

The Boston Private Industry Council

# HomeWork Year 4 Quantitative Report

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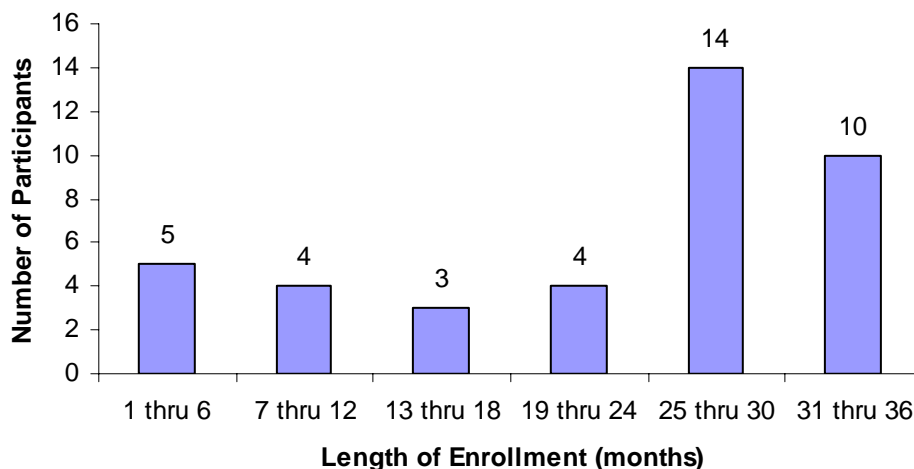
## Introduction

The HomeWork Program (HWP) is a multi-agency approach to serving chronically homeless disabled adults in Boston. It is funded jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program aims to change the system under which the chronically homeless are served by coordinating and integrating the services of multiple agencies and organizations.

Four years into the program, this report presents an update to demographic and socioeconomic data about the current program participants and their success in achieving stable housing and employment.<sup>1</sup> Using Year 3 data as a basis for comparison, the report also examines the changes in both housing and employment outcomes between 2006 and 2007. Those who were active in HWP during both Year 3 and Year 4 (a group we call the “persisters”) are compared to those who did not remain in the program and those who were new to HWP in Year 4. Finally, in contrast to last year’s report, this report also examines the data for “inactive” HWP participants — those who are registered in the program but are not currently active in program activities.

As of June 30, 2007, 40 people were enrolled in and actively receiving services from HomeWork and two others were active during the year but died before the year ended.<sup>2</sup> Nearly two-thirds had been enrolled for between two and three years, about 18 percent for one to two years, and about a fifth for less than a year. Figure 1, below, presents the details on length of active participation.

**Figure 1: Length of Active Participation in HWP**

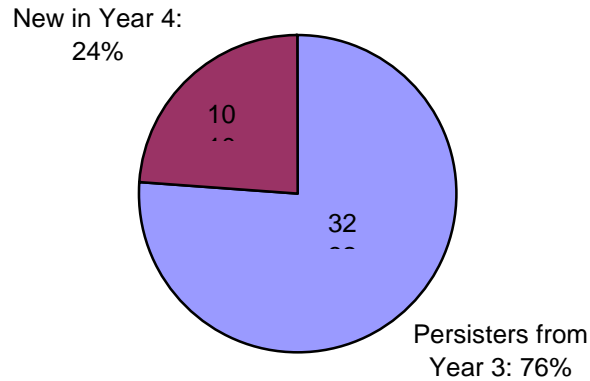


<sup>1</sup> All demographic and outcome data presented in this report were collected on June 30, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> “Active” participants are those who were currently receiving HomeWork services as of June 30, 2007. “Inactive” participants are those who received HomeWork services in the past but did not respond to offers of service or efforts to contact them for 90 days or more prior to June 30, 2007.

Eight participants who were active during Year 3 of HWP left the program in Year 4 and were replaced by ten new participants.<sup>3</sup> As shown in Figure 2, more than three-quarters of the Year 4 active participant group was made up of “persisters,” who were also active in Year 3.

**Figure 2: Composition of Active Participant Group**



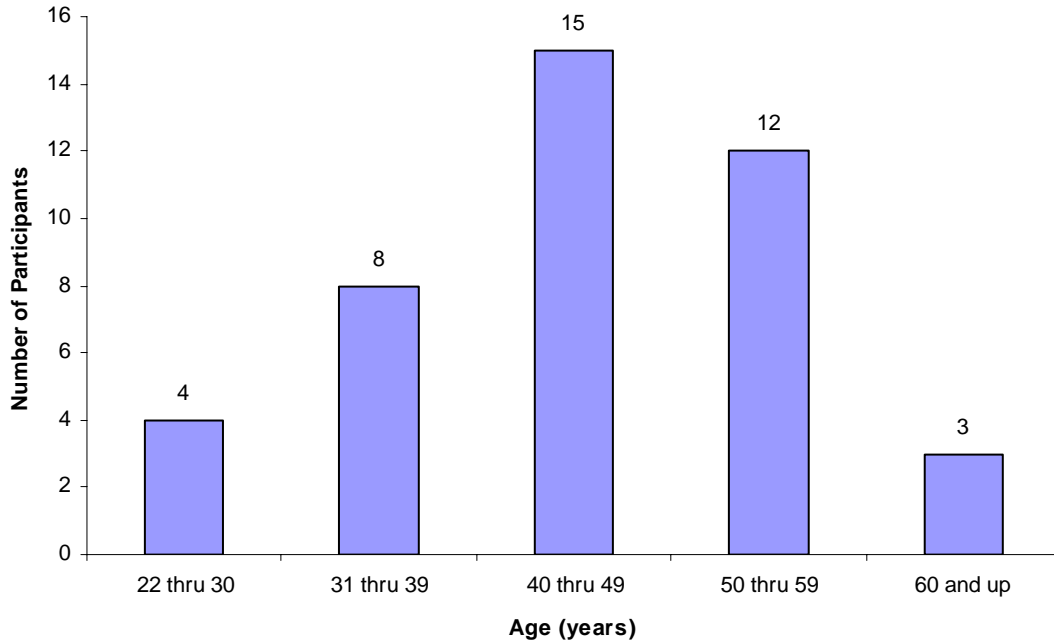
### Who Are the Participants?

