Ohio did not have waiting lists during WASC implementation

NOTE: ^aSan Diego began to simplify its work supports application process for all clients during the demonstration.

- **WASC in Dayton: Strong combination of coaching and access to training.** Access to very generous training dollars through WIA; discretionary funds to support additional training; incentives for training and sustained work; easier access to work supports, especially in redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in San Diego: Mostly coaching.** Very limited access to funds for training; referral to free or low-cost training in community; focus on career coaching and advancing at current employer; easier access to work supports, particularly in access to child care funding and application and redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in Bridgeport: Mostly access to training.** Some access to funds for training through WIA; discretionary funds to pay for training outside WIA, available for broader range of training programs; easier access to work supports, including access to a work support specialist

Expected Effects of the WASC Program

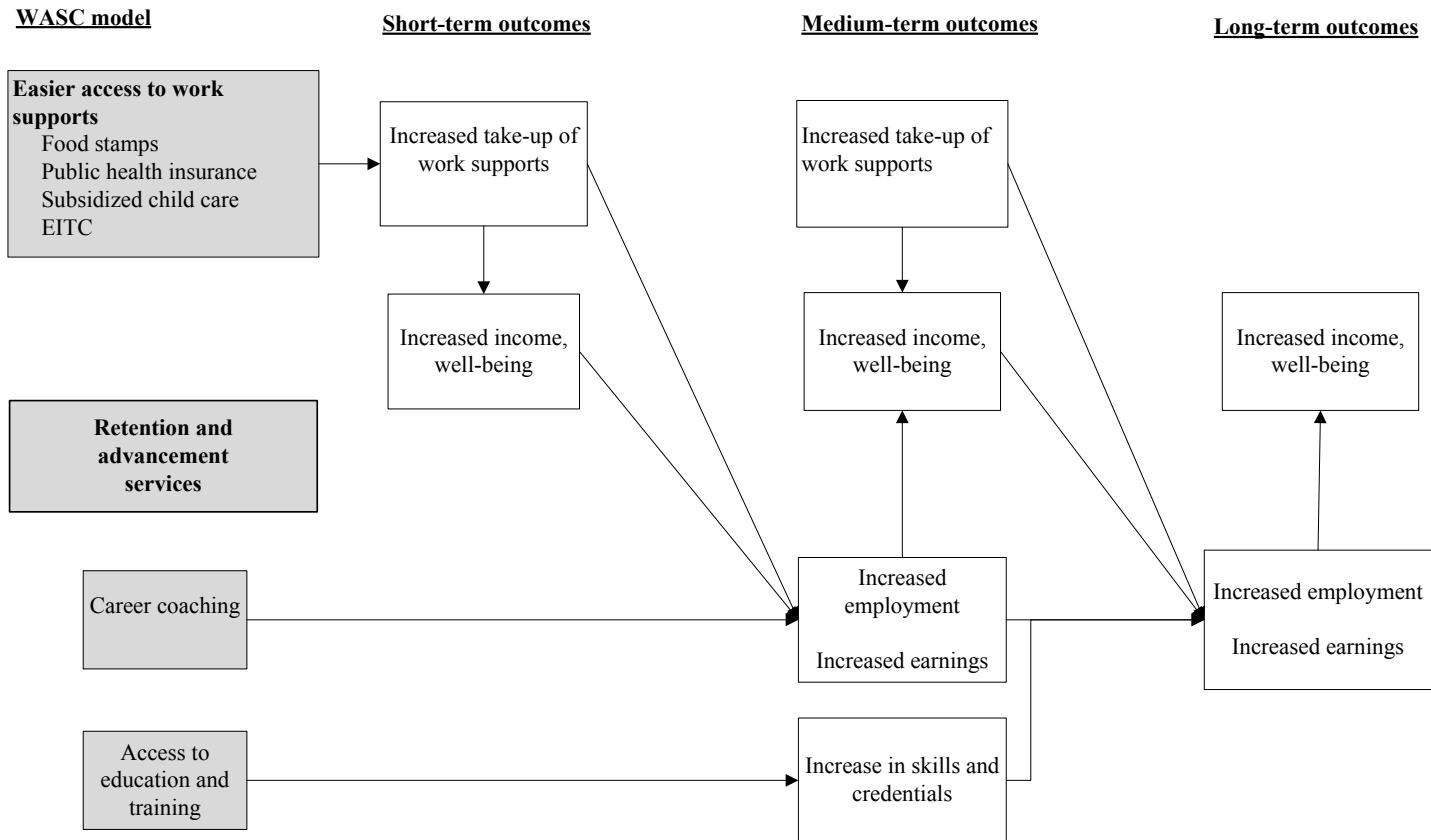
Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual model of the WASC evaluation, indicating the program's expected effects over time and the mechanisms through which these effects might occur. In the short term, the provision of WASC services was hypothesized first to lead to increased use of work supports. Staff might increase participants' take-up of work supports fairly quickly, by providing information about existing benefits and simplifying the application process.

In the medium term, shown in the middle of Figure 1.1, the program might increase the receipt of work supports but might also begin to affect employment and earnings in several ways. First, the receipt of work supports can affect employment and earnings, in some cases by increasing the payoff to continued work and in other cases by helping participants to weather financial or other emergencies. Work supports were thought to be unlikely to encourage advancement, except perhaps through increased employment stability, and may even discourage it if participants fear the loss of benefits as their earnings increase. WASC staff were trained to help participants navigate and anticipate the loss of work supports as they advance. Second, the receipt of work supports might help some workers pursue education and training, either by allowing them to reduce their hours or freeing up other resources to cover the costs of training. Finally, career coaches will help some workers stabilize their employment, by addressing various barriers to job retention. For other participants, staff can help them navigate advancement opportunities at their current employers, encouraging them to ask for more hours or to pursue promotions.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework of the WASC Evaluation



These early gains in employment and earnings in the medium term might then lead to continued earnings gains in the longer term (at the right of Figure 1.1), given that earnings tend to increase with work experience. The career coaching services might also have longer-term effects. For example, career coaches might help some participants explore opportunities in different fields or at other employers, eventually leading them to move to better-paying jobs, although these effects may take longer to observe. Finally, WASC might increase earnings in the longer term by providing guidance on and financial assistance with education and training programs and help with job placement on completion of education and training.

The conceptual model shown in Figure 1.1 also illustrates the ultimate goal of the program: to help low-wage workers substantially increase their household incomes through earnings alone, to the point that they are financially better off and are no longer in need of — or eligible for — financial work supports. As such, there is no expected increase in work supports in the long term.

Program designers also recognized, however, that this outcome may not be within the reach of all participants; some workers may not be able to advance enough to become ineligible for work supports. For this group, a desirable outcome would be that they increase their incomes through a combination of increased earnings and the use of work supports. Other participants are unlikely to advance in the labor market, even over extended time periods and even with access to services designed to help them do so. For this group, WASC might raise household incomes exclusively through the increased use of financial work supports.

Thus, although it is difficult to distinguish between who can and cannot advance over time, it is important to recognize that a long-term increase in the use of work supports for some individuals may be a positive outcome. For these individuals and their families, public benefits are serving their other role as part of the safety net in the United States.

Finally, the model also illustrates how the WASC demonstration can help to inform the next generation of retention and advancement policies. Although the analysis is suggestive at most — given only three sites — there is variation across these sites in the program components that they chose to or were able to emphasize and in their early pattern of effects. In one site, for example, the retention and advancement services were focused heavily on career coaching, rather than access to skills training. Another site had no early effects on the receipt of work supports, while the other two sites did. This variation in components and early effects can help to address questions such as “How effective is career coaching by itself in promoting advancement?” and “Does an early increase in the receipt of certain work supports contribute to later retention and advancement?” Chapter 5 addresses these issues as it summarizes the findings across all three WASC sites.

The WASC Evaluation

WASC is being evaluated using a random assignment research design, in which individuals who were eligible for the demonstration were assigned at random, using a lottery-like process, to the WASC group, eligible to receive WASC benefits and services, or to a control group, not eligible for WASC services but eligible to seek out existing services in the community. Random assignment ensures that, on average, the characteristics, backgrounds, and motivation levels of WASC and control group members did not differ systematically at the beginning of the study. Therefore, any significant differences between the two groups in outcomes that emerge over time — such as in receipt of work supports and in earnings — can be attributed to WASC.

To conduct random assignment, staff in the participating sites recruited interested individuals into the One-Stop Center’s offices. Once an individual was determined to be eligible for the study, consented to participate in the research, and filled out a baseline questionnaire, site staff submitted the information online, and an MDRC-created algorithm assigned the individual at random to either the WASC group or the control group. If assigned to the WASC group, the individual typically went directly to an orientation and first meeting with a career coach. Individuals who were assigned to the control group received a gift card for participating in the study and were escorted to the main One-Stop entrance, where they could access any services for which they were eligible. WASC services were available to each participant for two years in all three sites.

The Sites: Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

MDRC selected the first two sites in the fall of 2003: the Job Center in Dayton, Ohio, serving Montgomery County, and the South County Career Center in Chula Vista, California, part of San Diego County and referred to as the “San Diego” site. After an intensive selection and review process, the Southwestern CTWorks Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County in Fort Worth, Texas, were chosen as the third and fourth sites. These latter two sites began to pilot the WASC demonstration during the summer and fall of 2006, while the first two sites began their pilots in January 2005. The Fort Worth site had planned to be entirely employer-based, serving all individuals at their workplaces rather than at the One-Stop Center. Because the recruitment of employers proved to be so challenging, however, this site did not recruit enough individuals into the study to be a part of the formal impact evaluation. A separate report on the Fort Worth site documents the challenges of engaging both employers and employees in this strategy.⁷

⁷Schultz and Seith (2011).

The Target Population

WASC recruited two broad and sometimes overlapping target groups: (1) low-income, low-wage workers and (2) low-income, reemployed dislocated workers, or those who have lost a job and become reemployed at a lower wage rate. Initially, eligibility was restricted to those earning no more than \$9 per hour, or roughly the 25th percentile of hourly wages in the United States in late 2004,⁸ and with household incomes of no more than 130 percent of the federal poverty line. The income cutoff was used to ensure that most people who enrolled in the study would be eligible for the full set of available work supports.

After the pilot phase, however, it became evident that recruiting enough individuals into the study was going to be a major challenge.⁹ Several strategies were implemented to assist with recruitment, including raising the eligibility guidelines to a wage cap of \$15 per hour.¹⁰ Several months later, the family income threshold was also increased, to 200 percent of the poverty line. Although \$15 per hour and 200 percent of poverty is a higher target than program designers had planned, most individuals who eventually enrolled into the study were earning less than \$10 per hour and had family incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line.

WASC also attempted to target a population who had limited prior connection to the welfare system, in order to focus on a group who needed the most assistance with work supports and to reach a broad segment of the low-income, low-wage population. Accordingly, the eligibility guidelines also stipulated that (1) current recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) were *not eligible* to enroll in the demonstration, even if they were currently working, and (2) a *maximum* of 50 percent of all WASC sample members in each site could be *current* food stamp recipients.

Intake of the study sample took place between 2005 and 2008. Dayton and San Diego began enrollment in fall 2005 and continued through 2007. Bridgeport began enrolling individuals into the study in fall 2006 and continued through early 2008. The number of study participants, by site, is 1,176 individuals in Dayton, 971 individuals in San Diego, and 705 individuals in Bridgeport.

Data Sources

The data sources used for the analysis in this report are described below.

⁸U.S. Department of Labor (2006).

⁹Site staff also noted that the income threshold excluded a large number of low-wage workers who were single adults.

¹⁰The initial sample-size goal was 1,600 individuals per site, but this number was reduced to 1,000 for Dayton and San Diego and 700 for Bridgeport.

- **Baseline data.** MDRC collected data on sample members' demographic characteristics from a baseline information form filled out just before random assignment. These baseline data were collected in all three sites and include information on marital status, family structure, education level, work hours, wages, and benefit receipt. These data are used to describe the study sample and to identify subgroups whose results are analyzed separately.
- **Administrative records.** Effects on employment, employment retention, and earnings are estimated using automated quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) wage records data. These data are collected at the state level and were provided by the Department of Labor (DOL) in Connecticut, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), and the Employment Development Department (EDD) in California.¹¹ Data on monthly food stamp receipt are used to present effects on receipt rates and amounts. These data were provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS) in Connecticut, ODJFS, and the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA). Data on the receipt of child care subsidies are available for Dayton and San Diego, provided by ODJFS and the San Diego County HHSA, the Child Development Associates in San Diego, and the YMCA Childcare Resource Service in San Diego. Data on the receipt of publicly funded health care coverage are available for all three sites, provided by ODJFS, San Diego County HHSA, and DSS in Connecticut. Finally, data on individuals' enrollment in and receipt of degrees and certificates from postsecondary education institutions are available from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). For each source, the data typically cover one to two years prior to study entry and two to four years after study entry for each individual.
- **WASC 12-Month Survey.** Information about sample members' participation in program services and about their employment and receipt of work supports was gathered by a survey, which was administered to a random subset of WASC and control group members approximately 12 months after random assignment. The survey data are a valuable complement to the records data, providing information on the receipt of additional work supports, such as the EITC. In addition, although the UI data will be used to capture effects on employment and earnings over the long run, the 12-month survey data are able to capture any effects on job type, hours of work, wages, and

¹¹Earnings data for study participants in Bridgeport for Year 3 of follow-up were provided as group-level averages, rather than at the individual level. For this reason, as discussed in Chapter 4, effects on earnings during Year 3 are estimated differently and presented separately.

benefits.¹² The survey sample consists of 498 respondents in Dayton, 567 respondents in San Diego, and 306 respondents in Bridgeport.¹³

Characteristics of Sample Members at Baseline

Table 1.3 presents selected characteristics of the research sample members at baseline, the point of study entry. Data are presented separately by site, for both the WASC group and the control group combined. The table's first panel shows that a majority of study participants across all sites are women, with a high of 81 percent in Dayton and a low of 67 percent in Bridgeport. Their average age at study entry was in the early to middle thirties, although there are notable differences across sites. Dayton's sample members were relatively young, with more than a third of them being under age 24, while San Diego's sample members had an average age of 36. The sites also differ in the racial/ethnic composition of sample members, with Dayton and Bridgeport having a majority of black study participants and San Diego having primarily Hispanic sample members. Nearly half the participants in San Diego are foreign born; some of them were not citizens at study entry, but all of them had the legal right to work in the United States.

At baseline, most sample members had never been married, and few reported living with a spouse or partner. About 60 percent of participants had children, and the majority of these individuals were single parents. In terms of education and employment, most participants had at least a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate when they entered the study. However, while a fair number reported having taken some college courses, very few had a formal two-year or four-year credential. San Diego stands out in terms of education levels, with one in four participants lacking a high school diploma or GED certificate.

As mentioned above, despite the wage cap of \$15 per hour for study eligibility, average wages were low, ranging from about \$9 in Dayton and San Diego to about \$10 in Bridgeport. (See "Employment status" in Table 1.1.) In addition to earning relatively low wages, a fair number of participants were not working full time (35 or more hours per week), which may help explain the low rate of receipt of employer-provided benefits. Only 51 percent of workers in Dayton, for example, were offered a health care plan by their employers.

¹²Although a key benefit of the UI data is the ability to track earnings over a long period of time, these data do have several limitations. First, the UI wage records do not cover several types of workers, including the self-employed, military workers, federal government workers, and "off-the-books" work. Since the data are collected at the state level, they also do not capture employment in other states, although this issue is less relevant to the WASC sample, since the selected sites are not close to state borders.

¹³Survey response analyses for the three sites are presented in Appendix A (Dayton), Appendix B (San Diego), and Appendix C (Bridgeport).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Table 1.3

Selected Characteristics of Sample Members at Baseline

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Characteristic	Dayton	San Diego	Bridgeport
<u>Demographic characteristics</u>			
Gender (%)			
Female	80.8	72.1	66.5
Age in years (%)			
18-24	35.4	18.8	26.4
25-34	36.0	29.1	32.5
35-44	18.1	24.9	22.7
45-62	10.5	27.1	18.4
Average age (years)	30.3	36.3	33.4
Race/ethnicity (%)			
Hispanic	1.1	71.2	23.2
White	27.1	9.4	8.2
Black	67.6	10.7	60.5
Asian	0.4	6.0	1.1
Other	3.8	2.7	7.0
Citizenship (%)			
Born in United States	97.0	49.7	81.6
Naturalized	1.6	22.1	8.4
Noncitizen (work-authorized)	1.4	28.2	10.0
English proficiency (%)			
Speaks English well/very well	100.0	84.9	99.3
<u>Family status</u>			
Marital status (%)			
Single, never married	70.3	47.2	72.1
Married and living with spouse	9.7	21.4	10.7
Married but living apart from spouse	5.7	13.4	8.5
Legally separated, divorced, or widowed	14.4	18.0	8.7
Living with a partner (%)	6.0	5.9	5.8
Number of children ^a (%)			
At least 1 child	63.1	65.5	56.3

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Characteristic	Dayton	San Diego	Bridgeport
Average number of children	1.3	1.4	1.1
Youngest child less than 6 years old ^a (%)	59.4	52.7	56.8
Single and childless (%)	35.4	32.1	41.0
Single-parent household (%)	50.8	43.0	42.0
Two-parent household (%)	11.7	22.4	14.1
<u>Education level</u>			
Highest grade (%)			
No high school diploma or GED certificate	9.8	25.3	16.6
GED certificate	6.6	5.7	9.6
High school diploma	25.6	17.5	36.9
Some college or advanced training courses	47.5	36.8	30.2
Associate's degree	5.9	5.2	3.0
4-year college degree or higher	4.6	9.6	3.7
Currently enrolled in education or training program ^b (%)	34.8	20.5	12.9
English as a Second Language (ESL)	0.9	4.2	0.9
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	1.1	1.0	1.6
High school/GED preparation course	2.1	1.5	3.5
Vocational training	4.8	5.4	1.7
College course toward associate's/2-year degree	21.0	6.2	5.0
College course toward bachelor's/4-year degree	7.1	5.3	0.9
Other	1.6	1.1	1.7
<u>Employment status</u>			
Number of months in current job (%)			
Less than 1 year	54.5	55.0	59.5
Between 1 and 2 years	17.6	16.5	15.4
More than 2 years	27.9	28.6	25.1
Hours per week of work (%)			
1-19	20.3	18.9	22.3
20-34	42.1	37.1	44.1
35-39	12.4	10.7	7.0
40 or more	25.2	33.3	26.7
Working full time (35 hours or more) (%)	37.6	44.0	33.6
Average hourly wage (\$)	8.80	9.14	9.84
Less than \$7.00 (%)	20.3	11.6	2.1
\$7.00 - \$8.99 (%)	32.9	36.6	34.8
\$9.00 - \$10.99 (%)	28.6	32.0	33.5
\$11.00 - \$15.00 (%)	18.2	19.8	29.5
Average weekly earnings (\$)	251	268	273

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Characteristic	Dayton	San Diego	Bridgeport
Fringe benefits from employer ^b (%)			
Time off with pay	46.8	37.3	54.4
Health plan offered	50.6	38.3	55.7
Dental plan offered	40.4	28.4	48.7
Retirement plan	35.8	24.2	46.6
Other	17.0	3.0	1.8
Enrolled in employer-provided health or medical insurance plan (%)	20.3	17.8	17.9
<u>Circumstances that may affect job retention or job change (%)</u>			
Has driver's license	81.5	83.5	73.0
Has access to a car to drive to work	77.7	76.0	65.6
Physical or mental health problem that limits work	4.1	6.8	3.8
Became a Dislocated Worker during previous 2 years	19.6	26.3	13.5
Current wages compared with wages at pre-layoff job ^c			
A lot less or somewhat less	65.1	71.6	79.6
<u>Income and work supports</u>			
Average monthly family income (\$)	1,219	1,373	1,368
Family income exceeds (%)			
130 percent of federal poverty level	24.0	28.8	38.4
Income sources (%)			
Earnings from spouse or partner	6.4	10.8	8.0
Food stamps	36.6	14.5	23.0
Child support	14.8	11.9	9.4
Child care subsidy	17.5	5.9	5.7
Other types of assistance	1.4	2.3	2.1
Tax credits (%)			
Filed tax return during past 12 months	85.7	76.3	79.4
Aware of Earned Income Tax Credit	76.3	46.3	58.3
Claiming Earned Income Tax Credit	51.6	35.0	32.7
Aware of Child Tax Credit	41.8	36.3	19.2
Claiming Child Tax Credit	26.6	31.1	12.0
<u>Health care coverage (%)</u>			
Respondent has health care coverage	68.5	48.8	65.2
Employer-provided or other private health plan	34.4	25.8	18.4
Publicly funded coverage	37.2	25.4	62.7
Respondent's children have health care coverage ^b	89.3	68.4	88.8
Publicly funded coverage	74.5	52.3	85.6

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Characteristic	Dayton	San Diego	Bridgeport
<u>Housing status (%)</u>			
Current living arrangement			
Owns home or apartment	11.4	7.2	9.7
Rents home or apartment	61.8	59.0	57.1
Lives with family/friends and pays part of the rent	11.9	20.4	28.1
Lives with family/friends and pays no rent	13.4	11.8	1.0
Other housing arrangements	1.5	1.6	4.1
Lives in public housing, receives Section 8 rental assistance, or pays reduced rent because of low income	21.2	18.1	25.2
Sample size (total = 2,852)	1,176	971	705

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values. Sample members randomly assigned before January 12, 2006, in Dayton and before February 14, 2006, in San Diego were not asked to report Dislocated Worker status. Sample members randomly assigned before November 22, 2005, were not asked to report their monthly family income.

GED = General Educational Development.

^aChild-related measures were calculated for sample members with children.

^bThis measure can sum to more than 100 percent because sample members can record more than one response.

^cCurrent wages compared with wages at pre-layoff job is measured among Dislocated Workers.

The next panel of Table 1.3 presents data on income and the receipt of work supports. The majority of the sample members reported family incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line and thus were likely to be eligible for most work supports.¹⁴ Food stamp receipt rates, however, were fairly low, ranging from 15 percent in San Diego to 37 percent in Dayton. Coverage rates for health insurance were somewhat higher, particularly for children, although there was substantial room to increase coverage for adults. In addition, San Diego stands out with relatively low rates of health care coverage, both for adults and their children.

The Evaluation's Timeline

Figure 1.2 illustrates the timeline of the WASC evaluation and how it overlaps with the recession's high unemployment rates. Individuals were brought into the study between late

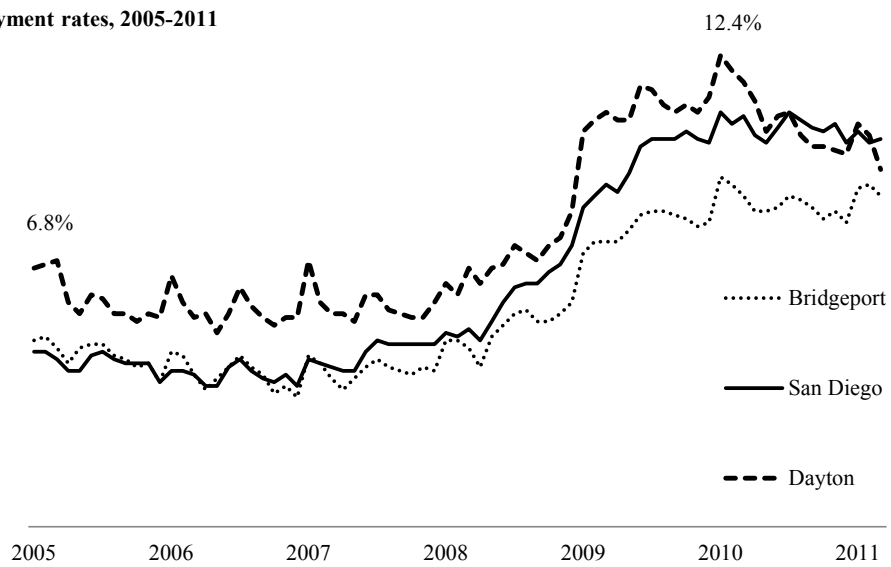
¹⁴Self-reported family income at baseline is a rough proxy for eligibility, given that income may change over the course of the follow-up period and that eligibility is often dependent on other factors as well, such as assets, in the case of food stamps.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

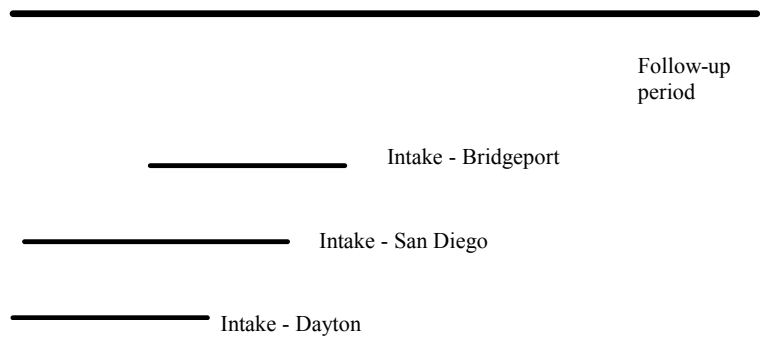
Figure 1.2

Unemployment Rates and the Evaluation's Follow-Up Period

Unemployment rates, 2005-2011



Intake and follow-up periods



2005 and early 2008, with Dayton and San Diego conducting intake about one year earlier than Bridgeport. The follow-up periods for UI earnings data are three years after study entry in Bridgeport and four years after study entry in Dayton and San Diego. As a whole, across all sites, the follow-up period for the evaluation spans late 2005 through early 2011.

The WASC demonstration began in a very different economic context than it encountered over time, with unemployment rates being fairly low in all three sites, ranging from 4 percent to 6 percent (Figure 1.2). Much of the follow-up period, however, was marked by rapidly rising unemployment rates. Dayton stands out with the highest unemployment rates throughout the period and with a rate of just over 12 percent in early 2010. In contrast, Bridgeport's unemployment rate in that quarter was 8.5 percent. Unemployment rates fell somewhat in Dayton during 2010 and, for the second half of that year, were on par with the rates in San Diego.

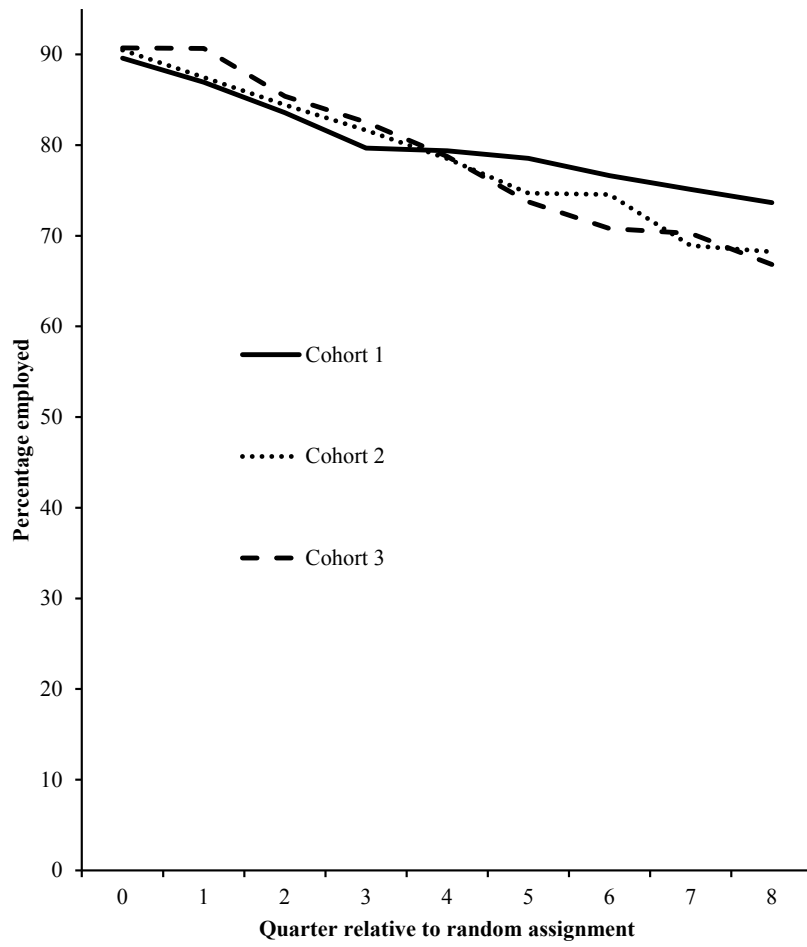
Figure 1.3 presents quarterly employment rates during the follow-up period for the control groups and illustrates how the state of the economy may have affected the study sample. The data are pooled across all three sites, and the sample is divided into three cohorts, based on when individuals entered the study. Employment rates begin falling immediately after study entry for all three cohorts. This pattern is fairly typical for studies that target low-wage workers, since there is always some job loss over time. For this reason, falling employment is not necessarily due to the economy. A better test of the effects of the economy is to compare employment rates for groups that entered the study early (for whom much of the follow-up period occurred before the steep rise in unemployment rates) with employment rates for groups that entered the study later (for whom the follow-up period overlapped more with the worst part of the recession). This comparison does suggest that the study sample was affected by the recession, since the employment rates for the later two cohorts fell more steeply than the rates for the first cohort.

It is not clear if or how the state of the local economy might affect the impacts of a program. A tougher economy may mean that advancement prospects are very limited for individuals taking advantage of the program, leading to smaller impacts. Or, because the control group is likely to set a low hurdle to beat in terms of employment and earnings, the program may have larger impacts than it would have otherwise. In any case, the dramatic rise in unemployment rates during the follow-up period are an important part of the context within which WASC was tested and should be kept in mind when considering the impacts presented in this report.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Figure 1.3

Employment Rates for the Control Groups,
by Time of Study Entry



The Organization of This Report

The remainder of the report is organized as follows.

- Chapter 2 describes the implementation of the programs in all three sites, documenting whether they succeeded in delivering the key components of the WASC model. The chapter also presents impacts on participation in program services.
- Chapter 3 presents the effects of WASC on the receipt of work supports, including food stamps, public health insurance, the EITC, and subsidized child care.
- Chapter 4 presents the effects of WASC on participation in education and training during Year 1 and the effects on employment and earnings through Years 3 and 4.
- Chapter 5 concludes the report with a brief summary of its findings and lessons for the next generation of advancement strategies aimed at low-income workers.

Chapter 2

The Implementation of WASC and Participation in Services

Introduction

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration aimed to offer intensive retention and advancement services to low-wage working individuals — that is, services to stabilize their employment, improve their skills, and find better-paying jobs. At the same time, WASC attempted to make it easier for these workers to receive public benefits, or work supports. This was to be achieved by offering these services in one location — existing One-Stop Career Centers — by colocated and integrated teams of workforce development and welfare staff in the three sites: Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California.

The degree to which a program like WASC is implemented as intended can be influenced by a wide variety of factors, including funding, the commitment of senior-level staff, local bureaucratic constraints, the population being served, and staff capacity. Understanding how these and other factors differed across the WASC sites and how they affected implementation — as well as how the delivery and receipt of services differed from what participants would likely have experienced in the absence of WASC — can help explain impact findings and place them in context.

This chapter reviews the key findings about the implementation of the WASC program in Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport as presented in an earlier report.¹ It updates the implementation findings for Bridgeport, where the WASC program continued for an additional year beyond the other two sites' programs; describes participation in the WASC program in all three sites; and compares the levels of participation in WASC with the control group levels of participation in any similar services. The report covers program operations in Dayton beginning in October 2005, in San Diego beginning in November 2005, and in Bridgeport beginning in October 2006, and it discusses operations through early summer of 2008 in Dayton and San Diego and through March 2009 in Bridgeport. Analyses are based on qualitative data from staff interviews, focus groups with participants, and observations of participant-staff “coaching” meetings and on the quantitative data captured by the 12-month survey.

¹Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

Unlike some other large random assignment demonstrations, in which sites developed broad components of their own programs to guide service delivery,² WASC services were designed to be delivered in a more uniform way across the three sites; all participants were to receive — or at least have available to them — the same types of services. The WASC model guidelines covered everything from the type of recruitment strategy to be used to how the unit should be managed. Essential service elements of the model included the following:

- Identify advancement and income stabilization goals using the Income Improvement and Advancement Plan (IIAP), a written plan that detailed short-term and long-term advancement goals and the steps to reach them, the individual's motivation for participating in WASC and wanting to advance, and the individual's interest in applying for work supports.
- Use the Work Advancement Calculator — a Web-based tool that was designed specifically for the WASC demonstration — to screen for work supports eligibility and to demonstrate how increases in earnings would affect work support receipt and total income.
- Provide eased access to work supports by, for example, enabling working people to apply for supports directly through the WASC unit, rather than at a welfare office; simplifying applications; providing one staff person to handle applications for all work supports; and providing flexible office hours.
- Maintain regular contact (two-way communication at least monthly) with at least 75 percent of the caseload (which should be no more than 100 customers per career coach) to be sure that participants were continuing to work toward the goals they had established in their IIAP while also maintaining their current employment.

Though all three sites implemented the key components of the WASC program model as described in Chapter 1, implementation research reveals that there were a few notable differences both in the delivery of services and in the characteristics of the populations across the sites:

- Dayton was fortunate to have generous Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding for training — through Individual Training Accounts, or ITAs — that was accessible to working people, as well as WIA Governor's Discretionary

²See, for example, the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project Web sites of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and MDRC. ACF site: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/employ_retention/index.html; MDRC site: http://www.mdrc.org/project_publications_14_9.html.

Funds to provide incentives for participation in and completion of training while maintaining employment. Dayton also had a relatively large pool of unusually motivated participants, many of whom joined WASC because they were already in training (including a large proportion taking college courses toward an associate's degree: 21 percent, compared with only 6 percent and 5 percent in San Diego and Bridgeport, respectively) or who were interested in training and viewed WASC as a way of getting that training funded. As discussed in earlier reports,³ WASC coaches across all the sites felt that they were able to offer more concrete information and to work more effectively with people who were career-directed than with those who did not know which, if any, advancement path they wanted to pursue; the combination of more generous and more flexible resources⁴ and a more motivated pool of customers distinguished Dayton from the other two sites.

- In San Diego, gaining access to WIA training funds for working people was much more difficult than in Dayton.⁵ Although the San Diego Workforce Partnership committed ITA funds to WASC, in order for the WIA Adult Program in San Diego to work with employed people and provide ITAs for training, the WASC unit had to document that these individuals had incomes below a certain self-sufficiency standard. To document their low incomes, WASC participants had to provide birth certificates for all children in the household as well as proof of current and past employment, family size, and total family earnings over the six months prior to enrollment — all of which was extraordinarily burdensome for both participants and staff. Additionally, the training providers who were certified to serve customers with ITAs tended to operate during the day, making classes inaccessible for WASC participants who worked during the day. Perhaps as a result of these conditions, at least in part, the focus of WASC services in San Diego was more on advancement within one's current job than on changing jobs — though focus groups with participants, including those in San Diego, indicated that most people were unhappy in their current job.

³Tessler, Seith, and Rucks (2008).

⁴For example, WIA formula funds provided up to \$15,000 for up to two years of undergraduate or graduate training for eligible customers who could document the market demand for the degree. In contrast, ITAs in Bridgeport and San Diego were in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000. Additionally, through the discretionary funds, individuals in Dayton could complete WIA-funded training and then quickly receive additional funds for a second-level training — something that WIA formula funding does not allow.

⁵Because states and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are responsible for administering ITAs, each WIB can define local criteria and processes by which individuals can access an ITA.

- WASC in Bridgeport had more flexible funding dollars than WIA traditionally offered there; one result is that some training that was funded under WASC may not have been approved under WIA because it was not necessarily going to lead to sustainable jobs that were in demand or that would lead to advancement. It is unknown at this time whether these types of trainings ultimately will benefit WASC participants who pursued them. The training in Bridgeport was much more vocationally oriented than in Dayton, and, according to focus groups and interviews with staff, it was largely aimed at credentials for two fields: a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate for women and a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) for men — neither of which offers much of a longer-term advancement track without additional training. Bridgeport also experienced more staff turnover and less high-level attention to the project than the other two sites.

These differences in service delivery and the populations across the three sites resulted in each site’s emphasizing, to varying degrees, different parts of the advancement model. Essentially, the sites could be characterized as follows:

- Dayton implemented the strongest combination of career coaching and access to training, including college, and easier access to work supports, especially in redetermination for food stamps.⁶
- San Diego implemented a “mostly coaching” model, as it lacked flexible training dollars, and access to WIA formula-funded training was very limited for working people. It also offered easier access to work supports, particularly in eased access to child care funding and application and redetermination for food stamps.
- Bridgeport implemented a “mostly training” model (though seemingly focused on a few occupations); it did have access to flexible training dollars, while the capacity of its coaching staff (with one or two exceptions) was limited by turnover, relative lack of experience, and other factors. Bridgeport’s program also offered easier access to work supports, including relatively quick access to a work support specialist.

The institutional starting points for the WASC sites were state or county workforce development and welfare agencies. These agencies were expected to collaborate to deliver

⁶The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

integrated retention, advancement, and work support services to low-wage workers in a single unit and to provide a complement of staff for the units that would bring a “culture change” to interactions between staff and participants; that is, in addition to the culture change of serving low-wage workers for the first time, they were also expected to depart from the typical social service focus on eligibility rules, compliance, or job placement only and, instead, to adopt a new approach focused on job advancement.

Overall, in all three sites, WASC was implemented largely as designed, although in different ways and to varying degrees. The program succeeded in delivering more streamlined and more integrated workforce development and work support services to its customers, and the evaluation tested the model largely as it was intended to be implemented. There were some challenges along the way; for example, caseloads occasionally exceeded the target level of no more than 100 customers per coach. Perhaps the biggest challenge was that sites were often hard pressed to provide as high-quality advancement coaching as was expected; that is, staff did not necessarily have as much expertise as was hoped for in using labor market information or knowledge of career ladders to effectively help move people up in their careers. Nevertheless, managers and staff were able to implement a program that provided more proactive, more personalized attention — focused on advancement — than participants would likely have received in the absence of WASC. This was especially true later in the demonstration period, when staff could spend less time on recruitment and more on service delivery.

In Bridgeport, a smaller staff, a series of staff turnovers, and less flexibility to serve a working population than in the other two sites — for example, the inability of staff to extend their work hours to meet with working people after business hours or to meet them outside the WASC office — would suggest that program services were not delivered as consistently and as thoroughly as in Dayton and San Diego. In Bridgeport’s final year of service delivery, coaching staff turned over completely for the third time: there were two new coaches during the last months of the program. Despite these challenges, however, Bridgeport did as good a job as the other two sites, if not better, of engaging participants in program services, as is discussed further below.⁷

Key Findings About Program Implementation

The WASC sites largely accomplished their primary goal: they were able to recruit low-wage workers into the study and to deliver advancement and work support services to them. Delivery of WASC services to a working population required changes in typical One-Stop recruitment

⁷This may have been an unintended consequence of staff turnover; each new staff person had the responsibility of reaching out to the individuals on the caseload from the previous staff member, which may have led to more systematic outreach to the entire caseload than in the other sites.

and engagement strategies; as discussed in more detail below, Bridgeport had a harder time achieving these changes, while Dayton and San Diego were successful in implementing them, for the most part. WASC program managers in all three sites made a considerable, ongoing investment of time and effort into the program, dedicating substantial staff time and revisiting and revising service delivery strategies multiple times. Staff proactively reached out to and followed up with participants, and they successfully broke down long-term goals into manageable steps. Dayton and San Diego offered flexible hours of services to meet the needs of working customers. Staff generally did a good job of tailoring services to the needs of individuals. Overall, the WASC program in all three sites maintained a focus on advancement, though fewer staff and less flexibility in Bridgeport may have hampered that program's ability to achieve its advancement goals, at least operationally.

The WASC units also set out to integrate WIA One-Stop Center and work support (welfare) eligibility staff and services. One-Stop and work support staff did, indeed, work closely together to try to increase take-up of work supports and to direct customers toward an advancement path. Specialization of staff in either workforce development or work support services according to their backgrounds, with cross-training and close coordination, became the norm. Staff made frequent offers to help participants enroll in work supports, and, by design, WASC packaged work supports with advancement services — such as assistance with education and training and career coaching — which were most often the stronger draw to the program. Perhaps most important, according to focus groups with participants, WASC coaching staff were able to build strong and meaningful relationships with the participants, who very much appreciated the sincerity and dedication of the staff and the services that they provided.⁸

Another goal of WASC was to simplify the process of applying for and receiving work supports. This was also achieved, for the most part; sites were able to reduce the amount of paperwork, consolidate forms, and conduct eligibility determinations across multiple supports. Redeterminations were also simplified; in San Diego, for example, the requirement that a participant be fingerprinted was deferred until visiting a county food stamp office, and recertification took place annually by telephone, rather than through an in-person meeting, with supporting documentation sent through the mail. Perhaps more important, WASC eased access to work supports for its customers by providing more immediate access to staff who could help them with eligibility determination and the application process, ongoing relationships with the same staff, and by staff efforts to simplify processes — for example, collecting data a single time and using it to populate multiple applications.⁹ Finally, WASC went beyond simply

⁸For more information about the relationships between customers and coaches in WASC, see Tessler, Seith, and Rucks (2008).

⁹For a more thorough discussion of the implementation of WASC, particularly in Dayton and San Diego, see Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

helping with the application process: participants did not have to go to a welfare office at all to start receiving their benefits, because the work support staff in the WASC units were eligibility workers who were authorized to grant benefits on the spot.

The Bridgeport WASC program continued for about eight months beyond the end of the qualitative data collection for the 12-month interim report, which was during the summer of 2008. At that time, the program was described as being especially challenged, for a number of reasons: coaching staff had already turned over twice; staffing and financial resources for the program were constrained; and, for the first year of the program, the program manager's office was on a different floor of the One-Stop from the staff offices, making it difficult for the manager to oversee daily operations of the program and to ensure that the intended "culture change" was being achieved — that is, that welfare and workforce staff were working together to provide integrated, advancement-focused services to their customers in a more efficient, more proactive way than would be experienced in the absence of the program. The Bridgeport WASC team did not have team meetings or case conferences as regularly as the other two sites did, which also contributed to the challenge of achieving WASC's goals. Additionally, as noted above, staff were not given the flexibility to meet participants outside the One-Stop or even to adjust their hours to accommodate work schedules, which was clearly an obstacle in an advancement-focused program targeting working people — and for which making services available to a working population was an explicit component.

