

WorkFirst Accountability Report

January 2011

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WorkFirst is Washington State's welfare reform program. Partner agencies include the Office of Financial Management, the Department of Social Health Services, Employment Security, the Department of Commerce, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

WorkFirst has three main goals:

- Reduce poverty by helping people to get and keep jobs
- Sustain independence by helping people keep and improve jobs
- Protect children and other vulnerable residents by providing for childcare and stopgap funding for emergency situations

The community and technical colleges along with community organizations and private career schools provide education and training opportunities for WorkFirst parents via a WorkFirst block grant.

A 2005 study conducted by SBCTC and the Community College Research Center, commonly referred to as the "Tipping Point" study¹ found that at least one year of college level credits plus a credential (certificate or degree) resulted in the greatest earnings gains for low skill adults and created a stronger likelihood that students would be prepared to go beyond that one year threshold. SBCTC's 2006 System Direction set a goal to raise achievement for all students that is aimed at the tipping point.

This report describes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) WorkFirst students enrolled in WorkFirst training activities for academic years 2007-2010. In addition to annual enrollments and progress during this period, the report describes completions and employment outcomes for students who left college in 2007 and 2008 and went to work in 2008 and 2009.

Overall Findings

Program Results for Students Who Finished Training in 2009 and Started Employment in 2010 and Job Retention in the Recession

Since the recession, vocational training completion, and even more importantly completion at the longer Tipping Point have offered the most protection for employment, job retention, wages, and earnings.

- 3,281 TANF students were employed after training in 2010. Since 2007, over 10,000 TANF WorkFirst students gained employment after training.

¹ Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Longitudinal Student Tracking Study; The "Tipping Point" Research, (Prince, Jenkins, April 2005).

- In 2010, initial employment was 72% for tipping point completers and 65% for all vocational completers compared to 51% for non-completers.
- 85% of students who reached the tipping point were employed 2 years after they left; 5% higher than vocational completers as a whole and 17% higher than students who left WorkFirst vocational training without completing.
- WorkFirst students who reached the tipping point had the highest wages and earnings following training. In 2010, those students started employment at \$12.78/hour with quarterly earnings of \$5,170.
- Students who reached the tipping point and went to work in 2009 had the highest wage progression and earnings gains at one year job retention in 2010. These students were earning \$13.73/hour and earned \$6,031 quarterly one year after starting work.

Colleges are very gradually providing longer vocational training for WorkFirst students. If this trend can be fostered, it provides opportunity for more students to reach the tipping point.

- 5,000 students (2,670 FTES) enrolled in a vocational training activity including Customized Job Skills Training (CJST), Full-time Vocational Education (FT), or Part-time Vocational (PT).
- The completion rate for vocational training was 45%. If the colleges and partners raised the completion rate, employment and earnings could be significantly impacted.
- There is a gradual shift occurring, more students are enrolling in Full-time Vocational Education and slightly fewer are enrolling in shorter CJST programs.

WorkFirst Student Enrollments in 2010

- Colleges and other providers served nearly 13,600 TANF parents, 6,300 FTES (all funding sources) in academic year 2010. Parents may have been served across various activities (i.e. vocational education, I-BEST, basic skills).
- Forty-nine percent of TANF WorkFirst students had less than 12 years of education. Over three-fourths had no prior college achievement.
- Eight thousand (2,258 FTES) of those enrolled received basic skills or soft skills. More than half of the FTES were in basic skills and developmental education.

Student Progress While Enrolled

- One in five students (20 percent) made college level achievement gains in 2010. Another 22 percent made pre-college gains for basic skills and developmental education.
- However, nearly six in ten (58 percent) of TANF WorkFirst students made no achievement gains. Ninety-four percent of those making no momentum were in short term activities that were not aligned with certificates and degrees that lead to the tipping point.
- Fifty-nine percent of those in JT left with one quarter or less of instruction.

College Support Services and Targeted Programs

- Although Opportunity Grants, Work Study, and I-BEST programs have demonstrated success in helping students succeed, just 12 percent of TANF WorkFirst students participated in them. PELL, however, has grown from 22 percent in 2006 to 27 percent in 2010.
- I-BEST results are promising, but reach a very small portion of students who could potentially benefit.
- The employment rate after basic skills is 44%; however, the employment rate is 54% for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) completers.

- The group of students (ABE level 4) most likely to benefit from I-BEST is growing the fastest. This suggests I-BEST could grow if supported.

Next Steps

There has been a shift in recent years towards supporting TANF participants to access and complete more than just short term training. WorkFirst TANF participants who completed longer term training had higher wages and better employment retention even during the recession. These positive outcomes would support continuance and possible expansion of TANF participants accessing longer term education, such as full time vocational education (up to the federally allowed 12 calendar months) and I-BEST to enable them to reach at least the tipping point of one year of college level credit and a credential. The number of WorkFirst TANF students in shorter term training options did not do as well in the labor market, and demonstrate a greater vulnerability for continuation of public assistance in a basically jobless recovery environment.

