

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training:  
Lessons Learned



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Kim Allen

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Faculty Mentor: Ruth Gannon - Cook

Professional Advisor: Keila M. Lacy

# Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

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# Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

## **ABSTRACT**

Long-term welfare recipients, specifically young women, suffer extreme disadvantages in the job market. Burtless attributes these disadvantages to limited job skills and education, and “low scores on standardized tests of ability and achievement” (Burtless, 1997, p. 8). He maintains that any reasonable plan to reform American welfare must identify economic life as the nucleus to which improvements must be connected. While exploring the history of welfare and its impact on welfare recipients, this paper provides evidence that welfare recipients (specifically single mothers) who receive training for job and life skills are more likely to secure employment that will allow them to move from welfare to self-sufficiency. The impetus for this paper is to learn more about organizations and the roles they are playing in helping welfare recipients move from dependency toward self-sufficiency.

According to research conducted by the Office of Family Assistance, Illinois is among the top ten states with the largest welfare caseload in America (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2013). In the research I conducted, I found that dependency is the root cause of the increasingly large welfare caseload in Illinois. Based on historical data, welfare dependency is a problem that has existed for more than 40 years. The effects of this problem permeate cultures and genders in the form of poverty and the inability to attain self-sufficiency. Preliminary research revealed that 1) 20 to 40 percent of former welfare recipients return to welfare after having left (Ellwood, 1986) and 2) 10 to 20% continue to have difficulty finding work after completing job training programs (Johnson & Tafoya, 1999).

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The objective of my research is to identify methods for reducing welfare dependency, thereby shrinking the Illinois caseload. By exploring organizations that simultaneously deliver life skills and job training to its participants, I intend to prove that these trainees are more likely to achieve (and sustain) self-sufficiency compared to those who received job training alone, and that as a result Illinois will realize a reduction in welfare caseloads

**Keywords:** self-sufficiency, welfare, culture, life skills, job skills, parenting, mentors, outreach, government, welfare reform, and self-esteem.

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## INTRODUCTION

### MY JOURNEY FROM WELFARE DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

For people receiving welfare benefits, becoming self-sufficient is often a daunting and difficult task which is usually met with denial and disappointment. Stripped of their dignity by social workers and state departments welfare recipients may believe they are unworthy of employment that will help them become self-sufficient. In addition, their lack of skills might keep them from seeking employment. I believe that workshops and programs that offer job and life skills training can repair the damage done to welfare recipients by government agencies and society, preparing them to take measured steps towards gainful employment and self-sufficiency. The workshop I propose will focus on educating female adults in preparation for entry into the workforce.

As a child I watched my mother's struggles as a single parent on welfare after she and my father divorced. At that time child support from the absent parent was considered income by the welfare agency. Consequently, welfare benefits to single parent families receiving child support were either discontinued or denied. Based on this knowledge, the single parents of these households were faced with a dilemma: report the child support income and information about the absent parent to the welfare department and receive no benefits; or withhold information about child support income and the absent parent from the welfare department and receive benefits – my mother chose the latter. For approximately five years, I watched my mother progress with the assistance she received from welfare. During this time, she budgeted the family income, returned to school, sent her children to Catholic School,

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purchased a home, and moved our family out of the projects and into a home. My mother served as a role model for our family.

Through my mother's examples, I learned about endurance, hard work, patience, time management, multi-tasking, finances, struggle, and most importantly, self-sufficiency. When I became a mother at the age of eighteen, all these life skills were already part of my culture. Now, I didn't have the perfect childhood - in fact, I had to deal with a lot of other barriers- but, having knowledge of how to survive helped move me from my dependency on welfare. I knew that it was not something that every normal person had to deal with, and I knew I did not want that system in my life or my business; I decided that it was up to me and only me to use this system as I went back to school to obtain the needed skill to help me take care of my son. Along the way I met one of my closest friends, together we decided to not only break this cycle of dependency on welfare, but to also break the cycle of teen pregnancy. We leaned on one another and shared our knowledge and resources. It seemed that if there was something I did not know, she knew and vice versa. If neither of us knew, we used all available resources and conducted research to fill in the gaps in our knowledge.

Eventually we became self-sufficient and relinquished our dependency on welfare. We also broke the cycle of teen pregnancy within our families; my twenty-eight year old son is a college graduate with no children and my twenty year old daughter is a college student with no children. My friend's twenty-three year old son

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also has no children. We both went on to further our education, she is in theology school and I am completing my graduate degree. We remain best friends.

I firmly believe that without the life skills our parents taught us, we would not have been able to release the hold that welfare has on many single mothers. This system we created enabled us to do more and gain control over our lives without the assistance of welfare.



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### **BACKGROUND**

The history of welfare is actually an interesting and possibly great idea.

Welfare began as an aid to the blind, war veterans, their widows, orphans, and some aid to former slaves (Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991). These benefits were governed by state and local government; it wasn't until the Great Depression that the federal government became involved due to the overwhelmingly large population of poor and a sudden need for finances (Koon, 1997). In 1933, the Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was introduced. This served to be the first legislation pertaining to welfare. The program, which was originally intended for widows and their children, grew quickly and assisted more than ten million recipients (Weil & Finegold, 2002).

In the 1980, welfare in many states started different initiatives to help women break the cycle of welfare dependency (i.e., education, job training, as well as different supportive services). In 1988, the Family Support Act (FSA) was introduced alongside the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS). The goal of these projects were to increase education, training, and employment opportunities for welfare recipients by 1997 (Fraker, et al., 2004).

These programs were not well-received by welfare recipients and lack of participation ensued. In response to this opposition, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, as a replacement for AFDC. In addition, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Act was also put in place to complement PRWORA. This new act

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implemented stricter guidelines and put limitations on the continuance of welfare benefits for recipients (Thomas-McRae, 2003). By 2002, 50% of welfare recipients were working and it was soon revealed that many had other problems such as poor physical or mental health, no high school diploma, or limited English skills (Acs & Loprest, 2004).

Aside from the obvious barriers that recipients face, many of them did not show an interest in any career whatsoever. Studies showed that little information existed regarding their well-being; therefore, if they wanted to research this information they would not know where to look (Ferrari & Sayad, 2002). Many of the current welfare recipients are not as skilled or educated as they need to be in a labor market that demands that people have advanced technical skills (Borysowich, 2010). Some of the tactics that may raise the welfare recipient's chances of being employed include the creation of skills that aid in searching for and obtaining employment, the provision of education and training, and the creation of financial growth (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 1) Since the enactment of the welfare reform bill, many training programs are available; however, the bill's effectiveness is rarely if ever reported (Weil & Finegold, 2002).

One county that has focused on specific factors when assisting welfare recipients is Onondaga in upstate New York (Tabe, 2002). Onondaga Community College has been administering the county's employment program for welfare recipients before PRWORA was even in place; the community college and other agencies got together to improve the entire welfare employment program (Lisman,

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2001). The college has implemented a combination of work experience with education or training at the needed pace of the recipient. This type of formalized training, education, and life skills has proven to be a success (Jacobs, 2003). Since the state began its own revamping of the welfare program, Onondaga County has reduced its caseload by 60% and over 16,000 jobs were filled by recipients that participated in the program.

This review of the literature reflects my experience as a former welfare recipient. The history of welfare reveals that problems existed from the beginning and that steps taken to correct those problems only compounded them. Hence, the problems with welfare are deep-rooted. As noted in this review by a number of authors, it takes a great deal of analysis and strategizing before a full improvement of this system is made (Jencks, 1994).

### **AIP LITERATURE REVIEW**

The current trend in welfare independence shows that welfare recipients who receive training to prepare them for entry into the workforce are more likely to become and remain self-sufficient. This review of literature examines the relationship between welfare reform and attempts to create self-sufficiency among welfare recipients through training. There will be a specific focus on welfare-to-work programs.

