

**RAISING THE BAR: OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD
ON THE EBMC
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

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David Stevens prepared this report. He accepts full responsibility for its content. Agreement with the views expressed here should not be attributed to any other person or organization. Diane Bell and other EBMC colleagues are thanked for insights offered. Institute colleagues John Janak, Stacey Lee and Sang Truong provided essential data processing, quality control and presentation support. Comments about this report should be e-mailed to the author.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) has been a ten-year strategic intervention with a multi-faceted mission that relied on many partners to succeed. One of four basic EBMC mission statements in 1994 was to help Empowerment Zone residents to prepare for and enter employment.

This is the seventh in a series of reports prepared for EBMC by The Jacob France Institute at the University of Baltimore, all concentrating on pre- and post-EBMC employment and earnings profiles for defined EBMC service groups. These profiles document the progress made by EBMC and affiliated partners to prepare some Zone residents for employment, while assisting them and others to find jobs.

This report covers 8,521 EBMC clients, each assigned to one of five mutually exclusive EBMC service groups—an *Intake Group* defined as EBMC registrants who do not have a job placement, direct hire or referral to training date in the EBMC administrative records; a *Career Group* defined as those who have a Career Center job placement date; a *Customized Training Group* defined as those having a customized training activity referral date; a *Direct Hire Group* defined as those with a recorded direct hire date; and an *Occupational Skills Training Group* defined as those having an occupational skills training activity exit date.

The pre-EBMC segment of each client's employment and earnings profile is defined as the eight complete quarters preceding the client's reference date, as this is defined in the previous paragraph. The post-EBMC segment of each client's profile covers the eight complete quarters following this reference date.

Only administrative records provided to The Jacob France Institute by EBMC and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation were used in the preparation of the EBMC client profiles of employment and earnings. No survey information was collected. No field interviews were conducted. No modification of EBMC service delivery was attempted.

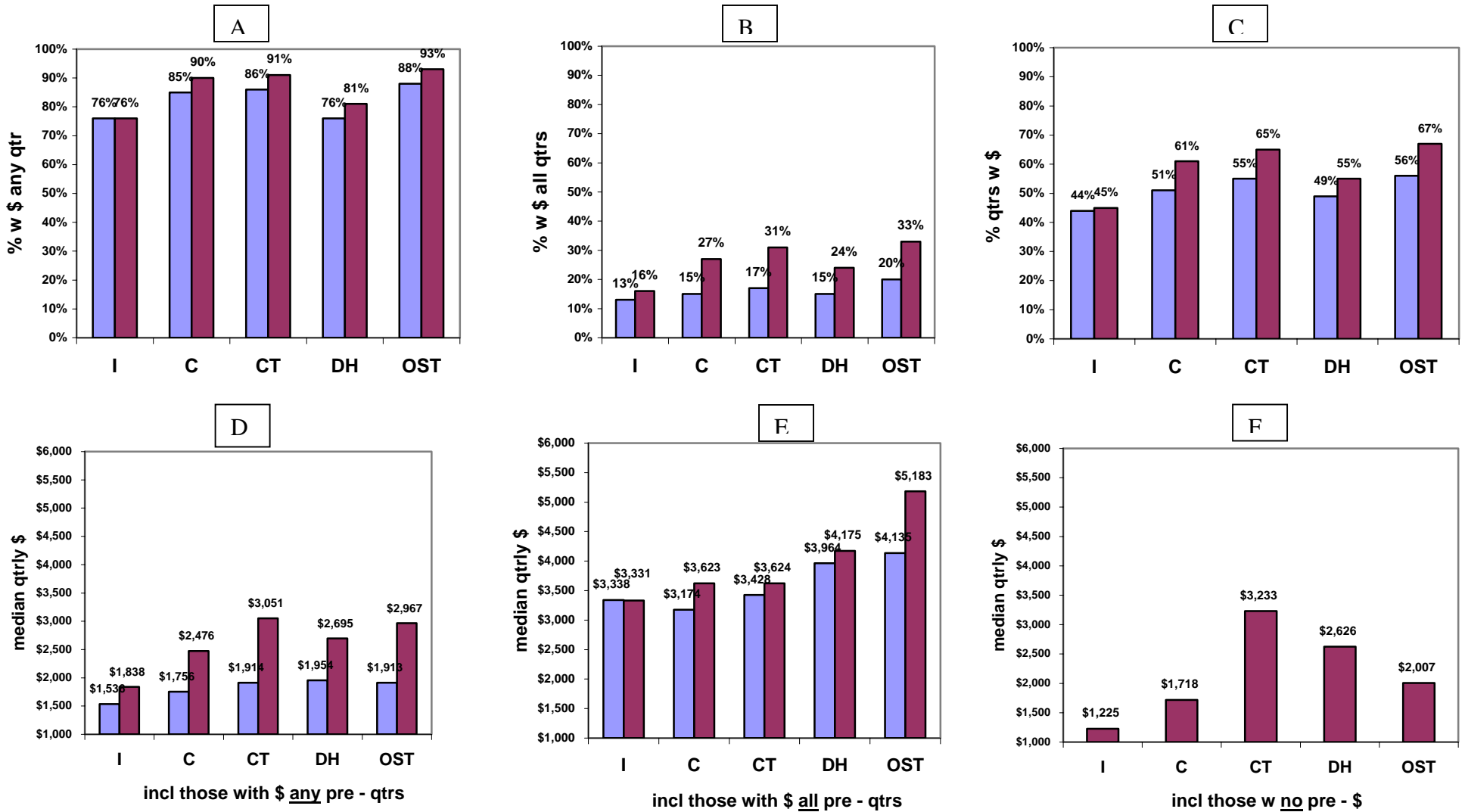
Comparisons among the EBMC service groups of the pre-EBMC, post-EBMC and pre-post change calculations are made without stratification by client demographics or changes in local economic conditions during the years observed. No attribution of cause-and-effect relationships is made.