Thirty-six (36) men and six women make up the active participant group in Year 4. They range in age from 22 to 63 and have an average age of 45. About two-thirds (64.3%) are between the ages of 40 and 60. A small number (7.1%) are older than sixty, and the remaining 30% are younger than forty. (See Figure 3 for the age distribution of participants.)

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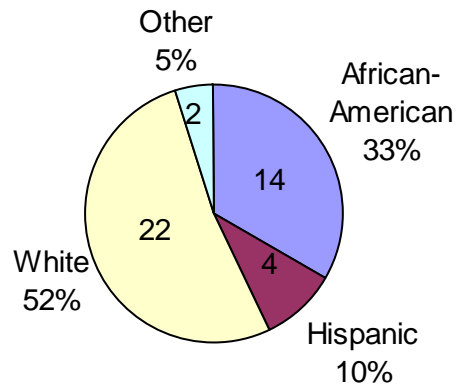
<sup>3</sup> “New” in Year 4 is defined as not having been active in Year 3. One of the ten “new” participants in Year 4 actually enrolled in May of 2004 but was not active in Year 3. All of the other nine “new” active participants enrolled during Year 4.

**Figure 3: Age of Active HWP Participants**



The HWP participants are a racially diverse group. About half (52.3%) are non-Hispanic white, a third are African American, and the remaining six are Hispanic (4) and "other" (2). (See Figure 4.)

**Figure 4: Race of Active HWP Participants**



With respect to educational background, it is notable that more than three-quarters of HWP participants have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent. Over a third have had some post-secondary education or training, and only about a fifth have less than a high school diploma. Table 1, below, presents these data.

**Table 1: Highest Educational Attainment of Active HWP Participants**

Highest Education Attained	Number of Participants	Percent of All Active Participants
Less than High School	9	21.4%
High School or GED	16	38.1%
Some College or Training	11	26.2%
Associate's Degree	2	4.8%
Bachelor's Degree	3	7.1%
Education unknown	1	2.4%
Total	42	100%

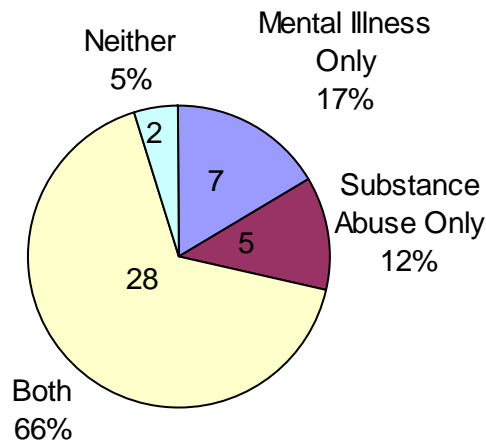
With regard to income, of the 36 active participants who provided income data, more than three-quarters (77.7%) have a monthly income between \$500 and \$2000. Almost a fifth (19.4%) have incomes of less than \$500 per month, and only two participants have incomes greater than \$2000. (See Table 2 for income data.) About half the participants receive some form of public assistance (SSI, SSDI, or Food Stamps).

**Table 2: Average Monthly Income of Active HWP Participants**

Income as of 6/30/07	Number of Participants	Percent of All Active Participants
Less than \$500/mo.	6	14.3%
\$500-\$1000/mo.	14	33.3%
\$1000-\$2000/mo.	14	33.3%
More than \$2000	2	4.8%
Income unknown	6	14.3%
Total	42	100%

HomeWork participants face many challenges to securing stable housing and employment, including high rates of current or prior substance abuse, mental illness, and involvement with the criminal justice system. All but two participants have a history of substance abuse, mental illness, or both. More than three-quarters (78.6%) have a history of substance abuse, 83.3% have been diagnosed with mental illness, and two-thirds (66.6%) have a dual diagnosis of both substance abuse and mental illness. (See Figure 5.) Slightly over half (55%) have a CORI record, indicating involvement with the criminal justice system.

