THE SECOND GENERATION OF JOBS-PLUS PROGRAMS

Implementation Lessons from San Antonio and the Bronx

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Jobs-Plus is one of five evidence-based programs that were implemented as part of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and the Center for Economic Opportunity. The SIF is a federal program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). It catalyzes a unique public-private funding model in which each federal dollar must be matched by private and local contributions. Matching funds for Jobs-Plus have been provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Open Society Foundations, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Catholic Charities of San Antonio, the Food Bank for New York City, The Kresge Foundation, Morgan Stanley, the New York City Council, Tiger Foundation, United Way of New York City, and United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County.

This material is based upon work supported by CNCS under Grant No. 10SIHNY002. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, CNCS or the Social Innovation Fund. Additionally, the cost study work that provided a basis for this publication was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the government.

Dissemination of MDRC publications is supported by the following funders that help finance MDRC's public policy outreach and expanding efforts to communicate the results and implications of our work to policymakers, practitioners, and others: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, Daniel and Corinne Goldman, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., The JBP Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Sandler Foundation, and The Starr Foundation.

In addition, earnings from the MDRC Endowment help sustain our dissemination efforts. Contributors to the MDRC Endowment include Alcoa Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, The Grable Foundation, The Lizabeth and Frank Newman Charitable Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, Jan Nicholson, Paul H. O'Neill Charitable Foundation, John S. Reed, Sandler Foundation, and The Stupski Family Fund, as well as other individual contributors.

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CEO Response to MDRC's Report on Jobs-Plus: "The Second Generation of Jobs-Plus Programs: Implementation Lessons Learned from San Antonio and the Bronx"

October 2015

Policymakers and scholars have long recognized that many public housing residents, to varying degrees, are not fully connected with labor markets and professional networks, and that there is a need for targeted programming to improve economic opportunity in public housing.[1] Jobs-Plus is a program model for increasing earnings and employment for residents of public housing with evidence of success, although potentially complex to implement. Jobs-Plus saturates target housing developments with job and career support, rent-based and other financial incentives that "make work pay," and community organizing activities that support a culture of work.

Jobs-Plus was designed in the 1990s by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a demonstration project in cities across the country to enhance economic opportunity and combat concentrated poverty in public housing. MDRC studied the program and found that it increased resident earnings by approximately $1,300 per year both during program operations and after the program ended.[2]

Jobs-Plus did not become a national program when the study was complete, but the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) was impressed by the evidence and invested in a pilot Jobs-Plus site in East Harlem in 2009. Encouraged by the evidence base and early strong performance at that site, CEO and the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC won a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund (SIF) to replicate Jobs-Plus in the South Bronx and in San Antonio, TX. The SIF replication also added a financial counseling component to Jobs-Plus at the Bronx site. This report includes the findings of research conducted by MDRC on those programs' implementation and costs. Additional funding for the cost study portion was provided by HUD.

Any locality replicating Jobs-Plus can learn from the best practices and challenges identified by MDRC in this report; in fact, these findings have already informed Jobs-Plus program development in New York City and beyond. For example, the report notes that while both SIF Jobs-Plus sites successfully enrolled a majority of target households in the program, the sites generally placed residents in low-wage work. For many participants, most of whom were unemployed and many of whom lacked even a high school diploma, these job placements were appropriate first steps. At the same time, the lack of connection to jobs with higher wage potential both made it hard for participants to advance in employment and made the program less attractive to public housing residents who were already employed. In response to this challenge, CEO and the sites added an advancement outcome goal and also worked to adapt the sites to New York City's shift to a "career

[1] For instance, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) data show that 56% of all working-age residents do not report income from employment and 84% of NYCHA households earn below New York City's median income.
[2] Riccio, James. "Sustained Earnings Gains for Residents in a Public Housing Jobs Program." MDRC, 2010.

pathways" framework in its workforce programs. As part of this process, the sites received technical assistance focused on building more connections to higher-quality jobs.

Additionally, the report finds that the integration of financial counseling into the Jobs-Plus model was successful. Programs and policies that promote personal financial empowerment and asset building are popular today, and the findings in the report contribute to the evidence base by documenting the positive experience of financial counseling integration that CEO has observed during this program. CEO and its City agency partners have now added financial counseling to all the New York City Jobs-Plus sites, and HUD is including financial counseling as a feature of its national Jobs-Plus expansion.

The evaluation also discusses the challenge of implementing the Earned Income Disallowance (EID) rent incentive, a central component of the model designed to address potential disincentives to work in the rent regulations. Despite the EID's importance, and despite the fact that the Housing Authority was a partner or, in the case of San Antonio, directly implementing the project, the sites faced substantial challenges in getting participants to take up the EID. There were a variety of reasons for this, including lack of resident knowledge about the EID, questions about how valuable the incentive was, and administrative challenges surrounding Housing Authority implementation. Because of the EID lessons learned through the SIF Jobs-Plus, HUD has developed a more simplified version of the EID for its national replication.

This report is timely because Jobs-Plus is continuing to be replicated across the country. New York City added Jobs-Plus to seven new public housing developments in 2013, with funding from the Young Men's Initiative, and all of these sites are still operating. The federal government is now funding an expansion of Jobs-Plus to nine new cities through HUD, and as of this writing, HUD has a NOFA out for further expansion as well. CEO is also engaging in several other place-based studies and initiatives, and looks forward to continuing to build evidence for strategies that improve community-wide outcomes.

We thank MDRC for this report, and we greatly appreciate the support of our partner agencies and funders in our ongoing Jobs-Plus collaboration.

Patrick Hart

Senior Advisor

Kate Dempsey

Director of Strategy and Operations

Overview

The Jobs-Plus Public Housing Revitalization Initiative (1998-2003) was designed to raise and sustain the employment and earnings of residents of public housing developments. It had three parts: (1) employment services offered at on-site job centers, (2) changes in rent rules that provided financial incentives to work, and (3) community support for work through neighbor-to-neighbor conversations. The initiative was subject to a rigorous evaluation, which found that where implemented fully, Jobs-Plus boosted residents' annual earnings by 16 percent, or $1,300 per year, an effect that endured seven years without abating. This report investigates how Jobs-Plus was replicated in more contemporary settings, analyzing the early implementation experiences of a community-based provider in the Bronx and the San Antonio Housing Authority in Texas, both funded by the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Main Findings

- Providers in the Bronx and in San Antonio were able to enroll substantial proportions of residents of very large housing developments. This represents a strong early indication of program "saturation," or offers of services. At the same time, providers found that the three components of Jobs-Plus — and especially their integration and coordination with each other — were difficult to manage in practice. Both providers generally placed residents in low-wage work, and struggled to find ways of helping residents who were already employed.

- Rent-based financial incentives were very seldom used by Jobs-Plus members, for reasons largely out of the control of program implementers. In the original demonstration, housing authorities could develop a variety of rent incentives, because they had legal authority to do so. However, in the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, the only rent incentive available to the providers in both the Bronx and San Antonio was the Earned Income Disregard (EID). During early implementation, EID receipt was very low (at about 1 percent of residents in the Bronx and 3 percent in San Antonio), despite providers' extensive efforts to promote its use.

- Jobs-Plus cost $672 per household per year in the Bronx and $503 in San Antonio. These costs would likely have increased had residents made greater use of the EID.

- In the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, neither the community-based organization nor the housing authority appeared to have a clear advantage in providing services. Instead, organizations' ability to implement the program appeared to depend on their administrative flexibility, their front-line staff members' ability to work as a team, their ability to tailor their strong workforce development experience to a variety of participants, their ability to conduct vigorous outreach and marketing, and the strength of their connection to property managers.

- The Jobs-Plus "Collaborative," a support and accountability body made up of local city agencies involved in workforce services, income support, and other social services, emerged as an important entity promoting strong implementation in the Bronx.

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Preface

After a rigorous evaluation shows that a program has a positive impact on the lives of low-income people, what happens next? How do funders, program managers, and practitioners collaborate to expand the initiative? How do they remain true to the proven model, while also making changes necessary to accommodate local policies and meet local populations' needs? How do service providers learn to operate differently than in the past, and how can technical assistance support their efforts?

This report explores these questions through an extensive implementation analysis of the expansion of Jobs-Plus under the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) of the National Corporation for Community Service. In 2011, MDRC, working with the Center for Economic Opportunity, part of the New York City's Mayor's Office, helped launch a replication of Jobs-Plus with a community-based provider in the Bronx and with the San Antonio Housing Authority in Texas.

Public housing residents are some of the most disadvantaged households in the country, and the original Jobs-Plus demonstration (1998-2003), is the only employment initiative targeting all of a development's residents to show impacts on their earnings. MDRC's Jobs-Plus research found that, where implemented fully, Jobs-Plus boosted the annual earnings of residents by 16 percent, or $1,300 per year, an effect that endured for seven years without abating. Evidence from the initial demonstration suggested that all three core elements of Jobs-Plus — employment services, changing rent rules to help "make work pay," and neighbor-to-neighbor conversations about work and services — needed to be adopted to achieve good impacts.

During the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, contemporary policies and economic realities suggested some adaptations to the original model. For example, practitioners during the initial demonstration had the ability to design a variety of rent incentives, but in the replication they needed to build on a federal policy known as Earned Income Disregard, which proved very challenging. The providers also had to wrestle with ways to promote economic mobility in a market where low-wage work often offers few opportunities for advancement. Finally, they successfully integrated financial counseling into the array of Jobs-Plus services.

This report is particularly timely, as policymakers and practitioners are currently involved in building the next generation of Jobs-Plus through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Jobs Plus Pilot Program, a $24 million initiative launched in 2015. As MDRC was involved in both the initial demonstration and the SIF version, this report provides a rare examination of what it takes to translate research evidence into broader practice.

Gordon L. Berlin
President, MDRC

Acknowledgments

Many hands contributed to this report, and more took part in the vital work it describes.

The report would not be possible without the efforts of practitioners in New York and San Antonio to implement Jobs-Plus and make it their own; many of these practitioners also contributed to reviews of the document. We especially thank Glenn Bullock, Denise Major, Jessica Nathan, Betty Ann Tamaisar, and Tiara Williams at BronxWorks, and Larry Carter, Joe Dyer, Mary Jane Flores, Aiyana Longoria, and Muriel Rhoder at the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA). Tiara Williams at BronxWorks and Mary Jane Flores at SAHA also provided MDRC with administrative data and technical assistance for analyzing study participants' characteristics and their use of Jobs-Plus services and financial incentives. Adrian Paling and John Weed at BronxWorks, and Hjal Frane and Linda Le at SAHA, also provided valuable information for the cost study.

We thank residents of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and SAHA developments who took the time to speak to researchers about their lives and experiences with the program.

Kate Dempsey and Patrick Hart at the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity brought valued insight to reviews based on their management of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant, their engagement with providers through several generations of Jobs-Plus, and their deep knowledge of the field.

The report also benefited from the comments of representatives from New York City agencies involved in the next generation of Jobs-Plus implementation. These include Sideya Sherman at NYCHA, Sarah Haas and Shanee Helfer at the New York City Human Resources Administration, and Sara Schlossberg at the New York City Department of Small Business Services. In addition, Jose Calderon and Michelle Raymie of NYCHA provided extensive administrative data for the cost study. We also thank reviewers from JBS, who on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service commented on two drafts of the report.

At MDRC, many contributed to data collection, analyses, and project implementation. Donna Wharton-Fields was MDRC's director for the SIF Jobs-Plus project and led technical assistance efforts. Stephen Friedman led analyses of management information system data, with Rhiannon Miller. Alice Anigacz and Tojuana Riley provided invaluable data collection, qualitative analyses, and general project support. John Padilla worked on technical assistance for both providers and commented on report drafts, and Kristen Cahill initially provided technical assistance for BronxWorks. Rachel Pedraza collected data and performed analyses of implementation in San Antonio. Jaya Varma assisted with operations work for both providers.

Gordon Berlin, John Hutchins, Beatriz Gil, and Caroline Schultz read and commented upon drafts, and James Riccio provided detailed feedback from his experience as a primary investigator of the original Jobs-Plus demonstration. Johanna Walter helped fact-check cost analyses.

Many thanks to Emma Saltzberg for ably coordinating the report and conducting multiple analyses. Joshua Malbin edited the document, and Carolyn Thomas prepared it for publication.

The Authors

Executive Summary

Jobs-Plus and the Need for Strong Implementation

This report provides extensive implementation analyses of the early experiences (2011-2014) of the Jobs-Plus scale-up and replication under a grant from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) of the Corporation for National and Community Service to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. This effort was conducted in partnership with the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, which oversaw program implementation. Like the original Jobs-Plus Public Housing Revitalization Initiative (1998-2005), the SIF version of Jobs-Plus is designed to raise and sustain the level of employment and earnings among residents of public housing developments. Jobs-Plus has three parts: (1) employment services offered at on-site job centers, (2) changes in rent rules that provide financial incentives to work, and (3) community support for work through neighbor-to-neighbor conversations. The original demonstration was subject to a rigorous evaluation, which found that, implemented fully, Jobs-Plus boosted annual earnings by 16 percent relative to the earnings of residents in comparison developments, an effect that endured for seven years without abating.

Jobs-Plus is currently being replicated even further through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and this report provides important findings related to the implementation of community-based employment programs in low-income neighborhoods, and programs helping individuals who are receiving housing assistance to find work and advance economically. Importantly, the *next* generation of Jobs-Plus is under way through HUD's Jobs Plus Pilot Program, a $24 million initiative that was launched in federal fiscal year 2015 and that may continue to expand. Insights from the early implementation of SIF Jobs-Plus are particularly important because there is considerable evidence that the strength of implementation determines whether Jobs-Plus has a long-lasting impact on residents. The original demonstration faced many implementation challenges, and only Jobs-Plus developments that fully implemented the model saw long-term earnings differences over control developments.

Implementing Providers

The SIF version of Jobs-Plus was launched in January 2011 as a five-year initiative in the Bronx, New York, and San Antonio, Texas. These programs provide an opportunity to see how Jobs-Plus fares under slightly different circumstances: in one the provider is a housing authority, while in the other it is a nonprofit community-based organization; one delivers services on-site, the other off-site. The two also illustrate different roles of the "Collaborative," a Jobs-Plus governance body and vehicle for interagency coordination.

- **The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)** provides on-site Jobs-Plus services to residents of Alazan-Apache Courts and Mirasol Homes. Alazan-Apache Courts has 1,022 units in total, mostly in two-level, apartment-style buildings. Mirasol Homes has 174 mixed-use development units. SAHA's Jobs-Plus program had up to 13 staff members, most of them working in an office at Alazan-Apache Courts.

- **BronxWorks**, a not-for-profit organization, began working in workforce development with the passage of the Welfare Reform Act in 1996. BronxWorks provides off-site Jobs-Plus services to the residents of three New York City Housing Authority developments located in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx. There are 1,516 households spread across the 34 buildings in these developments, and 1,701 working-age adults lived there when Jobs-Plus launched, according to their leases. The BronxWorks Jobs-Plus office is about a 10-minute walk from these development buildings, located in "the Hub," a busy commercial section of the South Bronx. Generally 15 staff members worked there during SIF Jobs-Plus implementation.

Implementation Lessons from the Bronx and San Antonio

Providers in the Bronx and in San Antonio were able to deliver employment services to substantial proportions of residents. By the beginning of Year 3, SAHA had enrolled 72 percent of the residents in its targeted housing units in Jobs-Plus, while BronxWorks had enrolled 58 percent. These enrollment figures represent a strong early indication of program "saturation," and are especially impressive given the large size of the developments compared with those in the original demonstration.[1]

At the same time, the components of Jobs-Plus — and especially their integration and coordination with each other — were challenging to manage in practice.

Employment Services

- **BronxWorks and SAHA brought strengths to the Jobs-Plus model, including BronxWorks' extensive job placement network and SAHA's access to employment opportunities connected with agency contracting.**

Members in the Bronx were more likely to receive job-search help, while those in San Antonio received social services to overcome barriers to employment. Through previous programs BronxWorks had developed relationships with employers in the retail, food, health,

[1]The developments in the original demonstration contained between 300 and 500 units.

security, and customer-service industries. SAHA was committed to complying with HUD's Section 3 regulation, which requires that low-income residents be the beneficiaries of job training, employment, and contract opportunities. While both providers developed some opportunities for members with higher levels of education and members who were already employed, both primarily focused on unemployed members with limited education.

- **Both providers generally placed residents in entry-level, low-wage jobs, and did not develop extensive ties to organizations that could provide training or other services to residents or help them advance along "career pathways." This made it more difficult for Jobs-Plus to engage everyone in the target developments.**

About two in five placements in the Bronx were to positions that paid the minimum wage or slightly above it ($7.25 to $8.00 an hour).[2] About three in five of SAHA's placements were at this wage level. More than two-thirds of SAHA's and approximately half of Bronx-Works' placements were to part-time work (less than 35 hours per week). While many residents might not have been adequately prepared for higher-wage work, the fact that SAHA and BronxWorks did not have extensive connections to training programs that could help prepare them for it meant the providers had less to offer residents who were interested in advancing, or who were already employed. (SAHA did make many education referrals, but these referrals did not tend to emphasize career advancement.) Ongoing member engagement was a challenge for both providers: Two months after members joined Jobs-Plus, the proportion who received any service from BronxWorks in a given month dropped by about half. For SAHA, it dropped to a third. Many voluntary programs experience this sort of drop-off, but the Jobs-Plus model emphasizes more regular engagement, even if some may be occurring between staff members and residents in informal settings.

- **BronxWorks successfully integrated financial counseling into Jobs-Plus, an innovation to the "original" Jobs-Plus model.**

This counseling was attempted because chronic financial instability affects many low-income people and was seen as a barrier to program engagement and good outcomes. Special funding allowed BronxWorks to hire two financial coaches. Financial coaches in the Bronx attended intensive training provided by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE), which provided instruction on how to assess the financial health of residents and repair poor credit. The delivery of financial counseling evolved and improved over time. Early in the initiative, BronxWorks provided budgeting assessments to

[2]These wages reflect placements before the New York State minimum wage was raised to $8.00 an hour at the end of 2013.

jobless individuals who often did not have income to budget, making counseling less appealing to them. Over time, financial counseling became a sophisticated tool to engage and retain Jobs-Plus members before and after they found work. Before members found work, it helped some of them address poor credit issues that could prevent employment. After individuals found work, counseling involved more extensive budgeting help, referrals to tax-preparation services, and help navigating financial decisions to avoid future crises. It also became a way of helping employed individuals plan for career advancement, as they considered how to balance the need for income with the need to spend time (and money) on education and training.

Financial Incentives

In general, public housing authorities charge rents fixed at 30 percent of eligible household income. This practice means that as household income rises, rent also increases. While this system makes public housing units affordable to low-income people, some also see it as a "tax" that discourages employment, a claim supported by some studies.[3] The financial incentive component of Jobs-Plus is an important way the model can reach beyond those residents directly served by employment services and influence the work behavior of *all* residents of a development, by adjusting rent rules to "make work pay." In the original demonstration, housing authorities had the ability to develop a variety of rent incentives because they were all Moving to Work sites with legal authority to do so.[4] In the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, Bronx-Works was only able to utilize a preexisting federal benefit known as the Earned Income Disregard (EID). The EID allows eligible public housing tenants to receive a once-in-a-lifetime exemption from any additional rent that would have been charged due to increased earnings. The EID is limited to two years, and decreases in value after the first year. SAHA has Moving to Work status, and when it recognized the limitations of the EID it developed a modified version that extended for a longer period.

- **The EID was very seldom used by Jobs-Plus members, for reasons largely out of the control of Jobs-Plus implementers.**

During early implementation, EID receipt was very low (at about 1 percent and 3 percent in the Bronx and San Antonio, respectively), despite providers' extensive efforts to implement the rent incentive. In part, this low usage was because the incentive is not widely implemented across the country; most housing authorities (including those in New York and San Antonio) did not have regular systems in place to apply it, and most tenants were unaware

[3]See, for example, Brian A. Jacob and Jens Ludwig, "The Effects of Housing Assistance on Labor Supply: Evidence from a Voucher Lottery," NBER Working Paper No. 14,570 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2008).

[4]The Moving to Work designation gives public housing authorities flexibility in how they spend federal funds and allows them to test innovative approaches.

of it. Over time, both providers developed connections between Jobs-Plus staff members and property managers to implement the EID, but by 2013 not many members had taken advantage of it. This problem is particularly significant because higher receipt of rent incentives (up to 77 percent but averaging around 50 percent) may have been a major factor contributing to the impacts in the original demonstration.

- **Major problems with EID receipt included residents' lack of awareness of the EID's availability, administrative start-up issues, the limited value of the incentive itself, and a lack of trust between residents and housing authorities.**

Because it is such an underused policy, the basic structure of the EID was not initially clear at times even to some Jobs-Plus staff members. Many residents who were part of interviews and focus groups also did not remember the EID having been explained to them. Further complicating matters, during early implementation, property management staff members responsible for implementing the EID did not always know how to do so, and as a result, residents would either be turned away or would have to wait many months before they received it. A final major challenge related to the value of the incentive itself. Public housing tenants generally come to property management annually, to declare their income and determine their rent for the coming year. A household could achieve at least part of the same effect as the EID's one-year rent freeze by not reporting a gain in income until the next recertification.

- **Residents responded best when the EID was explained as simply as possible, when it was associated with a message about economic opportunity and the struggle of low-income households, and when it was directed toward households with enough work and family stability to take advantage of the incentive.**

Although the EID was complicated to explain, over time practitioners developed some innovative ways to explain it more simply. For example, in San Antonio practitioners began describing the EID using a cartoon character called "Mr. Freeze," to illustrate its ability to freeze rents. Better marketing might also improve EID reception. For example, residents believed it was important to acknowledge the struggles in their lives and to talk about how the EID could help alleviate them. Finally, residents and practitioners believed that the EID was most likely to appeal to people who were likely to retain desirable jobs for some time and to households where romantic partners were in a stable relationship — the former because of the once-in-a-lifetime nature of EID, and the latter because someone leaving the apartment could trigger a need to reappear before the housing authority, something that most tenants wanted to avoid.

Community Support for Work

One feature that distinguishes the Jobs-Plus model from traditional employment programs is its goal of implementing services at "saturation" levels. By avoiding strict eligibility criteria, the model aims to get as many residents as possible to use Jobs-Plus services and to infuse the entire housing development with messages about the availability of employment and the opportunity for help in obtaining it. The component of the Jobs-Plus model most directly designed to support saturation is Community Support for Work (CSW). CSW aims to contribute to saturation by connecting residents to Jobs-Plus services formally and informally, and by developing and strengthening resident networks related to employment. In the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, CSW strategies took different forms and evolved and improved over time, but relied primarily on "community coaches." These were public housing residents hired to conduct outreach and other activities to promote the Jobs-Plus program.

- **As was the case in the original demonstration, resident networks in the SIF developments were not extensive, making it difficult to build on them and support work-related efforts.**

Most of the residents interviewed in both San Antonio and the Bronx described having limited contact with their neighbors. When residents were asked whether they talked to each other about employment opportunities, they often said things like, "People kind of stick to themselves," or "I like to keep to myself though, like mind your business." It is also possible that the stigma often attached to public housing limited practitioners' ability to build community among residents and strengthen social ties on the basis of their common address.

- **Despite this preexisting limitation, providers experimented with a number of strategies that show promise for strengthening resident ties, spreading the word about program services, and supporting employment efforts.**

From the early stages of implementation, Jobs-Plus staff members in San Antonio embraced the goals of CSW, knocking on doors and posting flyers, and organizing and participating in community events. (It took BronxWorks more time to fully implement CSW.) Recently SAHA developed a strategy known as Grass Roots, which uses property management data to guide unit-by-unit outreach. SAHA has also tested a few strategies to support up-and-coming community coaches as "apprentices," and to encourage resident-to-resident support (such as informal carpooling), some of which have shown promising results. Both providers used well-regarded community coaches, but these coaches required management and training that providers were not always able to supply. Providers also developed relationships with property managers, which proved important for outreach.

- **Findings from the SIF version of Jobs-Plus also demonstrate that CSW is dependent on the other two components of the model.**

If financial incentives are not viable (as was the case with the EID), then CSW cannot publicize their availability. If Jobs-Plus providers do not have access to higher-wage jobs or training opportunities related to career pathways, then working residents may not be interested in hearing about Jobs-Plus.

Supporting Strong Implementation: Learning Jobs-Plus, Establishing Accountability, and Supporting Ongoing Performance

Operating as it did in developments that were larger than those in the original demonstration, the SIF version of Jobs-Plus provides insights as to how to implement the program at a greater scale. After they received their grant awards from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity in March 2011, both BronxWorks and SAHA began to start up their Jobs-Plus programs. Start-up was meant to be a six-month exercise in which the Center for Economic Opportunity worked with providers on their budget and staffing plans, developed service and performance expectations for each of them, and engaged MDRC to help each develop a program design document. BronxWorks ended up launching its Jobs-Plus program in August 2011, SAHA in February 2012.

- **The SIF version of Jobs-Plus had a slow start due to staff turnover and bureaucratic challenges.**

A one- to two-year ramp-up period also occurred during the original demonstration, which saw overall impacts on earnings over time.

- **The process of "learning" Jobs-Plus included a vital period when providers collaboratively developed detailed plans for delivering services.**

In the Bronx, staff members described a positive environment of communication and collaboration during these early months. In San Antonio, after a management shift, staff members at all levels eventually started to become more engaged in the program-design process, and reported that participating in program development and technical assistance helped them understand the Jobs-Plus model.

- **Technical assistance that provided concrete guidance while permitting local ownership of the model also helped providers learn Jobs-Plus.**

There is a continuing debate in the policy literature about the best way to replicate a successful program: Some people feel program administrators should ensure program fidelity

by making sure services are delivered the same way in an expansion effort as they were in the smaller-scale test. Others believe administrators can learn a model more deeply if it consists of "principles" intended to be adapted to local conditions. In the SIF version of Jobs-Plus, the most helpful approach appeared to balance these two extremes. For example, in the Bronx, a "workbook" provided by MDRC helped guide senior leaders as they identified a program director, developed process benchmarks and outcome goals, analyzed existing management information systems, identified office space, created a spending plan, developed consent forms, and devised a supervisory plan. Yet MDRC still prodded BronxWorks to create these plans itself. SAHA staff members, in contrast, felt they had less guidance and fewer templates to develop all the documents required for launch and start-up, and as a result sometimes tended to become stuck on broader and less concrete issues.

- **Providers should also attempt to adopt fully the Jobs-Plus "Collaborative," a support and accountability body made up of local city agencies involved in workforce services, income support, and other social services.**

Only in the Bronx was the Collaborative fully developed, and there it played several important support functions for Jobs-Plus. New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity, part of the Mayor's office, led the formation of the Collaborative by convening a group of representatives from different city agencies with some stake in Jobs-Plus implementation. These included the Human Resources Administration (the city's welfare agency), the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Small Business Services (which runs the city's workforce agencies), and the Office of Financial Empowerment within the Department of Consumer Affairs, which helped support the financial counseling component of BronxWorks' program. While it took some time and extra effort for all the participants to establish their roles, ultimately city agency representatives and BronxWorks agreed that the Collaborative helped direct both resources and policy backing to BronxWorks' Jobs-Plus program. This backing was especially important for BronxWorks' interactions with the housing authority, as BronxWorks was a community organization with no formal standing to dictate housing authority policy.

The Gross Costs of Jobs-Plus

The current research was able to document the costs of operating Jobs-Plus — which was not done in the original demonstration. There are two ways of calculating these costs. "Gross" costs refer to the total outlays related to program operation, whereas "net" costs are calculated in comparison to what expenditures would be in the absence of the program. Because the SIF version of Jobs-Plus was not an impact study, it was not possible to calculate net costs, but gross costs are very important for budgeting and management purposes.

- **In the program's third year (when operations were in a steady state, beyond the launch phase), the annual cost per household of operating Jobs-Plus was $672 for BronxWorks and $503 for SAHA.**

BronxWorks' larger expenditures can be attributed to higher budgeted overhead (partially because office space for program operations was donated to SAHA but not BronxWorks) and to the financial counseling BronxWorks offered and SAHA did not.

- **The providers also differed in how they allocated their resources. BronxWorks spent the largest share of its budget on employment-related services, while SAHA emphasized Community Support for Work to roughly the same degree as employment-related services.**

Because the rent incentive was so little used, reduced rents accounted for relatively little of the expenditures in both locations, which means that more successful implementation of this aspect of Jobs-Plus could increase program costs substantially.

Service Provision and Provider Capacities

This evaluation benefits from the fact that the SIF version of Jobs-Plus included both a housing authority and a community-based organization as program implementers. While the experiences of only two providers do not provide definitive evidence about whether a housing authority or a community-based organization is better equipped to implement the model, qualitative analyses can lead to some conclusions.

- **Neither the community-based organization nor the housing authority had a clear advantage in implementation. Instead, several types of capacities that could be found in either type of organization emerged as important for Jobs-Plus.**

These capacities involved an organization's administrative flexibility, its front-line staff's ability to work as a team, its experience in workforce development and ability to tailor that experience to a variety of participants, its ability to conduct vigorous outreach and marketing, and the strength of its connection to property managers.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, program managers and practitioners should consider the following recommendations:

Employment Services

- **Focus on both the number and the quality of job placements.**

Providers should assess their existing relationships with employers, capitalize on those connections, and develop relationships with a wide array of new employers, particularly those that can offer living wages and opportunities for advancement. Public housing authorities should work with their contractors to generate job opportunities for Jobs-Plus members.

- **Create training opportunities for residents who are already employed.**

While it can be challenging to do so, it may be important to connect Jobs-Plus members with partners that can train people with limited education, as SAHA did with a local community college. Otherwise Jobs-Plus may have little to offer residents who are already employed and seeking advancement.

Financial Incentives

- **Where possible, do not use the EID as a financial incentive for work.**

The mechanisms of the EID, its complexity, and its limited financial value combined to make it little used. Some housing authorities might not have the Moving to Work status that would allow them to change rent rules, and might not be a part of the Jobs-Plus expansion, leaving them the EID as their only option for a rent-based work incentive. In this case they might consider working outside the rent rules altogether to provide an incentive for work. (This approach was attempted in MDRC's Work Rewards demonstration, in which housing voucher holders were given a supplemental cash incentive.) Fortunately, HUD has provided current replicators in the Jobs Plus Pilot Program with a longer-term, simpler rent incentive.

- **Keep rent incentives simple to explain, and integrate the marketing and receipt of the incentives into regular property-management procedures.**

HUD's new Jobs Plus EID, which essentially freezes rents for participating households for the duration of their time in the program, is an example of a rent incentive that is not difficult to understand. Senior leaders and front-line housing staff members should facilitate communication between Jobs-Plus and property management. Finally, housing authorities should assure tenants that the purpose of providing the disregard is not to discover existing housing violations, and change policies if necessary to support this assurance.