Six graphs on the next page capture the essence of the basic findings from the series of reports conducted for EBMC by The Jacob France Institute. The three graphs on the top row, labeled (a), (b) and (c), focus on different facets of EBMC client pre- and post- commitment to work. The three graphs on the bottom row, labeled (d), (e) and (f), address pre- and post- inflation adjusted earnings levels.

FIGURE ONE

Employment and Earnings Profiles for EBMC Job Seeking Clients:
Two Years Pre- and Two Years Post –

Pre Post



I = Intake Group; C= Career Group; CT=Customized Training Group; DH=Direct Hire Group; and OST=Occupational Skills Training Group

A suggested way to interpret each of the six graphs on the previous page is to answer three questions about each graph:

1. Are the post-EBMC (darker shading) vertical bars higher than the pre-EBMC (lighter shading) bars? If so, this is reliable evidence of pre-post improvement based on the measure defined for that graph.
2. Are the post-EBMC bars high enough to declare success? Attribution of success is a more rigorous performance standard than pre-post improvement.
3. Are pre-post change, and post-EBMC level, differences shown for defined EBMC service group members judged acceptable for the investment made?

The report title, *Raising the Bar: Opportunities to Build on the EBMC Workforce Development Foundation*, hints at the author's answers to the three questions. The goal has been, and remains to raise the graphed bars that describe continuity of work and the earnings associated with this employment.

Progress has occurred. The EBMC clients who received training and successful job-placement assistance worked more of the observed time than others who did not receive these services. Progress in earnings improvement is most apparent for those with some, but not a consistent recent work history, who received training services through EBMC auspices. Those with no recent work history fared poorly. Those with a consistent recent work history prospered relative to those with interrupted pre-EBMC employment profiles, but the pre-post difference in earnings level is lower.

Successful action to improve the employment stability record for clients requires a clear prior understanding of why repeated interruptions happen. Many likely reasons are known to explain observed patterns of interrupted employment—such as family responsibilities, a client's own inability to work for health reasons, undependable access to needed transportation, incarceration, inability to satisfy employer expectations, and unwillingness to accept amount of pay offered for the work required. Some or all of these reasons for interruption may not be knowable when help is requested. But, action without consideration of these barriers to sustained employment is likely to be futile, at least with respect to attainment of the goal of economic self-sufficiency through work.

When it comes to earnings, actual and potential, much is known about how to achieve a meaningful threshold of well being for clients and their dependents however the earnings target and dependency unit are defined. We need not quibble about these definitions.

A fundamental barrier to future progress is too few combinations of immediate employment opportunity coupled with assured access to continued on-the-job learning and sustained external access to renewal of skills beyond the workplace. Transformation of progress into sustained success will require a new compact among parties whose help is needed.

