

# WORKFIRST CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

*"The Life Skills portion of WorkFirst has helped me learn a lot of things. Better communication skills, Money management, Anger management, and work ethics. I really love and appreciate this program; I know that it has definitely helped me start big things in my life. I have never been to any program that has helped me as this one has."*

*"It has helped me to have more self-confidence, higher esteem, and has helped me realize that there can be something more in my life if I just try."*

*"WorkFirst helped make it possible as a struggling, single parent making it, on little to nothing every day. Also for my children and I by paying for transportation costs to and from school and daycare every day. They also helped me with childcare so that it was possible for me to go to school full time, and my children also enjoyed going to daycare. It was healthier for all of us and helped me get an education for a new fresh start in a career that could benefit my family and provide a stable life that my new confidence and self-respect can thank WorkFirst for. I have a better outlook on life and my children see the difference that these changes have made by attending WorkFirst and school activities."*

*"I absolutely love the support and the advice that I receive when dealing with life on life's terms."*

*"They are helping me to get work experience and job training while helping me to overcome obstacles that have made it difficult for me to find work and housing."*

## Survey Facts

- As part of the WorkFirst Re-examination effort, the WorkFirst Subcabinet invited current and former WorkFirst clients to complete an online survey. The purpose of the survey is to find out how WorkFirst works for the clients.
- The online survey was conducted between August 20 and September 3, 2010.
- The survey was provided in both English and Spanish.
- A total of 1,128 clients responded to the survey.
- Respondents represent all counties except Columbia and Okanogan Counties.

## Five WorkFirst Activities Chosen as Most Helpful, Most Often

1. Job Search
2. Vocational Education
3. High School/GED
4. Community Jobs
5. Job Skills Training

Over half of respondents reported these WorkFirst activities were very helpful in these areas: learning new skills, gaining confidence, knowing their strengths and becoming more employable.

## Barriers to Employment

73% of respondents reported at least one barrier to employment.

- 50% stated they didn't need help resolving barriers.
- 33% stated they got help resolving barriers.
- 15% stated they didn't get the help they needed.

## Combining WorkFirst Activities

- 60% combine WorkFirst activities
- 63% of these state it causes no problems.
- 27% reported difficulties related to lack of time and transportation, scheduling and stress

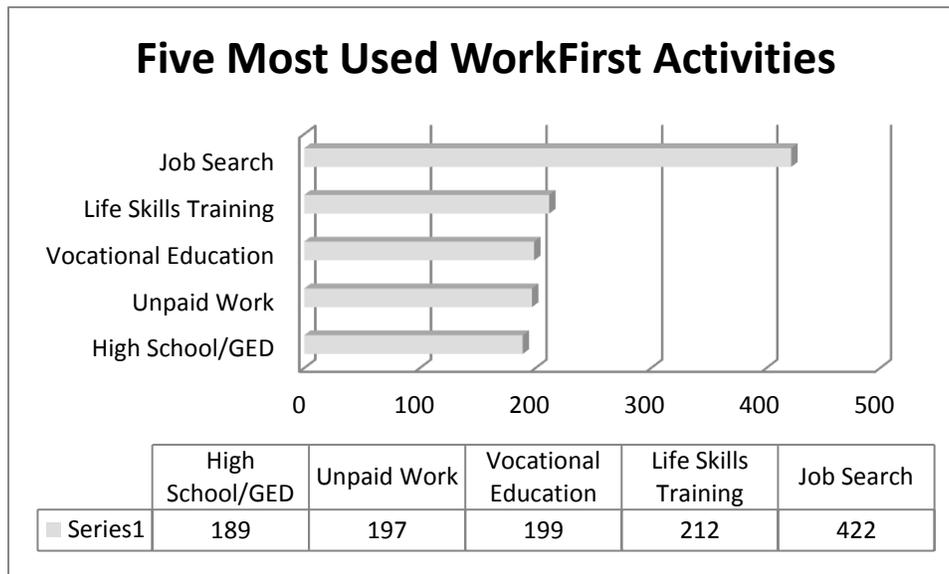
## Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)

- 55% used WCCC
- 23% didn't need child care
- 6% stopped using WCCC
- 8% used other child care providers