In the final year of Bridgeport's WASC program, following the summer of 2008, the coaching staff turned over completely for a third time. However, the program manager and new staff worked hard to ensure a smooth transition and, in January 2009, to begin the six-month phase-down of service delivery, concluding the program at the end of June 2009. In an effort both to provide information and to reengage participants, the WASC program sent letters to all customers introducing the new coaches (called "Career Navigators" in Bridgeport), inviting them to come in and meet with the coaches, letting them know about their program exit dates, and encouraging them to take advantage of services while they still could. They also let the customers know about new incentives that became available in the summer of 2008: as an incentive to reengage participants with their Career Navigators and to use free tax preparation services, Bridgeport offered gas and grocery gift cards.¹⁰

Career Navigators worked closely with customers to ensure that, whenever possible, they would complete their training programs before they rolled off WASC; this would allow WASC to continue to pay for the trainings through completion. Career Navigators also worked

¹⁰While customers did have to come in to sign for the gift cards — theoretically giving the Career Navigators an opportunity to engage customers to work on their advancement plans — the gift cards were eventually given out just because customers needed them, particularly as the economy declined.

with customers to start planning their job search once the training programs were completed. Staff also worked with participants to get them ready to continue to pursue their advancement plans after the WASC program was over, referring them back to the One-Stop and to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and preparing them for how to interact with these agencies to fulfill their goals and maintain their work supports.¹¹

Key Findings About Participation in Services

Unlike most workforce-related programs, which focus on preemployment services and job placement for unemployed people, WASC was designed to meet the career planning needs of low-income people who *are working* but whose jobs pay low wages and may provide few or no benefits and who have little support to learn what they need in order to advance. Given the focus of the workforce system on job placement for unemployed individuals, one would not expect low-wage working individuals to find much in the way of advancement services in the absence of WASC nor to find easy access to such services if they were available. Nevertheless, some control group members in the WASC demonstration did find and take advantage of services in the community. This section describes the differences between the participation in WASC services by program group members and the participation in services available in the community by control group members.

In particular, this section presents analyses of the WASC 12-Month Survey and administrative records from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services. It includes a description of the extent and nature of contact between agency staff and participants in all three WASC sites; the messages and help that participants received from the program concerning retention, advancement, and work supports; receipt of incentive payments in Dayton for participation in and completion of training; and training and job characteristics among those incentive payment recipients. Participation indicators are compared for program group members and their control group counterparts in each site, representing the participation “impacts” of WASC — that is, the extent to which WASC increased (had a positive impact on) or decreased (had a negative impact on) the participation outcomes of program group members relative to control group members. (All references to the program’s “increases” or “decreases” throughout the chapter are relative to the control group.) Unless otherwise noted, all participation impacts discussed in this chapter are statistically significant. Box 2.1 explains the three approaches that the WASC 12-Month Survey took for the purpose of measuring receipt of services or participation in the program.

¹¹The phase-out of WASC services in Dayton and San Diego occurred in a similar way; see Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

Box 2.1

Measuring Participation in the WASC Demonstration

In order to interpret the results of a random assignment evaluation, it is critical to understand the “dose” of services that each research group receives. In many studies, this is relatively straightforward because the “treatment” is easy to measure — for example, the number of hours of training or the dollar value of incentive payments. In contrast, WASC’s services were delivered mostly in one-on-one interactions in which staff advised or “coached” participants.

MDRC sought to measure the receipt of services in the WASC program using the WASC 12-Month Survey. Because it was administered to both research groups — that is, to both the WASC program group and the control group — the survey could not refer to the WASC program in particular; instead, it asked general questions about the kinds of services that WASC provided, using three main approaches, described below. Each approach has both strengths and limitations, and each contributes to the overall analysis.

- First, the survey asked how frequently respondents had had contact with staff members from employment or social service agencies (Table 2.1). The questions aimed to elicit responses that were related to WASC (for program group members) and to any similar services (for control group members), but it is difficult to determine whether program group members were referring to WASC when they replied to these questions. For example, contact with a worker who determines food stamp eligibility is likely to be quite different from contact with a WASC coach. Moreover, it may be difficult for respondents to recall the number of such contacts over a one-year period. Still, while the overall levels may be inaccurate, the estimated impacts on this measure are reliable, since respondents’ perceptions and recall should be the same for members of both research groups.
- Second, the survey asked what kinds of messages the respondents received from any program staff — in other words, the ways in which staff encouraged them to take action related to retention and advancement — and whether respondents received assistance in a variety of specific areas and where they received this assistance (Tables 2.2 and 2.3). The questions about the messages received from program staff get at the core of WASC service delivery — that is, whether WASC staff were more likely than their control group counterparts to be proactive in encouraging customers to advance. Some of the specific types of assistance that they may have received — such as help “looking for a job while employed” — are central to WASC. These questions are fairly straightforward, but they do not provide any information about the *amount* or *quality* of service that was received in each area.
- Third, the survey asked whether respondents participated in employment-related services or education and training classes and how many weeks they participated (for example, Table 4.1). These services are relatively easy to measure, but they vary as far as how central they are to the WASC model. Job search and other employment-related activities, such as on-the-job training, were less relevant for WASC, while participation in education and training turned out to be key WASC activities.

Summary of Findings About Program Participation

In Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport, WASC participants were much more likely to have talked recently (relative to the time of the survey interview) with their coaches — presumably about career planning, job retention, or work supports — than control group members were likely to have talked with a case manager in any setting where they might have received services, such as at the One-Stop Center or other community agencies. WASC also increased the likelihood that participants would receive encouragement to go to school or get training and to get a better job. The program also increased the likelihood that staff would encourage participants to apply for food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care assistance, and health insurance for themselves or their children. These findings — in all three sites — suggest that WASC staff were more proactive with customers in encouraging them to take up work supports and to advance in their careers than other program or agency staff were with control group members.

The San Diego program, more than the other two, led to an increase in participants' being encouraged to undertake a wide array of activities related to retention and advancement on the job — for example, to increase their work hours, negotiate a pay raise, pursue a promotion, or deal with personal problems that made it hard for them to keep a job. This aligns with the qualitative research, which shows that the messaging in San Diego focused more on advancing at one's current job than on changing jobs, as was more likely in the other sites. Dayton's program also increased the likelihood of participants' being encouraged to pursue a pay raise; other than that, only San Diego's program affected the "advance on the job" messaging.

Extent and Nature of Contact Between Coaches and Participants

As a program that was intended to provide intensive career coaching to its participants, WASC was expected to increase the frequency, relative to the control group, of the interactions that took place between coaches and participants. In the absence of WASC, it was assumed that individuals seeking retention and advancement services would have to take most of the initiative in getting the services they desired; in contrast, once a participant enrolled in WASC, the WASC coaches were expected to take an active interest in engaging their customers. Specifically, the WASC model called for coaches to interact with at least 75 percent of their caseload once every 30 days and to be proactive in reaching out to them, based on the hypothesis that more frequent contact would help keep participants engaged and moving along in their advancement plans. While coaches did not quite reach this target, as described below, they did succeed in having more contact with their customers than control group members had with case managers or staff from other programs.

- **In all three sites, WASC group members were much more likely to have spoken with a career coach in the four weeks prior to the survey inter-**

view than control group members were likely to have spoken with case managers or staff from other programs or agencies that were available in the community.

Table 2.1 shows that WASC increased the percentage of respondents who interacted with a case manager or agency staff (that is, a career coach in WASC) during the four weeks prior to the survey interview (an indication of ongoing contact) by 25 percentage points in Dayton, 22 percentage points in San Diego, and 34 percentage points in Bridgeport, above the control group averages of 17 percent, 13 percent, and 17 percent, respectively. Given that coaches were expected to have regular contact with at least 75 percent of their caseload, the percentage of WASC respondents who reported any contact was lower than expected — though still fairly high (nearly 52 percent in Bridgeport) and significantly more than the contact that control group members had with any case managers with whom they might have been working. (Box 2.2 explains how to read the estimated impact tables in this report.)

The increased contact between WASC participants and career coaches is not surprising, given the positive reports that both groups gave about the quality of their relationships, especially when contrasted with the more distant and bureaucratic relationships with government caseworkers that participants described. For example, WASC customers who participated in focus groups spoke very highly and appreciatively about the way their coaches treated them. They felt that the coaches knew them personally, took an interest in their success, treated them better than case managers in other programs, helped them overcome barriers that arose, believed in them, and gave them good advice:

All the staff that I came across [in the program] have a different compassion than some of the regular caseworkers. They don't act as though they feel that: "This is just my two hours. This person is trying to get something extra." They treat you like you would like to be treated. And that makes a big difference.

She was trying to help me to excel. And even if I couldn't make it for an appointment, if something happened, she would come to my house and work with me there. Whereas other workers are, like, "Okay, you have to be here within this half hour." And, like I said, I have three children.

Intervention with employers was not a core element of the WASC program but, rather, was at the discretion of the coaches, so no effects were expected here. The percentages of both program and control group respondents who reported that staff spoke with their employer are low, and there is no discernible pattern of effects.

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Table 2.1

Year 1, Impacts on Contacts with Program Staff

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome (%)	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Contact with any staff/case manager</u>									
Talked with staff/case manager in past 4 weeks	42.1	17.2	24.9 ***	35.8	13.4	22.4 ***	51.8	17.4	34.4 ***
Staff/case manager talked with respondent's employer									
Never	78.2	73.9	4.3	72.0	74.5	-2.5	72.4	70.3	2.0
Once or twice	10.7	18.0	-7.4 **	15.3	14.0	1.4	12.8	21.0	-8.2 *
More than twice	4.5	5.6	-1.1	5.3	8.7	-3.4	9.9	5.8	4.1
Don't know if the case manager talked with an employer	6.7	2.5	4.2 **	7.5	2.9	4.6 **	5.0	2.8	2.2
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTE: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Box 2.2

How to Read the Estimated Impact Tables in This Report

The “Difference (Impact)” columns of Table 2.1 show the estimated impacts — or the differences in mean values or percentages on outcomes between the program and control groups. For example, the table shows that 42.1 percent of the WASC group in Dayton and 17.2 percent of the control group in Dayton reported talking with a case manager in the past four weeks.

Because individuals were assigned randomly either to the WASC group or to the control group, the effects of the program can be estimated by the difference in outcomes between the two groups. The “Difference (Impact)” column in the table shows the differences between the two research groups’ participation rates — that is, the program’s *impacts* on this outcome. For example, the impact on talking with a case manager can be calculated by subtracting 17.2 percent from 42.1 percent, yielding 24.9 percentage points.

The number of asterisks shown in the table indicates whether a given estimated impact is statistically significant (or that the estimated impact is large enough that it is unlikely to be due to a program with no true effect). One asterisk corresponds with whether the estimated impact is statistically significant at the 10 percent level; two asterisks indicate statistical significance at the 5 percent level; and three asterisks indicate statistical significance at the 1 percent level.

Encouragement or Help from Coaches Related to Retention and Advancement

WASC’s model encouraged “proactive” coaching; in other words, coaches were expected to actively encourage participants to take steps toward advancement and income improvement. The type of case management that control group members were likely to find at the One-Stop or other community agencies was not typically proactive but, rather, was more reactive to clients’ initiative. Therefore, WASC was expected to increase the proportion of the WASC group members, relative to their control group counterparts, who reported getting encouragement to advance. Likewise, WASC coaches were expected to provide more help with retention and advancement than participants would have received in the absence of the program. In nearly all ways measured, WASC met this expectation.

- **In all three sites, WASC increased the likelihood that participants would receive some kind of encouragement or help from coaches related to retention and advancement, relative to control group members.**

Table 2.2 shows that, in all three sites, WASC increased the likelihood that participants would be encouraged to go to school, get training, or get a better job. In Dayton and San Diego,

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Table 2.2

Year 1, Impacts on Receipt of Encouragement or Help from Program Staff
Relating to Retention and Advancement

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome (%)	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Received any help or encouragement related to retention/advancement ^a	83.6	68.0	15.6 ***	88.0	71.4	16.7 ***	87.8	86.4	1.4
<u>Messages and help received from any program staff while participants were working^b</u>									
Encouraged participants to go to school or to get training	41.7	21.4	20.3 ***	48.9	23.1	25.9 ***	48.4	33.6	14.9 **
Encouraged participants to get a better job	20.4	14.0	6.4 *	39.1	12.9	26.2 ***	42.7	23.7	19.0 ***
Encouraged participants to focus on long-term career goals	37.5	20.8	16.7 ***	41.6	19.4	22.2 ***	48.1	42.0	6.1
Provided participants with specific job leads	17.6	13.3	4.3	33.6	18.9	14.6 ***	31.5	24.8	6.7
Encouraged participants to increase work hours	16.8	12.5	4.3	25.7	11.2	14.5 ***	23.5	17.3	6.1
Encouraged participants to negotiate pay raise	7.9	4.3	3.7 *	19.7	9.1	10.6 ***	13.0	12.9	0.1
Encouraged participants to negotiate better terms in job	11.4	8.0	3.4	16.4	11.5	4.9 *	19.4	18.3	1.0
Encouraged participants to pursue a promotion	10.4	9.1	1.3	22.4	11.7	10.7 ***	23.1	16.9	6.3
Helped participants deal with personal problems that make it hard to keep a job	14.0	17.2	-3.2	26.5	14.7	11.8 ***	17.7	21.5	-3.8
Was available to meet at a convenient time	42.3	29.5	12.8 ***	50.8	26.5	24.3 ***	56.0	41.3	14.7 **

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

Outcome (%)	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Was available to meet at a convenient place	33.2	25.2	8.0 *	50.0	27.5	22.5 ***	45.7	46.7	-1.0
Helped participants understand how changes in earnings would affect eligibility for certain benefits	33.5	23.0	10.5 ***	37.0	16.7	20.3 ***	32.5	30.4	2.1
Helped participants work out how much better off they would be if they increased hours worked or moved to new job	22.9	13.3	9.6 ***	33.0	14.3	18.7 ***	25.6	27.3	-1.7
Participants received help with retention/ advancement or with job preparation	53.2	32.1	21.1 ***	65.5	41.2	24.3 ***	67.9	58.4	9.5 *
Participants received help with retention/ advancement	43.9	19.1	24.9 ***	28.4	19.0	9.4 **	32.7	29.2	3.5
Career assessment	40.6	17.2	23.4 ***	24.6	14.6	10.1 ***	27.4	25.5	1.8
Dealing with problems on the job	9.4	6.3	3.1	9.4	7.5	1.8	16.5	10.8	5.8
Participants received help with job preparation	32.9	24.6	8.3 **	60.8	37.1	23.7 ***	61.5	53.7	7.8
Enrolling in job readiness or training classes	18.5	15.2	3.3	23.5	13.5	10.0 ***	29.3	30.8	-1.5
Looking for a job while employed	14.8	12.2	2.6	38.4	17.6	20.9 ***	34.9	25.7	9.2 *
Looking for a job while unemployed	13.1	13.5	-0.4	35.1	20.9	14.1 ***	35.2	30.9	4.3
Finding clothes, tools, or supplies for work	14.4	8.8	5.6 *	20.8	8.2	12.6 ***	20.6	15.2	5.5
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aThis measure captures any help or encouragements presented in this table.

^bThese percentages may sum to more than 100 percent because each respondent could provide multiple responses.

however, WASC had a positive impact on many more measures of receiving encouragement or help from coaches that was related to retention and advancement than in Bridgeport, largely because a greater proportion of the control group in Bridgeport was getting similar services than were the control groups in Dayton and San Diego. For instance, only about 20 percent of the control groups in Dayton and San Diego reported being encouraged by case managers to focus on long-term career goals, while 42 percent of the control group in Bridgeport reported receiving such encouragement. Similarly, while only 17 percent of the Dayton control group and 15 percent of the San Diego control group reported receiving help with career assessments, 26 percent of the control group in Bridgeport reported receiving this kind of help.

In most cases, WASC group members in Bridgeport reported receiving help and encouragement at levels comparable to, if not greater than, the WASC group members in Dayton and San Diego, despite the more frequent turnover of staff there and other implementation challenges discussed above. But in Bridgeport there were only a few areas of services in which WASC exceeded the levels of services in the control group. Aside from encouragement to go to school, get training, or get a better job, the only specific service that WASC increased in Bridgeport was assistance looking for a job while employed. While generally the WASC group members in Bridgeport reported receiving more help than control group members across a variety of measures, the differences are not statistically significant.

The relatively high level of services received by control group members in Bridgeport could be due to the fact that most WASC sample members in Bridgeport (both program and control groups) were recruited from among individuals who were already coming into the One-Stop for services.¹² In fact, according to a survey of customers walking into the Bridgeport One-Stop for services, conducted by MDRC prior to the start of the WASC program there, 58 percent of employed respondents (those most similar to the WASC target population) said that they came to the One-Stop for education or training services, and 24 percent said they came for job placement or job readiness services (not shown). Additionally, Bridgeport had a precursor to WASC, called the “Academy for Career Advancement,” which also provided flexible, non-WIA funding for training; WASC essentially replaced the Academy, and when people came into the One-Stop interested in training, they were routinely referred to WASC, just as they had previously often been referred to the Academy. Those who were assigned to the control group may have been more proactive than in the other sites in seeking services at the One-Stop, since, according to the walk-in survey, most of them likely came to the One-Stop seeking those types of services before they had even heard about WASC. In Dayton and San Diego, in contrast, WASC

¹²The majority of focus group participants in Bridgeport reported learning about the WASC program through the WIA One-Stop Center, called CTWorks. One participant reported learning about the program from an acquaintance, while another found the program online.

recruitment sources were more varied and included lists of food stamp recipients and the general public, through, for example, presentations at churches and community organizations.

- **San Diego is the only site in which WASC led to an increase in almost every measure (all but one) of encouragement or help related to retention and advancement received by participants.**

As in Dayton and Bridgeport, WASC in San Diego increased the likelihood that people would be encouraged to get a better (that is, a different) job; however, in San Diego, WASC also increased the likelihood that people would be encouraged to move up in their current job. For example, WASC in San Diego made a statistically significant difference in the proportion of people who indicated that staff encouraged them to increase their work hours, to negotiate better terms in their current job, and to pursue a promotion; staff also helped them deal with personal problems that make it hard for them to keep a job (Table 2.2).

The focus on advancing in a current job in San Diego may have been the result of the relative inaccessibility of training funds for participants to pursue a different type of career.

- **The Work Advancement Calculator — a Web-based tool designed especially for the WASC demonstration to help coaches explain the interactions between increases in earnings and the receipt of work supports — seems to have been more effective or more widely used in Dayton and San Diego than in Bridgeport.**

This is consistent with reports from Bridgeport staff that they did not use the calculator very often, but it is also important to note that a relatively high proportion of the control group in Bridgeport seems to have received information similar to what the calculator provided for the WASC group. In Dayton and San Diego, but not in Bridgeport, WASC increased the proportion of participants, compared with control group members, who said that staff helped them understand how changes in earnings would affect eligibility for certain benefits and that staff helped them understand how much better off they would be if they increased their hours worked or moved to a new job (Table 2.2).

Encouragement or Help Related to Work Supports or Public Benefits

Table 2.3 considers the encouragement and help that sample members received with work supports either from WASC coaches (for the WASC group) or, presumably, from human services agency staff (for the control group); the table presents estimates for the full sample and for the group not receiving benefits at the time of enrollment. Since eased access to work supports was a central component of the WASC model, and given the proactive nature intended for WASC coaches, WASC was expected to do a better job than the human services agencies of

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Table 2.3

Year 1, Impacts on Receipt of Encouragement or Help from Program Staff
Relating to Work Supports (Public Benefits)

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome (%)	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Received any help or encouragement relating to work supports	89.7	71.2	18.4 ***	92.1	56.5	35.6 ***	85.4	63.0	22.4 ***
Staff encouraged participants to think about applying for the following work supports/benefits since random assignment ^{a,b}									
Food stamps	35.5	17.8	17.7 ***	35.4	13.2	22.2 ***	46.1	14.0	32.2 ***
Earned Income Tax Credit	40.5	15.4	25.1 ***	39.8	13.2	26.6 ***	36.6	17.7	18.9 ***
Child care ^c	48.9	24.7	24.2 ***	55.4	17.0	38.4 ***	32.6	18.5	14.1 *
Health insurance for self or children	37.2	26.2	11.0 ***	35.5	17.5	18.0 ***	44.6	19.6	25.0 ***
Cash assistance ^d	16.1	7.2	8.9 ***	22.3	9.1	13.1 ***	12.7	8.1	4.6
Unemployment insurance	5.8	6.7	-1.0	16.7	10.7	5.9 **	14.3	11.9	2.4
Child support	19.5	13.1	6.4 **	14.9	7.4	7.5 ***	10.2	8.9	1.2
Received help with work supports	48.3	30.7	17.6 ***	40.6	18.1	22.5 ***	45.4	18.2	27.2 ***
Getting Medicaid for self	32.0	15.2	16.8 ***	24.2	10.1	14.1 ***	26.7	10.6	16.1 ***
Among those not covered at time of enrollment	23.0	9.8	13.3 ***	22.5	9.0	13.6 ***	28.5	6.7	21.8 **
Getting Medicaid for child	47.2	31.1	16.1 ***	33.8	11.9	21.9 ***	30.5	12.6	17.9 ***
Among those not covered at time of enrollment ^e	29.0	25.4	3.7	32.2	10.0	22.2 ***	12.5	14.9	-2.4
Getting food stamps	36.5	24.9	11.7 ***	25.3	8.6	16.8 ***	30.2	5.5	24.7 ***
Among those eligible and not covered at time of enrollment	35.5	19.0	16.5 **	26.0	7.2	18.8 ***	28.7	2.1	26.6 ***
Received help with support services	34.6	13.4	21.2 ***	53.6	14.3	39.3 ***	16.7	11.9	4.7
Finding child care provider or getting referrals for child care ^c	21.1	13.6	7.4	35.9	14.7	21.1 ***	13.3	14.8	-1.5
Finding or paying for transportation	28.2	9.4	18.8 ***	43.9	8.3	35.6 ***	11.5	5.3	6.3 **

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Received help handling a financial emergency	18.6	9.4	9.1 ***	8.9	5.0	3.9 *	8.2	2.0	6.2 **
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aThese percentages may sum to more than 100 percent because each respondent could provide multiple responses.

^bResponses are shown only for those who responded "agree a lot" to the statement.

^cThis measure is shown for respondents with at least one child age 11 or younger at time of random assignment.

^dThis includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Ohio Works First, California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), and so on.

^eThis measure is shown for sample members with at least one child at time of random assignment.

encouraging participants to apply for, and of helping them to receive, work supports. Across the board, WASC met this expectation.

In fact, WASC more consistently increased the receipt of encouragement or help related to work supports across all three sites than it did encouragement or help related to retention and advancement. In San Diego, WASC had positive impacts on every measure of encouragement or help related to work supports.

- **In all three sites, WASC increased the likelihood that people received a message from staff encouraging them to apply for food stamps, the EITC, child care assistance, and health insurance for themselves or their children.**
- **In all three sites, WASC also increased the likelihood that people received help getting Medicaid for themselves and their children, getting food stamps, finding or paying for transportation, and handling a financial emergency.**

Additionally, in Dayton and San Diego, WASC increased the proportion of people who were encouraged to apply for cash assistance and child support.

Bridgeport's stronger findings for staff help related to work supports than for help related to retention and advancement can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that this site had a single staff person who was involved in the project from beginning to end and who was solely responsible for work support assistance. The Career Navigators, who turned over frequently and were not always the best prepared for their role of advancement coach, were not involved in delivery of work support services at all in Bridgeport; instead, a part-time worker from the Department of Social Services, who was highly qualified to provide work support assistance, delivered this service to participants at the WASC office. This individual joined the project at the beginning and remained through the end, so this service was not interrupted by staff turnover, as was the case with the advancement staff. The work support staff person was not involved in the delivery of advancement coaching.

The agencies that respondents named as the places where they received help (not shown) reflect clearly that WASC participants in all three sites received most of their help from the WASC units and only some additional help from other agencies in the community, while the control group members reported receiving most of their help from the One-Stop Career Centers and other community agencies.¹³

¹³A relatively large proportion of control group members in San Diego reported receiving help from the WASC unit (31 percent), which may reflect control group respondents' memories of going to the WASC unit for random assignment and getting "assistance" from the unit in the form of a referral to the One-Stop Center.

Incentive Payments in Dayton

As noted above, WASC participants in Dayton could receive financial incentives to participate in the program, in the form of supportive services (such as transportation reimbursements); to participate in education and training — and to complete these programs — in the form of training incentives and completion bonuses; and to maintain employment, in the form of retention bonuses. Anyone who was employed and engaged in one other activity (such as skills training, college courses for credit, or General Educational Development [GED] classes) was eligible to receive an incentive payment, structured as follows:¹⁴

- A participant who enrolled in training and completed a course with a C-plus grade point average or higher could receive up to \$800 per year for the two years of the WASC program period.
- The participant could also receive up to \$300 more for completing this training with a credential.
- A participant who subsequently earned a job promotion as a result of the training and completion could receive an additional \$250.
- A participant who retained a new job for nine months or longer or who got a new job within 45 days of losing a job could earn \$100.

In other words, participants who enrolled in a two-year certificate program, completed the program satisfactorily, earned a promotion as a result, and — if the promotion was to a new job — retained a new job for nine months or longer could receive a total of \$2,150 in payments. In addition to these incentive payments, Dayton offered a child care stipend of \$65 per month to help defray the child care copay cost for everyone who maintained work, as well as an \$80 monthly gas card for participants who were working and in training. Participants who had children in child care, therefore, could receive another \$1,560 (\$65 per month for 24 months) and could be eligible for \$1,920 in gas cards (\$80 per month for 24 months). In total, a participant could receive up to \$5,730 in participation, completion, and retention incentive payments over two years, which would not count as income against eligibility for work supports.

As shown in Table 2.4, about 42 percent of program group members, or 246 participants, received at least one of these incentives over two and a half years. Of those 246 participants, 157 (or 64 percent) received a training incentive or completion bonus; the average total amount of that payment was \$379. While 157 is a relatively large number of program group

¹⁴While these incentives were all technically available to participants, according to the incentive voucher forms provided by the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, it is not known whether the incentives were all promoted or how well they were promoted.

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Table 2.4

Monthly Incentive Payments, July 2006 to January 2009

WASC Program Group Participants in Dayton

Payment Type	Percentage of Program Group Participants Receiving Payments (%)	Average Number of Months that Participants Received Payments ^a	Average Monthly Payment Amount per Participant ^b (\$)	Average Total Payment per Participant ^c (\$)
Any supportive service or incentive payment ^d	41.7	5.2	47	242
<u>Training incentives and bonus payments</u>				
Any incentive payment ^d	26.6			
<u>Supportive services</u>				
Child care reimbursement ^e	9.5			
Transportation reimbursement ^f	33.9			
Uniform and books ^g	1.9			
Tuition ^h	18.0			
Sample size	590			
<u>Training incentives and bonus paymentsⁱ</u>				
Any incentive payment ^{c,d}	63.8	1.8	214	379
<u>Supportive services^{c,i}</u>				
Child care reimbursement ^e	22.8	3.9	59	226
Transportation reimbursement ^f	81.3	5.1	71	360
Uniform and books ^g	4.5	1.0	169	169
Tuition ^h	43.1	1.4	1,476	2,047
Sample size	246			

(continued)

Table 2.4 (continued)

SOURCE: Administrative records from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services.

NOTES: MDRC received reimbursements and incentive/bonus payments from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services in a Microsoft Excel workbook that covered the months July 2006 through June 2007 and on paper voucher forms that covered the months June 2007 through January 2009. The information contained on the Microsoft Excel workbook and the paper voucher forms varied some. For example, the Microsoft Excel workbook contained information about tuition and uniform and books reimbursements whereas the paper voucher forms did not. The paper voucher forms differed some over time, due to changes in the agency's Supportive Service program. Voucher Form A, for example, contained a "fuller" set of reimbursement and incentive payment types; Voucher Form B contained an abbreviated set. (The form labels "A" and "B" were designated by MDRC to distinguish between forms.) Voucher Form A was used from June 2007 to April 2008 (as well as for two payments made in November and December 2008). Voucher Form B was used from March 2008 to January 2009.

^aOnly among months for which participants received payments.

^bExcludes zero payment amounts and months when participants did not receive payments. Note that the average monthly payment amount per person multiplied by the average number of months participants received payments equals the average total payment amount per participant (excluding zero payment amounts). For instance, the average total child care reimbursement amount per participant is approximately \$190 (\$57 per month times 3.33 months).

^cOnly among those who ever received an incentive payment.

^dIt is not possible to decompose incentive payment into constitutive components by payment type because payment amounts are not itemized on voucher forms.

^eMaximum benefit amount of \$65 per benefit month.

^fMaximum benefit amount of \$80 per benefit month.

^gService provided through May 2007.

^hWASC-funded tuition provided through June 2007.

ⁱAmong program group participants who received training incentives, bonus payments, or supportive services.

members to receive a training incentive or completion bonus, the total amount received was substantially lower than might have been expected, given that an individual could have received a total of \$1,900 for completing a two-year training with a C-plus and earning a credential. This lower incentive dollar amount suggests that some individuals who earned incentives did not complete two-year programs and/or did not earn a certificate as a result.

Among the 42 percent of program group members who received any supportive service or training/completion incentive, about 23 percent (56 participants) received an average total payment of \$226 in child care copay reimbursements, for which they needed to maintain employment. About 81 percent of incentive recipients (200 participants) received an average total of \$360 in transportation reimbursements (gas cards), for which they had to be working and in training. Only about 5 percent of incentive recipients (11 participants) received payments for uniforms and books, at an average total per recipient of \$169. And about 43 percent of incentive recipients (106 participants) received tuition payments from Dayton's discretionary funds, averaging \$2,047 per person. These funds could be used for additional training after completing a WIA formula-funded training.

Training and Job Characteristics Among Incentive Recipients in Dayton

Training institutions, training programs, and current job characteristics were tracked from June 2007 through January 2009 for a subset of 94 individuals who received incentive payments related to education and training in Dayton.¹⁵

As shown in Table 2.5, of those 94 participants:

- Nearly 66 percent attended a two-year college (Sinclair Community College, RETS Tech Center, and Miami-Jacobs Career College).
- Close to 13 percent attended a four-year university (Wright State University, Antioch University, and University of Cincinnati).
- About 19 percent attended a vocational/technical training institution (Miami Valley Career Technology Center and “other training institutions”).
- More than 56 percent studied to be medical or health care technicians.
- About 12 percent studied business/finance/real estate/management.
- Almost 45 percent were working as health care practitioners at the time of their latest incentive payment.

These data show that the predominant field of study was health care, with education and training being provided by vocational schools more than by colleges; thus, these likely led to Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) credentials rather than a bachelor’s degree in nursing. Health care was also the predominant field of employment for people who received an education/training incentive payment. These findings are consistent with the fact that most WASC participants were women — who are traditionally drawn to nursing more than men are — and that health care was an industry that was perceived to be growing.

Summary of Findings About Implementation and Participation

While the WASC program was largely implemented as designed in all three sites, the forms that the program took and the characteristics of the customers served varied substantially across

¹⁵These 94 individuals are a subset of the total group of individuals who received education and training incentive payments; in particular, they received payments between June 2007 and January 2009, and, during that period, Dayton tracked more information about incentive recipients’ training programs and employment than was tracked earlier. As a result, this is a group whose training activities and job characteristics can be described in more detail.

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Table 2.5

Training and Job Characteristics Among Incentive Payment Recipients

WASC Program Group Participants in Dayton

Characteristic	Percentage of Participants
<u>Training institution</u>	
Sinclair Community College	28.7
RETS Tech Center	23.4
Miami-Jacobs Career College	13.8
Other training institution ^a	12.8
Wright State University	8.5
Miami Valley Career Technology Center	6.4
Antioch University	2.1
University of Cincinnati	2.1
None reported	2.1
<u>Training program</u>	
Medical/health care technical	56.4
Business/finance/real estate/management	11.7
Community and social services	8.5
Other training program	8.5
Science and engineering	4.3
Health administration	3.2
General education/liberal arts	2.1
Construction	2.1
None reported	2.1
Computer technical support	1.1
<u>Current job industry^b</u>	
Other services ^c	58.5
Accommodations and food services	12.8
Public administration	5.3
Educational services	4.3
Retail trade	4.3
Other industries	4.3
Transportation and utilities	3.2
Administration, support, waste services	3.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.1
Manufacturing	1.1
Wholesale trade	1.1
None reported	1.1

(continued)

Table 2.5 (continued)

Characteristic	Percentage of Participants
<u>Current job occupation^d</u>	
Health care practitioners and technical occupations	44.7
Food preparation and service related	14.9
Clerical	10.6
Other occupations	9.6
Sales	6.4
Health care support services	5.3
Protective services	2.1
Community and social services	2.1
Operative or laborer	2.1
None reported	2.1
Sample size	94

SOURCE: Administrative records from the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services.

NOTES: Training and job characteristics are for the latest payment month for which a participant received an incentive payment.

^aOther training institutions include the following, each of which is associated with one participant: OIP&T, Life Skills, Ohio DRC, Carousel Beauty College, Kettering College of Medical Arts, Ohio Academy of Holistic Health, National College, Construction Craft, MVMS, Central State, Wilberforce University, and University of Phoenix.

^bIndustry categories are based on Census industry categories and are the same as those used to analyze employment history data from the WASC 12-Month Survey.

^cThe "other services" category includes health care and managed care services, retirement homes, early childhood education and daycare services, beauty salons, law practices, and temporary employment staffing and human resource services. Of the 55 participants, 50 (approximately 91percent in this category) whose job industry is in the "other services" category are involved in health care services or in managed and elderly care services.

^dOccupation categories are based on Census occupation categories and are the same as those used to analyze employment history data from the WASC 12-Month Survey.

sites, as did the level of service receipt among control group members. Yet, despite the differences in implementation and in participants' characteristics, the data support the notion that WASC delivered a fairly strong treatment in all three sites; that is, all participants reported receiving the encouragement and assistance that the program was expected to deliver, across both advancement and work supports, though not necessarily at the levels that were hoped for. While WASC had fewer impacts in Bridgeport than in Dayton and San Diego on the likelihood of receiving encouragement and help, especially in the area of retention and advancement, that

seems to be primarily because the control group was more likely to receive services in Bridgeport than in the other two sites, raising the bar there for what WASC had to improve on.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine whether the increased help and encouragement that WASC provided resulted in increased benefit receipt, employment, and earnings.

Chapter 3

Impacts of WASC on Work Supports

Introduction

This chapter discusses the impacts of the Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration on the take-up of such work supports as food stamps, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), subsidized child care, and publicly funded health care.¹

As noted in Chapter 2, the implementation research shows that each site tested different versions of the WASC model but that the work support features of the model were fairly similar across sites.² All three sites offered education about and easier access to work supports, including quick access to staff; career coaches and welfare caseworkers colocated in the local One-Stop Career Centers established by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998; help with applications for work supports and maintaining them over time; and one location for dropping off all applications.³ The emphasis of each version of the WASC model varied as follows:

- Dayton emphasized easier food stamp redetermination, access to public health care coverage, a strong blend of coaching and access to very generous training dollars through WIA, discretionary funds to support additional training, and incentives for training and sustained work.
- San Diego emphasized eased access to child care funding, easier application for and redetermination of benefits, mostly coaching and limited access to funds for training, referral to free or low-cost training in the community, and a focus on career coaching and advancing at the current employer.
- Bridgeport emphasized faster and more personalized access to a work support specialist, mostly access to training and some access to funds for training through WIA, discretionary funds to pay for training outside WIA, and the availability of a broader range of training programs.

¹The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

²The three sites are Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California. Individuals were brought into the study between late 2005 and early 2008, and the follow-up period for the evaluation spans late 2005 through early 2011.

³In many cases, WASC staff would also approve the application for the work support.

More program than control group members said in the 12-month survey that they were encouraged to and got help to apply for the full range of work supports. Thus, there are reasons to hypothesize that WASC might increase the use of work supports.

The key findings about work supports are as follows:

- **Food stamp receipt.** WASC increased the percentage of program group members receiving food stamps over the first two years by 4.7 percentage points in Dayton (an 8 percent increase) and by 7.7 percentage points in San Diego (a 27 percent increase). WASC had no impact on food stamp use in Bridgeport.
- **Health care coverage.** WASC helped more program group members get publicly funded health care coverage for their children over the first year in Dayton and San Diego. The result was a net gain in the number of children with health care coverage in San Diego but not in Dayton, where the increase in publicly funded coverage was mostly offset by a decrease in private coverage. WASC had no impact on health care coverage for adults or children in Bridgeport.
- **Earned Income Tax Credit claims.** The three programs do not appear to have had an effect on the number of people claiming the EITC, but the programs in Dayton and San Diego did increase individuals' use of free tax preparation services.
- **Subsidized child care receipt.** WASC increased parents' use of subsidized child care over the three-year follow-up period in San Diego.

The results show that WASC led to a fairly large increase in the use of work supports in San Diego, a modest increase in Dayton, and no increase in Bridgeport. The absence of impacts in Bridgeport could be because the take-up of work supports was at or above the nationwide average in many areas and so the program did not have much to improve on in terms of simplification, or perhaps WASC helped more people increase their earnings over time in this site. Bridgeport's results might also suggest that the basic WASC model was not always enough to help more people take up work supports. (Chapter 1 describes the program model, its expected effects over time, and the mechanisms through which these effects might occur.)

This chapter first discusses the impacts of WASC on food stamp receipt and then presents its impacts on receipt of the EITC, subsidized child care, and health care coverage. The concluding section summarizes the program's impacts on receipt of multiple work supports. An "impact" is defined as an increase or decrease relative to the control group average. Control group averages can therefore be viewed as benchmarks against which the WASC program was

tested, and they are discussed in the text to illustrate what happens over time when low-wage workers rely mostly on their own initiative to take up work supports. Program group members were eligible to receive services from WASC for two years after each individual's time of random assignment; after this time period, a program group member would have to go to the welfare office for work supports, just like a control group member. All impacts discussed in the text are statistically significant, unless otherwise noted.⁴

Food Stamps (SNAP)

Recognizing the need to ensure that low-income families have access to nutritious food, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has, since the early 2000s, supported state efforts to increase outreach and improve access to help families — especially those with earners — take up food stamps.⁵ These efforts have not been formally evaluated but likely contributed to the nationwide participation increase among eligible families with at least one earner, from 48 percent in 2003 to 54 percent in 2008.⁶ Although the increase masks differences by state, it suggests that the benchmark that WASC had to improve on increased over time. To set the context, in 2008, California was below the national average, at 31 percent, and Ohio was above it, at 64 percent; Connecticut was close to the average, at 50 percent.⁷

As noted, WASC program group members in all three sites were educated about food stamps and were offered easier access to them. WASC also emphasized providing program group members with easier application procedures, and the program in San Diego allowed customers to defer fingerprinting until, or if, they visited the county food stamp office. The implementation research shows that applicants and staff benefited from simpler procedures; the applicant could submit all needed information and documentation one time, and the staff then compiled and completed the applications. WASC thus helped staff become more efficient and likely reduced the transaction cost of processing applications for work supports in San Diego. WASC also emphasized easier redetermination of food stamps and offered extended office hours in both Dayton and San Diego.⁸ As Chapter 2 shows, in all three sites, WASC increased the number of people who received encouragement and help to apply for food stamps.

⁴Box 2.2 in Chapter 2 explains how to read the estimated impact tables in this report.

⁵Wolkwitz (2008); Leftin (2010).

⁶Cunyngham, Castner, and Schrim (2008, 2010, 2011).

⁷Cunyngham, Castner, and Schrim (2011).

⁸According to federal food stamp quality-control data for Fiscal Year 2006, in Ohio, about 97 percent of the household units with heads ages 18 to 62 who had earnings and about 66 percent of those without earnings were scheduled for redetermination every six months or less. In California, only about 1 percent of the households were scheduled for redetermination every six month or less, and almost all redetermination meetings (up to 99 percent) were held once a year.

- **WASC increased food stamp use over the first two years of follow-up in both Dayton and San Diego. The program had no effect on food stamp use in Bridgeport.**

The three graphs in Figure 3.1 present food stamp receipt in the three sites, by month relative to each individual's time of random assignment, starting six months before and extending two to three years after this month. The percentages are estimated from administrative records of food stamp receipt, and they cover the full research sample, including as zero values those who may have been ineligible or who for other reasons did not receive food stamps during a month. The percentages of program and control group members taking up food stamps, by month, increased over the two years prior to random assignment but were about the same for program and control group members in all three sites. (Only the six most recent months before random assignment are shown at the left of the graphs.) The increase in take-up mirrors the increase in nationwide rates, which suggests that the benchmark that WASC had to improve on increased over time. The analysis also shows that the randomization of individuals to the program and control groups succeeded in creating two groups with similar food stamp receipt rates at baseline.

Impacts for the two to three years after the month of random assignment (shown as the dotted lines in the graphs) are the focus of the impact analysis and show that WASC increased food stamp receipt in Month 1 in Bridgeport, over most months of the first and second year in Dayton and San Diego, and in the first two months of the third year in San Diego.⁹

Table 3.1 presents summary data on food stamp receipt. Of the outcomes shown, the cumulative effect over the first two years ("Years 1-2") is most interesting, as the impact of WASC was small and close to null over the third year, when WASC group members were no longer eligible for the program and went back to the welfare office for food stamp assistance.¹⁰ The increase due to WASC over the first two years is 4.7 percentage points above a control group level of 59.9 percent in Dayton and 7.7 percentage points above a control group figure of 28.8 percent in San Diego. This equals a 27 percent increase in San Diego, given its low rate of receipt, and an 8 percent increase in Dayton.