Educators must accept the remediation challenge for today's out-of-school youth and adults and earn renewed public trust that the challenge can be met. In return, taxpayers must make the necessary investment in remediation based on trust in provider capacity and student motivation. And businesses must accept and then nurture those who step up to the remedial education challenge, but without compromising their own business viability; the business of business is business.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh in a series of reports¹ prepared for the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) since 2001. Two topics are covered here:

1. An update through September 2004 of pre-EBMC and post-EBMC employment and earnings profiles for job-seeking EBMC clients.
2. Lessons learned and counsel offered about future pairings of job-seeking customers with services that promote pursuit and attainment of economic self-sufficiency.

2.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY SERIES

The updated findings reported here are based entirely on administrative records provided to The Jacob France Institute by EBMC and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. These administrative records are designed and maintained to manage the delivery of services. Administrative records are not intended to suffice for the discovery of reliable cause-and-effect relationships between a controlled 'treatment' and later circumstances of those receiving the services.

Since 2001, when this series of studies began, no attempt has been made to interfere with EBMC management decisions about what services to offer through which providers. However, early findings from the series of studies did influence EBMC decisions about the mix of services offered, particularly in devoting more attention to recruitment of customized training opportunities for EBMC clients in recent years.

¹ The Jacob France Institute (2001), *Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) Client Employment and Earnings Information*, Baltimore, MD: University of Baltimore, 10 pp.; Brandon Roberts and David Stevens (2001), *An Analysis of Work and Earnings of Selected EBMC Participants*, Chevy Chase, MD: Brandon Roberts + Associates, 25 pp.; The Jacob France Institute (February 25, 2002), *Employment and Earnings Profiles for Selected EBMC Client Sub-populations*, Baltimore, MD: University of Baltimore, 7 pp.; The Jacob France Institute (May 1, 2003), *Employment and Earnings Profiles for Empower Baltimore Management Corporation Job-seeking Clients*, Baltimore, MD: University of Baltimore, 19 pp.; The Jacob France Institute (August 12, 2003), *Employment and Earnings Profiles Update for Empower Baltimore Management Corporation Job-Seeking Customers*, Baltimore, MD: University of Baltimore, 19 pp.; and The Jacob France Institute (October 13, 2004), *Employment and Earnings Profiles*, Baltimore, MD: University of Baltimore, 14 pp.

EBMC customer attributes such as gender, race, age, educational attainment and other barriers to ease of access to particular employment opportunities, and measures of change in local economic conditions, were not used in this series of studies.²

3.0 APPROACH

3.1 The EBMC Job-seeking Client Population Covered

The EBMC client population covered in this report differs from and is broader than the coverage in earlier series reports. For example, the October 2004 report included 7,007 EBMC clients with a reference date³ between January 1, 1997 and June 30, 2002. That restriction, or filter, was removed in the processing of administrative records for this summary report. A total of 8,521 EBMC clients are covered here:

- 4,716 (55%) are defined as the *Intake Group* (those who do not have a job placement, direct hire or referral to training date in the EBMC administrative record file).
- 2,686 (31%) are defined as the *Career Group* (those who have a Career Center job placement date in the EBMC record file).
- 486 (6%) are defined as the *Customized Training Group* (those who have a referral date to a customized training activity in the EBMC record file).
- 323 (4%) are defined as the *Direct Hire Group* (those who have a recorded direct hire date in the EBMC record file).
- 310 (4%) are defined as the *OST Group* (those who have an occupational skills training exit date in the EBMC record file).

² Readers are alerted to a new data source, the Census Bureau Local Employment Dynamics Program (LED) *Quarterly Workforce Indicator* (QWI) series. An introduction to this new data source can be found at <http://lehd.dsd.census.gov>. The Jacob France Institute is using this data source in a national pilot project funded by the Office of Policy Development and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. This project, *Market-responsive Education and Employment Training System* (MEETS), is using the LED QWI indicators to design and release new local labor market information briefs in partnership with 10 local workforce areas and the five state labor market information units in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois and Maryland. More information about the MEETS project can be found at <http://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/meets>. The LED QWI data source, combined with a forthcoming GIS mapping capability that will enable customized geographic 'looks' at these indicators, would have given The Jacob France Institute researchers and EBMC management team valuable insights about promising opportunities for effective EBMC client service.

³ The *reference date* definition differs among the Intake Group, Career Group, Direct Hire Group, Customized Training Group, and OST (occupational skills training) Group. See the October 2004 report in this series, page 2, subsection 3.1, for details.

3.2 The Pre-EBMC and Post-EBMC Profile Indicators Used

Like the previous reports in this series, the employment and earnings profiles introduced here cover the two years prior to each client's recorded reference date, as this is defined in subsection 3.1 on the previous page, and the two years immediately following this reference date.⁴ This before-and-after pre-post coverage is not a cause-and-effect perspective.