**Figure 5: Substance Abuse and Mental Illness among Active HWP Participants**

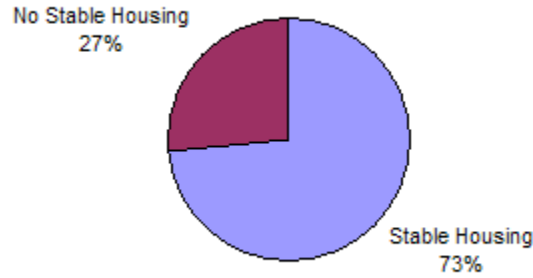


Finally, with regard to their work history prior to enrolling in HomeWork, data were available for 37 of the 42 active participants. Of these, six (14.3%) had a longest job stint of less than a year, 37.8% had held a job for between one and three years, and 18.9% had held a job for seven or more years at some point prior to joining HWP. About a quarter (23.8%) of the active HWP participants had served in the military.

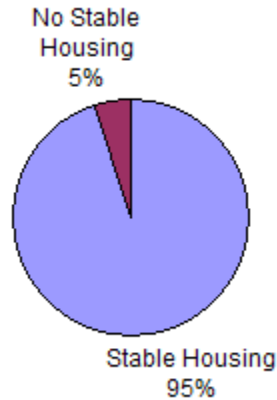
### **Are They Housed?**

At the end of 2006, HomeWork's original allotment of twenty Shelter Plus Care certificates was expanded by 17 additional certificates, giving the program the capacity to offer guaranteed housing to a substantially larger number of participants. As a result, a much larger percentage of participants (95%) were living in stable housing by the end of June 2007 than had been the case one year earlier (73%). (See Figures 6 and 7.) Thirty-two (32) participants used their certificates to acquire stable housing and another eight had found stable housing without a certificate. The remaining two participants had received Shelter Plus Care certificates and were still in the process of becoming housed. It is worth noting that both of these latter two had been in the program for less than six months.

**Figure 6: Proportion of Active HWP Participants Living in Stable Housing, Year 3**



**Figure 7: Proportion of Active HWP Participants Living in Stable Housing, Year 4**



**Are They Working?**

Over two-thirds (69.0%) of active HomeWork participants have been employed during their time in the program. The remaining 31 percent have not yet secured a job. (See Table 3.) This employment rate is similar to Year 3, when the corresponding percentages were 65% having held at least one job and 35% who had not yet been employed while in the program.

**Table 3: Number of Jobs Held in HWP by Active Participants**

Number of Jobs Held During HomeWork	Number of Participants (% of Total)
0	13 (31.0%)
1	18 (42.9%)
2	7 (16.7%)
More than 2	4 (9.5%)

Looking more closely at the thirteen Year 4 participants who never held a job while in HomeWork, we find that six of them were program persisters from the previous year and that seven were new to the program in Year 4. Thus, almost half of the jobless group were Year 3 participants who remained unemployed during the fourth year of HomeWork. These six jobless participants accounted for only 19% of all program persisters (6 of 32), the great majority of whom held at least one job while in the program. In contrast, the seven jobless participants who

were new to the program in Year 4 represented 70% (7 of 10) of all newcomers in that year. (See Table 4). This point will be explored further in later sections of this report.

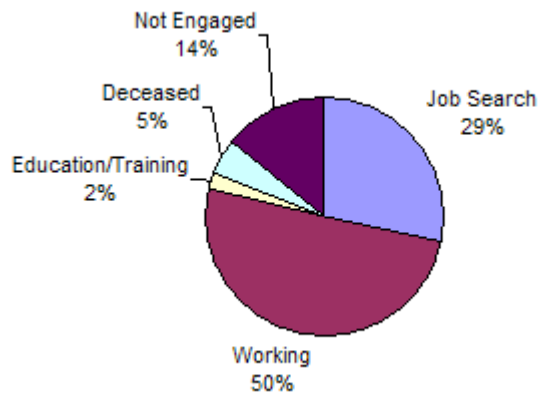
**Table 4: Employment Status in HWP of Active Participants in Years 3 and Year 4**

Group/ Sub-Group of Active HWP Participants	Number of Participants not employed in HWP	Number of Participants with 1+ jobs in HWP	Total
2006 (Year 3 of HWP)	14 (35%)	26 (65%)	40
2007 (Year 4 of HWP)	13 (31%)	29 (69%)	42

### ***Current Employment Activity***

While 69% of the active participant group have been employed at some point during their time in HomeWork, only half (21 of 42)) were working at the end of Year 4. Slightly more than a quarter (12 participants) were searching for work, 14.3% (6 participants) were not engaged in any work activity, one was enrolled in an educational program, and two had died. Figure 8 shows this distribution of current work activities for the active participant group.

