

Speaking of Employment:

A Report on ISSP Participant Interviews at Kern and San Mateo Counties

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Background

The evaluation of California's *Individual Self-Sufficiency Planning (ISSP)* project is heavily dependent on *quantitative* information on employment and earnings for participants at the two sites, Kern and San Mateo. Each year, the California Evaluation team has visited each site, to observe and to ask questions. The initial visits (in 1999) were an opportunity to get acquainted. Most questions dealt with (1) recruitment and intake; and (2) the process people experience while in the project. In the following two years (2000 and 2001), questions tended to focus on significant *changes*: in the kinds of people joining the project; in the process they go through; and/or in the larger environment (e.g., the job market; public transportation). We sought this kind of information to help us understand and interpret the quantitative information coming from the project. This year, we have had a special interest in learning from the experience of project participants. This document reports on one aspect of this work.

Three interviewers (two at San Mateo; one at Kern) were recruited and briefly trained. They carried out their work in March and April of this year. ISSP staff indicated how many participants in the ISSP project had jobs paying at least the minimum wage in September/October 2001. Two lists (one San Mateo; the other Kern) constituted the universe from which sample members were drawn. We established a predetermined target of 16-17 interviewees at Kern and 33-34 at San Mateo, where the project is about double the size of Kern's. Using the Random Number calculator in EXCEL to select the first person at random, we then used systematic sampling (e.g., every second person). This technique yields results essentially identical to random sampling, because each person has an equal chance of being selected into the sample. Forty-nine individuals were interviewed or completed and returned mail questionnaires: 32 from San Mateo; 17 from Kern. One potential interviewee at Kern, who speaks only Spanish, was dropped and replaced by the next available person on the list. Two or three others declined to be interviewed, and again the subsequent person on the list was contacted as a replacement.

Instruments

At the end of this report, the reader will find copies of a *Call Sheet* and two instruments. One is an *Interview Schedule*. The other is a mail *Questionnaire* version of the instrument, which was used in a handful of cases.

Findings

Job six months ago

Sector and occupation. -- Nearly half the jobs (22/49, 45%) were with companies or individuals in the private sector. Over half were with government entities (15/49, 31%) or in human service agencies, typically non-profits (11/49, 22%). One person was “self-employed,” working for a social service entity that the person created some years ago. Exhibit A is a listing of the employers (number in parenthesis, if more than one), excluding the person who reported being self-employed. Job titles are also given.

Exhibit A. Jobs Six Months Ago, by Sector and Job Title

Sector	Job title
<p><i>Private sector:</i> Friends of _____ _____ Plumbing Blockbuster Century Theaters Denny's K Mart (2) KL&P M&S Security Mail Boxes, Etc. Main Street Coffee Roasters Manpower Motor City Sales & Service Net Vision Technology, Inc. Peninsula Message Service Performance Bike Shop Petco Safeway (2) Savin Target (2)</p> <p><i>Government:</i> Ameri-Corp Work Study Bakersfield College College of San Mateo County of San Mateo (8) CSU-Bakersfield (2) Kern County Mental Health Superintendent of Schools</p> <p><i>Human service agencies, typically</i></p>	<p><i>Human service work:</i> Administrative Coordinator Case Manager Assistant Child Care Provider Community Friend Diet Aide Intake Coordinator: Drug & Alcohol Medical Program Assistant (2) Outcomes Assistant (2) Peer Counselor (3) Receptionist Social Security Benefits Technician Teacher/counselor/instructor (2) Teacher's Assistant/tutor (2)</p> <p><i>Janitorial, cleaning:</i> Dishwasher Gardener Garden Assistant Groundskeeper Janitor</p> <p><i>Security:</i> Guard/security guard (3)</p> <p><i>Customer service, sales, cashiering:</i> Cashier Clerk Courtesy Clerk (2) Customer Service/Stocker</p>

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<p><i>non-profit:</i> Bakersfield Symphony (and a private school) Bay Area Senior Services Caminar CLC (4) Goodwill Industries Mental Health Association (2) Redwood Village, Inc. Salvation Army</p>	<p>Retail Clerk Sales Associate (2) Stockperson Telemarketer</p> <p><i>Shipping and receiving:</i> Data Entry/Shipping Messenger Warehouse Assistant</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Copy Repairman Director File Clerk Plumber Secretary Technical Assistant Tuba player; instructor Waitress</p>
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Hours per week, and rate of pay. -- When jobs were taken, average hours of work per week were 22.6 (range: 4 to 40), and the average rate of pay (each person weighted equally) was \$9.08 per hour (range: \$6.25 to \$20.79).