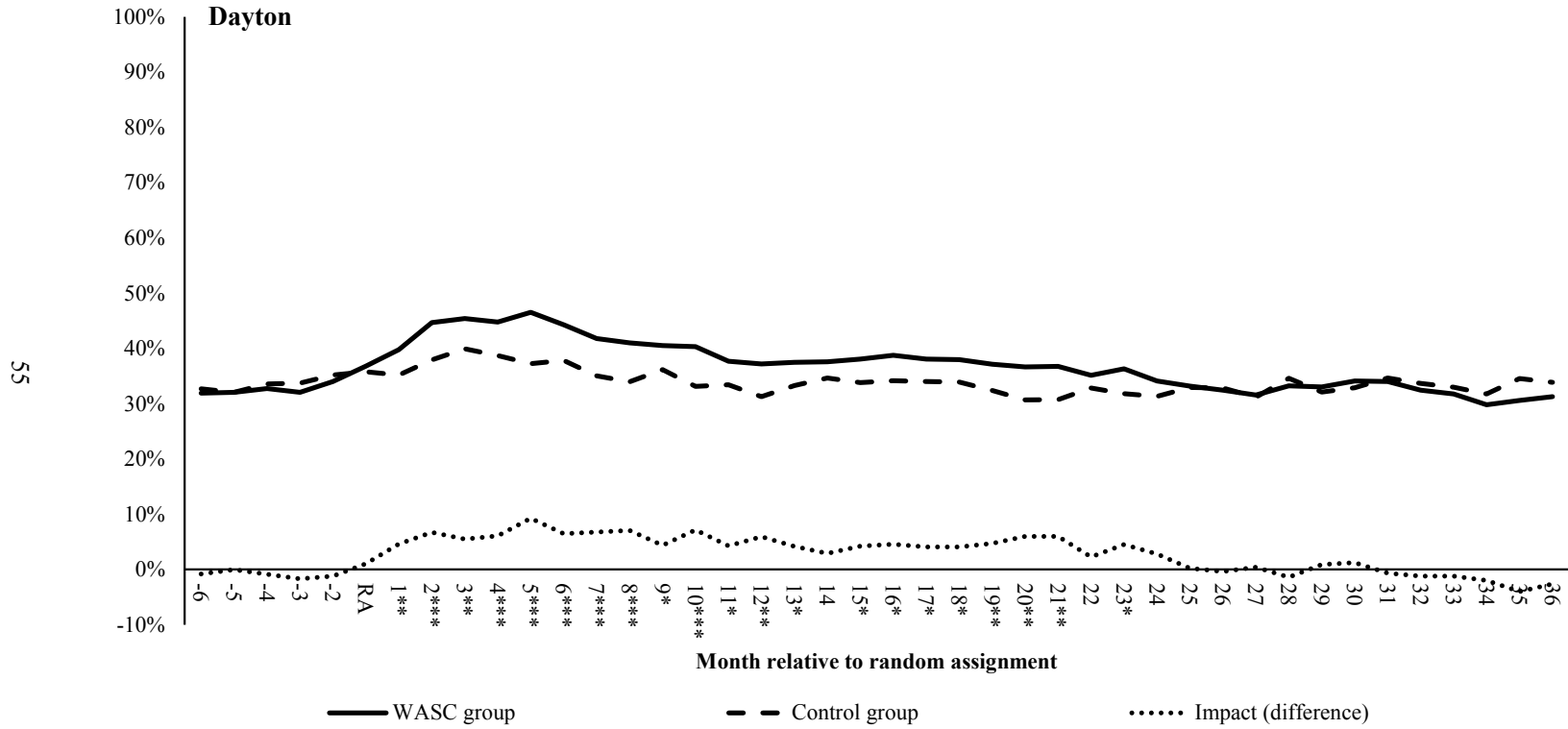
⁹Chapter 4 explores the lack of effects on food stamp receipt in Bridgeport.

¹⁰As discussed in Chapter 1, WASC offered services to program group members for a period of two years in Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport. In San Diego, for example, program group members had to go back to the family resource center (welfare office) to access and maintain eligibility for work supports after the services ended. The situation was similar for program group members in Dayton and Bridgeport.

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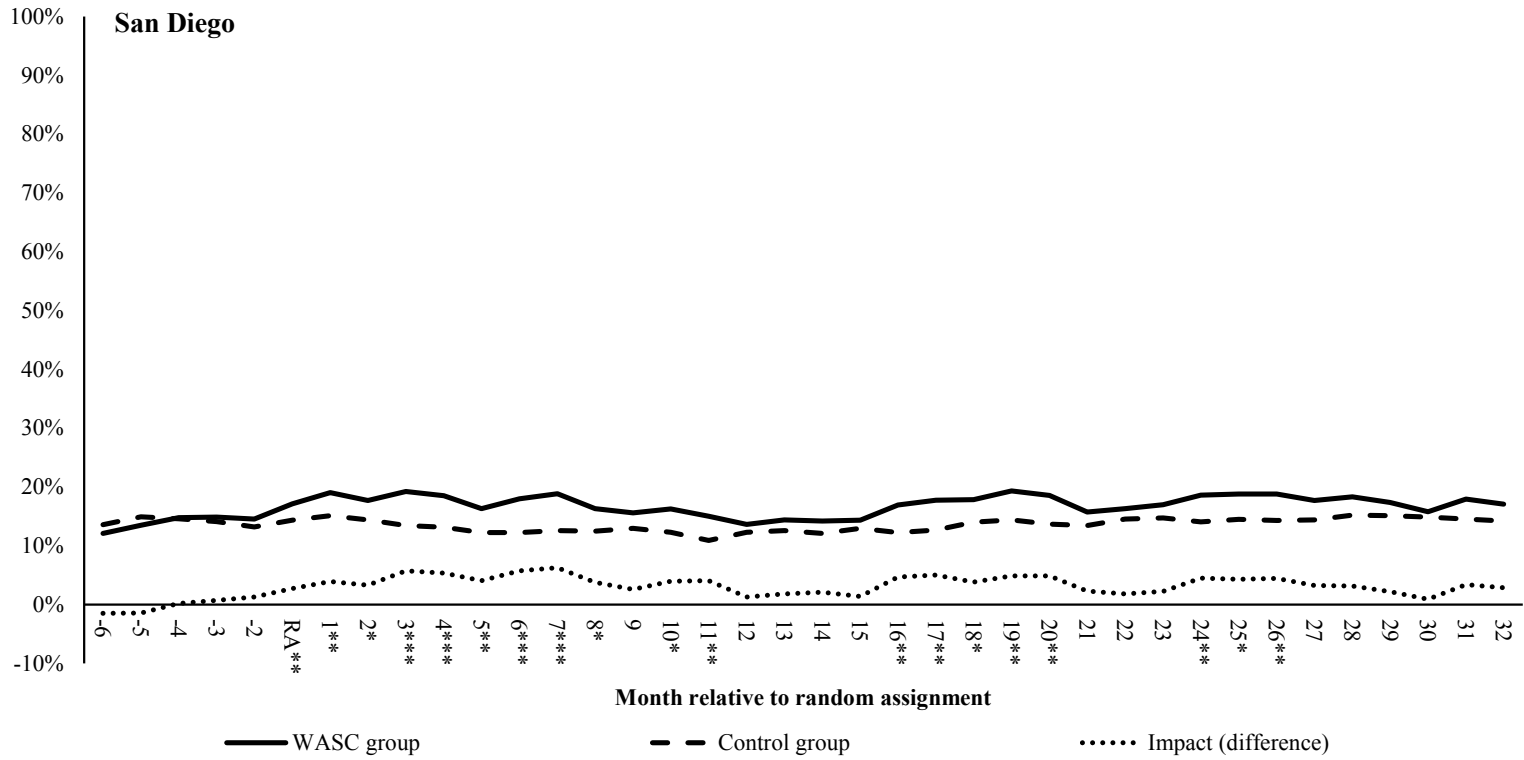
Figure 3.1

Percentage Receiving Food Stamps, by Month Relative to Random Assignment



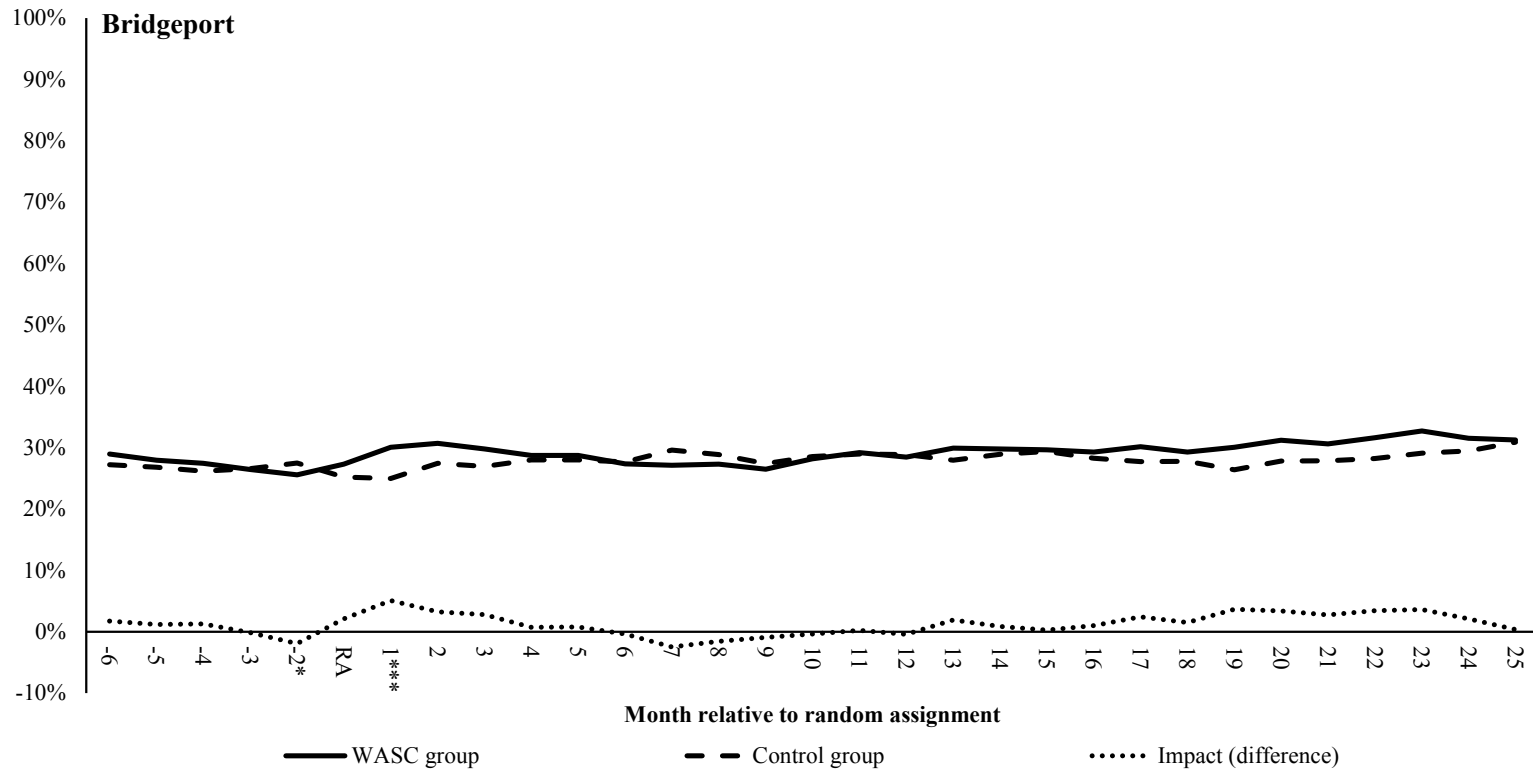
(continued)

Figure 3.1 (continued)



(continued)

Figure 3.1 (continued)



57

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from monthly food stamp receipt records provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) in California, and the Department of Social Services in Connecticut.

NOTE: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

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Table 3.1

Years 1-3, Impacts on Receipt of Food Stamps

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Among full research sample</u>									
<u>Year 1</u>									
Ever received food stamps (%)	60.4	54.2	6.2 ***	29.5	23.8	5.7 ***	42.4	40.2	2.3
Months receiving food stamps	5.0	4.3	0.7 ***	2.0	1.5	0.5 ***	3.4	3.4	0.0
Amount of food stamps received (\$)	1,457	1,325	133 *	622	466	155 **	867	871	-3
<u>Year 2</u>									
Ever received food stamps (%)	50.8	49.6	1.2	28.2	20.6	7.6 ***	42.1	41.6	0.6
Months receiving food stamps	4.4	3.9	0.5 **	2.1	1.7	0.4 *	3.7	3.4	0.3
Amount of food stamps received (\$)	1,416	1,315	101	839	601	238 **	1,057	1,006	50
<u>Years 1-2</u>									
Ever received food stamps (%)	64.6	59.9	4.7 **	36.5	28.8	7.7 ***	48.4	47.5	1.0
Months receiving food stamps	9.4	8.2	1.2 ***	4.1	3.2	0.9 **	7.1	6.8	0.3
Amount of food stamps received (\$)	2,873	2,639	234	1,461	1,067	394 ***	1,924	1,877	47
Sample size (total = 2,852)	590	586		488	483		351	354	

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Among research sample members enrolled March 31, 2007, or earlier									
Year 3									
Ever received food stamps (%)	47.6	48.0	-0.4	28.3	23.9	4.4			
Months receiving food stamps	3.8	4.0	-0.2	2.2	1.7	0.4 *			
Amount of food stamps received (\$)	1,514	1,516	-3	1,020	700	320 ***			
Years 1-3									
Ever received food stamps (%)	66.9	63.9	3.0	41.4	33.8	7.6 ***			
Months receiving food stamps	13.2	12.2	1.0 *	6.2	5.0	1.2 **			
Amount of food stamps received (\$)	4,387	4,156	231	2,458	1,764	694 ***			
Sample size (total = 1,969)	590	586		397	396				

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from monthly food stamp receipt records provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA), and the Department of Social Services in Connecticut.

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

These results may suggest that continued ease of access is needed — especially in San Diego, a county that, over a longer period of time, has struggled and continues to struggle with one of the lowest food stamp participation rates nationwide. In June 2009, only 16 percent of households in San Diego that were at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level participated in the food stamp program.¹¹

The second set of data shows that WASC also increased the number of months that individuals received food stamps. Over the two-year period as a whole in Dayton, for example, the average individual in the program group received food stamps for 1.2 months more than the average individual in the control group. While the control group average was only 3.2 months of receipt in San Diego, the impact of WASC was almost the same as in Dayton. The percentage increase in months of receipt in San Diego is about the same as the percentage increase in “ever received food stamps,” suggesting that most of the increase in months of receipt was due to more people getting the benefit in San Diego. Dayton differs in that half of its increase in months of receipt was due to more people getting food stamps and half was due to an increase in the length of receipt among those who received them.

- **WASC increased the total dollar amount of food stamps that individuals received. The effects persisted through Year 3 in San Diego and through Year 1 in Dayton.**

The third set of data in Table 3.1 shows that WASC increased the amount that individuals received in food stamp benefits over all three years in San Diego.¹² The increase was about \$694 above the control group average of \$1,764, or about 39 percent. WASC also increased the average amount of food stamps received over the first year in Dayton, by \$133, or about 10 percent. The averages for the dollar amount received include zeros for individuals who never received food stamps. A separate analysis (not shown) indicates that individuals who took up food stamps because of WASC got fairly substantial amounts over the follow-up period. During the first year, for example, these individuals received between \$1,455 and \$2,478 in food stamps in Dayton and between \$2,274 and \$2,917 in San Diego.

In contrast to Dayton and San Diego, WASC in Bridgeport had no effect on food stamp receipt. One big difference between Bridgeport and the other two sites, which may explain the lack of effects, is that Dayton and San Diego offered easier redetermination. This meant that program group members in Dayton and San Diego could call in for their redetermination meeting, whereas the control group members (and also the program and control group members in Bridgeport) had to take time off from work and incur the expense of going into the welfare

¹¹Food Research and Action Center (2010); *New York Times* (2009).

¹²Note that the average total dollar amount received in benefits covers individuals using and not using food stamps; those not using food stamps are included with zero values.

office to meet with their caseworker for a face-to-face redetermination meeting. Dayton and San Diego also offered flexible office hours to make it more convenient for working people to meet, while Bridgeport did not. Both factors might have made it easier to access and maintain food stamp benefits in Dayton and San Diego than in Bridgeport.

The differences between impacts on food stamp receipt in San Diego and Dayton, on the other hand, may be driven by several factors. First, the deferral of fingerprinting in San Diego likely lowered the threshold for program group members to obtain food stamps, relative to the control group. Fingerprinting is not required in Dayton. Second, the frequency of the redetermination meetings differed by employment status in Ohio but not in California. Most individuals in Ohio who are employed and getting food stamps have to meet with their caseworker every sixth months for redetermination of their food stamp benefits. Most individuals who are unemployed in Ohio and those who are employed or unemployed in California have to meet with their caseworker about once every twelve months. Research has shown that a shorter time period between the redetermination meetings reduces the percentage of eligible households participating in the food stamp program.¹³ Simpler redetermination in Dayton, therefore, likely boosted months of receipt more for employed than for unemployed program group members. Third, San Diego served a large group of Latino and immigrant individuals whose food stamp take-up rates are much lower than for the population at large.¹⁴ This might have lowered the benchmark receipt rate for WASC to improve on more in San Diego than in Dayton, and it might explain some of the larger increase in the San Diego site. Fourth and finally, WASC in Dayton helped more people stay employed and advance over the second and third year, which may have made some individuals ineligible for food stamps. In contrast, WASC did not increase earnings in San Diego, and it may even have had a small negative effect during the first year.

Table 3.2 presents impacts on food stamp receipt among respondents to the 12-month survey in the month before their survey interview date. The table shows that WASC increased food stamp receipt during this month in San Diego but led to no impact on the same outcome in Dayton and Bridgeport. The survey results are consistent with the impact on food stamp receipt based on administrative records data. (See Quarter 5 in Appendix Table D.1.) The main reasons that respondents gave for not receiving food stamps were having too-high income, not applying or reapplying for food stamps, not needing food stamps, or not wanting them.

¹³Kabbani and Wilde (2003).

¹⁴Skinner (2011).

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Table 3.2

The Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt in Month Prior to Survey Interview
Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Food stamps									
Received food stamps in prior month (%)	37.4	36.9	0.5	21.1	15.4	5.7 *	32.5	25.9	6.6
Average food stamp receipt in prior month (\$)	94	102	-8	54	31	23 **	69	60	9
<i>Average food stamp receipt in prior month among those receiving food stamps (\$)</i>	252	276	--	257	204	--	214	234	--
<i>Main reason for not receiving food stamps^a (%)</i>									
<i>Income too high</i>	45.9	35.1	--	31.6	31.4	--	43.4	37.1	--
<i>Too much of a hassle</i>	5.8	3.4	--	5.6	5.5	--	8.1	1.3	--
<i>Did not apply/reapply for food stamps</i>	18.5	29.3	--	24.7	22.3	--	19.0	19.8	--
<i>Problems with social services</i>	1.5	1.1	--	1.3	0.9	--	-0.1	4.8	--
<i>Eligible, but amount was too small</i>	-0.2	3.5	--	0.4	0.5	--	0.4	0.6	--
<i>Not needed</i>	17.9	17.4	--	21.9	26.5	--	16.5	23.4	--
<i>Didn't want them</i>	2.8	3.1	--	5.6	5.5	--	10.1	12.6	--
<i>Not a U.S. resident long enough to qualify</i>	0.7	0.0	--	1.0	-0.2	--	0.0	0.0	--
<i>Applied recently/started recently</i>	2.0	0.6	--	1.2	1.5	--	0.7	0.3	--
<i>Other</i>	5.2	6.6	--	6.7	6.2	--	1.9	0.0	--
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

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

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

^aThese measures are only among sample members in a household without food stamps during the previous month.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The federal EITC is the largest cash transfer program in the United States for low-income families, and it lifted around 6.6 million people, including 3.3 million children, out of poverty in 2010.¹⁵ The EITC is available only to low-income tax-filing individuals and families with earned income, and it is administered through the federal income tax system. It is thus the largest financial work support program in the United States. Estimates using the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, March Supplement, and its Survey of Income and Program Participation suggest that between 2.3 million and 3.4 million individuals were eligible for the EITC but failed to file a tax return to obtain the credit in 1996, leaving \$2.1 billion to \$3.5 billion in EITCs going unpaid.¹⁶ The percentage who did not file a tax return in 1996 was higher in California than in most other states. Hispanic individuals are also less likely than other groups to file taxes.

WASC staff, particularly in San Diego, used a Web-based tool developed for the demonstration, the Work Advancement Calculator, to educate customers about work supports and how they potentially affect income and also how tax credits increase or decrease depending on the level of earnings. All sites referred study participants to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites for free tax preparation assistance to ensure that they avoided rapid-refund loans and, therefore, were able to keep a larger portion of the credit. Staff also linked their efforts to reengage participants to the tax season and the value of the EITC, particularly over the second year, by offering them the chance to enter a lottery to win a cash prize if they brought in a completed tax return and met with their WASC coach. Chapter 2, Table 2.3, shows that WASC increased the number of individuals in all three sites who said that they had been encouraged to think about claiming the EITC since the time of random assignment.

- **Although WASC did not increase the number of individuals who reported receiving the EITC in any of the sites, it did increase individuals' use of free tax preparation services in Dayton and San Diego.**

Table 3.3 presents information about survey respondents' tax filing, EITC claims, free tax preparation assistance, and tax refunds in Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport. As shown, WASC helped more people file a federal tax return in Dayton. The increase due to WASC was about 6.7 percentage points above the 90.0 percent of the control group who filed on their own. The control group's filing rate in Dayton was similar to the rates in the two other sites. In San Diego, WASC led to a decrease in the federal filing rate — which is puzzling, given the efforts

¹⁵Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2012).

¹⁶Dollins and Maynard (2002).

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Table 3.3

Year 1, Impacts on Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (%)									
Will or did fill out federal tax return for previous year	96.6	90.0	6.7 ***	85.7	92.1	-6.4 **	91.1	92.5	-1.4
Will or did claim EITC in previous year	66.9	61.7	5.2	41.7	46.0	-4.3	49.0	57.2	-8.2
Received free tax preparation assistance since random assignment	25.5	12.3	13.2 ***	28.2	13.3	14.9 ***	26.3	21.1	5.3
Will or did receive a tax refund from federal government for previous year	87.8	83.4	4.3	78.0	77.6	0.5	83.2	79.4	3.8
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

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

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

that San Diego staff made to reach out, encourage the filing of federal taxes, and promote the credit to individuals in the WASC group. It is possible, however, that the lower filing rate occurred because more people in the WASC group than in the control group had first-year gross earned incomes that were below the minimum required for filing federal taxes (not shown). WASC had no impact on the filing rates in Bridgeport.

Some researchers argue that the filing rate is a good measure of the EITC take-up rate. Respondents in this study were also asked directly about whether or not they claimed or would claim the EITC. It is possible that many individuals who file taxes do not realize they have received the EITC, particularly since it is often used to offset taxes owed. Although it is likely that some individuals received the credit without knowing or recalling that they had received it, many survey respondents reported receiving it. Nonetheless, Table 3.3 shows that WASC had no impact on EITC receipt rates in the three sites.

In both Dayton and San Diego, WASC did help more people obtain free tax preparation assistance over the first year. The magnitudes of these two impacts are fairly large, at 13 to 15 percentage points. An increase in the use of free tax preparation is a positive outcome, since it allows individuals to avoid fees and other costs associated with using for-profit tax services.

The high federal tax filing rates for the control groups across the three WASC sites may suggest that a lot of EITC marketing and outreach is already being done — for example, by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), private tax services, community groups, and cities. It might be, therefore, that not a lot more can be done to help more individuals or families get the credit.¹⁷

Subsidized Child Care

Federal welfare reform in 1996 gave states more flexibility in the design of child care policies and, along with the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), led to a consolidation of funding streams aimed at improving the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care for low-income parents in order for them to work or participate in education or training. Accessibility of subsidized child care and eligibility (including its level of complexity) vary greatly by state, but families who meet the income requirements (which range from 185 percent of the poverty level in Ohio to 265 percent of the poverty level in California)¹⁸ and who have children younger than 13 years of age are usually eligible for child care programs funded under CCDF

¹⁷Ross Phillips (2001): “Some exemptions might apply. Data from the 1999 National Survey of America’s Families show that low-income Hispanic parents are much less likely to know about the program than low-income non-Hispanic parents of any race. Among low-income parents who know about the EITC, Hispanics are also less likely to have ever received the tax credit.” A more recent analysis is not available. It is therefore possible that it is no longer current.

¹⁸Schulman and Blank (2007).

rules.¹⁹ The fact that a family is eligible for a child care subsidy, however, does not mean that they are entitled to it. As of early 2007, the number of eligible children on waiting lists was especially high in California.²⁰ The most recent data, available for Fiscal Years 2004 through 2007, indicate that about one-third or less of the potentially eligible children received child care subsidies funded by CCDF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds.²¹

WASC in Dayton and San Diego offered eligible program group members easier access to child care subsidies, and it educated their counterparts in Bridgeport about the availability of the subsidy and how to apply for it. As part of the study, WASC required the Health and Human Services Agency in San Diego to set aside funds for subsidized child care. Due to politics and the difficulty of going through third-party administration, these funds ended up being administered through WASC.

As a work support, subsidized child care can help stabilize employment by reducing the incidence of job absence that can occur when child care arrangements are less formal or less reliable. Further, safe and reliable child care can relieve stress and the distraction that parents may exhibit at work when they are less comfortable with their children's care. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Table 2.3), WASC in all three sites increased the number of respondents who said they had been encouraged to apply for subsidized child care; in San Diego, it increased the percentage who received help finding a child care provider or who got referrals for child care. San Diego used a very proactive and time-consuming process to help program group members obtain subsidized child care.

- **WASC led to an increase in use of child care and the receipt of subsidized child care in San Diego but had no effect on these outcomes in Dayton.**

Table 3.4 includes information about child care arrangements for respondents to the 12-month survey in Dayton and San Diego who had a child under age 11 at study entry.²² Data for

¹⁹National Child Care Information Center (n.d.).

²⁰Matthews (2008).

²¹U.S. Government Accountability Office (2010), p. 12.

²²This analysis is conducted among respondents who had at least one child age 11 or younger at the time of random assignment. But it is possible that the youngest child of some respondents was just about to turn 12 years of age at the time of random assignment and that some of those respondents also were interviewed a month or two after their twelfth month subsequent to random assignment. If that was the case, then it is possible that they no longer had a child at the time of survey interview who was 12 years of age or younger. It is unlikely, however, that more than a few survey respondents fall into that category.

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Table 3.4

Year 1, Impacts on Child Care Arrangements Among Participants with at Least One Child Age 11 or Younger at Random Assignment

Dayton and San Diego

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Child care arrangements^a (%)						
Used child care since random assignment	67.7	61.0	6.7	49.7	40.9	8.8
Used child care regularly ^b	61.0	57.7	3.4	39.9	27.2	12.6 **
Household member paid for child care since random assignment ^c	43.4	44.4	-0.9	20.1	15.9	4.2
Received any help with child care costs ^d	39.7	33.2	6.5	23.5	14.1	9.4 *
Someone else paid for child care since random assignment	28.2	26.4	1.8	19.3	11.9	7.5
Received refund for child care since random assignment	13.6	8.2	5.4	10.6	4.7	5.9 *
Received subsidized child care since random assignment	32.5	27.2	5.3	16.2	11.1	5.2
Among respondents employed at time of survey	33.3	30.5	2.8	17.6	13.4	4.2
Sample size (total = 466)	112	102		125	127	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

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

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

^aThese measures are shown for sample members with at least one child age 11 or younger at the time of random assignment.

^b“Regular” child care is defined as at least 10 hours per week in the previous month.

^cThis includes cases where the participant was repaid for expenses.

^dThe respondent is coded as receiving help with child care costs if someone else paid for child care since random assignment, if the respondent received a refund for child care since random assignment, or if the respondent received subsidized child care since random assignment.

Bridgeport are not presented here because there were too few survey respondents with children in this age group to provide reliable estimates. As shown, child care use was fairly common for control group respondents in Dayton — 61 percent used it, and 58 percent used it regularly — but less so in San Diego, where 41 percent of control group respondents used it, and 27 percent used it regularly. This measure covers both formal child care arrangements, such as daycare centers and nursery schools, and informal arrangements, such as a babysitter, including siblings, parents, or other relatives who live outside the household. The fraction of the control group who

received the subsidized child care benefit was 27 percent in Dayton and 11 percent in San Diego. This puts Dayton close to the nationwide average and San Diego below this average. The lower benchmark in San Diego is likely a consequence, in part, of the limited funds for subsidized child care for eligible low-wage workers in this county and, in part, due to the large Latino populations, who are more reluctant to use formal child care.

WASC increased child care use (formal or informal) and receipt of subsidized child care in San Diego but not in Dayton (Table 3.4). The increase in the regular use of child care over the first year was 12.6 percentage points (or 46.4 percent) above the control group figure of 27.2 percent. WASC led to a similar increase in the percentage who ever received help with child care cost, which in San Diego likely equals an increase in subsidized child care use.

Table 3.5 presents WASC's impacts on the receipt of child care subsidies as captured by administrative records. The results are consistent with the survey data and show that WASC increased subsidy receipt in San Diego but not in Dayton and that the magnitudes of the increases over the first year are a bit larger as measured by the administrative records data. The table also shows that WASC helped more people obtain child care subsidies over the second year and that the effect dissipated and was no longer statistically significant after that, when program group members had to go back to the welfare office to get the benefit.²³ The effect of WASC on the dollar amount issued to child care providers dissipated over time but was still significant over the third year. Over the three-year time-period, WASC increased the total child care subsidy amount by \$3,288 (or 60 percent), on average, above the control group figure of \$5,492.

The different results across Dayton and San Diego may be due to several factors. First, WASC helped more eligible program group members avoid the waiting list to get funding for subsidized child care in San Diego. In Dayton, there was no difference between program and control group members in how the child care subsidy funding was administered. Second, the income eligibility threshold was lower in Ohio than in California, which means that a larger percentage of the study participants were eligible for the benefit in San Diego than in Ohio. Third and lastly, the colocation of workforce staff and benefit staff might have kept the latter more abreast of program group members' employment and earnings and might have led to expedited cancelations, relative to the control group, of subsidies to people in the program

²³The subgroup analysis discussed in Chapter 4 shows that, among single parents in San Diego, WASC increased the percentage who ever participated in any education or training activity over the first year. The impact among single parents was different than that among other individuals. The two groups did not differ in impacts on employment. Thus, it seems as though the increase in take-up of subsidized child care may have helped more parents to obtain training.

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Table 3.5

**Years 1-3, Impacts on Receipt of Child Care Subsidy Among Participants with
at Least One Child Age 11 or Younger at Random Assignment**

Dayton and San Diego

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Among full research sample</u>						
<u>Year 1</u>						
Ever received subsidized child care (%)	45.7	45.5	0.1	37.8	17.1	20.7 ***
Months receiving subsidized child care	3.2	3.3	-0.1	3.2	1.5	1.7 ***
Amount of child care subsidy received (\$)	2,790	2,980	-190	3,040	1,494	1,545 ***
<u>Year 2</u>						
Ever received subsidized child care (%)	37.0	35.9	1.1	29.5	15.8	13.7 ***
Months receiving subsidized child care	2.6	2.6	0.0	2.4	1.4	1.0 ***
Amount of child care subsidy received (\$)	2,567	2,733	-165	3,077	1,742	1,335 **
Sample size (total = 1,113)	310	302		248	253	
<u>Among research sample members enrolled March 31, 2007, or earlier</u>						
<u>Year 3</u>						
Ever received subsidized child care (%)	29.5	31.9	-2.4	17.5	14.8	2.7
Months receiving subsidized child care	1.8	2.2	-0.4	1.6	1.3	0.3
Amount of child care subsidy received (\$)	1,923	2,216	-294	2,621	1,522	1,099 *
<u>Years 1-3</u>						
Ever received subsidized child care (%)	50.2	51.8	-1.7	37.0	24.7	12.3 ***
Months receiving subsidized child care	7.4	8.1	-0.7	7.0	4.8	2.2 **
Amount of child care subsidy received (\$)	7,157	7,861	-705	8,780	5,492	3,288 **
Sample size (total = 944)	270	277		194	203	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from monthly child care subsidy receipt records provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA), the Child Development Associates in San Diego, and the YMCA Childcare Resource Service in San Diego.

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

The sample for this analysis is limited to participants with at least one child age 11 or younger at the time of random assignment.

group who became ineligible for the subsidy. As discussed in Chapter 4, WASC helped more people stay employed and advance their earnings over the second and third year in Dayton but not in San Diego. Thus, WASC in Dayton may have been more likely to offset any effect that easier access might have had on helping people receive subsidized child care.

Health Care Coverage

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2009 and 2010 Current Population Surveys show that, in 2009, the proportion of uninsured people under age 65 with income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level was 43 percent of adults and 16 percent of children. These numbers varied by state; over 2008 and 2009, the percentage of uninsured adults and children, respectively, was higher in California (47 percent and 17 percent) than in Connecticut (36 percent and 14 percent) and Ohio (37 percent and 13 percent).²⁴ The high percentage of uninsured in California partly reflects the large percentage of low-income Latinos, who are more likely to be uninsured due to a very low rate of employer-provided health insurance coverage.²⁵ These numbers are consistent with the percentages of WASC participants covered by any health insurance at baseline. Over the years 2000 to 2009, the number of uninsured people nationwide increased, primarily related to a steady decline in employer-provided coverage.²⁶

In all three sites, WASC offered people easier access to publicly funded health insurance and increased the percentage of respondents who received help applying for such coverage for themselves and their children (Chapter 2, Table 2.3). Most study participants were eligible for publicly funded health care coverage for their children and qualified for such coverage themselves if their income was at or below 90 percent of the poverty line in Ohio, 106 percent in California, and 120 percent in Connecticut.²⁷ Eligible adults in Bridgeport were also able to obtain coverage for themselves through the Charter Oak Health Plan in Connecticut, which offers monthly premiums on a sliding scale, based on income and family size.

- **WASC helped more participants in Dayton and San Diego obtain publicly funded health insurance for their children. This increase led to a net gain in the rate of overall coverage in San Diego but was mostly offset by a decrease in privately funded health care coverage in Dayton.**

Table 3.6 presents the use of publicly and privately funded health insurance for adults and their children. The panel on the first page presents these outcomes for survey respondents

²⁴Statehealthfacts.org. See the References for links to the health insurance rates for low-income adults and for low-income children.

²⁵Lavarrenda and Cabezas (2010).

²⁶Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (2010).

²⁷Healthinsuranceinfo.net (2009).

over the first year. The panel on the second page shows quarterly rates of Medicaid use (Medi-Cal in California) for the full research sample of adults over two to three years. Both panels cover all sites; the second panel for Dayton covers average monthly rates per quarter for groups of WASC program and control group members.

The rate of coverage for respondents' children in San Diego was 77 percent, compared with 83 percent in California, while the coverage rates among respondents with children in Dayton and Bridgeport were about 89 percent and 93 percent, respectively. The first panel shows that WASC increased the fraction of survey respondents with public health care coverage for all their children in both Dayton and San Diego. The increase due to WASC led to a net gain of about 9.1 percentage points in San Diego. WASC in Dayton, however, led to a 10.4 percentage point increase in publicly funded coverage for children that in part was offset by a decrease in the number of children with privately funded coverage.²⁸ The shift from private to subsidized coverage for children in Dayton may have provided more stable and lower-cost coverage. WASC had no impact on health care coverage in Bridgeport.

The survey also shows that WASC increased the number of respondents with publicly funded health care coverage for themselves in San Diego. As shown in the second panel of Table 3.6, however, WASC had no impact on adults' coverage according to administrative records data. Further analysis suggests that the results differ some by cohorts of people who enrolled over time. The survey results, however, are representative of the more than 80 percent of the full sample who were randomly assigned during the months that individuals were selected for the 12-month survey. Given that the findings differ across these two data sources, caution should be applied when interpreting the survey results on health care coverage for adults and parents in San Diego.

The varying impacts across the three sites may be due to several factors. First, the Charter Oak Health Plan in Connecticut offered health care coverage at a sliding scale, which may have filled the need for publicly funded health care coverage somewhat in Bridgeport. Consistent with this idea is that the rates of publicly provided coverage for adults and children in

²⁸While this means that more public resources were used to cover health care, it might make more sense for those who are eligible for publicly funded health care coverage to get such coverage and thereby increase their disposable income rather than having to pay premiums or possibly higher copayments for private health insurance coverage.

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Table 3.6

Year 1, Impacts on Health Care Coverage

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Health care coverage (%)									
Respondent has health care coverage ^a	67.8	64.4	3.4	68.0	58.6	9.4 **	71.9	73.3	-1.4
Publicly funded	32.6	31.3	1.3	35.8	29.7	6.1 *	46.5	45.9	0.6
Privately funded	35.5	33.1	2.4	32.2	28.9	3.3	25.4	28.0	-2.6
All dependent children have health care coverage ^a	92.8	89.3	3.6	85.7	76.6	9.1 *	93.7	93.2	0.5
Publicly funded	78.4	68.0	10.4 *	68.7	57.7	11.1 *	81.0	76.9	4.1
Privately funded	13.8	21.1	-7.4	16.9	18.9	-2.1	11.9	16.1	-4.2
Parent and all children have health care coverage ^b	74.8	80.8	-6.0	77.4	59.4	18.0 ***	85.6	90.0	-4.4
<i>Main reason did not enroll in employer's health insurance plan^d</i>									
Covered by Medicaid	14.8	9.6	--	32.0	10.4	--	21.6	40.4	--
Covered by other insurance	14.6	19.0	--	7.8	16.3	--	42.7	5.3	--
Too expensive	48.8	45.8	--	27.6	58.1	--	7.1	30.9	--
Started job too recently	18.1	22.4	--	30.9	8.8	--	35.1	6.7	--
Other reason	3.7	3.2	--	1.7	6.4	--	-6.6	16.7	--
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

(continued)

Table 3.6 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Publicly funded health care coverage for adults, by quarter^c (%)									
Quarter of random assignment	39.8	40.1	-0.3	32.4	31.0	1.5	35.6	35.0	0.6
Quarter 2	40.6	41.0	-0.4	34.0	33.3	0.7	38.5	37.2	1.3
Quarter 3	41.8	38.9	2.9	33.6	32.9	0.8	39.6	37.6	2.0
Quarter 4	41.1	39.2	1.9	34.6	34.6	-0.1	40.5	38.4	2.0
Quarter 5	40.9	38.4	2.4	35.3	33.7	1.6	39.6	38.1	1.5
Quarter 6	39.4	38.6	0.8	33.2	33.1	0.1	38.0	39.5	-1.5
Quarter 7	38.4	37.6	0.9	32.9	32.4	0.4	36.8	38.1	-1.3
Quarter 8	40.5	35.8	4.7	32.2	32.9	-0.7	36.1	38.5	-2.5
Quarter 9	39.6	36.2	3.5	33.0	31.1	1.9	36.6	37.5	-0.9
Quarter 10	38.9	36.7	2.3	31.4	30.4	1.1			
Quarter 11	35.9	37.3	-1.4	30.5	30.9	-0.3			
Quarter 12	34.0	36.7	-2.7						
Sample size (total = 1,696)	10	10		488	483		351	354	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

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

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

^aBecause of missing values, the percentage of sample members who have medical insurance may not necessarily equal the sum of those with public coverage and private coverage.

^bThis outcome measure is shown for parents only. Thus, nonparents are excluded from the denominator.

^cMDRC calculations for quarterly publicly funded health care coverage were provided by the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) in California, the Department of Social Services in Connecticut, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). ODJFS provided Medicaid records as group-level averages. One observation from each of 10 program groups and 10 control groups was selected and tested for statistical significance using a linear regression model, whereby covariates were limited to race/ethnicity, education, and prior-year earnings.

this site were relatively high. Second, the high levels of coverage among control group members in Dayton and Bridgeport and relatively low level of coverage among control group members in San Diego meant that the program had more room to improve outcomes in San Diego.

Summary of Findings About Work Supports

Research has shown that work supports can reduce poverty and have a range of other positive impacts. For example, a single mother in Ohio who has one child and is working 20 hours per week at \$9 per hour can boost her income by 36 percent by taking up the full package of work supports for which she is eligible. As noted in Chapter 1, however, despite the potential benefits of increasing income, many financial work support programs appear to be underused, and one goal of WASC was to increase workers' use of all benefits for which they might be eligible. This section presents the impacts of WASC on the use of multiple work supports.

- **WASC increased the percentage of respondents who ever used at least one work support in Dayton and the percentage of respondents who ever used two or more work supports in San Diego.**

Table 3.7 presents impacts on the use of multiple work supports, including food stamps, subsidized child care, the EITC, and publicly funded health care coverage. In all three sites, 90 percent or more of the control group received at least one work support over the first year. Fewer people got two or more work supports. In Dayton and Bridgeport, nearly two-thirds of the control group received two or more work supports over the first year, and about 45 percent received three or more work supports. The rates were much lower in San Diego.

WASC increased the percentage of individuals who ever used any work supports over the first year in Dayton but not in San Diego or Bridgeport (Table 3.7). In Dayton, WASC helped all program group members obtain some sort of work support, compared with the control group level of 95 percent. In San Diego, WASC helped more people obtain two or more and three or more work supports over that same year. WASC in San Diego led to a 13.7 percentage point increase in the take-up of two or more work supports, but it had no impact on this measure in Bridgeport or Dayton. The results among respondents with children were similar in all three sites.

- **Most control group participants received at least one work support.**

Although some low-wage workers may not get all the work supports for which they are eligible, these results show that most workers get at least some of them. The biggest increases

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Table 3.7

Year 1, Impacts on Receipt of Work Supports

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Received any work support ^a (%)	99.7	96.3	3.3 **	94.4	90.8	3.5	96.2	98.7	-2.5
Among respondents with children ^b	99.6	95.0	4.6 **	92.9	88.4	4.5	94.2	98.4	-4.2
Received any two or more work supports ^a (%)	71.4	64.4	7.0	62.0	48.3	13.7 ***	66.3	63.0	3.3
Among respondents with children ^b	81.7	76.0	5.7	71.4	53.2	18.3 ***	76.0	76.3	-0.3
Received any three or more work supports ^a (%)	50.8	46.0	4.8	36.6	23.1	13.5 ***	46.5	44.1	2.3
Among respondents with children ^b	61.5	57.3	4.2	45.2	29.7	15.4 ***	60.0	57.2	2.8
Sample Size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

^aMeasures of "any" work supports cover the following: food stamps, subsidized child care, the EITC, and public health care coverage (for the respondent, the respondent's spouse/partner, and all dependent children of the respondent).

^bThis measure is shown for parents only. Thus, nonparents are excluded from the denominator.

due to WASC occurred in San Diego for supports that had relatively low take-up rates among the control group. These supports include food stamp benefits, health care coverage for children, and subsidized child care. The results that WASC achieved in Dayton are more modest. In that site, the control group take-up rates were higher, and the increase due to WASC on food stamp receipt was smaller. WASC had no impact on the take-up of work supports in Bridgeport, where the control group take-up rates also were much higher and where there was little room for improvement on the simplification side.