Community Support for Work

- **Allocate enough resources to support and train community coaches, and build close relationships with property managers.**

Community coaches are central to CSW. Programs need to allocate time to direct their activities, train them, and supervise them so as to maximize their potential. Property managers were important allies who helped spread the word about the program and the range of services it offered, and who referred residents directly to Jobs-Plus. Future replicators of Jobs-Plus are advised to develop relationships with property managers early on.

- **Develop multiple opportunities for residents to engage in the program.**

In addition to posting flyers and knocking on doors, providers should take advantage of existing community events and programs, and organize new activities to reach out to residents. CSW is not only a way for implementers to "push out" information, but also a way to receive information from residents that can make services more relevant, and a way for residents to share leads with each other about jobs and other opportunities.

Program Management

- **Extensive, detailed technical assistance and training may be necessary for many housing authorities and community organizations.**

Housing authorities may not have experience with workforce or outreach programs emphasizing saturation in targeted developments, or in developing financial incentives. Many community organizations may not have access to high-quality training programs that emphasize career pathways, apprenticeships, and other routes to career advancement.

Chapter 1

Replicating Jobs-Plus and the Need for Strong Implementation

Introduction

This report provides extensive implementation analyses of the experiences of subgrantees under the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), some of the first to replicate and expand Jobs-Plus since the original Jobs-Plus demonstration ended in 2003. (The report also contributes to those subgrantees' ongoing improvement efforts.) Jobs-Plus is currently being replicated even further through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and this report provides important findings related to the implementation of community-based employment programs in low-income neighborhoods, and programs helping individuals who are receiving housing assistance to find work and advance economically. Importantly, the *next* generation of Jobs-Plus is now under way through HUD's Jobs Plus Pilot Program, a $24 million initiative launched in federal fiscal year 2015.

This chapter describes the original Jobs-Plus demonstration, the only employment program that targets all of a housing authority's residents to demonstrate an impact on earnings. It then discusses why strong implementation is necessary to produce those impacts, and introduces how replication proceeded since the original demonstration, culminating in the Social Innovation Fund. It ends with a description of the service providers chosen to replicate Jobs-Plus in the Bronx, New York, and San Antonio, Texas, and describes the structure of the remainder of the report.

Jobs-Plus: An Effective Model to Help Public Housing Residents

The effects of concentrated poverty are deeply felt in many of the nation's public housing developments, which rank among the most economically challenged neighborhoods in the country. Often located in communities that have high rates of poverty to begin with, public housing residents tend to have even less work history than their low-income neighbors. Because it is hard to obtain work with a limited work history, because the stigma associated with public housing may put off potential employers, and because public housing is often physically separated from areas with abundant jobs, public housing residents often face multiple disadvantages in searching for work. Furthermore, traditional public housing rent rules, under which rent usually increases as earnings rise, have long been thought to discourage residents from working, because they act as a "tax" on any additional income.

The Jobs-Plus Public Housing Revitalization Initiative was designed to raise and sustain the level of employment and earnings among residents of public housing developments. In 1998, MDRC launched Jobs-Plus in six public housing developments across the country, with funding from The Rockefeller Foundation, HUD (the federal agency responsible for public housing), and other sources. The initiative concluded in 2003, and was subject to a rigorous evaluation in which six public housing developments were chosen randomly in six cities and then were compared with similar developments in the same cities that did not participate in the program. Results from this experiment showed that in developments where all components were in place, implemented properly, and sustained, residents earned 16 percent more (or $1,300 more) per year than residents in comparison developments, an effect that endured for seven years without abating (see Figure 1.1).[1] Strong effects were observed across different cities and labor markets (Los Angeles, California; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Dayton, Ohio), and for diverse populations (black single mothers, Latino families, Hmong refugees, young adults, and older participants). For some groups the impacts exceeded $3,000 per year.[2]

Jobs-Plus is implemented by a team of service providers, who are supported by a "Collaborative," or interagency governance partnership. There are three components to the Jobs-Plus model, all of which are intended to improve residents' employment and well-being.

1. **Employment-related services and activities to help residents secure and retain jobs.** These services encompass activities such as help with job searches, coaching to help residents adjust to the world of work, referrals to vocational training (usually short-term), high school equivalency and English as a Second Language courses, subsidized supported work positions to help especially hard-to-employ residents transition to the world of work, and finally, a range of support services (such as child care) that make it easier for residents to work. Some services are conveniently provided at a job center in the housing development, while others are provided in the community.[3]

2. **Financial incentives through public housing rent rules that help "make work pay."** When public housing residents obtain work or move to better-paying jobs, they can be subject to rent increases, because rent is calculated as a percentage of

[1]Riccio (2010).

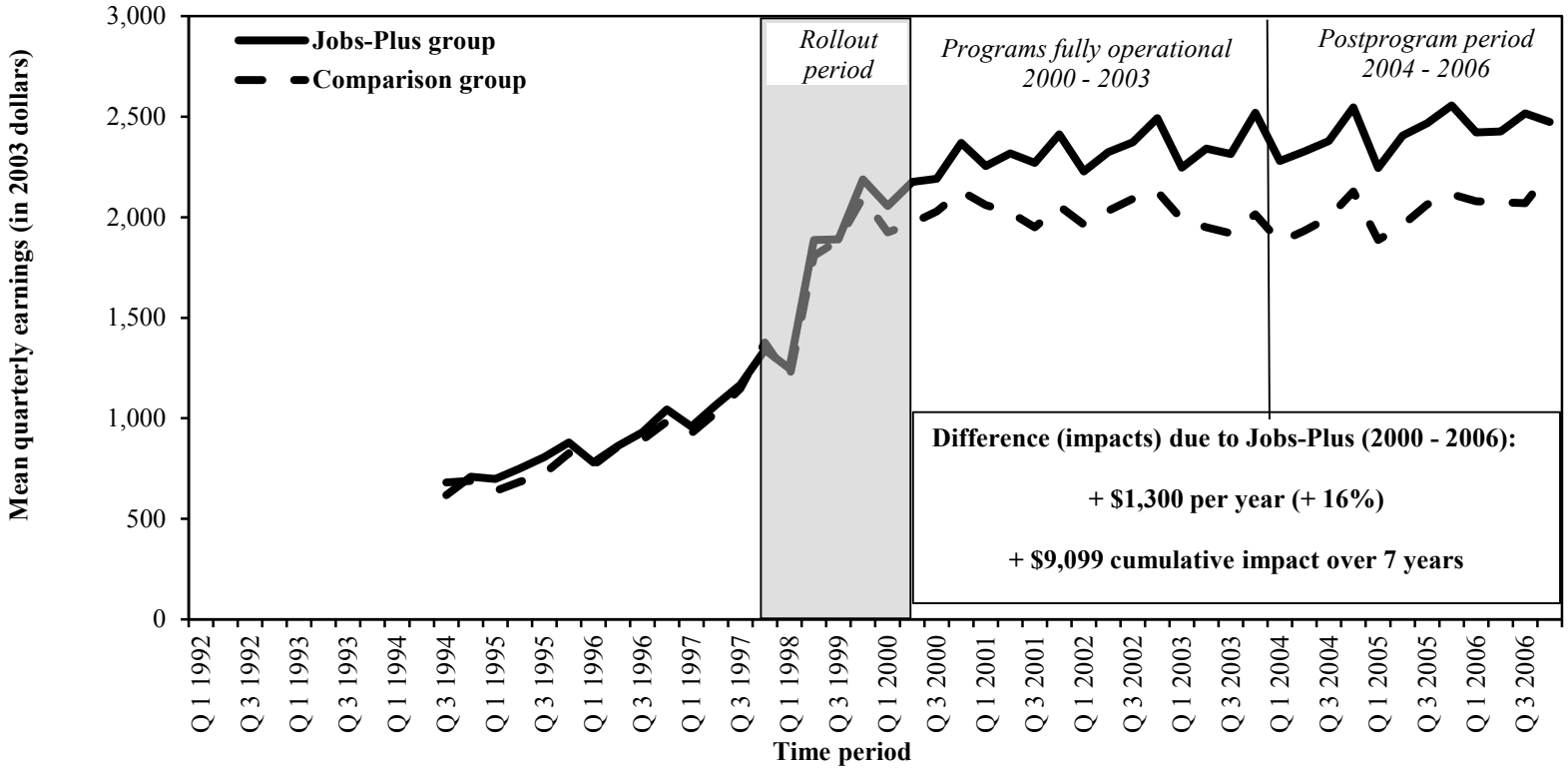
[2]Bloom, Riccio, and Verma (2005). MDRC produced over 20 reports on the impacts and implementation of Jobs-Plus; please see http://www.mdrc.org/project/jobs-plus-community-revitalization-initiative-public-housing-families for more information.

[3]One of the SIF replication's innovations to the Jobs-Plus model was to add financial coaching to this list of services. Chronic financial instability affects many low-income people, and was seen as a barrier to program engagement and good outcomes.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 1.1

Jobs-Plus's Impact on Average Quarterly Earnings in Dayton, Los Angeles, and St. Paul, 2000-2006



SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from housing authority tenant records and state unemployment insurance wage records.

NOTES: Sample includes all working-age, nondisabled residents who lived in the Jobs-Plus or comparison developments in Dayton, OH, Los Angeles, and St. Paul, MN, in October 1998. Trend lines show their earnings before and after October 1998, whether or not they were living in the developments during those other times. The annual and cumulative earnings impacts for the period 2000-2006 are statistically significant.

income. To offset this possible disincentive to work, Jobs-Plus offers working residents *rent-based incentives*. In the original demonstration, Jobs-Plus programs either offered a flat rent — one that did not rise with household income — or an income-based rent set lower than the usual 30 percent of income stipulated by HUD. Other strategies used during the demonstration included safety-net provisions for residents who lost jobs (for example, the option for residents to revert from a Jobs-Plus flat rent to the normal public housing income-based rent if they could no longer afford the flat rent). Jobs-Plus programs may also include other initiatives designed to help working residents keep more of their earnings and take advantage of a variety of income supplements for which they may be eligible (for example, the Earned Income Tax Credit, food stamps, Medicaid, etc.).[4]

3. **Community Support for Work.** Jobs-Plus aims to strengthen social ties among residents to help support their job preparation and work efforts. A fundamental purpose of Community Support for Work is to propagate the message that "work pays" and that "employment goals are attainable," thereby creating a social environment where the theme of work is more pervasive than it had previously been.[5] Another is to help residents connect with both formal sources of support (that is, social services) and informal ones (for example, babysitting, carpooling, or sharing information about job leads). Community Support for Work typically involves recruiting, training, and supervising a small cadre of residents who encourage their neighbors both to use Jobs-Plus services and to try to improve their employment situations. Residents selected to play this role usually receive stipends as compensation for their contributions.

Jobs-Plus is a "saturation initiative," meaning it aims to provide services to all working-age, nondisabled residents of a development. The different components are illustrated in a logic model for Jobs-Plus, shown in Figure 1.2. Because Jobs-Plus is a saturation initiative, the logic model emphasizes changes within a development. However, it is important to note that in the original demonstration, Jobs-Plus showed impacts even on residents who left their developments.

The Jobs-Plus Collaborative

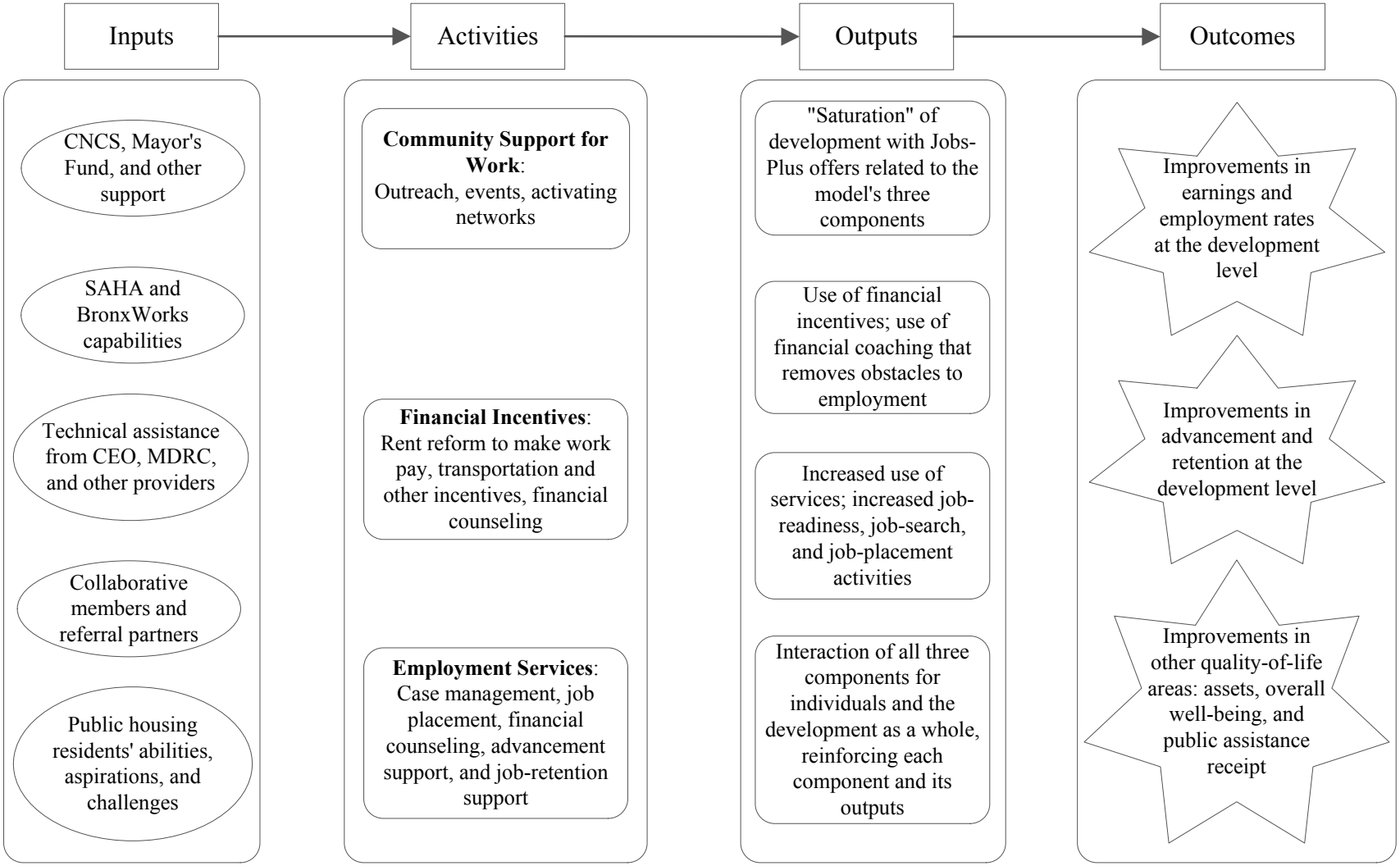
The original Jobs-Plus demonstration also had an innovative governance, accountability, and support component — the "Collaborative." That is, recognizing that no single agency

[4]Benefit eligibility counseling is also part of the SIF version of Jobs-Plus.
[5]Blank and Wharton-Fields (2008).

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 1.2

SIF Jobs-Plus Logic Model



could craft, fund, and operate such a comprehensive initiative, the national designers of Jobs-Plus called for the creation of new local partnerships (or "Collaboratives") in the cities that implemented the program. These Collaboratives had to include the local housing authority, resident representatives, the local welfare department, and the local workforce development agency (that is, the agency operating under the Workforce Investment Act).

Collaboratives served both a support and a governance function. On the support side, the housing authorities had access to HUD resources and controlled many policies affecting housing developments and their tenants, but they needed the experience and resources of the welfare department and the workforce development agency in providing employment and social services. At the same time, these agencies had little knowledge of the circumstances of public housing residents, who made up a sizable percentage of their caseloads. Furthermore, resident representatives on the Collaboratives knew their communities and their communities' service needs and could foster community trust in the program. Finally, other local organizations were expected to join and provide services, expertise, and other resources.

On the governance side, the Collaboratives were expected to hold Jobs-Plus providers and member agencies accountable for progress and for supporting the mission of Jobs-Plus, although this function was difficult to manage in practice.[6]

The Importance of Strong Implementation

The original Jobs-Plus demonstration was an ambitious program of a much larger scope than the types of self-sufficiency initiatives typical in public housing at the time. The parties involved had develop new interagency and resident partnerships to plan and deliver the intervention, bring employment assistance directly into public housing developments, craft new rent rules to make work pay, foster neighbor-to-neighbor support for work, and offer assistance to all working-age, nondisabled residents. It was not at all clear at the outset of the demonstration that it would be feasible to operate the Jobs-Plus model in the real world.

And, in fact, not all of the original Jobs-Plus developments were able to implement the model fully. As a result, the original demonstration amassed considerable evidence that implementation strongly affects the impact Jobs-Plus has residents. Jobs-Plus developments that fully implemented the model saw long-term earnings improvements compared with control developments, suggesting that Jobs-Plus can set a development on a new economic trajectory even after the program ends. However, those that did not implement the model fully saw no impacts.

[6]Kato and Riccio (2001).

Jobs-Plus relies on the concept of "saturation," or the ability to deliver services to all working-age, nondisabled residents of developments, in various ways. As described above, it is not necessary to be formally enrolled in employment or job-search services to be helped by the program. Residents who never come into the Jobs-Plus office can still experience the benefits of rent incentives to make work pay, or otherwise be touched by Community Support for Work activities. Among the targeted residents who enrolled early in the original demonstration, about 40 percent received a Jobs-Plus rent incentive at some time. That was for all developments combined, however. In the developments that saw no impacts — in Baltimore, Maryland, and Chattanooga, Tennessee — a much smaller proportion ever received a rent incentive (around 12 percent). On the other hand, in the developments that had higher impacts — in Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Dayton — as many as 77 percent of households were receiving rent incentives by the late stages of the demonstration. These differences appeared to stem not from variations in employment rates (which could have influenced how many residents were able to take advantage of rent incentives) but from differences in how well the developments administered and marketed the incentives themselves.

For example, all public housing residents are required to undergo an annual income and rent review, and at the Los Angeles Jobs-Plus development, the housing manager personally approved every one. When he came across individuals who were candidates for Jobs-Plus, he called them to the housing management office to talk about the program and encouraged them to enroll, sometimes even personally escorting them to the Jobs-Plus office. In St. Paul, Dayton, and Seattle, housing authority staff members took the lead in promoting and signing residents up for the incentives and worked in close partnership with Jobs-Plus staff members to do so. In sharp contrast, the housing authority in Baltimore made it a lower priority to process resident applications for Jobs-Plus rent incentives, and residents who did sign up often had to wait months before the adjustments to their rent bills took effect. Sometimes, after they began paying lower rent under the Jobs-Plus rules, the housing authority would mistakenly issue warning notices that they had not paid their full rent on time. Not surprisingly, these actions bred cynicism about Jobs-Plus among other residents.

Overall, the Jobs-Plus program operators that promoted the incentives aggressively and that built strong partnerships with their developments' housing management offices generated a better response to the offer. These were also the developments that then showed strong impacts.

Early Replication of Jobs-Plus

After promising Jobs-Plus results were published in 2005, several organizations started to implement the model.

- The East River Development Alliance, a community organization in eastern Queens, New York, started to adapt Jobs-Plus in Queensbridge Houses, a very large public housing development.
- Subsequently, New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) launched the first city-funded replication of Jobs-Plus in Jefferson Houses, a large development in East Harlem, with Hostos Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) as the service provider.
- The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and CEO then together launched Jobs-Plus through the SIF — the subject of this report.
- Following the SIF replication, the city's Human Resources Administration led the launch of seven additional Jobs-Plus programs throughout New York.

CEO developed a structure to support the SIF replication, develop accountability, and ensure results. It issued a request for proposals in the Bronx and San Antonio, inviting community groups to identify "clusters" of developments whose scale would be significant and whose residents had concentrated need. It selected service providers through a committee of city agencies experienced in the Jobs-Plus model. Once providers were selected, CEO worked with them on their budget and staffing plans, developed service and performance expectations for each of the developments, and engaged MDRC to help each of them develop a program design document. It required providers to report their progress monthly using both narrative descriptions and quantitative measures, and quarterly in more extensive quantitative reports. Building on its relationships with New York City agencies, it helped develop a Collaborative for the Bronx program. Finally, in the years after the Jobs-Plus replication was launched, CEO reviewed providers' data quarterly, held annual discussions with them about their performance, and hosted exercises with them to set goals.

The economic and policy circumstances of all these replications are different from those surrounding the original demonstration, which may require providers to make adjustments to their implementation of the model. This report tracks the ways that the SIF's Jobs-Plus providers — the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) and BronxWorks, a community organization in New York City — adhere to and adapt strategies shown during the initial demonstration to be related to successful implementation. These SIF providers are implementing Jobs-Plus in contexts that are different economically, institutionally, and organizationally from the original demonstration in the following ways, all of which may influence program implementation and outcomes:

- A weaker job market in the aftermath of the Great Recession, compared with more plentiful opportunities for low- and higher-wage work during the late 1990s
- A different environment for the provision of housing assistance, in which self-sufficiency efforts and rent-reform rules have greater prominence within HUD, and in which resources for public housing have been reduced in many cases[7]
- An increase in scale, as SIF Jobs-Plus is being replicated in developments of greater size than those served in the original demonstration

The increase in scale, in particular, will present new challenges to providers as they aim to engage a substantial proportion of residents (that is, to achieve "saturation").

In addition to these different service contexts, the SIF Jobs-Plus program also includes an important enhancement to the model: the addition of formal financial counseling in New York City, funded by a supplemental grant from an additional donor.

Finally, it is important to note that while participation in the SIF version of Jobs-Plus provided an opportunity for providers and intermediaries to learn from past experiences, it presented challenges as well. The initial demonstration often took over two years to start up and refine, but the SIF's expansion to a larger scale has required providers to launch operational and effective programs within months. Such is often the case for replication efforts following successful, smaller-scale demonstrations, which means research related to the SIF providers' experiences should be broadly relevant. The topic is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Capturing Lessons from Different Implementation Contexts

Because existing evidence shows the effectiveness of the Jobs-Plus model, this report focuses on how the SIF Jobs-Plus providers have responded to the challenges and opportunities of the replication programs' environments. It examines three major questions:

1. How successful were local efforts to develop each of the components of the Jobs-Plus model?
2. How did providers innovate as they adapted Jobs-Plus to local conditions?

[7]Although the original Jobs-Plus demonstration was launched in the context of federal and state welfare reform efforts, HUD is currently exploring rent reform to encourage work, as well as a host of other programs in Moving to Work developments.

3. What were the costs of implementation?

The report draws from (1) programs' management information systems (to analyze participation),[8] (2) interviews with service providers and other stakeholders and observers (who are not participants), (3) provider administrative records (for expenditure information), (4) voluntary interviews with consenting public housing residents, and (5) observations of both providers' practices.[9]

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[8]To analyze participation data, MDRC constructed measures of participant characteristics, use of program services, and reported employment, using data extracted from online management information systems (MISs) that BronxWorks and SAHA developed or modified for the Jobs-Plus program. MDRC also collected copies of each study participant's signed informed consent form and used the signature date as the date the participant's joined the program. This date, called the "intake date," is the one from which this report measures the timing of receipt of services, financial incentives, and reported employment. MDRC collected data from each service provider's MIS multiple times between January 2012 and July 2014. BronxWorks and SAHA provided MDRC with each study participant's unique Jobs-Plus Identification Number, which MDRC then included in requests for MIS data. Most data deliveries contained cumulative collections of records, which MDRC combined and then "deduplicated" by eliminating older and superseded versions of records. Through the matching procedure, MDRC eliminated records for Jobs-Plus participants who had not signed an informed-consent form. In addition, MDRC dropped from the study sample participants with addresses outside of the target developments. MDRC also dropped records with dates recorded prior to the month of each study participant's program intake and (in keeping with the requirement to analyze only postintake employment) dropped records of employment retention or advancement that appeared to be associated with a job that the participant began prior to intake. MDRC constructed measures of study participants' baseline characteristics from data recorded in standard assessments that BronxWorks and SAHA staff members conducted around study participants' time of program intake. MDRC developed a coding strategy for creating common characteristic measures from each type of assessment. MDRC constructed measures of study participants' use of services and use of the rent incentives from "Point of Service" and "Referral" records extracted from the BronxWorks MIS and from "Milestone" attainment and "Referral" records extracted from SAHA's MIS. MDRC closely reviewed each provider's specific codes for recording each type of service and financial incentive and then developed a coding strategy to create common outcome measures. MDRC also converted the date fields in MIS records to relative time — that is, the number of days following each study participant's intake date — when constructing measures that placed program outcomes within a standard follow-up period. Job characteristics were recorded for participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the programs. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. Program staff members at SAHA also verified participants' employment with information from the housing authority's database for calculating household income and rent levels. Measures of employment retention and advancement were recorded when Jobs-Plus participants reported their current hours of work and hourly pay at a job previously reported or a different job. Levels of unreported employment by Jobs-Plus participants are not known.

[9]The research team conducted three rounds of interviews and observations of program operations in the Bronx and San Antonio. In both rounds, interviews included program directors, housing authority senior managers, property management staff members, and front-line staff members (such as case managers). Both visits also allowed researchers to observe program practices directly, including intake, outreach, service flow, and case conferencing, among others. Between visits, researchers relied on monthly technical assistance calls to providers that allowed more constant data collection on challenges and progress. In the Bronx, researchers conducted two focus groups on the rent incentive with residents drawn from a random sample of program

(continued)

Throughout, the report compares the experiences of the SIF subgrantees in San Antonio and in the Bronx, illustrating important differences in their contexts. While these two providers alone cannot represent definitively how different operators will manage implementation, they present interesting contrasts: One is a housing authority and the other a not-for-profit provider; one provides services on-site, the other, off-site; one uses the Jobs-Plus Collaborative as a governance body, the other primarily as a vehicle for interagency coordination.

San Antonio, Texas

SAHA provides on-site Jobs-Plus services to the residents of its two most impoverished public housing developments: Alazan-Apache Courts and Mirasol Homes.[10] Alazan-Apache Courts, built in 1939, is the first public housing community constructed in the City of San Antonio. It includes three properties that consist of 1,022 units total: Alazan, Apache, and Guadalupe Homes. The properties, a mixture of two-level, apartment-style buildings and stand-alone homes, surround the Alazan-Apache Jobs-Plus office.[11] The office is clearly marked with a Jobs-Plus sign on its front lawn.

The second Jobs-Plus on-site office serves the residents of Mirasol Homes. It is located about three miles — or roughly a 30-minute bus ride — west of Alazan-Apache Courts. Mirasol Homes was constructed in 1952 and revitalized between 2000 and 2003 with 174 mixed-use development units: 87 single-family rental homes, 67 multifamily townhomes, and 20 cottage-style duplex apartments.[12] Mirasol Homes has many fewer units than Alazan-Apache Courts' total, and also has a smaller, less-busy Jobs-Plus office. Most of SAHA's Jobs-Plus staff members work in the Alazan-Apache Courts office.

SAHA's Jobs-Plus program had up to 13 staff members, including a program administrative assistant; three managers/supervisors (including one program director, one program manager, and one senior resource specialist); two resource specialists; two job-placement coordinators; and one community organizer overseeing up to four community coaches (outreach workers who were residents of the targeted developments).

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participants. This focus group sample was stratified by groups of interest, including residents working or not working when they enrolled in the program. All interviews and focus groups were recorded for subsequent coding and analysis. Interviewers also took notes on observations according to fixed guides. The team coded qualitative data according to themes using the online software package Dedoose, and conducted inter-rater reliability tests to ensure consistency across coders.

[10]San Antonio Housing Authority (2015c).

[11]San Antonio Housing Authority (2015a).

[12]San Antonio Housing Authority (2015b).

Left: Alazan-Apache Courts; right: Mirasol Homes. Photos courtesy of SAHA.

SAHA is a public housing authority with Moving to Work status.[13] Moving to Work is a designation granted by HUD under the authorization of the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996 to a limited number of public housing authorities among the over 3,000 that exist across the United States.[14] As of December 2012, 39 public housing authorities were authorized as Moving to Work agencies.[15] The Moving to Work designation gives public housing authorities flexibility in how they spend federal funds and allows them to test innovative approaches.[16] Moving to Work status allowed SAHA to modify the rent incentives component of the Jobs-Plus model during SIF implementation, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The Bronx, New York

BronxWorks, a not-for-profit organization operating in the Bronx since 1972, began working in workforce development with the passage of the Welfare Reform Act in 1996.[17] BronxWorks provides off-site Jobs-Plus services to the residents of three New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments located in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx: Betances I-IV, Moore Houses, and Courtlandt Houses. The three developments consist of 34 separate buildings,[18] an array of large, tower-style buildings and smaller buildings that

[13]San Antonio Housing Authority (2015c).

[14]Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (2009a); Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (2009b); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015c).

[15]Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (2009b).

[16]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015b).

[17]BronxWorks (2015).

[18]New York City Housing Authority (2010).

Betances Houses. Photo courtesy of NYCHA.

stand three, four, and five stories tall; both Betances and Moore Houses have community centers associated with them. There are 1,516 households spread across these buildings and 1,701 working-age adults lived there when Jobs-Plus launched, according to their leases.[19]

The BronxWorks Jobs-Plus office is about a 10-minute walk from these development buildings, located in "the Hub," a busy commercial section of the South Bronx. Generally 15 staff members worked there during SIF Jobs-Plus implementation, including a program director, an assistant program director, four resource coordinators, two job developers, two financial coaches, two community coaches (outreach workers who were residents of the targeted developments), one administrative assistant, and more recently added positions such as business development coordinator and community engagement coordinator. Most of these staff members sat in the same room so as to facilitate communication among them. This type of communication is particularly important to Jobs-Plus, which calls on providers to deliver services that are comprehensive and tailored to the member.

BronxWorks operates a community center in the Betances development, and was part of a planning process that connected public housing residents to service agencies through HUD's Choice Neighborhoods program. During Jobs-Plus implementation, NYCHA created a department called Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability, which strives to increase NYCHA residents' income and assets through programs, policies, and collaborations. Through this new department, NYCHA stopped being only a direct service provider and began forming formal partnerships with external providers, including providers like BronxWorks that

[19]It is likely that many more also live in the households but are not officially on the leases.

provide employment services and financial coaching. The Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability department uses a "zone" model that divides communities into areas and assigns a NYCHA staff member to serve as a "zone coordinator," ensuring that each area has a staff member devoting time to its residents. The average zone serves 11,000 NYCHA households. Jobs-Plus was an essential part of this new model, with NYCHA's early zone coordinators serving as liaisons to the Jobs-Plus program office.

In 2012 NYCHA was awarded a HUD Choice Neighborhoods planning grant and embarked on an 18-month community planning process in partnership with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. NYCHA met extensively with community members and then submitted a transformation plan to HUD titled "Make Mott Haven" that calls for capital improvements to the Betances Houses; increased access to workforce and educational services for residents; and improvements to the built environment including new parks and better lighting. As a long-time Bronx community provider, BronxWorks served on NYCHA's "Make Mott Haven" steering committee and hosted and participated in many of the community and partner meetings throughout the planning process.