Change in employment from six months ago

Employment status at time of survey. -- Two-thirds (33/49, 67%) reported still working for the employer on the Call Sheet. More (39/49, 79%) were employed at the time of interview, three holding two jobs. One-fifth (10/49, 20%) were not working. Two of the ten reported looking for work; three said they were going to school; and five reported doing something else. (See Q3.)

If not employed, reason for leaving last job. -- Question 4 asks whether the person (a) was laid off; (b) quit; (c) was fired; or (d) left employment for some other reason. Since reasons are often complex, it should come as no surprise that categorizing reasons was a challenge. Not infrequently, the interviewee would report being "laid off," "quit," or "let go," and then explain under "some other reason." Listed below are things that some individuals had to say: (The first three were reasons for "quitting;" the next five were written under "Some other reason.")

- [I] didn't get along with boss.
- To go to school (college).
- [I] injured myself (pinched nerve in the neck).

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- Because he was hospitalized and they needed someone at all times and he could not longer produce the work expected of him.
- The job was stressful.
- Granddaughter got laid off and couldn't handle babysitting anymore.
- Was at Bakersfield College; transferred to CSU-Bakersfield; the drive was too long.
- Started feeling bad; couldn't handle school and job at same time.

Current (or, most recent) job

Hours per week and rate of pay. -- At time of survey, when asked about *current (or most recent) job*, those surveyed reported working an average of 19.6 hours (range: 3 to 40), and earning an average of \$9.09 per hour (range: \$2.25 to \$20.25). The lowest wage was reported by an individual babysitting for a child within her family under CalWORKS.

Fringe benefits. -- Fringe benefits were infrequently reported. The most commonly reported fringe benefit was paid vacation (17/48, 35%). Interestingly, 12% (6/48) reported some health care coverage; 15% reported some holiday pay; and other fringes were reported by 6% or fewer.

Sector and occupation. -- With so little time passing, change in the range of jobs (sector and occupation) were relatively minor, and are not detailed here. (See pages 6 and 7.)

Current (or, most recent) job fit career goals? -- Respondents were asked (Q16) "To what extent does your current (or, most recent) job fit with your career goals?" One in five (10/49, 20%) said *Not at all*. Forty-five percent (22/49) said *Very much*, and 35% (17/49) said *Somewhat*.

Job satisfaction, training, accommodations

Job satisfaction. -- Asked about level of satisfaction with their job (current or most recent), 67% said *Very much*; another 27% said *Somewhat*; only 6% reported *Not at all*.

Training from employer. -- Two-fifths (30/49, 61%) reported receiving some training from their employer. This could be an overstatement, because "job coach" was often noted, and that service may (or may not) have come from the employer. Certainly, in some cases, employers doubtless concurred in training by an outside agency, such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services (San Mateo) or Kern County Vocational Services (Kern).

Disclosure of disability. -- As for information about the person's disability being shared with the employer, 59% (29/49) said "Yes." Of this number, the same percentage said that the information was shared before taking the job. A rather sizable fraction (4/29, 14%) said they were unsure when the information was shared.

Accommodations. -- Relatively few respondents (14/49, 29%) said “Yes,” in response to Q11, which read: “Did you or anyone else ask for anything, so that you could do your job better, or be more comfortable (an accommodation)?” Asked “what was requested?,” respondents said (or interviewers reported in their words):

- To get job done faster
- Cut hours back for him and was great toward helping him
- Works in the afternoon, because of insomnia
- Footrest
- Job coach (mentioned twice)

- More hot tips on gardening
- Support
- Ask for time off if needed
- Asked for head phones because of disability
- Once a month, meet with supervisor to let them know what is needed for client

- Flexibility
- Have meeting with supervisor for any problems every week
- Computer, cell phone, & pager

Of the fourteen individuals who asked for something, eleven said that they got what they asked for. One didn't know or couldn't remember. If repeating the survey, we would probably change the wording to say something like: “Because of your disability, did anyone . . . ?”