#### **Highlight on Welfare Reform: (Acs, G., Ferrari, J., & Handler, J.)**

As evidenced by the public debates surrounding the PRWORA, reforming the welfare system is a charged public issue. Designed to motivate welfare recipients to

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become more independent through employment, programs under this initiative were developed to support and assist those entering the workforce, and partnerships with businesses were formed to increase employment opportunities. Comparisons of the previous Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and current Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs reveal significant declines in welfare recipients under the new program (Acs & Loprest, 2004). These reported declines could indicate that PRWORA is successfully helping welfare recipients become independent. However, theorists suggest that several factors could contribute to this decline. Some theorists suggest that the process and challenges involved in moving from welfare-to-work could be overly-burdensome and cause recipients to lose or give up their benefits because they are unable to keep up with the stringent reporting requirements (Handler & Hansenfeld, 1992). The outcome of this and similar scenarios could be poverty, homelessness, stress-related physical illness, severe depression, lack of medical care and/or suicide, and death (Ferrari & Sayad, 2002). Life skills workshops for welfare recipients attempting to enter the workforce would equip them with knowledge about being organized and responsible, and give them techniques for dealing with stress. After attending these workshops, declines in welfare recipients could be more accurately attributed to employment.

### **Life Skills Training: (Hyles, D.)**

Life skills are customarily learned in families, communities, organizations and associations, and in the work place. They are continually developed through the trial and error we refer to as “life’s lessons.” Life skills focus on empowerment , values

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and attitudes such as promoting a better understanding between individuals, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Researchers have shown that life skills can be systematically acquired and reinforced through formal and informal learning settings. Although there is no greater teacher of life skills than life itself, some people have reached adulthood without growth in this area. Psychologists suggest that people who fall into this category are unwilling to accept responsibility for certain situations in their life (Hyles & Prevatt, 2012). As it relates to welfare recipients, some are unwilling to accept that lack of education and/or skills may prevent them from becoming employed; that having unprotected sex can lead to pregnancy, STDs, and/or HIV/AIDS, and/or that not having and sticking to a budget strains their fixed income. Sociologists, on the other hand, attribute this lack of life skills to societal changes and the focus on the cognitive element of education (Mahesh, 2011).

With life skills welfare recipients will be able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions to solve problems or issues that they face. It will also prepare them to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others and communicate effectively. Overall, life skills workshops will enhance the knowledge of welfare recipients and increase their self-esteem, making them more confident and desirable in the job market.

### **Self-Sufficiency: (Hofferth, S. & National Association of Social Workers)**

Studies suggest that the goal of self-sufficiency for welfare recipients may be difficult to attain because of employability, barriers and lack of power (Hofferth, Stanhope, & Harris, 2005). According to the National Association of Social Workers,

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NASW, although the welfare caseloads decreased by more than 50% since the start of the PRWORA, there are still a significant number of recipients who are “unable to obtain and/or maintain sustainable employment” (NASW, 2002). Moreover, recipients receiving cash aid through state programs established in response to PRWORA “have severe or multiple barriers to employment”. The NASW found that the “most common barriers among welfare recipients include low levels of education, minimal vocational skills, limited English proficiency, no access to work support, responsibility for a disabled family member, physical or mental health problems, drug and alcohol addictions, and domestic violence”. When the recipient has significant barriers to overcome their likelihood and chances for employability decrease (p. 1).

The workshop I propose will help welfare recipients develop critical thinking and creative problem solving skills that can be used to resolve some of the issues that affect their employability. In addition, the workshop will develop relationships with substance and alcohol abuse programs to help educate workshop participants on these issues and the resources available to those affected by them.

Overall, prior research on life skills training and self-sufficiency among welfare recipients offers only limited evidence of successful, sustained efforts; therefore, additional research is needed. One of the places to begin would be local government; they hold the key to many outlets for welfare recipients, (i.e., community colleges, junior colleges, training facilities, child care, housing, etc.). Therefore, the data is available and the need is great. The review of literature also suggests that

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additional research on local government's participation in supporting the needs of welfare recipients with the obstacle they face on several levels.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology employed will be a comprehensive literature review of the history of welfare reform and the impact of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) on welfare recipients. This study employed a review of structured interview questionnaires, case study notes and personal experience. A structured interview questionnaire was designed by the Employment Retention Act (ERA) program to determine the effectiveness of the Chicago program. Case studies were conducted to determine the effectiveness of the ERA and Heartland Alliance programs. In both cases, participants were randomly selected to participate in the program group or the control group. Personal experience was used as a source for determining the impact of welfare reform on single mothers.

Quantitative research was used to determine program effectiveness, participation levels, and to conduct population comparisons. A review of charts and tables compiled by Social Impact Research Center, the Illinois Poverty Summit, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Department of Health and Human Services were reviewed to determine program success, levels of participation, and movement of participants.

According to Merriam, when analyzing qualitative data, a unit of data must meet two criteria: first, the unit of data must "reveal information relevant to the study

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and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information; second, the unit of data must be able to stand on its own” (2009, p.177). This data was compared to national statistics in order to see how Chicago, Illinois performed in comparison to similar locations. Research Yin defines a case study as an in-depth inquiry of a setting, group or event that observes historical facts and developmental occurrences, presents conditions and shows environmental interaction (Yin, 1994), while Stake asserts that an “instrumental case study” accomplishes something other than understanding (Stake, 1995).

Data from agencies nationwide were reviewed. However, the primary focus was on data derived from research studies conducted in the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois. Based on these definitions, documents were reviewed to gather information on study group participants; a literature review was performed to gather historical data related to welfare reform, life skills training, job training, and programs available to help Chicago area welfare recipients attain independence from welfare. The sole purpose of these reviews was to explore how welfare recipients’ employment and welfare status change when they receive basic life skills and job training, and whether they become and remain self-sufficient for more than six months. Hence, existing quantitative data was used to document these changes.

Through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) was conducted in 2003 to explore the degree and transfer of learning made by case study participants (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Accordingly, the research reviewed herein focused on



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gaining insight into the links between life/job skills training and welfare independence, and discovering methods for moving welfare recipients toward perpetual self-sufficiency.

The Center for Career Studies of California State University's, long Beach location included a national household sample for all 50 states, and supplemental household samples for 6 states (O'Lawrence & Sanchez, 2003). Although Illinois participated in the 1992 household sample study, the state declined to participate in the 2003 study. Accordingly, data collected during the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey was also reviewed to ascertain the literacy of households in Illinois when compared to households in other States. Review of existing research considered the following elements related to study participants:

- 1) demographics (age, race, gender, marital status);
- 2) household size (number of children);
- 3) education;
- 4) socioeconomic status

The NAAL used this information to characterize the United States' adult population to understand factors related to basic skills score distribution, and for comparison with previous studies. For purposes of the study data for the female population in the 18-24 year old age group was summarized, reviewed and used as a comparison group.

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### **YEAR UP (CHICAGO)**

Year Up Chicago is a one-year, intensive training program that provides low-income young adults, ages 18-24, with a combination of hands-on life and training development skills, college credits, and corporate internships. The program was founded in the City of Boston in 2000 and opened an office in Chicago in 2010. Focusing on attracting youth who are motivated to improve their economic situation, the program engages them in an intensive, full-time, year-long intervention. The impetus for Year Up's research was the failure of past programs to sufficiently engage youth and produce positive impacts. Before embarking upon a large-scale study, Year Up conducted small-scale research to ensure that its program sites were performing up to expectations. In order to learn what opportunities the program participants could access on their own, Year Up also conducted a random assignment study in which control group members were equally motivated to succeed. This data was reviewed to determine whether the support offered by programs like Year Up is enough to help welfare recipients:

- 1) move above the poverty line
- 2) become self-sufficient (drop welfare benefits)
- 3) remain self-sufficient

In 2007, Year Up appointed the Economic Mobility Corporation ("EMC") to conduct a large-scale study of program performance and outcomes. The purpose of the study was: 1) to assess how student characteristics and participation levels

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related to outcomes in order to make adjustments in the program to improve performance; and 2) to assess whether participation levels and outcomes appeared strong enough to suggest that Year Up could be successful in demonstrating positive impacts on young people in a large-scale, rigorous evaluation (Roder & Elliott, 2011). Data from studies conducted by EMC was reviewed and used to study the impact of skills training on welfare recipients.

### **HEARTLAND ALLIANCE**

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights helps people living in poverty or danger improve their lives and realize their human rights. Their work is driven by research and focuses on poverty, health care, homelessness and judiciary fairness. According to Heartland, its goal is to “create [...] paths from crisis to stability and on to success” (Social Impact Research Center, 2002). One project, in particular, was facilitated by Heartland for Illinois Poverty Summit (IPS). The goal of this project was to put income supports in place for poor, working families. To aid in identifying the necessary supports, IPS established a set of principles that identified reasons for tackling poverty in Illinois. The principles declared that,

“People who work full-time should not live in poverty. elimination of poverty is good for the State and is good for all Illinoisans; all people who can work should work – and be given the tools to work toward their fullest potential; a safety net should be provided for those who cannot work” (Illinois Poverty Summit, 2002, p. 3).

