



Your Partner for Success

COMMUNITY JOBS FACT SHEET

Community Jobs is the first and largest program in the nation to provide welfare recipients with paychecks for their work in the public and private nonprofit sectors. A component of the state's WorkFirst welfare reform program, Community Jobs incorporates training, intensive support services, and paid work that all lead toward permanent economic self-sufficiency. Community Jobs creates a wage ladder for very low-income people and is one of the state's most successful programs serving hard-to-employ individuals.

Goal:

To achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency for individuals who are moving from welfare to work.

Key program elements:

Community Jobs is a work program.

- Participants earn a paycheck for hours worked.
- Participants step onto a job ladder that leads to economic self-sufficiency and steady employment.
- Participants begin a structured plan toward a living wage and independence from welfare.

Program basics:

While developing their own work and life skills, CJ participants improve their communities by working in community, government, and tribal organizations. Private nonprofit partners who administer each local program secure 20 hours of paid work for each participant and provide one-on-one support and mentoring to ease the transition to the world of work.

Program participants, who have had major difficulties in securing employment on their own, work in CJ up to nine months, long enough to gain both substantial work experience and an opportunity to deal with life situations beyond the day-to-day struggles to make ends meet. A typical CJ participant can be a bus driver, graphic artist, or teacher's aide; a counselor, administrative assistant, or carpenter, a construction worker, nursing assistant, or computer technician. While participating in Community Jobs, individuals receive \$6.50/hr for their work, are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and, like other working families in WorkFirst, have only one-half of their earnings deducted from their welfare grant.

The average Community Jobs participant earns \$944/month, well above the average welfare check of \$546/month. Individual assessments and Individual Development Plans (IDP) enable

participants to achieve career and personal goals. Participants develop a foundation for genuine job advancement and quality of life improvements after leaving CJ.

Local emphasis: CJ relies on local innovation to achieve its goals. Seventeen local nonprofit consortia responsible for implementing Community Jobs have designed specific programs to fit their participants and communities.

Background:

Community Jobs began operating as a pilot project in June 1998 with five consortia of community agencies administering the program in the counties of Pierce, King, Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Okanogan, Ferry, Grays Harbor/Pacific, and Thurston, Lewis, and Mason. In 1999, the state expanded the program to serve all regions of the state.

Administration:

CJ is administered by the Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED) working in partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Employment Security Department, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and community agencies. OTED contracts with 17 groups of private non-profit agencies that develop jobs in government, nonprofit, and tribal organizations, employ CJ participants to work in those jobs, and provide them with intensive support services. Contractors are held accountable through performance-based contracts that link payments to participant success. A strong referral system with the DSHS helps potential participants access Community Jobs services quickly.

Role of the Economic Opportunity Institute: The Economic Opportunity Institute (EOI), a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy institute, has worked in concert with OTED to design and implement the Community Jobs program. With its focus on helping low-income people to move into the middle class and sustaining economic security for working families, EOI has collaborated with OTED, DSHS, and CJ-contracted agencies to insure the integrity and quality of the Community Jobs program and improve its various components.

Results to date:

The following information is based on the preliminary outcomes assessment/evaluation for the five areas (12 counties) included in Phase I of the Community Jobs program (Pierce; King; Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Okanogan, Ferry; Grays Harbor/Pacific; and Thurston, Lewis, and Mason).

- 3,400 individuals have participated in Community Jobs through July 2000.
- 66% of CJ participants find employment after leaving the program.

- CJ graduates begin to move up an income ladder, with wages increasing in each successive quarter of employment. ***Median wages in the fourth quarter are 137% higher than those reported for the first quarter of employment.*** (See chart attached.)
- One year after leaving the program, CJ participants have an average annual income of \$14,772, more than double what they had prior to CJ (\$6,552). (See chart attached.)
- CJ participants and supervisors give excellent ratings to the program, with 85% indicating that CJ helps prepare participants for work and 90% rating the overall experience from good to excellent.