What has (or, would have) helped you stay employed?

Question 13 was viewed as one of the most important for the ISSP project, because increases in employment (and earnings) are viewed as a central outcome of the enhanced services being provided through the project. On this page and the next three, one can see what interviewees had to say in response to the question: “What has helped you stay employed (or, What would have helped you keep your job or stay employed?)”

There are a couple of ways to summarize such qualitative information. One is by *theme*, according (say) to first-mentioned thought. The other is to categorize *all* things mentioned, trying to include each discrete idea. We use this second approach below.

Those employed. – Here are the remarks made by 39 individuals who were employed at the time of the survey:

The job (enjoyment, self-esteem, etc.)

- I wanted to work. Basically, that was motivation.

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- Past work habits has helped through hard time.
- Good job for me. I feel important.
- Hot tips on gardening.
- Loves her job, enjoys working.
- Likes her job.
- Enjoy the job, lot of fun, get to know the client and is great for the both of us.
- Enjoys what she is doing.
- Believing in what you are doing. Helping mentally ill people to understand about mental illness.
- Like the job.
- Love my job.
- Like the job - helping me feel better about my job. Have a sense of pride - missed only one day's work in 9 months.
- Staying in the Master's program, getting a high rating from the students I teach.
- Different or change of lifestyle. Likes his work.
- I like my job.
- It's a good job.
- Customer service helping kids, getting them balloons.
- Wants to give back what he has received.
- Has been told she has a great attitude, because she works well with customers and co-workers.
- Being confident and happy to help clients.
- Love what I do.
- Conversing with the people at his job.

Support from others (e.g., family, friends, employer, co-workers)

- I like the people I work with.
- Treated very well.
- Nick King, supervisor, is supportive and understanding.
- The respect and helpfulness received.
- Employer is real supportive.
- My wife.
- Myself and God.
- Experience. Employees are helpful and understanding.
- The company itself. The environment. The employer, a very nice person.
- Good environment.
- Great environment, great supervisor.
- Having a great boss & friends.
- I meet a lot of other people who are quite friendly with me. The owners don't yell at me a lot. The owners care about me a lot. They depend on me. Care about me so much they drive to the bus depot every night also.
- Positive feedback from employer.
- Support received from supervisor and co-workers.

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Take home pay, benefits

- The pay.
- Making money. References for new job. Got raises.
- Need the money.
- Need money. Trying to save for car.
- Money. The union (I'm in the union). Vacation pay. Triple pay on holidays.
- The money made.
- Money.
- Necessity. Husband is so ill. I need this job.
- I like uniform.
- The alumni with the ISSP program, because this program allows her to keep more of her wages. Hopes the ISSP program continues beyond 2003.

Services (e.g., job coaching, mental health services)

- Caminar CLC job coaching.
- Job coaching has really helped. Nothing else comes to mind.
- The support from Angelina and Carol. It helps me a lot because I don't stay home any longer.
- Counseling helps me to get through crisis. It's been really hard for me, but I'm learning how to cope.
- Support from VRS.
- Sue Cleveland & Sue Broman, ISSP counselors.
- Peer Counselor support.

Hours, schedule, flexibility

- Flexible.
- Schedule of her hours.
- The flexibility.

Health (or illness)

- Have had a hard time staying focused.
- Sobriety.
- Medicine makes me fatigued and sleepy. I am having a problem with anger and paranoia.

Transportation or location

- Easy transportation.
- Close to home.

Other (not elsewhere classified)

- People have been laid off in other businesses, so I stayed with this job.
- Nothing.

Those no longer employed. – Here are the ideas expressed by the ten individuals who were not working at time of survey:

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The job (enjoyment, self-esteem, etc.)