Similarly, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) asserts that many members of the U.S. workforce earn wages that cannot lift them above the

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poverty line, and that those workers who move up over time are not likely to move up to higher paying jobs (MDRC, 2013). (See Tables 1 & 2.) The information reviewed therein provides a scale which was used to determine program participants' earnings before beginning the program and to measure changes in income after completing the program.

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**Table 1**

<b>Earned Income and Poverty Details</b> <b>For a Family of 3: one parent, two children</b>					
Poverty Line = \$15,020 annual income Chicago Self-Sufficiency Standard = \$38,281* Illinois Median Income = \$46,760**					
Hourly Wage	Monthly Earned Income‡	Annual Earned Income‡	% of Poverty Line	% of Self-Sufficiency Standard	% of Median Income
\$5.15	\$ 906	\$10,877	72%	28%	23%
\$6	\$1,056	\$12,672	84%	33%	27%
<b>\$7.11</b>	<b>\$1,252</b>	<b>\$15,020</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>32%</b>
\$9.46	\$1,665	\$19,976	133%	52%	43%
\$10.66	\$1,877	\$22,522	150%	59%	48%
\$13.13	\$2,312	\$27,738	185%	72%	59%
\$14.21	\$2,501	\$30,015	200%	78%	64%

\* The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Illinois, 2001: Diana Pearce, Wider Opportunities for Women, Women Employed.

\*\* U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2001 Two-Year Average Median Income.

‡ Indicates pre-tax income, which is used to measure poverty. Based on 176 monthly work hours (8 hours per day times 22 days per month).

*Note: Totals may not add exactly due to rounding.*

(Illinois Poverty Summit, 2002)

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**Table 2**

## POVERTY, INCOME, AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE



# Illinois

October 1, 2013 (version 1)

In 2012, the official poverty rate for the nation was 15.0%. There 46.5 million people in poverty nationwide. For the second consecutive year, neither the poverty rate nor the number of people in poverty was statistically different from the previous years estimates.

Illinoisans are faring no better. New state data on Illinois from the U.S. Census Bureau show that no progress has been made in the fight against poverty since last year. In 2012, over 1.85 million Illinoisans were in poverty — a rate of 14.7%. An additional 2.2 million Illinoisans are near poor and economically insecure with incomes between 100 and 199% of the federal poverty measure.

These figures mark a disappointing lack of progress. The recovery from the Great Recession, which officially ended in 2010, is happening too slowly and continues to elude those at the bottom rung of the economic ladder in Illinois.

### Illinois

	2007		2011		2012	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Poverty	1,496,248	11.9	1,879,965*	15.0*	1,850,562	14.7
Extreme Poverty	667,578	5.3	863,868*	6.9*	820,554*	6.5*
Low Income	2,029,262	16.2	2,245,488*	17.9*	2,217,821	17.6
Child Poverty	511,142	16.3	648,592*	21.3*	614,493*	20.4*
No Health Insurance†	1,597,086	14.2	1,639,724*	14.8*	1,602,960*	14.5*
Median Household Income	\$59,936	—	\$54,346*	—	\$55,137*	—

### Chicago

	2007		2011		2012	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Poverty	550,580	20.5	629,464*	23.7*	636,319	23.9
Extreme Poverty	244,498	9.1	298,403*	11.2*	282,821	10.6
Low Income	554,636	20.6	585,671	22.0*	573,258	21.5
Child Poverty	201,748	30.6	216,683	35.8*	207,002	34.3
No Health Insurance†	526,082	21.6	539,641	22.3	508,471*	21.1*
Median Household Income	\$50,392	—	\$44,539*	—	\$45,214	—

\* Denotes change from prior year in table is statistically significant.

† Health insurance coverage estimates reflect 2008 — the first year they were collected — rather than 2007.

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(Social Impact Research Center, 2002)

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Moreover, Burtless maintains that the welfare reform goal of moving mothers who rely on welfare into private-sector employment cannot be achieved only by changes to public policy, and that employment rates reflect the job qualifications of individuals (Burtless, 1997). Policymakers have expressed significant interest in finding ways to help these workers stay employed and advance in the labor market, but identifying effective approaches has been challenging.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICS**

The Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project, facilitated by Year Up, sought to identify what might work to improve employment and retention for low-income individuals. The project, started in 1999, identified and tested innovative program models designed to promote stable employment and wage progression among individuals with low-incomes who were current or former recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). ERA evaluated the programs using an experimental research design, in which individuals were randomly assigned to either a program group, whose members were eligible to receive ERA services; or to a control group, whose members were not eligible to receive ERA services. In testing over a dozen different program models using randomized control trials, the ERA project identified strategies that appear promising as well those that do not. While the main objective of ERA was to test a range of program approaches, the data collected as part of the evaluation also provides an in-depth look at the work experiences of the more than 27,000 single parents — both those who received ERA services (program group) and those who did not (control group) — who were targeted

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by 12 of the programs. The single parents in the sample nearly all earn wages that cannot lift a family above the poverty line. Single mothers were either receiving TANF or had recently left it prior to entering the study. They were relatively young at study entry; nearly half did not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate (See Table 3), and the majority had at least one child under the age of six. (See Table 4)

**Table 3**

<b>Educational Attainment and Ability Scores of 25-Year-Old Women, by AFDC Status</b>			
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Months Received AFDC</b>		
	<b>12 Months</b>	<b>1 to 11 Months</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Percentage of Women in Group</b>	5 %	3 %	92 %
<b>Educational Attainment by Age 25</b>			
Less than four years of high school	52 %	44 %	14 %
Four years of high school	35	48	40
One to three years of college	12	8	24
Four or more years of college	0	0	22
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	100 %	100 %	100 %
<b>Composite Score on 1980 Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT)</b>			
Bottom quartile	72 %	52 %	22 %
Second quartile	17	33	26
Third quartile	9	14	26
Top quartile	3	2	25
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	100 %	100 %	100 %
<sup>a</sup> Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.			

Source: Author's tabulations based on data from the *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth* (CD-ROM) Ohio State University.

(Burtless, 1997)



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**Table 4**

The Employment Retention and Advancement Project

## Selected Characteristics of Sample Members at Baseline

Characteristics	Full Sample
<b>Age (%)</b>	
20 years or younger	1.1
21-30	35.6
31-40	46.3
40 years or older	17.0
Average Age	33.4
<b>Race/Ethnicity (%)</b>	
Black, non-Hispanic	87.3
Hispanic	8.1
White, non-Hispanic	3.9
Other	0.7
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	0.6
Female	99.4
<b>Number of children in household (%)</b>	
0	0.4
1	10.5
2	22.2
3 or more	66.9
<b>Average number of children</b>	3.4
<b>Age of youngest child (%)</b>	
2 years or younger	25.9
3-5 years	23.0
6 years or younger	51.1
<b>Highest level of education completed (%)</b>	
General Education Development (GED) certificate	1.3
High School Diploma	35.0
Technical certificate/Associates Degree/Some college	7.5
4 years or more of college	0.2
None of the above	56.0
Any UI-covered employment in the 2 quarters prior to random assignment (%)	55.9
<b>Marital Status (%)</b>	
Married and living with spouse	3.7
Divorced	2.6
Never married	83.4
Other	10.3
<b>Sample Size</b>	1,615
<b>SOURCES:</b> Illinois DHS records and unemployment insurance records from the State of Illinois	

(Bloom, Hendra, & Page, 2006)