Chapter 4

Impacts of WASC on School Enrollment and Graduation, Employment and Earnings, and Total Income

Introduction

The underlying hypothesis of the program model for the Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration is that helping low-wage workers obtain work supports will help them retain employment over the short term and that, over the long term, high-quality career coaching and easier access to funding for education and training will help them advance. The demonstration was run in three sites — Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California — and this final report looks at the program’s effects after four years in Dayton and San Diego (or two years after program services ended) and results after three years in Bridgeport. This chapter first presents the effects of WASC on education and training and on employment, earnings, and income for the full report sample, and then it examines the effects on work supports and advancement outcomes for a few key subgroups.

The implementation research shows that the three sites each tested a different version of the WASC model.

- **WASC in Dayton: Strong combination of coaching and access to training.** Access to very generous training dollars through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998; discretionary funds to support additional training; incentives for training and sustained work; easier access to work supports, especially in redetermination for food stamps¹
- **WASC in San Diego: Mostly coaching.** Very limited access to funds for training; referral to free or low-cost training in community; focus on career coaching and advancing at current employer; easier access to work supports, particularly in access to child care funding and application and redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in Bridgeport: Mostly access to training.** Some access to funds for training through WIA; discretionary funds to pay for training outside WIA,

¹The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

available for broader range of training programs; easier access to work supports, including access to a work support specialist

The key findings about education and training and about earnings, by site, follow:

- **Dayton.** WASC increased the number of people who participated in education and training during the first year and led to an increase in the receipt of licenses or certificates. WASC increased employment rates during the second year and increased earnings during the third year. The impacts on earnings, however, did not persist through Year 4.
- **San Diego.** WASC led to a small increase in license or certificate receipt but had no effect on subsequent employment or earnings over the four-year follow-up period.
- **Bridgeport.** WASC helped more people participate in education and training during the first year and led to an increase in the receipt of licenses or certificates. The program led to an increase in earnings during Year 3. Year 4 data are not available for Bridgeport.

Dayton

The WASC program in Dayton offered career coaches who focused on helping people enroll in education and training. Eligible program group and control group members could get up to \$15,000 in funding for two years if they could document a market demand for the training that they wanted to pursue. But control group members could get only one formal training program funded by WIA, whereas individuals in the program group had access to the Governor's Discretionary Fund and could get up to \$15,000 in total funding for more than one formal training program — to pursue a registered nurse degree, for example, after completing a licensed practical nurse program. WASC also offered a particularly generous set of cash incentives (made possible by access to the same discretionary funds) to those participants who completed their training program while maintaining their hours of work, or who got a promotion due to training, or who obtained more stable employment.²

²The maximum dollar amounts that a participant could get were \$800 for completing each training program with a grade point average of C-plus or higher, \$300 for completing training with a credential, \$250 for getting a promotion due to training, and \$100 for getting a new job within 45 days of job loss or for holding on to a new job for nine months or longer.

Education and Training

Education and training are potentially important avenues to advancement. As workers acquire more skills (or human capital), they become more productive and can command higher wage rates. The positive return on education can be seen from the fact that college-educated workers earn more than high school graduates and that high school graduates earn more than high school dropouts.³ Other forms of skill acquisition, such as obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) certificate or community college credits, are also associated with higher earnings, although the returns can sometimes take several years to emerge.⁴ Despite the positive returns to education and training, however, a substantial amount of research documents that completion and persistence are relatively low for less-skilled individuals, suggesting that many may need additional supports to increase their human capital.⁵

Two sources of information are used to determine the impact of WASC on enrollment in and completion of education and training. One source is the information obtained from a survey interview at the 12-month mark for a randomly selected subset of study participants. The other source is the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) register, a database that covers more than 90 percent of the students nationwide who are enrolled in postsecondary education. Only 2 percent to 3 percent of the research sample were not submitted for a match to the NSC register.⁶ The coverage rate in these data appears to be higher for courses that provide credits toward a college degree than for courses that do not.

Table 4.1 presents the impacts of WASC on education and training in Dayton. The upper panel presents results from the survey, and the lower panel present results from the NSC data; both panels include the same set of columns.⁷

- **During Year 1, WASC in Dayton increased the proportion of individuals who participated in education and training and who obtained a license or certificate.**

³Cheeseman Day and Newburger (2002).

⁴Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, and Kienzl (2005); Tyler (2004).

⁵For an example of efforts to increase persistence among community college students, see Brock and LeBlanc (2005).

⁶The reason that 2 percent to 3 percent of study participants in Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport were not matched is that some people had their school records blocked or opted out of this data collection effort. Those individuals are shown in the exhibits as having zero values.

⁷Box 2.2 in Chapter 2 explains how to read the estimated impact tables in this report.

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Table 4.1

Years 1-3, Impacts on Participation in Education and Training

Dayton

Outcome	WASC Control Group	Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	77.1	53.5	23.6 ***	0.000
ABE/GED/HS	6.6	5.5	1.1	0.596
ESL	3.3	0.3	2.9 **	0.016
College courses	57.0	37.9	19.1 ***	0.000
Vocational training	32.5	19.7	12.8 ***	0.001
On-the-job training	18.1	17.2	0.8	0.809
Current participation in an education/training activity (%)	42.5	29.6	12.9 ***	0.003
Participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	71.9	51.2	20.7 ***	0.000
Average number of weeks participating in education/training activities	23.0	16.7	6.3 ***	0.003
<i>Among respondents who participated in education/training</i>	<i>30.1</i>	<i>31.8</i>	<i>-1.7</i>	
Obtained a license, certificate, or degree (%)	23.3	15.2	8.1 **	0.026
License or certificate ^a	18.0	11.6	6.4 **	0.049
Any degree or diploma ^b	7.3	4.7	2.5	0.239
Sample size (total = 498)	252	246		
<u>Among the full research sample</u>				
Registered at any 2-year school	37.1	34.0	3.0	0.266
Year 1	29.6	24.3	5.2 **	0.040
Year 2	22.8	20.6	2.2	0.364
3 first quarters of Year 3	16.5	18.3	-1.8	0.416
Sample size (total = 1,176)	590	586		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from enrollment and graduation data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse and responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

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

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Between 97 percent and 98 percent of the full research sample were matched to the National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) register of enrollment and graduation. About 90 percent of higher education institutions report student enrollment and graduation data to the NCS register. Student have the right to opt out of having their school report their enrollment and graduation information to the NCS.

^aThis measure includes trade license and training certificate.

^bThis measure includes GED certificate, high school diploma, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree.

A large number of participants, particularly in Dayton and Bridgeport, reported being interested in WASC as a route to pursue education and training. The survey captures this and shows that 54 percent of the control group participated in an education or training activity at some point over the first year in Dayton. Most of them were enrolled in a postsecondary or on-the-job training program.

The survey shows that WASC helped more people enroll in an education or training activity over the first year. The increase due to WASC was 23.6 percentage points above the control group level. Most of the increase in training was in college courses or vocational training programs. Similarly, WASC led to an increase in credential receipt (mostly licenses or certificates) of 8.1 percentage points.⁸ Box 4.1 presents more information on the types of training pursued by individuals in Dayton.

The lower panel of Table 4.1, using the NSC data, supports the survey findings. It shows that WASC led to an increase in the fraction of program group members ever registered at a two-year school over the first year. Most of the effect is likely a result of more people enrolling in classes that provided credits toward a college degree, such as an associate's degree. WASC had no effect on enrollment at a two-year school over the second year or over the first three-quarters of the third year (the total period for which NSC data were available) or on enrollment at a four-year school (not shown). The fraction of people enrolled at a two-year school fell more for individuals in the program group than for those in the control group, which narrowed the difference in enrollment rates.⁹

Employment and Earnings

- **WASC in Dayton increased employment rates by 7 percent during Year 2 and increased average total earnings by 8 percent in Year 3. The program had no statistically significant effects on earnings during Year 4.**

Table 4.2 presents the impacts of WASC on employment and earnings in Dayton. The upper panel presents unemployment insurance-covered (UI-covered) employment and earnings for the full research sample over a period of four years and is based on calculations from UI wage records. The lower panel presents measures of employment among respondents to the 12-month survey. As shown in the upper panel, WASC increased the average quarterly percentage of program group members employed over the full four years that individuals were followed.

⁸The lack of effects on college degrees is not surprising, given that such effects usually take longer than a year to emerge.

⁹Licenses and certificates are often obtained through vocational programs that do not provide credit toward a college degree and are, therefore, less likely to be covered by the NSC register data.

Box 4.1

Vocational Training in Dayton

The table below shows where WASC participants in Dayton got their vocational training and for what types of occupations they trained, by research group. As shown, most of the increase in vocational training was for occupations within the health care industry: about half was for medical assistance types of jobs, and a quarter was for various types of nursing jobs; the last quarter of the increase was for a mix of jobs. The table also shows that slightly less than half the increase occurred in programs that were offered at business or trade schools. Another, small fraction of the increase was from programs offered at two-year colleges. These types of providers often offer vocational training programs. A little less than half the increase in training was due to WASC's increasing the fraction of programs offered at the One-Stop Center. This could be because of preparatory training or because some survey respondents interpreted the inquiry as a question about who *paid for* the training (rather than who *provided* the training). Thus, these survey results appear reasonable, and the survey responses do permit the analysis to be more specific.

Survey Outcomes	WASC Group	Control Group
Vocational training	32.5	19.7
Place of training		
Community college/2-year college	9.1	5.6
Business or trade school	15.0	8.5
One-Stop Center	5.1	0.8
Other	5.5	5.2
Type of training		
Health care	22.0	9.2
Certified Nurse Assistant, nurse, nurse training	19.2	7.2
Technical/computer/office	3.9	2.4
Other	9.1	8.8
Sample size (total = 502)	254	248

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Table 4.2

Years 1-4, Impacts on Employment and Earnings

Dayton

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among the full research sample</u>				
Average quarterly employment in a UI-covered job (%)	78.8	75.5	3.3 **	0.032
Year 1	87.0	85.1	1.9	0.194
Year 2	82.4	77.0	5.4 ***	0.003
Year 3	74.9	72.1	2.8	0.188
Year 4	70.7	67.8	2.9	0.215
Ever employed in a UI-covered job (%)	97.3	98.3	-1.0	0.239
Quarter of random assignment	90.7	92.7	-2.0	0.168
Year 1	95.8	95.0	0.9	0.459
Year 2	91.0	89.3	1.7	0.324
Year 3	85.8	82.7	3.1	0.136
Year 4	80.9	78.1	2.8	0.235
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job (%)	90.6	88.8	1.8	0.301
Year 1	75.1	73.4	1.6	0.501
Year 2	69.7	62.6	7.1 ***	0.006
Year 3	61.0	58.4	2.6	0.346
Year 4	59.5	57.5	2.0	0.481
Earnings from UI-covered jobs (\$)	56,403	53,669	2,734	0.176
Year 1	12,789	12,832	-43	0.916
Year 2	14,101	13,238	863	0.126
Year 3	14,742	13,590	1,152 *	0.096
Year 4	14,970	14,030	939	0.236
Average annual earnings (\$)	14,101	13,417	684	0.176
Sample size (total = 1,176)	590	586		
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Ever employed in any job since random assignment (%)	99.4	96.9	2.5 **	0.042
Currently employed	83.0	80.8	2.2	0.531
No longer employed	16.4	16.1	0.3	0.925
Self-employed	1.8	3.1	-1.3	0.361
Current working status				
Full time ^a	46.9	40.1	6.8	0.118
Part time	36.0	40.0	-4.0	0.351
Hours worked not reported	0.1	0.7	-0.7	0.265
Average hours per week	26.7	25.7	1.0	0.481
Average hourly wage of any current job ^b (\$)	10.75	10.03	0.73	
Less than \$5.00 (%)	1.8	1.9	-0.1	0.929
\$5.00 - \$6.99 (%)	3.4	3.6	-0.2	0.907
\$7.00 - \$8.99 (%)	19.4	22.1	-2.8	0.442
\$9.00 or more (%)	51.6	45.4	6.2	0.152
Hourly wage not reported (%)	6.9	7.9	-0.9	0.703

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Average weekly earnings of any current job ^c	288	259	29	0.121
Employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	32.0	27.4	4.7	0.257
Paid vacation	44.1	37.6	6.5	0.145
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	46.6	42.2	4.5	0.321
Dental benefits	41.3	33.9	7.4 *	0.082
A retirement plan	40.1	35.7	4.4	0.309
A health plan or medical insurance	46.4	38.4	8.0 *	0.071
Enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	24.6	24.6	-0.1	0.989
Not enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	21.8	13.8	8.0 **	0.023
Has been promoted or has possibility of promotion (%)	56.8	47.2	9.6 **	0.039
Promoted to a higher position/job title	18.9	15.0	4.0	0.258
Has job with promotion possibilities	56.6	47.2	9.4 **	0.045
Work schedule ^d				
Regular	42.4	41.9	0.5	0.913
Split	1.2	2.1	-0.8	0.484
Irregular	8.7	10.6	-1.9	0.488
Evening shift	11.2	7.3	3.9	0.152
Night shift	11.7	6.4	5.4 **	0.044
Rotating shift	6.9	12.4	-5.5 **	0.042
Other schedule	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.186
Odd job	6.8	9.2	-2.5	0.325
Respondent sample size (total = 498)	252	246		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from Ohio and from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

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

Sample sizes may vary because of missing values.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

The table's upper panel includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio UI program. It does not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

^a The term "full time" is defined as working at least 35 hours per week.

^b This estimate of average hourly wage is for working respondents. Hourly wage is before taxes and is shown only for the primary, current job. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^c The weekly earnings estimate is shown for the primary, current job only. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^d A split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular schedule is defined as one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to nights. Percentages may add up to more than the percentage currently working because a person can have an odd job that can be defined as any of the following: split, irregular, evening, night, rotating, or other schedule.

Most of this effect is due to a positive impact in Year 2. These effects are not large; they occurred within the two-year time period when individuals were offered services from WASC and may have been caused by a number of features of the WASC program in Dayton,¹⁰ such as the help that WASC members received to obtain food stamps, the financial incentive for them to retain or get a new job within three months of job loss, and the fact that more people got into the labor market with newly obtained licenses or certificates after the first year.

As Table 4.2 shows, the WASC program in Dayton also increased average earnings over Year 3, by \$1,152 (or 8.5 percent) above the control group figure of \$13,590. About half the effect during Year 3 was due to increased employment, and half was due to an increase in earnings among those who worked. By Year 4, the earnings impact was reduced to a statistically insignificant \$939.

The lower panel of Table 4.2 presents effects during Year 1 on other dimensions of advancement. As shown, WASC generated no impacts on average hours of work per week or on average hourly wage at this job, but it increased the fraction of respondents who had jobs that offered such benefits as dental and health insurance. WASC also increased the number of respondents who, at the time of the 12-month survey, had a job that offered opportunities for promotions and better work hours (evening shifts rather than rotating shifts, for example).

Total Income

As discussed in Chapter 1, the goal of WASC was to help low-wage workers increase their incomes, but program designers envisioned that this would occur through different mechanisms over the shorter term than the longer term.

- **WASC in Dayton increased individuals' income from UI-covered earnings and food stamps over the second and third follow-up years.**

Table 4.3 presents the effects of WASC on total income in Dayton. The first section presents average total income from food stamp receipt and UI-covered earnings over three years.¹¹ Thus, the effects of WASC on helping more people obtain health care coverage, free tax preparation assistance, subsidized child care, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) have not been monetized and are not included in this income measure. The second and third sections of the table present the percentages of those ever receiving food stamps over each of the three

¹⁰Or the effect may have been caused by any combination of these features.

¹¹MDRC collected four years of UI wage data but only three years of food stamp payment data following each individual's time of random assignment. This is because the WASC model was designed to help more people take up food stamps over the short term, to help them stabilize their income and to build skills to advance over the long term. The effect of WASC on income is therefore measured only over three years.

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Table 4.3

Years 1-3, Impacts on Total Income from Earnings and Food Stamp Receipt

Dayton

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Total income (\$)	45,990	43,757	2,233 *	0.099
Year 1	14,245	14,158	87	0.828
Year 2	15,523	14,554	969 *	0.074
Year 3	16,255	15,106	1,150 *	0.086
Average annual income (\$)	15,330	14,586	744 *	0.099
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	44.6	36.8	7.8 ***	0.001
Year 2	32.9	26.2	6.7 ***	0.004
Year 3	24.2	23.4	0.8	0.738
Employed 2 consecutive quarters or less in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	9.0	11.4	-2.4	0.151
Year 2	10.3	16.4	-6.1 ***	0.001
Year 3	15.0	17.0	-2.1	0.320
Sample size (total = 1,176)	590	586		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from Ohio.

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

This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio UI program. It does not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

years, in combination with retaining UI-covered employment either over all four quarters of a year or just over two quarters or less.¹² As shown in the first section, the average total dollar amount of income among control group members in Dayton over the three years as a whole was about \$43,757, with income increasing in each year. Earnings contributed about 90 percent of the average total income over each of the three years, which suggests that most of the increase in total income over the three years is due to some people in the control group advancing on their own.

¹²These figures apply to the employment pattern of people who ever received food stamps. UI wage records capture people who were ever employed during a quarter. Thus, some may have been employed continuously while others may have had a spell of unemployment during a quarter. The data, therefore, do not prove that people were employed and receiving food stamps at the same time.

The first section of Table 4.3 shows that, compared with their counterparts in the control group, the program group members were better off financially, due to WASC, over the first three years of the study and particularly over the second and third years. The magnitude of the three-year effect is modest, at \$2,233 (about 5 percent), but it was likely substantial for those whose earnings increased (either due to employment or advancement in earnings) or who received more in food stamps due to WASC.

San Diego

WASC in San Diego offered easy access to career coaches who focused on individual job search and helping people advance on the job rather than on helping people enroll in education and training. WIA funding was offered for education and training to individuals who were interested in this as a route for advancement. But such funds were very difficult to access for those who were employed — and most program group members were working — and those who got their training funded were usually referred to low-cost opportunities within the community. And while discretionary funds eventually became available to provide more streamlined access to training, these funds did not become available until late in the study.

Education and Training

Table 4.4 presents the impacts of WASC on education and training in San Diego. The upper panel shows that about 45 percent of the control group enrolled in any education or training activity at some point over the first year in San Diego — a higher percentage than in Bridgeport but lower than Dayton. In San Diego, those who enrolled in education or training participated in a mix of activities, ranging from a high percentage in college courses to a low percentage in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and high school (HS) classes.

- **WASC in San Diego had no impact on helping more people enroll in an education or training program overall, but it led over the first year to a small gain in the percentage who enrolled in vocational training and who obtained a license or certificate. Over the second year, WASC reduced the percentage of individuals who enrolled at any two-year school.**

Table 4.4 (the upper panel) shows that WASC increased the percentage of respondents who went to a vocational training class over the first year by 5.5 percentage points above the control group level of 14 percent. This is a large increase relative to the control group, but it did not cause a net participation gain in any education or training activity. The same panel also shows that WASC helped more people take part in an employment or training activity while

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Table 4.4
Years 1-3, Impacts on Participation in Education and Training
San Diego

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	49.1	45.3	3.8	0.372
ABE/GED/HS	10.4	8.6	1.8	0.461
ESL	14.3	12.8	1.6	0.581
College courses	18.9	22.0	-3.1	0.322
Vocational training	19.6	14.1	5.5 *	0.087
On-the-job training	13.5	10.7	2.7	0.325
Current participation in an education/training activity (%)	20.5	18.9	1.6	0.626
Participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	49.6	41.2	8.4 **	0.045
Average number of weeks participating in education/training activities	13.0	10.9	2.1	0.222
<i>Among respondents who participated in education/training</i>	<i>27.0</i>	<i>24.5</i>	<i>2.4</i>	
Obtained a license, certificate, or degree (%)	12.1	8.5	3.6	0.174
License or certificate ^a	10.7	5.8	4.8 **	0.039
Any degree or diploma ^b	2.1	3.7	-1.7	0.245
Sample size (total = 567)	295	272		
<u>Among the full research sample</u>				
Registered at any 2-year school	17.4	23.5	-6.1 **	0.023
Year 1	12.7	14.1	-1.4	0.499
Year 2	10.4	14.2	-3.8 *	0.061
3 first quarters of Year 3 ^c	8.9	12.3	-3.3	0.124
Sample size (total = 971)	488	483		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from enrollment and graduation data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse and responses to the WASC12-Month Survey.

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

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus statistical significance tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Between 97 percent and 98 percent of the full research sample were matched to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) register of enrollment and graduation. About 90 percent of higher education institutions report student enrollment and graduation data to the NSC register. Student have the right to opt out of having their school report their enrollment and graduation information to the NCS.

^aThis measure includes trade license and training certificate.

^bThis measure includes GED certificate, high school diploma, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree.

^cAmong those randomly assigned in March 2007 or earlier.

they were employed and helped more people obtain a license or certificate. WASC increased the receipt of licenses or certificates by 4.8 percentage points.

The lower panel of Table 4.4 shows a decrease, relative to the control group, over the second year in the percentage of the WASC group who enrolled at any two-year school. It is possible that WASC, by helping more people enroll in a vocational training program, deferred some from enrolling in a college credit program. In addition, by helping more people search for a new job, or move up at their current employer, the program may have caused some individuals to defer or delay going to school.

Employment and Earnings

- **WASC in San Diego decreased employment somewhat over the first year but had no lasting effects on employment and earnings.**

Table 4.5 presents the impacts of WASC on employment and earnings in San Diego. It shows that the program led to a decrease of 5 percentage points in the proportion of individuals who were employed in a UI-covered job for all four quarters of the first year. WASC had no other impacts on UI-covered employment and earnings over the first, second, third, or fourth year. This finding appears to contradict the survey results (in the table's lower panel), which show that WASC had no impact on employment at the time of the survey. Separate analyses (Appendix Table E.5) suggest that the program may have led to some reduction in employment that is covered by the UI system. Similarly, WASC led to a decrease in the percentage of respondents who worked regular, daytime shifts and who had a job covered by a union agreement (Appendix Table E.6).

Although it is not possible to determine for whom the program led to a reduction in employment in Year 1, it has been hypothesized that increased food stamp receipt may have encouraged some individuals to reduce their work hours or not to move back into work as quickly as they would have otherwise; this may have dampened the effect of WASC on helping more people advance over the short term. Chapter 3 notes that WASC in San Diego led to an increase in food stamp receipt and publicly funded health care coverage for children — two work supports that do not hinge on a recipient's employment status and whose benefits decrease with an increase in earnings.

Total Income

- **WASC in San Diego had no impact on total income.**

Table 4.6 shows that the average control group member in San Diego had a total income of about \$43,636 over the cumulative three-year period, which amounts to an annual

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Table 4.5

Years 1-4, Impacts on Employment and Earnings

San Diego

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among the full research sample^a</u>				
Average quarterly employment in a UI-covered job (%)	68.7	69.7	-0.9	0.734
Year 1	79.3	81.9	-2.6	0.168
Year 2	69.7	72.6	-2.9	0.214
Year 3	64.0	65.9	-1.9	0.477
Year 4	59.9	62.0	-2.1	0.578
Ever employed in a UI-covered job (%)	94.5	94.6	-0.2	0.937
Quarter of random assignment	86.4	86.0	0.4	0.819
Year 1	90.9	90.8	0.1	0.949
Year 2	81.6	84.4	-2.7	0.225
Year 3	73.9	76.0	-2.1	0.438
Year 4	68.8	72.7	-3.9	0.322
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job (%)	79.9	80.6	-0.7	0.825
Year 1	65.1	70.1	-5.0 *	0.073
Year 2	56.4	60.2	-3.8	0.217
Year 3	53.5	55.3	-1.9	0.548
Year 4	50.1	51.9	-1.7	0.693
Earnings from UI-covered jobs (\$)	53,979	55,177	-1,198	0.744
Year 1	13,912	14,751	-839	0.152
Year 2	13,718	14,356	-638	0.400
Year 3	13,638	13,703	-65	0.938
Year 4	13,381	13,342	39	0.974
Average annual earnings ^a (\$)	13,495	13,794	-299	0.744
Sample size (total = 971)	488	483		
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Ever employed in any job since random assignment (%)	94.7	93.2	1.6	0.449
Currently employed	79.6	78.9	0.7	0.840
No longer employed	15.1	14.3	0.8	0.783
Self-employed	4.8	3.6	1.2	0.479
Current working status				
Full time ^b	45.6	52.2	-6.6	0.120
Part time	34.0	25.2	8.7 **	0.025
Hours worked not reported	0.1	1.5	-1.4 *	0.053
Average hours per week	26.4	27.3	-0.8	0.561
Average hourly wage of any current job ^c (\$)	11.47	11.06	0.41	
Less than \$5.00 (%)	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.773
\$5.00 - \$6.99 (%)	2.1	3.0	-0.9	0.489
\$7.00 - \$8.99 (%)	20.2	15.2	5.0	0.130
\$9.00 or more (%)	49.1	46.1	3.0	0.477
Hourly wage not reported (%)	6.9	13.5	-6.6 ***	0.009

(continued)

Table 4.5 (continued)

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<i>Average hourly wage of any current job^c (\$)</i>	<i>11.47</i>	<i>11.06</i>	<i>0.41</i>	
Less than \$5.00 (%)	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.773
\$5.00 - \$6.99 (%)	2.1	3.0	-0.9	0.489
\$7.00 - \$8.99 (%)	20.2	15.2	5.0	0.130
\$9.00 or more (%)	49.1	46.1	3.0	0.477
Hourly wage not reported (%)	6.9	13.5	-6.6 ***	0.009
<i>Average weekly earnings of any current job^d</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>-9</i>	<i>0.643</i>
Employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	30.2	29.8	0.4	0.925
Paid vacation	37.7	37.5	0.2	0.959
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	37.7	36.6	1.1	0.798
Dental benefits	33.6	32.4	1.2	0.755
A retirement plan	28.8	27.1	1.7	0.661
A health plan or medical insurance	38.6	38.9	-0.3	0.947
Enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	25.0	24.5	0.5	0.889
Not enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	13.7	14.3	-0.7	0.820
Has been promoted or has possibility of promotion (%)	44.2	50.5	-6.3	0.150
Promoted to a higher position/job title	17.0	19.2	-2.2	0.521
Has job with promotion possibilities	44.0	49.1	-5.1	0.239
Work schedule ^e				
Regular	48.6	57.2	-8.6 **	0.042
Split	0.3	2.0	-1.6 *	0.070
Irregular	3.6	5.2	-1.6	0.372
Evening shift	9.0	5.8	3.3	0.154
Night shift	7.7	1.5	6.2 ***	0.001
Rotating shift	10.4	7.3	3.2	0.207
Other schedule	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000
Odd job	4.6	3.4	1.3	0.464
Respondent sample size (total = 567)	295	272		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from California and from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

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

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Sample sizes may vary because of missing values.

All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

The table's upper panel includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the California UI program. It does not include employment outside California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

^aEarnings and employment data were available for approximately 53 percent of San Diego's full sample through Year 4.

^bThe term "full time" is defined as working at least 35 hours per week.

^cThis estimate of average hourly wage is for working respondents. Hourly wage is before taxes and is shown only for the primary, current job. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^dThe weekly earnings estimate is shown for the primary, current job only. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^eA split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular schedule is defined as one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to nights. Percentages may add up to more than the percentage currently working because a person can have an odd job that can be defined as any of the following: split, irregular, evening, night, rotating, or other schedule.

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Table 4.6

Years 1-3, Impacts on Total Income from Earnings and Food Stamp Receipt

San Diego

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Total income (\$)	42,440	43,636	-1,196	0.551
Year 1	14,534	15,217	-683	0.238
Year 2	14,557	14,958	-402	0.591
Year 3	14,217	14,111	106	0.902
Average annual income (\$)	14,147	14,545	-399	0.551
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	17.4	17.4	0.0	0.993
Year 2	14.1	11.3	2.8	0.169
Year 3	9.2	9.2	0.0	0.996
Employed 2 consecutive quarters or less in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	8.1	4.4	3.7 **	0.017
Year 2	9.5	6.8	2.8	0.117
Year 3	13.3	10.3	3.0	0.149
Sample size (total = 971)	488	483		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from California.

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

This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the California UI program. It does not include employment outside California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

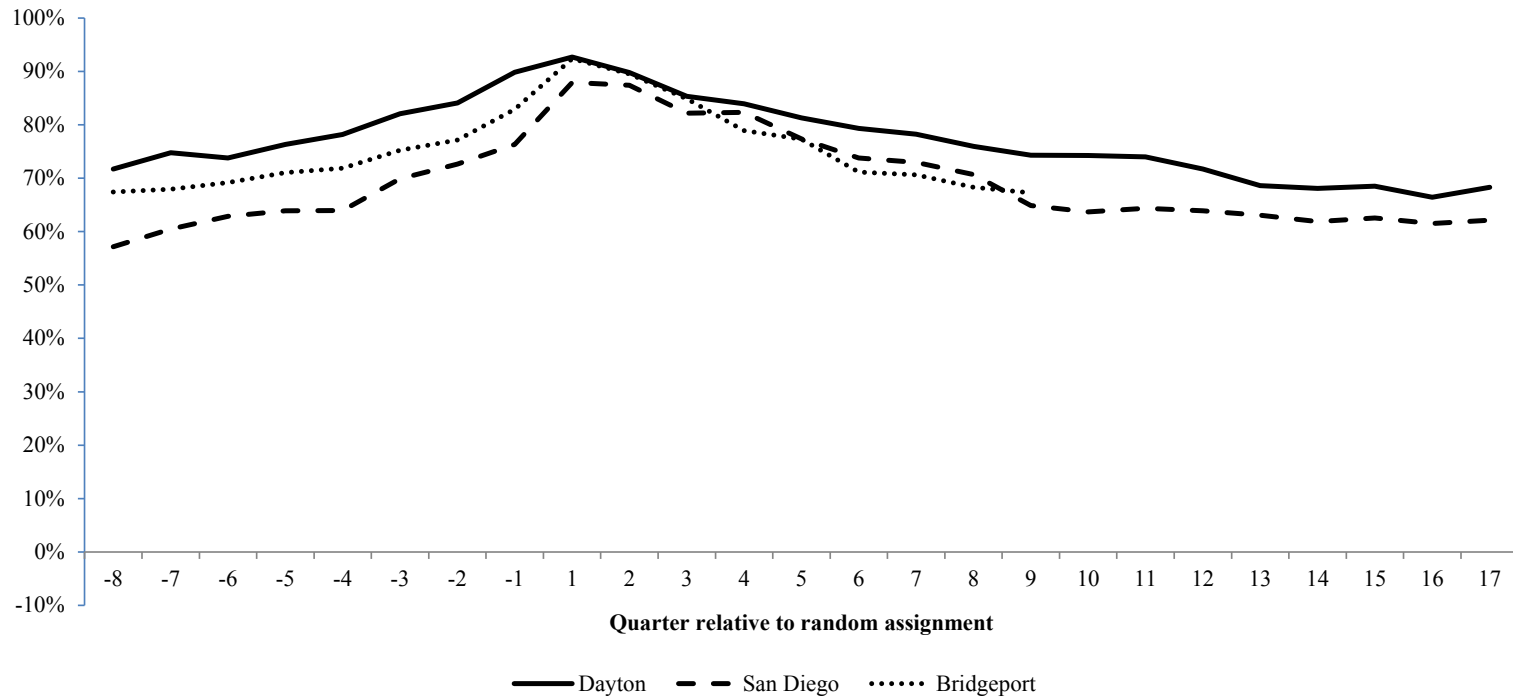
average income of \$14,545.¹³ About 96 percent of the income is attributable to earned income over the three years. Thus, the average total income per year is similar to the average total earnings per year, and it remained fairly stable as the number of people employed declined over the three-year follow-up period. (See Figure 4.1.) As shown in the first section of the table, WASC had no impact on the average total income over the three years. The negative impact on earnings in Year 1 was offset to some extent by the increase in food stamp receipt, with the

¹³This measure of income covers the dollar amount received in food stamp benefits and earned in a UI-covered job but does not include a monetary value of being covered by a health insurance plan, free tax preparation assistance, subsidized child care, and the EITC. Chapter 3 notes that WASC in San Diego helped more people get health care coverage for their children as well as free tax preparation assistance and child care subsidies.

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Figure 4.1

Percentage of Control Group Participants Employed in a UI-Covered Job,
by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment
Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport



93

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the States of Ohio, California, and Connecticut.

NOTES: This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio, California, and Connecticut UI programs. It does not include employment outside Ohio, California, and Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs). Additionally, individual-level earnings and employment data were available through Year 4 for approximately 53 percent of the full sample in San Diego and only through Year 2 for the full sample in Bridgeport.

result that the program group's income was only \$683 less than the control group's income — a difference that is not statistically significant.

Bridgeport

In Bridgeport, career coaches focused a lot of attention on helping people enroll in education or training and less on individual job search and advancement on the job, perhaps because many individuals in this site enrolled in WASC as a route to pursue education or training.¹⁴ This site also had available a discretionary fund that allowed it to offer more streamlined access to training and more funds for training than were available to the control group through WIA. WASC also offered funding for a wider range of training options than was available to control group members through WIA.

Education and Training

Table 4.7 presents the impacts of WASC on education and training in Bridgeport. The upper panel of the table shows that 40 percent of the control group participated in an education or training activity over the first year. As in Dayton, most of the Bridgeport respondents enrolled in postsecondary education or on-the-job training activities.

- **WASC in Bridgeport increased the proportion of individuals who participated in any education and training activity and who obtained a license or certificate over the first year.**

Table 4.7 (upper panel) shows that WASC increased the percentage of people who enrolled in an education and training program by 15.7 percentage points. Most of the effect was due to increased participation in vocational training. The program also led to an increase in the average number of weeks of participation. Box 4.2 presents data on the type of training pursued by individuals in Bridgeport.

The second panel of Table 4.7 shows that WASC increased the percentage of study participants who enrolled at a two-year school during Year 2 by 5.9 percentage points.¹⁵ These results are fairly consistent with the survey results and suggest that Bridgeport also helped more people enroll in college classes for credit over the second year. Because many two-year colleges offer vocational training, some of this increase might also reflect that WASC helped more people enroll in such programs.

¹⁴Perhaps they knew about the Career Academy in Bridgeport, a precursor to WASC, and sought out WASC as a potential source to fund their training.

¹⁵Only the first three quarters of the second year are captured by this measure.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration
Table 4.7
Years 1-2, Impacts on Participation in Education and Training
Bridgeport

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Participated in an education/training activity (%)	55.6	39.9	15.7 ***	0.007
ABE/GED/HS	8.7	6.2	2.5	0.382
ESL	3.6	2.2	1.4	0.474
College courses	20.6	16.8	3.8	0.393
Vocational training	37.3	19.7	17.6 ***	0.001
On-the-job training	17.4	11.2	6.3	0.128
Current participation in an education/training activity (%)	20.7	11.8	8.9 **	0.039
Participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	52.7	36.6	16.1 ***	0.006
Average number of weeks participating in education/training activities	11.7	6.4	5.3 ***	0.005
<i>Among respondents who participated in education/training</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>16.8</i>	<i>4.6</i>	
Obtained a license, certificate, or degree (%)	22.4	13.5	8.9 **	0.048
License or certificate ^a	21.7	12.8	8.9 **	0.046
Any degree or diploma ^b	1.9	1.4	0.6	0.706
Sample size (total = 306)	158	148		
<u>Among the full research sample</u>				
Registered at any 2-year school	19.7	13.9	5.8 **	0.031
Year 1	15.3	11.4	3.9	0.122
3 first quarters of Year 2	14.8	8.8	5.9 **	0.013
Sample size (total = 705)	351	354		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from enrollment and graduation data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse and responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

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

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Between 97 percent and 98 percent of the full research sample were matched to the National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) register of enrollment and graduation. About 90 percent of higher education institutions report student enrollment and graduation data to the NCS register. Students have the right to opt out of having their school report their enrollment and graduation information to the NCS.

^aThis measure includes trade license and training certificate.

^bThis measure includes GED certificate, high school diploma, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree.

Box 4.2

Vocational Training in Bridgeport

The table below shows where WASC participants in Bridgeport got their vocational training and for what types of occupations they trained, by research group. As shown, most of the increase in vocational training was for occupations within the health care industry: about half was for medical assistance types of jobs, and a quarter was for various types of nursing jobs; the last quarter of the increase was for a mix of jobs. The table also shows that slightly less than half the increase occurred in programs that were offered at business or trade schools. Another, small fraction of the increase was from programs offered at two-year colleges. These types of providers often offer vocational training programs. A little less than half the increase in training was due to WASC's increasing the fraction of programs offered at the One-Stop Center. This could be because of preparatory training or because some survey respondents interpreted the inquiry as a question about who *paid for* the training (rather than who *provided* the training). Thus, these survey results appear reasonable, and the survey responses do permit the analysis to be more specific.

Survey Outcomes	WASC Group	Control Group
Vocational training	37.3	19.7
Place of training		
Community college/2-year college	5.7	4.1
Business or trade school	17.7	10.1
Adult education center	2.5	2.0
One-Stop Center	8.2	0.7
Other	4.5	2.7
Type of training		
Health care	23.4	8.8
Certified Nurse Assistant, nurse, nurse training	8.2	4.8
Dental assistant	2.5	1.4
Medical assistant	8.2	0.7
Other (pharmacy, veterinarian, substance abuse)	3.8	2.0
Commercial Driver License (CDL)	3.8	3.4
Technical/computer/office	5.0	4.8
Other	3.8	2.0
Sample size (total = 306)	158	148

Employment and Earnings

As noted in Chapter 1, earnings data for Year 3 in Bridgeport were provided as group-level averages, rather than at the individual level. Thus, the analysis of these data is distinct from the analysis of individual-level UI data and survey data.

- **WASC in Bridgeport had no impact on employment and earnings over the first two years but increased average earnings during Year 3.**

Table 4.8 presents the impacts of WASC on employment and earnings in Bridgeport. The upper panel shows the impact of WASC on UI-covered employment and earnings over three years. The lower panel shows the impacts of WASC on employment over the first year among respondents to the 12-month survey. The first- and second-year employment and earnings estimates in the upper panel are regression-adjusted estimates using individual-level data for the full research sample. In other words, average earnings are adjusted for differences in the characteristics of the program and control groups before random assignment. WASC used random assignment to select individuals for the program and control groups. The regression-adjusted calculations are therefore not expected to change the results but, primarily, to improve the precision of the estimates.

In contrast, earnings over the third year and cumulative estimates of earnings over the three years as a whole are unadjusted calculations among groups of individuals in the full research sample. A separate analysis (Appendix Figure E.5) shows that the unadjusted earnings for individuals over the first two years are similar to unadjusted earnings using group-level data, suggesting that the group-level data are accurate. Thus, the only difference between the individual-level data for the first two years and the group-level data for the third year is that the former are regression adjusted.

As the upper panel of Table 4.8 shows, WASC had no impacts on employment and earnings over the first two years.¹⁶ This is consistent with the employment figures using the survey data (the table's lower panel).

The group-level estimates for Year 3 show that program group members in Bridgeport earned a total of \$2,244 more than the control group average of \$12,534. The cumulative increase over the third year was not subject to a test of statistical significance. However, the

¹⁶One exception to this is that the percentage who ever worked in a UI-covered job over the first year is lower for program group members than for control group members (not shown). Further analysis (not shown), however, suggests that this is likely due to an initial difference between the program group and control group in UI-covered employment.

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Table 4.8

Years 1-3, Impacts on Employment and Earnings

Bridgeport

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Among the full research sample</u>				
Average quarterly employment in a UI-covered job (%)	76.3	76.0	0.3	0.876
Year 1	81.3	82.7	-1.3	0.511
Year 2	71.3	69.3	2.0	0.465
Ever employed in a UI-covered job (%)	94.0	96.6	-2.6 *	0.094
Quarter of random assignment	88.3	92.4	-4.1 **	0.047
Year 1	92.4	96.2	-3.9 **	0.022
Year 2	83.3	80.7	2.6	0.348
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job (%)	75.9	72.7	3.2	0.291
Year 1	66.5	65.7	0.7	0.823
Year 2	58.3	56.9	1.4	0.695
Earnings from UI-covered jobs ^a (\$)	43,034	39,290	3,744	
Year 1	13,758	14,420	-662	0.300
Year 2	14,310	13,621	689	0.402
Year 3 ^b	14,778	12,534	2,244	
Average annual earnings ^a (\$)	14,345	13,097	1,248	
Sample size (total = 705)	351	354		
<u>Among respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey</u>				
Ever employed in any job since random assignment (%)	91.5	88.0	3.4	0.360
Currently employed	76.6	78.6	-2.0	0.690
No longer employed	14.9	9.4	5.5	0.172
Self-employed	-0.1	0.7	-0.8	0.232
Current working status				
Full time ^a	44.5	38.8	5.7	0.316
Part time	29.5	39.9	-10.4 *	0.067
Hours worked not reported	2.7	0.0	2.7 *	0.061
Average hours per week	24.9	24.8	0.2	0.932
Average hourly wage of any current job ^c (\$)	15.34	11.36	3.99	
Less than \$5.00 (%)	2.4	2.5	-0.2	0.936
\$5.00 - \$6.99 (%)	0.5	1.6	-1.1	0.382
\$7.00 - \$8.99 (%)	7.6	13.8	-6.1 *	0.096
\$9.00 or more (%)	56.9	53.1	3.9	0.513
Hourly wage not reported (%)	9.1	7.6	1.5	0.669
Average weekly earnings of any current job ^d	366	283	83	0.397

(continued)

Table 4.8 (continued)

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Employer-provided benefits at current job (%)				
Sick days with full pay	32.5	36.5	-4.0	0.462
Paid vacation	39.5	40.4	-0.9	0.876
Paid holidays other than Christmas and New Year	43.0	45.8	-2.7	0.641
Dental benefits	31.0	33.0	-2.1	0.706
A retirement plan	33.5	41.1	-7.7	0.190
A health plan or medical insurance	36.3	42.6	-6.3	0.267
Enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	24.4	22.5	2.0	0.692
Not enrolled in a work health or medical insurance plan	11.9	20.1	-8.2 *	0.069
Has been promoted or has possibility of promotion (%)	41.6	39.3	2.3	0.714
Promoted to a higher position/job title	18.1	5.1	13.0 ***	0.001
Has job with promotion possibilities	41.6	39.3	2.3	0.714
Work schedule ^e				
Regular	47.7	45.1	2.6	0.668
Split	4.5	4.7	-0.2	0.953
Irregular	1.7	4.8	-3.1	0.152
Evening shift	5.0	10.1	-5.1	0.112
Night shift	8.1	4.4	3.6	0.223
Rotating shift	9.5	8.8	0.8	0.830
Other schedule	0.0	0.8	-0.8	0.257
Odd job	5.3	9.0	-3.7	0.237
Respondent sample size (total = 306)	158	148		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from Connecticut and from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

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

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical test were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Sample sizes may vary because of missing values. All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

The table's upper panel includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

^aThe term "full time" is defined as working at least 35 hours per week.