- A different job.

Support from others (e.g., family, friends, employer, co-workers)

- Support from girlfriend.

Take home pay, benefits

- More money. Nothing else.
- The money he made helped him stay with this job, but would have liked to been paid more. There was not anything else about this job that helped him to stay employed while working.

Services (e.g., job coaching, mental health services)

- [Support from . . .] job coach & case manager.
- More interaction with job counselor.

Hours, schedule, flexibility

- More hours. The hours became less and less.
- If I wasn't going to school and working at same time, it would have helped. The main reason I left Ameri-Corp is I had to take a class in order to stay working at Ameri-Corp.

Health (or illness)

- I have schizophrenia. Major health concerns, need more surgery. Am tired all the time. If I had better correction for sleep apnea. Just need to focus on school until surgery is complete.
- Better nerves (meds calm nerves). Have less depression.

Transportation or location

- Transportation.
- Fact that I was working where already going to school.

Comparison of patterns, by whether employed. -- Motivators are sometimes categorized as *extrinsic* or *intrinsic*. Extrinsic factors are things that come from outside the person: pay, benefits, awards, and so forth. Intrinsic motivators come from within (e.g., enjoyment of the work; feeling of accomplishment). In terms of number of comments falling within various categories, Table 1 provides a summary, comparing those who were employed with those not working at time of survey. The data are generally consistent with Frederick Herzberg's theory of motivation. Those who stayed employed often mentioned aspects of their jobs (34% of all discrete ideas), while those no longer employed tended to mention things external to themselves (e.g., pay/benefits, hours/flexibility, and transportation/job location). Support from others can fall into either category, depending on whether it represents support for accomplishment (*intrinsic*) or is simply a public relations gesture (*extrinsic*).

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Table 1. Themes in response to the Question 13, by whether or not employed at time of survey

Theme	Number		Percent	
	Employed	Not employed	Employed	Not employed
The job (enjoyment, self-esteem, etc.).....	22	1	34%	8%
Support from others (family, friends, employer, co-workers)	15	1	23	8
Take home pay, benefits	10	2	16	17
Services (e.g., job coaching, mental health services)	7	2	11	17
Hours, schedule, flexibility	3	2	5	17
Health (or illness)	3	2	5	17
Transportation, location	2	2	3	17
Other (not elsewhere classified).....	2	0	3	--
Total (Avg)	64*	12*	100%	100%

*Exceeds number of respondents, because some mentioned reasons falling into more than one theme category.

Employment services

Employment services, in general. -- Asked to what extent “our employment services have helped you,” seven of every ten (35/49, 71%) said *Very much*; another 18% (9/49) said *Somewhat*; and one in ten (5/49, 10%) reported *Not at all*. See Q15.

Benefits counseling and assistance. -- Asked more specifically, to what extent “benefits counseling services have helped you (Q16),” the percentages reporting being helped were somewhat larger: 73% and 22%, respectively. Only 4% (2/50) said *Not at all*.

Any help with employment wanted at this time. -- At the end of the survey (Q25), each person was asked: “Regarding employment, is there anything that you would like help with now?” Over half the respondents (26/49, 53%) said “Yes.” Most of the rest (21/49, 43%) said “No.” Those who responded affirmatively were asked a follow-up question, “What would you like help with?” Here is what they had to say:

Getting a job, better job, or more pay:

- Meet with job developer to assist in getting another job.
- More pay.
- More hours or full time.
- Get back into Work Center or get another job.
- I would like eventually a better position.

- Get a new job.
- Work at a better place with more hours.

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- Looking for part-time work & is working with Joe Hennen.
- Would like help getting a new job.
- Housing and getting more money with the job she does.

- Employment.
- Would like to become full-time employee at KCMH.
- Referral for jobs.

Career or schooling:

- Resume preparation.
- Job training in mental illness.
- Tutors in reading and math; need help; don't like Adult School.
- I need to figure out where my life is going.
- Like to take a class in human resources, maybe accounts receivable.

- To continue help with going to school.
- I want to finish x-ray program. Another part of me wants to go to work in school system working with kids.