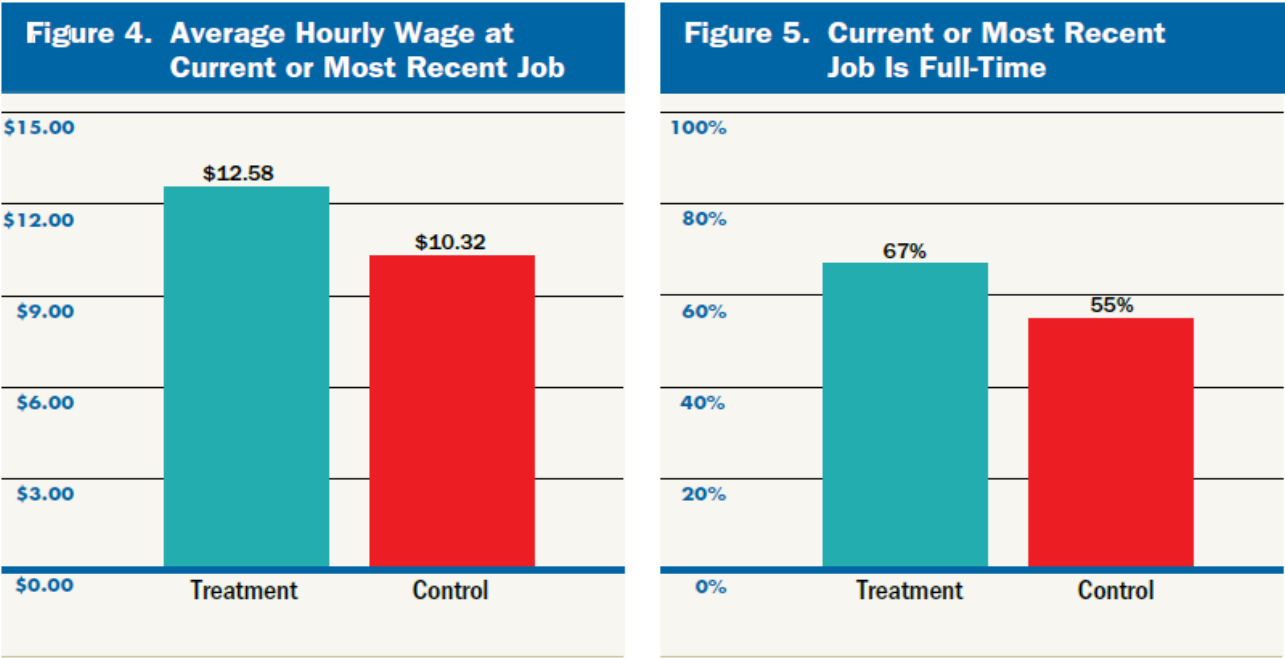
## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

The Chicago ERA program operated from February 2002 to June 2004 and targeted residents who worked at least 30 hours per week for at least six consecutive months, but remained eligible for TANF benefits. The program sought to help participants advance in their current jobs or move to higher-paying jobs. Using a lottery-like process, eligible individuals were assigned to one of two groups, the ERA group or the control group. Those assigned to the ERA group received TANF and were required to participate in the ERA program, while those in the control group could receive TANF or other services from the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), but could not participate in the ERA program.

Key findings were that the ERA group consistently received more guidance and found better jobs, while the control group continued to struggle with their job search and secure poverty level employment. (See Table 5).

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

Table 5



(Roder & Elliott, 2011) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009)

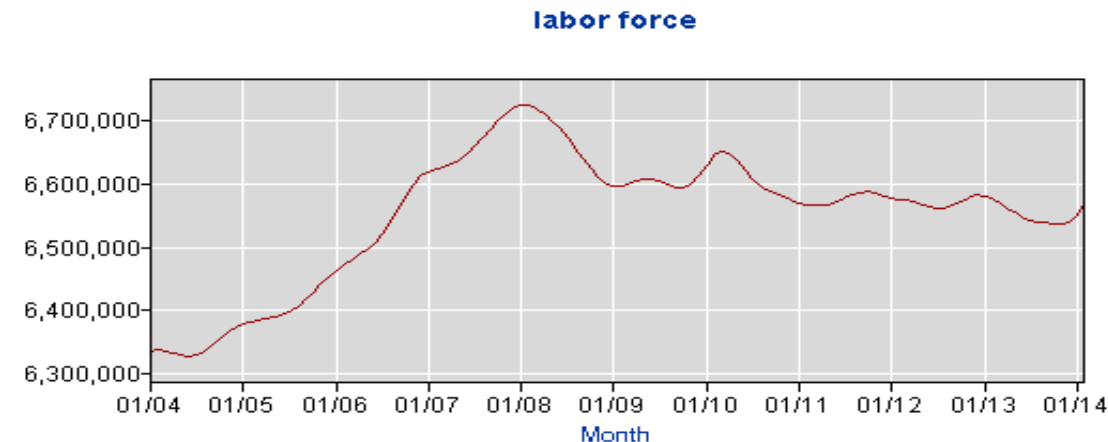
Although the Chicago ERA program was well implemented, and showed a contact rate of nearly 80 percent, many in the group were not interested in receiving program services. To add to this, many who participated faced personal or family problems that hindered their ability to progress. Despite these glitches, the Chicago ERA program reported modest increases in employment in the first two years. In Year 2, Forty-four percent of the ERA group worked in all four quarters of Year 2, compared to 39 percent of the control group, and the ERA group earned, on average, \$564 (9 percent) more than the control group. Based on this evidence, one can surmise that ERA was successful in helping its participants move to higher-paying jobs in the formal labor market and that the program helped the State realize a slight decrease in unemployment. (See Table 6)

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

Table 6

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Series Id: LASST1700000000000003  
Seasonally Adjusted  
Area: Illinois  
Area Type: Statewide  
State/Region/Division: Illinois



(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009)

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

Analysis of quantitative data compiled by ERA revealed that, by the end of the first year, there was a large reduction in TANF receipt. In a comparison of participants receiving TANF benefits the Chicago ERA program reports a 15% difference between the groups (ERA group – 37%; control group – 52%), (Bloom, Hendra, & Page, 2006). Moreover, Bloom, et al., assert that, “ERA generated large reductions in TANF receipt, and it appears that some people left welfare to avoid participating in the program.” (pp. ES-6).

### EVIDENCE

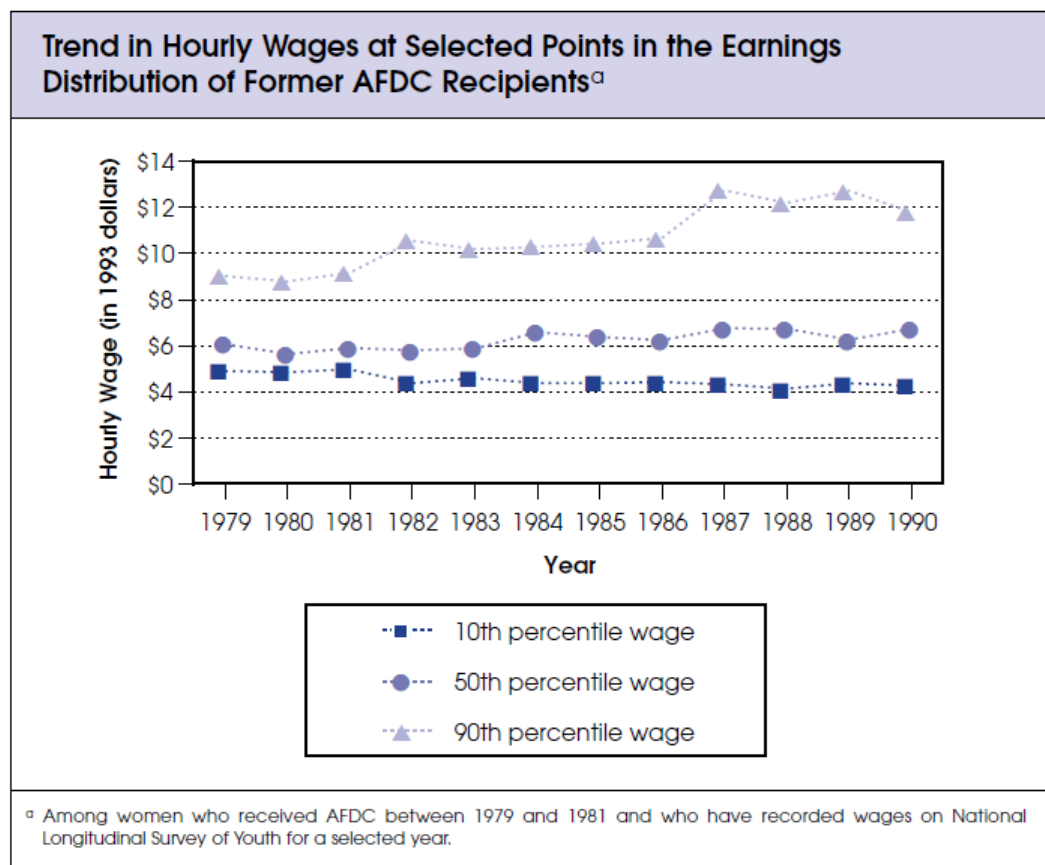
Based on the statistical evidence, young people who are part of a program that provides job skills training and similar services gain access to higher-quality jobs, reach job satisfaction and become self-sufficient. As previously mentioned, few youth employment programs have been able to positively impact program participants’ employment and earnings. Many programs are unable to engage young people enough to build the skills needed to succeed or provide access to opportunities once the program is complete. Caution is warranted in declaring the Year Up model a success, however, as past studies have found that early earnings gains often disappear over time. A future report will examine whether participants sustain the earnings gains four years after program application, and whether they make greater progress in pursuing a postsecondary degree. This report will also review the program’s costs and cost-effectiveness in light of these findings.