**Figure 8: Current Work Activity for Active HWP Participants**

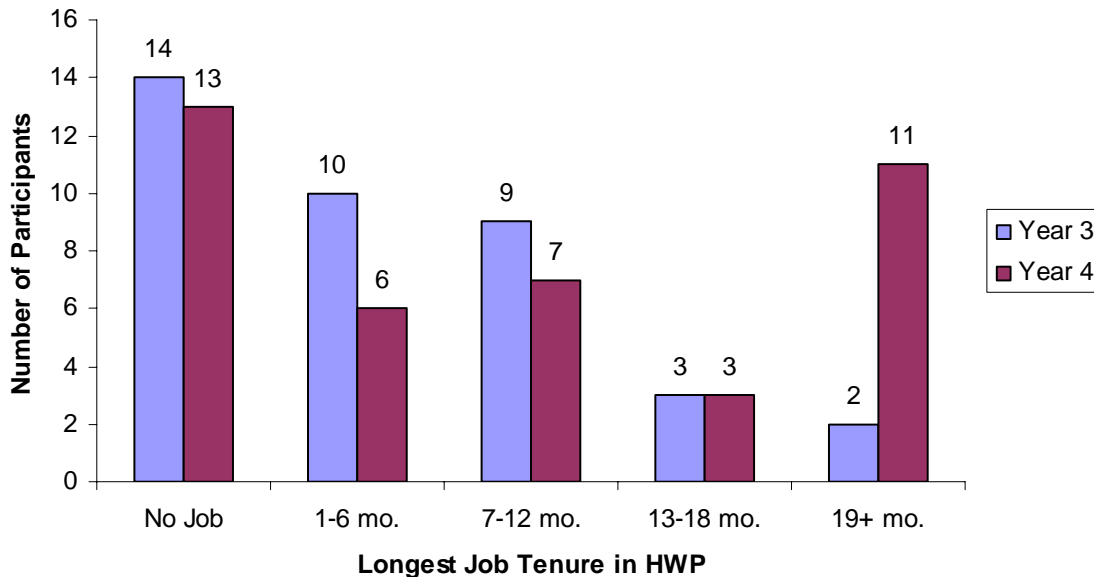


### ***Job Tenure***

Figure 9, below, shows that longest job tenure while in HomeWork has increased for the active participant group from Year 3 to Year 4. By the end of Year 4, a third of all active participants had worked in a single job for more than twelve months, while only 12.5% of participants had held a job for that long at the end of Year 3. Many of the program persisters who were working at the end of Year 3 were still working at the same job a year later, an indication of increasing employment stability for the active participant group.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Fourteen of the 32 program persisters (44%) had been working in their jobs for more than a year.

**Figure 9: Longest Job Tenure in HWP, Year 3 and Year 4**

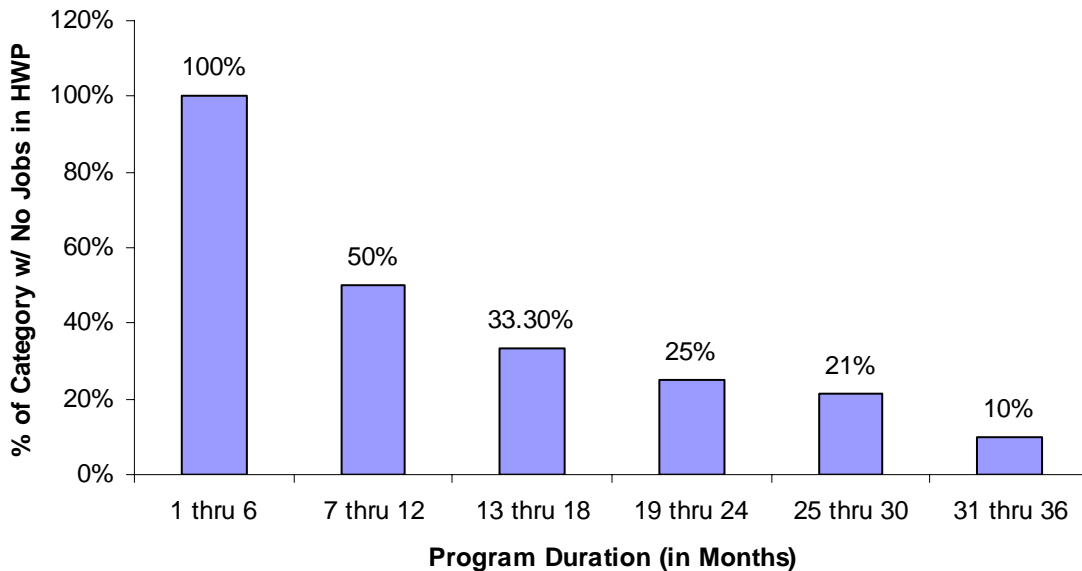


### ***Length of Participation and Employment***

The length of time participants have been active in the program seems to be associated with their success in becoming employed. As shown in Figure 10, *unemployment decreases with each additional six months of active program participation*. Only 10% (1 of 10) of those who have participated for more than thirty months were never employed during their time in HomeWork. In contrast, all five of those who have been active for less than six months have yet to become employed. Since more than half (7 of 13) of the never-employed group were new to the program in Year 4, it seems likely that a greater proportion of the participants will become employed by the end of next year.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that four of the thirteen (31%) who have not yet been employed have been enrolled for between two and three years, and among program persisters who have been enrolled for more than two years (24 participants), four participants (16.7%) remained unemployed at the end of the fourth year. As we will see below, it appears that there is a small group of participants for whom the challenge of becoming employed remains great even as their time in HomeWork increases.