The results highlight the benefit of identifying and using career pathways to develop both short and long term education and training plans for WorkFirst TANF students. Developing educational activity plans that are aligned with a pathway, such as I-BEST programs, will help move students further and faster along the pathway and provide better coherency. Intentionally designing activities to coordinate the utilization of part time education with part time employment not only provides skill acquisition, but demonstrates recent attachment to the labor market, which is desirable to employers. Other strategies to aid students are program supports such as mentoring and transition to other resources such as Federal Financial Aid Pell and Opportunity Grants. The additional supports, which assist to skill attainment and completion, are particularly needed for WorkFirst TANF students, as nearly 50% of them have less than 12 years of education.

Section I Annual Headcount Enrollments

All thirty-four community and technical colleges joined by five private career colleges and two community organizations provided WorkFirst training in 2010. They served 32,100 TANF parents since 2006. Headcount enrollments have increased 59 percent in that time period.

The number of TANF WorkFirst students served by providers has been increasing each year. The number of students has grown annually since 2006-07. In 2009-10, 13,569 TANF WorkFirst participants came to the community and technical college system (CTC) for training. The next table shows students by college and other providers. Each student is counted once based upon the first WorkFirst activity they received each year (most received just one activity).

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
TANF WorkFirst Students	8,523	9,346	11,838	13,569
Growth over previous year		833	2,492	1,731
% increase		10%	27%	15%

The annual TANF WorkFirst enrollments by provider are listed in the table below.

Provider	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Bates	367	407	567	309
Bellevue	95	103	131	206
Bellingham	211	172	151	164
Big Bend	170	202	291	309
Cascadia	16	14	21	29
Centralia	365	210	294	284
Clark	292	334	429	555
Clover Park	503	627	765	747
Columbia Basin	189	281	335	451
Edmonds	226	216	244	321
Everett	476	568	766	794
Grays Harbor	392	324	341	262
Green River	228	268	330	430
Highline	260	264	432	700
Lake Washington	74	51	59	101
Lower Columbia	528	313	419	692
Olympic	335	409	469	495
Peninsula	133	191	238	230
Pierce Fort Steilacoom	100	122	221	333
Pierce Puyallup	51	125	176	125
Renton	214	256	416	442
Seattle Central	166	141	156	202
Seattle North	189	187	197	199
Seattle South	134	176	343	288
Seattle Voc Institute	160	153	128	110
Shoreline	103	160	177	131
Skagit Valley	94	207	270	280
South Puget Sound	129	248	271	225
Spokane	243	289	393	416
Spokane Falls	821	1,000	1,164	1,343
Tacoma	195	389	394	188
Walla Walla	231	230	249	244
Wenatchee Valley	119	146	183	156
Whatcom	120	142	169	181
Yakima Valley	594	421	649	1,231
Community Organizations and Private Career				396

What were the characteristics of the TANF WorkFirst students as a whole?

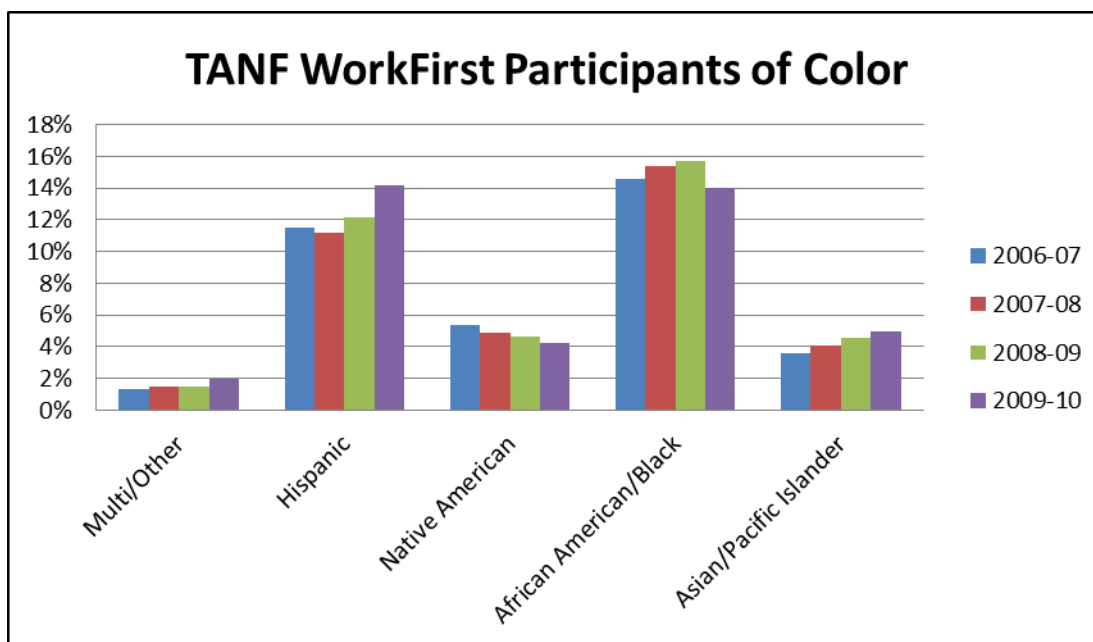
The typical WorkFirst student was female, age 27 years old. Forty-nine percent had less than twelve years of education (including those with a GED).