Recruitment and Enrollment of Members

Recruitment strategies evolved over time in both cities, but broadly speaking Jobs-Plus staff members in San Antonio and the Bronx got the word out to residents about Jobs-Plus by handing out flyers, knocking on doors, and creating or capitalizing on community events. These efforts are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, which focuses on the Jobs-Plus component most relevant to recruitment, Community Support for Work. Though they used similar recruitment strategies, BronxWorks and SAHA employed those strategies in developments with very different buildings and layouts.

BronxWorks also had 67 percent more resident households in its Jobs-Plus target units than SAHA, containing more working-age adults: 1,143 in SAHA target units and 1,701 in BronxWorks target units when Jobs-Plus launched in 2011. By the end of Year 1, BronxWorks had enrolled 12.5 percent of the residents in its targeted housing units in Jobs-Plus, while SAHA had enrolled 8.6 percent. By the beginning of Year 3, SAHA had enrolled 72.0 percent of the residents in its targeted housing units in Jobs-Plus, while BronxWorks had enrolled 58.4 percent.

This concept of "enrollment" is not necessarily the right one to use to examine Jobs-Plus, however. While people who came into the Jobs-Plus office were considered to be "enrolled" and were known as "members," Jobs-Plus is designed to reach public housing residents even if they never come into a Jobs-Plus office. All residents could take advantage of the rent incentives or participate in Community Support for Work activities. Further, as described in

Chapter 2, becoming a member did not necessarily mean that a resident was continuously engaged in employment services.

Demographics of Job-Plus Members

The majority of residents who enrolled in SAHA's Jobs-Plus program through December 31, 2013 came from Alazan-Apache (approximately 80 percent).[20] As shown in Table 1.1, most spoke English as their primary language, identified as Latino/Hispanic/Spanish and female, and were the heads of their households (not shown). In the Bronx, Jobs-Plus members who enrolled in the program during the same period primarily came from the Betances development (approximately 62 percent), were split evenly among men and women, and spoke English primarily. In contrast to SAHA's members, only 24 percent of BronxWorks Jobs-Plus members identified as the heads of their households. As an additional point of contrast, 56 percent of BronxWorks members identified as Latino/Hispanic/Spanish and 42 percent as Black or African American, while 87 percent of SAHA members identified as Latino/Hispanic/Spanish. Members in the two cities did have similar levels of educational attainment: approximately 46 percent of SAHA's Jobs-Plus members and 35 percent of BronxWorks' came to the program with less than a high school or high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. This means that the majority of members in both cities had a high school diploma/HSE or above (which may have been overlooked by provider staff members when it came to developing employment and advancement opportunities for them, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 2).

Previous Workforce Development Experience

BronxWorks and SAHA both came to Jobs-Plus with experience in managing and implementing workforce development and social service programs. BronxWorks' Jobs-Plus implementation mostly built on its experience with the Back-to-Work program, at the time a mandatory work-experience program for applicants and recipients of cash assistance (although it has since significantly changed its emphasis). In New York City, Back-to-Work vendors are paid based on their ability to place clients in jobs and help them retain those jobs. There is a built-in incentive to place clients quickly, which in some cases may mean placing them in low-wage jobs.

While SAHA staff members also had a variety of workforce experiences, SAHA's approach to employment services mostly built on its previous experience conducting case management in its Family Self-Sufficiency program. Family Self-Sufficiency is a five-year,

[20]This period was chosen to ensure adequate follow-up data on Jobs-Plus members and a consistent analytic framework for the report as a whole.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 1.1

Characteristics of Program Participants at Enrollment, by Provider Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Characteristic	BronxWorks	SAHA
Demographic characteristics		
Gender (%)		
Male	50.1	17.6
Female	49.9	82.4
Average age	30.5	28.6
Age (%)		
18 years	6.3	2.2
19-24 years	38.0	37.1
25-34 years	25.2	41.8
35-44 years	14.3	12.9
45-59 years	14.9	5.4
60 years or more	1.3	0.5
Married, living with spouse (%)	10.7	14.3
Race/ethnicity and citizenship		
Race/ethnicity (%)		
Latino/Hispanic/Spanish	55.8	87.4
White	0.3	3.4
Black or African American	41.6	8.9
Other	2.3	0.3

(continued)

voluntary case management and asset-building program that provides free services like job training, job placement, and education to participants, in this case public housing residents and housing voucher recipients. The program provides participants with incentives to work in the form of a free, interest-bearing savings account maintained by the housing authority and paid to the participant when he or she completes the program.

Table 1.1 (continued)

Characteristic	BronxWorks	SAHA
U.S. citizen (%)	90.9	95.1
Primary language (%)		
English	85.1	95.0
Spanish	13.7	4.4
Other	1.2	0.7
Education and employment		
Highest degree/diploma earned (%)		
Less than high school	35.1	46.1
High school equivalency diploma	11.0	12.4
High school diploma	41.1	40.2
Technical/associate's/2-year college	7.0	0.7
4-year college or higher	5.8	0.5
Currently employed (%)	18.1	24.0
Sample size	774	597

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values. Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.

The Roles of the Collaborative

The Collaborative is meant to be a vehicle for interagency coordination that brings together local stakeholders in Jobs-Plus implementation. In the Bronx, the Collaborative had a strong presence. CEO brought other city agencies into it including the Human Resources Administration, NYCHA, the Department of Small Business Services (which runs the city's workforce agencies), and the Office of Financial Empowerment (a part of the Department of Consumer Affairs). These agencies served as a sounding board for Jobs-Plus implementation also imparted knowledge to BronxWorks through training events, provided introductions to other organizations implementing similar programs, and helped BronxWorks create a data system for financial counseling. One BronxWorks staff member commented: "For me part of

the biggest things that become available through the Collaborative is really getting a sense of where the resources are on the ground and what's possible."

Because SAHA had the internal authority to make changes to Jobs-Plus procedures (as a housing authority with Moving to Work status) and felt accountable to its own leaders, it did not develop a formal Collaborative. To illustrate the difference, when BronxWorks sought to change a process under the purview of a housing authority, its staff had to arrange a meeting with NYCHA or property managers to discuss the desired changes. Then it was up to NYCHA to make those changes, on a schedule of its choosing. Having a Collaborative was more advantageous to BronxWorks because it did not have the ability to change Jobs-Plus procedures independently. In San Antonio, it was not until Year 4 of Jobs-Plus implementation — and at the encouragement of technical assistance providers — that SAHA made an effort to create a Collaborative.

The implementation of Collaboratives in the two cities is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Lessons for Future Replications

The experiences of SAHA and BronxWorks offer insights that may be valuable to HUD and to future Jobs-Plus grantees in a number of areas, including:

- What types of decisions and trade-offs occur when relying on a housing authority to carry out Jobs-Plus implementation, and what types occur when relying on an outside service partner
- How to structure technical assistance and ongoing support for providers with different strengths and weaknesses
- How to establish accountability structures and reporting mechanisms
- How providers with different levels of expertise can adopt contemporary, evidence-based workforce development practices
- How to achieve "saturation" of Jobs-Plus on a large scale, in different service environments and different economic and physical contexts
- How to structure and market financial incentives, and integrate them into housing authority processes

This implementation study should also be valuable to future replication efforts because it seeks to determine the cost of operating the Jobs-Plus program, a priority because no cost analysis was conducted during the original demonstration. This analysis estimates the full cost

of services, and, to the extent possible, the cost of rent incentives. Gross costs are estimated for both providers using analyses of participation, full expenditure data, estimates of the costs of rent incentives, and other relevant costs.

Report Structure

SIF Jobs-Plus was launched in January 2011 as a five-year initiative. This report covers program implementation in both cities from Year 1 through Year 4, although the quantitative data presented only reach the end of 2013 (to ensure that the analyses reported related only to individuals who had been served by Jobs-Plus for enough time to understand their experiences). The Jobs-Plus programs in San Antonio and the Bronx continue to operate through early 2016, and it should be noted that they continue to work on improving model implementation.

Chapters 2 through 4 discuss how the three components of the Jobs-Plus model (employment services, financial incentives, and Community Support for Work) operated on this larger scale. Chapter 5 describes ways HUD or other large-scale funders can support strong implementation throughout the life of a Jobs-Plus project, including ways they can provide technical assistance that supports learning and program start-up and ways they can develop accountability for performance. Chapter 6 describes the costs of operating Jobs-Plus.

Chapter 2

Employment Services for Public Housing Residents

Introduction

Jobs-Plus is designed to raise and sustain the level of employment and earnings among residents of public housing developments through a three-pronged strategy of employment services, financial incentives to make work pay, and community support for work. Employment services are most direct way to raise residents' employment and earnings, as residents receive assistance or referrals related to their barriers to employment, training, help with job searches and job placement, and support to help them keep jobs and advance in them.

This chapter describes how BronxWorks and the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) developed employment services in the large developments that were part of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) replication, during a period when the job market was weak and the national unemployment rate was high. The chapter also describes the financial counseling enhancement to the original Jobs-Plus model added in this replication.

A large proportion of the residents in the SIF Jobs-Plus developments became members of Jobs-Plus and at least had their needs for services assessed, indicating that most residents were aware of Jobs-Plus, as the "saturation" principle of the model calls for. This high enrollment during early implementation represented a major success for both providers. BronxWorks came to Jobs-Plus with an extensive job placement network and SAHA made use of its access to employment opportunities connected with agency contracting. Individual staff members also brought experiences from other self-sufficiency programs, including Back-to-Work, Strong Fathers, and Earn More in the Bronx, and the Family Self-Sufficiency program and Moving to Work in San Antonio.[1] These differences in their backgrounds led the providers to emphasize different services: members in the Bronx were more likely to receive help searching for jobs, while those in San Antonio were more likely to receive social services to help them overcome barriers to employment. BronxWorks received a grant from a SIF funder to provide financial counseling, an addition to the original Jobs-Plus model, and found ways to deliver this service successfully.[2]

However, both providers generally placed residents in low-wage work, and did not have ties to many organizations offering career advancement training. As a result, providers

[1]See Chapter 1 for descriptions of Back-to-Work and Family Self-Sufficiency.

[2]SAHA did not receive this funding, but toward the end of the study period found an external organization that could deliver these types of services.

had little to offer members who were already employed. It was also a challenge for both providers to maintain engagement with members over time. It is important to note that this chapter captures early implementation, through 2013, and that improvements have been reported in the years that followed.

Employment Services

During early implementation, Jobs-Plus staff members reached a significant percentage of eligible households.[3] Between 2011 and 2013, BronxWorks' employment services staff consisted of two resource coordinators, one job-readiness trainer, and two job developers; SAHA's consisted of one senior resource specialist, two resource specialists, and two job placement coordinators.[4] Table 2.1 shows interactions with Jobs-Plus members whose participation could be tracked for a year after they joined the program. It also shows the number of residents reached during early implementation by each provider. As described in greater detail in Chapter 4, this number represented a significant proportion of potentially eligible households.

Approximately three-fourths of members in the Bronx received job-search services during their first year in the Jobs-Plus program, and slightly above half were referred to a job interview. In contrast, only two-fifths of members in San Antonio received job-search services, and about a third were referred to a job interview. In general, SAHA placed much greater emphasis on referrals to social services, education, and training: 61 percent of members in San Antonio received referrals to social services in their first year in the program (compared with 14 percent in the Bronx), and 46 percent were referred to education or to employment-related training programs (compared with 27 percent in the Bronx).

These differences in the two providers' service approaches can be attributed to two factors. First, as described in Chapter 1, BronxWorks had recently implemented a Back-to-Work initiative, whose model emphasized employment readiness and quick placement, while SAHA's had recent experience with the Family Self-Sufficiency program, which emphasized referrals to social services intended to address barriers to employment. Second, SAHA Jobs-Plus members tended not to have made it as far in school; as described in Table 1.1, approximately half of SAHA Jobs-Plus members in the study had less than a high school or high school equivalency diploma, compared with 35 percent of BronxWorks Jobs-Plus members. SAHA may have focused more on education and training as a result.

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[3]The interactions discussed in this section only include formal encounters with program staff members, not informal conversations about work among residents, which are more difficult to capture.

[4]Resource coordinators and specialists conduct assessments of member needs and connect members to needed services through referrals. Job developers and job placement coordinators work with members on résumé and interview preparedness and refer members to active job openings.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.1

Use of Jobs-Plus Services During the First Year After Enrollment, by Provider

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through June 30, 2013

Interaction (%)	BronxWorks	SAHA
Any assessment	100.0	99.1
Career plan	99.5	98.8
Financial or benefits	84.5	84.4
Job readiness	94.9	4.9
Any postassessment service	92.8	80.7
Any job search	75.9	38.1
Independent job search	37.1	6.7
Job-readiness workshop	46.2	7.7
Determined to be job-ready	31.2	20.0
Referred to job interview	53.2	31.9
Referred to education or training	27.3	46.3
Basic education	13.4	19.8
Vocational training	16.0	32.1
Referred to benefits or social services		
Benefits	12.6	15.6
Social services	13.7	61.4
Referred to financial services	78.1	11.4
Received supportive services or incentive	4.0	17.9
Engaged in the EID process	11.7	7.2
Referred for the EID	11.3	6.0
Received the EID	2.1	4.7
Sample size	626	430

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and San Antonio Housing Authority management information systems.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
EID = Earned Income Disregard, a rent incentive.

During early implementation, SAHA also tended to view social service referrals as a "test" of participant engagement with Jobs-Plus, and would not generally encourage participants to seek employment until they had successfully completed those services. As described below, this practice contributed to a loss of engagement with some members, and may have meant that SAHA missed opportunities to combine training, services, and job-search activities.

That is, while both providers assessed the job readiness of members when they joined the program and identified the services members needed to become fully ready for jobs, the two providers had different definitions of "readiness." At BronxWorks, staff members focused on helping members achieve benchmarks that would allow quick placement in jobs, such as having a résumé, being able to interview, and having "soft skills" (the general habits and competencies that make for an effective employee, like how to show up for work on time and how to work with others). In the early stages of the program, all members at BronxWorks were required to attend two job-readiness workshops before they could be referred to a job developer — no matter how job-ready they were when they came to the program. BronxWorks quickly added a fast-track option for those who arrived job-ready and who otherwise could be discouraged by having to attend programs they did not need. As one staff member suggested:

> We deem them [Jobs-Plus members] job-ready basically by how they interview, you know having a presentable résumé and ... making sure they have work attire and they're presenting well. So if we feel that they're ready and they're not fidgeting, they're not nervous, they could express their career goals, then that's what makes a member job-ready.

This description suggests that BronxWorks defined most members who were employed at enrollment as "job-ready," and would not be as likely to refer them to job-readiness workshops as members who arrived unemployed. In fact, Table 2.2 shows that BronxWorks referred half of all members who were unemployed at enrollment to a job-readiness workshop, compared with 30 percent of members who were employed at enrollment. Educational attainment did not predict as well whether or not a member would be referred to a job-readiness workshop, as shown in Table 2.3.

In contrast, SAHA focused on addressing barriers to employment by providing services like child care or transportation before referring a member to the job developer. SAHA believed that not addressing these barriers would make it difficult for a member to retain work:

> [One member] had just lost her job because she couldn't get a babysitter.... We're going to try to address all those situations before we put you in a [job] because we don't want you to go to work and then lose your job because of something that we could have prevented on the front end.... Our program does not offer them a paycheck right away unless they are already job-ready, which

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.2

Use of Jobs-Plus Services During the Six Months After Enrollment, by Reported Employment Status at Enrollment (BronxWorks)

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Interaction (%)	Not Employed at Enrollment	Employed at Enrollment
Any assessment	99.8	99.3
Career plan	99.8	97.8
Financial or benefits	79.8	78.4
Job readiness	93.3	89.2
Any postassessment service	89.5	84.9
Any job search	73.1	60.4
Independent job search	38.2	20.9
Job-readiness workshop	50.3	29.5
Determined to be job-ready	29.0	22.3
Referred to job interview	47.9	36.7
Referred to education or training	22.3	18.7
Basic education	10.5	6.5
Vocational training	13.2	12.2
Referred to benefits or social services		
Benefits	10.2	9.4
Social services	11.6	2.9
Referred to financial services	74.4	72.7
Received supportive services or incentive	3.2	2.2
Engaged in the EID process	7.2	7.2
Referred for the EID	7.2	6.5
Received the EID	0.5	1.4
Began employment	34.6	20.1
Full time	16.6	7.9
Part time	18.0	12.2
Sample size	628	139

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks management information system.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
Study participants missing data on background characteristics used to create subgroup categories are not included in these measures.
Job characteristics were recorded for Jobs-Plus participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the program. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. Levels of unreported employment among Jobs-Plus participants are not known. Tests of statistical significance were not performed on differences in service use by subgroup.
EID = Earned Income Disregard, a rent incentive.

> some of them are. Some of them can come in and they have no barriers after being assessed and they go straight to job placement. But most of them have some work to do.

As mentioned above, the San Antonio residents' lower educational attainment may have been the reason for this social-service-based approach. As Table 2.4 shows, SAHA tended to engage more members in job-search activities if they had a high school degree or higher. However, Table 2.4 also shows that SAHA tended provide more referrals for social services to members with higher levels of education. It is possible that members with higher levels of education were more likely to ask for social service referrals. However, other indicators of service receipt are very similar between these subgroups. This pattern suggests that there was some degree of "gatekeeping" applied to residents universally rather than a strategy to tailor services to their needs. The result was a drop-off in engagement not consistent with the model's "saturation" goal of constant engagement, as discussed below.

Table 2.5 also shows that SAHA members who were employed when they joined Jobs-Plus received similar services as those who were unemployed. Similar proportions of unemployed and employed members received referrals to high school equivalency or job-training programs, to programs providing counseling or coaching on finances, or to the Earned Income Disregard (EID, the rent incentive discussed further in Chapter 3). Slightly more members who were employed when they joined received referrals to social services.

In sum, Tables 2.4 and 2.5 suggest that educational and employment status did not tend to guide practices in San Antonio.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.3

Use of Jobs-Plus Services During the Six Months After Enrollment, by Highest Education Credential at Enrollment (BronxWorks)

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Interaction (%)	No High School Diploma or HSE	High School Diploma, HSE, or Higher
Any assessment	100.0	99.6
Career plan	100.0	99.2
Financial or benefits	73.1	82.6
Job readiness	93.4	92.2
Any postassessment service	85.6	90.2
Any job search	63.5	74.7
Independent job search	33.2	35.9
Job-readiness workshop	44.6	47.3
Determined to be job-ready	20.3	31.7
Referred to job interview	36.2	51.3
Referred to education or training	31.7	16.0
Basic education	22.9	2.6
Vocational training	11.8	13.6
Referred to benefits or social services		
Benefits	10.7	9.6
Social services	13.7	8.2
Referred to financial services	67.5	77.0
Received supportive services or incentive	2.2	3.4
Engaged in the EID process	7.0	7.2
Referred for the EID	7.0	7.0
Received the EID	0.4	0.8
Began employment	26.6	34.9
Full time	13.7	15.8
Part time	12.9	19.2
Sample size	271	501

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks management information system.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
Study participants missing data on background characteristics used to create subgroup categories are not included in these measures.
Job characteristics were recorded for Jobs-Plus participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the program. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. Levels of unreported employment among Jobs-Plus participants are not known. Tests of statistical significance were not performed on differences in service use by subgroup.
HSE = high school equivalency diploma.
EID = Earned Income Disregard, a rent incentive.

Building Relationships with Members and Maintaining Engagement

While members may join Jobs-Plus to solve immediate employment and service needs, best practices in the employment field today suggest that providers should remain engaged with program members after those immediate needs are met, supporting their continued employment, helping them meet training goals, responding to crises when necessary, and helping them advance toward longer-term career goals.

Both BronxWorks and SAHA struggled to maintain this sort of engagement with members. As Figure 2.1 shows, two months after members joined Jobs-Plus, the proportion of participants who received any service from BronxWorks in a given month dropped by about half. For SAHA, after two months only a third of members received any services in a given month. Many voluntary programs experience this sort of drop-off, but the Jobs-Plus model emphasizes more regular engagement.

This drop-off in engagement occurred for three main reasons: staff attitudes about accountability, turnover among staff members, and staff members' limited use of management information systems.

Staff Attitudes About Accountability

Some staff members — especially at SAHA — had the perception that Jobs-Plus demanded a certain level of commitment and accountability from members. As a result, some of them were only willing to follow up with members to a limited extent; they saw this practice as a way of demanding commitment from members. In fact, SAHA employed social service referrals as a way to screen out uncommitted Jobs-Plus members. A SAHA staff member noted:

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Table 2.4

Use of Jobs-Plus Services During the Six Months After Enrollment, by Highest Education Credential at Enrollment (SAHA)

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Interaction (%)	No High School Diploma or HSE	High School Diploma, HSE, or Higher
Any assessment	99.6	99.7
Career plan	98.8	99.0
Financial or benefits	94.8	93.9
Job readiness	2.0	4.4
Any postassessment service	73.4	83.7
Any job search	24.6	34.2
Independent job search	3.2	7.1
Job-readiness workshop	4.8	8.8
Determined to be job-ready	11.5	14.9
Referred to job interview	17.9	29.2
Referred to education or training	45.6	36.9
Basic education	35.3	2.4
Vocational training	15.1	35.3
Referred to benefits or social services		
Benefits	10.3	12.5
Social services	51.6	62.7
Referred to financial services	9.5	16.3
Received supportive services or incentive	12.7	14.6
Engaged in the EID process	4.4	6.1
Referred for the EID	4.0	5.4
Received the EID	1.2	2.7
Began employment	21.4	24.4
Full time	6.3	9.2
Part time	12.7	13.2
Sample size	252	295

(continued)

Table 2.4 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the SAHA management information system.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
Study participants missing data on background characteristics used to create subgroup categories are not included in these measures.
Job characteristics were recorded for Jobs-Plus participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the program. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. SAHA also verified participants employment with information from the housing authority's database for calculating household income and rent levels. Levels of unreported employment among Jobs-Plus participants are not known. Tests of statistical significance were not performed on differences in service use by subgroup.
HSE = high school equivalency diploma.
EID = Earned Income Disregard, a rent incentive.

> [I am] just trying to get a good feel for them to see if they're really committed to doing this and what have they done up to this point and what has been their actions up to this point that shows that they've been trying and that shows that they're ready to do employment?

In the Bronx, Jobs-Plus staff members also wanted members to follow up with them, but described this follow-up as a form of mutual accountability. One BronxWorks staff member explained:

> I just think that we kind of need to do what we say — you know we need to hold up to that expectation, especially since I'm telling members during orientation this is what our mutual expectations are. If you call me and I tell you that I'm going to call you back and I haven't called you back, call me.... Hold me accountable for what I said that I'm going to do because I'm going to hold you accountable for what you say you're going to do. So it's just having that mutual respect.

Still, Jobs-Plus participants in both cities complained that Jobs-Plus staff members did not follow up with them well enough. This sentiment was expressed even by participants who were recruited for interviews because they were active members (and who might therefore have a higher opinion of the program than participants who had lost contact with the program, or who had never been in contact with it). One member in the Bronx described this experience during early implementation:

> The first time that I actually did go back [to the Jobs-Plus office], [the staff member] was like, "Who's your representative?" I was like, [name of staff member I had worked with before]. He's like, "She's not there. But I'll — to see what's up...." I went back there Monday, and [the staff member] said, ... "I can't do anything for you because there's a lot of people in front of you." I'm like,

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.5

Use of Jobs-Plus Services During the Six Months After Enrollment, by Reported Employment Status at Enrollment (SAHA)

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Interaction (%)	Not Employed at Enrollment	Employed at Enrollment
Any assessment	100.0	99.1
Career plan	99.1	98.2
Financial or benefits	96.9	89.2
Job readiness	4.3	2.7
Any postassessment service	82.9	80.2
Any job search	35.3	25.2
Independent job search	6.3	4.5
Job-readiness workshop	8.5	5.4
Determined to be job-ready	18.5	6.3
Referred to job interview	28.5	18.9
Referred to education or training	46.2	44.1
Basic education	19.9	18.0
Vocational training	29.1	27.9
Referred to benefits or social services		
Benefits	14.2	9.9
Social services	62.1	46.8
Referred to financial services	15.1	14.4
Received supportive services or incentive	16.2	14.4
Engaged in the EID process	6.0	7.2
Referred for the EID	5.7	5.4
Received the EID	2.0	3.6
Began employment	27.1	21.6
Full time	10.5	2.7
Part time	14.2	15.3
Sample size	351	111

(continued)

Table 2.5 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the SAHA management information system.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
Study participants missing data on background characteristics used to create subgroup categories are not included in these measures.
Job characteristics were recorded for Jobs-Plus participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the program. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. SAHA also verified participants' employment with information from the housing authority's database for calculating household income and rent levels. Levels of unreported employment by Jobs-Plus participants are not known. Tests of statistical significance were not performed on differences in service use by subgroup.
EID = Earned Income Disregard, a rent incentive.

> "It's no problem, just let me know, call me." [The previous staff person who helped me] said, "I'll call you." So I'm still waiting for her phone call.... That was actually at the beginning of the summer last year I was still waiting for a phone call.... After that I've just been looking for work on my own.

Residents also voiced concern about staff follow-up in San Antonio. One resident said she enrolled in the program and then did not interact with a Jobs-Plus staff member until she went into the Jobs-Plus office seeking employment, almost two months later. Because she had never heard from the Jobs-Plus staff, the resident thought she had to enroll in the program again to get access to program services: "So, I came into this office trying to sign up for the program and they're like, 'Well, you're already signed up.' I was like, 'I am.... No. I didn't get contacted.'" The resident went on to identify how the Jobs-Plus program actually did follow up with her after initial enrollment, but the method it used was confusing and did not seem to apply to her.

> Well, I kind of was getting letters from them, but I just thought it was just letters coming in.... Well, I would read them. I knew it was [the] Jobs-Plus program. I knew it was for the placement for jobs, to look for a job. But, I was just like, "Why do they keep sending me these letters?" Are they trying to tell me something? Are they trying to tell me like, "Hey, you need a job." Or, "You need to look for a job." And then I was like, "Well, maybe they're sending them to everybody — all the residents."

Turnover Among Staff Members

During early implementation, BronxWorks experienced several leadership changes: It had four Jobs-Plus program directors between 2011 and 2013, and significant turnover among resource coordinators and job developers as well. The SAHA staff, in contrast, was more stable,

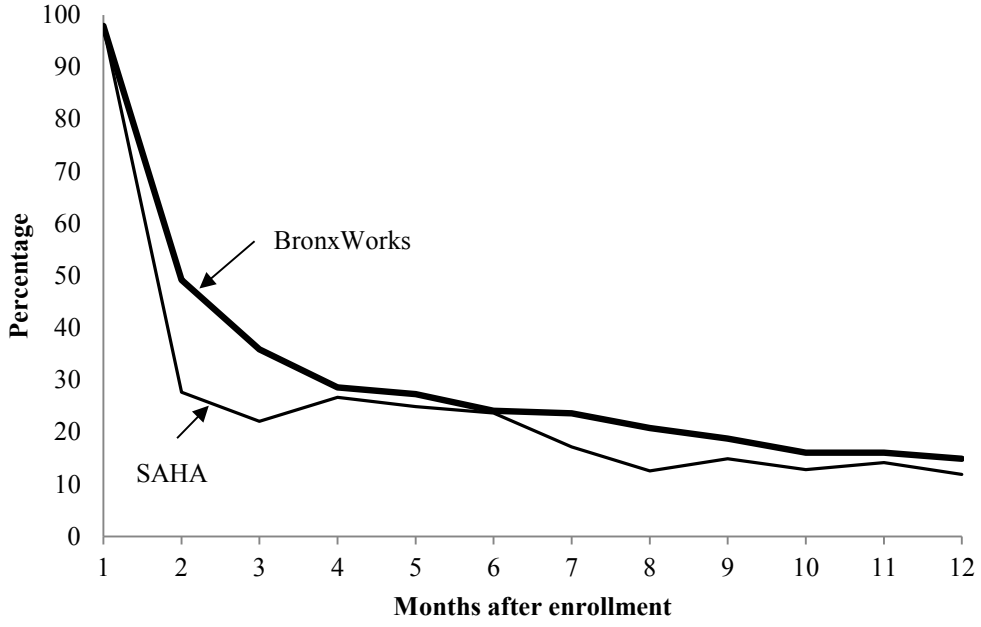
SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 2.1

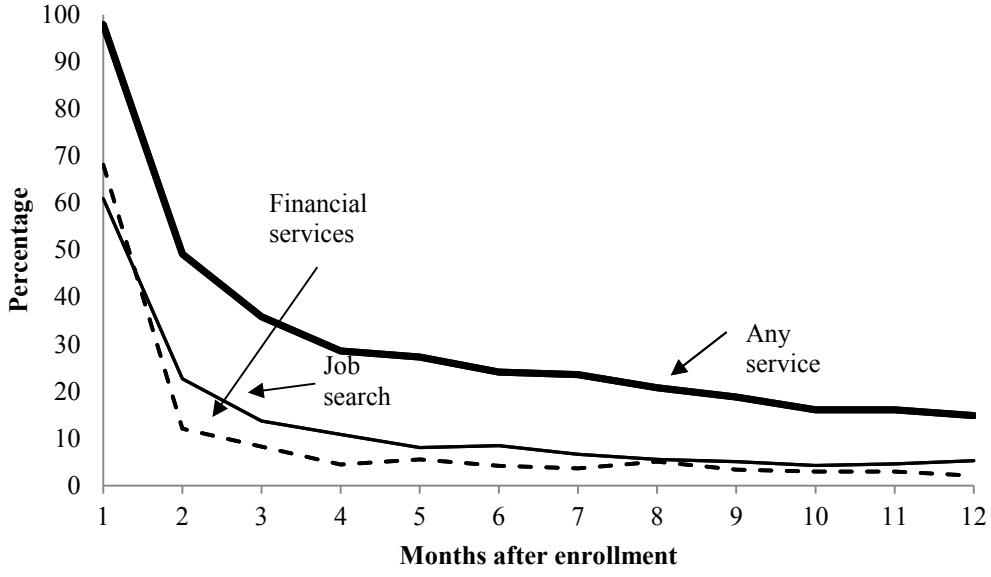
Use of Selected Jobs-Plus Services During the First Year After Enrollment, by Provider

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through June 30, 2013

Any service, employment start, or contact



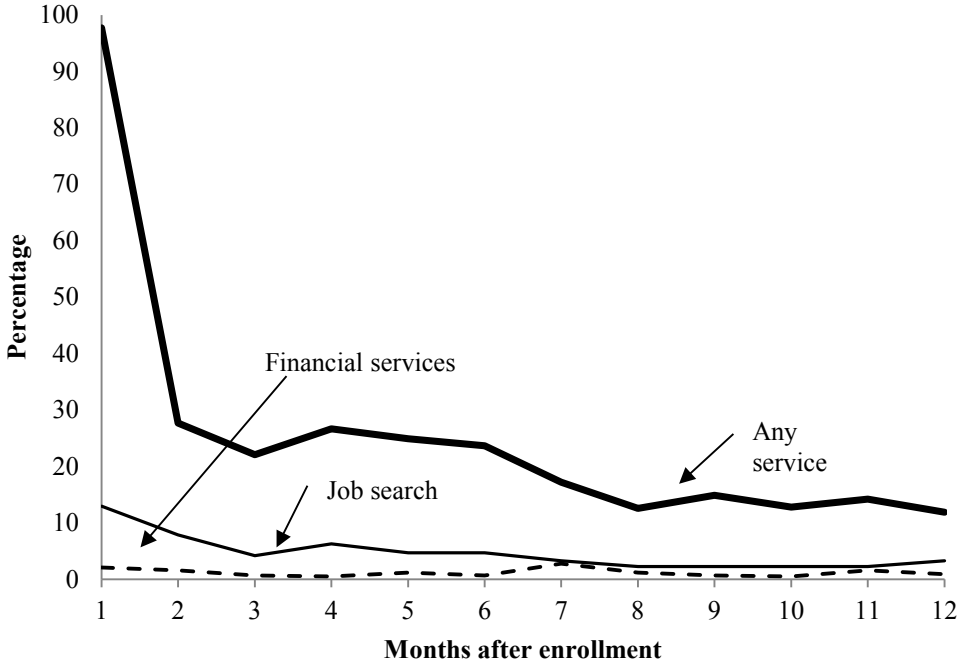
BronxWorks



(continued)

Figure 2.1 (continued)

San Antonio Housing Authority



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems.