^bThe Department of Labor in Connecticut provided MDRC with individual-level earnings data covering Years 1-2 and group-level earnings data covering Years 1-3. As such, statistical tests were not performed on average earnings overall, and, in Year 3, for individuals randomly assigned in Bridgeport, and these averages are unadjusted.

^cThis estimate of average hourly wage is for working respondents. Hourly wage is before taxes and is shown only for the primary, current job. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^dThe weekly earnings estimate is shown for the primary, current job only. If a participant works more than one job, then the job with the most hours is considered primary.

^eA split shift is defined as one consisting of two distinct periods each day. An irregular schedule is defined as one that changes from day to day. A rotating shift is one that changes regularly from days to evenings to nights. Percentages may add up to more than the percentage currently working because a person can have an odd job that can be defined as any of the following: split, irregular, evening, night, rotating, or other schedule.

quarterly earnings increases were subject to significance tests. Figure 4.2 shows that WASC increased earnings in all quarters from Quarter 9 through Quarter 13. This translates into an increase over the last quarter of Year 2 and all quarters of Year 3.

It is possible that the \$2,244 estimated impact is a bit high. For example, it does not adjust for the initial difference between program and control group members in UI-covered employment during the quarter of random assignment. Although everyone was employed at this point, the two groups differed a bit in the percentage employed in a UI-covered job during the quarter of random assignment. The differences in unadjusted earnings between the two groups are a bit higher than adjusted earnings at the individual level, perhaps as a result of this.

Figure 4.3 presents group-level estimates of employment by quarter over three years for program and control group members in Bridgeport. As shown, WASC had no impact on the quarterly employment rate in any quarter of the three years, except in Quarter 13. In the context of the earnings results, these results suggest that about one-quarter of the Year 3 increase in earnings is due to more people working¹⁷ and that about three-quarters is due to WASC helping more people advance in terms of working more hours or getting a higher hourly wage.¹⁸

Total Income

As discussed in Chapter 1, the short-term goal of WASC was to increase people's incomes and well-being through the use of existing work supports so that they could build skills and advance in the labor market over the long term. This section discusses impacts of WASC on total income from UI-covered employment and food stamp receipt over the three-year follow-up period.

- **WASC in Bridgeport had no impact on total income derived from food stamp receipt and UI-covered employment.**

The first section of Table 4.9 presents average total dollar amounts of income from UI-covered earnings and food stamp receipt in Bridgeport over Years 1 and 2. This measure does not include a monetary value of being covered by a health insurance plan, free tax preparation assistance, subsidized child care, and the EITC. The subsequent sections of the table present the

¹⁷This is also shown as more people working over the last quarter of Year 3 (Figure 4.2).

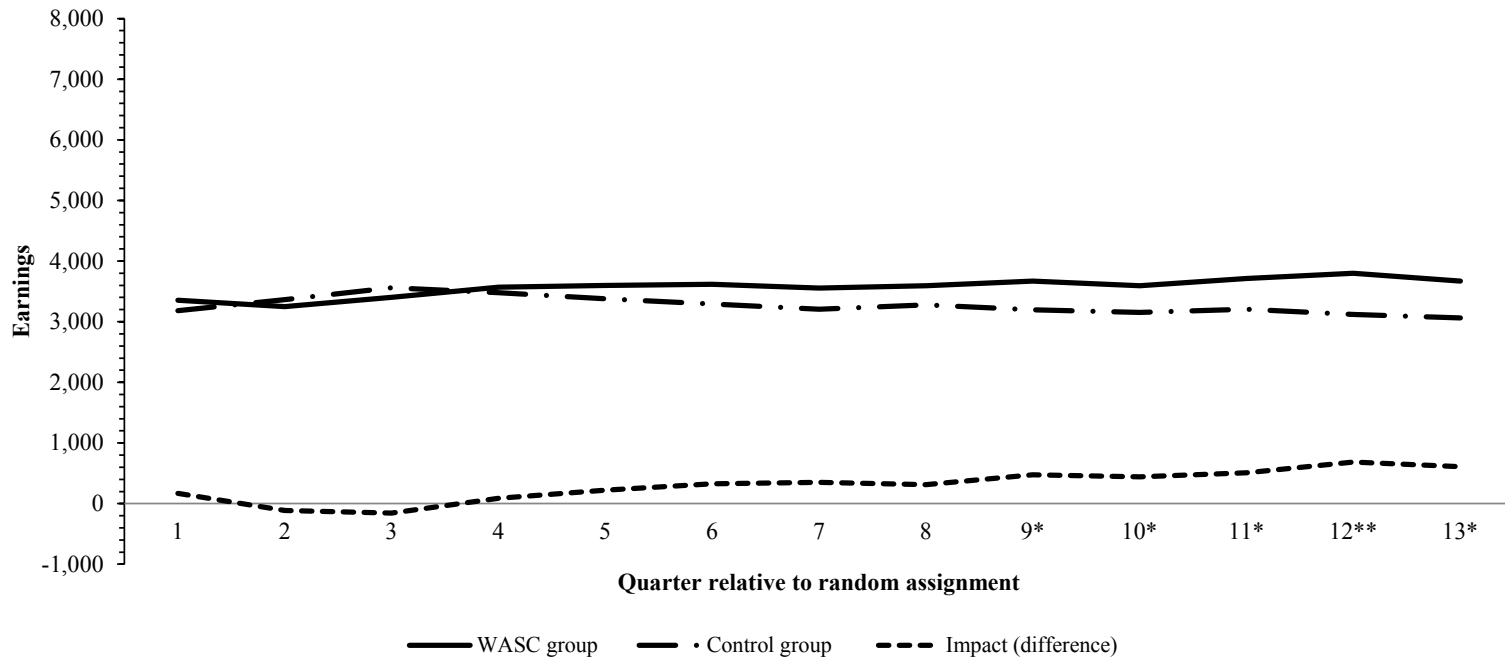
¹⁸About \$1,588 of the \$2,244 increase above the average control group member's income over Year 3 occurred among those who were employed.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Figure 4.2

Years 1-3, Unadjusted Group-Level Impacts on Quarterly Earnings,
by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment

Bridgeport



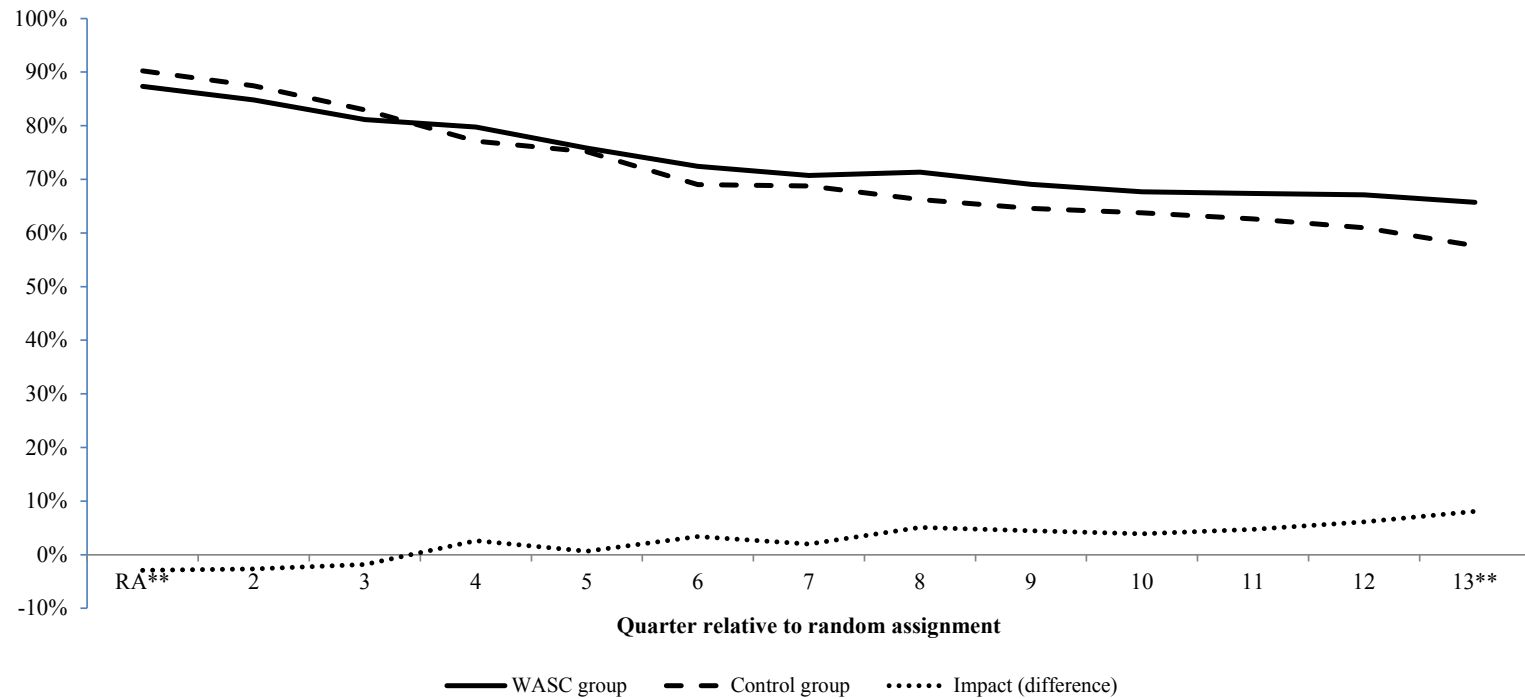
SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Connecticut.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.
This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

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Figure 4.3

Unadjusted Group-Level Impacts on Percentage Employed in a UI-Covered Job, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment
Bridgeport



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SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Connecticut.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

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Table 4.9

Years 1-2, Impacts on Total Income from Earnings and Food Stamp Receipt

Bridgeport

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Total income (\$)	29,992	29,918	74	0.954
Year 1	14,625	15,290	-665	0.289
Year 2	15,367	14,628	739	0.354
Average annual income (\$)	14,996	14,959	37	0.954
Employed 4 consecutive quarters in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	23.8	23.0	0.8	0.778
Year 2	19.6	18.7	0.8	0.759
Employed 2 consecutive quarters or less in a UI-covered job and ever received food stamps (%)				
Year 1	10.8	11.7	-0.9	0.683
Year 2	19.0	17.6	1.3	0.626
Sample size (total = 705)	351	354		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from Connecticut.

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

This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

percentages of people who ever received food stamps over each of the three years in combination with either retaining UI-covered employment over all four quarters of a year (second section) or over two quarters or less (third section).¹⁹

As shown in the first section of the table, average income among control group members over the first two years was about \$29,918, and income in Year 1 was higher than income in Year 2. Average earnings among control group members made up about 94 percent of income over the two years. As discussed above, in the employment and earnings section for Bridgeport, average earnings increased over this two-year period among those who were

¹⁹These figures apply to the employment pattern of people who ever received food stamps. UI wage records capture people who were ever employed during a quarter. Thus, some of them may have been employed continuously during a quarter while others may have had a spell of unemployment. The records, therefore, do not prove that people were employed and receiving food stamps at the same time.

employed, meaning that some control group members advanced on their own. The UI-covered employment rate, however, decreased over the same period. These results suggest, therefore, that the decrease in total income is due to the decline in employment over the same period.

Impacts on Key Subgroups

The average impacts for the full research sample can sometimes mask variation in effects by subgroups that can answer questions about who benefitted the most from WASC services. This section examines whether there is variation in effects for key subgroups and, if so, whether such variation can help address some of the questions that arise from the pattern of findings. For example, why did WASC not increase education and training in San Diego? (Was it due to less accessible and less generous funding or to other factors?) And why did WASC have no effect, or perhaps even a small adverse effect, on helping people stay employed and advance in San Diego? (Was it due to more people in the program group getting food stamps, which may have served as a disincentive to working and increasing earnings?) And why did WASC increase earnings during Year 3 in Dayton and Bridgeport? (Was it because more people were getting education and training? career coaching services? or because of other factors?) And why was there no earnings increase over Year 4 in Dayton? (Was it because control group members caught up with the average earnings of program group members?)

This section focuses on two subgroups and presents impacts on education and training during Year 1, food stamp receipt during Year 1, and UI-covered earnings during Years 3 and 4.²⁰ The first subgroup is defined by *food stamp receipt at baseline*. For example, almost by definition, WASC should increase food stamp receipt rates more for individuals not receiving food stamps at study entry. The second subgroup is defined by *the level of disadvantage at baseline*. Labor market disadvantages are defined as not having more than six months of employment in the current job at baseline, receiving some type of financial work support, and not having a high school diploma at baseline. Individuals who met two or more of these criteria are defined as “most disadvantaged.” Individuals who met one criterion are defined as “moderately disadvantaged.” Individuals who met none of these criteria were defined as “least disadvantaged.”²¹ Impacts on earnings may be larger among the least disadvantaged, for example, because they are more likely to be employed and are therefore in a better position to benefit from the help that WASC offered in building skills to advance in the labor market.

²⁰The samples vary across these measures: education and training cover survey respondents in all three sites; food stamp receipt covers the full research sample in all three sites; and earnings cover the full research samples in Dayton and Bridgeport and a partial sample in San Diego.

²¹Additional and more exploratory subgroups are presented in Appendix Tables E.10 and E.11.

The difference between impacts for two or three groups must be statistically significant in order for it to be considered a true difference, rather than one arising by chance. The p-value for this test of statistical significance is shown in the far-right columns of the tables that follow. (The lower the p-value, which indicates the exact level of statistical significance, the more meaningful the result.) Although the results are shown in tables by site, the text discusses them by outcome. Only differences between subgroups that have sufficient sample sizes and that are statistically significant are discussed.

- **WASC increased food stamp receipt among individuals who were not receiving food stamps at study entry, but it did not increase the duration of receipt among individuals who were already receiving the benefit. Effects on food stamp receipt did not vary by level of disadvantage.**

The first panels of Tables 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 present impacts on food stamp receipt over Year 1 in the three sites. They show that, across the sites, the impacts on food stamp receipt differed by whether individuals received food stamps and not by level of disadvantage at baseline.²²

The second row of data in the tables (outcomes for individuals who were not receiving food stamps at baseline) shows that WASC increased the fraction who ever received food stamps over the first year in all three sites. In San Diego, for example, the increase was about 7.6 percentage points above a control group level of 13.2 percent (Table 4.11). In San Diego and Dayton, such results led to an increase in receipt for the two research groups combined — that is, for the full sample. The effect in Bridgeport, in contrast, was offset by a decrease among those who received food stamps at baseline, and so it did not lead to an increase in receipt for the full sample.

- **Impacts on earnings in Dayton varied by level of disadvantage. In that site, the program led to an increase in Year 3 earnings for the least disadvantaged individuals, although this effect did not persist to Year 4. A similar pattern is found for San Diego.**

The fourth panel of Table 4.10 and the third panels of Tables 4.11 and 4.12 present impacts on earnings. The row of data for individuals who were in the least disadvantaged group at baseline shows that WASC increased earnings in Year 3 in Dayton; the increase was about

²²There is one exception to this in Bridgeport, where the impacts of WASC on food stamp receipt differed by employment status at baseline. Yet the difference in the percentages of WASC program and control group members who received food stamps within the two subgroups is not statistically significant. It is therefore unclear whether the difference in employment status led to an increase or a decrease in food stamp receipt.

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Table 4.10

Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Participation in Education and Training, and UI-Covered Earnings, by Selected Subgroups

Dayton

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
<u>Ever received food stamps, Year 1 (%)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	94.8	96.2	-1.5	0.451	†††
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	40.1	29.9	10.2 ***	0.001	†††
Most disadvantaged at baseline	84.6	83.0	1.6	0.649	
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	65.9	58.3	7.7 **	0.020	
Least disadvantaged at baseline	26.8	18.1	8.7 **	0.036	
<u>Ever enrolled in education or training, Year 1^a (%)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	74.0	48.6	25.4 ***	0.003	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	79.3	54.2	25.1 ***	0.000	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	73.3	45.0	28.3 ***	0.003	
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	80.0	54.2	25.9 ***	0.000	
Least disadvantaged at baseline	72.3	61.9	10.5	0.188	
<u>Earned bachelor's degree, Year 1 + 3 quarters (%)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	1.6	1.3	0.3	0.782	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	3.5	1.0	2.5 **	0.025	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	1.2	0.7	0.5	0.637	††
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	1.1	1.9	-0.8	0.480	††
Least disadvantaged at baseline	6.4	1.0	5.4 ***	0.008	††
<u>Earnings, Year 3 (\$)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	11,719	11,754	-34	0.975	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	16,147	14,701	1,447	0.109	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	10,551	11,680	-1,129	0.360	†
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	15,101	13,711	1,390	0.175	†
Least disadvantaged at baseline	18,308	15,199	3,109 **	0.034	†
<u>Earnings, Year 4 (\$)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	12,089	11,982	107	0.932	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	16,377	15,308	1,069	0.298	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	10,448	11,340	-892	0.524	
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	15,682	13,735	1,947 *	0.099	
Least disadvantaged at baseline	18,462	17,031	1,432	0.390	

(continued)

Table 4.10 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Ohio.

NOTES: This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio UI program. It does not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

A statistical test was performed to measure whether impacts differed significantly across subgroup categories. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; and ††† = 1 percent.

WASC defined (1) the most disadvantaged (two out of three) as follows: did not have a high school diploma at the time of random assignment, did not have more than 6 months in the current job at the time of random assignment, received some type of work support at the time of random assignment (food stamps, child care subsidy, other types of assistance, publicly funded health care coverage for self, and publicly funded coverage for dependent children); (2) the moderately disadvantaged faced only one of the three barriers, while (3) the least disadvantaged faced none of the barriers.

^aAmong respondents to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

\$3,109 (about 21 percent) above the control group average of \$15,199. San Diego’s program led to a similar increase over the same year and for the same group — a difference that just misses statistical significance. But this increase was offset by a decrease in average earnings among individuals in the most disadvantaged group. Impacts on earnings in Bridgeport did not differ by level of disadvantage over Year 2, but, among people in the least disadvantaged group, the impacts differed more and in the same direction as in Dayton and San Diego.

These results suggest that WASC helped more individuals in the least disadvantaged group increase their earnings and advance in the labor market over the third year, at least in Dayton and San Diego.²³ These were people who had the strongest attachment to the labor market and who perhaps as a result of this needed a lighter touch to get ahead. As the data for Dayton and San Diego show, these subgroup differences, although interesting, did not persist

²³A separate analysis (not shown) that pools study participants across the three sites shows an increase in earnings over the third year among people who were the least disadvantaged.

into Year 4, mostly because control group members caught up with their counterparts in the program group.

- **The findings in Dayton suggest that the positive effects on earnings may not have been driven entirely by increased education and training.**

Further analysis by level of disadvantage in Dayton shows that the 21 percent earnings gain due to WASC among individuals in the least disadvantaged group is not a result of WASC increasing their employment rate (not shown). The earnings gain is thus mostly from those who worked more hours or earned more per hour, on average, than their control group counterparts. The question is therefore whether these gains are due to WASC helping more people participate in education and training in Dayton.

The impact on enrollment for education and training does not differ by level of disadvantage over the first year in Dayton, and enrollment levels for WASC program and control group members differ less among individuals in the least disadvantaged group than they do for individuals in the more disadvantaged groups. This is mostly due to the fact that individuals in the least disadvantaged control group were more likely to pursue education and training on their own. Estimates based on information from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), however, show differences in graduation rates by level of disadvantage. WASC increased the percentage who graduated with a bachelor's degree over the second year among individuals in the least disadvantaged group in Dayton. There was no difference in rates of graduation among individuals in the moderately and the most disadvantaged groups. The survey confirms these results.²⁴ The graduation effect, however, is small relative to the impact of WASC on average earnings, which suggests that graduation alone cannot explain the full effect of WASC on helping more people in the least disadvantaged group advance in the labor market.

The number of survey respondents grouped by level of disadvantage is too small for a meaningful analysis of the correlation between education and training and earnings increases in Bridgeport.

- **The implementation results suggest that the positive effects on earnings likely are mostly due to increased education and training in Bridgeport.**

²⁴The impacts of WASC on obtaining a bachelor's degree among survey respondents did not differ by level of disadvantage, but program group members were more likely than control group members in the least disadvantaged group to obtain a bachelor's degree over the first year after each individual's time of random assignment.

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Table 4.11

Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Participation in Education and Training, and UI-Covered Earnings, by Selected Subgroups

San Diego

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
<u>Ever received food stamps, Year 1 (%)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	79.6	88.3	-8.6	0.182	††
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	20.7	13.2	7.6 ***	0.001	††
Most disadvantaged at baseline	40.2	38.4	1.8	0.689	
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	29.7	21.9	7.7 **	0.030	
Least disadvantaged at baseline	14.9	10.1	4.8	0.187	
<u>Ever enrolled in education or training, Year 1^a (%)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	54.9	29.2	25.8 *	0.080	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	49.2	47.0	2.3	0.616	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	43.4	33.4	10.0	0.196	
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	45.2	53.6	-8.4	0.196	
Least disadvantaged at baseline	59.5	51.2	8.2	0.359	
<u>Earnings, Year 3 (\$)</u>					
Received food stamps at baseline	12,043	14,367	-2,324	0.338	
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	13,373	13,300	73	0.943	
Most disadvantaged at baseline	10,152	12,298	-2,146	0.126	†
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	12,855	14,038	-1,183	0.430	†
Least disadvantaged at baseline	17,555	14,301	3,254	0.123	†

(continued)

Table 4.11 (continued)

SOURCE:MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of California.

NOTES: This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the California UI program. It does not include employment outside California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

A statistical test was performed to measure whether impacts differed significantly across subgroup categories. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; and ††† = 1 percent.

WASC defined (1) the most disadvantaged (two out of three) as follows: did not have a high school diploma at the time of random assignment, did not have more than 6 months in the current job at the time of random assignment, received some type of work support at the time of random assignment (food stamps, child care subsidy, other types of assistance, publicly funded health care coverage for self, and publicly funded coverage for dependent children); (2) the moderately disadvantaged faced only one of the three barriers, while (3) the least disadvantaged faced none of the barriers.

^aAmong respondents to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

WASC in Bridgeport led to no impacts on the take-up of work supports, and the program experienced a fair amount of turnover in the workforce staff. The program thus did not do a lot to help more WASC group members stabilize their income while taking steps to advance, nor did it do a lot to help more of them take steps to advance on the job. But WASC in Bridgeport did generate fairly large impacts on participation in education and training, especially, and in the receipt of licenses or certificates. It is likely that the impacts of WASC on helping more people increase their earnings over the third year are mostly due to the program helping more people enroll in education and training activities.

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Table 4.12

Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Participation in Education and Training, and UI-Covered Earnings, by Selected Subgroups

Bridgeport

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Ever received food stamps, Year 1 (%)</u>				
Received food stamps at baseline	86.8	96.7	-9.9 **	0.011 †††
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	29.6	22.7	7.0 **	0.042 †††
Most disadvantaged at baseline	56.5	56.0	0.5	0.909
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	32.0	29.0	3.0	0.446
Least disadvantaged at baseline	36.7	21.4	15.3	0.152
<u>Ever enrolled in education or training, Year 1^a (%)</u>				
Received food stamps at baseline	59.8	40.8	19.0	0.170
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	53.8	40.5	13.3 **	0.049
Most disadvantaged at baseline	61.9	45.9	16.0	0.104
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	49.7	38.6	11.1	0.212
Least disadvantaged at baseline	60.8	0.2	60.6	0.205
<u>Earnings, Year 2 (\$)</u>				
Received food stamps at baseline	10,201	9,061	1,140	0.411
Did not receive food stamps at baseline	15,455	15,069	386	0.701
Most disadvantaged at baseline	11,672	10,824	848	0.485
Moderately disadvantaged at baseline	16,616	16,544	72	0.954
Least disadvantaged at baseline	13,857	12,095	1,763	0.530

(continued)

Table 4.12 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Connecticut.

NOTES: This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

A statistical test was performed to measure whether impacts differ significantly across subgroup categories. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; and ††† = 1 percent.

WASC defined (1) the most disadvantaged (two out of three) as follows: did not have a high school diploma at the time of random assignment, did not have more than 6 months in the current job at the time of random assignment, received some type of work support at the time of random assignment (food stamps, child care subsidy, other types of assistance, publicly funded health care coverage for self, and publicly funded coverage for dependent children); (2) the moderately disadvantaged faced only one of the three barriers, while (3) the least disadvantaged faced none of the barriers.

^aAmong respondents to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration was an ambitious program designed to increase the incomes of low-wage workers. It pushed the participating One-Stop Career Centers to serve incumbent workers, to develop new methods to connect them to available work supports, and to help them move up in the labor market. The program offered services to participants for two years at three One-Stops around the country, serving more than 1,400 low-wage workers. This report has presented its effects on these workers' work support receipt, employment, and earnings for three to four years after study entry. This chapter summarizes the findings and lessons learned from the demonstration.

Summary of Findings from the WASC Demonstration

Each of the three sites in the demonstration — Bridgeport, Connecticut; Dayton, Ohio; and San Diego, California — successfully implemented the basic version of the WASC model described in Chapter 1, including colocation of workforce and welfare staff, easier access to work supports, and services for advancement. However, the features varied enough across the three places, particularly in the advancement component, to suggest that the sites should be thought of as three different versions of the WASC model.

- **WASC in Dayton: Strong combination of coaching and access to training.** Access to very generous training dollars through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998; discretionary funds to support additional training; incentives for training and sustained work; easier access to work supports, especially in redetermination for food stamps¹
- **WASC in San Diego: Mostly coaching.** Very limited access to funds for training; referral to free or low-cost training in community; focus on career coaching and advancing at current employer; easier access to work supports, particularly access to child care funding and application and redetermination for food stamps
- **WASC in Bridgeport: Mostly access to training.** Some access to funds for training through WIA; discretionary funds to pay for training outside WIA,

¹The Food Stamp Program was renamed the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP) in 2008. To be consistent with earlier reports on WASC, this report continues to use “food stamps” in reference to SNAP.

available for broader range of training programs; easier access to work supports, including access to a work support specialist

Table 5.1 summarizes the findings. The first panel shows that the effects of WASC on work supports are quite varied, ranging from no increase in any work supports in Bridgeport to modest effects in Dayton to more widespread effects in San Diego. WASC in San Diego, for example, led to notable increases in the receipt of food stamps, in the take-up of publicly provided health care coverage, and in the use of subsidized child care. This site differs from the other two in that the use of these work supports was relatively low for individuals in the control group, meaning that there was much more room for improvement in participation rates. As expected, the effects on food stamp receipt ended when the program ended and individuals reverted to the former system for accessing benefits.

The second panel of Table 5.1 presents effects on participation in education or training during the first year after study entry. As with effects on work supports, the effects on training vary across the sites. However, this variation appears to be more easily attributable to what each program was able to offer participants. Dayton and Bridgeport succeeded in simplifying access to funds for training, and their programs increased the take-up of training. San Diego, in contrast, was not able to offer participants easy access to funding and had very small effects. Also, for the two sites that did increase participation in training, Dayton did so for both college courses and vocational training, while Bridgeport's effects were concentrated entirely in vocational training. This difference is likely due to differences in the types of individuals who enrolled in the study across these two sites, with Dayton enrolling a relatively high fraction of workers who were already taking college courses.

The last panel of Table 5.1 presents effects on employment and earnings, measured for four years in Dayton and San Diego and for three years in Bridgeport. (It is not possible with the available data to track effects in Bridgeport beyond Year 3.) The findings suggest that the Year 1 increases in training — and, perhaps, career coaching — had some payoff in terms of increased earnings in both Dayton and Bridgeport. However, the effects may be short-lived; the effect on earnings in Dayton is no longer statistically significant in Year 4.

One difference between the Dayton and Bridgeport sites that might lead to varying effects on earnings is the local economy. Year 4 of the follow-up period coincided for

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Table 5.1

Summary of WASC Program Impacts, by Site and Year

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton				San Diego				Bridgeport		
	<i>Easier access to work supports + coaching and access to training</i>				<i>Easier access to work supports + coaching</i>				<i>Easier access to work supports + access to training</i>		
	Year 1	2	3	4	Year 1	2	3	4	Year 1	2	3
<u>Work supports (%)</u>											
Food stamps (Years 1-3)	6.2	-	-		5.7	7.6	-		-	-	
Public health care coverage, adults (Years 1-3)	-	-	-		-	-	-		-	-	
Public health care coverage, children (Year 1)	10.4				11.1				-		
Subsidized child care (Years 1-3)	-	-	-		20.7	13.7	-				
EITC (Year 1)	-								-		
Three or more supports (Year 1)	-				15.4				-		
<u>Skills training (Year 1) (%)</u>											
Participated in any type of training	23.6				-				15.7		
College courses	19.1				-				-		
Vocational training or any type of training	12.8				5.5				17.6		
Received license/certificate	6.4				4.8				8.9		
<u>Employment and earnings</u>											
Employment rate (%)	-	5.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stable employment (%)	-	7.1	-	-	-5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Earnings ^a (\$)	-	-	1,152	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,244

NOTES: Only effects that are statistically significant at the 10 percent level or higher are listed, and they represent percentage point impacts (unless otherwise indicated). A dash (-) indicates that effects were measured in that year but are not statistically significant.

^aThe Department of Labor in Connecticut provided MDRC with individual-level earnings data covering Years 1-2 and group-level earnings data covering Years 1-3. As such, statistical tests were not performed on average earnings overall and in Year 3 for individuals randomly assigned in Bridgeport. The earnings effect for Bridgeport is the sum of the earnings impacts for the four quarters of Year 3, all of which reached statistical significance.

many people in the Dayton sample with the dramatic rise in unemployment rates during 2009, which peaked at over 12 percent in early 2010. While unemployment rates for all sites increased over this period, they did so most sharply in Dayton. The gains made by program participants during the early years may have faded if they lost their jobs or had their hours reduced.

The increase in unemployment rates in all sites raises the more general question of how the recent recession may have affected WASC's impacts. It is not clear how the local economy might affect a program's impacts, although some recent research has suggested that a higher unemployment rate is associated with smaller impacts on earnings.² A higher unemployment rate means that it is more difficult for individuals in the control group to find work, in which case the program might be especially helpful for individuals in the program group and might lead to larger impacts. However, higher unemployment also means that it is harder for individuals in the program group to find work or to translate program services or training into earnings gains, which would lead to smaller impacts. While it is not possible to say with certainty, it seems likely that the economic downturn that started during the follow-up period — largely because it was so severe — dampened any effect that WASC may have had on employment and earnings in the later follow-up years.

Lessons from the WASC Demonstration

The ultimate goal of WASC was for participating workers to advance, and the assumptions behind the model were that advancement would be facilitated in three key ways. First, the model assumed that low-wage workers are not taking up the benefits for which they are eligible and that providing easier access to these benefits would increase workers' use of these benefits. Receipt of *work supports* would then help low-wage workers sustain employment by increasing the payoff to work (if the supports are conditioned on work) or by helping them weather financial emergencies. These supports might also lead to advancement if they allow workers to pursue education and training. Second, the model assumed that low-wage workers lack the necessary information and connections (typically possessed by their higher-income counterparts) to learn about and pursue better-paying jobs. *Career coaching* can help individuals navigate the labor market by providing important information about how to move up within their current employer or how to learn about better opportunities elsewhere. Finally, many low-wage workers face important barriers to acquiring additional skills, such as a lack of information about training opportunities and the inability to cover the costs of attending. Access to and help covering the costs of *education and training* can help these workers acquire the skills needed to gain access to better-paying jobs.

²Bloom, Hill, and Riccio (2001).

The findings from the demonstration as a whole and from the variation in effects across the three sites can provide some lessons for the next generation of advancement strategies.

A significant share of the workers who enrolled in the demonstration would have received one or more work supports on their own (in the absence of the program) or would have been ineligible to receive them. However, simplifying access to them can increase the use of work supports among workers who would have had low participation rates.

WASC considered the key work supports to be food stamps, publicly provided health insurance, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and subsidized child care. First consider food stamps. The program increased food stamp participation rates in Dayton and San Diego but not in Bridgeport. The effects were modest in absolute terms (at 6 percentage points in Year 1) but were relatively large in San Diego, given that this impact represented an increase in food stamp use from 24 percent for the control group to 30 percent for the WASC group. Low participation rates in San Diego, as indicated by take-up rates among individuals in the control group, reflect low rates in general for California's working population. In Dayton and Bridgeport, in contrast, there may have been less room for WASC to increase participation rates, with control group receipt rates of 54 percent and 40 percent, respectively. In addition, individuals in Bridgeport had relatively higher incomes when they entered the study, suggesting that fewer of them may have been eligible to receive food stamps.

A similar story can be found for other benefits, where the effects occurred primarily when there was more room for improvement. For the take-up of public health coverage, for example, the effects in San Diego were largest and most consistent (for children), most likely because that site's rates of health care coverage were lowest. Only 77 percent of children had health care coverage in the absence of WASC in San Diego, compared with 89 percent of children in Dayton and 93 percent of children in Bridgeport. Similarly, effects on the use of subsidized child care occurred only in San Diego, perhaps in part because that site used discretionary funds to create subsidies for WASC participants, thereby avoiding the county's long waiting list. However, this finding probably also reflects that the rates of child care use were relatively low in San Diego; only 12 percent of control group families received subsidies at some point during the three-year period. In Dayton, in contrast, there is no waiting list for low-income families, and about 30 percent of control group families used subsidized child care. Fewer families in Dayton may have been eligible for subsidies, since the income cutoff to determine eligibility is lower in Ohio than in California.

Finally, one premise behind WASC was that many families might receive one work support for which they were eligible but that few would receive the whole package. At some point during the follow-up period, however, nearly half of all individuals in the control groups in Dayton and Bridgeport received at least three of the key work supports (typically, publicly

provided health coverage, food stamps, and the EITC). For individuals with children, this fraction was nearly 60 percent in both sites. WASC did not improve on this rate in either of these sites. In contrast, only about 23 percent of the control group in San Diego received at least three work supports, and WASC increased this fraction to 37 percent.

The gains in San Diego are noteworthy, especially given the low benchmark from which they occurred and other efforts by the State of California to increase participation rates. However, a question for policymakers to consider is “At what cost were the gains achieved?” There are other ways to increase the take-up of benefits, such as offering extended office hours, offering online applications, outstationing staff, eliminating face-to-face interviews and fingerprinting requirements, eliminating asset tests, and improving outreach and marketing. States and counties have tried a variety of these strategies, many of which have undoubtedly contributed to the recent increase in participation rates. While a formal benefit-cost analysis is not being conducted for the WASC demonstration, it would be worthwhile to compare the costs of providing easier access through WASC with the costs of these other strategies.³

Is colocation necessary to increase work supports? Would these increases in work supports have been achieved if staff had implemented easier access outside the One-Stop Center? Although there are no experimental data to answer this question, since no participants were randomly assigned to easier access without the colocation of welfare and workforce staff, the implementation findings and interviews suggest that colocation is necessary when serving a working population. Offering access to work supports along with advancement services proved to be more convenient for low-wage workers and helped to reduce the stigma sometimes associated with applying for these benefits. In addition, many workers were drawn to the program because of the advancement services that it provided, suggesting that simply offering easier access to work supports by itself might not attract many low-wage workers who would nonetheless be eligible.

Increasing the take-up of certain work supports that are not tied to work, such as food stamps, does not appear to promote advancement and may even discourage it.

The idea behind coupling work supports and advancement services was that work supports would help promote advancement by increasing employment stability or, in some cases, by allowing workers to pursue education and training. Evidence from the San Diego site — where the WASC program increased the receipt of both food stamps and publicly provided health care coverage — suggests that the receipt of these benefits may have encouraged some

³Included in cost estimates, particularly for food stamp receipt, would be any resulting change in error rates. A separate analysis for WASC found that the efforts to increase simplification and take-up rates resulted in a slight increase in error rates in Dayton but not in San Diego (van Dok, 2010).

individuals to reduce their work hours or not to move back into work as quickly as they would have otherwise. These findings are consistent with other research suggesting that benefit use discourages work because these benefits are taxed away as earnings increase.⁴ In addition, the implementation findings from all three sites suggest that some staff found it difficult to connect participants to work supports only to later try to convince them that they would be better off in the long run without these supports.⁵ It is important in this case to distinguish between these types of benefits and the EITC, which individuals receive only when they work and which increases with earnings up to a certain level.

The Dayton site provides a note of caution to this conclusion, since WASC in this site increased food stamp receipt but also increased earnings. It is not possible to determine whether the increase in food stamp receipt in Dayton contributed to increased earnings, although it seems unlikely. The research sample also consisted of a large number of individuals who were already pursuing education and training. Participation rates in San Diego, in contrast, were much lower. This difference in the types of individuals enrolled at the two sites may also explain the different responses to the increase in work supports. At a minimum, the findings suggest that if sites are going to encourage the take-up of certain work supports, this should be coupled with strong job retention and advancement services in order to counteract any potential work disincentives.

Should work supports be part of an “advancement” model? Although food stamps and other benefits help families by reducing material hardship and food insecurity, it is not clear that the take-up of these benefits should be a key component of a program designed to promote advancement. As mentioned, the receipt of certain work supports may discourage employment, which works at cross-purposes with staff efforts to promote advancement. Again, the results may differ depending on the types of individuals being served. Offering easier access to benefits to community college students, for example, may be consistent with an advancement goal if it helps individuals cover the costs of training.

However, the general issue still holds: the receipt of nonwork income can act as a deterrent to work and advancement. Note that the results do not imply that the receipt of benefits should be conditioned on work, since the demonstration did not test this hypothesis. Conditioning these benefits on work would limit their effectiveness as a key part of the safety net.

Generic career coaching, especially coaching focused on moving up in the current job, is unlikely to help individuals achieve earnings gains.

⁴For evidence from the Food Stamp Program, see, for example, Hoynes and Schanzenbach (2010).

⁵Miller, Tessler, and van Dok (2009).

The key components of the WASC model that center on advancement are career coaching and easier access to education and training. The San Diego site — given the challenges that it faced in getting participants access to WIA funds for training — focused its advancement services largely on the coaching component, particularly coaching that focused on how to move up within one’s current employer. Other research suggests that changing jobs is an important avenue through which low-wage workers advance, particularly if they move to jobs in higher wage sectors. Data from the WASC implementation research suggest that participants were well aware of this fact. Most of them were not happy in their current jobs and wanted to change employers and sometimes even industries. The disconnect between what participants wanted and what the San Diego site was able to offer was unfortunate, and the impact data indicate that this strategy was ultimately not effective at helping people advance.

Even in the other two sites, however, the type of coaching offered was fairly general and unlikely to have had much effect on advancement. As an example, earlier reports indicate that coaches took different strategies for the two types of participants they encountered. For those who entered WASC knowing the steps that they wanted to take — usually participation in a specific education or training program — coaches took the tangible steps of facilitating the paperwork and the access to funding. For individuals who entered with no set plan, coaching services were similar to what was available at the One-Stop for unemployed individuals. In fact, coaches often referred such participants to the One-Stops to obtain job listings. With these listings in hand, the coaches then reinforced the workers’ employment goals and assisted with developing interview skills. However, while participants appreciated the motivational role that coaches played, very few coaches possessed in-depth knowledge of the local labor market, including knowledge about which sectors were hiring versus shrinking and which sectors were offering well-paying jobs with opportunities for advancement. None of the coaches had connections to local employers.

The findings in Dayton serve as a caveat to the general conclusion that coaching in WASC did not work. Because coaching and access to education and training were offered as a package in Dayton, it is not possible to attribute the positive earnings effects in this site to training only; career coaching may have had some effects. However, the findings across all three sites suggest that, at a minimum, coaching should be combined with access to and help with the costs of training. By itself, coaching may have little effect.

The suggestion that this type of general coaching by itself has little effect on advancement is consistent with findings from other advancement studies. For example, findings from the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project — which tested a variety of strategies to help low-income individuals stay employed and advance — suggest that this type

of coaching was not effective.⁶ However, as with WASC, staff in these other programs struggled to provide the type of career coaching that is likely to generate effects.

Easier access to funding for training can increase participation rates. However, the earnings gains associated with this participation may be short-lived if participants are not given more guidance about the right types of training to pursue or are not given access to funding for additional training.

WASC significantly increased workers' participation in education and training activities in both Dayton and Bridgeport. In Dayton, this additional training occurred in both college and vocational courses, while most of the training in Bridgeport was in vocational courses. In both sites, much of the additional training was for jobs in the health care sector, specifically, nursing.

In both sites, positive effects on earnings emerged in Year 3, and the timing of the effects suggests that they were caused by the increased training. In Dayton, however, where there is longer follow-up, these effects diminished somewhat by Year 4 and were no longer statistically significant. There are several possible reasons for the diminishing effects. First, the economy may have played an important role. The dramatic increase in unemployment rates in Dayton during the later part of the follow-up period might have increased job loss among these newly trained workers. Second, the type of individuals who were recruited into the demonstration may have resulted in control group workers who were also highly motivated to pursue training and who eventually "caught up" to the workers in the WASC group. Detailed data on training are available only for Year 1, so it is not possible to determine this. Third, the types of training that individuals pursued because of WASC either may not have been recognized by employers or may not have resulted in higher-paying jobs. Neither program seems to have steered workers into different types of training than they would have taken up anyway, since health care was also the most common training field for the control group. This is not surprising, since, as noted above, the career coaches typically did not possess the type of labor market knowledge or resources needed to direct people into specific sectors. This idea is consistent with evidence from other training programs that provided incentives for training. The United Kingdom's Employment Retention and Advancement demonstration (UK ERA), for example, encouraged individuals to take up additional training, but the types of training that individuals pursued varied greatly in terms of labor market value. That program had no long-term effect on earnings for two of its three target groups, and the effects that it did have do not appear to be caused by training. Finally, workers may have trained for jobs that ultimately do lead to advancement, but advancing may require additional training beyond that obtained through their time in WASC. The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate is one example; it is

⁶See Hamilton and Scrivener (2012).

certainly a step on the way to a higher-paying nursing position, but it is just the first step of a ladder on which the rungs are quite far apart.