Dealing with benefits and Social Security:

- Help with benefits.
- Would like some progress with Social Security & VRS in North County.
- Help with W2 and pay stubs.
- Dealing with Social Security forms about disability & learning the new job.
- Stabilizing benefits.

Other:

- Moral support & someone to talk to.
- Just stay in contact with Carol Bowman

Experience with Social Security Administration

Because the ISSP Project provides intensive benefits counseling and assistance, and greater service coordination (employment support), and is funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the Social Security Administration, four questions (Q17, Q18, Q19, and Q20) dealt with Social Security issues.

Whether had contact over past year. -- Asked whether, over the past year, the interviewee had any contact by phone or in-person with the Social Security Administration local office, just over half (24/49, 51%) said "Yes."

Helpfulness, courtesy, clarity of information. -- Those who responded affirmatively were asked to describe the contact in terms of helpfulness, courtesy,

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and/or clarity (or understanding). Here is what respondents had to say, categorized by *positive* statements, *negative (i.e., critical)* statements, and *other* statements.

Positive statements:

- Helpful and courteous.
- Very helpful.
- Polite and helpful.
- Just fine.
- Very helpful; courteous.

- Thankful for the support they gave him for as long as they did. He is no longer receiving benefits because SSA says he is no longer eligible for money, but Medi-Cal.
- Sent letter about overpayment, so she went in person and they were very helpful & very nice.
- Very great.
- Very helpful. No problems.
- Somewhat helpful; very courteous; easy to understand.

- Helpful; courteous; somewhat easy to understand.
- Somewhat helpful; courteous; understandable.
- A+ on everything.

Negative (critical) statements:

- Not helpful. Sent pay stubs to SSA last year and they were lost. Client says she contacted caseworker and caseworker told her she should wait until she (case manager) calls her. Client says there are too many different rules being played.
- Didn't like the courtesy of SSI administration. Had to pay back more than expected.
- Courtesy was bad; helpfulness was bad; he had to write a letter of complaint with one of the staff. Sent many letters of overpayment & very bad with bookkeeping.
- Miscommunication. Conflicting letters saying he owed them & he didn't owe them. Finally, he has this under control.
- She thinks they are trying to mess over them and she did discuss this with the VRS counselor.

- Hostile; non-support and non-courtesy completely.
- In person they are very helpful, but by phone there are conflicts such as reaching each other.
- Over the phone, very helpful, but in person, not very helpful. Courteous over the phone but not so in person. Not easy to understand.

Other statements:

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- Sometimes helpful. One time treated with disrespect. Easy to understand.
- He received letters and his case manager and payee helped him.
- Owe them \$4,000 for overpayment, because 2 years ago worked with Goodwill & Canada College.
- Contact by mail and there would be (idea not completed by interviewer).

Confidence in accuracy of information received. -- Questions 19 asked “How confident are you in the accuracy (correctness) of any information you received from Social Security Administration staff?” Here are the numbers and percentages that said:

Very confident – 7/25, 28%
Somewhat confident – 12/25, 48%
Not very confident – 6/25, 24%

How affected feelings/attitudes toward working. -- Asked how the interaction may have affected the person’s feelings and attitudes toward working, the numbers and percentages were:

Positively – 11/25, 44%
Negatively – 7/25, 28%
Not at all – 7/25, 28%

School, college, or vocational training

Going to school or participating in a training program? -- Everyone was asked whether they were “taking classes, attending college, or otherwise going to school or participating in a training program.” See Q21. Thirteen of 49 respondents (27%) said “Yes.” Asked to what extent their educational program fit with their career goals (Q22), eleven of the thirteen (85%) said *Very much*. The rest (2/13, 15%) said *Somewhat*.

Perceived changes in financial situation and life quality (Q23, Q24)

Changes in financial situation. -- Nearly three of every four respondents (34/47, 72%) said “Yes,” in response to the question, “Compared with six months ago, has your *financial situation* changed?” Those who said “Yes,” were asked: “In what ways?” and here is what they had to say:

Better off or (net) neutral:

- “Somewhat better now” (2)¹
- More freedom to earn more money.