**Figure 10: Percentage of Never-Employed HWP Participants by Length of Participation**



### ***Housing and its Relationship to Employment***

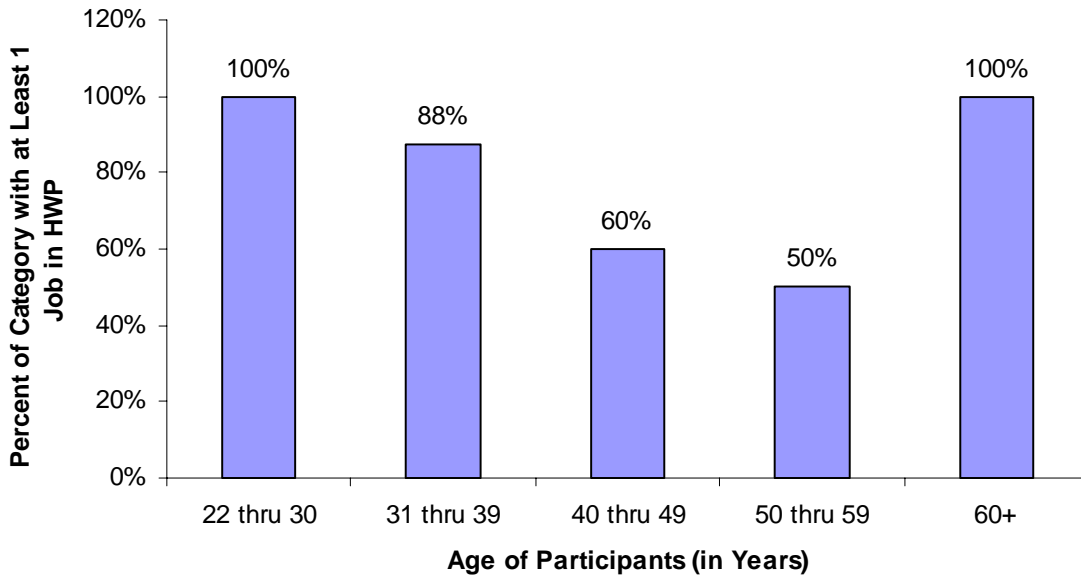
Our analysis of the Year 3 data suggested that the lack of stable housing can be an impediment to becoming employed. On the other hand, the higher percentage of participants stably housed in Year 4 than in Year 3 (95.2% vs. 72.5%) has not led to a corresponding increase in the percentage of participants to become employed. That percentage remained at about 67%. Now that virtually everyone is stably housed, it remains to be seen whether more time in the program, especially for those who were newcomers in Year 4, will result in a higher percentage of participant employment.

### ***Gender, Age, and Race and Employment***

The women in HomeWork have been less successful than the men in finding and maintaining employment. Three of the five have not been employed while in the program. The remaining two had two and three jobs since joining the program, with longest job stints of 19 months and 6 months, respectively.

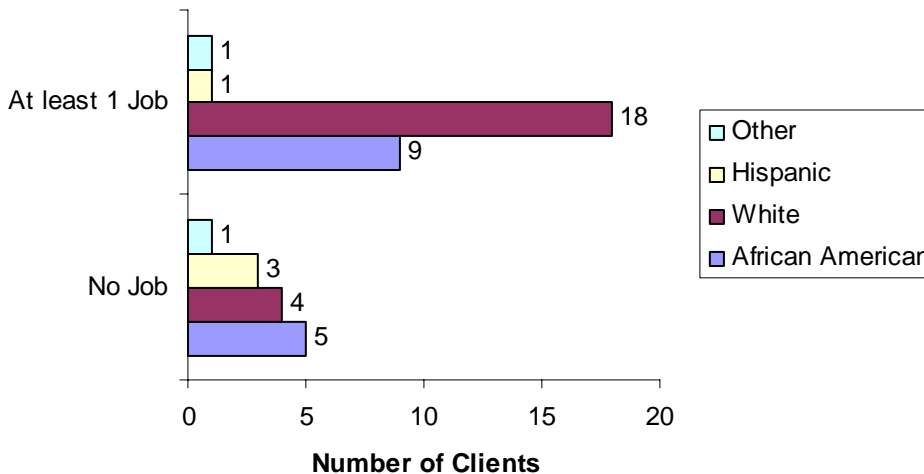
Younger HWP participants were more likely to be employed while in the program than their older counterparts. Only one of the twelve active participants under the age of 40 failed to become employed. In contrast, twelve of the 30 participants over the age of 40 (40.0%) were not employed during their time in the program. (See Figure 11.)

**Figure 11: Employment by Age Group for the Active HWP Participants**



Race also appears to be correlated with employment while in HomeWork. While less than a fifth (18.2%) of white participants were unemployed, 45.0% of non-white participants were not employed. (See Figure 12.)

**Figure 12: Jobs in HWP by Race of Participants**



***Challenges and Advantages in the Job Market***

Substance abuse and having a CORI record do not appear to be insurmountable barriers to employment for active HWP participants. There is no difference in the employment rate or longest job duration for those with substance abuse histories and those without. HomeWork participants with a CORI and those without had approximately the same rates of finding at least one job through the program: 63.6% and 66.6%, respectively. Similarly, receiving public

assistance does not appear to affect participants' abilities to secure a job through HomeWork one way or the other.