	Since Fall 2006
Current Welfare	100%
Female	82%
Less than 12 years Education (includes those with GED)	49%
Of Color	38%
Limited English	4%
Median Age	27 years

TANF WorkFirst Participant Headcounts by Race and Ethnic Background

Community and technical college students overall are increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse. The numbers of students of color served has increased each year. In 2009-10, the number of TANF WorkFirst students of color increased 15% over the previous year.

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	% Change from 2008
Multi/Other	110	141	177	207	17%
Hispanic	977	1,042	1,430	1,898	33%
Native American	452	457	544	596	10%
African American/Black	1,232	1,434	1,849	1,906	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	306	381	537	601	12%
White	5,064	5,513	6,760	7,474	11%
Total Reporting Race	8,141	8,968	11,297	12,682	
Not Reporting Race	382	378	541	887	64%
Students of Color	3,077	3,455	4,537	5,208	15%
% of Total	36%	37%	38%	38%	



Number of WorkFirst TANF Students Enrolled by Program

There are a number of allowable activities under the WorkFirst program. For more information about these activities see the, *2009-10 WorkFirst Delivery Agreement Plan Guidance* on the SBCTC website at: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/workforce/2009_10_workfirst_delivery_agreement_guidelines.pdf.

Basic Skills and/or Skills Enhancement Training (JT): can include ABE/ESL/HS/GED, WorkFirst Family Literacy (aka *Families That Work*) and general job skills (JT) training activities such as basic or advanced computer classes, or flagger training. Activities also include developmental/remedial education courses, prerequisites for vocational programs, part-time vocational education, and/or employment-related skills done in conjunction with job search or other WorkFirst activities.

Full-time Vocational Education (FT): There are two types of FT full-time training options for WorkFirst TANF recipients.

1) Information Technology (IT), Health Care or Other Professional-Technical Programs:

This option, which can be approved locally, allows participants to start and finish within 12 calendar months, a community or technical college training program in the IT or health care fields or any other professional-technical program that meets the FT criteria listed below and is included in the college's listing of High Wage/ High Demand programs. Programs may also be added during the school year.

FT Criteria:

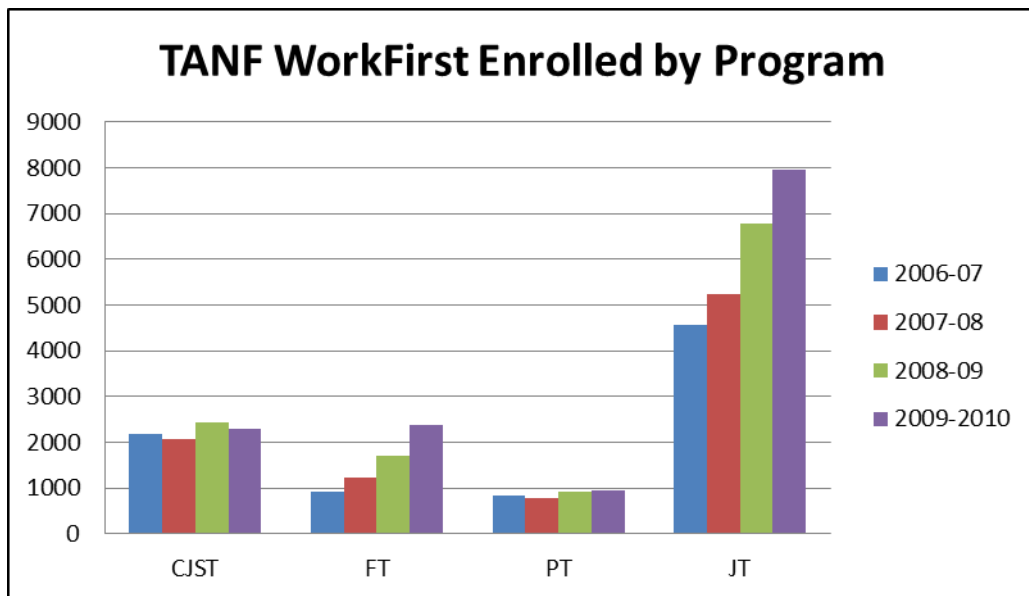
- Certificates or degrees in IT and health care meet the WorkFirst FT criteria by definition.
- Other programs meet FT criteria by screening the training program on the Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) website: www.WorkforceExplorer.com. LMEA will post 12 regional lists that compile information from the Training Benefits website lists developed with the Workforce Development Councils for high demand occupations, and with the LMEA labor market information developed for high wage occupations.