¹ The mail questionnaire asked for the direction of change. Responses in quotation marks are from the mail questionnaire version of the survey.

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- Improved - more money.
- It's better.
- Yes, because I am full time now (since November 1, 2001).

- For the better. ISSP program helps a lot.
- Saving money.
- Cut down to \$15 a week kept from SSI.
- Increase.
- For better, because he is learning how to spend his money and proud of working and learning a lot at the same time.

- Much better because she is working and getting Social Security or SSI.
- Better because she has 20 hrs a week where she used to have 12 hrs a week & it was poverty.
- Financial situation has changed successfully & so much better than before.
- It has changed & is much better.
- It's better. Able to open a savings account.

- My SSI is much more dependable. I'm not that frustrated with the system. Glad it's straightened out.
- Struggling but getting by.
- Increase in income.
- Making more money. Have a house now, a truck, doing in vehicle better.
- Working less, but financial [aid?] compensates for that.

- Better. Able to meet my needs. Buy food, etc.
- Maybe I feel confident that I could get a job.
- More stable. I have to move out of my home. Carol is aware of situation.
- A little more income.
- I have more spending money and have savings.

Worse off:

- Not receiving as much money since his hours at work have been cut back.
- Worse. He is not working and receiving his SDI.
- Worse.
- "Worse now."
- Less finances.
- Getting less money than 6 months ago. Had a surgery and missed a lot of work. Not teaching as much now.
- Worse. Everything has gone up. Cost of living, health, etc., health insurance.
- It is worse. Not on SSI and makes less money if she would have stayed on it.

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It is worth noting that some of the remarks may stem from the change in SSI rules (\$1 for \$4 waiver; ability to having savings in excess of \$2,000; etc.).

Changes in life or well-being. -- As for the following, more global question: "Compared with six months ago, have your life or well-being changed?," 41 of 49 (84%) said "Yes." Here are the reasons given, in response to the follow-up, "In what ways?"

Perceived positive changes:

- "Somewhat better now."
- Much better feeling about life.
- Improved.
- I moved into own place to live. I changed for the good.
- It's looking up.

- Happier.
- "Much better now."
- I feel a little upturn.
- More stable.
- Money; I don't have to worry.

- Have \$2,000 in bank & hoping to invest in mutual funds & goal is to get off SSI by October 2002 or January 2003.
- Change [is] about people and the law because he is learning how to follow the rules and not breaking the law. Showing honesty, compared with what he used to do in the past.
- She thinks her life is better because she is with her parents and has to take care of them.
- More outgoing, social life is great & better friends & the quality of life is great. The system is working better for him.
- Because she is engaged to be married and is feeling great.

- She has felt better.
- Feel better mentally. Happier when I'm working.
- Confidence is better in regards to working.
- For the better, more self-esteem, emotional wellness, is more stable.
- It's gotten better; increase in competence.

- Improved; happier overall; peace in my life; enjoy work.
- Much more positive attitude.
- More patience. Better family life, more comfortable.
- Little more income.
- My mental attitude is better. Job keeps me going.

- Learning to believe in myself more.

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Perceived negative changes:

- Gone down. Personal setback.
- "Worse now."
- Very difficult because he is no longer working & does not have extra money to do the things he would like to do.
- Hurt back and shoulders. It is very hard to sit for a long time, and in constant pain.
- He does not have a job, but he is still receiving his SSI benefits.

- She might lose her housing; it's expensive and has gone up. Cannot keep her car up. Physical problems from her problems and stress; back is out and she does not know how to get out the mess she is in.
- Slowly improving by resolving health issues.
- My husband is ill and I have much stress in my life. Kaiser took my psychological benefits away in 1994.
- Four family members passed away. I'm handling it OK.
- Not working.

Changes not elsewhere classified:

- Better, more confident, but stressful. Needs to get back to exercise.
- Have improved but had to go back on benefits from the result of being in the hospital.
- Money hopefully will increase and seeing (idea not completed by interviewer).
- I feel more hopeful. Was going to get my teaching credential, but it stopped. Have another interest (art), but future is indefinite.
- I feel like I matter. I don't feel insignificant & would like to complete this job the way I want to, but time is running out.