The initial results of this study offer support to findings from previous research on youth development and employment programs regarding what represents

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

effective practices. The results suggest that investments should be made in programs with a focus on opportunities in strong sectors of the local economy and employer involvement in program design and implementation. The findings support the implication that sector-based job training programs can significantly and positively impact the earnings of less-skilled, low-income workers (Maguire, 2010). The earnings impacts found in this study resulted from the Year Up job training program and its help with gaining access to better paying jobs. (See Tables 7, 8 & 9)

**Table 7**

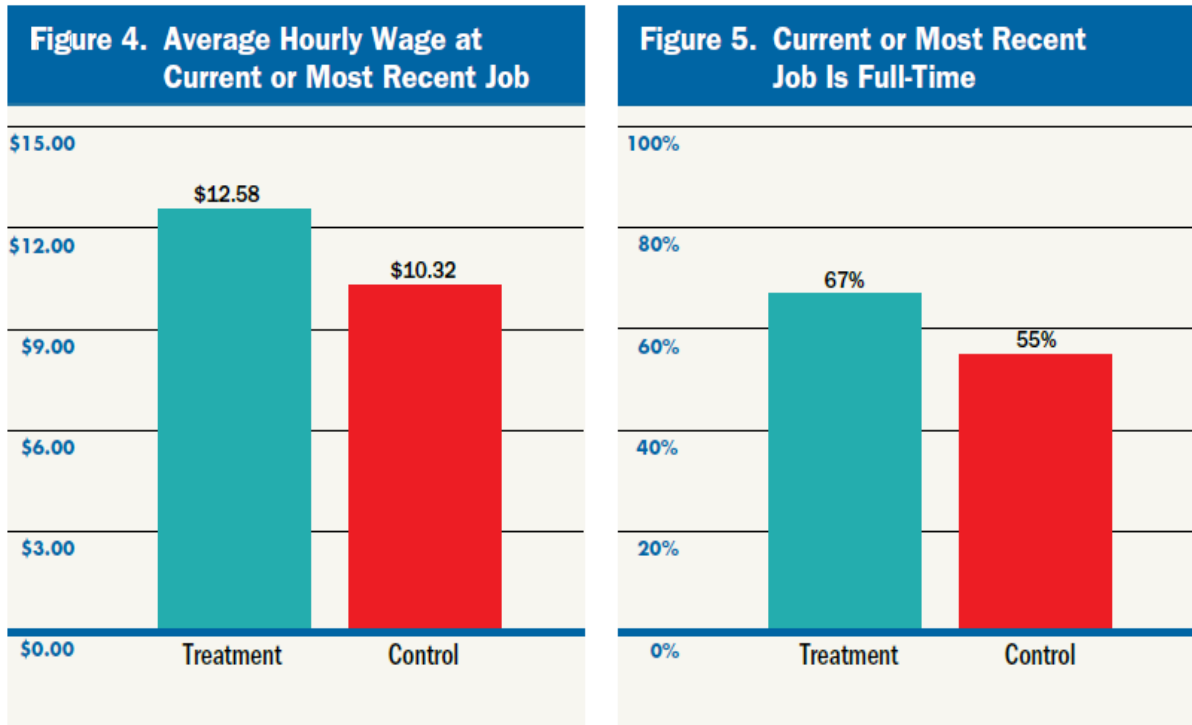


Source: Author's tabulations based on data from the *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth* (CD-ROM) Ohio State University, 1979-92. Available from NLS User Services, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 200, Columbus, OH 43221.

(Burtless, 1997)

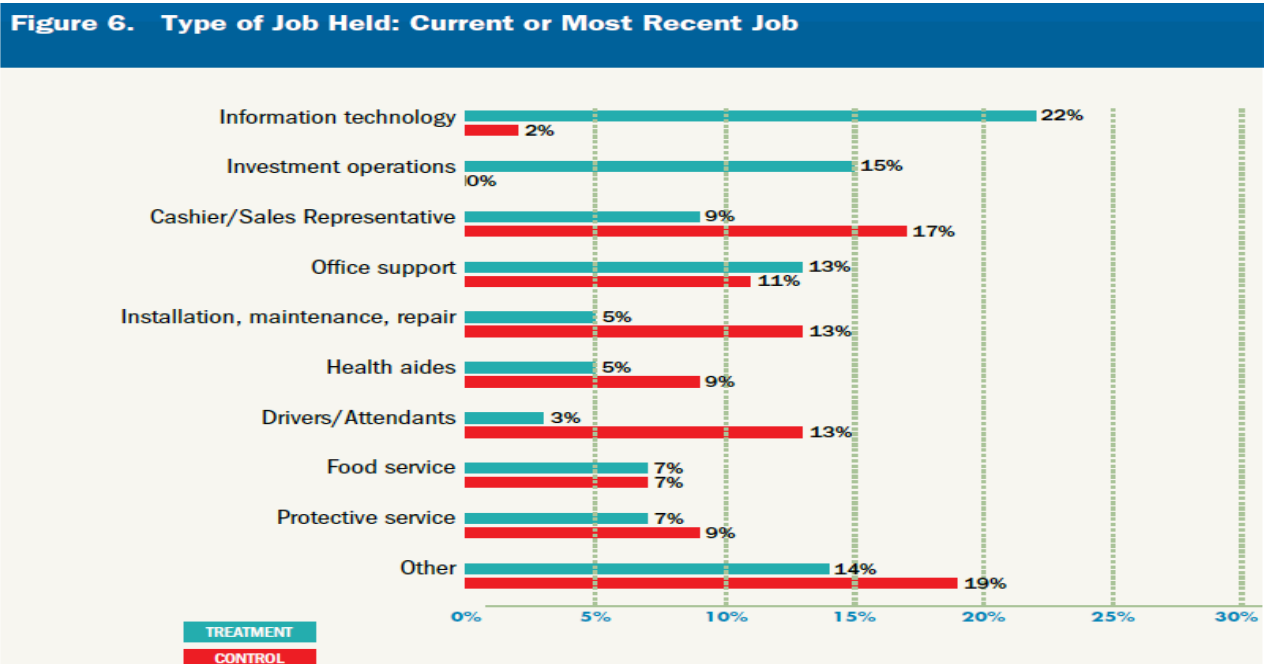
## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

**Table 8**



(MDRC, 2013)

**Table 9**



(MDRC, 2013)

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

### REFLECTION

I embarked upon this project with the knowledge and intent of proving that single women on welfare are more likely to secure and retain employment that will help them gain independence from welfare when they receive job and life skills training. In interpreting the data reviewed, I determined that it would be of greater benefit (individually and collectively) to broaden my focus. In doing so, the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, and its residents could benefit from less violence (moving those likely to commit violent crimes in the future off the streets and into jobs, creating a more constructive use of time); more college graduates (those in jobs that reward achievement become more motivated), fewer welfare recipients (as higher pay is received, self-esteem increases, the need for welfare decreases, and the desire for self-sufficiency increases), and, ultimately, lower city and state taxes. In sum, each program reviewed herein suggests that, because young adults are vulnerable in the labor market there is a great need to invest in honing their job and life skills.