2) Certificate/Degree Completion: This option allows participants to complete the last year of a two- or four-year certificate or degree in a FT field, not to exceed a Baccalaureate degree or result in fifth-year credentialing. The Degree Completion (DC) option activity) is available on a *case-by-case basis* with approval at the local and SBCTC level. Participation in this activity counts against the 12 month life time limit for Vocational Education.

Customized Job Skills Training (CJST) is a full-time training program that is customized for specific employers or tied to a specific industry. CJSTs must include industry-specific technical training and be tied to jobs with good labor market demand and target fields with better than average entry-level wages for your local area.

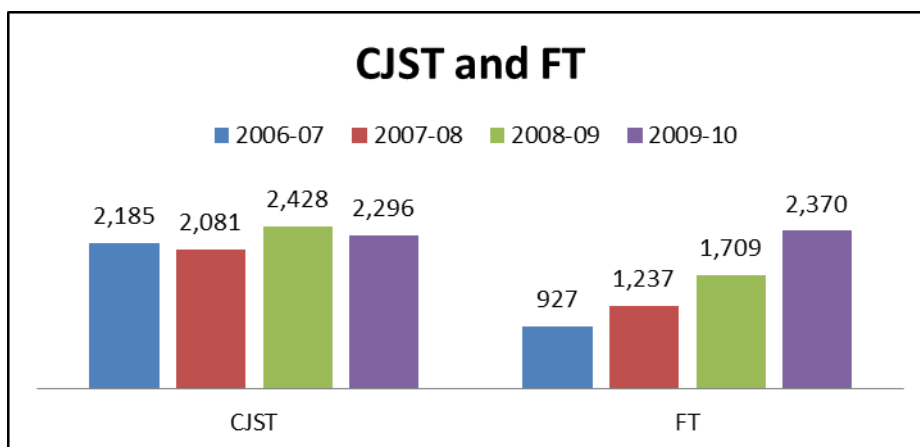
Part-time Vocational (PT) is a training option for a parent who is participating a minimum of 20 hours or more a week in work or a work-like (Core) activity at registration and enrolling for wage progression/vocational education.

The graph below shows the number of students enrolled by program. The largest activity by share of students was JT (59 percent of all TANF WorkFirst participants attending community and technical colleges in 2009-10). These students were taking mostly basic skills or soft skills enhancement training. Enrollments in JT increased 10 percent over the previous year.



CJST and FT along with PT all provide access to college level workforce education to assist a student in reaching the “tipping point”. These three activities together enrolled less than half the students enrolled in JT.

Short-term CJST was the major training vehicle for WorkFirst participants for many years. However, WorkFirst has been trying to emphasize longer training the past two years. As part of this policy change in 2010, FT grew 17 percent over the previous year and fewer students received CJST, which increased 17 percent. PT enrollments have stayed fairly flat for TANF parents. It is the smallest TANF WorkFirst activity.



Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Course Enrollments

College capacity is measured by FTEs (full-time equivalent students). Total college course FTEs have increased by 1,931 FTEs or 44 percent.

College course effort is classified into four types: basic skills, developmental education (for remedial instruction just below college level readiness), workforce and related instruction academics. College capacity is measured in terms of FTEs. Each annual full-time equivalent student is equal to 45 FTEs.

In 2010, colleges provided 6,300 FTEs (all funds). Fifty-eight percent of the courses that WorkFirst students enrolled in were basic skills and developmental. Just 42 percent of the courses were college vocational and related instruction. Preparation for college level work is a major part of WorkFirst education and training programs.

Courses	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Related Instruction	383	462	663	896
Basic Skills	1,914	1,764	2,218	2,258
Pre-College	269	280	402	476
Workforce	1,803	2,125	2,678	2,670
Total	4,369	4,631	5,961	6,300

Remedial Education Needs of TANF WorkFirst Students

Nearly half (49 percent) of TANF WorkFirst students enroll for remediation. This includes 41 percent who need adult basic education and 8 percent who need developmental education, the remediation required for students who are just below college level readiness.

The table on the next page shows ABE and ESL students by starting level for each of the three years. Of note is that most students are ABE/GED. ESL is offered on a separate track outside of the WorkFirst block grant. Of note is the large growth in ABE level 4. This level is typically a major feeder into I-BEST programs.