Summary

Here are some highlights from the survey:

Employment

1. Over half had government or non-profit, human service jobs six months before the survey. Several at San Mateo worked for the county. Those at Kern tended to work for educational institutions (colleges, schools).
2. 80% were employed at time of interview; some of the remainder were in school or doing other things; only 3 were looking for work.

Speaking of Employment

3. Of those working at time of survey, hours worked per week dropped, on average, from 22.6 hours to 19.6 hours, or by 13%. Hourly rate of pay was essentially unchanged at just over \$9 per hour.
4. Principally because *temp*, *trainee* positions at County of San Mateo carry paid vacation benefits, 35% of all respondents reported receiving this fringe benefit. Fifteen percent reported some holiday pay. A somewhat surprising 12% reported health care coverage.
5. Four-fifths said that their current (or, most recent) job fit with their career goals.

Job satisfaction, training, disclosure, and accommodations

1. All but 6% reported job satisfaction, liking their jobs either *Very Much* (67%) or *Somewhat* (27%).
2. Three-fifths reported receiving some training from (or while with) their current (or, most recent) employer.
3. Nearly three-fifths disclosed (or had others disclose) information about their disability; a comparable proportion of this group did so *before* going to work with current (or, most recent) employer.
4. Nearly three in ten asked for something to help them do their job better, or to be more comfortable working. In about half the cases, what was requested appeared related to their disability (e.g., breaks, footrest). Most got what they asked for.

What helped (or, would have helped) stay employed

1. Nearly everyone answered the question “What has helped you stay employed?” or “What would have helped you stay employed?” Of those employed at time of survey, over a third mentioned something about “their job” (e.g., enjoyment, self-esteem). Next most frequently mentioned (23%) was “support from others” (family, friends, employer, co-workers). “Take home pay, benefits” ranked third (16%), and “Services” (e.g., job coaching, mental health services) was fourth (11%). Other reasons, amounting to 5% or less of mentioned thoughts, were “hours, schedule, flexibility,” “health (or illness),” “transportation, location,” and “other” (not elsewhere classified).

Services

1. Seven in ten respondents said that employment services had helped them *very much*. One in ten said *Not at all*.

Speaking of Employment

2. Benefits counseling and assistance was viewed slightly more favorably. Percentages saying *Very much*, *Somewhat*, or *Not at all* were 73%, 22%, and 4%, respectively.
3. Asked, at the end of the survey, whether they wanted any help related to employment, just over half (53%) said “Yes.” “Getting a job, a better job, or more pay” was most often mentioned, followed by help with “Career or schooling.” In third place was “Dealing with benefits and Social Security,” mentioned by five respondents.

Contact with the Social Security Administration

1. Just over half (51%) said they had contact with their local office of the Social Security Administration over the past year. Those who had were asked to describe their contact in terms of (1) helpfulness, (2) courtesy, and (3) clarity of understanding. Thirteen respondents offered positive statements, such as “A+ on everything.” Eight had critical comments, such as “Sent pay stubs to SSA last year and they were lost.” Four offered information that was, on balance, essentially neutral. As for confidence in the accuracy of information received, only 28% said *Very confident*. Twenty-four percent said *Not very confident*. The rest (48%; 12/25) said *Somewhat confident*. Asked how their interaction may have affected their feelings or attitudes toward work, 44% said *Positively*; 28% said *Negatively*; and the same percentage (28%) said *Not at all*.

Career, finances, and overall quality of life

1. Just over one-quarter (27%) of those surveyed said they were taking classes, attending college or otherwise going to school or participating in a training program. Eleven of the thirteen said their educational program fit with their career goals *Very much*. The rests (2/13) said *Somewhat*.
2. Nearly three of every four respondents (72%) said “Yes” in response to the question, “Compared with six months ago, has your financial situation changed?” Twenty-five said they were better off, or the changes were (net) neutral. Only eight said they were worse off. Some of the remarks reflect the SSI waivers being tested at Kern and San Mateo counties.
3. Forty-one of 49 respondents (84%) said “Yes” in response to a broader question, “Compared with six months ago, have your life or well-being changed?” Twenty-six mentioned positive changes. Ten remarked on negative changes. And, five could not be readily classified this way.