NOTE: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.

with most staff members staying through the implementation of the program. When leaders changed, existing staff members had to adjust to new management styles. Other new staff members had to learn the Jobs-Plus model when they joined and develop relationships with the members their predecessors had worked with.

Limited Use of Management Information Systems

While staffing turnover is a common challenge among employment and social service programs, its effects were compounded because staff members made only limited use of case notes to document interactions with members. Front-line staff members did not always see the utility of the management information system. As one explained:

> [The management information system is] not something that we front-line individuals can grasp and utilize information. As administrators, sure, you can scroll down and come up with logistics, demographics, queries, and so forth and so on. But what does it do for us front-line when we can't really understand or comprehend what services were delivered and to what point [the members] are at.

In some cases, staff members may have been making referrals and members may have been receiving social services that were not documented due to these challenges. If used more fully, the management information system could make services appear more seamless to members by having all program interactions build on each other.

Connecting Residents to Jobs and Career Advancement

Jobs-Plus requires providers to develop relationships with employers or intermediaries who can offer jobs to members. Because many members come to Jobs-Plus in need of immediate placement, providers may need to strike a balance between employers with continuous demand for workers (often in retail or some other service field with low wages and high turnover), and employers offering higher-wage jobs, or jobs where advancement is possible. Positions with these latter employers may also require more training, certification, or education, and the employment field as a whole has struggled to connect people to them who have not gotten far in school or who do not have much work history.[5]

BronxWorks and SAHA had different strengths related to their employer networks. BronxWorks staff members could take advantage of relationships the organization had developed through other employment programs. SAHA staff members took advantage of the housing authority's contracts with external employers and made inroads in the construction and waste management industries, which could offer advancement opportunities. However, placements in both cities were primarily in low-wage, often part-time jobs, as shown in Table 2.6. About two in five placements in the Bronx were in positions that paid the minimum wage or slightly above it ($7.25 to $8.00 an hour).[6] About three in five of SAHA's placements were at this wage level. More than two-thirds of SAHA placements and approximately half of BronxWorks' placements were to part-time work (at less than 35 hours).

[5]Given the structure of the economy this difficulty is a growing challenge, and one that has often plagued efforts to help low-wage workers. See MDRC's large body of work on the subject at www.mdrc.org/project/employment-retention-and-advancement#overview.

[6]These wages reflect placements before the New York State minimum wage was raised to $8.00 an hour at the end of 2013.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.6

Characteristics of First Reported Job After Enrollment
Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Outcome	BronxWorks	SAHA
Hours per week (%)		
1.0 - 20.0	17.4	31.0
20.1 - 34.9	34.9	29.3
35.0 or more	47.7	39.7
Average number of hours per week	31	29
Hourly pay (%)		
Less than $7.25	0.3	1.7
$7.25 - $8.00	39.3	63.0
$8.01 - $9.00	19.8	15.5
$9.01 - $10.00	15.9	13.3
$10.01 - $12.50	9.1	5.5
$12.51 - $15.00	8.5	1.1
$15.00 or more	7.0	0.0
Average hourly pay ($)	9.84	8.21
Sample size	328	181

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems.

NOTES: Sample sizes for specific outcomes may vary because of missing values.
Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.
Job characteristics were recorded for Jobs-Plus participants who began employment after enrollment and reported their jobs to the programs. To verify their employment, participants submitted pay stubs or letters from employers. SAHA also verified participants' employment with information from the housing authority's database for calculating household income and rent levels. Levels of unreported employment by Jobs-Plus participants are not known.

BronxWorks and SAHA each had job development plans that described how they intended to create more and better employment opportunities for members. While both developed some opportunities for members with higher levels of education and members who were already employed, both primarily focused on unemployed members with limited education.7 As de-

[7]In San Antonio, this focus was informed by expectations that only "new" employment would be counted as job placements for program reporting purposes.

scribed above, unemployed members in both the Bronx and San Antonio tended to receive more job-assistance services than employed ones, and reported new employment starts at higher rates.

BronxWorks primarily developed relationships with employers in the retail, food, health, security, and customer-service industries. Some of these relationships existed prior to Jobs-Plus via other BronxWorks programs, and sometimes job orders that the other programs could not fill were provided to Jobs-Plus. SAHA was committed to complying with the Section 3 regulation of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which requires that low-income residents be the beneficiaries of job training, employment, and contract opportunities.[8] SAHA did use its relationships with vendors to refer members to training opportunities in forklift operating and Commercial Driver License certification, which had the potential to help them get higher-wage jobs. Table 2.6 shows that Jobs-Plus members did not generally find such higher-wage jobs, however, perhaps because jobs in those industries were not available at the time.

Both Jobs-Plus providers helped members obtain some training to enhance their job prospects, although SAHA provided more training opportunities than BronxWorks, as described in Table 2.5. For example, SAHA developed a relationship with a local college to refer Jobs-Plus members to Health Professionals Opportunities Grants, which provided training in high-demand health care professions for public-assistance recipients and low-income people.[9]

Providers also developed ties to employers that could offer advancement opportunities. BronxWorks, for example, developed a relationship with a maintenance company servicing Co-op City buildings.[10] The company hires entry-level workers on a temporary basis and after a probation period and upon good performance, allows them to join a union. When this report was being written, no Jobs-Plus member had yet spent enough time with the company to be considered for regular employment.

In the Bronx and San Antonio, individuals who were already employed or who had higher levels of education were not a priority for job placement, which influenced other components of the model. For example, as described in the next chapter, Community Support for Work efforts in the Bronx focused primarily on residents who were unemployed. This lack of outreach to employed residents may have made it more difficult to publicize rent incentives among those who might most easily take advantage of them because they had recently obtained work.

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[8]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015d).

[9]See Anderson, Hall, and Derrick-Mill (2013).

[10]Co-op City is a housing cooperative located in Northeast Bronx managed by RiverBay Corporation. It houses approximately 50,000 residents in 35 high-rise buildings and 7 townhouse clusters. See RiverBay Corporation (2015).

Integrating Financial Coaching with Employment Services

Financial coaching was one of the SIF replication's innovations to the Jobs-Plus model. Chronic financial instability affects many low-income people and was seen as a barrier to program engagement and good outcomes. Financial coaching therefore became an important enhancement to Jobs-Plus in both cities, although it was better integrated with other Jobs-Plus services in the Bronx, where special funding from Morgan Stanley allowed BronxWorks to hire two financial coaches.[11]

Early on, financial coaches in the Bronx (with the rest of the Jobs-Plus staff) attended intensive training provided by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE),[12] which provided instruction on how to assess the financial health of residents and repair poor credit. The training also introduced staff members to other organizations performing financial coaching. BronxWorks coaches were able to observe service delivery throughout New York, borrow and adapt tools from other groups (such as credit-repair letters and budgeting templates), and call on coaches informally for advice and support. In addition, BronxWorks had calls with OFE every other week to troubleshoot financial coaching challenges. One financial coach described the importance of these resources:

> We don't work for [a] financial empowerment center itself and ... and our supervisors aren't all financial counselors, well trained as well, that's a support that we're missing.[13] But that's something that we get from the OFE meetings, so that's why it's really important for us to plug in to that and maintain those relationships, because you're talking to people who speak the lingo, who been through what you been — who go [through] what you go through. We have that luxury to be able to go [call] OFE and [other partner organizations] and rely on them and talk with them about issues that we deal with on a daily basis.

During early program implementation, MDRC observed that financial coaching was not a priority for members who came to Jobs-Plus in need of immediate employment. BronxWorks quickly learned that it was essential to integrate financial coaching with other employment services. Over time, BronxWorks framed financial coaching as a service that would help members search for and secure employment, by helping them review and repair their credit.[14] Financial coaches also encouraged members without jobs to start creating a budget with

[11]In San Antonio, financial coaching was brought to Jobs-Plus members through a partner agency, which was a significant accomplishment on its own but one that made it more difficult to integrate coaching services into Jobs-Plus.

[12]OFE was part of BronxWorks' Collaborative, described in Chapters 1 and 5.

[13]A financial empowerment center is an organization that provides access to free or low-cost financial education classes, workshops, hotlines, and one-on-one counseling services

[14]Poor credit scores may sometimes prevent employers from hiring.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table 2.7

Selected Outcomes for 100 BronxWorks Participants Who Met with a Financial Counselor for an Initial Financial Assessment

Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

Outcome	Participants
Any postassessment financial service or outcome	77
Reviewed credit report	61
Received credit-repair assistance	24
Increased credit score by at least 10 points	4
Created a budget	22
Opened a bank account	19
Saved at least $250	2
Referred to a bank to obtain a Credit Builder Loan	2
Checked ChexSystem report	3
Referred to a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance organization for free tax preparation	7
Had taxes prepared by BronxWorks financial counselor	2
Decreased debt by at least 10 percent	2
Received help to manage student loans or financial aid	2
Increased income-to-expense ratio by at least 5 percent	2
Sample size	100

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks management information system.

NOTES: The 100 participants were randomly selected from 596 participants who met with a financial counselor following enrollment in Jobs-Plus.

The number of participants with particular outcomes sums to more than 100 because some participants had multiple outcomes.

whatever limited income they had, even when it meant setting aside a few dollars a week for subway or bus fare in order to travel to and from job interviews.

Table 2.7 shows the selected outcomes for 100 BronxWorks members who enrolled through December 31, 2013 and received financial services from Jobs-Plus. All 100 members represented in Table 2.7 received an initial financial assessment from a financial counselor, and 77 received the financial services listed in the table. Table 2.7 displays the types of help these members were most likely to receive from a financial coach, including reviewing their credit reports (61 percent), helping them repair their credit (24 percent), helping them create a budget (22 percent), and opening a bank account (19 percent).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter illustrates the strengths that both providers brought to the employment services in Jobs-Plus and challenges they faced during this study. A major strength of both their operations was the high proportion of residents they reached over two years. SAHA's status as a housing authority gave it advantages in some areas; in particular it had the ability to offer Jobs-Plus members employment opportunities and training with agency contractors, in sectors that could potentially lead to higher wages and advancement over time. While BronxWorks did not have the same influence over contractors, its experience running other workforce programs provided it with access to an existing network of employers. See Box 2.1 for a further discussion of the advantages and disadvantages associated with each type of service provider.

Despite these differences, the results achieved by BronxWorks and SAHA were in some ways similar: Members in San Antonio and the Bronx generally received low-wage placements, and their engagement with the Jobs-Plus program — as recorded in the management information system — decreased dramatically over their first year. (These challenges to engagement are common among service programs, and some of the economic realities of wages and advancement have also been well described.)[15] Based on the experiences of these SIF providers, agencies interested in replicating Jobs-Plus should consider the following ways to strengthen employment services:

- **Focus on both the number and the quality of job placements.** Providers should assess their existing relationships with employers, capitalize on those connections, and develop relationships with a wide array of new employers, particularly those that can offer living wages and opportunities for advancement. Public housing authorities should work with their contractors to generate job opportunities for Jobs-Plus members.

- **Create training opportunities for residents who are already employed.** While it can be challenging to create these relationships, it may be important to connect Jobs-Plus members with partners who can train people with limited education, as SAHA did with a local community college. Otherwise Jobs-Plus may have little to offer residents who are already employed.

- **Use data to track member engagement and facilitate communication among staff members, especially when staff turnover is high.** During early implementation, the SIF providers might have used their management information systems better to support staff communication about and with

[15]Tessler (2013).

Box 2.1

Service Providers and Jobs-Plus: Do Community-Based Organizations Always Have Greater Workforce Capabilities than Housing Authorities?

In the original demonstration, Jobs-Plus was run directly by housing authorities. While some of these implementers had less experience with workforce development than others, overall the demonstration did find impacts, as described in Chapter 1.

Many observers have noted that housing authorities — experts in property management — may not have the internal capabilities necessary to provide workforce development services on a large scale. Inviting other types of agencies to become Jobs-Plus providers could reveal what happens when the model is implemented by organizations with other types of workforce experience. In fact, despite having experienced some management turnover, BronxWorks has been able to rely on its established network of employers and a proven system for placing people in jobs. As a result, more people received employment-related services in the Bronx than in San Antonio, where the provider tended to emphasize social service delivery.

At the same time, BronxWorks' Back-to-Work program — which informed how it approached Jobs-Plus — tended to emphasize low-wage placements. This history may have hampered Jobs-Plus members' career advancement and may have made it harder for Jobs-Plus to reach already-employed residents. While SAHA had more limited experience with workforce development programs, it also had valuable connections to higher-wage employers and training providers through the Section 3 program, an initiative that encourages agency contractors to employ public housing residents.

This comparison suggests that it may be important to have Jobs-Plus implementers provide varied workforce services for individuals with different types of needs, but that not every community organization can do so. Even if housing authorities are not the primary providers of Jobs-Plus services, Jobs-Plus implementers may benefit residents greatly by coordinating with housing authorities' Section 3 programs.

Jobs-Plus members, to document members' various interactions with program, to facilitate follow-up, and to provide a more coordinated experience for Jobs-Plus members.

- **Integrate financial coaching with employment services.** Financial coaching can serve multiple purposes in Jobs-Plus: First, before and during members' job search, it can help members address poor credit issues that can prevent employment or help them develop a budget to support job-search activities. Second, it can maintain the program's engagement with members who have found employment by offering them budgeting help, tax-

preparation services, and help navigating financial decisions to avoid future crises. Finally, it can help employed individuals plan for career advancement, as they consider how to balance the need for income with the need to spend time (and money) on education and training.

Chapter 3

Rent Incentives to Make Work Pay

Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, the Jobs-Plus model has three components: (1) employment services, (2) Community Support for Work, and (3) financial incentives within public housing rent rules to "make work pay." In general, public housing authorities charge rents fixed at 30 percent of eligible household income. As a result, as household income rises, rent also increases. While this system makes public housing units affordable to low-income people, some also see it as a "tax" that discourages employment, a claim borne out by some studies.[1] The financial incentive component of Jobs-Plus is an important way the model can reach beyond those residents directly served by employment services and influence the work behavior of all residents of a development.

In the original demonstration, each of the six developments developed financial incentives to make work pay by changing rent rules to promote full-time employment.[2] The incentive strategies included flat rents (with protections for people who lost their jobs), rent freezes, and rents that charged a lower percentage of income than the standard 30 percent. It was not necessary for a resident to enroll in Jobs-Plus services to receive these alternative rents; they were available to all in the development. A few years into the program, surveys showed that as many as 77 percent of residents were making use of these incentives.[3]

In the replication under the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a federal policy known as the Earned Income Disregard (EID) was the rent incentive offered, because it was the only one available in the developments in both San Antonio and the Bronx.[4] However, this incentive is not widely implemented across the country.[5] Most housing authorities do not have regular systems in place to apply the incentive, and most tenants are unaware of it. It was not known how residents would receive this rent incentive, nor how frequently it would be used.

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[1]See, for example, Jacob and Ludwig (2008).

[2]These developments had the flexibility of offering their own rent incentives because they all had Moving to Work status.

[3]Bloom, Riccio, and Verma (2005).

[4]The policy is also known as the Earned Income Disallowance. While the San Antonio Housing Authority had Moving to Work status and could create different rent rules, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) did not and so needed to rely on the EID.

[5]Sard and Sanders (2001).

In fact, not many residents were referred to the EID process or ended up receiving the incentive in the SIF replication of Jobs-Plus. Residents were not made aware of its availability; problems plagued the administration of its launch, making it hard for housing authorities to enact it "automatically"; the mechanisms of the incentive itself reduced its value; and residents lost trust in housing authorities regarding it. The fact that not many residents used the EID challenges the very notion that this replication of Jobs-Plus has been successful. One important lesson of this evaluation is that where they have the flexibility, new providers replicating Jobs-Plus may want to experiment with financial incentives other than the EID. Fortunately, in its Jobs Plus Pilot Program the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has learned from this replication and others, and is offering a simpler incentive.

Although the factors preventing the EID from being widely used were largely outside the control of Jobs-Plus implementers, the strategies that they adopted may help future providers design and market rent rules for their Jobs-Plus efforts. The providers in San Antonio and the Bronx found that residents responded best when the EID was explained as simply as possible, when it was linked to a message about economic opportunity and the struggle of low-income households, and when it was directed toward households with enough work and family stability to take advantage of it.

The Earned Income Disregard

The EID allows eligible public housing tenants to receive a once-in-a-lifetime exemption from any additional rent that would have been charged due to increased earnings.[6] It is intended to encourage residents to work and to allow working residents to retain more of their income.

To be eligible for the benefit, public housing residents must meet one of three criteria: they must have not worked in the past 12 months, they must be participating in an economic self-sufficiency or job training program, or they must have been receiving public assistance benefits in the previous six months (from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or some other program).[7] In the case of Jobs-Plus, all members were considered to be taking part in a self-sufficiency program, so a referral letter from Jobs-Plus to the housing management office was enough to establish eligibility for the exemption.

The EID is limited to two years, and decreases in value after the first year. For the first 12 months, 100 percent of increased earnings are "disregarded" when the housing authority calculates a resident's rent. Consider the example of a public housing tenant who has been earning $1,000 per month and paying $300 per month in rent. She gets a new job that pays her

[6]The EID is also available for tenants with disabilities in other forms of subsidized units.
[7]Minimal employment is also a condition for eligibility.

$1,500 per month. Ordinarily, her rent would rise to $450 per month (30 percent of $1,500). But for the first 12 months after she is determined to be eligible for the EID, her rent stays at $300, because all of the $500 in increased earnings is disregarded for the purposes of rent calculation.

For the second 12 months, 50 percent of increased earnings are disregarded for rent calculations. This means that for months 13 through 24, the hypothetical tenant's new rent is calculated as if her monthly income were $1,250 — the $1,000-per-month original income plus 50 percent of the $500 in increased income. Thirty percent of $1,250 puts her monthly rent at $375 for months 13 through 24. As a result, the EID saves this individual a total of $2,700 over two years ($1,800 in the first year and $900 in the second year).

If the individual receiving EID becomes unemployed during this two-year period, she is allowed to "stop the clock" on the EID benefit. The EID can resume after she gets a new job, as long as the total benefit occurs within 48 months of its first receipt. The starting and stopping of EID, while beneficial to the individual, requires systems that a housing authority may not have in place. To address this administrative complication, the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) worked to develop a Simplified EID, described below.

While the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 makes it mandatory for housing authorities to offer the EID, in practice the benefit is not widely known among practitioners or residents. Such was the case in both San Antonio and the Bronx at the start of the program, with implications described below.

EID Use in Practice

As shown in Figure 3.1, the EID was used at very low rates in this study's developments. In the figure, the top lines indicate EID referrals — that is, the number of participants who were identified by the Jobs-Plus staff as being eligible for EID, and referred to the property management office, with a letter, to receive the benefit. While it took several months to set the EID process in motion, BronxWorks started to refer members in early 2012, and had referred more than 20 to property management by April that year. Referrals increased slowly over time; in all approximately 90 occurred by the end of formal data collection in June 2014. However, many fewer Jobs-Plus participants were known to have *received* the EID from the housing authority. It was not until August 2012 that the first tenant received the benefit, and by June 2014 only about 25 had received it.

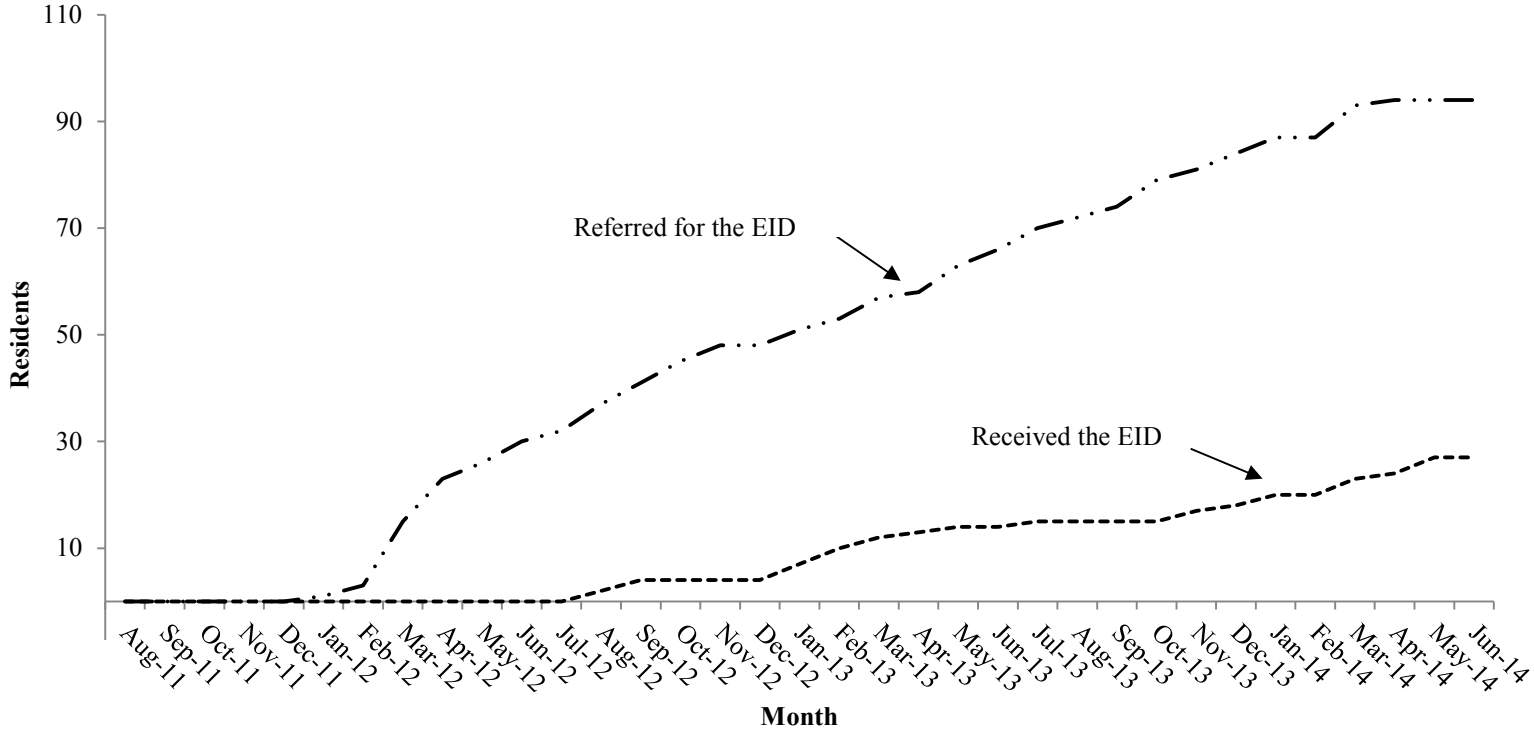
This pattern held in San Antonio as well. SAHA had referred approximately 30 tenants for the EID by August 2013, and by June 2014 had referred just over 80. While a higher proportion of those referred for the EID eventually received the benefit than was the case in

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 3.1

Number of Jobs-Plus Members Referred for the EID and Receiving the EID
Study Participants Who Enrolled Through December 31, 2013

BronxWorks

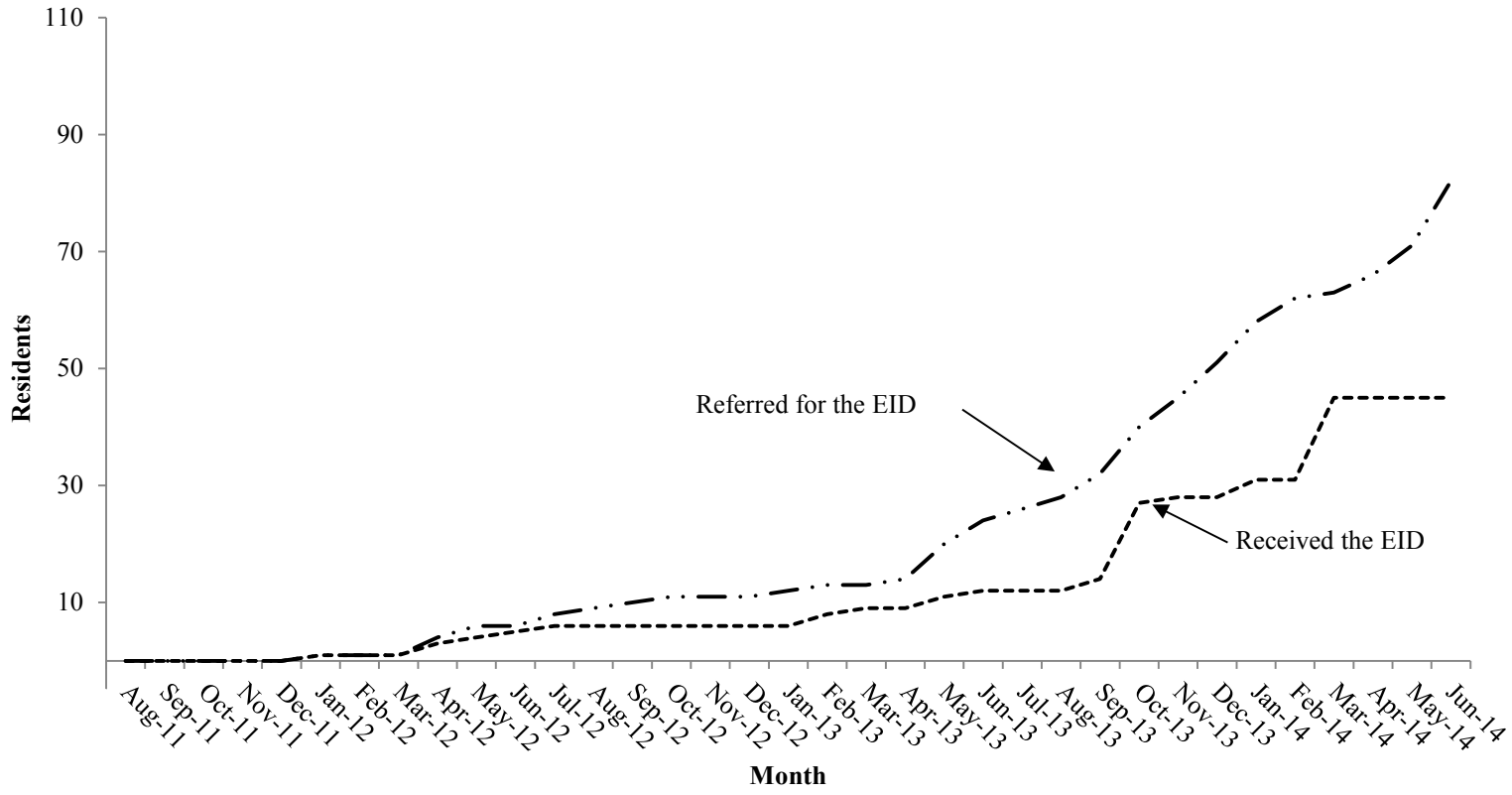


(continued)

46

Figure 3.1 (continued)

SAHA



SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems.

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the Bronx — approximately 50 percent — that left about 50 percent who did not receive it. This record shows that even when a housing authority runs a Jobs-Plus program directly while at the same time managing the EID process, it cannot guarantee EID receipt for all referred participants.

This low rate of rent incentive participation compares very poorly with the participation in the original demonstration (which did not rely on the EID as its rent incentive policy). In the original demonstration up to 77 percent of targeted residents lived in households that received Jobs-Plus rent incentives. In contrast, the EID reached approximately 1 percent of working-age adults in the Bronx and 3 percent in San Antonio. While the SIF Jobs-Plus study is not an impact report and cannot tell if the program made a difference in employment or earnings for residents, it is important to note that in the initial demonstration, developments that did not implement the rent-based work incentives showed no impacts, even if they implemented other components of the model well.[8]

Reasons for Low EID Use

There were four major reasons why EID use was so low. (These reasons also explain the poor use of the incentive in the Human Resources Administration's Jobs-Plus's expansion, mentioned in the footnote above.) First, staff members and residents both reported the benefit to be complicated to explain and understand. Second, both SAHA and BronxWorks faced significant administrative start-up issues, even though SAHA, as a housing authority, might be thought better equipped to implement the program immediately. Third, the EID has limited value as a rent incentive as it is structured on paper, and even less as it occurs in practice. Finally, because Jobs-Plus members needed to identify themselves to the housing authority, residents who were skeptical of property management or thought it was to their disadvantage to do so were unlikely to come forward. These findings are consistent with findings from the original demonstration about the problems that can occur with rent incentives.[9]

Understanding the Benefit

As suggested from its description above, compared with other types of rent incentives (such as flat rents or rent freezes) the EID is somewhat complicated to explain. Because it is

[8]The expansion of Jobs-Plus led by the New York City Human Resources Administration shows a similar pattern of EID referral and receipt, even though by then NYCHA was drawing on the experience of SIF Jobs-Plus. After five quarters of implementation, 250 tenants had received the EID across all eight providers in the expansion. Given the size of the developments involved, this rate of rent incentive receipt is even lower than the ones described in this report.

[9]Gardenhire (2004).

such an underused policy, the basic structure of the EID was not initially clear at times even to some Jobs-Plus staff members. Before they could explain the incentive to residents, they first had to come to understand it themselves. For example, a SAHA program director worked for some time under the mistaken assumption that the EID reduced rents to zero for those who were working, as opposed to its actual ability to keep rents from rising for a year. Front-line staff members needed training and technical assistance both to understand the rules of the EID and to learn how to communicate it to members. One front-line staff member said:

> A simple flow chart would have been great.... What happens if a member becomes employed? What are the initial steps of them applying for their income disallowance? We're doing the work [and] we're not too clear on that. Yet, I'm sure that it was information shared between the administrators and the [technical assistance] that never funneled down.