## Who Completed the WorkFirst Client Survey?

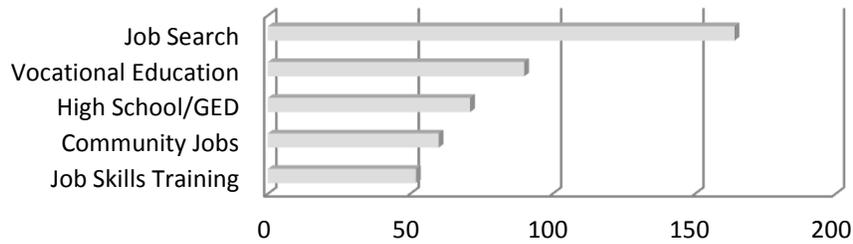
Description	Demographics of Survey Respondents	Demographics of All TANF Clients (ESA Briefing Book 2009)
<b>1.</b> Top four counties represented		
• Spokane	27%	8.1%
• King	12%	20.7%
• Snohomish	10%	6.8%
• Cowlitz	6%	2.8%
<b>2.</b> Female	79%	79.9%
<b>3.</b> U.S. Citizens	96%	88.6%
<b>4.</b> Primary Language		
• English	94%	83.9%
• Spanish	3%	12.2%
• Other languages	3%	3.9%
<b>5.</b> Length of WorkFirst Participation		
• Six months or less	63%	
• One year	19%	
• Two years	9%	
• More than two years	9%	
<b>6.</b> Participation in WorkFirst activities during the last year		
• Yes	75%	
• No	25%	

## WORKFIRST ACTIVITIES



80% of respondents reported they were required to participate in WorkFirst activities, while 4% were unable to participate due to barriers. 688 respondents reported each of the WorkFirst activities they had done within the last year.

## Five WorkFirst Activities Chosen as Most Helpful, Most Often



	Job Skills Training	Community Jobs	High School/GED	Vocational Education	Job Search
Series1	52	60	71	90	164

639 respondents told us which of the activities they had done in their last year was most helpful. Job search, high school/GED and vocational education are also in the top five most used WorkFirst activities.

When asked how much the activity she or he chose helped them, respondents most commonly reported their activity was very helpful in these areas:

- Learning new skills (57.4%)
- Gaining confidence (52.4%)
- Knowing their strengths (51.7%)
- Becoming more employable (47.4%)

183 respondents reported they were able to obtain a certificate or degree and 168 that they were able to get a job due to their most helpful WorkFirst activity.

The appendix shows the percentage of respondents who found each type of WorkFirst activity as very or somewhat helpful in nine key areas.

## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

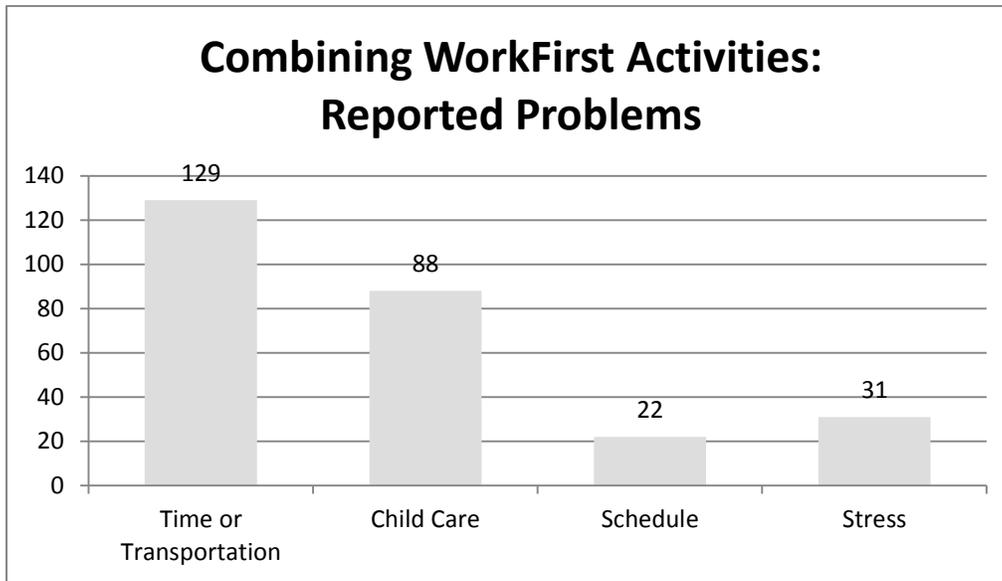
*We asked respondents whether WorkFirst staff had helped them deal with barriers like family violence or health problems. 50% stated they didn't need any help, 33% said they got help and 16% said they got no help and were asked to do more than they could do.*

*Later in the survey we listed ten common barriers and asked if respondents were experiencing any of them. 73% of the respondents listed at least one, with skills gaps being the most common (27%).*

# COMBINING WORKFIRST ACTIVITIES

60% of respondents reported they were required to combine WorkFirst activities (such as doing work experience in the morning and school in the afternoon) and 63% of those stated this didn't cause them any problems.

The 150 respondents who experienced problems commonly said they had no time to spend with their children, run errands, maintain their household, take care of their family and friends, eat lunch, attend doctor or counseling appointments and do homework. They also noted the cost of gas, long commutes and lack of transportation.