Basic Skills Level	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
ABE 1	82	101	137	136
ABE 2	429	416	589	711
ABE 3	822	815	1,057	1,244
ABE 4	1,368	1,513	1,910	2,141
Total ABE	2,701	2,845	3,693	4,232
ESL 1	35	41	43	51
ESL 2	41	42	38	51
ESL 3	78	70	84	109
ESL 4	106	93	116	131
ESL 5	84	65	86	115
ESL 6	45	51	66	76
Total ESL	389	362	433	533
GED 1	519	518	584	567
GED 2	112	71	99	94
Total GED	631	589	683	661
Total ABE & GED	3,332	3,434	4,376	4,893
Total in Basic Skills	3,721	3,796	4,809	5,426

College Student Support Services and Targeted Programs

Opportunity Grant: the goal of the Opportunity Grants is to help low-income adults to complete at least 45 credits and earn a credential in an educational program leading to careers in high-demand fields. Eligible students pursuing approved programs leading to career-path employment can receive funds to cover tuition and mandatory fees for up to 45 credits, and up to \$1,000 for books and supplies per academic year. Individualized student support services are an important part of the program and may include personalized counseling, one-on-one tutoring, career advising, college success classes, emergency child care, and emergency transportation.

Work-Based Learning/Work Study: includes WorkFirst Work Study, other paid or unpaid work experience, or internships done in conjunction with training.

PELL and State Need Grants (SNG): are programs that help the state's lowest-income undergraduate students pursue degrees, improve skills, or train for new careers.

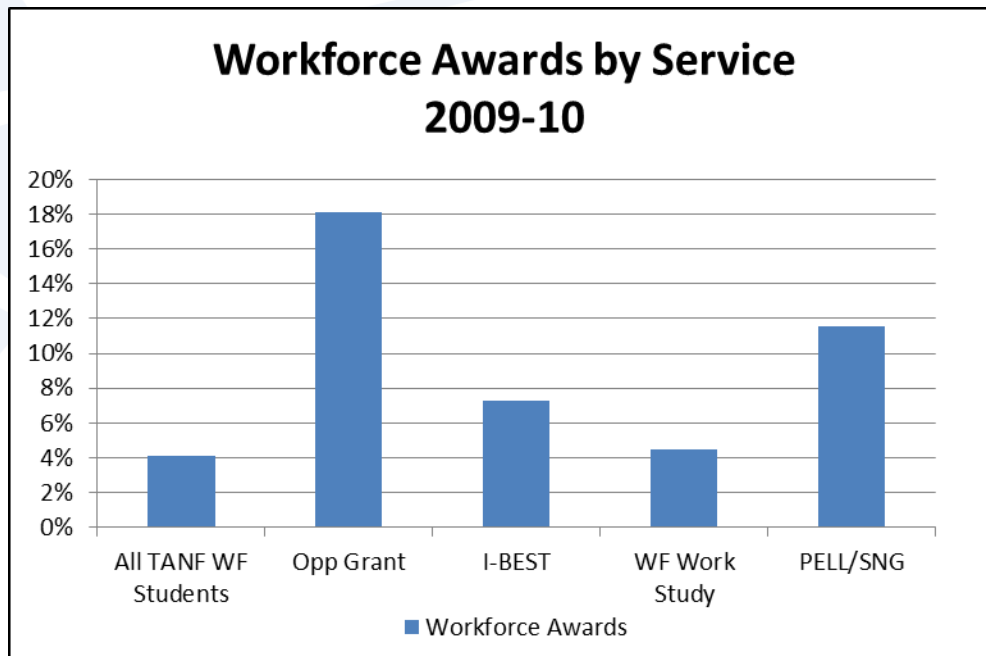
Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST): I-BEST integrates professional-technical programs and adult basic education programs to move students further and faster to certificate and degree completion. I-BEST is designed to directly transition into college-level programs and help students build skills that will move them forward. The programs are formally approved by SBCTC.

Twenty-nine percent of students are receiving either a PELL or SNG. The numbers of TANF WorkFirst Students participating in the other programs is relatively low.

Program/Service	2006-07	%	2007-08	%	2008-09	%	2009-10	%
Opportunity Grant			380	4%	533	5%	525	4%
WorkFirst Work Study	368	4%	507	5%	532	4%	588	4%
Pell/SNG	1,876	22%	2,187	23%	3,142	27%	3,977	29%
I-BEST	220	3%	309	3%	469	4%	576	4%

Student Support Helps Students Complete

Students receiving one of the services listed above were more likely to receive a workforce award than students who did not. TANF WorkFirst students with Opportunity Grants were the most likely to receive workforce awards, followed by PELL/SNG, and I-BEST as indicated on the graph below. Students in the I-BEST category began at lower educational levels as a percent than the students in Opportunity Grant and PELL/SNG.