Even after providers developed clear explanations of the incentive, some confusion remained for residents. For example, in a focus group of resident participants in the Bronx — all of whom had already received an explanation of the EID — only 3 people of 13 remembered the policy. A staff member in attendance then gave a strong presentation explaining the policy, but it took nearly 40 minutes to both explain the EID and answer questions about it. Participants had questions about eligibility, the eligibility of household members, and the number of times one could apply for the benefit, and needed much clarification of the disregard in the second 12 months.[10]

Administrative Start-Up

To receive the EID, Jobs-Plus members who were identified as being eligible needed to bring a referral form to a property management staff member at the housing authority, who would in turn process the incentive. However, at the beginning of Jobs-Plus, the staff members in question were generally unfamiliar with the EID and did not always know how to implement it, especially when forms or systems were not available for them to do so. As a result, residents would either be turned away or would have to wait many months before they received the EID.

[10]Some residents in the focus group misunderstood the 100 percent disregard in the first year to mean a disregard of *all* earned income (as the name of the policy might suggest), which would have kept rents to the minimum allowed by the housing authority. In fact, the disregard refers only to increased earnings. This confusion was exacerbated because one of the easiest ways to explain EID involves the case of a person moving from unemployment to a job. In that case one can say that all additional earnings will be disregarded and the rent will stay at the minimum for 12 months. But that does not apply if a resident who already has a job begins to earn more money. In addition, focus group participants had questions about the overall, 48-month window of EID eligibility, and how it related to the 50 percent disregard of additional earnings that occurs after 12 months. Finally, they were confused by the time frame of the incentive's benefit as it related to the EID start date and annual rent certifications (for reasons described below under "The Value of the Incentive").

This dynamic led implementers to feel that efforts to promote the EID were not worthwhile. Early in the program, a staff member at BronxWorks reflected:

> It doesn't seem like EID is well known, and it doesn't seem like it works that well or that easily. It seems like a tremendous amount of work, even if someone actually qualifies for it. Up to this point no one to our knowledge has actually gotten it. I think we've referred about five or six members, and by refer I mean they reported they were on the lease. They got a job after dealing with our program. We sat down. We gave them the EID letter for them to bring in to management. They may have signed a release of information giving us permission to share information with NYCHA, and then from there it's really up to them to bring it to NYCHA.... We can help somebody with a job. We can give them all the letters. But at some point it's up to the member to bring it to the housing authority, and then it's up to the housing authority to actually process it right now. And my understanding is even with some of the people who work in the housing authority, management offices, they didn't know about EID. It's like the biggest-kept secret and I'm not even sure if they know how to process it at this point.

Over time, NYCHA and SAHA both developed tools and systems to support the EID, as described later in this chapter. Box 3.1 considers whether a Jobs-Plus provider must be a housing authority to implement rent incentives.

The Value of the Incentive

Public housing rules oblige tenants to report changes in income. However, low-income people often experience frequent fluctuations in earnings, so to ease the administrative burden of adjusting thousands of households' incomes many housing authorities employ (authorized) discretion about whether to increase rents prior to annual certification. In practice, doing so means that they will not apply penalties if tenants wait until yearly recertification to report changes in income. In such a situation, it is in a tenant's interest to report job *losses* to the housing authority, because it allows the housing authority to reduce his or her rent. However, it is not in the interest of the tenant to report income *gains* until recertification. A household could achieve at least part of the same effect as the EID's one-year rent freeze by not reporting an income change until the next recertification. This reality significantly reduces the EID's value.

As one practitioner noted:

> Well I think at the very base they need to see the benefit. And I think right now we're still in a culture with the residents that because NYCHA has not had capacity to enforce it, they see it as like ... why do I need to do this, like I'm not reporting my [earnings] now? Or I'll wait till I have to or they've never asked for it in the past so. [Interviewer: So what's the benefit?] Yeah, it's not clear. I mean it's hey, we get to charge you more rent, but for a while you can save more of the money yourself. Well, I could have saved the money anyway.

Box 3.1

Service Providers and Jobs-Plus: Can Only Housing Authorities Implement Rent Incentives Effectively?

When it comes to implementing rent incentives, housing authorities should have an advantage over community-based organizations, which have no authority to set public housing policies. And in fact, a greater proportion of SAHA residents received the rent incentive than residents in the Bronx, in part because they had easier access to property management staff members, who were not only in charge of delivering rent incentives but also responsible for referring many residents to the Jobs-Plus program. As one practitioner in San Antonio summarized it:

> I think access is the biggest point. When I say access, we're on-site. We have access to the database of all of the folks living in Alazan and every place else that's public housing here in San Antonio. So that means that within the housing authority structure, if we aren't getting across to the property manager who is in a different department, we just simply elevate to [a senior department head]. He talks to his boss ... and we address it that way.

Some of these issues of access, however, could be overcome by a working Collaborative and close partnership between a community-based organization and a housing authority. For example, in the Bronx, NYCHA's zone coordinators — who, as described in Chapter 1, were the housing authority's liaisons to the Jobs-Plus program — also acted as liaisons between Jobs-Plus and property management offices for the purposes of EID implementation. The Human Resources Administration's expansion of Jobs-Plus helped further codify EID procedures across the housing authority. And it is also notable that even in San Antonio, it was sometimes challenging for the Jobs-Plus staff to communicate with the property management staff. As in all large organizations, policies developed at the highest levels did not always filter down into regular practice.

Another feature of rent calculation reduced the "real" value of the EID: the need for the employed person to be officially on the lease in order for the benefit to be activated. In many parts of the country, housing costs and limited income force many generations of a family to take advantage of public housing, either on an emergency basis or following life changes such as the birth of a child. In addition, children who become adults may stay in public housing units because they cannot afford places of their own. In addition to nuclear family members, friends, boyfriends or girlfriends, or other relatives may in emergencies also stay in public housing units. Many housing authorities acknowledge that their developments serve as housing of last resort for people who otherwise might be in the shelter system.

Given the fluctuation of household composition, very low-income residents sometimes take adult children who become employed off the lease, so that their incomes do not contribute

to the rent calculation. Doing so allows the household as a whole to save more money; it may also stem from the hope that the adult children will soon find their own place.

This practice may also reduce the value of the EID. In a focus group, residents reflected on the hypothetical case of a 22-year-old who was on her mother's lease, who was previously unemployed but who got a job in fine dining after going through a training program. Initially the group thought that the EID was a good thing for the 22-year-old, and could also be a motivation for her to stay employed, so as to save up and move into her own apartment. However, the group also said that taking the daughter off the lease represented a more certain strategy for avoiding rent increases than applying for the EID. In fact, it might even result in a rent reduction if the daughter's public-assistance benefits had been part of the mother's baseline rent calculation. The risks of this strategy included the possibility that the mother might be assigned a smaller apartment, if the daughter were the only other person on the lease, and that NYCHA might become suspicious of the household. However, in strictly financial terms, the group felt that taking the daughter off the lease was a better option than the EID, over a longer period of time.

Resident Skepticism About Interacting with the Housing Authority

As described above, during the period of data collection, there was a wide gap between EID referrals (the number of people who had letters prepared for property management to apply for the EID) and receipt (the number of tenants who received it). While some of this gap can be attributed to delays in the housing authority recognizing or processing the EID, some may have come from residents simply not going to the property management office after receiving the referral. In general, residents interviewed individually and focus group members said that tenants preferred to interact with the housing authority as little as possible, either because they experienced personal hostility when they visited the offices or because they were afraid that such an encounter could reveal a violation of lease terms that could cause them to lose housing assistance.

For example, in another focus group scenario, "Natalia," a hypothetical 26-year-old mother of a 6-year-old son, moves from off-the-books to on-the-books employment. She previously worked as a housekeeper, part time, and was paid under the table. Her brother, recently released from prison and unemployed, often lives in the apartment but is not on the lease, in violation of housing authority rules. Her child care is also unreliable. When asked whether she should apply for the EID, while some focus group members believed that it would help Natalia's feeling of insecurity to be "on the books and legit," and that it was "better for her to report [income] before they came after her," they acknowledged that there were also risks in coming forward to interact with property managers.

In Natalia's situation, focus group members said, if she applied for the EID property managers might ask how the family previously supported itself, raising questions about both her off-the-books employment and her brother's presence. Both would be grounds to terminate her lease. If she became unemployed again it might require another trip to the property management office — another opportunity for managers to ask questions about her brother. In this case, focus group members thought it was important to interact with the housing authority as little as possible, and therefore that she should not apply for the EID. As one attendee said, "Sometimes you could jeopardize your lease on yourself and lose your apartment because you didn't report this and you didn't report that."

Factors Promoting the Use of Rent Incentives

If one lesson from the Bronx and San Antonio is that future Jobs-Plus replicators should develop different types of financial incentives, what did the EID experience in these two cities teach about the form such incentives should take, how they should be marketed, and how housing authorities can support their implementation? The findings described above suggest replicators should aim for (1) a simple incentive with benefits that are immediately clear to residents; (2) an efficient administrative process for that incentive, integrated into recertification and rent calculation processes; (3) a development-wide marketing campaign that emphasizes residents' struggles and desire for greater economic opportunity; (4) practical targeting to bring the incentive to residents with the stability to take advantage of it; and (5) a "do no harm" ethos to build rapport and trust between residents and property management.

Simplicity and Clarity

The relative complexity of the EID made it hard to market. As described above, very few residents in focus groups or in one-on-one interviews were aware of the EID, even though they had received explanations of it before. Practitioners and administrators shared similar challenges, which led one administrator to comment:

> I think that we need to make it personable for front-line staff, for them to be able to explain EID beyond it's an income disregard. That means nothing to anybody. It doesn't mean anything to me. Like for them to [be] able to really explain to households and head of households why EID is great.

As one Collaborative member in the Bronx said about the limitations of the EID:

> I really see it more related to education and understanding.... I think the [most valuable] incentive would just be to simplify the rent rules. It would make it so much easier for everybody to understand what their situation is, whatever it is. In the same way that a credit score has become this great thing, that if I come to

> you for help you're able to tap into this one number that right away gives you the sense of where I am and you can explain that to me.

Over time, practitioners developed some innovative ways to explain the benefit more simply. For example, in San Antonio, practitioners began describing the EID using a cartoon character called "Mr. Freeze," to illustrate its ability to freeze rents.

Administrative Efficiency and Integration with Regular Housing Authority Processes

Jobs-Plus staff members were hesitant to market the EID in part because, based on their early experiences, they couldn't be certain tenants would receive the benefit. They therefore felt uncomfortable risking their credibility to promote it. (This observation also relates to a way that the components of the Jobs-Plus model are interconnected. As described in subsequent chapter, rent incentives can be marketed directly to residents through Community Support for Work, but without an effective EID system in place, Community Support for Work lost an opportunity for meaningful engagement with residents.) One staff member said that if the EID had been ready to go when Jobs-Plus launched, it might have made marketing easier:

> We have this nice EID flyer on our wall. I think it looks pretty, but I don't know if that's getting members to say, "Boy, I want to work because I want to bring in EID." I think there has to be a bigger campaign with that. And again, that might have been something that would have been helpful early on, but even as late as September ... documents were still being created by NYCHA.... If that's a critique, I'm not blaming anybody. NYCHA is a very big organization so things take a while, but it would have been helpful to have an EID format already in place.... Maybe that promotion should have been at the same time when we rolled out Jobs-Plus.

According to federal guidelines, the EID should be triggered automatically for all eligible residents. Since tenants are obligated to meet with property management to state their incomes, usually on an annual basis, the EID (or any rent incentive) might reasonably be activated as part of regular recertification and rent calculation programs. Integrating rent incentives into recertification, rent calculation, and other regular housing authority processes would be the administratively efficient way to handle them.

Residents in the Bronx suggested that information about the EID be added to NYCHA billing statements and the NYCHA website, and displayed in places where tenants made rent payments. They further suggested that staff members make presentations about it during resident council meetings and talk about it during recertification processes. Over time, NYCHA trained its property management staff to manually monitor and track EID participation. (The EID is now integrated into property management computer systems and assessments, although

in the Human Resources Administration expansion of Jobs-Plus, property managers in each new Jobs-Plus development still require extensive training and supervision to implement it.)

SAHA responded to its difficulties with the EID by developing a Simplified EID, which was meant to be less complicated for housing assistants to understand and apply. To provide a greater benefit and potential incentive to residents, SAHA extended the EID's two-year benefit to five years, implementing a 25 percent earned-income disregard during Year 3, a 20 percent disregard in Year 4, and a 10 percent disregard in Year 5. It also did away with the EID's "clock" that could start and stop over a 48-month period as an individual lost and then regained work. Instead the Simplified EID extended rent relief over five years without interruption. The incentive's designers reasoned that this simplified extension would encourage residents to stay employed during this period of time. It took some time for SAHA to develop the Simplified EID and to get approval from HUD to proceed with it, but once it did, rent incentive use started to increase substantially.

Marketing That Emphasizes Opportunity and Struggle

Two major themes emerged from focus groups and interviews about the rent-incentive messages that most appealed to tenants. First, given the hardships that low-income people face, respondents believed it was important to acknowledge the struggle in their lives and to talk about how the EID could help alleviate it. They said marketing messages should talk about the EID as a chance to deal with debt and promote savings, a benefit that could help those "struggling to get by, while needing an opportunity." Because low-wage workers often lack job security, they thought the opportunity to save money would be a particularly potent message to market the EID. Respondents said that people "know how much savings can matter because of their lives and life experiences," that the EID was "a way of making a living, while saving," and "making sure you can have a little extra."

The other, related, marketing theme that emerged in interviews and focus groups concerned opportunity — residents' desire and ability to get ahead. Some residents felt that properly marketing the EID was a way to counter what they felt to be the stigma of living in public housing, and the belief that tenants were lazy or unwilling to work. As one interviewee said:

> So, it does take that misconception off of, "Oh, these people are in dire need. They need. They don't know ... better." You have really good, hardworking people in [the] New York City Housing Authority, residents that live in these apartments.... You have hardworking families, husbands, wives, children going to school, achieving, going to college. So, it's not always ... that everybody's poor [and that] nobody wants to get ahead. That's not the case at all.

In fact, financial coaches at BronxWorks did tend to describe the EID in these terms: as part of a longer-term trajectory toward financial betterment that involved finding and keeping

jobs. This is another example of how Jobs-Plus works best when its components are integrated. Job-search activities become more appealing when combined with an emphasis on future savings. As one financial coach put it:

> I was like, if you're paying $3 of rent and then you get a job, they can freeze that for a while and that will help you out. So if you're behind on bills or you want to buy a car that will help you, that's extra money. And if you don't want to buy a car, you don't want to do anything, that's money in your pocket. So let's just say for a rainy day, something happens, and you have to pay for something, you know that money is there. They're like, oh, I never really thought about that.

Targeting Residents Able to Take Advantage of the Incentive

Residents and staff members noted that the EID was more likely to appeal to individuals in certain situations: people who were likely to retain desirable jobs for some time and whose household dynamics were stable. One focus group participant said that the EID was helpful for those who "Have a steady job and, you know, a stable relationship. That's important."

It is fairly obvious why residents with "a steady job" would have more to gain from the EID. Regular work means no periods of unemployment that could force a tenant to report his or her income anew to the housing authority, or that could cause him or her to miss the 48-month lifetime window for the benefit. As one interviewee said:

> Because if he did find [a job] he might get sick or something, you know, you never know and then he can't do it and they go up on his rent and then he won't be able to pay that.

In a focus group scenario, residents were told about the hypothetical case of "Darren," a man with a history of work in the construction industry who receives a job with a high hourly wage but who worries that the new job might not be stable because of the economy. Although focus group participants thought the high wages were a reason for Darren to report his increased earnings to NYCHA and start receiving the EID, they also thought the potential instability in his employment should make him think twice about it.

It is perhaps less obvious why respondents thought the EID would be good for people with good *household* stability ("a steady relationship"). They probably had several factors in mind. First, when relationships with romantic partners or family members become unstable, an individual might move out of a unit or back in. If this type of move happened in a household receiving the EID, that person would be need to be added to or removed from the official lease, leading to multiple, unwanted encounters with the housing authority. Changing household dynamics can also create new needs, like child care, that might jeopardize employment. For example, one interviewee responded to the hypothetical case of a young couple who has broken up and then gotten back together several times. The boyfriend in this situation comes to Jobs-

Plus and after getting the program's help is able to get a higher-paying job. In this case the interviewee thought reporting that additional income to the housing authority was dangerous for the girlfriend:

> So let's say they're paying $250 apiece — say the rent is $500 — and he decides — they had a big argument and he decides to get up and go to his mother's house for the next three months. She's got to pay that $500 because he ain't giving her no money.

Promoting a "Do-No-Harm" Ethos

In interviews and focus groups, some residents said that the "nosiness" of the housing authority made it difficult to contemplate approaching its staff, especially if they were living with violations that might jeopardize their housing assistance. Tenants reflected that some managers were approachable and helpful when residents came to discuss a problem, while others "make you feel bad about yourself." About applying for the EID in a situation where questions might be asked, one said, "It all depends on the rapport that you have with your housing representative."

Accordingly, it may be important to assure tenants that the housing authority's does not apply a rent incentive policy to ensure compliance with other rules.[11] The very fact that the EID had existed as a federal policy for a while without being promoted made some focus group respondents suspicious about the housing authority's motivations for promoting it now. If the authority's intention were to help residents, they reasoned, the EID would already be widely used.[12] As one focus group member said: "Because honestly we wouldn't have known nothing about that EID if we didn't go to BronxWorks.... Honestly, if you let people know off the bat that the first year their rent won't be raised, so many more would be willing to sign up."

Conclusion and Recommendations

As this chapter has described, very few residents in the SIF Jobs-Plus developments received the EID. A slightly higher proportion received it in San Antonio, because having the housing authority as the Jobs-Plus provider offered certain advantages, but still very few.[13] Low receipt of incentives challenges the very notion that the model has been successfully replicated. It indicates that Jobs-Plus requires an alternative rent incentive that can reach more deeply into

[11]While housing authorities need to enforce the required rules, the fear that an infraction could result in the loss of housing assistance was a major theme in interviews and focus groups.

[12]In the original demonstration, the EID was also not widely used in the control developments — the developments that did not receive Jobs-Plus services. See Gardenhire (2004).

[13]More people do appear to have begun receiving the EID after the period covered in this report.

developments. Fortunately, in its latest replication of the program HUD is applying a different rent incentive, one that allows up to 100 percent of all additional earnings to be disregarded for the duration of the program — essentially a rent freeze. This benefit, called the "Jobs Plus EID," may be more appealing to residents if it is successfully implemented.

The experiences of the providers in the current replication offer the following lessons for these and other new developments seeking to implement Jobs-Plus:

- **Where possible, do not use the EID as a rent incentive.** The mechanisms of the benefit, its complexity, and its limited value combined to make it little used. Some housing authorities might not have the Moving to Work status that would let them change rent rules, and might not be a part of the Jobs-Plus expansion, leaving them the EID as their only option for a rent incentive. In this case they might consider working outside the rent rules altogether, as was attempted in MDRC's Work Rewards demonstration, in which housing voucher holders were given a supplemental cash incentive.[14]

- **Keep rent incentives simple to explain.** The 100 percent disregard of HUD's current Jobs Plus EID is an example of a rent freeze that is not difficult to understand.

- **Assure tenants that applying to receive incentives will "do no harm" to any other aspect of their tenancy.** Housing authorities should assure tenants that the purpose of providing the disregard is not to discover existing housing violations, and change policies if necessary to support this assurance.

- **Integrate the marketing and receipt of the incentive into regular property management processes, including annual reviews of income.** The administrative start-up of the EID in large housing authorities was challenging, but support from senior leaders and front-line housing staff members should facilitate this communication between Jobs-Plus and property management.

- **Invest in marketing and communications to develop messages that residents will find relevant and compelling.** Appealing messages include those that connect to residents' sense of struggle as low-income people and to their desire for economic opportunity for themselves and their children. Residents also seem to respond to the message that rent incentives allow one to save more of the money earned through hard work.

[14]See Verma et al. (2012).

Chapter 4

Community Support for Work and Other Saturation Strategies

Introduction

One feature that distinguishes the Jobs-Plus model from traditional employment programs is its goal of implementing services at "saturation" levels. Doing so means promoting Jobs-Plus services and marketing rent-based financial incentives to all working-age residents of targeted public housing developments. By avoiding strict eligibility criteria, the model aims to get as many residents as possible to use Jobs-Plus services and to infuse the entire housing development with messages about the availability of employment and the opportunity for help in obtaining it.[1] This chapter discusses the component of the Jobs-Plus model most directly designed to support saturation: Community Support for Work (CSW). CSW aims to contribute to saturation by connecting residents to Jobs-Plus services formally and informally, and by developing and strengthening resident networks related to employment.

In the original demonstration, these formal and informal opportunities to connect residents to services and employment took different forms in different locations, but many of the Jobs-Plus developments ended up leaning on "community coaches." These were public housing residents hired to conduct outreach and other activities to promote the Jobs-Plus program. They were often members of tenant associations. In the demonstration, it was not always clear what role resident networks played in advancing or detracting from employment efforts. In the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) replication it was therefore important to explore how resident networks contribute to saturation. Given the size of the developments in New York and San Antonio, it was also important to explore how the providers could achieve saturation on a large scale.

Despite the developments' size, CSW in the Bronx and San Antonio allowed a substantial proportion of residents to become Jobs-Plus members during early implementation. As was the case in the original demonstration, the preexisting resident networks in these developments were not extensive, making it difficult to build on them. The stigma attached to public housing made it hard for providers to build a sense of community among residents based on their attachment to the place they all lived. Nevertheless, the providers experimented with a number of strategies that show promise for strengthening social ties among residents, spreading the word about program services, and supporting employment efforts. The San Antonio Housing

[1]Kato (1998).

Authority (SAHA) was particularly creative in doing so, whereas it took BronxWorks some time to fully implement CSW.

Both Jobs-Plus providers hired well-regarded community coaches, but these coaches required management and training that the providers could not always offer. Providers also developed relationships with property management staff members, who in turn helped make more residents aware of the program. Finally, because providers did not have as much to offer employed residents as unemployed ones (as described in Chapter 2), and because the Earned Income Disregard was not viable during early Jobs-Plus implementation (as described in Chapter 3), CSW could not fully build upon and integrate other components of the Jobs-Plus model. For many residents it had no relevant employment services or attractive rent incentives to offer. As was the case for the other components of the model, however, the implementation of CSW evolved and improved over time in both cities.

Community Support for Work in the Bronx and San Antonio

Both BronxWorks and SAHA hired a staff member (known as the "community organizer" in San Antonio and the "community engagement coordinator" in the Bronx) to oversee all aspects of CSW, including outreach, the development of marketing materials, and the recruitment and management of community coaches. The community coaches spent between 7 and 15 hours per week canvassing their developments and providing information about Jobs-Plus services. The provider staff members themselves conducted outreach that primarily involved knocking on doors and posting flyers throughout the housing developments, although they also organized or attended community events. While it took some time, especially in the Bronx, both providers developed relationships with their developments' property management offices to support CSW efforts. Staff members in the property management offices became vital allies of Jobs-Plus, helping to advertise the program and refer residents to it.

From the early stages of implementation, Jobs-Plus staff members in San Antonio embraced the goals of CSW, knocking on doors and posting flyers, and organizing and participating in community events. This high level of CSW activity has continued to evolve and improve, and has grown more sophisticated as Jobs-Plus has learned to use housing authority data to target outreach better. Recently SAHA developed a strategy known as Grass Roots, which uses property management data on residents' demographics, household composition, and employment status to guide unit-by-unit outreach. SAHA has also tested a few strategies to encourage resident-to-resident support (such as informal carpooling), some of which have shown promising results.

CSW at BronxWorks, on the other hand, was hampered during early implementation by not hiring enough community coaches (until early 2012, only one was employed to cover three

very large developments), a limited set of outreach tactics, and a lack of bilingual staff members to communicate with Spanish-speaking residents. During early implementation, BronxWorks focused almost exclusively on posting flyers and knocking on doors. When they knocked on doors staff members generally only asked residents if they were looking for work; they did not engage in more extensive conversations or attempt to build relationships. More recently, however, a new staff member has taken charge of CSW and turned things around, and ultimately BronxWorks' community coaches did develop good rapport with residents and did become a recognizable presence. This success is particularly noteworthy since BronxWorks worked from an off-site location and served three different developments.

In the end, both providers were able to serve a substantial proportion of residents. Figure 4.1 shows the cumulative percentage of working-age households enrolled in Jobs-Plus in San Antonio and the Bronx, by development, through December 31, 2013.[2] By the end of 2013, BronxWorks had enrolled at least 50 percent of all working-age households in all three developments. SAHA enrolled 66 percent and 70 percent of working-age households in Alazan and Mirasol, respectively. The figure, however, does not take into account residents who did not enroll but who may have heard about the program from flyers, from other residents, by attending an event, or by other means.

Tapping into Resident Networks

Jobs-Plus attempts to take advantage of existing resident networks to promote the program, disseminate information about employment opportunities, and support residents' job preparation and work efforts. Unlike other programs that try to tap into existing community networks, however, Jobs-Plus is located in public housing, which historically has been stigmatized and associated with urban decline.[3] This stigma makes it challenging for a program like Jobs-Plus to use "place" as the common ground to bring residents together and strengthen their networks. It can be difficult to promote "belonging" to a development when residents do not want to be associated with the development and mistrust their neighbors. Nonetheless, the Jobs-Plus program can help create and reproduce resident networks.

[2]The figure uses the percentage of working-age households enrolled in the program over time as a lower-bound estimate for the number of interactions the program could have had with residents in developments, keeping in mind the fact that many informal interactions related to Jobs-Plus likely occurred outside of enrollment in the program.

[3]Vale (2000).

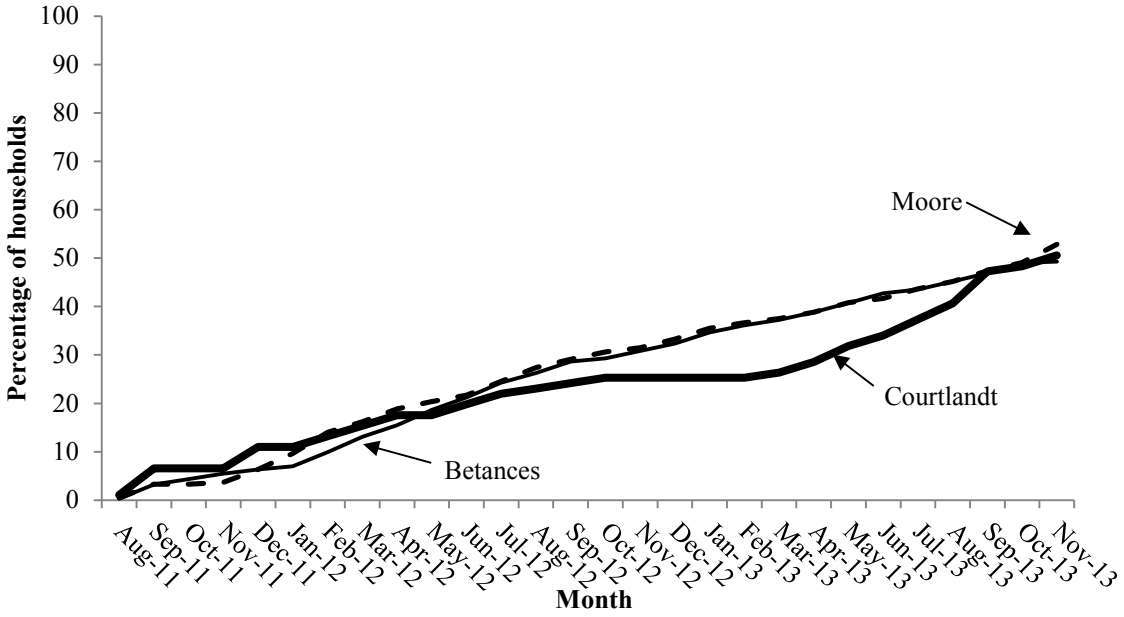
SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 4.1

Cumulative Percentage of Working-Age Households Enrolled in Jobs-Plus, by Development

Enrollment Through December 31, 2013

BronxWorks



SAHA

(continued)

Figure 4.1 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations from the BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems and aggregate household membership reports from New York City and San Antonio Housing Authorities.

NOTES: "Working-age" households defined as those headed by an adult between the ages of 18 and 61 at enrollment. In the absence of individual-level household membership data, calculations assume that only one working-age adult per household enrolled in Jobs-Plus. Calculations exclude Jobs-Plus enrollees recorded as residing outside of participating developments, but include enrollees who were not listed on the apartment lease.

As was the case in the original demonstration, residents in SIF Jobs-Plus developments did not have extensive ties to their neighbors when the program began.[4] Most residents interviewed in this study had limited contact with their neighbors, tried to keep to themselves, and did not want to be associated with a public housing "community." At the same time, in both the Bronx and San Antonio some residents did talk about the program with select neighbors and family members, encouraging them to enroll. Community programs and gatherings in public places offered residents the opportunity to interact with one another and exchange information about jobs and services. BronxWorks created these opportunities through men's empowerment group meetings, job retention clubs, and family days, and SAHA did so through community events and job clubs, among other activities.

Existing Resident Networks

Most of the residents interviewed during this study, in both San Antonio and the Bronx, described having limited contact with their neighbors. When residents were asked whether they talked to each other about employment opportunities, they often said things like, "People kind of stick to themselves," "I like to keep to myself though, like mind your business," "I don't really associate with anyone in the neighborhood," or "A lot of people keep private and to themselves." Some residents also distrusted their neighbors; as one said: "It's like, lack of communication is the main thing out here, that people just don't talk to each other with trust."

In some cases, residents not only had limited interaction with their neighbors but tried to create distance from them. This sentiment was particularly pronounced in the Bronx, where residents live in buildings that house many people. One Bronx resident who had lived in her building for three years said, "If I don't know you, I'm not trying to get to know you. I'd rather stay to myself, because that's how problems are caused." Another resident who had moved in recently said, "When I came here I was like I don't want to get into no trouble, put my business out and then people start talking and then everybody knows everything. So that's why I keep to

[4]Kato (1998).

myself." In San Antonio residents also described limited engagement with neighbors, but did not appear to maintain quite as much social distance from them. This difference may have been influenced by the layout of SAHA's developments (two-level, apartment-style buildings in Alazan and stand-alone homes in Mirasol), which offered residents some privacy.