Eight pre-EBMC and post-EBMC indicator values are presented for each of the five EBMC sub-populations defined by their EBMC service designation—*Intake, Career, Customized Training, Direct Hire* and *OST* (occupational skills training). The eight pre- and post- indicators are intended to answer the following before-and-after EBMC questions:

- Did more of the EBMC clients in a defined service group have earnings in one or more of the post- quarters compared with the pre- quarters?
- Did more of the EBMC clients in a defined service group have earnings in all eight post- quarters compared with the eight pre- quarters?
- Did the percent of quarters with earnings increase from the pre- to post- observations?
- Did real⁵ quarterly earnings amounts change between the pre- and post- observations?
- Did the pre-post change differ when only those who had earnings in all eight pre- quarters are included in the calculation?
- Did the pre-post change differ when only those who had no reported earnings in any of the eight pre- quarters are included?
- Did more EBMC clients in the defined service group have post-earnings that exceeded the full-time minimum wage level over the two years observed than during the two pre- years?

⁴ As in previous reports in this series, this means that EBMC clients with a recorded reference date more recent than September 30, 2002 are not included in the calculation of post-EBMC profile values. This restriction is necessary to satisfy the two-year definition of the profile values. A client with a reference date of September 30, 2002 would have a post-EBMC observation period of 2002:4 (beginning October 1, 2002) through 2004:3 (ending September 30, 2004). This uses the most recent quarter of UI wage record data currently available to The Jacob France Institute.

⁵ All dollar amounts are calculated based on a 2003 index value of 100. This means that all reported pre- and post- differences have been adjusted for inflation.

- Did fewer EBMC clients in a defined service group hold five or more jobs during the two post- years than in the two pre- years?

Answers to these eight questions illuminate different features of the pre- and post-EBMC client employment and earnings profiles. Each of these features is subject to intervention action.

For example, prior work experience is known to be an important criterion in many hiring decisions. So, an observed pre-post increase in documented work experience is one indicator of an improvement in a former EBMC client's future candidacy for hire. Similarly, a pre-post increase in the percentage of former EBMC clients who earned more than the two-year full-time minimum wage equivalent is a positive sign of progress toward self-sufficiency. And the breakout of those with no reported earnings in any of the eight pre- quarters versus those who had reported earnings in all eight pre- quarters sheds light on the success of referrals of each group to different types of assistance.

4.0 UPDATED FINDINGS

Each of the eight questions posed in subsection 3.2 is answered next. The findings for the first six questions are graphed in Figure One on page 5. The findings for the seventh and eighth questions are reported in text format only.