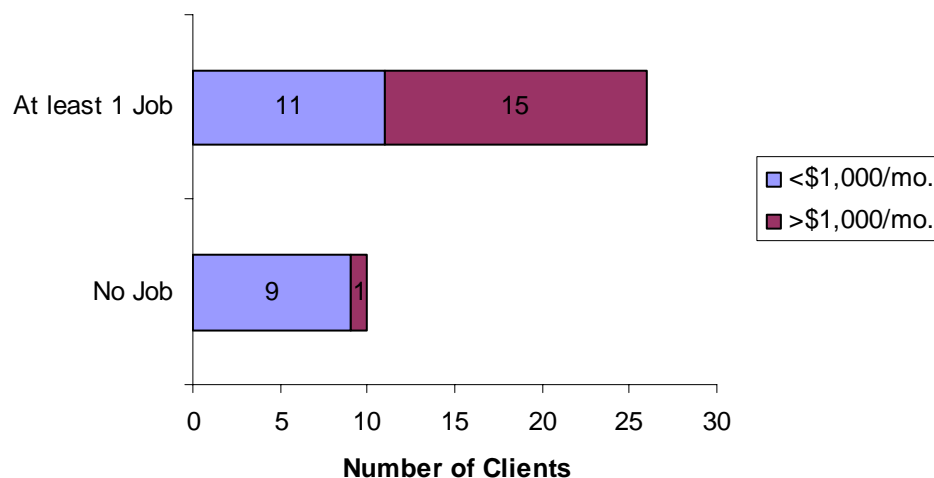
Likewise, being diagnosed with a mental illness does not appear to impede participants in finding or maintaining a job through the program. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of those without a diagnosed mental illness found at least one job, compared to 68.6% of those with a diagnosed mental illness. The mentally ill and those without mental illness had similar longest job tenures. What is not clear, however, is whether the specific diagnosis or severity of the illness has an effect on a participant's ability to hold a job.

Just under a quarter (23.8%, or 10 of 42) of HWP participants are veterans. Veterans in HomeWork are more likely to be employed while in the program than non-veterans. Only two of the ten veterans have remained unemployed, as compared to more than a third (37.5%) of the 32 non-veterans. Apparently, those who serve in the military have an advantage in the job market over those who do not.

### ***Income and Employment***

Not surprisingly, monthly incomes were lower among those who were not employed during their time in the program. Almost all (90%) of those who remained unemployed had monthly incomes below \$1,000, while only 42.3% of those who had found at least one job through the program did. Looking at it another way, four of the six people earning less than \$500 per month (66.6%) were unemployed, compared to only 6.3% of the 16 earning more than \$1000 per month. (See Figure 13.)

**Figure 13: Average Monthly Income by Employment in HWP**

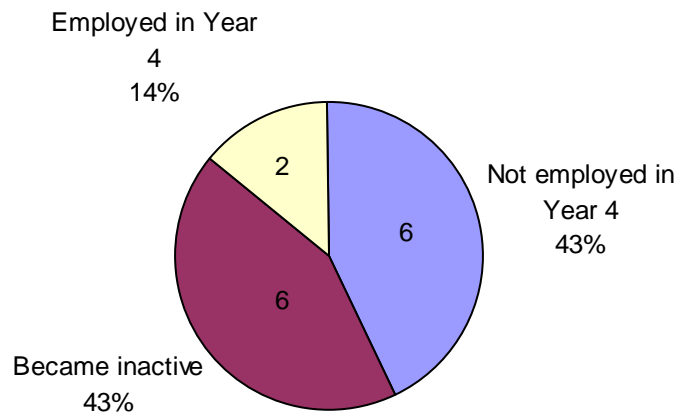


### **What Happened to Those Who Were Jobless in Year 3?**

As we have seen above, of the thirteen participants who have never been employed during their time in HomeWork, six were persisters from Year 3 and the other seven were newcomers to the program in Year 4. In this section of the report, we look more closely at those participants who were not employed during Year 3 and track them into Year 4 of the program.

At the end of Year 3 (June 2006), there were 14 HomeWork participants who had not yet been employed during their time in the program. Of these, two remained in HomeWork and became employed during Year 4, six remained in the program but did not become employed, and six became inactive in the program (see Figure 14). Since only two of the fourteen (14.2%) in the “never employed” group in Year 3 stayed in the program and found a job, it raises the question of whether certain individuals have substantially greater barriers to employment than the rest of the participant population.

**Figure 14: Program Outcomes for Those with No Jobs in Year 3**



With regard to the twelve Year 3 participants who did not become employed while in HomeWork —those who remained in the program plus those who became inactive—are there any discernible characteristics that they share in common? Based upon an analysis of the data, it would appear that only one such characteristic is salient: being stably housed. The twelve were more than twice as likely to be without stable housing at the end of Year 3 than the population of Year 3 participants as a whole—58% vs. 28%. Otherwise, there were no apparent ways in which these twelve differed from their counterparts. They did not have different rates of CORI possession, mental illness, substance abuse, or dual diagnosis than the rest of the Year 3 active HWP participants. This does not rule out the possibility that the members of this group differed from the others in ways that are not represented in the data—type or severity of mental illness, for example—but such differences can only be discovered by a more in-depth analysis of individual case records.