Section II Student Progress

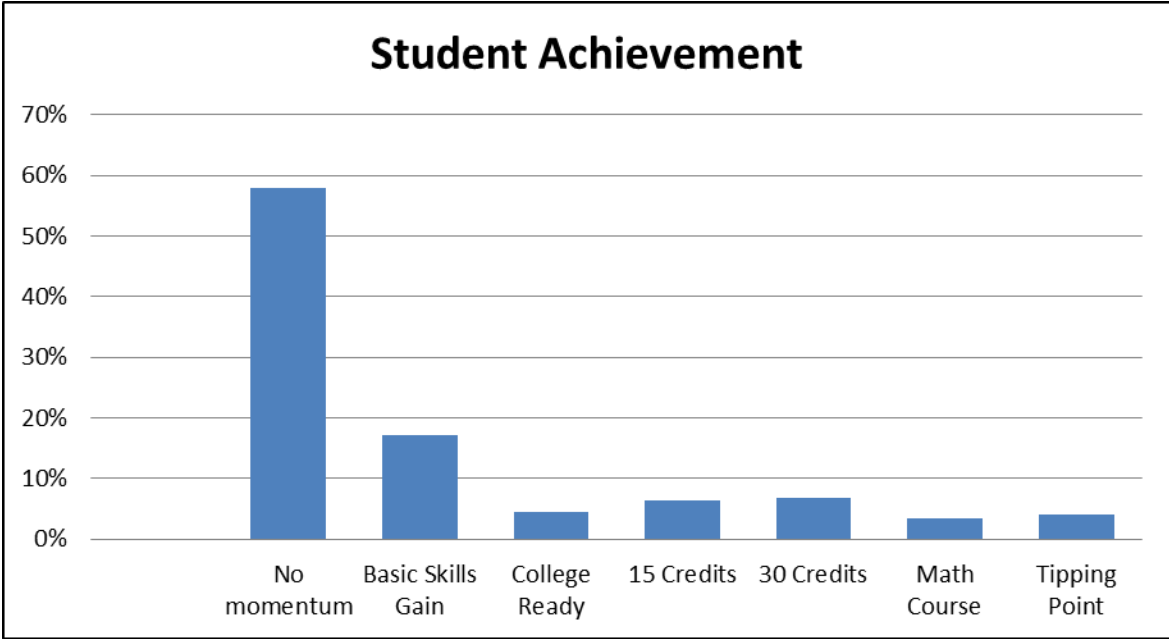
How much prior achievement do TANF WorkFirst students have at the start the year?

The Student Achievement Initiative is a new performance system that measures students for their advancement to the tipping point of at least one year of college and a certificate. While data shows

that many entering TANF students are either continuing or returning to college, the fact is that nearly eight in ten have very little to no college level achievement. The number of TANF WorkFirst students entering the year with no prior momentum has decreased annually, from 81 percent in 2006-07 to 77 percent in 2009-10. Only 15 percent has had some prior college. The portion who are starting the year with some college success is increasing modestly as longer training has started to be introduced.

Achievement	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
No Achievement	81%	78%	78%	77%
Math	0%	0%	0%	0%
15 Credits	7%	7%	6%	7%
30 Credits	13%	14%	14%	15%

The Student Achievement Initiative measures achievement gains during the year to account for the annual progress students are making. Nearly six in ten (58 percent) of TANF WorkFirst students made no achievement gains. Sixty-six percent of those who made no momentum were in JT and twenty-eight percent were in CJST. Four percent reached the tipping point. Twenty-one percent started to reach critical college milestones on the way to the tipping point. Another 22 percent made some improvements getting ready for college or increasing their basic skills.



Section III Vocational Training Completion

This section describes the completion rates for vocational training and attainment levels for students who left training from 2007 to 2009. All students are measured and included in the denominator, even those who only took basic skills. A leaver is defined as a student who has exited college for one full year. Completion status is measured from the last year and quarter they were enrolled. It is based upon their last WorkFirst activity.

A total of 20,258 TANF adults left training from 2007 to 2009. The table below (years revised in July 2012) shows the completion rate by activity by year for the full time period of the study.

Activity	Completers	Leavers	Completion Rate	Total Exits
CJST				
2007 (revised)	671	768	47%	1,439
2008 (revised)	602	740	45%	1,342
2009 (revised)	611	851	42%	1,462
Total CJST	1,884	2,359	44%	4,243
FT				
2007 (revised)	185	236	44%	421
2008 (revised)	238	303	44%	541
2009 (revised)	315	377	46%	692
Total FT	738	916	45%	1,654
PT				
2007 (revised)	540	573	49%	1,113
2008 (revised)	502	642	44%	1,144
2009 (revised)	545	715	43%	1,260
Total PT	1,587	1,930	45%	3,517
Total All	4,209	5,205	45%	9,414