4.1 Questions and Answers

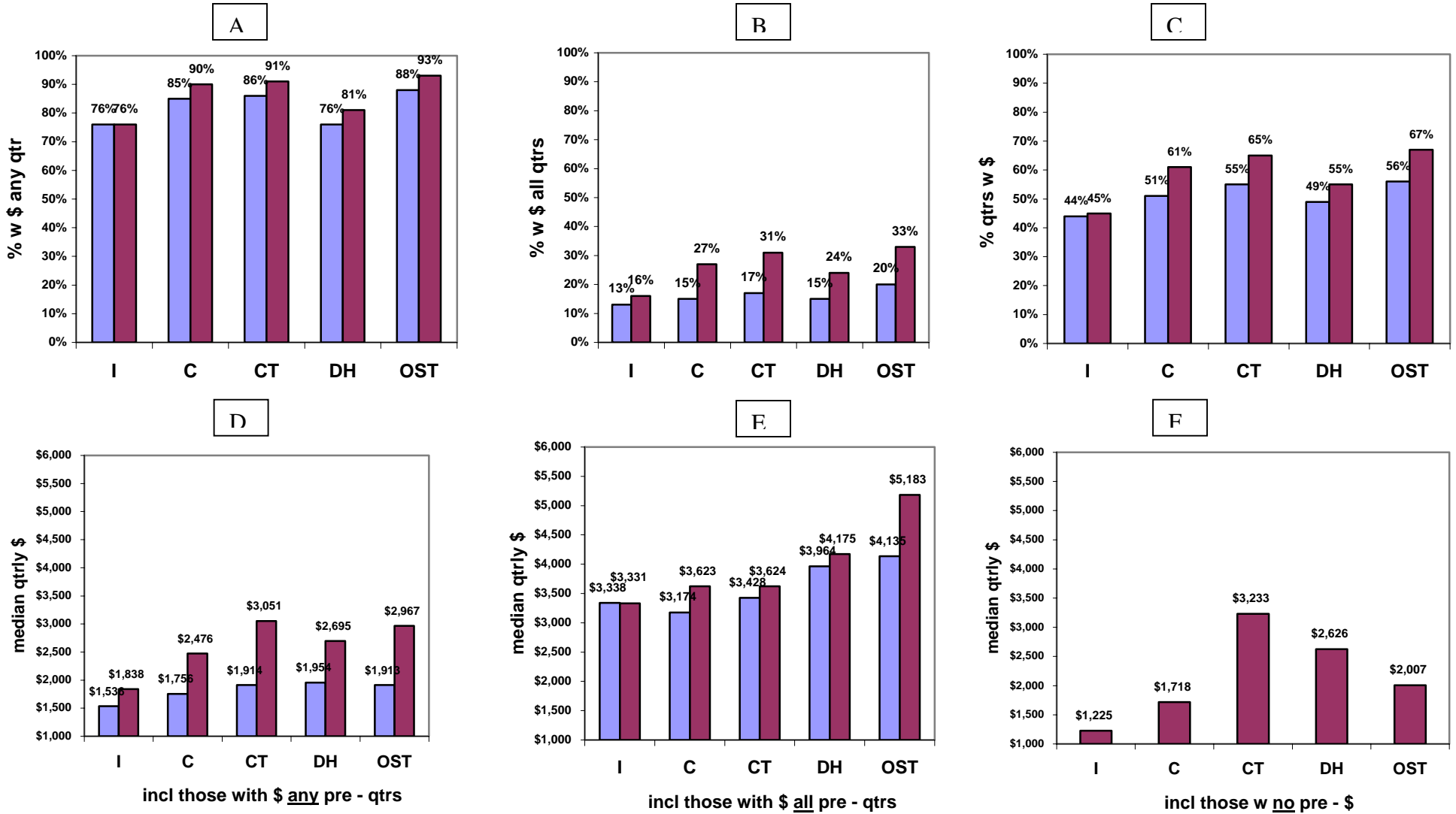
Question: Did more of the EBMC clients in a defined service group have earnings in one or more of the eight post- quarters compared with the eight pre- quarters?

Answer: Figure One, graph (a), shows that four of the five defined EBMC service groups had a uniform 5 percentage point pre-to-post increase of group members having some reported earnings during the years observed. Only the *Intake Group*, which is defined as having no record of EBMC job placement or referral to a training activity, shows no change.

FIGURE ONE

Employment and Earnings Profiles for EBMC Job Seeking Clients:
Two Years Pre- and Two Years Post –

Pre Post



I = Intake Group; C= Career Group; CT=Customized Training Group; DH=Direct Hire Group; and OST=Occupational Skills Training Group

Source: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore

February 22, 2005

Question: Did more of the EBMC clients in a defined service group have earnings in all eight post- quarters compared with each group's pre- earnings profile?

Answer: Yes, for each of the five defined service groups.

- Figure One, graph (b), shows that the *Customized Training Group* had the largest percentage point increase, from 17% pre- to 31% post- having reported earnings in all eight reference quarters.
- The *OST Group* had the highest post- level of 33%, a 13 percentage point increase from the 20% pre- level.
- The *Intake Group*, which has no recorded job placement or referral to training services, had the lowest pre- level of 13%, and the smallest increase to only 16% post-EBMC.

Question: Did the percent of quarters with earnings increase from the pre- to post- observation periods?

Answer: Yes, for each of the defined service groups.

- Figure One, graph (c), shows that the *OST Group* had the largest percentage point increase, from 56% pre- to 67% post-EBMC. This means that post- earnings were reported for this group in two-thirds of the post- quarters observed.
- The *Customized Training Group* and the *Career Group* each achieved a 10 percentage point increase, although the *Career Group* shows a slightly lower pre- or base value.
- The *Intake Group* had the lowest pre- level of 44% of the pre- quarters having reported earnings, and shows only a one percentage point post- increase from this base.

Question: Did real (inflation adjusted) earnings change between the pre- and post- observations?

Answer: Yes, for each of the defined service groups.

- Figure One, graph (d), shows that the *Customized Training Group* had the highest median level of post-quarterly earnings (\$3,051), a 59% pre-post increase.
- The *OST Group* began from the same pre- level of median earnings and shows a 55% pre-post increase to a \$2,967 post- quarterly median.
- The *Intake Group* had the lowest pre- level of median quarterly earnings, \$1,536, and shows only a 20% increase from this base level to a \$1,838 post-quarterly median amount.