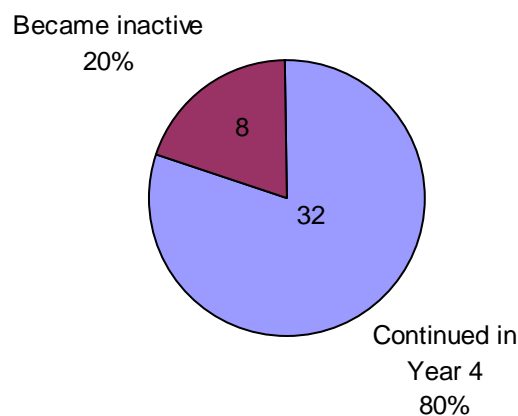
Interestingly, all six of the jobless Year 3 participants who became inactive in the program before the end of Year 4 had not been stably housed during Year 3. Only one of the six Year 3 “never employed” participants who stayed in the program did not have stable housing. Perhaps the lack of stable housing was the reason why these six dropped out, or perhaps the challenges

they faced made it too difficult for them to find housing or work, and maintain program participation.

The six who were jobless in Year 3 and then became inactive in Year 4 were also disproportionately likely to be white (5 of 6) compared to only one of the six jobless participants who stayed in HomeWork through Year 4. This racial disparity among the jobless inactives may partially explain the disproportionate number of racial minorities among the active Year 4 participants who had not found work.

### ***Program Leavers from Year 3 to Year 4*<sup>5</sup>**

**Figure 15: Inactive Rate among Year 3 Active Participants**



Eighty percent (80%) of Year 3 active participants went on to participate actively in HomeWork during Year 4, while the other 20% became inactive (see Figure 15, above). Looking more broadly at all of the eight people who were active in the program during its third year and then became inactive before the end of Year 4, it is clear that they were significantly less successful than their peers in attaining stable housing and employment during Year 3. Table 5 shows that only one of the eight inactives had secured housing and only two had been employed. This compares unfavorably to the almost three-quarters (72.5%) of the Year 3 active participants who had moved into stable housing and the two-thirds (65%) who became employed. This raises the question of whether those who became inactive did so because of their poor program outcomes or whether their disabilities were such that they could neither attain program goals nor continue to participate in HomeWork.

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<sup>5</sup> Program leavers are defined as people who were on the active participant list at the end of Year 3 but were no longer on that list at the end of Year 4.

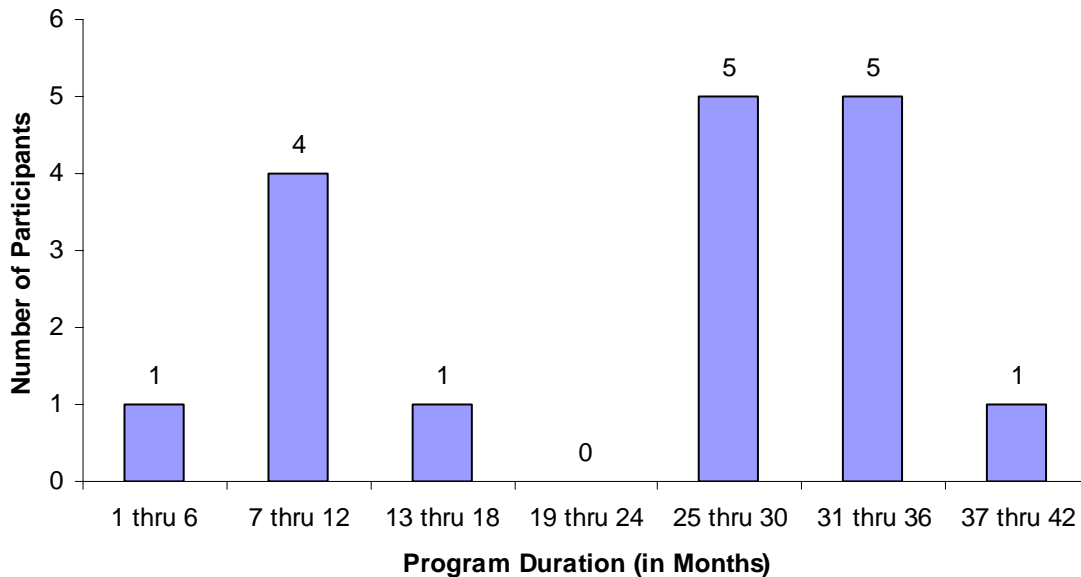
**Table 5: Housing and Employment Status of Program Leavers**

	Number Of Year 3-4 Leavers	Number of All Year 3 Active Participants
Stable Housing	1 (12.5%)	29 (72.5%)
At Least 1 Job in HWP	2 (25%)	26 (65%)
Total	8 (100%)	40 (100%)

### The Inactive HomeWork Participants

In addition to the eight program leavers between Years 3 and 4, there are nine other formerly active participants who have subsequently become inactive—a total of 17 over the life of the program. Prior to becoming part of the inactive group, all seventeen were active in the program for some length of time ranging from four to 39 months. Close to two-thirds (64.7%) were active for between two and three and one-half years, and another 29.4% (5 people) were active for less than one year. There was only one person who stayed in the program for less than six months. As a group, the currently inactive participants were active in the program for about the same amount of time as those who have remained active in HomeWork (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Length of Participation of Inactive Participants**