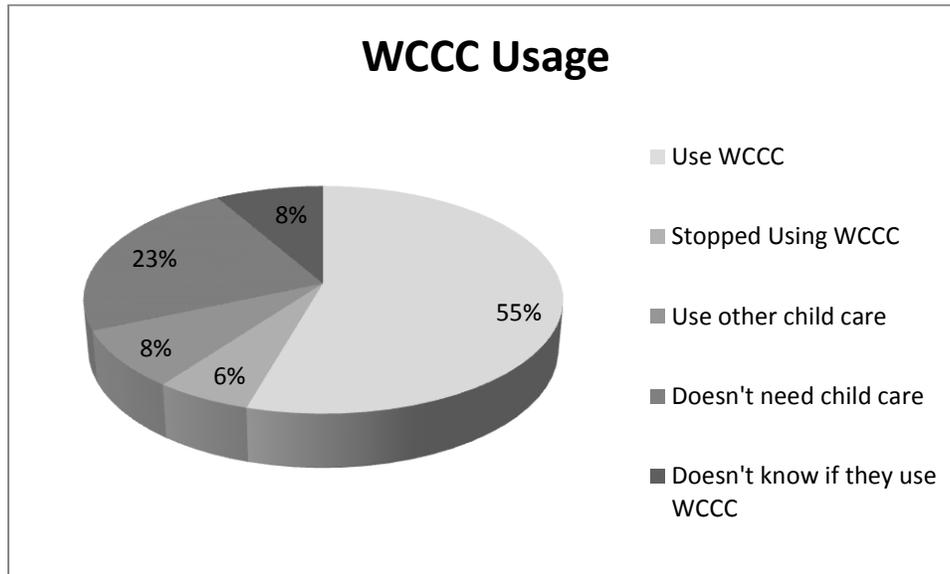
*“There was little time for lunch, not that I would have been able to pack a lunch or afford fast food. With packing a lunch there was no refrigeration and non-perishable lunch foods are expensive. There were also no food prep facilities for heating lunches. Many times I simply had to go without which interfered with concentration in the afternoon as well as contributed to my existing health problems. If I was denied gas assistance, public transportation was not an option due to my living arrangements being outside of the limited busing area of this community.”*

*“While I had (after school hours) daycare for youngest child, I did not have anyone to pick up my older two children after school and get them to daycare, therefore I had one more big gap in my day because it takes an hour to go one direction on the bus (which was my mode of transportation).”*

*“I felt really overwhelmed, between school, homework, work experience and family time. I notice that doing stuff other than school brings down my grades due to lack of time to concentrate on my homework. I don't mind working for my welfare check but it almost seems like way to much at times. Sometimes I'm required to be in two places at once.”*

# WORKING CONNECTIONS CHILD CARE

982 respondents answered questions about the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program.



The survey asked respondents who may need, but don't use WCCC why. About 42% of these respondents didn't provide any answers. Those who did gave the following reasons:

- **Ineligible (20%):** Factors causing ineligibility included job loss, increased earnings, having a parent at home to provide care, restrictions on covering educational activities, wanting to use relatives who don't pass the background check, older children the parent doesn't want to leave home alone and unpaid WCCC copayments.
- **Barriers (16%):** Barriers to accessing WCCC coverage most commonly included paperwork struggles and high co-payments, but a few also mentioned they needed child care for doctor appointments or job interviews and two described difficulties in arranging transportation between home, school and the child care facility.
- **Prefers Other Child Care (22%):** While some respondents can't access WCCC, others deliberately use other child care providers. Many of these expressed a strong preference for using family and friends as they were less expensive (often free), more trusted and more convenient.

*"My father is retired and he enjoys spending the day with my son. So Jaden can stay at my dad's house and those two can go have fun all day, instead of sticking him with strangers. I would always rather choose a family member over daycare. But of course if I didn't have family that could do it, I would for sure use the working connections child care."*

*"My child is now old enough to stay home by himself but I am gone all day doing these WorkFirst activities I never see him and I don't feel comfortable being gone so long"*

*"I tried last year but info was sent to wrong address and I was not able to respond by the due date because I got the mail after the fact and was told I could not reply. I am going to try again today and see how it goes...."*

## WORKFIRST: WHAT'S WORKING, WHAT'S NOT?

796 respondents commented on what was most helpful to them about the WorkFirst program. 705 respondents had comments about how we might make improvements.

The WorkFirst partnership is still analyzing comments, but we can provide a summary of how many respondents provided comments in key areas in terms of what's most helpful to them and how the program can be improved.

	<b>What's Most Helpful to You in the WorkFirst Program?</b>	<b>What Could Improve the Program?</b>
Education and Training	14%	8%
Job Preparation	29%	11%
Transportation	12%	10%
Child Care	12%	4%
Job Search	25%	13%
Program Rules and Process	8.5%	31%