Question: Did the pre-post change of median quarterly earnings differ within and among the defined service groups when only those who had earnings in all eight of the pre- quarters are included in the calculation?

Answer: Yes, within each of the five service groups and in a comparison of pre-post changes among the service groups.

- Figure One, graph (e), shows that the base pre-median quarterly earnings levels are substantially higher for each of the five service groups than was found when the earnings-in-all-pre-quarters filter was not introduced, graph (d). When the earnings-in-all-pre-quarters is used the pre- median quarterly earnings amounts range between a low of \$3,174 for the *Career Group* to a high of \$4,135 for the *OST Group*. The without-filter range was between \$1,536 for the *Intake Group* to \$1,954 for the *Direct Hire Group*.⁶
- The pre-post comparison of quarterly median earnings amounts shows a \$7 pre-post decline for the *Intake Group*.

⁶ This difference is not attributable to inclusion of zero earning amounts in the without-filter calculation. The calculation was done in the same way in both cases, including only positive earnings amounts in deriving each median value. The observed difference in calculated pre-quarterly median amounts means that those with reported earnings in all eight quarters have different, more favorable, earnings profiles than those who had less consistent work histories.

- Introduction of the earnings-in-all-quarters filter results in a narrower range of pre-post changes among the five service groups—from a low of no change for the *Intake Group*, through a +5% change for the *Direct Hire Group*, a +14% change for the *Career Group*, a +19% change for the *Customized Training Group*, to a high of +25% for the *OST Group*.
- A comparison of the with-filter and without-filter findings shows a common sense relationship—job seekers with a consistent recent work history before arrival at EBMC show a flat-to-shallow slope of their pre-post earnings profile if they did not receive EBMC job placement or referral to training services—look at the pre-post median earnings amounts in Figure One, graph (e), for the *Intake Group* and *Direct Hire Group*. Some with a similar pattern of consistent earnings over the two pre- years, but who received job placement help or referral to occupational skills training, show a 14% to 25% increase in median quarterly earnings—look at the pre-post median earnings amounts in Figure One, graph (e), for the *Career Group* and *OST Group*. But still others, those who participated in the *Customized Training* activity, show only a 5% pre-post increase for those who entered the customized training from a consistent recent work history.
- The comparison made in the previous dot-point does not mean that job placement assistance or referral to a training activity for those in the *Intake Group* or the *Direct Hire Group* would produce the same increase in earnings result shown here for the *Customized Training Group*, the *OST Group* and the *Career Group*. I do not know, but EBMC front-line staff probably does know whether and how the members of each defined group differ in ways that would affect their candidacy for hire and the earnings level associated with the position offered.

Question: What do the post- median quarterly earnings amounts look like when a no-earnings-in-any-pre-quarter filter is introduced, compared with the results reported above when an earnings-in-all-pre-quarters filter was used?

Answer: Figure One, graph (f), shows that post- earnings levels are dramatically lower for four of the five service groups when those with all or no pre- earnings consistency are compared. Only those in the *Customized Training Group* are shown to have approximately the same post- median earnings level regardless of their earnings history during the two pre- years.

- The *Customized Training Group* members with no reported earnings during the pre- years had a median post- quarterly earnings level of \$3,233, compared with a \$3,624 median for those in the same defined service group who had earnings in all eight pre- quarters, an 11% advantage for those with a consistent pre- work history.
- An identical comparison to that described in the previous dot-point, but for those in the *OST Group*, shows a \$2,007 post- quarterly median for those with no pre- earnings compared with a \$5,183 post- quarterly median for those with earnings in all eight pre- quarters, a 61% advantage for those with a consistent pre- work history.
- A compelling interpretation of the comparison made in the two previous dot-points is that delivery of occupational skills training for those without a record of consistent recent employment has a limited immediate impact on participant earnings.

Question: Did more EBMC clients in the defined service groups have post- earnings that exceeded the full-time minimum wage equivalent level⁷ over the observed quarters than is shown for the eight pre- quarters?

Answer: Yes, for each of the five defined service groups.

⁷ The full-time minimum wage equivalent over two years was calculated as \$5.15 an hour x 2,000 hours annually x 2 years=\$20,600, unadjusted for inflation as a benchmark threshold. This amount is much less than official poverty level earnings amounts for different household compositions, and less still when compared to living-wage calculations that have been published by various advocacy groups.

The findings highlighted below do not appear in Figure One.