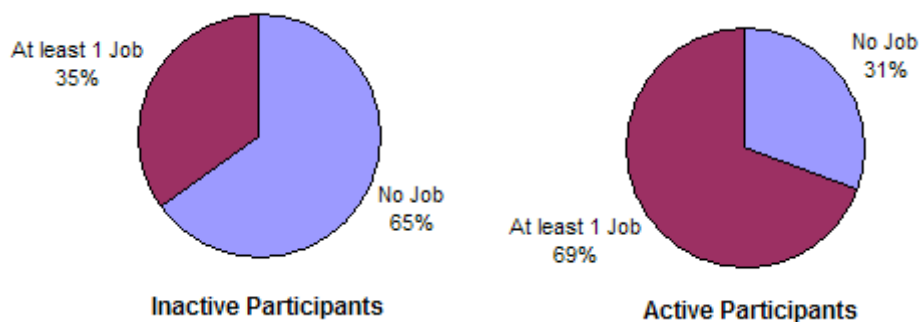
The characteristics of the inactive participants are similar in most respects to those of their active counterparts. There are no significant differences, for example, with respect to their ages or their education or work backgrounds. On the other hand, the two groups do differ in certain ways. The inactives are more likely to be women (29%, vs. 14% for the active group), to be African American (47% of inactives vs. 33% of actives), and to have a CORI record (81% of inactives vs. 55% of actives). Given the small numbers in the sample, with only 17 individuals in the

inactive group, one would expect a certain amount of fluctuation, and it is not possible to draw clear conclusions from these differences. It may be, for example, that having a CORI is closely related to participants becoming inactive, but the small size of the sample and the limitations of the data make it difficult to tell whether or not that is the case.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to housing outcomes, the data about the inactive participant group are spotty. Only three of the ten for whom this information is available are stably housed, and none of those three has received a Shelter Plus Care certificate. Another seven have an unknown housing status. This much lower rate of stable housing among inactive participants points to the achievement of active participants and HomeWork in securing housing for almost all of them.

Most of the inactive group have been unemployed since joining HomeWork. Almost two-thirds (64.7%) of the 17 inactive participants never had a job in the program, another indication that those who do not find work in the program are the most likely to drop out of active participation. (See Figure 17 for the employment status of active and inactive participants.) Seven of the 17 currently inactive participants provided information about their current work situation: four are working and three are not engaged in any employment activity.

**Figure 17: Employment Status of Inactive and Active HWP Participants**



## Conclusion

In this fourth year of the HomeWork program, there were significant increases in the proportion of the active participants living in stable housing. All but two active participants (95%) have secured stable living arrangements, compared to only 72.5% of Year 3 participants. Even the two who were not in stable housing by year's end had received Shelter Plus Care certificates and were in the process of finding stable housing. Much, but not all, of this achievement can be attributed to the increased allocation of Shelter Plus Care housing certificates, from 19 in Year 3 to 36 in Year 4.

More than two-thirds (69%) of active HWP participants were employed during their time in the program. Males, veterans, whites and young people have had greater success than other

<sup>6</sup> It will be recalled (see page 12, above) that active participants with a CORI record were no less likely to have found a job under HomeWork than those without a CORI. More data and analysis would be needed to determine whether part of the reason for this is that many of the participants who did have CORIs had already left the program.

participants in becoming employed. Only two of the ten veterans have remained unemployed, as compared to more than a third (37.5%) of the 32 non-veterans in the active participant group.

An important finding from the Year 4 data is that the longer participants stay in HomeWork, the more likely they are to become employed. Unemployment declines with each additional six months of active program participation. Among those who have been active in HomeWork for two or more years, 83.3% have been employed during their time in the program. Further, since more than half of those who have not been employed (7 of 13) were new to the program during Year 4, there is reason to expect that by the end of Year 5 an even higher percentage of HomeWork participants will be employed.

There is a small contingent of persistently unemployed individuals among the active participant group. Of the 14 never-employed participants in Year 3, six remained in the program in Year 4 and remained unemployed. Another six of the Year 3 jobless participants became inactive during Year 4. Only two of the fourteen participants who had not found a job in Year 3 stayed in the program and became employed the following year. This raises the question of whether certain individuals in HomeWork are facing substantially higher barriers to employment than their peers.

Most of the eight participants who became inactive between the end of Years 3 and 4 had not secured either housing or employment while in the program. In other words, those who do not find housing or work through HomeWork are the most likely to become inactive. It is not clear whether these poor program outcomes led to these participants disengaging from services or whether, instead, the challenges that these people faced were such that they could not attain housing or employment or maintain their participation in HomeWork.

Another positive finding is that job tenures increased dramatically in Year 4 of HomeWork. Not only were people finding work, but they were holding onto their jobs. Fully 38% of those who became employed while in HomeWork held their job for more than a year and a half, compared to only 7.7% of those who were employed during Year 3. Among those who were actively participating during both Years 3 and 4, more than half of those who were working had held their job for longer than one year. The increasing job tenure among HomeWork participants is a strong indication of increased stability and ability to function in the community.

Looking forward to the fifth, and final, year of the HomeWork demonstration, it will be interesting to observe whether these trends continue. Especially of interest, now that all participants are housed, will be whether fewer participants disengage from services over the course of the year and more find their way into employment. Based upon what has been learned so far, there is reason to expect that the Year 5 results will be even more positive than those in Year 4.