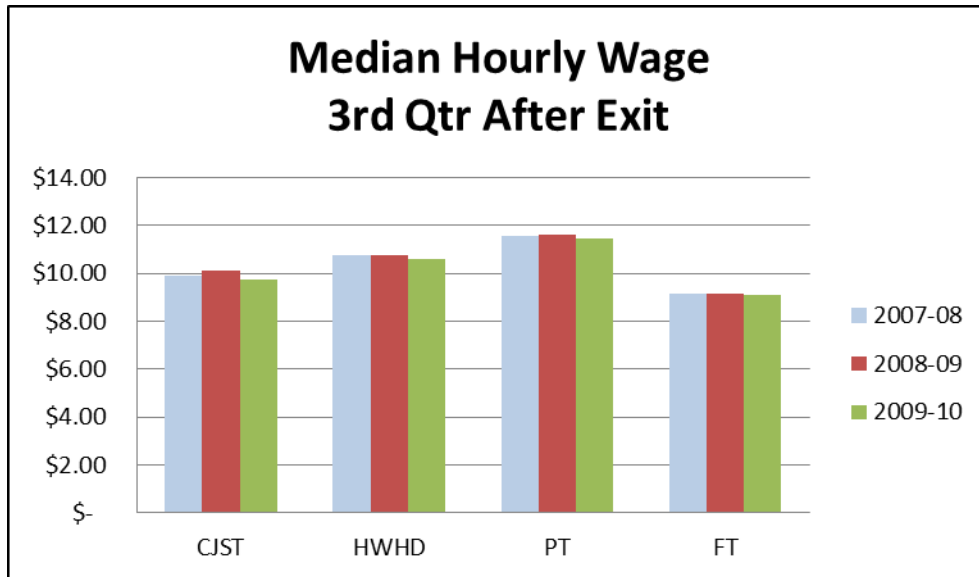
Students in PT were more likely to reach the Tipping Point at a rate of 45%. At a rate of 10%, students in JT were the least likely to reach it. The overall rate for CJST was 20% and for FT was 25%. The overall completion rate (54%) for I-BEST was higher than for the activities listed above. However, just like other students, completion appears more challenging during the recession. For both 2008 and 2009, the completion rate was 58%. In 2009 (revised), it declined to 49%. Fifty-nine percent of those in JT left with one quarter or less of instruction.

Section IV Training and Employment Outcomes

This section describes short-term employment results through 2010 for participants who left college training. The results are for the third employment quarter after exiting college. All results are in inflation adjusted dollars. Results are disaggregated for training activity and completion status. Tipping point and I-BEST employment results are included.

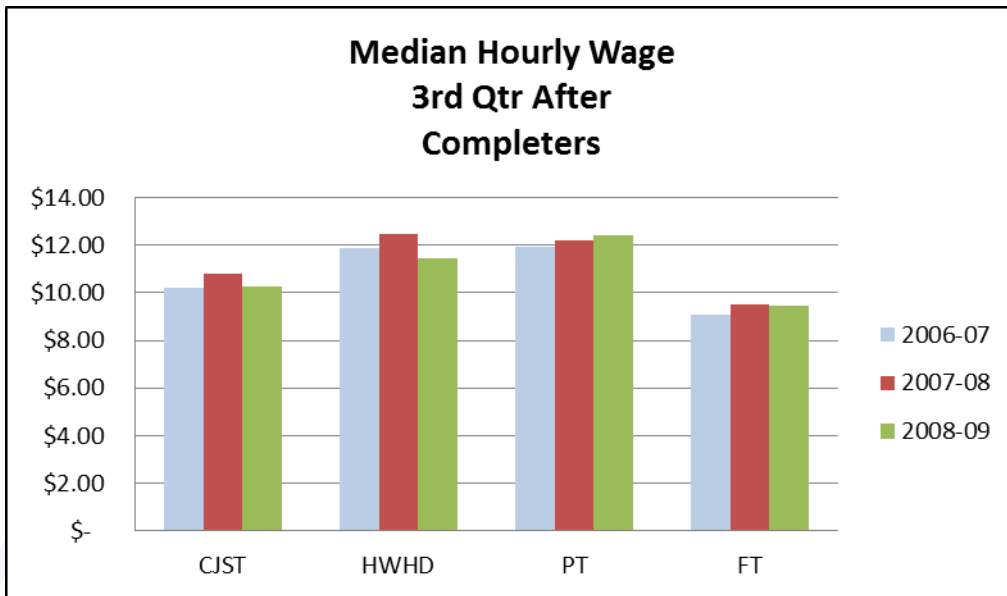
Forty-five percent of TANF WorkFirst students in FT programs completed. Students who were employed part-time had a 45% completion rate. Seven percent of the students made it to the tipping point. The rest were in basic skills, which does not have completions.