People were particularly skeptical about coming together with residents of *other* developments, a problem for both BronxWorks and SAHA, which were both overseeing multidevelopment Jobs-Plus programs. In the Bronx, Jobs-Plus targeted three different developments, each containing multiple buildings. One participant wondered aloud why the program would put together events that invited residents from all three developments, like a free-throw contest at nearby basketball courts, saying:

> A lot of people got conflict outside [their housing development], like this area don't get along with that area.... Some people can't go up the block. Some people can't come down the block. So what y'all putting a program together, what make you think that people from down on the block and everybody's going to converge?

This quotation illustrates that perceived turf issues among the developments may have made residents worried about their safety at multidevelopment community events, undermining CSW efforts. Since CSW depends on neighbor-to neighbor-contact, this widespread skepticism among residents about the value of meeting others presented a serious challenge. However, SAHA and BronxWorks developed some promising strategies to address this challenge.

Strategies to Tap into Resident Networks

SAHA and BronxWorks tried to tap into existing resident networks by encouraging Jobs-Plus members to spread the word about the program. One BronxWorks staff member noted:

> So for us it's every single member that comes into the actual program that builds on [Community Support for Work].... We have this idea of cohorts and actual residents being more like community coaches. They're not doing outreach but if you spread the word of Jobs-Plus it's kind of like being a community coach.

While most people said they had limited contact with other residents in their developments, some mentioned knowing a few neighbors or having family in the development with whom they spoke about employment. These networks usually included only a handful of people, and the depths of the relationships involved varied widely, as did the information that the people in them transmitted. Some residents learned about employment programs, job fairs, or services through these contacts. It was not uncommon, for example, for residents to refer others to classes or programs they had attended outside of Jobs-Plus. Some also learned of job opportunities through these networks. One SAHA resident, for example, said: "On the week-

ends me and my other neighbor right next to me, she's talked to me about a job over by [a local street] and there's like another day care that's opening up and my friend said that she needed help over there as well." Others talked about job-related matters, went to apply for jobs together, or referred other residents and family to Jobs-Plus.

Residents also spoke about interacting with others at dance classes, at community centers, or when picking up children from school. A common strategy used by Jobs-Plus staff members in both cities was to post flyers in these public spaces, and most residents interviewed noted that they became accustomed to seeing flyers throughout the development. When researchers visited the developments, they observed that SAHA staff members in particular took advantage of public events and spaces to reach out to residents. For example, Jobs-Plus in San Antonio worked with a local church to host a back-to-school event on SAHA property, providing backpacks and school supplies to children. The event let SAHA staff members discuss employment with adults, associate the Jobs-Plus brand with a positive event for children, and enroll residents on the spot for the Jobs-Plus program. Such efforts also had the potential to build ties among residents and between residents and Jobs-Plus.

During early implementation, BronxWorks was not as successful in capitalizing on community events or in hosting events. Part of the problem was that BronxWorks, as an off-site community-based organization, had to file paperwork with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) if it wanted to host an event on NYCHA property. Nonetheless, BronxWorks helped organize holiday parties and celebrations of Mother's Day and Father's Day, and in 2014 BronxWorks organized a Jobs Fair at the Betances Community Center for development residents. The event was well attended and Jobs-Plus was able to enroll several new members that day.

The Jobs-Plus providers also developed relationships with tenant associations. SAHA staff members routinely attended tenant association meetings in order to meet new residents and publicize Jobs-Plus's presence in the housing development. BronxWorks staff members built relationships with tenant associations as well, although they primarily used those relationships to exchange information about upcoming events.

Both providers developed relationships with developments' property management offices, taking advantage of the existing ties these offices had with residents. SAHA provided an orientation to the Jobs-Plus program for the property management office staff and custodial staff so that they could relay information about the program to residents. Similarly, BronxWorks reached out to the property management office to post flyers and keep managers informed about upcoming Jobs-Plus program activities. The relationship developed to the point

that some property managers engaged in "reverse referrals," sending residents to Jobs-Plus.[5] In the Bronx, at the time this report was written Jobs-Plus and the property management office were developing a formal process to assess the outcomes of these "reverse referrals." Several residents interviewed in San Antonio mentioned that they were first introduced to Jobs-Plus by property managers, as did some in the Bronx.

During this period NYCHA's Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability department (described in Chapter 1) also launched the pilot phase of its Resident Referral System, a web-based tool that connects NYCHA residents to external partner providers. (The system was expanded citywide in 2014.) The Resident Referral System was designed to capitalize on routine property management interactions, such as a rent adjustment, to connect residents to relevant services. The organizations providing those services engage residents within 48 hours of a referral and share the outcomes of those interactions with NYCHA through the web-based platform. BronxWorks participated in the 15-week pilot phase of this system between January 9 and April 12, 2012, receiving 28 referrals from property management. Of those 28 residents, 86 percent became Jobs-Plus members.

Box 4.1 considers whether community-based organizations providing Jobs-Plus services have an inherent advantage over housing authorities when it comes to building trust with residents.

The Challenges of Building Cohorts

Jobs-Plus is open to all working-age residents of a targeted housing development. It aims to saturate the development with job-related services and messages, so it does not screen anyone out. At the same time, the program strives to address each participant's specific goals and needs. Some staff members thought this individual tailoring made it harder to create a sense of community, because residents came to the program with different levels of skill, different work experiences, and different goals. As a result, staff members thought that they had to work with residents individually, leaving little room for members to find common ground. As one staff member said:

> I do fundamentally feel that this open entry, open exit really is a hindrance to creating community ... that the most meaningful sort of connections [are created] when you put people together and kind of move them through a sort of continuum of services together. So I've been involved in programs ... that are cohort-based, and you really see community.

[5]"Reverse referrals" were so called because most of the time Jobs-Plus referred residents to the property management office to receive the Earned Income Disregard, as described in Chapter 3.

Box 4.1

Service Providers and Jobs-Plus: Are Community-Based Organizations Always More Trusted?

In both the Bronx and San Antonio, residents voiced skepticism and mistrust to varying degrees of the housing authorities that managed their properties. This is a well-documented phenomenon that does not necessarily reflect poorly on either NYCHA or SAHA, but instead may arise from the conflict that often occurs between landlords and tenants, especially when the landlord is required to implement additional rules and more intensive monitoring of residents than a standard apartment owner.

Given this skepticism, it might follow that a community-based organization would be better positioned to gain the trust of residents. Observations of BronxWorks in action showed good rapport between residents and service providers, and a later hire of a community engagement coordinator with a background in community organizing helped improve Community Support for Work implementation dramatically. However, it was SAHA that had the more aggressive and innovative approach to Community Support for Work during very early implementation. This finding suggests that while community organizations may have some inherent advantages when it comes to building trust with residents, housing authorities can overcome resident skepticism through a welcoming staff, resident leadership programs, and other tenant-engagement initiatives. A SAHA staff member reflected on this interpersonal dynamic:

> They believe that we want to help them and I think that's absolutely critical for getting them to invest their time and their commitment into their goals.... They have to believe that we're invested, I think, a lot of time for them to commit. I think that we're really good at that. I think we're really good at helping our residents trust us. Trust is really hard to earn.

Another SAHA staff member described being able to act as a trusted advocate on behalf of residents, even during eviction proceedings that might put the housing authority at odds with the tenant. In this instance, the staff person was able to call up the property management office, learn the basis for the eviction proceeding, and coordinate a way to avoid it:

> So we'll have a resident come in here, they're evicting me, they're not hearing my side of the story ... and I have the ability to go look in there and say, well look, you've been late three months and there's budgeting issues. Because you have enough money to pay the rent, you're just not making your rent a priority. So we need to refocus on your priorities. In the meantime when I'm working on you with this then let's see if we can work with management and put you on a payment agreement to try to get you to catch up so they won't evict you.

In the view of the BronxWorks staff, it was difficult to create cohorts among members given the structure of the Jobs-Plus program. In contrast, SAHA developed the idea of a Job Club as a strategy to create a kind of cohort. The idea of the club was to bring together Job-Plus members through job-readiness workshops (for example, workshops on résumé writing), so that they could move together through the process of preparing for and finding jobs. The staff also saw the Job Club as a way to reengage residents who had found employment through Jobs-Plus, by inviting them to share their experiences of employment with unemployed residents. Unfortunately, the Job Club was poorly attended and members often moved through the job-search process at their own pace. The Club was subsequently discontinued.

SAHA had more success with its attempt to create carpools among residents, to help them get to and from work. These carpools required members to coordinate schedules and pool their money for gas, offered them the opportunity to interact during the ride, and in some cases resulted in support networks. For example, a SAHA staff member described two female residents who met in a carpool and discovered that they both wanted to obtain their high school equivalency diplomas. When they arrived back home later that day, they walked to the Jobs-Plus office together and signed up for a high school equivalency course. From that day forward, the women attended Jobs-Plus meetings together. This case illustrates how these kinds of activities can foster resident networks.

Community Coaches as a Saturation Strategy

In the original demonstration, Jobs-Plus providers came to rely on community coaches to serve as representatives of the program and build relationships with residents, and to communicate the needs of residents to Jobs-Plus staff members. Using community coaches means recruiting, training, and supervising a small group of residents who encourage their neighbors to use Jobs-Plus services. BronxWorks and SAHA implemented the community coach model as part of their Community Support for Work activities. In general, community coaches were well regarded by residents, who often appreciated the in-person contact with the program. SAHA developed its community coach model more fully than did BronxWorks, and even developed an innovative apprentice program to help address community coach turnover and support coaches' activities, particularly during events. While BronxWorks experienced some challenges early on, later in implementation it started to develop a more targeted strategy for outreach and communication.

For the most part, community coaches engaged residents in general, limited one-on-one encounters (for example, by knocking on doors) rather than developing opportunities for residents to interact with each other. Providers led more targeted outreach efforts as the implementation of the program progressed. Both providers found it challenging to find enough time to manage community coaches and to provide them with adequate training. As a result, com-

munity coaches could only relay limited information to residents and could only provide limited support to the Jobs-Plus staff.

SAHA's Experience with Coaches

Soon after the launch of the Jobs-Plus program, SAHA hired five community coaches to conduct outreach to residents, serve as liaisons between residents and the Jobs-Plus office, develop and lead campaigns, assist the community organizer in reaching out to a certain number of residents per month, and assist the staff in providing orientation for new members. SAHA had experience managing a resident ambassador program, a program that aims to inform residents about self-sufficiency activities and motivate them to participate.[6] Some of the initial community coaches came through this program. Community coaches at both Alazan and Mirasol were recruited and given employee status. Jobs-Plus implementers thought that giving coaches employee status would make them more accountable to the program and integrated into it. In early program implementation, SAHA's community coaches visited local employers to inquire about job openings. SAHA also relied on community coaches to conduct resident surveys and collect information about residents' needs and views of Jobs-Plus.

One innovation SAHA utilized to support coaches was the "apprentice program." Like community coaches, "apprentices" were housing development residents; they were unpaid outreach workers who could aspire to be hired as community coaches once an opening was available. Apprentices received an introduction to the program and usually accompanied a more experienced community coach to conduct outreach in the development. The idea was to create a pool of potential applicants who were already familiar with Jobs-Plus and who had shown some level of commitment, in the event that a community coach left the program. The apprenticeship program also satisfied a volunteer-hour requirement that SAHA had implemented for residents.

During later implementation, SAHA developed a door-to-door outreach strategy known as Grass Roots, wherein staff members reached out to targeted residents. Because SAHA's Jobs-Plus staff members had access to the housing management database, they could easily identify residents with specific characteristics (for example, with certain household composition, or with a recent change in employment status) and tailor messages to those groups. For example, SAHA staff members could identify which residents were recently employed and eligible for the Earned Income Disregard, making it easier to hold conversations with them that were relevant to their particular needs. MDRC researchers observed that this approach did help

[6]The resident ambassador program was modeled after the community coach program in the original Jobs-Plus demonstration. According to a report, the resident ambassador program "encourages resident participation in outreach and promotion for education, job-training, employment, and community building activities. The ambassadors' purpose is to inform and motivate fellow residents to participate in self-sufficiency activities." San Antonio Housing Authority (2013).

staff members start conversations in which they encouraged residents to attend a particular event or take advantage of specific resources.

BronxWorks' Experience with Coaches

Initially, BronxWorks experienced some challenges recruiting community coaches. The organization required a minimum of a high school diploma and references, and according to the staff this was something that few residents could provide. Until early 2012, BronxWorks had only one community coach; another was hired later that year. The size of the developments (1,514 households with over 1,701 working-age adults at the beginning of the program) and their scattered geography made it even more challenging for one or two community coaches to reach out to all residents.

At BronxWorks, community coaches were considered the "day-to-day doers of outreach," as a staff person described them. During early observations, community coaches hardly engaged with residents when they handed out flyers door to door, did not vary their messages depending on the resident, and did not bring with them concrete opportunities or messages to entice residents into the program. Another limitation BronxWorks faced was its lack of bilingual staff members. Residents who preferred to speak in Spanish (and about 13 percent of Jobs-Plus members in the Bronx used Spanish as their primary language, as shown in Table 1.1 in Chapter 1) were usually just handed a flyer with no further attempt to interact. During the early stages of implementation, BronxWorks limited its Community Support for Work activities to knocking on doors and posting flyers.

During the third year of implementation BronxWorks hired a new bilingual community engagement coordinator, who reinvigorated the program. He proposed a building-by-building strategy to identify residents with specific demographic characteristics and tailor marketing materials to them. During MDRC observations of door-to-door outreach, this staff member was seen talking with residents about Jobs-Plus activities, upcoming workshops, employment, school, the Earned Income Disregard, and tax assistance. He also invested time in building BronxWorks' social media presence and created videos advertising workshops to share through social media as well. Since knocking on doors was yielding only limited interactions, he and community coaches began setting up information tables in building lobbies, which provided more opportunity to interact with residents as they entered and left the building.

Managing Coaches

Community coaches must be well managed and trained if they are to carry the Jobs-Plus message effectively. For both providers, one of the main challenges working with community coaches was allocating time and resources to manage and train them. A SAHA staff person lamented this lack of time:

> The Community Support for Work component as far as the community coaches and developing that program is so consuming that I can't really ... make sure that the community coaches are being developed the way that we promised we will assist them in developing.... [At the same time,] we need the community coaches because we can't do the outreach effectively without them.

SAHA's community organizer believed that to ensure high-quality service, coaches should be trained in conflict resolution, awareness of sexual harassment, customer service, and safety. Initially, SAHA intended to give community coaches the same training as other SAHA employees, but its human resource department policies did not allow that to happen. Moreover, the community organizer's multiple responsibilities made it impossible to supervise community coaches continuously, although community coaches often partnered with staff members during their outreach work and could receive feedback in this way.

Facing a similar issue, BronxWorks did not conduct formal training for community coaches, but instead had Jobs-Plus staff members accompany them their first few times in the field. As one staff member said:

> I don't think you can prepare someone to be a community coach.... It's just a matter of doing it.... Just being there in the field with the [community coach] was probably the only thing that I could have done that was helpful.... I just did [accompany community coaches] like a few days just so that they can get a sense of what that should look like, the things that they should be talking about, and then I was like hands-off.

In supervisors' view, one of the results of this limited training was that community coaches could only provide partial information to residents. In both cities, supervisors thought that community coaches were often ill prepared to answer questions other than the most basic ones about the program or upcoming events. For example, staff members said that community coaches did not fully grasp the content of the program's financial counseling workshops, which limited their ability to promote them.

Community Support for Work and Saturation

In the SIF Jobs-Plus replication, one critical question concerned how to measure "saturation." "Saturation" involved the goal that services would be offered to all working-age, nondisabled residents, but it was an open question how to measure progress toward that goal when these interactions and offers of services sometimes occurred in informal settings. As a member of the Collaborative said:

> We need a way to measure saturation.... This is very much where the contract management comes into place.... We don't want to say, like, "You have to have

> 20 events in one year." [Instead] we've tried to say, "You have to touch everybody." [But] what does that actually mean?

For both providers saturation became synonymous with the word "touch," and both emphasized building residents' awareness of Jobs-Plus. Accordingly, CSW activities often focused on marketing Jobs-Plus services through activities such as distributing flyers. One staff member in the Bronx described saturation this way:

> I think that to me saturation is when you ask anyone who lives in our developments if they've heard of Jobs-Plus and at least 90 percent of the people say yes ... I've seen them around. Oh, yeah I got a flyer.

While spreading information about Jobs-Plus is an important activity, there are two other aspects of Jobs-Plus that are also important to consider in defining saturation. First, CSW can allow a Jobs-Plus program to build extensive relationships with residents, thereby helping them feel attachment to the goal of employment, build ties with each other, and give feedback to Jobs-Plus providers. Yet as described in Chapter 2, Jobs-Plus members' engagement tended to fall off over time, and as described in this chapter, CSW engagement in the early days of implementation largely consisted of distributing generic flyers. Residents interviewed often tended to dismiss these flyers because they appeared so frequently and because their messages were so generic. BronxWorks in particular conducted only limited outreach early on.

Second, CSW provides a way to integrate and expand the potential of employment services and financial incentives, as illustrated by Figure 4.2. For example, marketing the Earned Income Disregard to *employed* residents can boost the number of them who receive the financial incentive and also build relationships with a group of residents who might not otherwise feel they need help. That in turn can help them connect to training programs and programs otherwise intended to help them advance their careers. CSW can also help residents understand the specific services Jobs-Plus offers. Staff members found flyers to be more effective when they included information about job titles and wage rates available, child care assistance, classes (for example, high school equivalency classes), or training sessions in specific areas (for example, a course in forklift operation offered by a SAHA partner). Unsurprisingly, these more specific messages were also more appealing to residents, as one said:

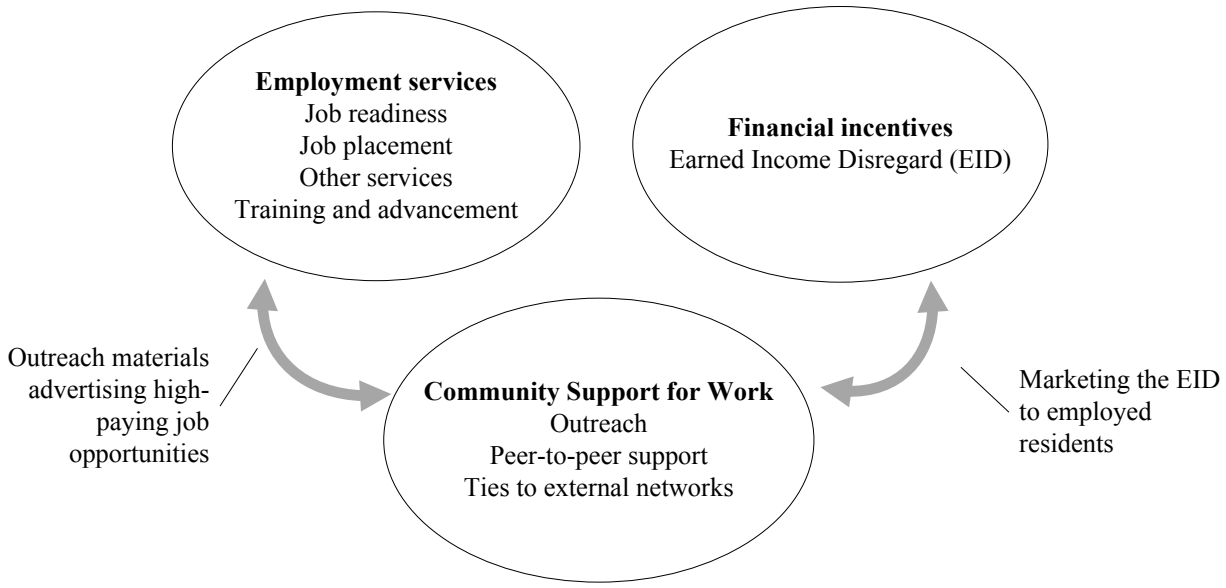
> So the way that I first heard about BronxWorks Jobs-Plus was basically through the flyers that I saw throughout the building, and the different job positions that they had available. So that was basically what drew my attention.

Thus, while it was possible to reach many residents with flyers, these "touches" were more effective when they carried concrete messages regarding employment and training opportunities.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Figure 4.2

Community Support for Work Interactions with Financial Incentives and Employment Services



Conclusion and Recommendations

Even though the developments in this replication were larger and more scattered than the ones in the original demonstration, CSW provided a way to bring substantial proportions of residents into Jobs-Plus as members. SAHA in particular developed several creative strategies to tap into resident networks and create new ones, to support community coaches, and to use property management data for targeted outreach. At the same time, CSW was hampered by limitations in other parts of the Jobs-Plus model. For example, in the Bronx it was difficult to spread the word about the Earned Income Disregard because the incentive was not fully operational. As a result, the program had fewer chances to make contact with individuals who were already employed. Based on these findings, future replicators may want to consider the follow recommendations:

- **Allocate enough resources to support and train community coaches.** Community coaches are central to CSW. Programs need to allocate time to

direct their activities, train them, and supervise them so as to maximize their potential.

- **Develop targeted outreach strategies and messages.** These providers' experiences show that residents are more likely to respond to messages that offer concrete opportunities, such as employer and wage information. Their experiences also show how housing authority data can help providers target residents in particular situations with specific messages (for example, messages about rent incentives for recently employed residents).

- **Build close relationships with property managers.** Property managers were important allies who helped spread the word about the program and the range of services it offered, and who referred residents directly to Jobs-Plus. Future replicators of Jobs-Plus are advised to develop relationships with property managers early on, in part to tap into the relationships property managers have already built with residents.

- **Develop multiple opportunities for residents to engage in the program.** In addition to posting flyers and knocking on doors, providers should take advantage of existing community events and programs, and organize new activities to reach out to residents (like the carpools implemented by SAHA). CSW is not only a way for implementers to "push out" information, but also a way to receive information from residents that can make services more relevant, and a way for residents to share leads with each other about jobs and other opportunities.

Chapter 5

Supporting Strong Implementation: Learning Jobs-Plus, Establishing Accountability, and Supporting Ongoing Performance

Introduction

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is designed to "grow promising, innovative community solutions that have evidence of compelling impact."[1] Started in the 1990s, Jobs-Plus produced strong evidence through a large, random assignment study. In the original demonstration, the earnings of residents in Jobs-Plus housing developments rose significantly after program implementation and continued to rise for three years after the program ended, greatly outpacing the incomes of residents in comparison developments. However, it is always the case that replicators trying to deliver services in different contexts may run into unforeseen challenges, and it is also always true that program models may be adapted in new ways that actually enhance them.[2]

This chapter focuses on the ways the model was expanded in new economic, service, and policy environments. It describes how providers learned the Jobs-Plus approach, the factors that made it easier for them to adopt and expand the model, and the role of technical assistance and accountability mechanisms in supporting project performance. While the three components of the Jobs-Plus model are not in themselves conceptually complicated, providers will face unique decisions about how put them into practice in various contexts, and will also face choices about how the model components should be connected. As the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) replicates the program throughout the country, and as the program continues to evolve in New York and San Antonio, it will be particularly important to understand how best to promote learning, accountability, and good performance.

The SIF Jobs-Plus replication started up slowly due to staff turnover and bureaucratic challenges. (The original demonstration also took a year or two to ramp up across developments.) While both BronxWorks and the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) had their strengths, they were limited in some aspects of contemporary workforce practice that HUD has since stressed.[3] They also had limited ability to conduct outreach and maintain engagement with development residents. These are common limitations among housing authorities and commu-

[1]Corporation for National and Community Service (2015).

[2]Bardach (1977).

[3]The call for proposals HUD issued for the newest replication of Jobs-Plus directed applicants to explain how they would use labor market data, career pathways, and apprenticeships, among other elements.

nity organizations. Given these potentially widespread challenges, it is important for future replicators to know that BronxWorks and SAHA "learned" how to implement Jobs-Plus over a period of time, during which they worked with partners to create an integrated system of services. During this learning time they also received technical assistance that included concrete guidance in some areas and permitted providers to tailor the model to their circumstances in others.

In fact, technical assistance turned out to be needed for a much longer time than initially anticipated; this chapter includes several suggestions for how to launch Jobs-Plus programs more expeditiously: Funders and program managers should seek to develop accountability systems that focus Jobs-Plus replicators on a limited range of important outcomes. They should also provide access to agencies responsible for housing, workforce, education, and training policies. Finally, Jobs-Plus replicators should also attempt to develop fully a Jobs-Plus "Collaborative" (the purpose of which is discussed in Chapter 1). Only in the Bronx was a Collaborative developed, and there it played several important support functions for Jobs-Plus.

Learning Jobs-Plus

After they received their grant awards from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) in March 2011, both BronxWorks and SAHA began to start up their Jobs-Plus programs. As described in Chapter 1, start-up was a six-month exercise in which CEO worked with providers on their budget and staffing plans, developed service and performance expectations for each of them, and engaged MDRC to help each provider develop a program design document. During this start-up period BronxWorks and SAHA thought through how services should be delivered, developed Jobs-Plus policies, created or modified data systems for tracking participation, and held regular planning sessions led by MDRC. They also received training in the Jobs-Plus model and in other topics in workforce development and financial literacy. BronxWorks launched its Jobs-Plus program in August 2011, SAHA in February 2012. Based on interviews and observations, three factors appeared to make it easier for providers to adopt the model and adapt it to local needs: (1) good internal collaboration and the inclusion of front-line staff members in planning, (2) a balance between concrete guidance from technical assistance providers and the freedom to innovate, and (3) the opportunity to learn from peer providers.

Internal Collaboration and Inclusion of Front-Line Staff Members

During the start-up period, providers were asked to "own" Jobs-Plus and adapt it to their local needs by creating a plan for the delivery of employment services, developing outreach strategies tailored to each development's needs, and deciding how to promote the Earned Income Disregard. Both Bronx and San Antonio staff members reported that during this time

they learned Jobs-Plus better when they could build on a sense of collective camaraderie and engagement that extended beyond program leaders to reach the front-line staff.

In the Bronx, staff members described a positive environment of communication and collaboration during the early months of program support. The team would often brainstorm about program flow and design, and staff members at different levels felt that program managers valued their ideas. MDRC observations of inclusive meetings, productive case conferences, and good informal communication supported staff members' views. It was important to establish these good communication practices early, because Jobs-Plus relies on good coordination among resource coordinators, job developers, and financial counselors. As one staff member said about this start-up period:

> I think the timetable worked out perfectly, in my opinion. Six months allowed us to train the financial counselors, to train on this ETO system [the name for the participant database], which no one ... used before ... to come up with all these ideas and forms, have MDRC give us the feedback on the forms, to come up with some new forms and edit the forms, to think about all the outreach strategies and how are we going to blanket the targeted developments.

In contrast, at SAHA some staff members reported that technical assistance did not always "filter down" to the front-line staff, resulting in a lack of detail and flexibility. As one said:

> Many of the [technical assistance] sessions were geared more towards the administrators. The front line were kept out of the conversations altogether. For me personally, the best practices don't come through the administrators — don't get me wrong — but it also comes together very nicely with front-line feedback and input. We do the work.

These initial problems were attributed in part to the management patterns established by an early director of the Jobs-Plus program. After a management shift, staff members at all levels eventually started to become more engaged in the program design process. As one reflected:

> We have a mixture of experience here, and some folks may not have been exposed…to [work planning and program development.] You know, half the team is young people.... They haven't grown programs. It clicked that everybody was getting it when I started listening to the types of questions that were being asked. In the very beginning, there were either very few or no questions. And that worried me. And then right about mid-July, early August, there were technical questions, [which was] great, [like] how are we going to support the day care unless we get folks who have no preschoolers?

Initially some junior staff members were hesitant about participating in sessions related to work flow and formal planning, but over time they reported that participating in program development and technical assistance helped them understand the Jobs-Plus model. Informal participation was seen as especially important, as much of the technical assistance

provided to SAHA was intended to help the provider produce a document (called a program design) that would establish how services would be delivered and define other procedures. SAHA needed to produce this document before CEO would give it approval to launch Jobs-Plus. While staff members recognized that these protocols were necessary, they sometimes had trouble engaging the written documents and instead valued being able to discuss how the program would work in practice:

> Yeah, the manuals, the workbook, and reading [helped]. Those things helped, but it's still — you see it in black and white, but it's still vague.... Once we were able to have free discussions, free from criticism, free from skepticism — once we got all that out the way ... [that helped].

Balancing Concrete Assistance with Flexibility

There is a continuing debate in the policy literature about the best way to replicate a successful program: Some feel program administrators should ensure program fidelity by making sure services are delivered the same way in an expansion effort as they were in the smaller-scale test, an approach called "manualization." Others believe that front-line staff members and managers can learn a model more deeply if it consists of "principles" intended to be adapted to local conditions.[4] In the SIF replication, the most helpful approach appeared to balance these two extremes.

For example, providers needed to make some important decisions related to Community Support for Work based on their own knowledge and experience: how to conduct outreach in separate developments in the Bronx and San Antonio; how to address the safety issues that arose when residents traveled between developments in the Bronx; or how to engage building staff members in a development where no active tenant association existed. Any provider would have to wrestle with these *types* of decisions in implementing Community Support for Work.

During the Jobs-Plus start-up period, a "workbook" provided by MDRC appeared to strike the right balance between "manualization" and local innovation and creativity. In the Bronx, this workbook was provided to senior leaders to guide them as they developed processes and protocols for different stages of the program's existence. For example, in the prelaunch phase, the workbook told leaders they needed to identify a program director, develop process benchmarks and outcome goals, analyze existing management information systems, identify office space, create a spending plan, develop consent forms, and devise a supervisory plan, as shown in Figure 5.1. Leaders still needed a great deal of support to translate these broad ideas into specific plans.

[4]Fixsen et al. (2005).