Furthermore, people of color face even greater challenges, with unemployment rates of 32.5 percent and 24.2 percent among young black and Latino workers, respectively (Edwards & Hertel-Fernandez, 2010). The Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests that half of all new jobs created through 2018 will be in occupations that require either a postsecondary degree or vocational award (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009), to develop workers who can meet the demands of the economy. Based on my research, the Year Up and Heartland Alliance programs are



## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

closing the gap between welfare and non-welfare recipients by providing job skills and specialized training to those receiving TANF, and by assisting them with job searches. In providing this service for adults and youth receiving welfare (directly or indirectly), these organizations are preparing them to meet the current and future demands of the economy.

If I were asked to make changes in the welfare system to assure that welfare recipients were equipped with all the support and tools they need to become self-sufficient, I would suggest investigating the origins of the problems with the welfare system, make job and life skills training a requirement for recipients, evaluate each participant's circumstances, and design a system based on circumstances and movement toward self-sufficiency.

With a basic understanding of the history of welfare also comes the understanding that it would be difficult to change the welfare system. Based on the history of welfare, policymakers have placed a theoretical bandage on the visible problems of the welfare system. I believe that while the visible problem is the welfare system, there is an underlying problem that has caused policymakers to systematically apply these temporary fixes. Hence, I would recommend an examination of the origins of the problem. This could be done through historical literature reviews and data collections.

During the evaluation of the current welfare system, I would gather information about welfare recipients that would be used to formulate a plan for support and self-sufficiency. This plan would enable the participants to share their concerns, goals

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

and needs with a caseworker. Working with the caseworker, the welfare recipients would be encouraged to devise a 3 year plan for becoming self-sufficient. The plan would include training and financial support and would identify any real or perceived obstacles that might prevent them from reaching the goals identified in the plan. Creating a plan provides a visible roadmap designed to encourage goal achievement and give the participant something to work toward.

It is my belief that creating a different welfare system from what it has become, along with improvement in life/job skills, would not only impact the welfare system and bring positive changes, but it will also assist in some of the decision making that has resulted in welfare dependency.

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

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Training: Lessons Learned

**APPENDIX A**  
**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Acs, G., & Loprest, P. (2004). *Leaving welfare: Employment and well being of families that left welfare in the post-entitlement era*. Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute.

In this book Acs and Loprest take a look at the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and how it made massive changes to welfare system in the U.S. The authors take a look at the older welfare policy, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and compare it to the new program Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This is illustrated through data to support the difference and outcome of both programs. This was done due to the drastic decline in welfare recipients to see how they were faring with the new program. The authors used data from different geographic areas and compared the outcomes with national level outcomes; from their conclusions and information was drawn on the success of welfare reform then and in the future.

Burleson, B.R. & Greene, J.O. (2003). *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates

This handbook helps recognize the significance of having good communication and skill enhancement tools. The focus on social interaction skills gives a deeper depth of how these tools are needed in one's social and personal life, the importance of the two falls in place with some of the fundamentals of the project and will assist in the improvement of internal and the external needs of these skills. The authors support this evidence through the research that is captured as well as the other writers that

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

collaborated on this handbook; this provides a foundation on which this project can build from along with possible data that can be used in future development.

Ferrari, J. R., & Sayad, J. V. (2002). Processes, challenges, and outcomes: The transition from welfare to work. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 23, 65-87.

This journal provides a synopsis of issues, such as, the effect of welfare-to-work legislation on children and mothers, the social ecology of the transition to work, financial empowerment to mothers on welfare, career search efficacy among the at risk, and welfare reform to women's health. The editors illustrate the impact that all these issues have on the welfare recipient and a need to re-examine the welfare policy. One of the main issues with the welfare reform policies is the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which caused the programs reauthorization in 2002, resulting in an assessment of the progress of the welfare program. This journal provided some of the issues single mothers on welfare face in the transition from welfare to work, and the relevance of the programs to assist them by laying out the different issues that may or may not affect some single mothers when trying to transition from welfare recipients to working single mothers.

Handler, J. F., & Hansenfeld, Y. (1992). *The moral construction of poverty: Welfare reform in America*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

This book focuses on two arguments, social welfare policy and federalism. This book gives you a breakdown of both, and how they affect the recipients of welfare, as well

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

as the non-welfare recipients. One of the issues that the authors point out is how the social welfare policy separates the deserving from the undeserving poor and how they view one another through a status system by using different symbols of values such as gender, race, ethnic relations, family, and work ethic. The author summarizes how all these symbols play a role in different communities and how welfare benefits are distributed; the welfare policy is viewed as a moral system and used to affirm the “deviants.” The author shows that after affirming the deviants they are then controlled by the federalism, this allows the government to pass these findings down to local government, which applies its own policies and procedures in accordance to the outline given.

Hawkins, R. L. (2005). From Self-Sufficiency to Personal and Family Sustainability: A new paradigm for social policy. Academic journal article from Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, Vol. 32, No. 4

The article focuses on the idea of "self-sufficiency", and how it relates to terms such as, "independence," "self-reliance," and "self-supporting", they all have become an example of what is needed to escape poverty and they are used frequently in policies relating to this topic. This article gives clear examples of how self-sufficiency has been lost in translation and that it is a term that has been a Congressional focus since the 1960's. This article will be used to support my project in the way that something needs to change, it's well defined that self-sufficiency is the focus, but, so



## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

far there hasn't been a program or policy that has totally succeeded with this quest amongst the female welfare recipients.

Hyles, D. & Prevatt, C., (2012). Life Skills Training - A Workbook: A Reflective Work Book for Youth and Adults. Xlibris Corporation

This literature supports the need for life learning skills as well as gives different ways in which to empower my female audience with self-esteem, teaching communication skills, the importance of work relationships and how they affect you. These are only a few but main skills needed to survive in this ever changing world these women will become a part of in order to become self-sufficient. Because Liberation Practice International (LPI) works with international communities it would be a great resource to help deal with the diversity amongst the participants as it applies to training.

Jacobs, R. L. (2003). *Structured on the job training*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

The primary objective of the authors was to provide a guide by which organizations could plan their training programs efficiently. In the book, the importance of training to employee development and organizational success were discussed, and various training plans or programs were listed based on the specific needs of organizations.

Jencks, C. (1994, April 1). What's wrong with welfare reform?: Harpers Magazine. 1-3.

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

This article takes a close look at the history of welfare and the reason behind welfare reform. The author recalls the information used to determine the guidelines for welfare reform and the reason former President Clinton thought it would be a simple process. Specific data was used to determine how long it would take a single mother to get a job and how much money was needed to assist her in taking care of her family; as long as there was local government funding available for her to offset some of the cost, such as child care and food. President Clinton thought two years would be enough time for a single mother to accomplish this, but found out that two years wasn't enough time and that it affected the working poor.

This article's relevance is the history and data used to determine the estimated time line needed for a single mothers on welfare to become self-sufficient; as well as some of the local governments part in offsetting cost while striving for that independence.

Koon, R. L. (1997). *Welfare reform: Helping the least fortunate become less dependent*. New York, NY: Garland.

Koon concentrates on the education and training needs of the welfare recipient. It specifically targets single parents and supports the fact that without the proper education and or training, the possibility of welfare to work programs will not work, resulting in failure as an outcome. This study was done at a time in which the topic was one of the most controversial programs of the government, mainly due to the fact that attempts would be made to change something that had been in effect since the 1930's and the transition would be difficult. The study gives a concise order of

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

method to the possible reduction of welfare recipients' benefits, along with the steps it would take to make them self-sufficient in the workforce through job training, education, and placement.

This book is relevant to my topic. It discusses how many single parents, particularly mothers, lack the education and training needed to help them become self-sufficient and how without this they will possibly never become independent.

Lisman, D. C. (2001). The community college role in welfare to work. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 116, 49-72.

This publication focuses on the role of community colleges in the welfare to work programs. The editor takes a look at the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) as both an opportunity and challenge for community colleges to create welfare to work programs. With the opportunity given to the colleges, they will develop a short-term training program fitting the welfare to work program over a certain period of time. The editor gives scenarios of how this can work, but illustrates the challenge of the "work first" philosophy; this philosophy requires welfare recipients to work immediately rather than receive short term training enabling them to be employable. The editor draws upon the necessary adjustments to meet the welfare reform policy, as well as the examples of how community colleges can eventually progress.

Perez, C. (2004). *Reforming welfare policy: Past, present, and future* (Unpublished master's thesis). DePaul University: Chicago, IL.