Do incentives for training complement easier access to funding? WASC in Dayton offered a range of incentives that workers could earn while they participated in training, including a performance bonus, a completion bonus, and child care and transportation assistance. Did the incentives serve to increase training beyond the increase caused by the help with funding? Although it is not possible to answer this question experimentally, the findings from Bridgeport suggest that these incentives may not have added much to the program's effects. WASC in Bridgeport, which did not have incentives, led to a similar-size increase in training. In addition, the relatively low take-up of the training incentives in Dayton (just over 25 percent of individuals in the program group received a training payment) suggests that the additional incentive may not have been very salient to participants. While other programs with incentives have been found to increase participation, it may be that incentives do not add much in the context of already-generous assistance with funding.

* * *

The WASC demonstration started in 2005 and has provided important information on what low-wage workers want, how they think about work supports and advancement, and what services work or do not work to help them advance. First, the findings speak to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the effort to serve incumbent workers through the One-Stop Career Centers created by that act. While One-Stop Centers typically serve the unemployed, the WASC findings indicate that they can broaden their mission and achieve the culture change necessary to successfully serve low-wage workers, offering them advancement and work support services in one location and with teams of staff. A key finding in terms of serving these workers through WIA relates to the ease with which they can access funds for training. Program rules at the San Diego site made access to these funds very difficult. Findings from the other two sites suggest what might have occurred for participants in San Diego had they been able to get help with the costs of training.

More broadly, the findings offer some suggestions for the next generation of advancement models, some of which are on firmer ground than others. It seems clear, for example, that most workers, or at least those who entered WASC, wanted to advance by changing jobs and that job coaching that focused on their current job is not helpful. The results also suggest further thinking about whether work supports — particularly those that are not conditioned on work — should be part of an advancement model. Finally, the fade-out of earnings impacts in one site suggests that more can be done on the training side, although the exact prescription is not clear. Some suggestions include job coaching that is driven by a deeper knowledge of the local labor market, access to relevant training opportunities, and connections to jobs at the end of training. One example of such an approach is the group of sectoral training programs that were evaluated

by Public/Private Ventures. These programs offered industry-specific training for less-skilled individuals and took the next step of connecting them to employers once the training was completed. Findings from a random assignment evaluation show large gains in earnings for participants.⁷ More recently, the WorkAdvance demonstration being conducted by MDRC seeks to build on these and other findings by evaluating several sector-based programs in New York City that provide vocational skills training in specific sectors, along with job placement, postplacement services, and financial assistance with training.⁸

Finally, the assistance may need to be longer-term. Staying ahead in today's labor market requires continuous skill building, and WASC may have offered low-wage workers an important first step.

⁷Maguire et al. (2010).

⁸This demonstration has been developed in partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity and is being funded by the Social Innovation Fund of the federal Corporation for National and Community Service.

Appendix A

**WASC in Dayton:
12-Month Survey Response Analysis**

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration interviewed a selected group of study participants in Dayton about their contact with program staff or any case manager, areas in which they received help, messages received relating to employment retention and/or advancement, participation in employment and/or education- or training-related activities, receipt of work supports, their current or most recent job, their household composition, and their health. Interviews were conducted about 12 months after each individual entered the study. This analysis examines whether the cumulative outcomes of these interviews can be generalized to the members of the research sample covered by this report.

Subsequent sections describe who was eligible in Dayton to be interviewed for the WASC 12-Month Survey, who was fielded, and who responded to the survey effort. The analysis further examines how respondents differ from nonrespondents, how respondents in the WASC group differ from those in the control group, and how key outcomes based on administrative records data differ across individuals in the research sample, the survey-eligible sample, the fielded sample, and the respondent sample. (See Box A.1.)

Conclusions

- There is a marginally statistically significant difference between the average survey respondent in Dayton and the average nonrespondent, particularly insofar as survey respondents are more likely to be female and were less likely to be single at the time of the survey interview.
- Nevertheless, the average respondent in the WASC group is not statistically significantly different from the average respondent in the control group, except insofar as that WASC group members were less likely to have monthly family incomes greater than 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) and were more likely to have one child and a youngest child who was less than 5 years old.
- Comparison of earnings covered by the unemployment insurance (UI) system, employment, and food stamp outcomes among individuals in the research, survey-eligible, fielded, and respondent samples shows a fair amount of consistency across samples and between research groups. Survey outcomes are thus fairly representative of the research sample.

Selection of Research Sample Members

All individuals in the research sample who spoke English or Spanish and who were randomly assigned from January 2006 through March 2007 were eligible to participate in the WASC 12-

Box A.1

Key Analysis Samples for WASC in Dayton

Research sample (for the 2009 interim report). Everyone who was randomly assigned from November 2005 through March 2007 (N = 1,176).

Survey-eligible sample. Individuals who met the criteria for inclusion in the survey. The criteria for eligibility in Dayton were (1) ability to speak English or Spanish and (2) enrolled from January 2006 through March 2007 (N = 1,085).

Fielded sample. Survey-eligible individuals who were selected at random to be interviewed for the 12-month survey (N = 608).

Respondent sample. Sample members in the fielded sample who completed the WASC 12-Month Survey (N = 498).

Nonrespondent sample. Individuals in the fielded sample who were not interviewed because they were not located, refused to be interviewed, were located after the fielded period expired, or were unable to be interviewed for other reasons (N = 110).

Month Survey. Based on these criteria, 1,085 of the 1,176 individuals in the research sample (92 percent) were “survey-eligible.”¹ Of those who were eligible, 608 individuals were selected to be surveyed (herein identified as the “fielded sample”), split equally between the WASC group (N = 304) and the control group (N = 304). Individuals who completed the 12-month survey are referred to as the “respondent sample” (N = 498). The group of individuals who did not complete the survey are referred to as the “nonrespondent sample” (N = 110).

Survey Response Rates

The goal of the survey effort was to interview 80 percent of individuals in the fielded sample. Dayton exceeded this goal with a survey response rate of 81.9 percent for the WASC and control groups combined (N = 498), or 83 percent of the WASC group (N = 252) and 81 percent of the control group (N = 246). Of the 110 individuals who did not respond, 88 were not located before the fielding period ended; 15 refused to be interviewed; 3 requested not to be called; and 3 were never located.

¹Sixteen individuals who initially were identified as eligible and were interviewed for the 12-month survey were subsequently dropped from the sample for the impact study and, therefore, also from the survey-eligible sample. Most of these individuals were dropped from the impact study because the administrative records data showed that they were living in a household with another study participant who was randomly assigned to the opposite research group.

Survey Response Rates in Dayton

Description	WASC Group	Control Group	Total
Eligible (N)	544	541	1,085
Fielded (N)	304	304	608
Responded (N)	252	246	498
Response rate (%)	81.9	80.8	81.5

Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents

On average, survey respondents are expected to have characteristics similar to those of individuals in the fielded sample who did not respond. A dichotomous survey response indicator (1 = survey respondent; 0 = survey nonrespondent) was created in order to measure the difference between the two groups and was regressed on a range of baseline characteristics, which are shown in Appendix Table A.1.

Appendix Table A.1 shows that these 22 predictors account for only 5.31 percent of the variance in survey responses ($R^2 = 0.0531$) and that the model is statistically significant (p-value = 0.0522). What this suggests is that survey respondents and nonrespondents are not similar across all key characteristics selected for this analysis. For instance, survey respondents are more likely to be female and were less likely to be single at the time of the survey interview.

Comparison of WASC Group Respondents and Control Group Respondents

Survey-eligible individuals who were selected to be fielded shared similar characteristics across research groups. Thus, respondents are also expected to have similar characteristics across research groups. The differences in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group were measured across a few key characteristics in a multivariate regression and across a wider set of characteristics in a bivariate analysis relying on chi-square and t-test statistics.

The multivariate analysis included the same 22 predictors used in the comparison of respondents and nonrespondents. The predictors were regressed based on a WASC group dichotomous indicator (E = 1 = WASC group; E = 0 = control group). Appendix Table A.2 shows that these predictors account for only 3.5 percent of the variance in survey responses ($R^2 = 0.0353$) and that the model is not statistically significant (p-value = 0.624). What this suggests is that

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Appendix Table A.1

**Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey**

Dayton

Variable	Fielded Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
WASC group	0.017	0.5835
Single	-0.100 **	0.0325
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	0.003	0.9416
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	0.051	0.1968
Black, non-Hispanic	0.017	0.6068
Hispanic	0.003	0.9820
Age	0.002	0.3141
Female	0.168 ***	<.0001
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	-0.003	0.9647
Age of youngest child 0-5	-0.013	0.7844
One child	0.026	0.5767
Two or more children	0.020	0.6685
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2006	0.044	0.3823
Enrolled during Quarter 3 of 2006	0.042	0.4566
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	0.035	0.5340
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	0.031	0.5387
Total earnings in quarter prior to random assignment	0.000	0.3387
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	0.005	0.5380
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.042	0.4933
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.003	0.6556
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	0.089	0.1077
R-square	0.0531	
F-statistic	1.56	
P-value of F-statistic	0.0522	
Sample size	608	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from Dayton and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows:

* = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

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Appendix Table A.2

**Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a WASC Group Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey**

Dayton

Variable	Respondent Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
Single	-0.036	0.5827
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	0.013	0.8323
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	-0.095 *	0.0932
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.011	0.8295
Hispanic	0.217	0.3068
Age	0.004	0.1364
Female	0.049	0.4374
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	0.074	0.3993
Age of youngest child 0-5	0.134 **	0.0405
One child	0.116 *	0.0911
Two or more children	0.035	0.5912
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2006	-0.072	0.3193
Enrolled during Quarter 3 of 2006	-0.032	0.7009
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	0.008	0.9190
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	0.000	0.9961
Total earnings in quarter prior to random assignment	0.000	0.9556
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	0.004	0.7586
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.130	0.1497
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	0.006	0.5649
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	-0.033	0.6745
R-square	0.0353	
F-statistic	0.87	
P-value of F-statistic	0.6241	
Sample size	498	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from Dayton and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows:

* = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

WASC group respondents and control group respondents are similar across most key characteristics selected for this analysis. Some exceptions are that WASC group respondents were more likely to have one child (when the age of the youngest child was less than 5) and that they were less likely to have a family income that exceeded 130 percent of FPL.

Appendix Table A.3 shows a bivariate analysis of the differences, on a wider variety of baseline measures, in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group. Compared with respondents in the control group, those in the WASC group were more likely to have a youngest child age 3 to 5 (birth to age 2 for the control group), were more likely to be receiving child care subsidies, were more likely to have filed a tax return in previous year, and more likely to be aware of and claiming the Child Tax Credit.

(The text continues after Appendix Table A.3.)

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Appendix Table A.3

Selected Baseline Characteristics of Survey Respondents Randomly Assigned
from January 2006 Through March 31, 2007

Dayton

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Demographic characteristics</u>				
Gender (%)				
Female	82.5	80.1	81.3	497
Age (%)				
18-24	35.3	41.5	38.4	498
25-34	33.7	35.0	34.3	498
35-44	20.6	13.4	17.1	498
45-62	10.3	10.2	10.2	498
Average age (years)	30.1	29.4	29.8	498
Race/ethnicity (%)				
Hispanic	1.6	0.8	1.2 []	496
White	30.6	30.3	30.4 []	496
Black	61.5	65.6	63.5 []	496
Native American	0.4	0.4	0.4 []	496
Asian	0.4	0.4	0.4 []	496
Other	6.0	2.9	4.4 *	496
Citizenship (%)				
Born in United States	95.6	97.6	96.6 []	498
Naturalized citizen	2.0	0.8	1.4 []	498
Noncitizen	2.4	1.6	2.0 []	498
English proficiency (%)				
Speaks English very well	100.0	100.0	100.0	493
<u>Family status (%)</u>				
Marital status				
Single, never married	67.3	75.9	71.6 []	496
Married and living with spouse	12.0	8.2	10.1 []	496
Married but living apart from spouse	6.8	3.7	5.2 []	496
Legally separated, divorced, or widowed	13.9	12.2	13.1	496
Living with a partner	6.7	6.5	6.6	498
Number of children				
0	38.5	43.7	41.0	497
1	24.2	19.2	21.7	497
2 or more	37.3	37.1	37.2	497

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Age of youngest child in years ^a				
0-2	27.5	34.1	30.6 **	291
3-5	34.6	18.8	27.1 **	291
6-12	24.2	33.3	28.5 **	291
13-18	13.7	13.8	13.7 **	291
Single and childless	35.1	41.5	38.2	497
Single-parent household	47.8	45.3	46.6	496
Two-parent household	13.5	10.7	12.1	495
<u>Education status (%)</u>				
Highest grade				
No high school diploma or GED certificate	6.8	9.1	7.9	493
GED certificate	6.4	9.1	7.7 []	493
High school diploma	24.4	24.3	24.3 []	493
Some college or advanced training courses	51.6	49.0	50.3 []	493
Associate's degree	8.0	4.9	6.5 []	493
4-year college degree or higher	2.8	3.7	3.2 []	493
Currently enrolled in education or training program ^b	42.9	37.0	40.0	498
English as a Second Language (ESL)	0.8	0.4	0.6 []	498
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	1.6	1.2	1.4 []	498
High school/GED preparation course	1.2	2.8	2.0 []	498
Vocational training	4.8	3.3	4.0	498
College course toward associate's/2-year degree	27.4	22.8	25.1	498
College course toward bachelor's/4-year degree	9.5	8.9	9.2	498
Other	0.8	2.4	1.6 []	498
<u>Employment status</u>				
<u>Current employment</u>				
Number of months in current job (%)				
Less than 1 year	49.0	53.3	51.1	497
Between 1 year and 2	17.9	19.5	18.7	497
More than 2 years	33.1	27.2	30.2	497
Working full time (35 hours or more) (%)	36.3	42.3	39.2	497
Average hourly wage (\$)	9.07	9.01	9.04	497
Less than \$5.15	3.2	1.2	2.2	497
\$5.15 - \$6.99	15.9	17.1	16.5	497
\$7.00 - \$8.99	29.1	30.5	29.8	497
\$9.00 - \$10.99	29.1	29.3	29.2	497
\$11.00 - \$14.99	22.7	21.5	22.1	497
\$15.00 - \$19.99	0.0	0.4	0.2	497

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Average weekly earnings (\$)	258	268	263	497
Fringe benefits from employer ^b (%)				
Time off with pay	45.4	49.0	47.2	496
Health plan offered	52.4	54.9	53.6	498
Dental plan offered	41.7	45.1	43.4	498
Retirement plan	37.3	38.2	37.8	498
Other	21.4	16.3	18.9	497
Enrolled in employer-provided health or medical insurance plan (%)	23.4	23.6	23.5	498
<u>Circumstances that may affect job retention or job change (%)</u>				
Has driver's license	83.3	83.7	83.5	498
Has access to a car to drive to work	79.0	78.5	78.7	498
Currently receiving help finding new or additional job	5.2	6.5	5.8	498
Physical or mental health problem that limits work	2.4	4.5	3.4	496
Became a Dislocated Worker during previous 2 years ^b (%)	17.5	17.9	17.7 []	498
Current wages compared with wages at pre-layoff job ^c (%)				
A lot less or somewhat less	57.9	37.5	48.6	35
<u>Income and work supports</u>				
Average monthly family income (\$)	1,251	1,280	1,266	497
Family income exceeds (%)				
130 percent of federal poverty level	29.4	34.1	31.7 []	498
Currently receiving income or work support (%)				
Earnings from spouse or partner	7.5	6.5	7.0	497
Food stamps	28.3	31.4	29.8	496
Child support	16.3	15.9	16.1	498
Child care subsidy	19.0	13.0	16.1 *	498
Other types of assistance	2.0	1.2	1.6 []	495
Received tax credits (%)				
Filed tax return during past 12 months	88.5	82.9	85.7 *	497
Aware of Earned Income Tax Credit	74.9	72.0	73.4	497
Claiming Earned Income Tax Credit	52.6	46.1	49.4	496
Aware of Child Tax Credit	47.6	33.7	40.7 ***	496
Claiming Child Tax Credit	33.3	21.3	27.3 ***	490

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Medical coverage</u>				
Sample member has coverage (%)	68.7	69.5	69.1	498
Employer-provided or other private health plan	40.1	40.7	40.4	498
Publicly funded coverage	31.7	31.7	31.7	498
Sample member's children have coverage ^a (%)	89.0	91.4	90.1	294
Publicly funded coverage	70.3	72.7	71.4	294
<u>Housing status (%)</u>				
Current living arrangement				
Owns home or apartment	16.7	8.2	12.5 [*]	497
Rents home or apartment	56.7	61.6	59.2 [*]	497
Lives with family/friends and pays part of the rent	9.9	14.7	12.3 [*]	497
Lives with family/friends and pays no rent	15.5	14.3	14.9 [*]	497
Lives in a group shelter	0.4	0.8	0.6 [*]	497
Other housing arrangements	0.8	0.4	0.6 [*]	497
Lives in public housing, receives Section 8 rental assistance, or pays reduced rent because of low income	17.9	22.9	20.3	497
Sample size = 498	252	246		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables, and t-tests were used for continuous variables. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; and * = 10 percent. Brackets indicate that the chi-square test may not be valid due to small sample sizes within the cross-tabulation distribution.

Sample members randomly assigned before January 12, 2006, were not asked to report dislocated worker status. Sample members randomly assigned before November 22, 2005, were not asked to report their monthly family income.

^aThe details of this estimate can sum to more than 100 percent because sample members can record more than one response.

^bChild-related measures were calculated for sample members with children.

^cCurrent wages compared with wages at the pre-layoff job is measured among dislocated workers.

Comparison of Employment, Earnings, and Food Stamp Outcomes Across the Research Sample, Survey-Eligible Sample, Fielded Sample, and Respondent Sample

Individuals across the four analysis samples are expected to have, on average, similar levels of employment, earnings, and food stamp receipt. Appendix Table A.4 shows regression-adjusted means and impacts on UI-covered employment and earnings and food stamp outcomes for each of the samples. WASC's impacts remain generally consistent across the analysis samples. Survey outcomes are thus fairly representative of the research sample.

The percentage of individuals ever employed at some point during Year 1 and the average level of quarterly employment remain generally consistent across analysis samples. The impact of WASC on the percentage ever employed decreases from 0.9 percent for the research sample to 0.3 percent for the respondent sample. The impact of WASC on the average level of quarterly employment is positive across the research, survey-eligible, and fielded samples, but it becomes negative for the respondent sample. None of the impacts on employment-related outcomes is statistically significant, however.

On average, total earnings are between \$500 and \$700 higher for those in the respondent sample than for those in the research sample. WASC had a greater negative impact on average total earnings for the respondent sample (at $-\$134$) than for the research sample (at $-\$43$), though neither outcome is statistically significant. The change from the survey-eligible to the fielded sample is notable because the impact more than doubles in magnitude, from $-\$103$ to $-\$226$, and suggests the presence of a cohort effect. Attempts to adjust for this potential effect by weighting the survey results were unsuccessful.²

On average, food stamp outcomes and impacts are slightly lower for the respondent sample than for the research sample, but they remain generally consistent across the four samples. WASC's impacts are positive across food stamp outcomes, but they lose significance between the fielded and the respondent samples. Across the samples, changes in food stamp outcomes and impacts are consistent with respective changes in outcomes and impacts on earnings, since food stamp receipt is inversely related to earnings, and the largest changes in food stamp outcomes and impacts also occur between the survey-eligible and the fielded samples.

²Outcomes for the respondent sample in Dayton were weighted as follows: individuals who were randomly assigned before July 1, 2006, were considered members of the early cohort, and those who were randomly assigned on or after that date were considered members of the late cohort. Within each cohort, the weight for each individual is the proportion who were respondents in the research sample divided by the proportion who were respondents in the respondent sample. For all measures, neither weighting procedure reduces the difference in impacts between the respondent sample and the research sample.

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Appendix Table A.4

**Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Employment, and Earnings
for the Research, Survey-Eligible, Fielded, and Respondent Samples**

Dayton

Year 1 Outcomes	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	Percentage Difference	P- Value
	Average	N	Average	N			
Ever employed (%)							
Research sample	95.8	590	95.0	586	0.9	0.9	0.459
Survey-eligible sample	95.6	544	95.2	541	0.3	0.4	0.776
Fielded sample	94.6	304	94.6	304	0.0	0.0	0.998
Respondent sample	94.3	252	94.1	246	0.3	0.3	0.896
Average quarterly employment (%)							
Research sample	87.0	590	85.1	586	1.9	2.3	0.194
Survey-eligible sample	86.6	544	85.3	541	1.3	1.5	0.398
Fielded sample	85.7	304	84.9	304	0.8	0.9	0.710
Respondent sample	85.3	252	85.4	246	-0.1	-0.1	0.958
Total earnings (\$)							
Research sample	12,789	590	12,832	585	-43	-0.3	0.916
Survey-eligible sample	12,890	544	12,993	540	-103	-0.8	0.810
Fielded sample	13,296	304	13,522	304	-226	-1.7	0.713
Respondent sample	13,304	252	13,438	246	-134	-1.0	0.838
Ever received food stamp (%)							
Research sample	60.4	590	54.2	586	6.2 ***	11.4	0.003
Survey-eligible sample	58.7	544	52.7	541	6.0 ***	11.4	0.006
Fielded sample	51.0	304	44.7	304	6.3 **	14.2	0.032
Respondent sample	52.0	252	46.4	246	5.6 *	12.0	0.090
Number of months receiving food stamps							
Research sample	5.0	590	4.3	586	0.7 ***	16.7	0.000
Survey-eligible sample	4.8	544	4.1	541	0.7 ***	17.6	0.000
Fielded sample	4.0	304	3.5	304	0.5 *	13.0	0.073
Respondent sample	4.1	252	3.7	246	0.4	10.1	0.191
Amount of food stamps received (\$)							
Research sample	1,457	590	1,325	586	133 *	10.0	0.070
Survey-eligible sample	1,415	544	1,263	541	152 **	12.1	0.044
Fielded sample	1,147	304	1,081	304	67	6.2	0.489
Respondent sample	1,152	252	1,126	246	26	2.3	0.810

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for Dayton for sample members who were randomly assigned through March 2007.

NOTE: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Appendix B

**WASC in San Diego:
12-Month Survey Response Analysis**

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration interviewed a selected group of study participants in San Diego about their contact with program staff or any case manager, areas in which they received help, messages received relating to employment retention and/or advancement, participation in employment and/or education- or training-related activities, receipt of work supports, their current or most recent job, their household composition, and their health. Interviews were conducted about 12 months after each individual entered the study. This analysis examines whether the cumulative outcomes of these interviews can be generalized to the members of the research sample covered by this report.

Subsequent sections describe who was eligible in San Diego to be interviewed for the WASC 12-Month Survey, who was fielded, and who responded to the survey effort. The analysis further examines how respondents differ from nonrespondents, how respondents in the WASC group differ from those in the control group, and how key outcomes based on administrative records data differ across individuals in the research sample, the survey-eligible sample, the fielded sample, and the respondent sample.

Conclusions

- Survey respondents and nonrespondents in San Diego differ. Compared with the average nonrespondents, survey respondents were more likely to be assigned to the WASC group, to have monthly family incomes that exceeded 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), to have a longer employment history, and to have a high school diploma or higher credential. Respondents are less likely than nonrespondents to be black.
- The average respondent in the WASC group, however, is not statistically significantly different from respondents in the control group, except insofar as WASC group members are more likely to be female and were less likely to have filed a federal tax return within the 12 months before random assignment.
- Among those in the research sample, the effects of the program differ when comparing those surveyed and those not surveyed. The survey data are not representative of the full research sample in terms of impacts, but they are fairly representative of 85 percent of the research sample who are covered by the survey cohort.
- Comparison of earnings covered by the unemployment insurance (UI) system, employment, and food stamp outcomes among individuals in the research, survey-eligible, fielded, and respondent samples shows differences in

averages across samples and research groups. For example, average earnings for survey-eligible individuals in the WASC group are about \$2,637 lower than for WASC group members not in the survey cohort sample, whereas average earnings were about \$12 more for those in the control group.

Selection of Research Sample Members

Appendix Figure B.1 describes the enrollment period for the various groups of individuals discussed in the analysis below. It shows that the enrollment period for the 971 individuals in the impact study sample covers November 2005 through October 2007, which is also the enrollment period for the research sample covered in this analysis.

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Appendix Figure B.1

Enrollment Periods and Research Samples

San Diego

Sample	2005			2006						2007															
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Impact study sample	971																								
Research sample	971																								
Eligible sample				329											479										
Fielded sample				243											479										
Respondent sample				183											384										
Nonrespondent sample				60											95										

All individuals in the research sample who spoke English or Spanish and who were randomly assigned from January through June 2006 and from September 2006 through October 2007 were eligible to participate in the WASC 12-Month Survey. Based on these criteria and summarizing across these two time periods, 821 of the 971 individuals in the research sample (84 percent) were “survey-eligible” (shown in the third pair of bars).¹ Of those

¹Eight individuals who initially were identified as eligible and were interviewed for the 12-month survey were subsequently dropped from the sample for the impact study and, therefore, also from the survey-eligible sample. Most of these individuals were dropped from the impact study because the administrative records data showed that they were living in a household with another study participant who was randomly assigned to the opposite research group.

who were eligible, 722 individuals were selected to be surveyed (herein identified as the “fielded sample” and shown in the fourth pair of bars), split equally between the WASC group (N = 361) and the control group (N = 361). Individuals who completed the 12-month survey are referred to as the “respondent sample” (N = 567; the fifth pair of bars). The group of individuals who did not complete the survey are referred to as the “nonrespondent sample” (N = 155; the bottom pair of bars).

Survey Response Rates

The goal of the survey effort was to interview 80 percent of individuals in the fielded sample. San Diego came close with a survey response rate of 78 percent for the WASC and control groups combined (N = 567), or 82 percent of the WASC group (N = 295) and 75 percent of the control group (N = 272). Of the 155 individuals who did not respond, 109 were not located before the fielding period ended; 21 were never located; 21 refused to be interviewed; and 4 did not respond for other reasons.

Survey Response Rates in San Diego

Description	WASC Group	Control Group	Total
Eligible (N)	412	409	821
Fielded (N)	361	361	722
Responded (N)	295	272	567
Response rate (%)	81.7	75.3	78.5

Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents

On average, survey respondents are expected to have characteristics similar to those of individuals in the fielded sample who did not respond. A dichotomous survey response indicator (1 = survey respondent; 0 = survey nonrespondent) was created in order to measure the difference between the two groups and was regressed on a range of baseline characteristics, which are shown in Appendix Table B.1.

Appendix Table B.1 shows that these 22 predictors account for only 6.7 percent of the variance in survey responses ($R^2 = 0.0671$) and that the model is statistically significant (p-value = 0.001). Significant effects were found for being a member of the WASC group, non-Hispanic black, having a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate or

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Appendix Table B.1

**Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey**

San Diego

Variable	Fielded Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
WASC group	0.069 **	0.0246
Filed tax return during past 12 months	0.014	0.7256
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	-0.017	0.6316
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	0.063 *	0.0668
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.149 **	0.0151
Hispanic	0.051	0.2149
Age	-0.002	0.1845
Female	0.040	0.2575
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	-0.077 **	0.0411
Age of youngest child 0-5	-0.049	0.2346
One child	-0.009	0.8316
Two or more children	0.025	0.5351
Sample member's children have health care coverage	-0.033	0.4426
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2006	0.023	0.5978
Enrolled during Quarter 3 of 2006	0.034	0.6059
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	0.022	0.5880
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	0.048	0.3548
UI-covered earnings in year prior to random assignment	0.000	0.2820
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	0.017 **	0.0244
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.016	0.8174
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	0.007	0.4766
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	-0.033	0.6228
R-square	0.0671	
F-statistic	2.18	
P-value of F-statistic	0.0012	
Sample size	722	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from San Diego and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

higher credential, having family income in excess of 130 percent of the FPL, and the number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the two years prior to random assignment.

Compared with nonrespondents, survey respondents were more likely to be in the WASC group, to have monthly family incomes in excess of 130 percent of FPL, and to have been employed for longer during the two years prior to random assignment. Survey respondents were less likely to be black and less likely to have a high school diploma or GED certificate or higher credential.

Comparison of WASC Group Respondents and Control Group Respondents

Survey-eligible individuals who were selected to be fielded shared similar characteristics across research groups. Thus, respondents are also expected to have similar characteristics across research groups. The differences in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group were measured across a few key characteristics in a multivariate regression and across a wider set of characteristics in a bivariate analysis relying on chi-square and t-test statistics.

The multivariate analysis included the same 22 predictors used in the comparison of respondents and nonrespondents. The predictors were regressed based on a WASC group dichotomous indicator ($E = 1 = \text{WASC group}$; $E = 0 = \text{control group}$). Appendix Table B.2 shows that these predictors account for only 4.03 percent of the variance between individuals in the WASC group and those in the control group ($R^2 = 0.0403$) and that the model is not statistically significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.414$). WASC group and control group respondents are therefore similar across the key characteristics selected for this analysis. Nevertheless, the results do show that WASC group respondents were less likely to have filed a tax return within the 12 months prior to random assignment and are more likely to be female than control group respondents.

Appendix Table B.3 shows a bivariate analysis of the differences, on a wider variety of baseline measures, in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group. Those in the WASC group were more likely to be female, to be enrolled in Adult Basic Education, and to have a higher average hourly wage. The WASC group respondents were less likely to be living with a partner, to have physical or mental health problems that limit work, or to have earnings from a spouse or partner. This analysis shows that while individuals in the two respondent groups were similar on key characteristics at baseline, they do differ on other characteristics.

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Appendix Table B.2
Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a WASC Group Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey
San Diego

Variable	Respondent Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
Filed tax return during past 12 months	-0.132 **	0.0231
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	0.000	0.9996
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	-0.030	0.5273
Black, non-Hispanic	0.026	0.7838
Hispanic	-0.012	0.8353
Age	0.003	0.1056
Female	0.102 **	0.0468
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	0.028	0.5875
Age of youngest child 0-5	0.037	0.5315
One child	-0.073	0.2304
Two or more children	0.030	0.5954
Sample member's children have health care coverage	-0.052	0.3744
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2006	-0.032	0.6014
Enrolled during Quarter 3 of 2006	-0.034	0.7130
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	-0.025	0.6699
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	-0.065	0.3671
UI-covered earnings in year prior to random assignment	0.000	0.1520
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	0.004	0.7163
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	0.001	0.9958
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.012	0.3589
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	0.076	0.4244
R-square	0.0403	
F-statistic	1.04	
P-value of F-statistic	0.4144	
Sample size	567	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from San Diego and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

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Appendix Table B.3

Selected Baseline Characteristics of Survey Respondents Randomly Assigned
from January 2006 Through October 31, 2007

San Diego

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Demographic characteristics</u>				
Gender (%)				
Female	76.6	70.2	73.5 *	567
Age in years (%)				
18-24	19.0	22.4	20.6	567
25-34	28.5	31.6	30.0	567
35-44	24.7	21.0	22.9	567
45-62	27.8	25.0	26.5	567
Average age (years)	36.4	35.0	35.7	567
Race/ethnicity (%)				
Hispanic	74.2	76.0	75.1	566
White	8.8	8.9	8.8	566
Black	7.8	6.6	7.2	566
Asian	6.4	6.3	6.4	566
Other	2.7	2.2	2.5	566
Citizenship (%)				
Born in United States	48.0	47.8	47.9	566
Naturalized citizen	23.8	24.3	24.0	566
Noncitizen	28.2	27.9	28.1	566
English proficiency (%)				
Speaks English very well	84.7	82.5	83.6	562
<u>Family status (%)</u>				
Marital status				
Single, never married	44.9	54.1	49.3	564
Married and living with spouse	20.7	21.1	20.9	564
Married but living apart from spouse	14.3	9.3	11.9	564
Legally separated, divorced, or widowed	20.1	15.6	17.9	564
Living with a partner	3.7	8.8	6.2 **	567
Number of children				
0	34.6	34.9	34.7	567
1	19.0	25.0	21.9	567
2 or more	46.4	40.1	43.4	567

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Age of youngest child in years ^a				
0-2	33.7	28.6	31.2	359
3-5	19.0	24.0	21.4	359
6-12	27.2	33.7	30.4	359
13-18	20.1	13.7	17.0	359
Single and childless	35.6	32.0	33.9	567
Single-parent household	44.6	39.6	42.2	564
Two-parent household	20.7	25.2	22.9	564
<u>Education status (%)</u>				
Highest grade				
No high school diploma or GED certificate	26.4	27.3	26.9	566
GED certificate	6.1	3.0	4.6	566
High school diploma	16.6	14.4	15.5	566
Some college or advanced training courses	35.3	39.9	37.5	566
Associate's degree	3.7	4.8	4.2	566
4-year college degree or higher	11.9	10.7	11.3	566
Currently enrolled in education or training program ^b	21.8	21.7	21.7	566
English as a Second Language (ESL)	3.1	4.4	3.7	567
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	0.7	2.6	1.6 [*]	567
High school/GED preparation course	1.0	2.2	1.6 []	567
Vocational training	7.1	4.0	5.6	567
College course toward associate's/2-year degree	6.8	7.7	7.2	567
College course toward bachelor's/4-year degree	4.7	6.6	5.6	567
Other	1.0	1.1	1.1 []	566
<u>Current employment status</u>				
Number of months in current job (%)				
Less than 1 year	53.5	58.9	56.1	551
Between 1 year and 2	16.4	16.2	16.3	551
More than 2 years	30.1	24.9	27.6	551
Working full time (35 hours or more) (%)	44.7	43.0	43.9	567
Average hourly wage (\$)	9.37	9.02	9.20 *	567
Less than \$5.15	2.0	2.6	2.3	567
\$5.15 - \$6.99	5.8	7.0	6.3	567
\$7.00 - \$8.99	34.2	41.5	37.7	567
\$9.00 - \$10.99	37.6	29.8	33.9	567
\$11.00 - \$15.00	20.3	19.1	19.8	427
Average weekly earnings (\$)	270	261	266	567

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Fringe benefits from employer ^b (%)				
Time off with pay	38.8	35.9	37.4	561
Health plan offered	38.9	38.1	38.5	563
Dental plan offered	30.2	26.1	28.3	559
Retirement plan	24.9	23.4	24.2	562
Other	3.4	3.0	3.2	564
Enrolled in employer-provided health or medical insurance plan (%)	20.2	15.6	18.0	562
Circumstances that may affect job retention or job change (%)				
Has driver's license	84.7	84.9	84.8	566
Has access to a car to drive to work	77.4	79.0	78.2	564
Currently receiving help finding new or additional job	6.4	7.7	7.1	567
Physical or mental health problem that limits work	4.4	9.2	6.7 **	566
Became a Dislocated Worker during previous 2 years ^b (%)	26.9	25.3	26.1	548
Current wages compared with wages at pre-layoff job ^c (%)				
A lot less or somewhat less	76.9	68.0	72.5	51
<u>Income and work supports</u>				
Average monthly family income (\$)	1,393	1,416	1,404	565
Family income exceeds (%)				
130 percent of federal poverty level	31.2	33.5	32.3	567
Currently receiving income or work support (%)				
Earnings from spouse or partner	10.2	14.8	12.4 *	566
Food stamps	13.9	13.3	13.6	565
Child support	11.3	12.2	11.7	564
Child care subsidy	5.8	4.8	5.3	565
Other types of assistance	3.5	1.9	2.7	558
Received tax credits (%)				
Filed tax return during past 12 months	73.2	78.5	75.8	565
Aware of Earned Income Tax Credit	42.6	47.5	44.9	514
Claiming Earned Income Tax Credit	31.6	36.9	34.1	516
Aware of Child Tax Credit	33.7	36.6	35.1	539
Claiming Child Tax Credit	26.6	32.2	29.3	533

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Medical coverage</u> (%)				
Sample member has coverage	53.6	47.1	50.4	567
Employer-provided or other private health plan	29.8	25.0	27.5	567
Publicly funded coverage	25.7	25.2	25.4	562
Sample member's children have coverage ^a	65.3	70.9	67.9	368
Publicly funded coverage	51.3	54.0	52.6	365
<u>Housing status</u> (%)				
Current living arrangement				
Owns home or apartment	9.5	10.3	9.9 []	567
Rents home or apartment	53.9	56.6	55.2 []	567
Lives with family/friends and pays part of the rent	23.1	21.0	22.0 []	567
Lives with family/friends and pays no rent	12.5	11.0	11.8 []	567
Lives in a group shelter	0.3	0.4	0.4 []	567
Other housing arrangements	0.7	0.7	0.7 []	567
Lives in public housing, receives Section 8 rental assistance, or pays reduced rent because of low income	15.6	18.5	17.0	565
Sample size (total = 567)	295	272		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables, and t-tests were used for continuous variables. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; and * = 10 percent. Brackets indicate that the chi-square test may not be valid due to small sample sizes within the cross-tabulation distribution.

Sample members randomly assigned before January 12, 2006, were not asked to report dislocated worker status. Sample members randomly assigned before November 22, 2005, were not asked to report their monthly family income.

^aThe details of this estimate can sum to more than 100 percent because sample members can record more than one response.

^bChild-related measures were calculated for sample members with children.

^cCurrent wages compared with wages at the pre-layoff job is measured among dislocated workers.

Comparison of Employment, Earnings, and Food Stamp Outcomes Across the Research Sample, Survey-Eligible Sample, Fielded Sample, and Respondent Sample.

Individuals across the four analysis samples are expected to have, on average, similar levels of employment, earnings, and food stamp receipt. Appendix Table B.4 shows regression-adjusted means and impacts on UI-covered employment and earnings and food stamp outcomes for each of the samples. As the table shows, impacts vary across analysis samples for all outcomes. Among those in the research sample, the effects of the program differ when comparing the survey cohort with those enrolled in the nonsurvey cohort — that is, with individuals who were randomly assigned from November through December 2005 and from July through August 2006.

Thus, the survey cohort is not representative of the research sample at large in terms of impacts, but it is fairly representative of 84.5 percent of the research sample.² In general, the nonsurvey cohort and the research sample look similar in terms of baseline characteristics.

The differences in impacts are due mostly to large positive effects on earnings for a subset of individuals in the nonsurvey cohort whose random assignment was between November and December 2005. As shown in Appendix Table B.4, the program increased average total earnings by \$1,244 for the nonsurvey cohort, but it decreased average total earnings by \$1,404 for the survey cohort. Why the nonsurvey cohort experienced large positive effects is unclear, but what seems to have occurred for the survey cohort is a reduction in earnings. WASC further reduced average total earnings between the eligible sample and the fielded sample but to a lesser extent than the reduction in earnings between the nonsurvey cohort and the survey cohort. The impact is not statistically significant for the research sample or for the nonsurvey cohort, but is significant for all the other samples.

Similar trends are seen across the other employment-related outcomes. WASC increased the percentage ever employed in Year 1 by 2.8 percent for the nonsurvey cohort but decreased this measure by 0.5 percent for the survey cohort. The program also reduced the average percentage employed in a quarter by a greater magnitude for the survey cohort (4.2 percent) than for the

²The proportion of individuals in the research sample who were randomly assigned from January through June 2006 and from September 2006 through October 2007 is 84.5 percent ($821/971 \approx 0.845$).

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Appendix Table B.4

Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Employment, and Earnings
for the Research, Survey-Eligible, Fielded, and Respondent Samples

San Diego

Outcome, Quarters 2-5	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	Percentage Difference	P- Value
	Average	N	Average	N			
Ever employed (%)							
Research sample	90.9	488	90.8	483	0.2	0.2	0.930
Not in survey cohort	95.1	71	92.5	74	2.6	2.8	0.521
In survey cohort	90.0	412	90.5	409	-0.5	-0.5	0.805
Survey-eligible sample	90.0	412	90.5	409	-0.5	-0.5	0.805
Fielded sample	89.8	361	90.5	361	-0.7	-0.8	0.735
Respondent sample	90.4	295	92.7	272	-2.3	-2.5	0.293
Average quarterly employment (%)							
Research sample	79.3	488	81.9	483	-2.6	-3.2	0.169
Not in survey cohort	79.7	71	79.6	74	0.1	0.2	0.981
In survey cohort	78.9	412	82.4	409	-3.5 *	-4.2	0.090
Survey-eligible sample	78.9	412	82.4	409	-3.5 *	-4.2	0.090
Fielded sample	78.4	361	82.5	361	-4.0 *	-4.9	0.066
Respondent sample	79.9	295	85.4	272	-5.5 **	-6.4	0.022
Total earnings (\$)							
Research sample	13,877	488	14,764	483	-887	-6.0	0.129
Not in survey cohort	16,044	71	14,800	74	1,244	8.4	0.471
In survey cohort	13,407	412	14,812	409	-1,404 **	-9.5	0.024
Survey-eligible sample	13,407	412	14,812	409	-1,404 **	-9.5	0.024
Fielded sample	13,130	361	14,897	361	-1,768 ***	-11.9	0.005
Respondent sample	13,584	295	15,419	272	-1,835 **	-11.9	0.011
Ever received food stamps (%)							
Research sample	29.6	488	23.7	483	5.9 ***	24.9	0.007
Not in survey cohort	21.0	71	16.3	74	4.7	28.9	0.400
In survey cohort	30.6	412	24.9	409	5.7 **	22.8	0.018
Survey-eligible sample	30.6	412	24.9	409	5.7 **	22.8	0.018
Fielded sample	29.0	361	23.4	361	5.6 **	24.1	0.024
Respondent sample	29.9	295	23.1	272	6.8 **	29.5	0.017
Number of months receiving food stamps							
Research sample	2.0	488	1.5	483	0.5 ***	33.6	0.005
Not in survey cohort	1.2	71	1.2	74	0.0	-2.5	0.941
In survey cohort	2.1	412	1.5	409	0.6 ***	36.7	0.005
Survey-eligible sample	2.1	412	1.5	409	0.6 ***	36.7	0.005
Fielded sample	1.9	361	1.4	361	0.6 ***	42.3	0.004
Respondent sample	2.1	295	1.4	272	0.7 ***	46.7	0.004

(continued)

Appendix Table B.4 (continued)

Outcome, Quarters 2-5	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	Percentage Difference	P- Value
	Average	N	Average	N			
Amount of food stamps received (\$)							
Research sample	623	488	465	483	158 **	34.0	0.019
Not in survey cohort	279	71	390	74	-111	-28.4	0.404
In survey cohort	669	412	471	409	198 ***	41.9	0.009
Survey-eligible sample	669	412	471	409	198 ***	41.9	0.009
Fielded sample	608	361	408	361	200 ***	49.1	0.006
Respondent sample	674	295	400	272	274 ***	68.5	0.002

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for San Diego for sample members who were randomly assigned through October 2007.