Figure 5.1

Sample Pages from the Jobs-Plus Workbook

TASK	QUESTIONS	COMPETENCY	PRODUCTS
Identify Program Director	How can the supervisory and front-line management build a program that will bring the most value to the community?	Entrepreneurial, innovative leadership	Project Manager who inspires the confidence of partners, staff and participants
Develop Process Benchmarks and Outcome Goals SEE **A. Performance Outcomes Worksheet/BronxWorks** and **B. Reporting Requirements**	• What standard benchmarks and metrics are in use at local workforce programs? • What measurements will MDRC and CEO ask program to report on? • What are key formative benchmarks that provide useful information about progress towards program outcomes? • Given the population Jobs-Plus will serve, what are realistic outcomes? • What are ambitious outcomes?	Continuous improvement	Program process measures, benchmarks and outcomes
Work with MDRC to analyze existing MIS system. Suggest improvements to meet program needs. SEE **B. Reporting Requirements**	• How will information be gathered and entered into system? • How will information be verified and/or double-checked? • How can data-entry time be minimized?	Continuous improvement	Identify next steps/plan to adapt existing MIS system for needs of Jobs-Plus
Develop staffing plan and program flow SEE **D. Program Flow** and **E. Objectives by Job Title**	• What kind of assumptions can we make about minimum and maximum caseloads for each position based on program outcomes and knowledge of time requirements of case management? • How can we meet our outcomes yet function as more than a "by appointment" program and "meet residents where they are"?	Continuous improvement	Staffing Plan and Program Flow

(continued)

Figure 5.1 (continued)

TASK	QUESTIONS	COMPETENCY	PRODUCTS
Identification of Jobs-Plus office space(s)	• How accessible to residents is the space? • Are there any rivalries between different sections of the development? • Are there safety concerns, including environmental ones? Will the space be functional for all office requirements? For example, is there adequate space for: • private consultation with members and staff • staff meetings • group trainings • desks • phone and fax lines • photocopier • computers for all staff • computers for members to use (resume writing, keyboarding practice, on-line applications and assessments, etc.) • On what type of schedule will the office be cleaned and maintained reliably?	Continuous improvement	Selection and outfitting of program office space
Create weekly/ monthly Spending Plan	• Does the budget clearly reflect program priorities? • Can any problems with access to program funds be anticipated? • How can program goals be supported through use of program funds? • Are program funds used to overcome obstacles to employment and further advancement among members?	Continuous improvement	Weekly and Monthly Spending Plan
Work with MDRC to develop Consent Forms See **G. <u>Draft Consent Forms</u>**	• Why are consent forms needed? • How should staff be trained to talk about the consent process? • How do we minimize the risk of a member refusing to sign?	Client-centered service	Final Consent forms

(continued)

Figure 5.1 (continued)

TASK	QUESTIONS	COMPETENCY	PRODUCTS
Finalize supervisory plan to monitor program, staff and service delivery SEE **E. <u>SAMPLE Objectives by Job Title</u>**	• How can we build checks and balances into the program flow? • How can the program flow support regular public sharing of progress and achievement? • How often will the program director audit files and observe service delivery? • When will case conferences occur?	Collaboration	Final plan to supervise staff and monitor service delivery
Post Job Announcements for Staff	Where are we likely to find entrepreneurial, innovative and collaborative staff?	Entrepreneurial, innovative leadership	Posted Job Announcements

When staff members felt they had too little guidance and or not enough templates to develop all the documents required for launch and start-up, they tended to get stuck on broader and less concrete issues, without the ability to anticipate service needs or even realize that they existed. As a result, staff members became skeptical at times about why materials were being developed in the first place. As one said, "Okay, it's just a replication of the model, [so] why is it that we are coming up with all of the materials, the intake forms and things like that? If this is a replication, why are we creating things?" That is, some staff members would have liked to see forms and materials that did not represent critical or important decisions "manualized," leaving them to focus on other decisions.

This issue of wanting the right balance between guidance and local decisions was especially important in San Antonio, where the provider had less experience launching workforce programs. As one staff member commented, the early documents SAHA produced for Jobs-Plus were somewhat abstract:

> Yeah, the term sausage making comes into mind [to describe the early planning process]. We had a very energized, enthusiastic atmosphere, but it was kind of messy; it was all over the place when we started.... It didn't become apparent to me that we all weren't on the same page until months later on. We were in the training [by a workforce group], it was an outstanding training, and we started on the right track, and then it just kind of unraveled after that ... as far as — I think we started getting hit with responsibilities and goals.

SAHA's challenges in developing a design document were one reason it launched its Jobs-Plus program six months later than BronxWorks.

Another important example of concrete guidance was a 10-day, highly structured course in financial counseling developed in the Bronx by New York City's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE). The course helped case workers understand credit and banking issues, showed them how to develop budgets and financial goals with clients, and taught them other technical skills. As one staff person said:

> That OFE training was astronomically important I think for me, considering my background, because I was coming from case management. I was concerned thinking my background really isn't financial, so I would probably have to catch up. So that training early on was brilliant.

As described in Chapter 3, financial counseling was well implemented in the Bronx, and that appears to be in part thanks to this intensive training. (It was also very helpful that OFE connected BronxWorks with other practitioners that could share their insights and templates. As was, of course, having a funding stream dedicated to financial counseling.)

The Value of Peer Learning

BronxWorks and SAHA deeply valued it when CEO and MDRC helped them learn from other providers implementing Jobs-Plus. Staff members felt that these connections were both encouraging and clarifying, especially while the program was starting up. Practitioners valued being able to "talk shop" and connect to other front-line staff members. It helped them practically, as they got to talk through problems, and allowed them to feel less isolated, as they saw other practitioners facing the same issues.

This type of exchange occurred when both providers went to visit Jefferson Houses, an early adopter of the Jobs-Plus approach in East Harlem, New York. Staff members felt this visit was important because at the time they had not yet launched the Jobs-Plus program and were trying to make decisions about it in the abstract, and visiting Jefferson Houses let them see the implications of those decisions in a program already in operation. They found it helpful to review the Jefferson Houses forms and intake processes, to see how Jobs-Plus members flowed through the program from one service to the next, and even to observe the arrangement of office space. As one staff member noted:

> That was extremely helpful, because there was a concrete version of how the program ran, and there was actual people that I can talk to and meet with. It was like a hands-on learning experience, and that was really cool.

Building on this desire, MDRC and CEO tried to promote these peer-to-peer connections where possible between BronxWorks and SAHA, and they have continued to do so among the New York providers in the replication led by the city's Human Resources Administration. In this latter case it has been relatively easy for these Jobs-Plus initiatives all working in the same city to visit each other.

The Jobs-Plus Collaborative

The Jobs-Plus Collaborative was an important mechanism for accountability and support, but the concept was only realized fully in the Bronx. As described in Chapter 1, the Collaborative is an interagency effort linking a housing authority to other city and state agencies, including those administering Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, American Job Centers, and other workforce or social services organizations. It makes the program accountable to actors beyond the housing agency and allows these organizations to support Jobs-Plus through their expertise, additional resources, and policy changes to benefit public housing residents.

The Collaborative in the Bronx

In the Bronx, CEO led the formation of the Collaborative by convening a group of representatives from different city agencies with some stake in Jobs-Plus implementation. These

included the Human Resources Administration (the city's welfare agency), the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Small Business Services (which runs the city's workforce agencies), and the Office of Financial Empowerment within the Department of Consumer Affairs, which helped support the financial counseling component of BronxWorks' program.[5] These agencies did not formally oversee Jobs-Plus as a governance body or approve major decisions, but did contribute to a general atmosphere of accountability, as BronxWorks would often begin Collaborative meetings with a report on program outcomes.

As in the original demonstration, the BronxWorks Collaborative underwent a start-up and learning process (even though several of its members were familiar with the model, having participated in Jobs-Plus replications in Jefferson Houses and in Queens, as described in Chapter 1). Because the SIF replication was managed by CEO and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, other city agencies were aware of Jobs-Plus and supported its implementation, but at the beginning of the initiative their roles in the Collaborative were not yet defined. These organizations, especially those without much previous Jobs-Plus experience, needed additional education in the nontraditional arrangement of the Collaborative, where participants do not necessarily contribute funding but do provide guidance and oversight. As one collaborative member recounted:

> When we started collaborating, I wonder if all of the members of the Collaborative were as familiar with all of the parts of the Jobs-Plus model. I think we knew a little bit about the parts that might relate to the work that we were doing, but I probably didn't know as much about it as I do now.

BronxWorks initially saw the Collaborative as an additional layer of formal accountability, which made it harder for it to act as an ongoing, supportive, and problem-solving working group. One BronxWorks staff member recalled:

> Very early on ... it was very much as if we were in this report-out mode that you know you were being held accountable and you know, why haven't you done this? Why — where's this? Where's that? It occurred as if you just now have five or six or seven new bosses.

While it took some time and extra effort for all the participants to establish their roles, ultimately city agency representatives and BronxWorks agreed that the Collaborative allowed both resources and policy backing to flow toward the Bronx Jobs-Plus replication. This was especially important for interacting with the housing authority, as BronxWorks was a community organization with no official standing to do work in the developments. The Office of Financial Empowerment provided data systems, training, and access to credit scores for financial

[5]Unlike the original demonstration, in the SIF replication, resident representatives were not part of the Collaborative.

counseling. The Collaborative was especially important for developing systems and training related to the Earned Income Disregard (which BronxWorks, as a community-based provider, would not have been able to develop alone). The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) also provided access to the property management staff, made it easy for housing assistants to refer tenants to Jobs-Plus, and invited Jobs-Plus staff members to rent-certification training sessions, which helped them learn the procedures related to the Earned Income Disregard. In the end, BronxWorks staff members said the Collaborative sessions allowed them to step back, gain perspective, and see the program through the eyes of other, knowledgeable practitioners.

Collaborative members themselves also came to see some benefit in participating. Participating in the Collaborative prepared the Human Resources Administration to take the lead in managing a further expansion of Jobs-Plus (as described in Chapter 1). It gave NYCHA an opportunity to reflect on how the day-to-day provision of needed affordable housing fit into a broader social mission. As one NYCHA staff member said:

> [Our work] lives and breathes in property management offices. Because that's where residents go. That's where housing assistants [are], whose primary job is to collect rent and to make sure that annual certifications are happening. That feeds into our primary line of business, which is, we are a landlord. But at the same time I learned [about our] social mission.... We're also about providing access to opportunities and providing safe and livable neighborhoods.

In this replication the Collaborative was never recognized fully as a governance body for Jobs-Plus, because the SIF contract made BronxWorks formally accountable to the Mayor's Fund and CEO. This less-formal status had positive and negative implications for the initiative. On the one hand, it was probably more efficient than the governance mechanisms in the original Jobs-Plus demonstration, where accountability relationships needed to be formalized among multiple partners. On the other hand, when Jobs-Plus launched in eight additional locations around New York, Collaborative members' attention was diverted somewhat from BronxWorks (although BronxWorks did benefit from the expanded opportunity to learn from peers).

Collaborative Functions in San Antonio

In San Antonio the Collaborative did not exist as a governance body, but an informal advisory group served some of its support functions. For example, SAHA's relationship with a waste-management company allowed it to bring forklift training classes to a limited number of residents, and helped others prepare to receive Commercial Driver Licenses. Its relationship with the local community college gave it a referral network for programs that combined high school, postsecondary, and vocational training, although these programs were used somewhat infrequently. Interagency relationships also made it possible for Jobs-Plus members to receive child care vouchers. The San Antonio Jobs-Plus program may have also gained help from some

of these partners thanks to the visible support provided Jobs-Plus by then-San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro (now secretary of HUD).

At the same time, while the program was accountable to the Mayor's Fund, the fact that the San Antonio Collaborative consisted of referral partners, rather than agencies formally invested in Jobs-Plus, left responsibility for Jobs-Plus solely in the hands of the housing authority. MDRC's technical-assistance team believed that this concentration of responsibility removed a source of potential pressure for continuous performance improvement and support that existed in the original demonstration (and in the Bronx).[6]

Learning Challenges

Many things worked together to help providers learn the Jobs-Plus model: the Collaborative, peer learning, team dynamics, and detailed training and technical assistance. At the same time, though, other factors hampered them. These involved (1) issues related to their existing capabilities and (2) managerial and administrative challenges. (Similar learning challenges plagued the original demonstration as well. It took two years or more for some providers to ramp up their implementation of the model.)

Providers' Existing Capabilities

As described in Chapters 2 through 4, while both BronxWorks and SAHA brought strengths to Jobs-Plus, they also shared challenges that are common to community organizations and housing authorities.

For its part, BronxWorks brought to Jobs-Plus an established workforce and job development strategy, and a recognized presence in the neighborhood as a community institution. After one transitional director left the program, BronxWorks also brought an experienced program director with knowledge of workforce development and experience running these programs.

At the same time, as described in Chapter 3, many Jobs-Plus staff members in the Bronx had previously been associated with Back-to-Work, a mandatory work-experience program. While integrating mandatory welfare-to-work efforts with Jobs-Plus was an important rationale of MDRC's original demonstration, the mandatory aspects of Back-to-Work contrasted with Jobs-Plus's emphasis on outreach. In describing the Jobs-Plus model, staff members in the Bronx consistently said that the "voluntary" nature of Jobs-Plus made it a departure from

[6]It is also important to note that from a program-monitoring standpoint, SAHA was able to meet program benchmarks related to job placements it had set in cooperation with CEO.

Back-to-Work, which they saw as both a challenge and an opportunity. For example, some staff members believed that Jobs-Plus participants were more motivated and less antagonistic than Back-to-Work clients, but others felt that the voluntary nature of the program made it harder to follow up with members and to retain their interest:

> Back-to-Work for me is like a completely different ball game. Jobs-Plus to me is like an individualized service that tries to meet the participants where they are, so we are flexible. Whereas Back-to-Work may be a little bit stringent.... You're not coming in because I'm telling you, you have to come in.

As described in Chapter 2, BronxWorks' history with Back-to-Work had given it a network that made it easy to place people in low-wage jobs rather than jobs with greater retention and advancement opportunities. While many residents did come to Jobs-Plus for quick placement opportunities, BronxWorks' focus on low-wage jobs made it harder for the program to reach a broad spectrum of residents, to "saturate" developments with services, and to continue engaging residents after they were placed in jobs.

When it came to Community Support for Work, while BronxWorks as a whole had experience with resident outreach and engagement, the "saturation" model was new for Jobs-Plus staff members. They were unfamiliar with its focus on aggressive strategies to attract participants and its goal of embedding Jobs-Plus in target developments. As described in Chapter 4, Community Support for Work remained an area of concern for BronxWorks until 2013, when the organization hired a new director for community engagement.

In San Antonio, as described in Chapter 2, SAHA emphasized referrals to social services over immediate job placements, to meet participants' needs but also to "test" their willingness and motivation to "stick with" Jobs-Plus services. As a result, participation in the program dropped off significantly after participants were first assessed.[7] Although these referrals to social services could remove obstacles that might potentially make it harder for residents to maintain jobs down the road, using them to test engagement was at odds with the Jobs-Plus emphasis on employment.

Managerial and Administrative Challenges

The Jobs-Plus programs' start-up was impeded in both cities by managerial and administrative challenges related to hiring, finding office space, and procuring equipment. In the

[7]This orientation toward social services was not in itself a result of SAHA having run Family Self-Sufficiency prior to Jobs-Plus. In fact, during interviews staff members recognized the ways that Jobs-Plus could allow greater contact with participants than Family Self-Sufficiency: It was better aimed at individual developments, had a smaller case load, and offered more immediate returns to participants.

Bronx, it took some time to establish an off-site location for the Jobs-Plus program. In San Antonio, SAHA designated regular housing units within Alazan for Jobs-Plus office space, but it took several months to make them ready for service with phones and computers. Other issues in San Antonio included delays in getting approval for marketing materials, in coordinating with SAHA's information technology department to get access to data systems, and in receiving approval to use funds for child care assistance, training, and other miscellaneous expenses. Both BronxWorks and SAHA described it as laborious to hire community coaches as employees, and as a result a critical component of outreach and Community Support for Work was initially understaffed in both cities.

BronxWorks also faced delays in hiring a program director, and both providers later replaced their directors. This instability at the top posed its own challenges. For example, in the Bronx, although front-line staff members started to work on the program's organizational documents before a director was hired, observations and interviews suggested that these materials might have had greater coherence if they had been developed with more extensive guidance from senior leaders at BronxWorks. When the director came on board, however, BronxWorks was under pressure to launch Jobs-Plus quickly, which may have led the director not to engage front-line staff members in work-planning sessions, in an effort to help them focus on other activities. As a result, some materials developed for start-up deadlines were not always shared with the staff. In San Antonio, the first program director hired had general administrative and managerial experience, but no experience in nonprofit management. SAHA leaders, CEO, and MDRC decided jointly to replace this individual, which led SAHA senior leaders to become more invested in the Jobs-Plus program.

In addition to these hiring and procurement issues, neither BronxWorks nor SAHA fully used all of its assets for Jobs-Plus implementation. For example, during early operation in the Bronx, the Jobs-Plus staff did not tend to use the Betances Community Center, a recently constructed, attractive facility close to Betances Houses. This center was a good place for the off-site Jobs-Plus program to anchor its work in that development, and eventually BronxWorks came to use it that way. The BronxWorks organization also provided services to seniors and helped organize tenants through aggressive outreach, but did not generally avail itself of these in-house areas of expertise for Jobs-Plus implementation. This lack of internal coordination also occurred in San Antonio: even after senior SAHA leaders developed the Simplified Earned Income Disregard, it took a while for the policy change to filter down to the property managers in charge of implementing it. Box 5.1 considers whether community organizations always have more administrative flexibility than housing agencies.

Box 5.1

Service Providers and Jobs-Plus: Do Community Organizations Always Have More Administrative Flexibility?

Large government agencies (such as housing authorities) need extensive systems to ensure that public funds are used responsibly for the public good. The downside to this bureaucracy is that it may take some time to launch new programs and policies. SAHA, like many housing authorities in the initial demonstration, experienced many bureaucratic challenges related to start-up. Procuring computers, securing office space, and getting approval for signs, banners, or food at events — all took time in a way that frustrated Jobs-Plus practitioners and senior managers. One staff member described the art of working in a large agency:

> Communicating with parties who are nonresponsive, knowing when to elevate or escalate things, you know, becomes critical, and that is difficult, I think, when you work in a large organization.... Don't let those things stop you from doing what you need to do. At the end of the day we're still going to be held accountable to these very specific measurements and very specific things, and everything else that happens we'll work around it; we'll make it work.

At the same time, BronxWorks, as a large community organization, also had challenges related to hiring and start-up. In fact, staff members pointed to the hiring process as one of the reasons very few community coaches were initially brought on board. Large community organizations like BronxWorks may also have extensive systems in place that require patience to navigate.

Technical Assistance to Support Performance

Technical assistance was initially intended to end shortly after launch and to quickly segue into monitoring, but partly as a result of these early challenges it was extended through May 2015. The SIF replication's experience with technical assistance reveals some issues that future replicators and program designers might consider, especially issues relating to the benefits of distinguishing among support, monitoring, and accountability functions.

Distinguishing (and Coordinating) Support and Accountability Functions

Technical assistance appeared to be most effective in helping providers overcome obstacles when it kept two functions distinct but also well coordinated: (1) detailed, hands-on support designed to help providers build effective workforce programs, conduct effective outreach, and create effective rent incentives; and (2) monitoring a limited number of important indicators and keeping providers accountable.

The SIF promoted a division of labor wherein CEO provided broad guidance about policy decisions, supported the Jobs-Plus Collaborative, convened the grantees, provided and managed funds directly through the Mayor's Fund, raised funds for the external "leverage" match the SIF required, and managed the work of the contract and grantees. Based on its past experiences with Jobs-Plus, MDRC received a contract to monitor the program, provide technical assistance, and evaluate it, although CEO also monitored providers' work through monthly and quarterly data.

MDRC's dual role as a provider of technical assistance and evaluation led to some confusion. The concrete guidance described in the "Learning Jobs-Plus" section above was deeply valued, but program staff members in the Bronx and San Antonio felt that some technical-assistance tasks (such as work planning and developing detailed supervision plans) were "compliance" steps related to evaluation rather than processes meant to inform program development. As a result, sometimes the technical assistance was not as well received as it might have been. As one observer commented:

> Literally it was like, "Who does BronxWorks report to?" We don't quite know that. Who do they pick up the phone and call? I think it's worthwhile to figure that out with any official accountability structure before you bring in partners.

However, MDRC and CEO eventually did establish and distinguish their respective roles in accountability and support.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Challenges common to housing authorities and community organizations delayed Jobs-Plus start-up in this replication and posed challenges to its ongoing implementation. Start-up was facilitated by clear, strong lines of horizontal and vertical communication: vertical communication with funders about the model, and horizontal communication within teams about how to implement it in practice. The following recommendations are drawn from these experiences:

- **Extensive, detailed technical assistance and training may be necessary for many housing authorities and community organizations.** Housing authorities may not have experience with workforce or outreach programs emphasizing saturation in targeted developments, or in developing financial incentives. Many community organizations may not have access to high-quality training programs that emphasize career pathways, apprenticeships, and other routes to career advancement.

- **Provide a safe space and some degree of grantee choice in technical assistance.** While accountability is important for the Jobs-Plus model, it must

be paired with support. Technical assistance should not be a mandatory compliance step or an extension of funder accountability, but a relationship aligned to grantee needs, so as to engage the grantee with the effort to the fullest extent possible.

- **Establish a Jobs-Plus Collaborative, define Collaborative members' roles, and make sure that the Collaborative provides access to workforce, housing, and training agencies, as well as oversight and accountability.** Collaborative members can provide valuable experience, support, and access to agency programs and policies.
- **Funders should focus on a limited number of outcomes that emphasize saturation goals.** These might include not just low-wage placements but rates of rent-incentive use, and training that provides access to higher-wage jobs.

Chapter 6

The Gross Costs of Jobs-Plus

Introduction

This chapter focuses on measuring the costs of delivering Jobs-Plus in the Bronx and San Antonio. In addition to learning about the various outcomes produced by the program in each city, it is important to examine the costs of producing the observed outcomes, for several different reasons. For BronxWorks and the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), this analysis allows providers to understand whether individual aspects of the program might be scaled back or enriched. Cost analyses also offer federal budgetary officials, such as those at the Office of Management and Budget, information that they can use in developing budget estimates for the national replication of Jobs-Plus. Finally, this analysis can provide prospective local providers that are considering implementing Jobs-Plus programs of their own with the best information available about potential costs.[1]

The cost per resident household of operating Jobs-Plus at the targeted housing units during the program's third year was $672 for BronxWorks and $503 for SAHA. The larger expenditures at BronxWorks were attributable to higher budgeted overhead (partly because office space for program operations was donated to SAHA but not BronxWorks) and to financial counseling, which was offered by BronxWorks but not by SAHA. The providers also differed in their allocation of budgeted resources. BronxWorks spent the largest share of its budget on employment-related services, while SAHA emphasized Community Support for Work to roughly the same degree as employment-related services. Because the rent incentive was little used, reduced rents accounted for relatively little of the expenditures in both cities. Other organizations that were not reimbursed out of the Jobs-Plus budget played important roles in both cities by providing services such as education, training, and child care. The costs associated with the services these providers delivered were considerably larger in San Antonio than in the Bronx, but in both cases were much smaller than the operating costs of SAHA or BronxWorks.

The remainder of this chapter first discusses the concepts used to define the costs reported for Jobs-Plus. It then describes how Jobs-Plus costs are measured and the data used

[1]The chapter also provides estimates of the costs of the individual program components, giving insight into the number and type of people they will need to hire. Beyond budgeting and resource planning, the cost analysis should help cities with the fundamental decision of whether to implement the program. It should also help them in designing the program and determining what components to incorporate. For example, BronxWorks' inclusion of financial counseling contrasted with SAHA's exclusion of it will help those considering Jobs-Plus to decide whether to include this component with its accompanying cost.

to quantify costs. The third section reports findings from the cost analysis, and the final section presents conclusions.

Some Important Cost Concepts

Gross Costs Versus Net Costs

Costs can be measured in two different ways: as gross costs and as net costs. Gross costs are the outlays required to operate a program such as Jobs-Plus, whereas net costs are the *change* in costs that result from operating a program. In other words, net costs are the additional costs engendered by the existence of programs that would not have otherwise been incurred in the absence of the programs. Calculating net costs requires a comparison between gross costs under the program and gross costs without the program. Net costs can then be calculated as the difference between these two sets of gross cost figures. This sort of comparison is not possible in the evaluation of the Bronx and San Antonio Jobs-Plus programs. Thus, only gross costs are presented in this chapter.

Gross costs are essential for budgetary planning purposes — for example, the estimates provided in this chapter should be useful to entities in other cities, such as housing authorities, that are considering undertaking Jobs-Plus. They can also be used to determine how program resources are being allocated among different program components; in the Bronx, Jobs-Plus comprises employment-related activities, Community Support for Work activities, and financial counseling, whereas in San Antonio it includes only employment-related activities and Community Support for Work activities.

One reason that the distinction between gross costs and net costs is important is that net costs can be meaningfully compared to net impacts to determine whether increases in expenditures are associated with improved outcomes. Gross costs, however, cannot conclusively be related to specific program impacts or outcomes because causal links do not necessarily exist. For example, if a program results in an increase in expenditures of $500 per program participant and also results in an increase in the employment of 100 program participants, it would suggest that the former caused the latter. But if all that is known is that the program's gross cost is $1,000 per participant and that 3,000 program participants are employed, then it is impossible to know the extent to which the former affected the latter or even whether it had any effect at all. Many or even all of the 3,000 working participants might well have found jobs even in the absence of the program. Thus, comparing gross costs with outcomes can be very misleading.

Internal Costs Versus External Costs

This chapter divides gross costs for Jobs-Plus into two categories: internal and external. Internal costs are those BronxWorks and SAHA incurred directly to operate their Jobs-Plus programs and directly paid for out of the official program budget and sponsor funding. For example, BronxWorks has a line in its budget for office space and is required to report its corresponding expenditures regularly. Estimates of internal operating expenditures are useful because they indicate the budget needed to run Jobs-Plus facilities. External expenditures occurred when BronxWorks and SAHA referred Jobs-Plus participants to various service providers (for example, for training or education) and those organizations absorbed the costs of supplying their services. In addition, elements needed to operate Jobs-Plus may be contributed by individuals or organizations at no cost. For example, SAHA uses office space in both an apartment unit and a community center owned by the housing authority, and the program is not charged to use these spaces.

External expenditures are more difficult to measure and to interpret than internal expenditures. They suggest the extent to which the Jobs-Plus program relies on outside organizations, and also indicate how much internal operating costs would increase if Jobs-Plus had to pay for a service. For example, if SAHA paid rent for its office space, its internal operating costs would likely increase substantially. The same would be true if SAHA or BronxWorks provided the training some Jobs-Plus participants received from outside organizations. However, external gross expenditures do not necessarily represent *additional* costs imposed on the organizations providing the service. In the absence of Jobs-Plus, some program participants may have independently sought some of the services provided by the outside organizations. In a sense, therefore, Jobs-Plus can be viewed simply as an entity that helped to marshal available resources for its participants, but which may not have been solely responsible for residents' access to and use of them. Moreover, if the services were not used by Jobs-Plus participants, they likely would have been received by other low-income people. For example, a training organization may have a fixed number of available slots, and if the slots are not filled by Jobs-Plus participants, then they may be occupied by other people. Because of these differences in interpreting gross external costs, internal and external costs are reported separately.

Start-Up Costs Versus Steady-State Costs

When new programs are started, they often incur initial costs that do not reoccur. For example, staff members need to be trained and inefficient procedures need to be modified.[2] This

[2]An important start-up cost may be technical assistance from an outside organization needed to properly implement a new program. MDRC provided such assistance to both BronxWorks and SAHA. These costs were about $175,000 per provider in the first program year, just under $100,000 in the second year, and about

(continued)

chapter focuses mainly on the third year of Jobs-Plus, after start-up costs had been incurred and the program had presumably reached a steady state of operations. Yet the chapter also reports gross costs experienced during the first two years. Estimates of steady-state costs measure what it would take to continue operating an existing program, while estimates of steady-state *plus* start-up costs indicate what it would take to initiate a new program. The costs of evaluating the BronxWorks and SAHA Jobs-Plus programs are excluded from the estimates here because they are not part of running these programs.[3]

Costs Per Member Versus Costs Per Resident Household

The cost analysis of Jobs-Plus addresses two primary questions:

1. What are the gross costs per Jobs-Plus member?
2. What would be the gross cost of continuing to run Jobs-Plus at the existing sites or implementing a similar program elsewhere?

These questions are different and the methods required to address them also differ.

The first question is a natural one to ask, since Jobs-Plus members are the individuals who have demonstrated a tangible interest in Jobs-Plus, and since most of them have received at least some services from the program. It is addressed by dividing aggregate costs for each of the three years for which program data are available by the number of members at the end of each program year. The resulting measure permits comparisons between the BronxWorks and SAHA Jobs-Plus programs, which are different in size. It can also be used for planning Jobs-Plus programs in other cities — aggregate costs are difficult to use for this purpose because programs elsewhere are likely to be larger or smaller than those in the Bronx or San Antonio — though an alternative measure (described below) may be more useful for that purpose. Moreover, it allows the different program components to be compared, because the aggregate cost of each component is divided by the same number of people. In making such comparisons, however, it is important to recognize that not all Jobs-Plus members participated in each program component (for example, one may have received financial counseling while another did not).

$27,000 in the third year. As expected, these costs quickly diminished over time. These costs are not included in the estimates presented in this chapter because they are not part of operating an ongoing program.

[3]However, the gross internal costs reported in this chapter do include nominal costs that resulted from the providers' participation in a research-related evaluation. Specifically, the providers' involvement in an evaluation is directly responsible for travel costs tied to participation in Social Innovation Fund Learning Network events, some staff time relating to technical assistance, and some other activities. These costs are relatively minor.

While useful, the costs-per-member measure has limitations. First, the number of Jobs-Plus members increased over time in both cities and aggregate costs did not increase as quickly. As a result, costs per member declined over time. Thus, it must be borne in mind in interpreting changes in the measure over the three years that they not only reflect changes in costs but also are affected by changes in the number of members. A second problem is that some program resources are expended on nonmembers. For example, Community Support for Work is directed at all working-age residents of the targeted housing units, including nonmembers. In addition, some nonmembers have received employment-related services from Jobs-Plus. As discussed in greater detail in the following section, this issue is treated in the cost analysis by adjusting the numerator costs so that expenditures on nonmembers are not included. As a result, an important share of costs is left out of the main analysis. Still another issue arises from the fact that many individuals become members but subsequently disengage from Jobs-Plus. They continue to be counted as members though they are not responsible for costs incurred by the program, thereby diluting the costs per "active" member.

Addressing the second primary question above requires dividing the aggregate gross cost of the program by the number of eligible households living in the targeted housing units. One problem with this denominator is that it does not incorporate nonresident Jobs-Plus members who received employment-related services and financial services. However, there were relatively few of these: 8 percent of all BronxWorks members and 6 percent of all SAHA members.[4] This costs-per-resident-household measure is more readily interpreted than the costs-per-member measure. Its denominator does not vary systematically across time,[5] and all program costs (except for the small amount incurred by nonresidents) can be included in the numerator.

The costs-per-resident-household measure is useful for several purposes. First, the measure adjusts for the size of the development so that costs can be readily compared from location to location. Second, if managers at larger or smaller housing developments are considering adopting a similar program, they can make reasonable adjustments to the cost estimates to take account of the relative size of their own developments. (Further adjustments may obviously be needed if participation in various program services is expected to be higher or lower in their developments than was the case in the BronxWorks and SAHA programs.) Third, comparisons can be made between categories of program expenditures, such as employment-related activities

[4]The costs incurred by these people are included in the costs-per-member estimates but excluded from the costs-per-resident-household figures. They are excluded by multiplying gross expenditures on employment-related services and financial services by the ratio of resident members to total members.

[5]It fluctuates slightly from month to month, however. To preserve the advantages of using a constant number as a denominator, the analysis in this chapter uses the average number of targeted housing units with working-age adults over the entire follow-up period.

versus Community Support for Work. Finally, the denominator of the measure is a constant, facilitating the comparison of program expenditures over time.