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

This thesis was done to examine the welfare to work programs and the obstacles that many recipients face once they enter the workforce. The author used data from creditable resources such as the National Survey of America's Family (NSAF), National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Studies (NEWWS), both of whom work specifically with this issue. The study used local and national demographics of the welfare inhabitants to execute this study. The study was able to give a comparison of the welfare to work programs throughout the country to see how they rank.

The relevance in this thesis paper is pertaining to the demographics of the many training programs and the effect of the programs on race and culture

Rector, R. (2003, March 10). Welfare-reform-critics were wrong. *National Review*, 1-2.

This article directs its attention to the critics that condemned the welfare reform bill of 1996; the article gives some data to support the positive effects of the bill. Mainly focusing on child poverty for single-mother families (mainly black mothers), some of the data reported back maintains that child poverty is at the lowest levels in national history. Similar rates are also showing in the single-mother families and employment. The article addresses a study by Rebecca Blank, which showed how the employment rate rose in states with strong work incentive programs, while the states with weak incentive programs showed no improvement.

Rosenberg, D. (2003, February 24). While you were sleeping. *Newsweek*, 1.

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

This article is very short but quite interesting. It indirectly focuses on the many laws that are passed when Americans are preoccupied with major issues. The article speaks directly to the bill that was passed by the Republican Party without a public hearing and a brief floor debate. This bill was put in place to implement a stricter welfare reform bill, tougher work requirement, less training and education, as well as funding for child care.

Tabe, M. (2002). *Family cap and teenage pregnancy reduction: Comparison of two states, Illinois and New York* (Unpublished master's thesis). DePaul University: Chicago, IL.

This master's thesis focuses on the teenager of the welfare recipient, their pregnancy rate, and how it affects the family cap (the maximum amount of funding a recipient could receive). Two states are used as an example in this study to illustrate how unsuccessful the welfare reform programs are in assisting recipients with employment training across different states. This research data was analyzed and the results were compared resulting in little difference along with an ineffective program.

The relevance in this thesis paper is pertaining to the demographics of the many training programs and the effect of the programs on race and culture.

Thomas- McRae, T. R. (2003). *A test of a successful employment and training program serving welfare recipients* (Unpublished master's thesis). DePaul University: Chicago, IL.

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

This thesis was done to research better ways in assisting welfare recipients to become self-sufficient through education and job training programs. Information was gathered from existing programs to get a sense of the success to determine if more needed to be done. The study found that it was difficult to get the participants adjusted to this new way of life; this was mainly due to the fact that many of the participant came from a generation that was dependent on the little money they received and had adjusted their life accordingly. The study showed how many of the programs offered ongoing job training, financial readiness, and child care to help the transition. The study also found that many of the services were proven to be successful in keeping the welfare recipient working for at least six months.

Weil, A., & Finegold, K., (Eds.). (2002). *Welfare reform: The next act*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

This book takes an in-depth look back at welfare reform to see how successful it really was by re-evaluating the terms upon which it was created. The authors divided the research by several categories and incorporated the assistance from many other authors that specialize in the given chapter they wrote. Some of the topics covered were the transition from welfare to work, the family structure and childbearing before and after welfare reform, work opportunities for people leaving welfare, childcare, hard to service recipients, and the funding of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

Based on this review of the literature, one of the places to begin would be local government; they hold the key to many outlets for welfare recipients, (i.e., community colleges, junior colleges, training facilities, child care, housing, etc.). Overall, the data is available and the need is great. Further research should be done on the part of local government participation in supporting the need of welfare recipients with the obstacle they face on several levels (Rector, 2003).

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job  
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**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

**[Your Name]**  
**[Street Address]**  
**[City, ST ZIP Code]**  
May 1, 2014

**[Recipient Name]**  
**[Title]**  
**[Company Name]**  
**[Street Address]**  
**[City, ST ZIP Code]**

Dear **[Recipient Name]**:

The educational background, experience, and skills listed in your Elm Street News advertisement are only the beginning of what I can bring to your firm.

I have a solid history of producing results within a limited budget. I have built and successfully managed a staff of 20, and I deal effectively with customers, executives, and stockholders on a regular basis. All of these achievements are critical to firms, such as yours, that must compete in today's difficult economy.

My resume is enclosed as proof that I meet all the criteria listed in your ad. An interview would give me the chance to further prove my unique strengths.

I hope to hear from you shortly.

Sincerely,

**[Your Name]**

Enclosure



# Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

## APPENDIX C SAMPLE RESUME

[Your Name]  
[Street Address], [City, ST ZIP Code]  
[phone]  
[e-mail]

<b>Objective</b>	<b>A secretarial position in a fast-paced environment.</b>	
<b>Skills</b>	Excellent Organizational Skills • Strong Customer Relations Skills • Computer Proficiency • Data Entry • <b>Computer:</b> Lotus 1-2-3, WordPerfect 5.1, Microsoft Word, Alpha IV Data Base, DOS.	Telephone Answering, 12-Line System • Word Processing and Typing • 10-Key Calculator • Filing
<b>Experience</b>	<b>Secretary</b> <i>A. Datum Corporation</i> , Taylor, Michigan Handled all word processing and typing. Entered data for reports, production items, shipping, and inventory. Maintained computerized inventory of all parts, supplies, and products. Helped plan and organize company functions. Answered the telephone and represented the company in a professional and businesslike manner. <i>Accomplishments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researched and set up a voice mail answering system. Result: Saves time for both the receptionist and the customers.</li><li>• Created, organized, and set up an information center for manuals and schematics. Result: Better access to needed information, and less time searching for it.</li><li>• Employee of the Month, July, 1993.</li></ul>	<i>1990 to Present</i>
	<b>Sales Clerk</b> <i>Tailspin Toys</i> , Taylor, Michigan	<i>1989 - 1990</i>
<b>Education</b>	<b>Word Processing/Data Processing</b> <i>Elm Tree Community College</i> , Taylor, Michigan <b>Diploma</b> <i>Maple High School</i> , Monroe, Michigan	<i>1987 - 1989</i>  <i>1987</i>
<b>References</b>	Furnished on request.	

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job  
Training: Lessons Learned

APPENDIX D

FUTURE PLAN FORM

**What Do You Want To Be Doing Ten Years From Now?**

*Imagine yourself ten years from now. If you could choose exactly what your life would be like, what would you be doing? Be realistic, but positive. It's OK to dream! Take your time and answer the following questions. Use the back of the sheet as needed.*

1. Where would you be living, in what sort of area, in what sort of home?

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2. How would you be making a living, doing what sorts of things?

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3. Who or with what sorts of people would you be sharing your time?

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4. How would you spend your leisure time, doing what sorts of things?

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5. Any other important details?

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Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job  
Training: Lessons Learned

**APPENDIX E**  
**EVALUATION FORM**

**Participants Evaluation Form**

We hope to continue to improve our job readiness instruction. To help us do so, we would appreciate your completing the questions that follow:

\*(You may use the back of this sheet for additional comments)

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being very helpful and 1 being horrible), how would you rate the overall helpfulness of this course?
2. Do you feel more prepared to find a job as a result of the course? Yes or no. Why?
3. Do you feel more positive about yourself as a result of the course activities? Yes or no. If yes, give a specific example of what made you feel this way.
4. Has taking this course helped you feel more motivated about goal setting and taking steps toward those goals? Yes or no. Why?
5. Do you think that future students would benefit from taking this course? Yes or no. If yes, what was the best part to you?
6. Do you have any other comments?

Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job  
Training: Lessons Learned

**APPENDIX F**  
**WORKSHOP EMPLOYMENT QUIZ**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the letter in front of the words that best complete each sentence.*

1. One of the best ways to find out about unadvertised jobs is to?
  - A. Write to companies in the phonebook
  - B. Read the want ads
  - C. Talk to working friends and family members
2. You can often find out about unadvertised jobs from?
  - A. Bus and train posters
  - B. Community services
  - C. Newspapers and magazines
3. You can survey workplaces to find out where there is a need for workers with?
  - A. Your interests, abilities, and experience
  - B. Your height and weight
  - C. Your age and grades
4. When you find a place you think you would like to work, you should?
  - A. Just walk in and ask for a job
  - B. Find out more about the place first
  - C. Ask someone to recommend you
5. When you are ready to apply for a job, see?
  - A. One of the workers
  - B. One of the customers
  - C. A person who does the hiring
6. Look clean and neat?
  - A. Only if the job is in an office
  - B. No matter what kind of job it is

## Helping Unskilled Welfare Recipients Succeed with Basic Life Skills and Job Training: Lessons Learned

- C. If the job is in a restaurant
7. Be ready to talk about?
- A. How you can help the employer
  - B. Any problems you are having
  - C. Who your friends are
8. Tell about your work experience?
- A. Only if you got paid for it
  - B. Only if it is exactly the same as the job calls for
  - C. Even if it is not exactly the same as the job calls for
9. Employers often like to hire people who?
- A. Have a positive attitude
  - B. Brag and ask for high pay
  - C. Are not sure of themselves
10. If you really want to work for someone who says he or she can't afford to hire you?
- A. Give up and look for another place to work
  - B. Say you will try again later
  - C. Offer to work for no pay for a while

APPENDIX G  
WORKSHOP OUTLINE

# Job Training/Life Skills Workshop Outline



## Objective

- The objective of these workshops is to provide basic life skill/job training to disadvantaged single female parents and teens, between the ages of fourteen through twenty four in the urban community through workshops geared around the needs of each participant.

## Experiential Objective

- To assist in the development of participants currently on welfare and or recently disengaged from welfare with the ability to become self-sufficient and become the heads of their household, as well as become better parents, while cutting their ties with the welfare system altogether.



## Space Arrangement/Material

- Twelve months access to park district
- Approval to use the park district resources to accommodate single parents without babysitters during time of workshop
- Three small square tables large enough for four people to interact with one another
- Projector
- Speaker
- Writing utensils
- Questionnaires'

## Availability of Space

- One room large enough to accommodate twelve participants
- The workshops are broken up in four week increments, meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays
- Two hours per work day for each workshop
- Between the ours of 5pm thru 7pm

# Workshop Module Set-Up



# Module One

## Week One

- Day One:
  - Workshop introduction
    - Icebreakers
    - Pre-screening
  - Instructor preparation
  - Plan for and stick to the class schedule
- Day Two:
  - Know your objectives
    - Start on time – sign in sheet
    - Assignments – incentives system implemented (gift cards)
    - Proper dress – what's appropriate (more on this topic later)
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Guidelines – respect for instructor and classmates



# Module One

## Week Two

- Day One:

- Understanding your skill sets
  - Personal self-management skills
  - General social skills
  - Drug awareness

- Day Two:

- Identifying your strengths
  - Skill set testing
- Managing your stress
  - Stress techniques
  - Overcoming stress



# Module One

## Week Three

- Day One:

- Parenting Skills
  - Assessment
  - Positive words and usage
  - Listening
  - Social skills
  - Understanding feeling



◦ -versus-



- Day Two:

- **Reflective** - Parenting Skills continue
  - Social Skills
  - Listening
  - Understanding feelings (both sides, parent and child)
  - Positive words and usage

**If I text a person in the same room as me, I stare at them till they get it.**



# Module One

## Week Four

- Day One:
  - Recap of week's one and two
- Day Two:
  - Recap of week three



# Module Two

## Week One

- Day one and Day two:

- **Welcome to Microsoft Office**

- **Word 2010**
    - Excel
    - Outlook
    - PowerPoint Presentation



Key Word Documents

**Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Word 2010
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Word 2010

**Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Word 2010
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Word 2010



# Module Two

## Week Two

- Day one and Day two:

- **Welcome to Microsoft Office**
  - Word 2010
  - **Excel**
  - Outlook
  - PowerPoint Presentation



Key Word **Spreadsheet**

### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:15pm – Week One Refresher
- 5:15pm thru 5:45pm – Excel
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Excel

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Excel
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Excel

# Module Two

## Week Three

- Day one and Day two:

- **Welcome to Microsoft Office**

- Word 2010
    - Excel
    - **Outlook**
    - PowerPoint Presentation

Key Word **Communication**



**Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:15pm – Week Two Refresher
- 5:15pm thru 5:45pm – Outlook
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Outlook

**Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Outlook
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Outlook

# Module Two

## Week Four

- Day one and Day two:

- **Welcome to Microsoft Office**

- Word 2010
    - Excel
    - Outlook
    - **PowerPoint**

Key Word **Presentation**



**Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:15pm – Week Two Refresher
- 5:15pm thru 5:45pm – PowerPoint
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – PowerPoint

**Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – PowerPoint
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – PowerPoint

# Module Three

## Week Two

- Day one and Day two:
  - **Establishing your worth to a company**
    - Know your support system
    - Employment goals
    - Short and long term goals (yours)
    - Following directions and it's importance

Key words **Stay Positive**



### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm - Know your support system
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Employment goals

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Short and long term goals (yours)
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Short and long term goals (yours)

# Module Three

## Week Three

- Day one and Day two:
  - Review of previous week
  - Jumping Hurdles
    - Barriers and resources
    - Identifying Support Systems
  - Employment Search
    - Participants job search methods
    - Most effective job search methods



Key word **Networking**

### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Review, jumping Hurdles
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Identifying support systems

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – participants job search methods
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – most effective job search methods

# Module Three

## Week Two

- Day one and Day two:
  - **Establishing your worth to a company**
    - Know your support system
    - Employment goals
    - Short and long term goals (yours)
    - Following directions and it's importance

Key words **Stay Positive**

### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Know your support system
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Employment goals

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Short and long term goals (yours)
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Short and long term goals (yours)



# Module Three

## Week Three

- Day one and Day two:
  - Review of previous week
  - Jumping Hurdles
    - Barriers and resources
    - Identifying Support Systems
  - Employment Search
    - Participants job search methods
    - Most effective job search methods



Key word **Networking**

### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Review, jumping Hurdles
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Identifying support systems

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – participants job search methods
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – most effective job search methods

# Module Three

## Week Four

- Day one and Day two:
  - Review of previous week
  - Completing Job Applications
  - Resume/Cover Letter & Creating an E-mail

Key word **Accuracy**



### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Review
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – completing job application

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – resume/cover letter creation
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – resume/cover letter review and creation of email



# Module Four

## Week One

- Day One and Two:
  - Time to Impress
  - Understand effective listening and communication
  - Interview behavior and appearance
    - *Before you go to the interview*
    - *First moves*
    - *The interview itself*



Key word **Informative**

### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Pre interview
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – First moves

### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – The interview
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – The interview

# Module Four

## Week Two

### Day One and Two:

- o Time to Impress continue's
- o Importance of interview questions
  - Closing the interview
  - Following up
  - Negotiating salary
  - Making a final decision

#### Key word Communication

#### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Post interview
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Follow up

#### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Negotiating salary
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Final decision



# Module Four

## Week Three

### Day One and Two:

- o Dress to Impress
- o Dress and Groom Carefully
  - Conservative
  - Consider an interview "uniform"
  - Dress up not down



Key word **Apperance**

### Monday

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Conservative dressing
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Interview uniform (details and suggestions)

### Wednesday

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Dressing up (role play)
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Dressing down (role play)



# Module Four

## Week Four

### Day One and Two:

- o Know your future employer
  - Research
  - Ask good questions
    - o Good and bad questions
  - Show supportive documents
  - Make the employer want to hire you

### Key word Knowledge

#### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Research company
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Good and bad questions

#### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Supportive documents
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Impress employer



# Module Five

## Week One

### Day One and Two:

- o Money and your relationship with it
  - Your financial history
  - Money and family
  - Household budgeting
  - Dumb dollar and smart dollar
  - Bank versus currency exchanges

Key word **Value**

#### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Your financial history
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Money and family

#### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Money and family
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Dumb dollar/smart dollar



# Module Five

## Week Two

### Day One and Two:

- o Money and your relationship with it
  - Your financial history
  - Money and family
  - Household budgeting
  - Dumb dollar and smart dollar
  - Bank versus currency exchanges



Key word **Value**

#### **Monday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Bank versus current
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – Household budgeting

#### **Wednesday**

- 5:00pm thru 5:45pm – Money and Family
- 15 minute break
- 6:00pm thru 7:00pm – Money and your relationship with it



# Module Five

## Week Three

Day One and Two:

- Recap/Review
- Life Coach assigned
- Visit from college representatives

Let's  
Recap



# Module Five

## Week Four

Day One and Two:

- Recap/review
- Makeover Time
  - Interview outfits
  - Grooming bag
  - **NEW YOU**





## End of Modules

All participants will continue to be monitored and are considered alumni of the workshop. They can always return for refresher courses or any support needed.