NOTE: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

nonsurvey cohort (0.2 percent). Thus, the remaining survey cohort experienced a reduction in both outcomes. However, the changes in impacts due to the “cohort effect” are lesser in magnitude than the changes seen between the fielded sample and the respondent sample. The impact of WASC on the percentage ever employed in the first year decreased from -0.8 percent to -2.5 percent, and the program’s effect on the average employment rate per quarter fell from -4.9 percent to -5.5 percent. The reduction in impacts between the fielded sample and the respondent sample was due to increases in outcomes for the control group; this might also be due to response bias. For “ever employed,” the impact is not statistically significant for any sample. For quarterly employment, the impacts are not significant for the research sample or for the nonsurvey cohort, but they are significant for all the other samples.

The average percentage of individuals who ever received food stamps remains generally consistent across samples, but WASC program impacts are larger for the respondent sample than for the research sample, and both impacts are statistically significant. This might be due to response bias, because the increase occurs between the fielded sample and the respondent sample. For this outcome, the cohort effect on WASC’s impacts is negligible, although it does reduce the percentage who ever received food stamps across both the program group and the control group in the nonsurvey cohort.

The average number of months that individuals received food stamps also remains generally consistent across samples, as do WASC program impacts, which are statistically significant across the analysis samples. Among the nonsurvey cohort, there is no difference in the

number of months receiving food stamps between the program and control groups, so the impact is zero and is statistically insignificant.

On average, WASC had a larger effect on the average amount of food stamps received for the respondent sample than for the research sample; both effects are statistically significant. In part, this is due to the cohort effect. WASC reduced the value of the amount of food stamps received by \$111 among the nonsurvey cohort, but it increased the amount by \$198 for the survey cohort. In turn, the amount of food stamps received by the survey cohort increased. Why this is the case is not entirely clear, but it is likely due to a combination of the cohort effect acting on average total earnings and a substitution effect between average total earnings and levels of food stamp receipt. In addition, a large increase in impacts occurred between the fielded sample and the respondent sample. This is due to a large increase in the average amount of food stamps received among the program group, which might be attributed to response bias.

Attempts to weight the survey results to adjust for the cohort effect did not change the results.³

³Outcomes for the respondent sample in San Diego were weighted using two procedures. First, a logistic regression was run on the fielded sample where a dichotomous indicator for whether the individual was a respondent (1 = respondent; 0 = nonrespondent) was regressed on the covariates from the time of random assignment. For each member of the fielded sample, this generated an individual probability of being sampled, which was then divided into the response weight. The resulting quotient is each individual's weight. The second weighting procedure addressed a potential cohort effect (which is different from the one discussed above). Individuals who were randomly assigned before July 1, 2006, were considered members of the early cohort, whereas those who were randomly assigned on or after that date were considered members of the late cohort. Within each cohort, the weight for each individual is the proportion of individuals who were respondents in the research sample divided by the proportion of individuals who were respondents in the respondent sample. For all outcome measures, neither weighting procedure reduces the difference in impacts between the program and control groups when compared with the unweighted results. Neither procedure improves the consistency between the respondent sample and the research sample.

Appendix C

**WASC in Bridgeport:
12-Month Survey Response Analysis**

The Work Advancement and Support Center (WASC) demonstration interviewed a selected group of study participants in Bridgeport about their contact with program staff or any case manager, areas in which they received help, messages received relating to employment retention and/or advancement, participation in employment and/or education- or training-related activities, receipt of work supports, their current or most recent job, their household composition, and their health. Interviews were conducted about 12 months after each individual entered the study. This analysis examines whether the cumulative outcomes of these interviews can be generalized to the members of in the research sample covered by this report.

Subsequent sections will describe who was eligible in Bridgeport to be interviewed for the WASC 12-Month Survey, who was fielded, and who responded to the survey effort. The analysis further examines how respondents differ from nonrespondents, how respondents in the WASC group differ from those in the control group, and how key outcomes based on administrative records data differ across individuals in the research sample, the survey-eligible sample, the fielded sample, and the respondent sample.

Conclusions

- Survey respondents in Bridgeport differ from nonrespondents. They are more likely to be female and less likely to be Hispanic.
- The average respondent in the WASC group, however, is not statistically significantly different from the average respondent in the control group, except insofar as that WASC group members were less likely to have monthly family incomes greater than 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).
- Among those in the research sample, the effects of the program differ somewhat when comparing those surveyed and those not surveyed. However, the survey data are generally representative of the full research sample in terms of impacts.
- Comparison of employment covered by the unemployment insurance (UI) system and food stamp outcomes between individuals in the research, survey-eligible, fielded, and respondent samples shows differences in averages across samples and research groups. For example, the average value of food stamp receipt for survey-eligible individuals in the WASC group is about \$147 less than for WASC group members not in the survey-eligible sample, whereas the average value is about \$97 less for those in the control group.

Selection of Research Sample Members

Appendix Figure C.1 describes the enrollment period for the various groups of individuals discussed in the analysis below. It shows that the enrollment period for the 706 individuals in the impact study sample covers October 2006 through March 2008, which is also the enrollment period for the research sample covered in this analysis.

All individuals in the research sample who spoke English or Spanish and who were randomly assigned from October 18, 2006, through August 2007 were eligible to participate in the 12-month survey. Based on these criteria, 387 of the 706 individuals in the research sample (55 percent) were “survey-eligible” (shown in the third bar). Of those who were eligible, 375 individuals were selected to be surveyed (herein identified as the “fielded sample” and shown in the fourth bar), split equally between the WASC group (N = 188) and the control group (N = 187). Individuals who completed the 12-month survey are referred to as the “respondent sample” (N = 306; the fifth bar). The group of individuals who did not complete the survey are referred to as the “nonrespondent sample” (N = 69; the bottom bar).

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Appendix Figure C.1

Enrollment Periods and Research Samples

Bridgeport

Sample	2006			2007						2008								
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Impact study sample	706																	
Research sample	706																	
Eligible sample	387																	
Fielded sample	375																	
Respondent sample	306																	
Nonrespondent sample	69																	

Survey Response Rates

The goal of the survey effort was to interview 80 percent of individuals in the fielded sample. Bridgeport exceeded this goal with a survey response rate of 81.6 percent for the WASC and control groups combined (N = 306), or 84 percent of the WASC group (N = 158) and 79 percent of the control group (N = 148). Of the 69 individuals who did not respond, 66 were not located before the fielding period ended, and 3 refused to be interviewed.

Survey Response Rates in Bridgeport

Description	WASC Group	Control Group	Total
Eligible (N)	351	355	706
Fielded (N)	188	187	375
Responded (N)	158	148	306
Response rate (%)	84.0	79.1	81.6

Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents

On average, survey respondents are expected to have characteristics similar to those of individuals in the fielded sample who did not respond. A dichotomous survey response indicator (1 = survey respondent; 0 = survey nonrespondent) was created in order to measure the difference between the two groups and was regressed on a range of baseline characteristics, which are shown in Appendix Table C.1.

Appendix Table C.1 shows that these 21 predictors account for only 8.2 percent of the variance in survey responses ($R^2 = 0.0823$), but the model is marginally statistically significant (p -value = 0.0949). Significant effects were found for being Hispanic and being female.

This analysis shows that survey respondents, compared with nonrespondents, were more likely to be female and less likely to be Hispanic.

Comparison of WASC Group Respondents and Control Group Respondents

Survey-eligible individuals who were selected to be fielded shared similar characteristics across research groups. Thus, respondents are also expected to have similar characteristics across research groups. The differences in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group were measured across a few key characteristics in a multivariate regression and across a wider set of characteristics in a bivariate analysis relying on chi-square and t-test statistics.

The multivariate analysis included the same 21 predictors used in the comparison of respondents and nonrespondents. The predictors were regressed based on a WASC group dichotomous indicator ($E = 1 =$ WASC group; $E = 0 =$ control group). Appendix Table C.2 shows that these predictors account for only 6.9 percent of the variance between individuals in the WASC

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Appendix Table C.1

**Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey**

Bridgeport

Variable	Fielded Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
WASC group	0.029	0.4703
Filed tax return during past 12 months	-0.023	0.7026
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	0.008	0.8991
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	-0.056	0.2147
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.011	0.8591
Hispanic	-0.136 *	0.0577
Age	0.001	0.7198
Female	0.154 ***	0.0013
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	-0.077	0.1923
Age of youngest child 0-5	0.026	0.6523
One child	0.059	0.2807
Two or more children	-0.046	0.4035
Sample member's children have health care coverage	0.051	0.5663
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	0.042	0.5362
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	0.006	0.9233
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2007	-0.039	0.5329
UI-covered earnings in year prior to random assignment	0.000	0.2490
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	0.002	0.8547
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.021	0.8162
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.002	0.8669
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	-0.007	0.9264
R-square	0.0823	
F-statistic	1.43	
P-value of F-statistic	0.0949	
Sample size	375	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from Bridgeport and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration
Appendix Table C.2
Estimated Regression Coefficients for the Probability of
Being a WASC Group Respondent to the WASC 12-Month Survey
Bridgeport

Variable	Respondent Sample	
	Parameter Estimate	P-Value
Filed tax return during past 12 months	-0.104	0.2362
Became a Dislocated Worker during the previous 2 years	0.039	0.6554
Family income exceeds 130 percent of the federal poverty level	-0.131 **	0.0470
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.061	0.4756
Hispanic	0.001	0.9938
Age	-0.004	0.2088
Female	0.084	0.2376
High school diploma/GED certificate or above	0.027	0.7558
Age of youngest child 0-5	-0.033	0.6831
One child	0.039	0.6172
Two or more children	0.069	0.4024
Sample member's children have health care coverage	-0.189	0.1419
Enrolled during Quarter 4 of 2006	0.045	0.6474
Enrolled during Quarter 1 of 2007	0.013	0.8872
Enrolled during Quarter 2 of 2007	0.034	0.7128
UI-covered earnings in year prior to random assignment	0.000	0.2126
Number of quarters employed in a UI-covered job during the 2 years prior to random assignment	-0.018	0.2785
Received food stamps in year prior to random assignment	0.132	0.3057
Number of months receiving food stamps in year prior to random assignment	-0.007	0.6620
Ever received food stamps in month prior to random assignment	-0.171	0.1498
R-square	0.0694	
F-statistic	1.01	
P-value of F-statistic	0.4529	
Sample size	306	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records data from San Diego and from the WASC Baseline Information Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

UI = unemployment insurance.

group and those in the control group ($R^2 = 0.0694$) and that the model is not statistically significant (p -value = 0.453). WASC and control group members are therefore similar across the key characteristics selected for this analysis.

Appendix Table C.3 shows a bivariate analysis of the differences, on a wider variety of baseline measures, in average characteristics between respondents in the WASC group and those in the control group. Compared with respondents in the control group, those in the WASC group were less likely to be born in the United States, to have a family income that exceeds 130 percent of FPL, and to have children with any medical coverage. This analysis shows that while individuals in the WASC group are similar to those in the control group on key characteristics at baseline, they do differ on a few other characteristics.

Comparison of Employment, Earnings, and Food Stamp Outcomes Across the Research Sample, Survey-Eligible Sample, Fielded Sample, and Respondent Sample.

Individuals across the four analysis samples are expected to have, on average, similar levels of employment, earnings, and food stamp receipt. Appendix Table C.4 shows regression-adjusted means and impacts on UI-covered employment and earnings and food stamp outcomes for each of the samples. As the table shows, impacts vary across analysis samples for all outcomes. Among those in the research sample, the effects of the program differ some when comparing the survey cohort with those enrolled in the nonsurvey cohort — that is, with individuals who were randomly assigned from September 2007 through March 2008.

However, impact findings for the survey sample generally tell a similar story on findings for the full research sample, although there are some differences in the magnitude of effects.

For the research sample, WASC reduced the percentage ever employed in Year 1 by 4.5 percent, and its impact is somewhat greater in magnitude for the nonsurvey cohort (5.2 percent) than for the survey cohort (4.4 percent) (Appendix Table C.4). The program also reduced the average percentage employed in a quarter by a greater magnitude for the survey

(The text continues after Appendix Table C.3.)

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Appendix Table C.3

Selected Baseline Characteristics of Survey Respondents Randomly Assigned
from October 18, 2006, Through August 30, 2007

Bridgeport

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Demographic characteristics</u>				
Gender (%)				
Female	75.3	68.9	72.2	306
Age in years (%)				
18-24	24.7	28.4	26.5	306
25-34	33.5	27.7	30.7	306
35-44	27.8	21.6	24.8	306
45-62	13.9	22.3	18.0	306
Average age (years)	32.9	33.9	33.4	306
Race/ethnicity (%)				
Hispanic	19.6	17.0	18.4 []	305
White	8.2	8.8	8.5 []	305
Black	63.9	68.7	66.2 []	305
Asian	2.5	0.0	1.3 []	305
Multiracial	4.4	4.8	4.6 []	305
Other	1.3	0.7	1.0 []	305
Citizenship (%)				
Born in United States	76.9	87.8	82.2 **	304
Naturalized citizen	14.7	5.4	10.2 **	304
Noncitizen	8.3	6.8	7.6 **	304
English proficiency (%)				
Speaks English very well	100.0	99.3	99.7 []	303
<u>Family status</u> (%)				
Marital status				
Single, never married	71.5	74.1	72.8 []	305
Married and living with spouse	8.9	10.2	9.5	305
Married but living apart from spouse	11.4	8.2	9.8	305
Legally separated, divorced, or widowed	8.2	7.5	7.9	305
Living with a partner	6.3	3.4	4.9	306
Number of children				
0	40.1	44.6	42.3	305
1	26.1	26.4	26.2	305
2 or more	33.8	29.1	31.5	305

(continued)

Appendix Table C.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Age of youngest child in years ^a				
0-2	29.8	31.7	30.7	176
3-5	26.6	26.8	26.7	176
6-12	28.7	26.8	27.8	176
13-18	14.9	14.6	14.8	176
Single and childless	34.2	40.5	37.3	306
Single-parent household	47.8	42.9	45.4	304
Two-parent household	12.0	12.2	12.1	305
<u>Education status</u> (%)				
Highest grade				
No high school diploma or GED certificate	15.8	16.9	16.3	306
GED certificate	6.3	10.1	8.2	306
High school diploma	40.5	33.8	37.3	306
Some college or advanced training courses	28.5	29.7	29.1	306
Associate's degree	5.1	2.7	3.9	306
4-year college degree or higher	3.8	6.8	5.2	306
Currently enrolled in education or training program ^b	18.4	12.4	15.5	303
English as a Second Language (ESL)	0.6	1.4	1.0 []	306
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	3.2	3.4	3.3 []	306
High school/GED preparation course	1.9	4.1	2.9 []	306
Vocational training	3.2	1.4	2.3 []	304
College course toward associate's/2-year degree	8.2	4.7	6.5	306
College course toward bachelor's/4-year degree	0.6	2.0	1.3 []	306
Other	2.5	2.7	2.6 []	305
<u>Current employment status</u>				
Number of months in current job (%)				
Less than 1 year	55.4	60.5	57.9	304
Between 1 year and 2	16.6	11.6	14.1	304
More than 2 years	28.0	27.9	28.0	304
Working full time (35 hours or more) (%)	35.4	31.1	33.3	306
Average hourly wage (\$)	9.80	9.87	9.83	306
Less than \$5.15	1.3	1.4	1.3 []	306
\$5.15 - \$6.99	1.3	1.4	1.3 []	306
\$7.00 - \$8.99	38.6	34.5	36.6 []	306
\$9.00 - \$10.99	27.2	33.8	30.4 []	306
\$11.00 - \$15.00	31.6	29.1	30.4	427
Average weekly earnings (\$)	278	268	273	306

(continued)

Appendix Table C.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
Fringe benefits from employer ^b (%)				
Time off with pay	59.6	58.1	58.9	304
Health plan offered	61.1	62.8	62.0	305
Dental plan offered	54.1	56.8	55.4	305
Retirement plan	51.3	51.4	51.3	304
Other	2.8	3.0	2.9 []	280
Enrolled in employer-provided health or medical insurance plan (%)	21.8	19.0	20.5	303
Circumstances that may affect job retention or job change (%)				
Has driver's license	71.5	72.3	71.9	306
Has access to a car to drive to work	62.0	67.3	64.6	305
Currently receiving help finding new or additional job	10.8	10.9	10.8	305
Physical or mental health problem that limits work	6.3	7.4	6.9	306
Became a Dislocated Worker during previous 2 years ^b (%)	13.9	13.5	13.7	306
Current wages compared with wages at pre-layoff job ^c (%)				
A lot less or somewhat less	90.0	78.6	83.3 []	24
<u>Income and work supports</u>				
Average monthly family income (\$)	1,335	1,283	1,310	306
Family income exceeds (%)				
130 percent of federal poverty level	29.1	39.9	34.3 **	306
Currently receiving income or work support (%)				
Earnings from spouse or partner	5.7	4.1	4.9	306
Food stamps	20.3	23.0	21.6	306
Child support	4.4	7.4	5.9	306
Child care subsidy	5.1	6.1	5.6	305
Other types of assistance	3.2	2.0	2.6 []	306
Received tax credits (%)				
Filed tax return during past 12 months	80.3	83.7	81.9	304
Aware of Earned Income Tax Credit	62.0	68.5	65.1	304
Claiming Earned Income Tax Credit	42.4	36.9	39.7	292
Aware of Child Tax Credit	21.3	19.6	20.5	298
Claiming Child Tax Credit	15.0	11.8	13.5	297

(continued)

Appendix Table C.3 (continued)

Characteristic	WASC Group	Control Group	Total	N
<u>Medical coverage</u> (%)				
Sample member has coverage	67.1	68.9	68.0	306
Employer-provided or other private health plan	22.2	18.9	20.6	306
Publicly funded coverage	64.3	68.7	66.4	304
Sample member's children have coverage ^a	85.1	93.8	89.1 *	175
Publicly funded coverage	80.9	93.8	86.8 **	174
<u>Housing status</u> (%)				
Current living arrangement				
Owns home or apartment	7.6	11.6	9.5 []	305
Rents home or apartment	60.8	59.2	60.0 []	305
Lives with family/friends and pays part of the rent	27.2	26.5	26.9 []	305
Lives with family/friends and pays no rent	1.3	0.0	0.7 []	305
Lives in a group shelter	2.5	2.7	2.6 []	305
Other housing arrangements	0.6	0.0	0.3 []	305
Lives in public housing, receives Section 8 rental assistance, or pays reduced rent because of low income	26.1	25.9	26.0	304
Sample size (total = 306)	158	148		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC Baseline Information Forms.

NOTES: In order to assess differences in characteristics across research groups, chi-square tests were used for categorical variables, and t-tests were used for continuous variables. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; and * = 10 percent. Brackets indicate that the chi-square test may not be valid due to small sample sizes within the cross-tabulation distribution.

Sample members randomly assigned before January 12, 2006, were not asked to report dislocated worker status. Sample members randomly assigned before November 22, 2005, were not asked to report their monthly family income.

^aThe details of this estimate can sum to more than 100 percent because sample members can record more than one response.

^bChild-related measures were calculated for sample members with children.

^cCurrent wages compared with wages at the pre-layoff job is measured among dislocated workers.

cohort (2.7 percent) than for the nonsurvey cohort (2.2 percent), though this result is not statistically significant. Thus, the remaining survey cohort experienced a reduction in both outcomes. However, the changes in impacts that are due to the “cohort effect” are lesser in magnitude than the changes seen between the fielded sample and the respondent sample. The impact of WASC on the average employment rate per quarter is similar across the samples.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table C.4

**Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Employment, and Earnings
for the Research, Survey-Eligible, Fielded, and Respondent Samples**

Bridgeport

Outcome, Quarters 2-5	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	Percentage Difference	P- Value
	Average	N	Average	N			
Ever employed (%)							
Research sample	91.6	351	95.9	355	-4.3 **	-4.5	0.013
Not in survey cohort	92.1	158	97.2	160	-5.1 **	-5.2	0.042
In survey cohort	90.9	193	95.1	194	-4.2 *	-4.4	0.084
Survey-eligible sample	91.6	351	95.9	355	-4.3 **	-4.5	0.013
Fielded sample	91.2	188	94.9	187	-3.7	-3.9	0.135
Respondent sample	92.3	158	94.8	148	-2.5	-2.6	0.354
Average quarterly employment (%)							
Research sample	80.4	351	82.2	355	-1.8	-2.2	0.380
Not in survey cohort	79.4	158	81.2	160	-1.8	-2.2	0.567
In survey cohort	81.2	193	83.4	194	-2.3	-2.7	0.413
Survey-eligible sample	80.4	351	82.2	355	-1.8	-2.2	0.380
Fielded sample	81.8	188	83.0	187	-1.2	-1.5	0.661
Respondent sample	83.1	158	84.9	148	-1.8	-2.1	0.556
Total earnings (\$)							
Research sample	13,478	351	14,243	355	-764	-5.4	0.225
Not in survey cohort	13,205	158	14,346	160	-1,141	-8.0	0.257
In survey cohort	13,734	193	14,172	194	-438	-3.1	0.593
Survey-eligible sample	13,478	351	14,243	355	-764	-5.4	0.225
Fielded sample	13,764	188	13,925	187	-161	-1.2	0.844
Respondent sample	14,302	158	14,792	148	-489	-3.3	0.590
Ever received food stamps (%)							
Research sample	42.6	351	40.2	355	2.4	5.9	0.389
Not in survey cohort	42.5	158	41.8	160	0.8	1.8	0.853
In survey cohort	42.7	193	38.4	194	4.3	11.2	0.250
Survey-eligible sample	42.6	351	40.2	355	2.4	5.9	0.389
Fielded sample	41.9	188	38.6	187	3.3	8.5	0.387
Respondent sample	43.3	158	36.2	148	7.0 *	19.4	0.086
Number of months receiving food stamps							
Research sample	3.4	351	3.4	355	0.1	1.6	0.820
Not in survey cohort	3.6	158	3.6	160	0.1	1.4	0.888
In survey cohort	3.3	193	3.2	194	0.1	3.0	0.753
Survey-eligible sample	3.4	351	3.4	355	0.1	1.6	0.820
Fielded sample	3.3	188	3.2	187	0.1	2.5	0.798
Respondent sample	3.4	158	3.0	148	0.3	10.7	0.332

(continued)

Appendix Table C.4 (continued)

Outcome, Quarters 2-5	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	Percentage Difference	P- Value
	Average	N	Average	N			
Amount of food stamps received (\$)							
Research sample	871	351	866	355	5	0.6	0.942
Not in survey cohort	1,018	158	930	160	89	9.5	0.470
In survey cohort	745	193	819	194	-75	-9.1	0.430
Survey-eligible sample	871	351	866	355	5	0.6	0.942
Fielded sample	752	188	833	187	-82	-9.8	0.398
Respondent sample	767	158	801	148	-34	-4.3	0.749

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from administrative records for Bridgeport for sample members who were randomly assigned through August 30, 2007.

NOTE: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

The average percentage of individuals who ever received food stamps remains generally consistent across samples, but WASC program impacts are larger for the survey cohort than for the nonsurvey cohort, and they are statistically significant for the respondent sample. This might be due to response bias, because the increase occurs between the fielded sample and the respondent sample. For this outcome, the cohort effect on WASC's impacts is negligible. The average number of months that individuals received food stamps also remains generally consistent across samples, as do WASC program impacts, which are statistically insignificant across the samples.

Appendix D

**Impacts of WASC on Work Supports and Other
Outcomes**

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table D.1

Impacts on Quarterly Food Stamp Receipt

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever received food stamps (%)									
Quarter of random assignment	49.5	42.3	7.2 ***	20.9	18.4	2.5 *	31.4	29.6	1.7
Q2	51.3	47.0	4.3 **	23.0	16.9	6.2 ***	32.5	30.8	1.7
Q3	51.0	43.2	7.9 ***	22.0	15.8	6.2 ***	31.1	31.1	0.0
Q4	47.9	41.7	6.2 ***	20.0	14.8	5.3 **	29.5	31.8	-2.3
Q5	44.5	40.8	3.7	18.0	13.7	4.4 **	32.0	32.4	-0.4
Q6	44.2	41.0	3.2	19.2	15.4	3.7 *	32.5	30.5	1.9
Q7	42.6	39.6	3.0	22.5	16.0	6.5 ***	33.1	30.4	2.7
Q8	41.7	38.4	3.3	21.6	16.5	5.1 **	34.0	31.3	2.6
Q9	39.6	38.5	1.1	21.7	17.2	4.5 *	35.0	34.0	1.0
Q10	38.6	38.5	0.1	20.9	17.8	3.2			
Q11	39.3	39.5	-0.2	21.8	18.2	3.6			
Q12	37.9	39.0	-1.1						
Q13	36.3	40.2	-3.9						
Amount of food stamps received (\$)									
Quarter of random assignment	334	319	15	150	117	33 **	217	200	17
Q2	369	358	11	161	126	35 *	210	207	3
Q3	372	338	34	167	114	52 ***	207	201	6
Q4	369	315	54 **	147	117	29	222	229	-6
Q5	347	313	34	147	109	39 *	228	234	-6
Q6	353	325	28	184	137	46 *	240	224	16
Q7	362	320	42	217	151	66 **	253	244	9
Q8	363	323	40	214	150	64 **	281	257	25
Q9	338	347	-9	224	162	62 **	282	281	1
Q10	362	343	19	218	169	49 *			
Q11	396	394	2	243	178	65 **			
Q12	384	374	10						
Q13	372	406	-34						

(continued)

Appendix Table D.1 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<i>Amount of food stamps among those receiving them (\$)</i>									
<i>Quarter of random assignment</i>	<i>676</i>	<i>753</i>		<i>719</i>	<i>636</i>		<i>690</i>	<i>673</i>	
<i>Q2</i>	<i>719</i>	<i>762</i>		<i>699</i>	<i>749</i>		<i>645</i>	<i>671</i>	
<i>Q3</i>	<i>730</i>	<i>784</i>		<i>757</i>	<i>722</i>		<i>666</i>	<i>649</i>	
<i>Q4</i>	<i>769</i>	<i>755</i>		<i>732</i>	<i>793</i>		<i>754</i>	<i>719</i>	
<i>Q5</i>	<i>780</i>	<i>768</i>		<i>818</i>	<i>794</i>		<i>714</i>	<i>723</i>	
<i>Q6</i>	<i>798</i>	<i>792</i>		<i>959</i>	<i>891</i>		<i>739</i>	<i>734</i>	
<i>Q7</i>	<i>851</i>	<i>808</i>		<i>964</i>	<i>942</i>		<i>765</i>	<i>801</i>	
<i>Q8</i>	<i>870</i>	<i>843</i>		<i>991</i>	<i>912</i>		<i>829</i>	<i>820</i>	
<i>Q9</i>	<i>854</i>	<i>902</i>		<i>1,035</i>	<i>942</i>		<i>806</i>	<i>829</i>	
<i>Q10</i>	<i>939</i>	<i>891</i>		<i>1,041</i>	<i>948</i>				
<i>Q11</i>	<i>1,007</i>	<i>998</i>		<i>1,116</i>	<i>979</i>				
<i>Q12</i>	<i>1,014</i>	<i>959</i>							
<i>Q13</i>	<i>1,024</i>	<i>1,009</i>							
Sample size (total = 2,147)	590	586		488	483		351	354	

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from monthly food stamp receipt records provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) in California, and the Department of Social Services in Connecticut.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed. Italicized values were calculated by dividing the dollar amount received in benefits by the percentage who ever received the benefit.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table D.2

Impacts, by Amount of Food Stamps Received

Dayton and San Diego

Outcome (%)	Dayton			San Diego		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Received food stamps in Month 2						
Any amount	39.8	35.2	4.6 **	19.1	15.1	3.9 **
\$1 - \$50	1.8	2.1	-0.3	0.5	0.5	0.1
\$51 - \$150	8.1	3.7	4.4 ***	3.4	3.6	-0.2
\$151 - \$300	16.3	15.2	1.1	7.7	5.5	2.2
More than \$300	13.6	14.3	-0.7	7.4	5.6	1.8
Received food stamps in Month 8						
Any amount	41.8	35.0	6.8 ***	18.9	12.6	6.3 ***
\$1 - \$50	1.3	1.5	-0.2	1.0	0.3	0.7
\$51 - \$150	6.0	4.2	1.9	2.6	2.4	0.2
\$151 - \$300	18.9	15.1	3.8 *	7.7	3.6	4.2 ***
More than \$300	15.6	14.3	1.3	7.6	6.4	1.2
Received food stamps in Month 17						
Any amount	38.8	34.2	4.6 *	17.0	12.3	4.7 **
\$1 - \$50	0.5	0.8	-0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
\$51 - \$150	5.7	3.8	1.9	1.1	1.4	-0.3
\$151 - \$300	15.1	14.3	0.8	6.0	4.3	1.6
More than \$300	17.4	15.3	2.2	9.8	6.5	3.4 **
Received food stamps in Month 19						
Any amount	38.0	33.9	4.1 *	17.9	14.0	3.9 *
\$1 - \$50	0.8	1.6	-0.9	0.2	0.1	0.1
\$51 - \$150	4.3	3.7	0.6	1.0	1.3	-0.4
\$151 - \$300	14.7	12.4	2.3	5.7	5.7	0.0
More than \$300	18.3	16.2	2.1	11.1	7.0	4.1 **
Received food stamps in Month 26						
Any amount	33.2	33.0	0.2	18.8	14.5	4.3 *
\$1 - \$50	0.7	0.9	-0.2	0.4	0.6	-0.3
\$51 - \$150	3.9	2.8	1.1	1.3	1.4	-0.1
\$151 - \$300	11.8	12.4	-0.6	6.4	5.8	0.6
More than \$300	16.9	17.0	-0.1	10.7	6.8	4.0 **
Received food stamps in Month 32						
Any amount	34.0	34.7	-0.6	18.0	14.6	3.4
\$1 - \$50	0.4	0.8	-0.5	0.2	0.2	0.0
\$51 - \$150	2.0	2.7	-0.7	0.4	0.0	0.4
\$151 - \$300	10.3	11.0	-0.7	3.1	5.5	-2.4 *
More than \$300	21.4	20.3	1.2	14.2	8.8	5.4 ***
Sample size (total = 2,147)	590	586		488	483	

(continued)

Appendix Table D.2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from monthly food stamp receipt records provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) in California, and the Department of Social Services in Connecticut.

NOTE: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table D.3

Impacts on Quarterly Child Care Subsidy Receipt
Among Participants with at Least One Child Age 11 or Younger at Random Assignment

Dayton and San Diego

Outcome	Dayton				San Diego			
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Ever received child care subsidy (%)								
Quarter of random assignment	31.2	32.5	-1.3	0.710	17.1	10.9	6.2 **	0.043
Q2	37.2	35.7	1.5	0.673	29.9	12.2	17.7 ***	0.000
Q3	36.3	38.2	-2.0	0.595	31.7	13.6	18.2 ***	0.000
Q4	36.1	37.4	-1.3	0.716	30.5	14.7	15.8 ***	0.000
Q5	31.9	32.2	-0.3	0.931	28.9	14.4	14.5 ***	0.000
Q6	30.8	30.7	0.1	0.979	27.3	14.4	13.0 ***	0.000
Q7	27.4	27.5	0.0	0.990	25.1	14.5	10.6 ***	0.002
Q8	23.6	26.8	-3.3	0.331	24.0	14.0	10.0 ***	0.004
Q9	26.3	27.0	-0.6	0.856	19.1	10.1	9.0 ***	0.004
Q10	23.6	25.2	-1.6	0.630	15.2	10.4	4.8	0.108
Q11	22.7	25.0	-2.3	0.497				
Q12	21.3	25.5	-4.2	0.203				
Amount of child care subsidy received (\$)								
Quarter of random assignment	653	693	-40	0.695	421	288	133	0.170
Q2	719	721	-2	0.983	720	297	422 ***	0.000
Q3	771	805	-35	0.749	770	399	371 ***	0.002
Q4	703	767	-64	0.541	758	366	391 ***	0.001
Q5	597	687	-90	0.340	792	431	361 ***	0.006
Q6	694	682	12	0.911	761	482	278 **	0.041
Q7	642	756	-114	0.312	828	467	361 **	0.020
Q8	564	652	-88	0.408	793	454	339 **	0.035
Q9	668	642	25	0.818	695	338	357 **	0.018
Q10	541	615	-74	0.471	674	341	333 *	0.052
Q11	528	605	-77	0.465				
Q12	466	623	-158	0.141				

(continued)

Appendix Table D.3 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton				San Diego			
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<i>Amount of child care subsidy among those receiving it (\$)</i>								
<i>Quarter of random assignment</i>	2,092	2,132			2,456	2,647		
<i>Q2</i>	1,934	2,022			2,406	2,442		
<i>Q3</i>	2,123	2,105			2,428	2,944		
<i>Q4</i>	1,947	2,048			2,481	2,486		
<i>Q5</i>	1,874	2,135			2,745	2,995		
<i>Q6</i>	2,256	2,225			2,786	3,360		
<i>Q7</i>	2,340	2,752			3,297	3,223		
<i>Q8</i>	2,394	2,431			3,301	3,239		
<i>Q9</i>	2,535	2,384			3,639	3,342		
<i>Q10</i>	2,297	2,443			4,435	3,278		
<i>Q11</i>	2,322	2,419						
<i>Q12</i>	2,190	2,444						
Sample size (total = 1,113)	310	302			248	253		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from administrative records from Ohio and California.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical tests were not performed. Italicized values were calculated by dividing the dollar amount received in benefits by the percentage who ever received the benefit.

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Appendix Table D.4

Year 1, Impacts on Household Composition

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Number in household	3.0	3.2	-0.2 *	4.0	3.8	0.2	3.2	3.0	0.3
Ever married ^a (%)	35.1	31.5	3.6	63.5	54.8	8.7 **	40.5	30.0	10.5 **
Living with partner (%)	7.4	8.4	-1.1	7.2	12.6	-5.4 **	7.7	7.6	0.1
Current marital status (%)									
Married and living with spouse	12.8	10.2	2.7	24.2	21.5	2.7	13.5	14.1	-0.6
Separated or living apart from spouse	9.4	5.9	3.5	15.0	11.4	3.6	9.8	5.3	4.5
Divorced	11.9	13.5	-1.6	23.0	21.3	1.7	14.5	9.0	5.5
Widowed	0.6	1.8	-1.2	1.2	0.5	0.7	2.3	1.7	0.6
Number of children ^b (%)									
0	38.9	37.4	1.5	40.9	42.4	-1.5	39.7	49.6	-9.9 **
1	25.4	21.8	3.6	19.7	20.9	-1.2	23.7	21.4	2.3
2	20.8	25.3	-4.5	19.7	16.4	3.3	20.8	19.0	1.8
3 or more	14.8	15.5	-0.6	19.6	20.3	-0.7	15.7	10.1	5.7
Average number of children	1.2	1.3	-0.1	1.3	1.2	0.1	1.2	0.9	0.2 **
Sample size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

^aOne respondent reported being “ever married” but incorrectly skipped the question about current marital status; thus, percentages for marital status do not exactly match percentages ever married.

^bThis measure includes only children under age 18.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table D.5

Year 1, Impacts on Health

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Average Body Mass Index (BMI) ^a (%)	28.9	29.6	-0.7	27.8	27.8	-0.1	29.5	28.1	1.3 *
Underweight	2.1	0.7	1.4	0.8	1.8	-1.0	0.4	1.6	-1.2
Normal weight	27.9	24.7	3.2	34.8	27.3	7.5 *	23.7	30.8	-7.0
Overweight	28.8	27.1	1.7	30.7	32.5	-1.9	25.7	26.7	-1.0
Obese	33.8	38.1	-4.3	26.4	28.7	-2.3	34.8	31.7	3.1
Unreported BMI	7.5	9.4	-2.0	7.4	9.7	-2.3	15.4	9.3	6.1
Self-rated health (%)									
Excellent	13.2	16.2	-3.0	15.6	13.3	2.3	18.9	22.4	-3.5
Very good	33.8	28.0	5.8	23.4	24.4	-1.0	27.1	30.1	-3.1
Good	34.2	38.2	-4.0	36.8	40.0	-3.2	38.5	30.5	8.0
Fair	18.4	15.7	2.6	18.1	17.6	0.5	13.8	12.8	1.0
Poor	0.5	1.9	-1.5	6.2	4.7	1.5	1.8	4.2	-2.4
Psychological Distress Scale ^b (K6)	6.3	5.9	0.3	6.2	6.1	0.1	5.4	5.7	-0.3
Experienced serious psychological distress in the past month ^b (%)	11.0	9.9	1.1	14.9	9.4	5.5 *	10.2	12.0	-1.8
Needed to go to doctor or hospital in past 12 months but could not because of cost or insurance (%)	41.7	44.1	-2.5	33.5	34.5	-1.1	24.6	29.5	-4.9
Number of times saw the following professionals in past 12 months									
Doctor for routine care	3.0	3.0	0.1	2.4	2.0	0.5	2.2	2.2	0.0
Doctor for pregnancy-related care	1.0	0.9	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.7	0.1

(continued)

Appendix Table D.5 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Number of times saw the following professionals in past 12 months (continued)									
Dentist for routine checkup or exam	1.1	1.1	0.0	1.4	0.9	0.4 **	1.3	1.3	0.0
Doctor for urgent care	0.9	1.2	-0.3 *	0.5	0.7	-0.2	0.7	1.0	-0.3
Doctor for scheduled treatment or surgery	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.4	-0.1	0.4	0.6	-0.2
Mental health professional	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.6	-0.1	0.5	0.7	-0.2
Self-rated to have disability (%)	8.8	10.3	-1.6	13.6	14.3	-0.8	12.5	11.4	1.2
Rated by others to have disability (%)	7.6	7.9	-0.3	9.0	12.7	-3.7	7.9	9.6	-1.7
Personal Mastery Scale ^c	1.8	1.9	-0.1 *	1.9	1.9	0.0	1.9	2.0	-0.1
Sample Size (total = 1,371)	252	246		295	272		158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between outcomes for the program and control groups in the analysis for the full research sample. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Sample sizes may vary because of missing values, and rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

^aThe weight categories are from the National Institutes of Health.

^bBased on the K6 scale, which includes six questions about how often a respondent experienced symptoms of psychological distress during the past 30 days. The response codes (0-4) of the six items for each person are summed to yield a scale with a 0-24 range. A value of 13 or more for this scale is used here to define serious psychological distress. See Kessler et al. (2003).

^cBased on Pearlin's Personal Mastery Scale, which includes seven questions about how well a respondent is able to cope. The table shows the average of the mean of the response codes (1-4) of the seven items. Therefore, the range of the scale is from 1 to 4, with a lower score indicating a greater ability to cope. See Pearlin and Schooler (1978).

Appendix E

**Impacts of WASC on Additional Training and
Employment Outcomes and for Selected Subgroups**

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.1

Year 1, Impacts on Participation in Job Search and Other Activities

Dayton

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever participated in any activity ^a (%)	89.0	76.2	12.8 ***
Participated in any employment-related activity ^b (%)	47.8	43.3	4.5
Ever participated in individual job search (%)	37.8	32.7	5.0
<i>For less than 1 month</i>	<i>43.0</i>	<i>39.7</i>	--
<i>For 1 to 5 months</i>	<i>45.7</i>	<i>45.4</i>	--
<i>For 6 to 12 months</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>7.7</i>	--
<i>For 1 year or more</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>7.3</i>	--
Ever participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	71.9	51.2	20.7 ***
<i>Average number of weeks participating in individual job search^c</i>	<i>9.3</i>	<i>11.6</i>	--
Sample size (total = 498)	252	246	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical test were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

^a Measures of “any activity” include individual job search, ESL, ABE/GED/high school, vocational training, college courses, and on-the-job training.

^b Measures of employment-related activities include independent job search activities and on-the-job training.

^c These estimates are calculated for sample members who participated in individual job search activities.

Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.2

**Employment in a UI-Covered Job Compared with Survey-Reported Employment
at the Time of the Interview for the 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

Dayton

	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact) %	P-Value
	N	%	N	%		
Unadjusted Outcome						
Unemployed	16	6.8	22	8.6	-1.9	0.434
UI-covered employment only	24	9.9	26	10.5	-0.5	0.848
Survey-reported employment only	24	9.9	29	11.6	-1.7	0.537
UI and survey-reported employment	179	72.6	167	68.6	4.0	0.313
Sample size (total = 487)	243		244			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Ohio.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

Sample members with missing start or end dates have missing information about current employment status on the survey.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.3

Year 1, Impacts on Selected Characteristics of Current Job

Dayton

Outcome (%)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Selected characteristics of current job</u>			
Works out of state	1.3	1.2	0.1
Job type			
Occasional, odd job	6.8	9.2	-2.5
Seasonal job	3.9	4.8	-1.0
Works for “temp” agency	5.6	4.3	1.3
Currently employed at unionized job	9.9	7.2	2.7
Type of industry			
Construction	2.2	1.5	0.8
Manufacturing	2.6	2.3	0.3
Transportation and utilities	4.1	2.9	1.2
Wholesale trade	0.3	0.5	-0.2
Retail trade	33.6	30.1	3.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.3	4.0	-2.7 *
Services	35.1	34.3	0.8
Other industries	3.1	4.3	-1.3
Industry not reported	0.7	0.9	-0.2
Type of occupation			
Sales	6.9	7.1	-0.2
Clerical	13.5	15.7	-2.2
Services	40.4	37.3	3.1
Operatives/laborers	10.7	9.5	1.2
Other	11.7	10.5	1.2
Occupation not reported	-0.1	0.9	-0.9
Sample size (total = 502)	254	248	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.4

Year 1, Impacts on Participation in Job Search and Other Activities

San Diego

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever participated in any activity ^a (%)	73.0	64.6	8.4 **
Participated in any employment-related activity ^b (%)	48.7	39.0	9.7 **
Ever participated in individual job search (%)	41.7	31.3	10.4 **
<i>For less than 1 month</i>	<i>40.3</i>	<i>34.9</i>	--
<i>For 1 to 5 months</i>	<i>49.9</i>	<i>53.8</i>	--
<i>For 6 to 12 months</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>2.7</i>	--
<i>For 1 year or more</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>8.6</i>	--
Ever participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	49.6	41.2	8.4 **
<i>Average number of weeks participating in individual job search^c</i>	<i>11.2</i>	<i>11.9</i>	--
Sample size (total = 567)	295	272	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical test were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

^aMeasures of “any activity” include individual job search, ESL, ABE/GED/high school, vocational training, college courses, and on-the-job training.