For more information:

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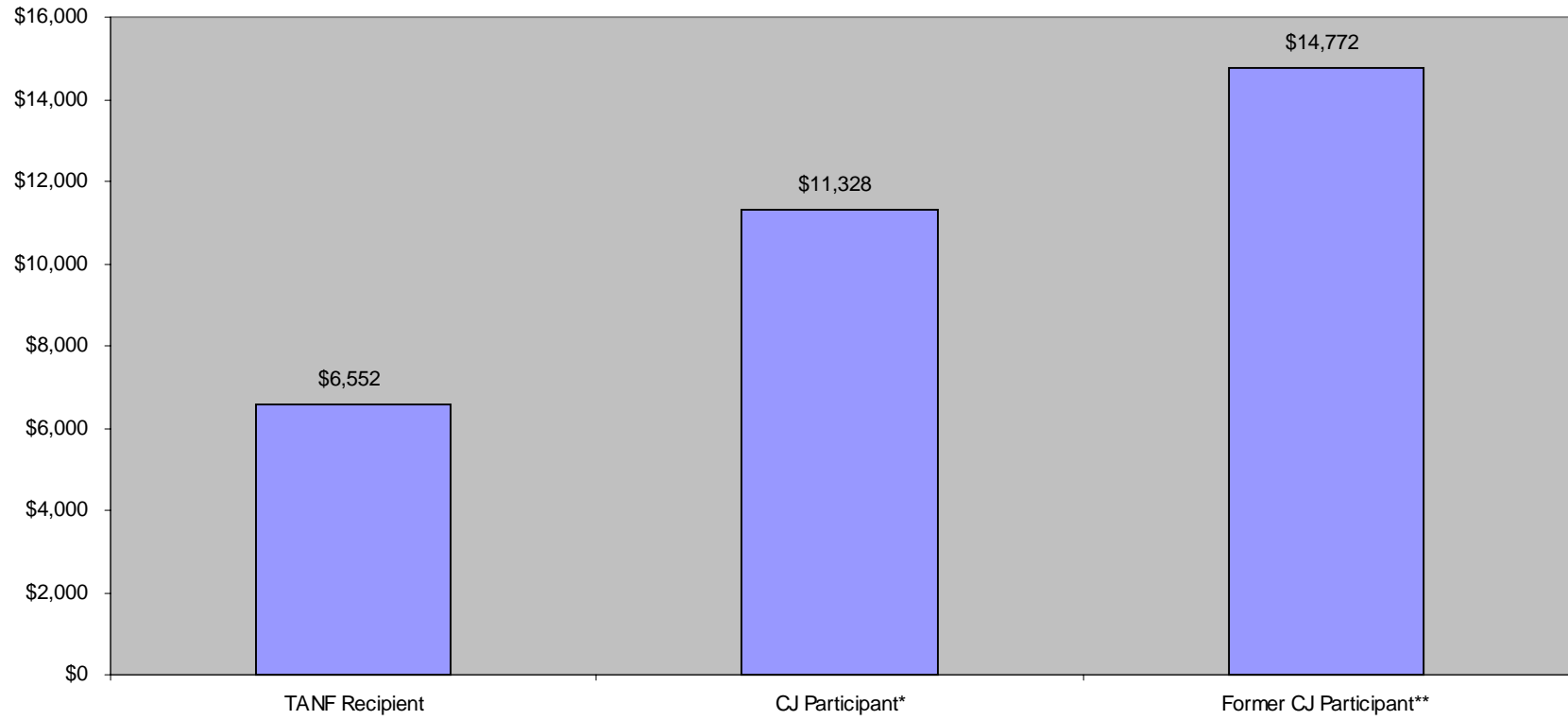
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Community Jobs - Annual Income Comparison



* Includes average CJ wages, average EITC, and an earnings disregard on TANF assistance

**Annualized 4th quarter average wages, average EITC, and an earnings disregard on TANF assistance

CJ Wage Progression

Median Earned Income for Each Quarter of Work Post CJ

