



MEMORANDUM

TO: National League of Cities TJ Project Sites

cc: National TJ Network Steering Committee

FROM: Andrew O. Moore, Consultant to National TJ Network

DATE: January 12, 2004

RE: Recommended Basic Data Collection Elements for TJ Programs

This memorandum contains a list of ten recommended basic data collection elements for transitional jobs programs, with definitions. This comes to you as a technical assistance product of the National League of Cities in conjunction with the National Transitional Jobs Network. The recommendations assume that programs will also collect at least basic demographic data on participants.

Experienced TJ program operators and evaluators recommend that startup TJ programs collect these data in order to:

- Understand program operations and performance, and inform management decisions;
- Enable comparisons between and among programs; and
- Provide information to in-house or third-party evaluators.

The first six elements represent those that are absolutely necessary to collect, and collect well and systematically. Experience shows that Elements 7, 8, 9, and 10 may be more difficult for programs to collect systematically – but having these data is a common expectation among funders and program operators today.

Appended to the basic list are suggested additional data elements that could begin to provide a richer picture of program impact, and have been used to good effect in TJ program evaluation and management.

An underlying recommendation is to strive for as systematic an approach as possible to collecting all data. To that end, ongoing technical assistance in development of strong data collection procedures and systems is available through the National Transitional Jobs Network.

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Basic recommended common data elements for Transitional Jobs programs

Element 1: Number of persons referred or recruited

Defined as: Number on list of possible participants sent to program, or recruited.

Note: If some participants come to the program voluntarily and some are mandated to attend, distinguish between the two groups as well.

Element 2: Number of program starters

Defined as: Number who attend first day of orientation (or other first phase of program such as intake or assessment).

Note: Collect start and end dates of orientation or other first phase.

Element 3: Number of terminations

Defined as: Number who leave program before completion of a phase (for instance, the orientation phase or transitional work phase).

Note: Collect termination date(s) and reasons for positive (placement in employment) and negative (quit, dismissed, etc.) terminations.

Element 4: Number of participants placed into transitional jobs

Defined as: Number who attend first day of assigned / agreed transitional employment

Note: Collect start date of transitional jobs phase. For those who work in more than one transitional job, collect each start date.

Element 5: Number of participants who complete the transitional work phase

Defined as: Number who complete transitional work phase of X months, OR who begin transitional work phase and enter unsubsidized employment earlier than end of full transitional work phase.

Note: Collect end date of (each) transitional job.

Element 6: Number of participants who enter unsubsidized employment

Defined as: Number who start unsubsidized jobs during or at the end of the transitional work phase, or within 4-12 weeks after completion of transitional work phase.

Note: Collect start date of (each) unsubsidized job.

Element 7: Wages at entry to unsubsidized employment

Defined as: Starting wage per hour, as reported by employer, job developer or by participant in case of self-placement

Alternate approach: Calculation based on earnings per quarter (if program or evaluator has access to UI data)

Element 8: Hours per week at placement

Defined as: Average hours expected to be worked per week, as reported by job developer, employer, or by participant in case of self-placement.

Element 9: Retention in employment

Defined as: Number working at point in time 6 months after placement as determined by UI data, participant contact, or employer contact (with gaps in employment not exceeding 14 days – may presume intermediate checks at 30-60-90-120 days)

Note: Gathering data on retention at 12, 18, 24 months after placement also recommended.

Element 10: Use or receipt of post-placement services

Defined as: Number and types of services used or received, and by how many participants

Note: Important to gather the number, frequency, types, and dates of contacts made and assistance provided in order to develop any hypotheses about how post-program services affect retention. Also important to define what constitutes post-placement services, which may range from transportation subsidies, to contacts with service providers and employers, to direct contacts with or counseling for the participant.

Additional recommended data elements for Transitional Jobs programs

- **How someone obtained his/her job** – whether the job placement resulted from program staff referrals, self placement, or intensive screening and placement by program staff
- **Individual barriers to employment** –(as comprehensively noted in the Lifetrack evaluation), or other assessment / intake information
- **Employer-provided benefits at placement** – health insurance etc. (it may be important to collect information as to whether the benefits are not only offered, but also funded, by the employer.)
- **Benefits received as a result of program participation** – e.g., Federal, state or local EITC, other public benefits to which participants gain access thanks to assistance received from the program – regardless of program completion
- **Change in receipt of public assistance** or other change of status measure, especially for those placed in unsubsidized employment
- **Advancement in unsubsidized employment (including receipt of additional benefits such as health, pension, etc.)** – presumes intensive tracking capacity.

- **Quarterly earnings data – More detailed information related to retention and advancement.** Assumes access by program or cooperating researcher to unemployment insurance or other data collection system.