^bMeasures of employment-related activities include independent job search activities and on-the-job training.

^cThese estimates are calculated for sample members who participated in individual job search activities.

Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.5

**Employment in a UI-Covered Job Compared with Survey-Reported Employment
at the Time of the Interview for the 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

San Diego

Unadjusted Outcome	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact) %	P-Value
	N	%	N	%		
Unemployed	32	11.4	28	9.9	1.5	0.578
UI-covered employment only	25	8.9	29	10.7	-1.8	0.482
Survey-reported employment only	35	12.0	21	7.8	4.1	0.082
UI and survey-reported employment	197	66.7	183	70.1	-3.4	0.369
Sample size (total = 550)	289		261			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of California.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

Sample members with missing start or end dates have missing information about current employment status on the survey.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.6

Year 1, Impacts on Selected Characteristics of Current Job

San Diego

Outcome (%)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Selected characteristics of current job</u>			
Works out of state	1.8	0.3	1.5
Job type			
Occasional, odd job	4.6	3.4	1.3
Seasonal job	6.3	6.5	-0.2
Works for “temp” agency	2.3	9.0	-6.8 ***
Currently employed at unionized job	8.6	13.7	-5.2 *
Type of industry			
Construction	2.7	2.0	0.7
Manufacturing	2.5	3.0	-0.6
Transportation and utilities	3.4	4.3	-0.9
Wholesale trade	0.1	0.3	-0.3
Retail trade	24.1	20.0	4.1
Finance, insurance, and real estate	2.4	1.5	0.9
Services	36.1	37.1	-1.1
Other industries	4.7	5.1	-0.4
Industry not reported	3.6	5.6	-1.9
Type of occupation			
Sales	6.9	7.6	-0.7
Clerical	12.5	9.9	2.6
Services	28.2	25.1	3.1
Operatives/laborers	18.3	23.8	-5.4
Other	10.3	9.3	1.0
Occupation not reported	3.4	3.2	0.2
Sample size (total = 567)	295	272	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.7

Year 1, Impacts on Participation in Job Search and Other Activities

Bridgeport

Outcome	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever participated in any activity ^a (%)	71.2	65.0	6.2
Participated in any employment-related activity ^b (%)	49.8	47.2	2.6
Ever participated in individual job search (%)	43.2	38.7	4.5
<i>For less than 1 month</i>	<i>28.4</i>	<i>35.4</i>	--
<i>For 1 to 5 months</i>	<i>54.8</i>	<i>55.2</i>	--
<i>For 6 to 12 months</i>	<i>8.8</i>	<i>6.0</i>	--
<i>For 1 year or more</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>3.4</i>	--
Ever participated in an employment or education activity while working (%)	52.7	36.6	16.1 ***
<i>Average number of weeks participating in individual job search^c</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>9.9</i>	--
Sample size (total = 306)	158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Italic type indicates that the measure is nonexperimental; thus, statistical test were not performed, and so the cells are blank.

Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

All measures refer to participation in activities since the time of random assignment.

ABE = Adult Basic Education certificate. GED = General Educational Development certificate. HS = high school diploma. ESL = English as a Second Language.

^a Measures of “any activity” include individual job search, ESL, ABE/GED/high school, vocational training, college courses, and on-the-job training.

^b Measures of employment-related activities include independent job search activities and on-the-job training.

^c These estimates are calculated for sample members who participated in individual job search activities.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.8

**Employment in a UI-Covered Job Compared with Survey-Reported Employment
at the Time of the Interview for the 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

Bridgeport

	WASC Group		Control Group		Difference (Impact)	
	N	%	N	%	%	P-Value
Unadjusted Outcome						
Unemployed	13	9.1	17	11.1	-2.0	0.578
UI-covered employment only	22	13.9	12	9.1	4.8	0.210
Survey-reported employment only	15	10.2	7	4.3	5.9	0.048
UI and survey-reported employment	100	64.2	99	72.1	-8.0	0.149
Sample size (total = 285)	150		135			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey and from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Connecticut..

NOTES: Sample sizes vary because of missing values.

Sample members with missing start or end dates have missing information about current employment status on the survey.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.9

Year 1, Impacts on Selected Characteristics of Current Job

Bridgeport

Outcome (%)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Selected characteristics of current job</u>			
Works out of state	1.2	0.9	0.4
Job type			
Occasional, odd job	5.3	9.0	-3.7
Seasonal job	3.0	2.6	0.4
Works for “temp” agency	6.1	7.4	-1.3
Currently employed at unionized job	6.4	9.2	-2.9
Type of industry			
Construction	0.0	1.5	-1.5
Manufacturing	0.0	2.2	-2.2 *
Transportation and utilities	3.6	6.4	-2.9
Wholesale trade	1.4	1.4	0.0
Retail trade	19.8	22.5	-2.7
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.2	0.8	0.4
Services	42.4	38.1	4.4
Other industries	6.3	4.2	2.1
Industry not reported	1.9	1.6	0.3
Type of occupation			
Sales	7.4	5.1	2.3
Clerical	6.1	7.3	-1.3
Services	45.1	39.6	5.5
Operatives/laborers	13.0	18.9	-5.9
Other	5.0	7.0	-2.0
Occupation not reported	0.0	0.7	-0.7
Sample size (total = 306)	158	148	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from responses to the WASC 12-Month Survey.

NOTES: Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

Sample members with missing start or end dates have missing information about current employment status on the survey.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.10

Years 1-4, Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Education/Training, and Earnings,
by Subgroup

Dayton, San Diego, and Bridgeport

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridgeport			
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	
<u>Ever received food stamps^a (%)</u>										
Year 1										
Income more than 130% FPL	24.1	20.8	3.3	12.8	6.8	6.0 *	29.6	26.6	3.0	
Income less than 130% FPL	70.7	63.5	7.2 ***	36.6	30.4	6.2 **	50.1	49.0	1.1	
Enrolled in education/training	51.9	46.5	5.4	23.8	18.5	5.3	47.1	27.1	20.0 **	††
Not enrolled in education/training	64.3	59.1	5.2 **	31.0	25.0	6.0 **	41.9	41.8	0.2	††
Has high school diploma or more	58.4	49.3	9.1 ***	†††	26.5	18.8	7.7 ***	38.4	36.6	1.8
Has less than high school diploma	71.4	79.5	-8.1	†††	36.7	34.6	2.1	54.9	49.3	5.6
More than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	54.8	47.1	7.8 **	28.9	25.0	3.9	30.8	28.4	2.4	
Less than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	66.1	61.9	4.2	30.0	22.8	7.2 **	53.5	51.6	1.9	
Single-parent household	79.2	72.9	6.3 **	45.5	37.7	7.8 *	55.0	53.5	1.5	
Not a single-parent household	41.3	34.7	6.6 **	17.9	13.0	4.8 **	32.5	30.9	1.6	
Employed less than 1 year	64.5	58.1	6.4 **	29.4	24.4	5.0	43.6	47.5	-3.9	†††
Employed more than 1 year	56.4	48.6	7.8 **	28.3	24.1	4.2	40.5	27.5	12.9 ***	†††

(continued)

Appendix Table E.10 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridmore thanport			
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	
Naturalized or noncitizen ^b				28.5	20.1	8.4 ***				
Born in the United States				30.4	27.6	2.8				
Female	66.3	58.8	7.5 ***	32.7	27.9	4.9 *	50.4	48.0	2.4	
Male	36.5	34.5	2.0	20.9	13.8	7.1 **	27.1	24.0	3.1	
Early cohort ^c	72.6	69.2	3.4	43.2	36.8	6.4	40.9	37.6	3.4	
Late cohort	39.5	30.1	9.5 ***	22.5	16.9	5.7 **	43.7	43.3	0.5	
Worked full time at baseline	55.4	52.5	2.9	30.1	25.2	4.9	28.0	32.9	-4.9	†
Worked part time at baseline	63.4	55.2	8.2 ***	28.8	23.1	5.7 *	49.5	44.2	5.3	†
<u>Ever enrolled in education or training^d (%)</u>										
Year 1										
Income more than 130% FPL	82.1	53.6	28.5 ***	46.3	51.5	-5.3	56.1	35.9	20.2 *	
Income less than 130% FPL	75.0	53.3	21.7 ***	50.3	42.2	8.1	55.4	42.6	12.8	
Enrolled in education/training	92.2	76.3	15.9 ***	72.4	80.8	-8.4	81.9	45.9	36.0 **	
Not enrolled in education/training	66.1	39.7	26.4 ***	40.8	37.6	3.2	50.5	36.9	13.7 **	
Has high school diploma or more	78.6	55.3	23.3 ***	51.4	49.6	1.8	54.7	36.7	18.0 ***	
Has less than high school diploma	66.6	45.5	21.1 *	43.1	35.9	7.2	64.4	43.7	20.8	
More than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	76.0	52.0	24.0 ***	47.0	42.6	4.4	49.4	42.9	6.5	
Less than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	80.0	53.4	26.6 ***	50.0	48.7	1.4	61.6	37.1	24.5 ***	
Single-parent household	75.9	52.0	23.9 ***	50.5	31.1	19.4 ***	†††	56.5	42.2	14.3
Not a single-parent household	77.9	55.9	22.0 ***	48.0	54.8	-6.8	†††	52.5	39.3	13.2 *
Employed less than 1 year	78.1	54.0	24.2 ***	49.4	48.3	1.1	63.0	40.7	22.4 ***	
Employed more than 1 year	75.0	53.9	21.1 ***	47.3	39.5	7.9	48.6	36.2	12.4	

(continued)

Appendix Table E.10 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridmore thanport			
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	
Naturalized or noncitizen ^b				47.7	47.6	0.1				
Born in the United States				51.4	42.4	9.1				
Female	77.0	55.0	22.1 ***	49.8	44.0	5.8	59.7	42.1	17.6 **	
Male	77.1	47.1	30.0 ***	46.5	48.7	-2.2	48.8	30.4	18.4 *	
Early cohort ^c	72.3	47.9	24.3 ***	39.9	35.4	4.6	55.2	40.7	14.5 **	
Late cohort	79.2	57.2	22.0 ***	52.9	48.9	4.0	n/a	n/a		
Worked full time at baseline	77.3	47.5	29.8 ***	49.6	32.1	17.5 ***	†††	53.3	39.5	13.9
Worked part time at baseline	77.0	57.6	19.4 ***	48.2	55.7	-7.5	†††	56.8	40.3	16.5 **
<u>Earnings^a (\$)</u>										
Year 2										
Income more than 130% FPL	18,052	17,444	608	17,021	16,720	301		16,045	15,894	151
Income less than 130% FPL	12,739	11,813	925	12,341	13,466	-1,125		13,164	12,243	921
Enrolled in education/training	15,315	14,633	682	12,125	14,422	-2,298		16,526	12,519	4,007
Not enrolled in education/training	13,278	12,616	662	13,917	14,523	-607		13,996	13,643	352
Has high school diploma or more	14,603	13,724	879	15,430	15,367	63		14,716	14,356	359
Has less than high school diploma	11,706	10,166	1,541	10,163	11,908	-1,745 *		12,929	11,842	1,087
More than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	18,316	17,219	1,097	18,992	18,993	-1		20,274	18,808	1,466
Less than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	9,526	9,132	394	8,719	9,573	-854		8,828	8,255	573
Single-parent household	14,048	12,926	1,122	14,541	15,449	-908		16,687	15,139	1,548
Not a single-parent household	14,119	13,424	695	12,867	13,711	-844		12,911	12,209	702

(continued)

Appendix Table E.10 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridmore thanport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Employed less than 1 year	13,127	11,816	1,310 *	12,198	13,074	-875	11,384	10,827	557
Employed more than 1 year	15,108	15,005	103	15,902	15,559	344	18,073	18,209	-137
Naturalized or noncitizen ^b				14,432	13,866	566			
Born in the United States				13,012	14,975	-1,963 *	†		
Female	13,946	13,188	758	13,377	13,486	-110	14,671	13,656	1,015
Male	14,370	13,543	827	14,552	16,600	-2,048	13,349	13,708	-360
Early cohort ^c	13,108	13,115	-6.8	† 14,113	14,299	-186	15,349	14,329	1,020
Late cohort	15,665	13,565	2,100 **	† 13,536	14,362	-826	13,394	12,642	752
Worked full time at baseline	15,991	15,004	987	16,029	16,286	-257	18,655	16,786	1,869
Worked part time at baseline	12,759	12,281	477	11,953	12,794	-841	12,397	11,719	678
Year 3									
Income more than 130% FPL	19,294	17,794	1,500	17,202	15,900	1,302			
Income less than 130% FPL	13,442	12,062	1,379 *	12,156	12,897	-741			
Enrolled in education/training	18,080	16,514	1,566	13,218	14,444	-1,226			
Not enrolled in education/training	12,634	12,249	385	13,489	13,747	-258			
Has high school diploma or more	15,383	14,023	1,359 *	14,923	14,825	97			
Has less than high school diploma	10,906	11,226	-320	10,999	11,056	-57			
More than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	19,499	17,325	2,174 **	† 19,066	17,885	1,181			
Less than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	9,606	9,788	-181	† 8,505	9,344	-839			
Single-parent household	14,347	14,027	320	14,455	14,530	-75			
Not a single-parent household	15,175	12,938	2,238 **	12,934	13,208	-274			

(continued)

Appendix Table E.10 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridmore thanport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Employed less than 1 year	12,770	12,135	635	11,609	12,472	-863			
Employed more than 1 year	16,884	15,403	1,482	16,279	14,894	1,386			
Naturalized or noncitizen ^b				14,425	13,003	1,422			
Born in the United States				12,801	14,556	-1,755	†		
Female	14,898	13,812	1,086	13,391	13,165	227			
Male	13,948	12,657	1,291	14,341	14,994	-653			
Early cohort ^c	13,551	13,156	395	13,489	14,478	-989			
Late cohort	16,651	14,385	2,266 *	13,729	13,286	443			
Worked full time at baseline	16,274	14,743	1,531	15,980	15,097	882			
Worked part time at baseline	13,642	13,023	619	11,852	12,554	-702			
Year 4									
Income more than 130% FPL	17,977	18,916	-939						
Income less than 130% FPL	14,300	12,152	2,147 **						
Enrolled in education/training	18,467	17,676	792						
Not enrolled in education/training	12,816	12,235	580						
Has high school diploma or more	15,619	14,724	895						
Has less than high school diploma	11,268	10,126	1,142						
More than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	19,464	17,938	1,526						
Less than median of prior-year earnings (\$9,932)	10,151	10,034	116						
Single-parent household	14,533	14,416	118						
Not a single-parent household	15,336	13,572	1,765						

(continued)

Appendix Table E.10 (continued)

Outcome	Dayton			San Diego			Bridmore thanport		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Employed less than 1 year	12,674	12,175	499						
Employed more than 1 year	17,532	16,311	1,221						
Female	15,128	14,204	924						
Male	14,412	13,154	1,258						
Early cohort ^c	13,558	12,512	1,046						
Late cohort	17,275	16,564	712						
Worked full time at baseline	15,928	15,600	329						
Worked part time at baseline	14,219	13,188	1,031						

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from food stamp (FS) and unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the States of Ohio, California, and Connecticut.

NOTES: This table includes only food stamp receipt and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio, California, and Connecticut UI programs. It does not include employment outside Ohio, California, Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

A statistical test was performed to measure whether impacts differed significantly across subgroup categories. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; and ††† = 1 percent.

FPL = federal poverty level.

^a Subgroup characteristics were collected at baseline.

^b Noncitizens are authorized to work.

^c The early cohorts in Dayton and San Diego represent individuals randomly assigned before June 1, 2006. The early cohort in Bridgeport represents individuals randomly assigned before August 15, 2007.

^d Among respondents to the 12-month survey.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Table E.11

Years 1-3, Impacts on Food Stamp Receipt, Education/Training, and Earnings,
by Subgroup

Pooled Sample

Outcome	3-Year Follow-Up			2-Year Follow-Up		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever received food stamps at baseline (%)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	41.2	37.3	3.9	41.7	37.0	4.7
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	48.7	41.6	7.1 ***	45.8	40.4	5.5 ***
Most disadvantaged at baseline	65.6	61.6	4.0	60.7	59.4	1.4 †
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	49.6	41.8	7.8 ***	45.7	39.0	6.7 *** †
Least disadvantaged at baseline	22.5	14.2	8.3 ***	24.1	14.7	9.4 *** †
Year 2						
Dislocated worker at baseline	33.5	33.8	-0.2	33.2	34.5	-1.3
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	43.8	37.7	6.1 ***	42.6	38.1	4.5 ***
Most disadvantaged at baseline	58.4	52.4	6.1 *	54.7	52.5	2.1
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	43.2	38.8	4.4 *	41.9	37.5	4.4 *
Least disadvantaged at baseline	19.1	15.6	3.5	20.0	16.5	3.5
Year 3						
Dislocated worker at baseline	32.8	32.6	0.2			
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	41.8	40.5	1.3			
Most disadvantaged at baseline	55.7	52.3	3.5			
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	41.7	39.7	2.0			
Least disadvantaged at baseline	17.9	19.9	-2.1			

(continued)

Appendix Table E.11 (continued)

Outcome	3-Year Follow-Up			2-Year Follow-Up		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever enrolled in education or training^a (%)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	57.1	42.6	14.5 **	56.8	41.9	14.9 **
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	63.0	47.9	15.1 ***	62.0	48.5	13.6 ***
Most disadvantaged at baseline	54.5	38.8	15.8 ***	57.2	40.1	17.1 ***
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	61.7	48.3	13.5 ***	59.8	49.4	10.4 ***
Least disadvantaged at baseline	68.3	54.5	13.7 **	65.7	53.1	12.6 **
Ever enrolled in vocational training^a (%)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	24.2	16.8	7.4	25.8	16.3	9.5 *
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	28.0	17.0	11.0 ***	28.8	17.6	11.2 ***
Most disadvantaged at baseline	29.5	13.8	15.8 ***	31.4	14.5	16.9 ***
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	28.7	19.3	9.5 **	28.1	20.6	7.5 **
Least disadvantaged at baseline	22.7	15.8	7.0	24.0	15.7	8.3 *
Ever enrolled in a college course^a (%)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	35.0	20.1	14.9 **	32.4	18.1	14.3 *** †
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	38.2	29.6	8.5 ***	33.6	28.9	4.8 * †
Most disadvantaged at baseline	23.0	15.3	7.7 *	20.4	13.3	7.1 **
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	40.2	29.9	10.3 **	37.2	29.4	7.8 **
Least disadvantaged at baseline	47.8	39.3	8.6	42.2	38.5	3.7

(continued)

Appendix Table E.11 (continued)

Outcome	3-Year Follow-Up			2-Year Follow-Up		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Ever received a training certificate^a (%)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	16.4	10.2	6.3	15.1	11.5	3.5
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	20.7	12.3	8.4 ***	19.9	12.1	7.8 ***
Most disadvantaged at baseline	15.8	10.4	5.3	15.9	11.0	4.9
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	22.7	10.7	12.0 ***	21.1	11.2	9.9 ***
Least disadvantaged at baseline	18.5	15.0	3.4	17.4	14.8	2.6
Earnings (\$)						
Year 1						
Dislocated worker at baseline	13,778	14,828	-1,050	13,776	14,733	-957
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	13,126	13,434	-308	13,294	13,795	-501
Most disadvantaged at baseline	11,835	11,556	279	11,535	11,658	-123
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	13,150	14,266	-1,116 **	13,706	14,679	-973 **
Least disadvantaged at baseline	15,418	14,973	445	15,521	15,481	40
Highest level of education at baseline						
No high school diploma or GED	11,212	11,121	91	11,286	11,814	-528
GED certificate	12,087	14,356	-2,270	12,689	13,472	-782
High school diploma	13,355	13,005	350	13,089	13,814	-725
Some postsecondary courses or more	14,071	14,484	-413	14,351	14,663	-312
Employed 1 quarter or less in prior year	6,354	6,644	-290	6,506	7,478	-972
Employed 2 or 3 quarters in prior year	11,140	11,616	-477	11,445	11,507	-63
Employed all 4 quarters in prior year	15,625	16,022	-397	15,896	16,408	-512

(continued)

Appendix Table E.11 (continued)

Outcome	3-Year Follow-Up			2-Year Follow-Up		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Year 2						
Dislocated worker at baseline	14,375	15,462	-1,087	14,544	14,896	-352
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	13,790	13,376	414	13,748	13,303	446
Most disadvantaged at baseline	11,882	11,832	50	11,741	11,342	399
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	14,370	14,480	-110	14,611	14,541	70
Least disadvantaged at baseline	16,353	15,350	1,002	16,296	15,286	1,010
Highest level of education at baseline						
No high school diploma or GED	11,023	11,377	-354	11,022	11,410	-388
GED certificate	11,978	12,065	-87	11,894	11,292	602
High school diploma	14,402	13,482	920	14,060	13,749	311
Some postsecondary courses or more	15,253	14,895	358	15,288	14,738	550
Employed 1 quarter or less in prior year	6,947	7,764	-817	7,463	7,671	-208
Employed 2 or 3 quarters in prior year	11,645	12,070	-426	11,283	11,796	-513
Employed all 4 quarters in prior year	16,551	16,012	538	16,673	15,970	703
Year 3						
Dislocated worker at baseline	14,193	14,503	-310			
Not a dislocated worker at baseline	14,326	13,282	1,045 *			

(continued)

Appendix Table E.11 (continued)

Outcome	3-Year Follow-Up			2-Year Follow-Up		
	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	WASC Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
Most disadvantaged at baseline	10,804	11,965	-1,161	††		
Modestly disadvantaged at baseline	14,729	14,212	517	††		
Least disadvantaged at baseline	17,792	14,780	3,012 **	††		
Highest level of education at baseline						
No high school diploma or GED	10,196	11,094	-898			
GED certificate	13,693	11,766	1,927			
High school diploma	14,641	12,969	1,672			
Some postsecondary courses or more	15,532	14,827	704			
Employed 1 quarter or less in prior year	7,188	7,954	-766			
Employed 2 or 3 quarters in prior year	11,322	11,591	-269			
Employed all 4 quarters in prior year	16,955	15,752	1,203 *			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the States of Ohio, California, and Connecticut.

NOTES: This table includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio and California UI programs. It does not include employment outside Ohio and California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

Estimates were regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for pre-random assignment characteristics of sample members. Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between outcomes for the WASC group and the control group. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; and *** = 1 percent.

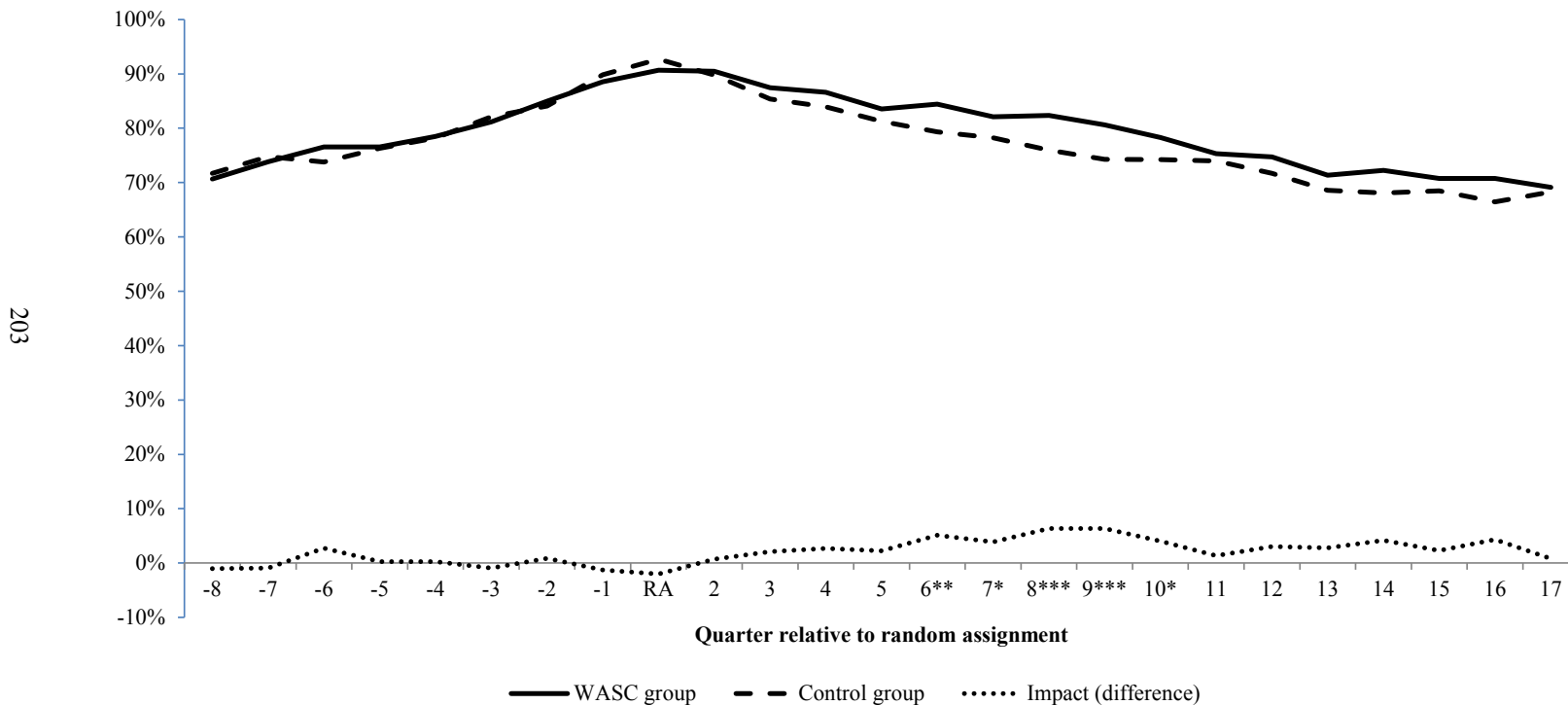
A statistical test was performed to measure whether impacts differed significantly across subgroup categories. Levels of statistical significance are indicated as follows: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; and ††† = 1 percent.

^aAmong respondents to the 12-month survey.

^bNoncitizens are authorized to work.

^cThe early cohorts in Dayton and San Diego represent individuals randomly assigned before July 1, 2006. The early cohort in Bridgeport represents individuals randomly assigned before August 15, 2007.

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration
Appendix Figure E.1
Percentage Employed in a UI-Covered Job, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment
Dayton



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Ohio.

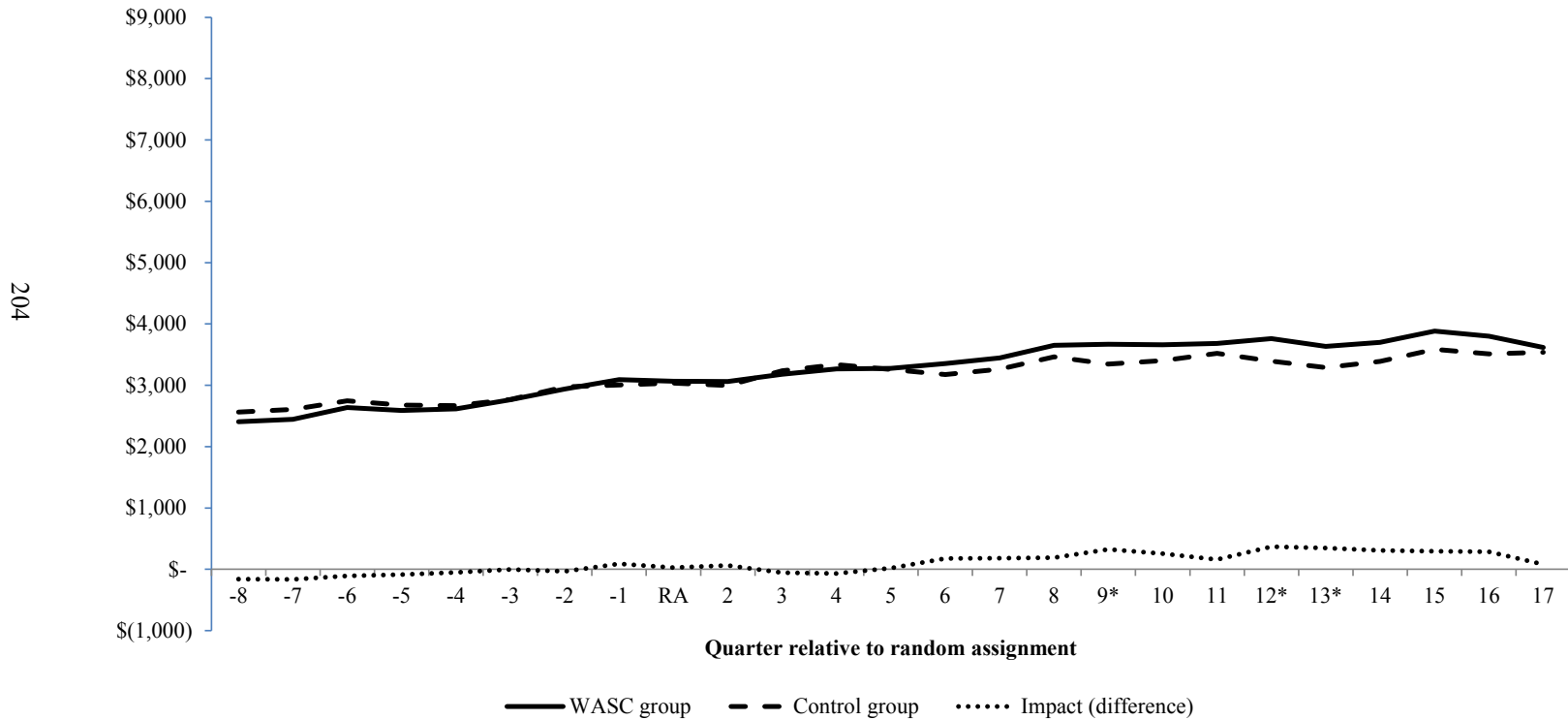
NOTE: This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio UI program. It does not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Figure E.2

Average Quarterly Earnings from UI-Covered Employment, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment

Dayton



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Ohio.

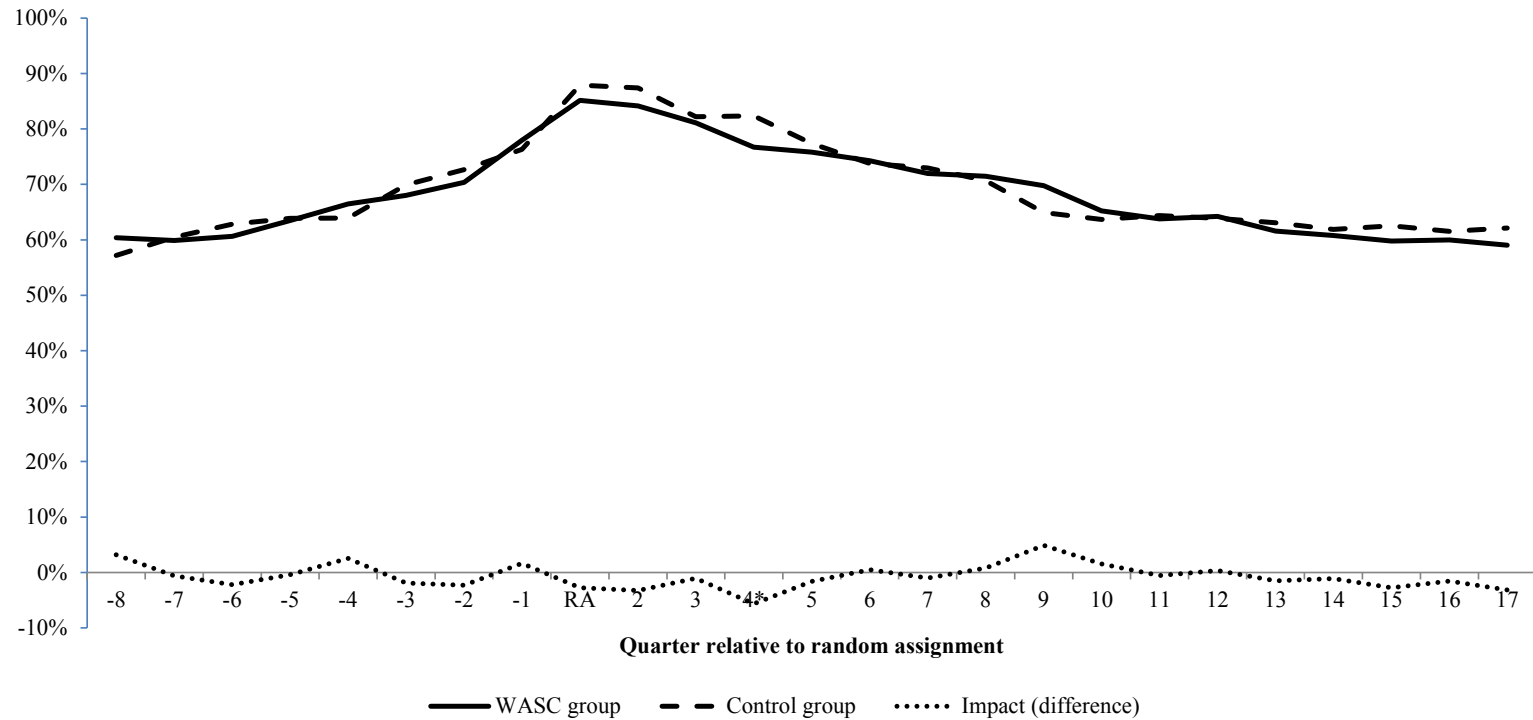
NOTE: This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Ohio UI program. It does not include employment outside Ohio or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Figure E.3

Percentage Employed in a UI-Covered Job, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment

San Diego



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of California.

NOTES: This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the California UI program. It does not include employment outside California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, "off-the-books" jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

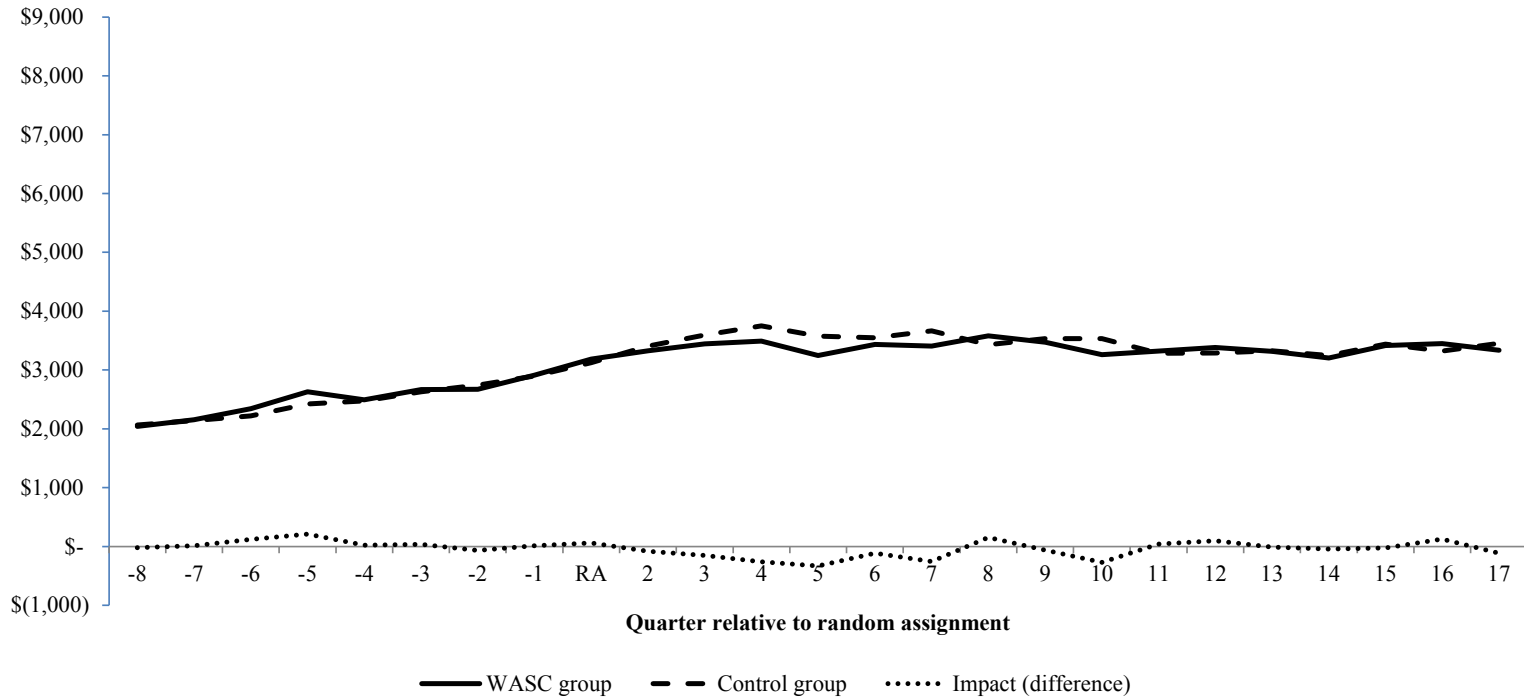
Earnings and employment data were available for approximately 53 percent of San Diego's full sample through Year 4 (that is, through relative Quarter 17).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Figure E.4

Average Quarterly Earnings from UI-Covered Employment, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment

San Diego



SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of California.

NOTES: This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the California UI program. It does not include employment outside California or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

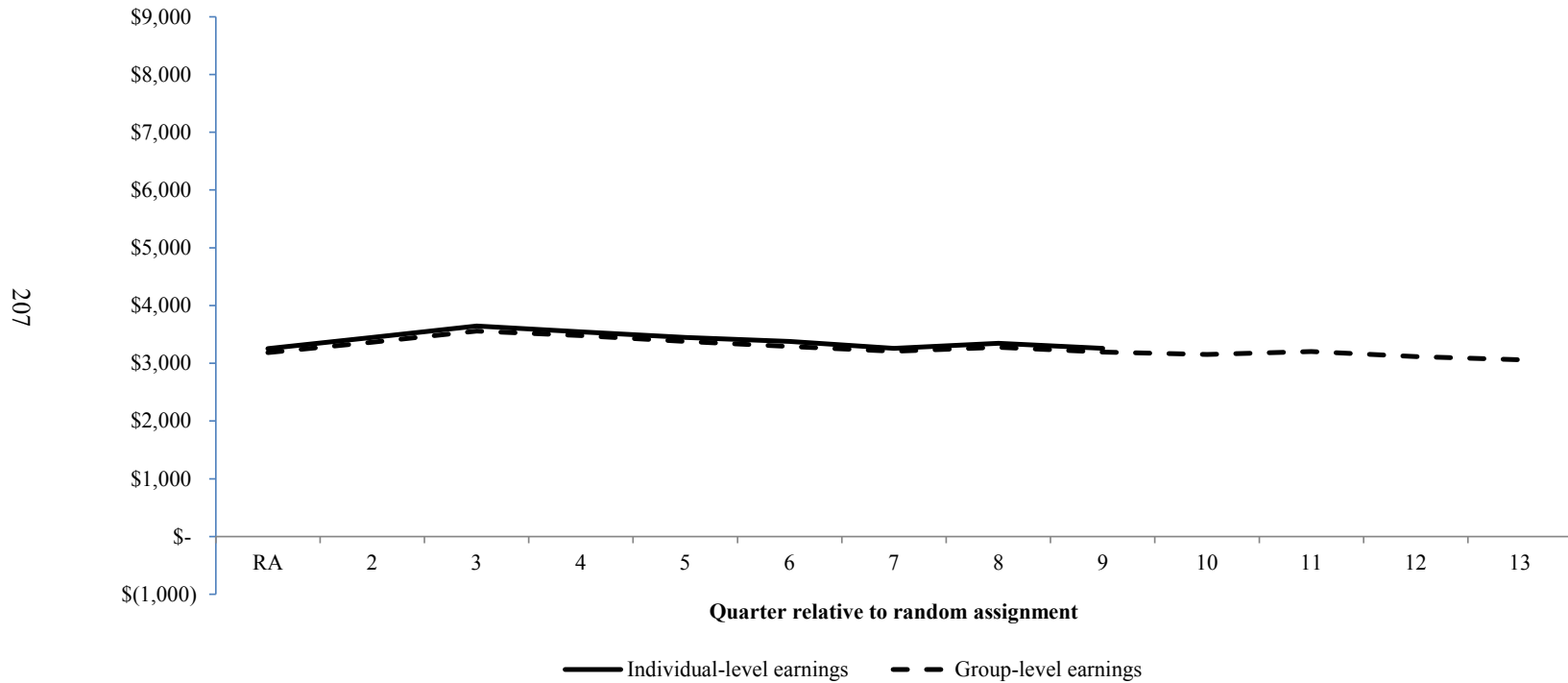
Earnings and employment data were available for approximately 53 percent of San Diego's full sample through Year 4 (that is, through Quarter 17).

The Work Advancement and Support Center Demonstration

Appendix Figure E.5

Unadjusted Average Quarterly Earnings from UI-Covered Employment, by Quarter Relative to Random Assignment,
Among Control Group Participants

Bridgeport



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) administrative records from the State of Connecticut.

NOTES: The Department of Labor in Connecticut provided MDRC with individual-level earnings data covering Years 1 through 2 (from random assignment through relative Quarter 9) and group-level earnings data covering Years 1 through 3. This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the Connecticut UI program. It does not include employment outside Connecticut or in jobs not covered by UI (for example, “off-the-books” jobs; self-employment; any small employers who are not required to report to/participate in the UI system, such as some agricultural jobs; and federal government jobs).

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MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs.

Founded in 1974 and located in New York City and Oakland, California, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are proactively shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-offenders and people with disabilities, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Children's Development
- Improving Public Education
- Raising Academic Achievement and Persistence in College
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.