Methods

Calculating the costs of Jobs-Plus in each city required that cost data from BronxWorks and SAHA first be collected and sorted appropriately. It was of primary importance to identify the internal and external costs that could reasonably be attributed to the program in each city. Once identified, the costs could then be categorized and distributed so that they could be more readily analyzed. Aggregate totals were then broken down further into the per-member and per-household measures used to summarize the activities of each provider.

Data Sources

As noted earlier, internal costs are defined as those direct expenses necessary to operate the program. They were paid by the organizations delivering Jobs-Plus on the basis of an established budget. BronxWorks and SAHA were each required to submit quarterly financial reports enumerating all monetary expenditures incurred for Jobs-Plus. Financial reports included a certification statement, were substantiated through additional fiscal oversight and were submitted using an online grants management system that included the Jobs-Plus line-item budgets for each program year. Total expenditures for each budget line item were reported in each period and aggregated in the grants management system. Reported information could then be exported from the grants management system to Excel for further analysis.[6]

External costs were more difficult to capture. In addition to financial reports, BronxWorks and SAHA were each required to submit monthly and quarterly programmatic reports that outlined relevant activities performed during the defined period. MDRC evaluators reviewed those reports and noted all mentions of resources potentially provided by other entities, then provided lists of those resources to senior program staff members from each provider for review. This was accompanied by multiple discussions between staff members and MDRC to gather additional information. BronxWorks and SAHA provided information that each had recorded about the nature, frequency, and estimated value of their identified external costs.[7] The process of compiling external costs was not as objective as the process for internal costs because

[6] To calculate expenditures related to the Earned Income Disregard (EID), management information system data were used to identify Jobs-Plus members who received the benefit, and the amount of benefit for which each individual should have been eligible, based on reported income changes.

[7] Whenever possible, values given by the service provider were used. In other instances, estimates were based on prices of similar services offered by another provider in the same city.

it was dependent on the individual recollections and personal assessments of both the evaluators and the providers' representatives.

The numbers of Jobs-Plus members in the Bronx and San Antonio during the course of Jobs-Plus were drawn from the BronxWorks and SAHA management information systems, as were data about members receiving the Earned Income Disregard.[8]

Cost Categories

After costs were effectively identified, they were segregated into categories that would be most useful for analysis. All costs were classified in three ways: primary program components, key budget descriptors, and whether they were internal or external in nature. Employment-related activities, Community Support for Work activities, and financial counseling were the major program components of Jobs-Plus to carry costs. However, certain costs straddled more than one of those components or were not easily attributable to any single one (for example, the cost of management or office space), so additional categories were added for costs relevant to supervision and of an undefined character. When considering Jobs-Plus from a more practical operational perspective, it is also useful to be able to view costs in terms of salary expenditures, fringe benefits, overhead and other expenses, so costs were also broken down in that manner. As noted earlier, internal and external costs were kept separate.

Prorating Costs

As mentioned in the previous subsection, certain costs could not easily be associated with any specific category. For example, fringe benefit costs were reported by BronxWorks and SAHA as a total amount incurred during a defined reporting period. Fringe benefits were prorated to each of the cost categories based on the percentage of total staff salaries accounted for by those categories. All costs categorized as "undefined" were similarly prorated to "supervisory," "employment-related," "Community Support for Work," and (in the case of BronxWorks) "financial counseling" after all of the identified costs had been distributed.[9]

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[8]SAHA was able to provide monthly household occupancy rates for its targeted developments, which meant that the average number of occupied households could be calculated for the program years and used as an approximation to calculate per-resident household costs in San Antonio. BronxWorks and the New York City Housing Authority were only able to provide occupancy data for one month during each program year, so July was used as a representative month to calculate per-resident household costs in the Bronx.

[9]In the case of BronxWorks, the undefined category included "indirect costs," which are effectively an institutional overhead rate built into the program budget. (That is, the organization is allowed to charge an established percentage of all its reported expenditures in each period to support organizational infrastructure.) Indirect costs were prorated after fringe benefits but prior to undefined costs. SAHA did not have a budgeted indirect cost rate and therefore did not charge indirect costs.

Additional Adjustments to Cost Data

Jobs-Plus provided several services to low-income nonmembers. The associated costs are included in the costs-per-resident-household figures but excluded from the costs-per-member estimates. In consultation with staff members from the two providers, evaluators estimated that roughly 5 percent of total employment-related costs at both BronxWorks and SAHA were engendered by nonmembers (including residents and nonresidents). More importantly, as much effort was made to provide Community Support for Work to nonmembers living in the developments as there was to members. Therefore, considering that in Year 3 nonmembers accounted for over 40 percent of the adult residents in the targeted Bronx developments and more than 25 percent in the San Antonio developments, nonmember Community Support for Work costs were excluded from the internal costs-per-member estimates but included in the internal costs-per-resident-household estimates.[10]

Findings

This section reports findings from the Jobs-Plus cost analysis. Costs per resident household and costs per member are both presented, but greater emphasis is given to the estimates of costs per resident household because, as discussed earlier, they are somewhat less complex and more easily interpreted than the costs per member.

Cost Comparisons Between BronxWorks and SAHA in Year 3

Table 6.1 reports the internal costs of Jobs-Plus at both BronxWorks and SAHA for the first three years that the program operated. Costs per resident household and costs per program member are both reported. The initial discussion here focuses on the program's third year because, as explained above, that is the year in which the program is assumed to have reached a steady state of operation.

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[10]To determine the costs of Community Support for Work received only by members, MDRC computed the ratio of targeted household members to total occupied targeted households. That ratio (effectively the percentage of households that had Jobs-Plus members) was then multiplied by the total aggregate costs of Community Support for Work. The resulting estimate of the aggregate cost of Community Support for Work received by members was then divided by the total number of members to establish the costs per member. These calculations assume that there was no more than one Jobs-Plus member in each targeted resident housing unit. To the extent that there was more than one member, the estimates of the costs of Community Support for Work per member are overstated.

Nonmember Community Support for Work costs were included in the external costs-per-member estimates and external costs-per-resident-household estimates because external Community Support for Work initiatives at Jobs-Plus developments did not necessarily place restrictions on the individuals who were allowed to participate.

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Table 6.1

Total Internal Costs, by Program Year

Gross Costs ($)	BronxWorks	SAHA
Costs per resident household		
Year 1	566	388
Year 2	659	439
Year 3	672	503
Total	1897	1330
Costs per Jobs-Plus member		
Year 1	4107	2578
Year 2	1549	758
Year 3	1097	611
Total	6753	3947

SOURCES: Financial reports submitted to the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC through the Grants Management System; MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and San Antonio Housing Authority management information systems.

For both providers, most of the expenditures shown in the table resulted from salary and fringe benefits (over 70 percent during Year 3). The remaining internal costs are primarily attributable to overhead and rent incentives.

In terms of costs per resident household, Table 6.1 suggests that BronxWorks' Jobs-Plus program was about one-third more costly to operate than SAHA's in Year 3. Aggregate internal costs for Jobs-Plus were actually more than twice as high at BronxWorks as at SAHA for the year — $1,040,065 versus $454,674. However, much of this difference can be attributed to the fact that BronxWorks had 68 percent more resident households in its Jobs-Plus target units than SAHA. As will be shown later, the remaining difference results because BronxWorks made internal expenditures on providing financial counseling while SAHA did not, and because BronxWorks spent more on overhead than SAHA.

In terms of costs per Jobs-Plus member, Table 6.1 indicates that BronxWorks' program was 80 percent more costly to operate in Year 3 than SAHA's. The reason that the

difference between providers is larger when measured as costs per member than when measured as costs per resident household is that BronxWorks had fewer Jobs-Plus members relative to the number of targeted households than SAHA. More specifically, BronxWorks had only about one-third more members than SAHA during Year 3 even though it had approximately two-thirds more targeted resident households. An alternative way of looking at it is to compute the "membership penetration rate" of each provider — that is, the number of Jobs-Plus members who resided in the targeted housing units as a percentage of all occupied units in the targeted developments. In Year 3, BronxWorks had a membership penetration rate of 54 percent, while SAHA had a rate of 68 percent.[11]

Changes in Costs Over Time

Aggregate internal costs (not shown) increased over time for both providers as the Jobs-Plus program reached its steady state, although this increase was somewhat more pronounced and occurred at a more consistent rate for SAHA. Thus, as indicated by Table 6.1, internal costs per resident household are greater for both providers in Years 2 and 3 of Jobs-Plus than in Year 1, but not by a large amount. Moreover, this increase is attenuated somewhat if rent incentives, which were negligible in Years 1 and 2, are excluded from the calculations. For example, when excluding rent incentives, costs per resident household at SAHA increase from $388 in the first year to $426 in the second, and then to $445 in Year 3. At BronxWorks, there was an increase in the first two years of the program from $566 to $650, and then a small decrease to $616 in Year 3. Thus, other than rent incentives, costs per resident household appear to have stabilized after the first program year for both providers, suggesting that the program reached its steady state relatively quickly.

Table 6.1 indicates that in contrast to the costs per resident household, internal costs per Jobs-Plus member were actually much larger in Year 1 than in the other two years. The reason for the difference between the two measures is that the number of resident households varies little over time and aggregate costs grew relatively moderately, whereas the number of members increased between the first and third program years by well over fourfold at BronxWorks and more than eightfold at SAHA. Viewed in slightly different terms, BronxWorks' membership penetration rate grew from 8 percent in Year 1 to 35 percent in Year 2, and then to 54 percent in Year 3, while SAHA's rate grew from 8 percent in Year 1 to 39 percent in Year 2 to 68 percent in Year 3. One implication is that even though the number of Jobs-Plus members grew greatly between Years 1 and 3, expenditures per resident household grew only modestly larger. In other words, Jobs-Plus membership grew without a corresponding growth in costs, which in turn

[11]In interpreting these rates it should be borne in mind that some households may have more than one member and the extent to which this occurs may differ between BronxWorks and SAHA developments. Unfortunately, the data needed to determine whether this is true are not available.

suggests that start-up costs diminished and Jobs-Plus operations became more efficient over time in both cities as learning took place. Membership may have also grown faster than costs because when the program was first introduced it anticipated some of its future expansion needs and put those resources in place from the start.

Year 3 Internal Costs by Program Component

Table 6.2 reports the internal costs of Jobs-Plus in the Bronx and San Antonio during the program's third year, the year in which the program is assumed to have reached a steady state of operation. Internal costs per resident household and internal costs per member both appear in the table. The rows contain the major program components described earlier in this report: employment-related activities, Community Support for Work, and the Earned Income Disregard (EID) rent incentive. In addition, supervisory costs and the costs incurred in delivering financial counseling are listed in separate rows. Totals appear in the bottom row.

In general, the findings that emerge from Table 6.2 concerning how expenditures were allocated among the different Jobs-Plus core services during Year 3 are consistent with findings from the earlier chapters of this report. For example, BronxWorks' relatively greater emphasis on employment services and SAHA's more extensive Community Support for Work efforts are both apparent. If measured as costs per resident household, BronxWorks' largest internal Jobs-Plus expenditure by far was on employment-related services, although supervisory costs accounted for almost a quarter of total internal costs during Year 3. In contrast, SAHA's internal expenditures on Community Support for Work were a little larger than its expenditures on employment-related services during the third year of Jobs-Plus. Expenditures on Community Support for Work are a smaller share of SAHA's costs when measured as costs per member instead of costs per resident household, presumably because these expenditures were directed at nonmembers as well as Jobs-Plus members, and the share attributable to nonmembers is not counted in computing costs per member.

The difference between the two providers in total internal costs per resident household during Year 3 is virtually eliminated if the costs of financial counseling and overhead are ignored: the costs per resident household falls to $464 for BronxWorks and $448 for SAHA (see Table A.1 in Appendix A for more detail). As previously discussed, SAHA did not make internal expenditures on financial counseling. BronxWorks had higher expenditures on overhead than SAHA ($129 per resident household versus $55) primarily because it had to pay for office space while SAHA's office operated in donated space. In addition, BronxWorks incorporated an indirect cost rate into its budget, which allowed it to claim roughly 10 percent of all reported direct expenditures as a supplemental expense to help defray institutional overhead (see footnote 9). SAHA, however, did not budget or charge an indirect cost rate, and it did not

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Table 6.2

Distribution of Year 3 Internal Costs, by Cost Component and Provider

Gross Costs	BronxWorks		SAHA	
Costs per resident household	**($)**	**(%)**	**($)**	**(%)**
Supervisory	162	24.1	77	15.3
Employment-related	262	39.0	177	35.1
Community Support for Work	92	13.7	192	38.2
Financial counseling	100	14.9	0	0.0
Rent incentive (EID)	56	8.3	58	11.5
Total	672	100.0	503	100.0
Costs per Jobs-Plus member	**($)**	**(%)**	**($)**	**(%)**
Supervisory	275	25.1	106	17.3
Employment-related	458	41.7	246	40.3
Community Support for Work	85	7.8	180	29.4
Financial counseling	184	16.8	0	0.0
Rent incentive (EID)	95	8.6	79	13.0
Total	1,097	100.0	611	100.0

SOURCES: Financial reports submitted to the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC through the Grants Management System; MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and San Antonio Housing Authority management information systems.

NOTE: Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.

report the bulk of its own corresponding overhead expenses (which it covered with other sources of funding).

As mentioned, Table 6.2 shows that BronxWorks spent more than SAHA to provide employment-related services, while SAHA spent more on Community Support for Work. When measured as costs per resident household, these two differences tended to roughly offset one another. Thus, taken together, they have little effect on the comparison of total costs per resident household between the two providers. As can be seen in Table 6.2, they do not offset when costs are measured on a per-member basis.

Supervisory costs during Year 3 were more than twice as large for BronxWorks as for SAHA when measured on either a per-resident-household basis or a per-member basis. Because BronxWorks's Jobs-Plus program is a larger operation than SAHA's, its supervisory costs are more than 3.5 times as large as SAHA's when measured in aggregate terms (not shown). These differences mainly reflect the fact that during Year 3 BronxWorks had the equivalent of three staff members with supervisory responsibilities while SAHA had only one. Supervisory costs were also much higher at BronxWorks during the first and second program years. Supervisory costs increased over time at SAHA, however, so the ratio of BronxWorks' supervisory costs to SAHA's diminished. (For example, when measured as costs per resident household, BronxWorks' costs were 3.5 times SAHA's in Year 1, 2.5 times SAHA's in Year 2, and then 2.1 times SAHA's in Year 3).

Rent Incentives (the Earned Income Disregard)

As shown in Table 6.2, because the rent incentive was little used, reduced rents accounted for only around one-tenth of internal costs in Year 3 for both providers, and even that figure is likely an overstatement of actual EID costs.[12] As noted below, rent incentives were also of negligible importance from a cost perspective in Years 1 and 2. Rent incentive costs could be much more important in future replications of Jobs-Plus than they were for the BronxWorks and SAHA programs if future providers are able to get them more widely used in their developments. As mentioned in Chapter 3, EID participation rates were only around 1 percent in BronxWorks developments and 3 percent in SAHA developments, much lower than the rent incentive participation rates in the original demonstration (between 28 and 77 percent, depending on the development and the time period).[13] Thus, participation rates could be many times larger than was the case in these Jobs-Plus developments. Had the EID participation rate reached 15 percent at BronxWorks (which would have been a fifteen-fold increase over what was observed) and 20 percent at SAHA (roughly a tenfold increase), the Year 3 cost of the EID would likely have been larger than the costs of all other internal Jobs-Plus services and activities combined.

[12]MDRC did not have access to complete cost data for those Jobs-Plus households that received the EID. Instead, it based its figures on the number of households enrolled in Jobs-Plus as of December 31, 2013, that were shown to be receiving the EID. The maximum possible EID was calculated for each household through the end of Year 3 based on employment information and EID start and end dates, with the monthly household average EID amounts for the respective city used as a substitute for those households missing employment information. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that EID costs included in this report for all program years are overstated to an unknown degree.

[13]Bloom, Riccio, and Verma (2005), Table 3.3. In the Baltimore development, the rate was only 12 percent for the 1998 cohort and 19 percent for the 2000 cohort.

Although rent incentive costs per resident household were similar for the two providers in Year 3, rent incentive costs per member were nearly 20 percent higher for BronxWorks than SAHA. This higher per-member rent incentive cost in the Bronx reflects the fact that average rent incentives were larger and were received for more months in the Bronx during Year 3 (about 9 months, on average) than in San Antonio (around 6 months, on average). However, because the membership penetration rate was lower in the Bronx than in San Antonio, the difference between the two cities in rent incentives costs is smaller when measured as costs per resident household.

The Role of External Costs

External program costs — that is, the costs of the resources contributed to Jobs-Plus by outside partners — are reported in Table 6.3 for both providers for all three program years. Using the costs-per-resident-household measure, the table indicates various types of external resources used and their accompanying costs. Total external costs per resident household and total external costs per member appear in the bottom two rows of each section of the table.

Overall, SAHA seems to have marshaled more external contributions than BronxWorks (specifically in connection with employment-related training and education). However, as can be seen by comparing Tables 6.2 and 6.3, external costs are small relative to internal costs for both providers. Viewed as costs per resident household, Year 3 external costs were only about one-quarter as large as internal costs at SAHA and less than one-twentieth as large at BronxWorks.[14]

It is apparent from Table 6.3 that the vast majority of BronxWorks' external costs stem from provision of training and child care for Jobs-Plus members. External costs at SAHA come mostly from education and training for Jobs-Plus members and from the donation of office space for Jobs-Plus operations. As mentioned earlier, while Jobs-Plus at BronxWorks rents its

[14]However, BronxWorks has facilities that help secure food stamps, health insurance, and legal assistance for residents. (SAHA does not.) Some Jobs-Plus members have received these benefits through BronxWorks. The table does not count these benefits as external costs associated with the BronxWorks Jobs-Plus program because they can be received by any resident of a development where BronxWorks operates regardless of participation in Jobs-Plus. After all, it is BronxWorks, not Jobs-Plus, that provides the facilities to obtain these benefits (although the Jobs-Plus members who receive them were referred to the BronxWorks facility by the program's staff). In addition, because this chapter deals with gross costs, nothing can be said about whether these members would have received food stamps, health insurance, or legal assistance without Jobs-Plus. Moreover, it is difficult to establish their value. For example, even though the number of Jobs-Plus members to receive food stamps and health insurance is known, it is not known for how many months they were received or the sizes and incomes of the families who received them, information that is required to determine the amount and value of assistance received.

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Table 6.3

Total External Costs, by Program Year

Gross Costs ($)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
BronxWorks				
Costs per resident household				
Employment-related	10	45	27	82
Education and training	4	25	8	36
Child care	6	17	17	39
Employment-related clothing	1	3	2	6
Employment search tools	0	0	1	1
Community Support for Work	0	0	3	3
Materials	0	0	3	3
Financial counseling	0	0	0	0
Total	10	45	30	85
Total costs per member	86	124	55	265
San Antonio Housing Authority				
Costs per resident household				
Employment-related	0	44	74	119
Education and training	0	44	74	119
Community Support for Work	0	16	2	18
Financial counseling	0	4	3	7
Donated office space	30	49	49	128
Total	30	113	129	271
Total costs per member	346	269	184	799

SOURCE: Financial reports submitted to the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC through the Grants Management System.

NOTE: Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.

office space (an internal cost included as part of overhead), space for the SAHA Jobs-Plus office is donated and is therefore considered an external cost. There were other services donated to one provider but paid for by the other, suggesting some flexibility in how the Jobs-Plus model can be operated in practice. For example, though child care was donated in the Bronx, it was paid for in San Antonio, while financial counseling was donated in San Antonio but paid for in the Bronx. Donated amounts in both cases are relatively small, however, so they have little effect on the comparison of internal costs between the two providers.

External costs at BronxWorks remained small throughout the first three program years. In terms of costs per resident household, they reached a peak in the second year, when entities outside of the Jobs-Plus program provided the most training and child care. External costs then fell in the third year, mostly as a result of fewer program members receiving donated training. The decline was even greater when measured as costs per member because of the increased number of members.

Measured as costs per resident household, external costs at SAHA increased substantially between the first two years as greater use was made of outside education providers. Costs then increased by a small amount between Years 2 and 3 as the program began to make greater use of outside training organizations. In terms of costs per member, external costs declined steadily at SAHA as the increase in the number of members outstripped the increase over time in the use of donated services.

Conclusions

This chapter focuses on the steady-state — Year 3 — gross costs of Jobs-Plus. The distinction between gross costs directly borne by the program (internal costs) and those resulting because the program referred individuals to other organizations (external costs) is an important one for both local housing authorities and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) because they only need to budget for internal costs.

The internal gross costs of the two Jobs-Plus providers differed in certain important respects. Perhaps the most obvious and pronounced difference is that BronxWorks' version of the program was more expensive to operate than SAHA's. It operated on a larger scale because it had more resident households, it offered the additional component of financial counseling (which SAHA did not), and its overhead was considerably higher (partly because it had to pay for office space while SAHA did not, and partly because of indirect costs). Another difference is that BronxWorks allocated the largest share of its internal expenditures to employment-related services, while SAHA's expenditures on Community Support for Work and employment-related services were roughly equal. Not surprisingly, given how little the rent incentive was used, reduced rents account for a relatively small share of both provid-

ers' internal gross costs. If rent incentives were more widely used in future Jobs-Plus operations it would, of course, greatly increase their cost.

While external gross costs were much smaller than internal gross costs in both cities, they were considerably more important for SAHA than BronxWorks. SAHA's external costs resulted mainly from education and training provided to its Jobs-Plus members and BronxWorks took the greatest advantage of training and child care provided by outside organizations. SAHA had the added advantage of office space donated to its Jobs-Plus program.

It is important to emphasize again that all of the cost estimates presented in this chapter are gross costs, not net costs. Some of these costs probably would have occurred even in the absence of Jobs-Plus, because some program participants would have found similar services on their own accord, especially those related to employment. Because the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) version of Jobs-Plus did not have a comparison group, there is no way of knowing the extent to which they would have done so. The earlier, demonstration version of Jobs-Plus (described in Chapter 1) provides greater insight and information in this regard because it compared program sites with similar housing developments. Findings from the demonstration indicated that while 58 percent of residents at the Jobs-Plus developments participated in at least one employment-related activity (for example, job search, training, or education) within 12 months of being surveyed, 46 percent of the residents at the designated comparison sites did as well.[15] Although the employment-related activities and other aspects of the earlier version of Jobs-Plus may well have differed in important respects from those of the SIF version, this finding suggests that housing development residents will utilize employment-related services even in the absence of Jobs-Plus, albeit to a lesser extent. This possibility has two offsetting implications. First, it may diminish the effects of the program (that is, its net impact). Second, it suggests that the net costs of Jobs-Plus — the actual cost of producing program effects — are probably less than the program's gross costs.

[15]Bloom, Riccio, and Verma (2005), Table 3.4.

Chapter 7

Jobs-Plus Moving Forward

This report provides extensive implementation analyses of the early Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Jobs-Plus program experiences of the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) and BronxWorks from 2010 to 2013. It offers insights into the challenges the providers navigated regarding employment services, Community Support for Work, and rent-based work incentives, and highlights the promising strategies they employed. As SAHA and BronxWorks continue to operate Jobs-Plus, their implementation practices have evolved and they have been able to share some of what they have learned with the next two waves of organizations implementing Jobs-Plus, first in New York City and then nationally.

Jobs-Plus Throughout New York City

In 2013, New York City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) launched seven additional Jobs-Plus programs across the city. These programs will receive a combined total of $24 million over three years, 2013 to 2016, while they serve 23 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments across all five boroughs and aim to place more than 4,400 NYCHA residents in jobs. This investment acknowledges the persistent need for and growing body of evidence backing the comprehensive employment services and support provided by Jobs-Plus to all of a development's residents. In this new replication HRA is stressing performance metrics and will review data with staff members at quarterly meetings that include representatives of all programs. These quarterly meetings represent a substantial shift from the SIF experience with regard to management, metrics, cross-site coordination, and ongoing learning opportunities.

The HRA programs have built on the SIF replication experience and incorporated financial counseling from the outset. They have also benefited from the systems NYCHA has developed to connect public housing residents to local economic opportunity programs and services through its "zone" model, run by NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES). The zone model separates NYCHA developments into 15 geographic "zones" and recognizes that every public housing neighborhood is unique. It reflects NYCHA's commitment to offering high-quality employment and financial counseling services, vocational training and education programs, and other programs and services to public housing communities.

In 2012, REES led an interdepartmental working group that gave NYCHA property managers new tools to help them identify residents who qualify for the Earned Income Disal-

lowance (EID) and to apply it. Now when NYCHA's data system registers an increase in a resident's income, it prompts the property manager with questions to see whether that resident qualifies for the EID. The system then tracks the EID for the duration of the incentive period. REES also worked internally to revise NYCHA's policies and procedures related to the EID and launched a campaign to raise residents' awareness of it. Finally, REES has educated NYCHA self-sufficiency program partners about the EID and its benefits for their clients, and has enlisted them to educate residents about the EID in turn. Since REES began tracking EID use in 2012, 6,214 residents have received the rent incentive. In fact, over 82 percent of the EID adjustments NYCHA has performed since 1982 have occurred since 2012.

NYCHA's Professional Development and Training department and REES developed the "Public Housing Module," a one-and-a-half-day course on NYCHA rental policies and procedures designed for financial counselors. The course seeks to teach financial counselors about how those policies and procedures might affect residents' money-management skills and financial decisions. The class was first offered in April 2012. (BronxWorks participated in that session.) It is now being offered quarterly to all REES partner organizations that conduct financial counseling, including all of the Jobs-Plus programs. To date 108 financial counselors have been trained. In a follow-up survey conducted with participants three months after the course, REES found that 67 percent had used the information they learned to adapt and improve their services.

Jobs-Plus Throughout the Country

In 2015, the Jobs-Plus program become an important part of federal housing policy when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced it would provide $24 million to nine housing authorities over the following four years to implement the Jobs-Plus program nationally.[1] The providers selected for the Jobs Plus Pilot Program, as this replication is called, include housing authorities in Boston, Massachusetts; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chicago, Illinois; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Memphis, Tennessee; Roanoke, Virginia; St. Louis, Missouri; and Syracuse, New York. These providers were chosen because they demonstrated strong ties to community organizations, local employers, foundations, and citywide workforce agencies; local referral networks with community partners; streamlined and tailored hiring processes for local employers based on their needs and open positions; and experience running adult education programs, lease-compliance programs, and other workforce and economic self-sufficiency programs to meet the needs of their public housing residents.[2]

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[1]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015a).

[2]In other ways, the Jobs-Plus pilot expansion builds on other self-sufficiency initiatives in HUD's portfolio, including Residential Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) programs. Even if they do not fully (continued)

HUD has advised these housing authorities to use labor market data to guide the delivery of employment services to residents; implement a career pathways strategy incorporating work-based training and education to help individuals obtain new training and credentials; support internships, apprenticeships, and access to training; and establish partnerships with public housing residents, Workforce Investment Boards, American Job Centers, and local businesses and employers. Further, HUD suggests that housing authorities reach out to colleges, philanthropies, human services agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations to build a comprehensive network of services. The Jobs Plus Pilot Program provides many opportunities to continue learning about Jobs-Plus, including: (1) how Jobs Plus operates in different contexts (different geographic areas, housing markets, political climates, resident populations, etc.); (2) how the different components of the model are implemented, including a novel rent incentive; and (3) ultimately, whether the program is effective in its new form, and if so, why.

One update to the Jobs-Plus model in the Pilot Program will be its rent incentive, the Jobs Plus Earned Income Disregard (Jobs Plus EID), which disregards all incremental earnings for Jobs-Plus members. Under the Jobs Plus EID (1) a member's baseline income will not change once the incentive is triggered and (2) the member will receive the Jobs Plus EID through the duration of the provider's Jobs Plus Pilot Program grant. That means that participants who enroll early may benefit from the rent incentive for longer than residents who enroll later. This program update should address the concerns outlined in this report about the existing EID's complexity and meager effective benefits to residents. Ultimately, the success of the Jobs-Plus program rests on each provider's ability to implement the three components of the model and integrate them well. An organization can do this only when it has the local partnerships and resources necessary to create a comprehensive network of employment and support services, and when it can convey to residents in a meaningful way that these services exist and would benefit them. This report aims to support these efforts by allowing housing authorities now launching new Jobs-Plus programs to learn from the pair in this replication. This could help them anticipate some challenges and start them thinking about how they can build on their own backgrounds, on their community resources and partners, and on the skills of their staff members. The next generation of implementers can then continue building upon and refining the Jobs-Plus program for the benefit of public housing residents across the United States, setting them on improved economic trajectories.

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implement the Jobs-Plus model, ROSS programs may experience challenges and opportunities similar to those discussed in this report, and so may benefit from these findings.

Appendix A

Supplementary Tables for Chapter 6

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Appendix Table A.1

Year 3 Internal Costs, by Expense Category

Gross Costs ($)	Costs per Resident Household ($)					Costs per Member ($)
	Salary	Fringe Benefits	Overhead	Other	Total	Total
BronxWorks						
Supervisory	101	27	34	1	162	275
Employment-related	157	42	55	8	262	458
Community Support for Work	51	14	19	8	92	85
Financial counseling	62	17	21	0	100	184
Rent incentive (EID)	0	0	0	56	56	95
Total	372	99	129	72	672	1,097
San Antonio Housing Authority						
Supervisory	52	16	10	0	77	106
Employment-related	111	33	22	10	177	246
Community Support for Work	127	38	24	3	192	180
Financial counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rent incentive (EID)	0	0	0	58	58	79
Total	290	87	55	71	503	611

SOURCES: Financial reports submitted to the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC through the Grants Management System; MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and San Antonio Housing Authority management information systems.

NOTES: Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.
EID = Earned Income Disregard.

SIF Jobs-Plus Study

Table A.2

Distribution of Total Internal Costs, by Cost Component and Program Year

Gross Costs ($)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
BronxWorks				
Costs per resident household				
Supervisory	160	131	162	453
Employment-related	231	299	262	792
Community Support for Work	69	109	92	270
Financial counseling	107	112	100	319
Rent incentive (EID)	0	9	56	64
Total	566	659	672	1,897
San Antonio Housing Authority				
Costs per resident household				
Supervisory	46	53	77	176
Employment-related	163	183	177	522
Community Support for Work	179	190	192	561
Financial counseling	0	0	0	0
Rent incentive (EID)	0	13	58	71
Total	388	439	503	1,330

SOURCES: Financial reports submitted to the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC through the Grants Management System; MDRC calculations from BronxWorks and San Antonio Housing Authority management information systems.

NOTES: EID = Earned Income Disregard.

One Jobs-Plus member received the EID in the final month of Year 1, but information on the actual amount is unavailable.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums.

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Founded in 1974 and located in New York City and Oakland, California, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are proactively shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-offenders and people with disabilities, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Children's Development
- Improving Public Education
- Raising Academic Achievement and Persistence in College
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.