As seen in the graph below, TANF WorkFirst students who were in PT had the highest average wage per hour at \$11.53. FT students made \$10.70 per hour, CJST made \$9.93, and students in JT made \$9.12.

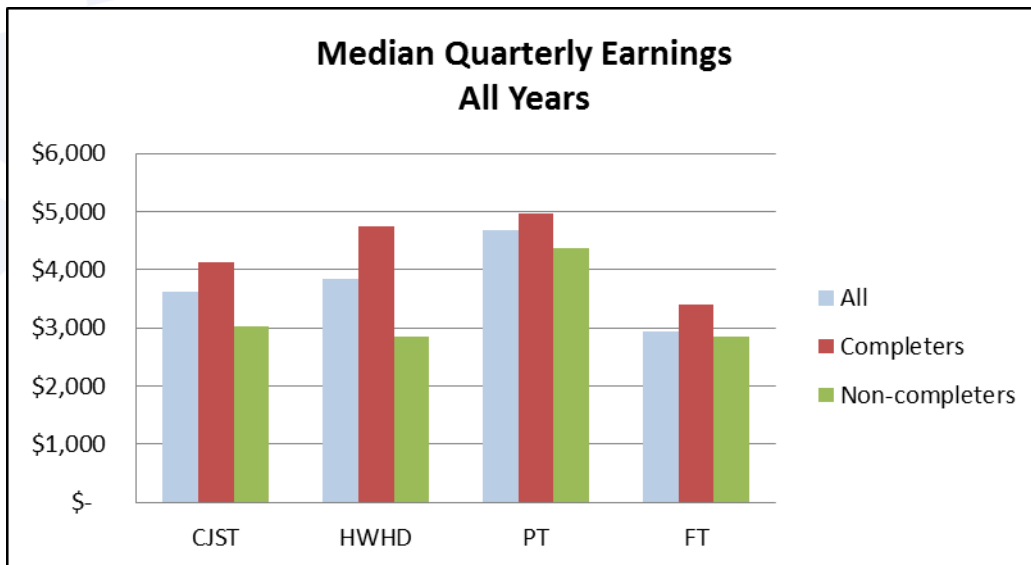


Wages increased in all categories between 2006-07 and 2007-08. In 2008-09, wages decreased in all areas. The decline coincided with the economic crisis. Hourly wages for students who completed had higher than the overall median wage rates.

As seen in the graph on the next page, TANF WorkFirst students who completed their training had higher wages. PT had the highest average wage per hour at \$12.12. FT students made \$11.93 per hour, CJST made \$10.41, and students in JT made \$9.33. Students who left before completing their program had lower wages and earnings than those who did complete.



As seen in the graph below, completers have higher average median wages in all areas. The difference in the wages for FT and CJST completers versus non-completers were \$1,889 and \$1,089 respectively per quarter. The difference in wages for PT and JT completers versus non-completers were not as great at \$591 and \$554 respectively per quarter.



The median hourly wage fell in FT, CJST and JT between 2008-09 and 2009-10. Again, this appears to be related to the recession. Wages had been rising prior to then. The median earnings for completers and non-completers were lower in all categories between 2007-08 and 2008-09, except in FT, where the earnings rose for both. Both the hourly wages and earnings were highest for TANF WorkFirst Students reaching the Tipping Point. The major portion comes from PT students. Students who left before completing their program had lower wages and earnings than those who did complete.

Overall, students who reached the Tipping Point had the highest wages and earnings as seen in the table below. TANF WorkFirst students who reached the Tipping Point were matched with unemployment insurance (UI) for hourly wages and quarterly earnings in the 3rd quarter after leaving.

Year	Students	Employed	% Employed	Hourly Wage	Earnings
2007-08	425	319	75%	\$ 12.53	\$ 5,257
2008-09	447	338	76%	\$ 12.92	\$ 5,505
2009-10	548	360	66%	\$ 12.78	\$ 5,170

Longer-Term Employment Results

This section describes employment in the 7th quarter (2nd year after exiting training). This includes employment through 2010. Results are analyzed for job retention, wage progression and earnings gains.

TANF WorkFirst students who reached the Tipping Point were also matched with unemployment insurance (UI) for hourly wages and quarterly earnings in the 7th quarter after leaving. Nearly 85% of students who reached the tipping point were employed 2 years after they left. The retention rate for all vocational completers was 80%. The employment retention rate for vocational non-completers was 68%.

Year	Participant UI Matched 7 th qtr	Retained	7 th qtr Hourly Wage	7 th qtr Earnings	Wage Progression 3 rd to 7 th qtr	Earnings Gain 3 rd to 7 th qtr
2007-08	279	87%	\$ 13.68	\$ 5,947	\$ 1.15	\$690
2008-09	279	83%	\$ 13.73	\$ 6,031	\$ 0.81	\$526