- The *Customized Training Group* had the largest pre-post increase in percent exceeding the full-time minimum wage equivalent threshold, from 20% pre- to 40% post-EBMC.
- The *OST Group* had the highest post- percent exceeding the full-time minimum wage equivalent threshold at 41%, from a pre- level of 24% exceeding the threshold.
- The *Intake Group* had the lowest pre- (15%) and post- (19%) percentages exceeding the full-time minimum wage equivalent threshold.

Question: Did fewer EBMC clients in the defined service groups hold five or more jobs during the two post- years than in the two pre- years?

Answer: Yes, for each of the five defined service groups, but only a small difference was found for any of the groups.

- The *Customized Training Group* had the largest pre-post decline in percent holding five or more jobs, from 18% to 14%. Here, a pre-post decline should be interpreted as a 'good' profile if employment stability is viewed as a favorable status. However, caution is urged in this interpretation because there are both good and bad mobility patterns.
- None of the other four defined service groups had a pre-post decline of more than two percentage points, although the *Intake Group* had the lowest post- level of 12% holding five or more jobs.
- These job change figures are consistent with recent evidence from many sources indicating substantial mobility of U.S. workers, which is a combination of voluntary and involuntary moves, some resulting in better working conditions and compensation, while others are at least a temporary step backwards. Business acquisitions and mergers, new businesses, closing and relocating businesses, growing and declining businesses, and new technologies all contribute to turmoil in local labor markets.

4.2 Summary of Questions and Answers

Eight questions were posed on pages 3 and 4 above, covering different facets of EBMC job-seeking client employment and earnings profiles two years prior to and two years after EBMC involvement. Answers to these questions have been given on pages 4 through 10, including a one-page presentation on page 5 of six graphs that capture the essence of findings for six of the eight questions.

Three of the questions, and associated ‘answer’ graphs (a), (b) and (c) on page 5, focus on the amount of available time pre- and post-EBMC that defined sub-populations of EBMC clients are known to have worked⁸. Four of the questions, and associated ‘answer’ graphs (d), (e) and (f) on page 5, address the pre- and post-EBMC dollar compensation associated with the EBMC client employment histories. The final question, and answer reported on page 10, looked at the pre- and post-EBMC client mobility among jobs.

4.2.1 The findings about pre-post changes in *amount of available time worked* are summarized first:

- The *Intake Group*, defined as those who do not have a job placement, direct hire or referral to training date in the EBMC administrative record file, had the lowest pre- level, lowest post- level, and smallest pre-post increase in each of the three measures of time worked—Figure One, graph (a) percent with any earnings; graph (b) percent with earnings in all reference quarters; and graph (c) percent of reference quarters with earnings.
- The *Direct Hire Group*, defined as those who have a recorded direct hire date in the EBMC administrative record file, rank second only to the *Intake Group* in the low pre- and post- levels and small pre-post change of all three measures of time worked.

⁸ New readers, who have not seen earlier reports in this series, should understand the limitation on what can be said about “amount of time worked” based on the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation administrative records (UI wage records) relied upon here. We know whether one or more Maryland employers reported earnings for a former EBMC client in each reference year/quarter of interest here. That is, we know whether a former EBMC client is reported to have worked at all during each three month period covered. We do not know how many weeks during each three month period an employee worked, and we do not know how many hours were worked during these weeks of employment. So, “amount of time worked” here means “number of quarters with reported earnings out of the eight pre- or post- quarters observed.”

- The rank order of the pre-, post- and pre-post change for the remaining three types of EBMC service is consistent across the three measures of available time worked—the *Career Group*, defined as those who have a Career Center job placement date in the EBMC administrative record file) rank third; the *Customized Training Group*, defined as those who are known to have been referred to a customized training activity, are ranked fourth; and the *Occupational Skills Training Group*, defined as those who have an OST exit date in the EBMC administrative record file, are ranked fifth.
- The consistent ranking of pre-, post- and pre-post change among the five defined service groups across three measures of available time worked is interpreted as evidence of strategic client screening—those with the best recent work histories were identified and referred to the most intensive high value-added types of service—occupational skills training, customized training that combines classroom and on-the-job learning, and job-search assistance.

4.2.2 The findings about pre-post changes in *earnings* are summarized next:

- The rankings of pre-, post- and pre-post change of inflation adjusted quarterly earnings among the five defined EBMC service groups are not uniform.
- When all clients who had earnings in one or more of the eight pre-EBMC quarters are included, the range of pre- quarterly earnings is only \$418 across the five defined service groups, from a low of \$1,536 to a high of \$1,954; that is, members of each of the five groups had roughly the same pre- earnings. The ranking of post- earnings, from low to high, is the *Intake Group*, the *Career Group*, the *Direct Hire Group*, the *OST Group*, and the *Customized Training Group*, with a range from \$1,838 to \$3,051. Those who received the most intensive EBMC services had the highest post-EBMC earnings levels.
- The service group rankings for those who had earnings in all eight pre-quarters are complicated, but consistent with what might have been expected. The pre- ranking of quarterly earnings, from low to high, is the *Career Group*, the *Intake Group*, the *Customized Training Group*, the *Direct Hire Group*, and the *OST Group*. The post- ranking of quarterly earnings, again from low to high, is the *Intake Group*, the *Career Group*, the *Customized Training Group*, the *Direct Hire Group*, and the *OST Group*. While all had reported pre- earnings in all eight quarters, the *Direct Hire Group* and the *OST Group* started highest and ended highest, ranking fourth and fifth from low to high both pre- and post-EBMC.

- The highlights reported in the previous dot-point contrast with results for the *Career Group* and the *Customized Training Group* members who had lower pre- earnings than those in the *Intake Group*, but higher and virtually identical post-EBMC earnings. Those with a consistent two year work history who were defined as *Intake Group* members started and ended at the same earnings level, but those who received EBMC services started lower and ended higher.
- Consistent with the findings highlighted above, the members of the *Customized Training Group* and the *OST Group* had the largest pre-post percentage point increases of those exceeding the full-time minimum wage equivalent earnings level over the respective two year periods—a 20 percentage point increase from 20% to 40% for the *Customized Training Group* and a 17 percentage point increase from 24% to 41% for the *OST Group*. This is substantial progress toward self-sufficiency, but leaves ample room for future improvement.

4.2.3 Finally, the pre- and post-EBMC change in *mobility* finding is easily summarized:

- Negligible pre-post reductions in the incidence of holding five or more jobs over two years occurred for each of the five defined EBMC service groups.

Amount of available time worked, earnings and mobility patterns interact, but each is subject to separate intervention opportunities and strategies. Attention is turned to insights gained from the series of studies conducted for the EBMC since 2001 that address future intervention opportunities and strategies.

5.0 INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THE SERIES OF STUDIES CONDUCTED FOR EBMC BY THE JACOB FRANCE INSTITUTE

Look at Figure One on page 5 again. Think of twin goals:

- Raise the post-EBMC percent of quarters with reported earnings towards 100%, beyond the progress indicated in the three charts on the top row of Figure One.
- Raise the post-EBMC quarterly earnings amounts beyond the progress indicated in the three charts on the bottom row of Figure One.

Progress towards these two interrelated goals can begin with either and then add the other, or the two goals can be pursued concurrently. Thoughts about these strategic approaches conclude this report.

Progress towards sustained employment over a continuous series of three-month observations is a weak target if economic self-sufficiency through work is the real objective. Nevertheless, the findings in all reports in this series indicate repeated interruption of work histories, as these are described by the UI wage records data source.

Successful action to improve the employment stability record for clients requires a clear prior understanding of why repeated interruptions happen. Many likely reasons are known to explain observed patterns of interrupted employment—such as family responsibilities, a client's own inability to work for health reasons, undependable access to needed transportation, incarceration, inability to satisfy employer expectations, and unwillingness to accept amount of pay offered for the work required. Some or all of these reasons for interruption may not be knowable when help is requested. But, action without consideration of these barriers to sustained employment is likely to be futile, at least with respect to attainment of the goal of economic self-sufficiency through work.

When it comes to earnings, actual and potential, much is known about how to achieve a meaningful threshold of well being for clients and their dependents however the earnings target and dependency unit are defined. We need not quibble about these definitions.

The indicators of pre-post progress covered in this series of reports show that progress is possible. Progress has happened.

A fundamental barrier to future progress is too few combinations of immediate employment opportunity coupled with assured access to continued on-the-job learning and sustained external access to renewal of skills beyond the workplace. Transformation of progress into sustained success will require a new compact among parties whose help is needed.

Educators must accept the remediation challenge for today's out-of-school youth and adults and earn renewed public trust that the challenge can be met. In return, taxpayers must make the necessary investment in remediation based on trust in provider capacity and student motivation. And businesses must accept and then nurture those who step up to the remedial education challenge, but without compromising their own business viability; the business of business is business.