Appendix A.

Call Sheet

Speaking of Employment

Call Sheet for Interviews with Selected Individuals Served Through DR/DMH Cooperative Project

Database information available prior to interview:

Person's name: _____ Unique ID#: _____

Person's phone number(s): _____

Person's mailing address: _____

Name, relationship, and phone number of *first person* likely to always know how to reach the person: _____

(name)

(relationship)

(phone #)

Name, relationship, and phone number of *second person* likely to always know how to reach the person: _____

(name)

(relationship)

(phone #)

Initial job information:

Name of employer (entity): _____

Job title or occupation: _____

Date took job (month/day/year): _____

Number of hours worked per week: _____

Starting wage: \$ _____ per hour

County where DR/DMH Coop is located: _____

Call Record			
Date	Time	Result*	Remarks, if any

* Result codes could be *busy* (1), *no answer* (2), *wrong number* (3), *left call-back message* (4), *set time for interview* (5), *completed interview* (6), and so forth.

Appendix B.
Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Selected Individuals Served Through DR/DMH Cooperative Project

Unique ID# _____

Date of interview (MM/DD/YY): _____

Which interview? ₁ 6 mos ₂ 12 mos ₃ 18 mos

With the **Call Sheet** in front of you, begin by saying:

“Hi. My name is *(name of interviewer)*. I work with *(name of person, agency or group)*. How are you today? PAUSE AND BE SOCIABLE. *(Name of program or agency)* wants to learn from your experience and that of others, so that services and supports can be improved. **OPTIONAL: Like you, I received services from *(name of agency or program)*.** The survey takes 10-15 minutes. What you tell me is completely *confidential*. Information will be grouped, and no names will accompany the results. The survey is voluntary. If you don’t feel comfortable answering any question, just tell me. We can skip it or perhaps come back to it. May I begin?”

If “**Yes**,” say: “We want to know about your work and any school or training you have had since *(having a job with _____ back in (month & year))*, and how you really feel about services and supports.”

If “**No**,” say: “May I tell you about the survey, why we are doing it, and how the results will be used to improve services?” Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn *What’s working, What isn’t working*, and how to improve services and supports. Ask again: “May I begin? If “**Yes**,” begin with Q1. If “**No**,” thank the person for their time, perhaps give the person a phone number to reach you, and ask the person to call you if the person changes his/her mind.

Q1. Are you still working for *(name of employer on Call Sheet)*?

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No

Q2. Are you working for anyone else?

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No

(IF “YES” TO Q1 OR Q2, *SKIP* TO Q5. OTHERWISE, ASK Q3.)

Q3. Are you going to school, looking for work, or doing something else? (CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY)

- ₁ Looking for work
- ₂ Going to school
- ₃ Doing something else • What? *(please describe: _____)*

Q4. Can you tell us why you left your most recent employer? Were you laid off, did you quit, or were you let go (discharged)?

- ₁ Laid off (lack of work)
- ₂ Quit *If Quit, what was the reason?*
 - ₁ Poor health
 - ₂ To go to school (e.g., college)
 - ₃ For another reason — (please describe: _____)
- ₃ Let go (fired, discharged)
- ₄ Some other reason -- Please describe: _____

Speaking of Employment

Q5. Over the past six months (that is, 26 weeks), in about how many weeks did you work for pay?

_____ weeks

Q6. When you were working, about how many hours did you work each week?

_____ hours per week

These next questions are about your [principal] current (or, if not now employed, most recent) job

Q7. Who are (were) you working for? What kind of work do (did) you do? How many hours do (did) you work each week? How much do (did) you make? Do (did) you receive any benefits, such as a health plan or paid time off? ASK SPECIFICALLY ABOUT EACH TYPE OF BENEFIT.

Name of employer (e.g., company)	Kind of work you do (e.g., job title, tasks performed)	Hours worked per week	Rate of pay	Fringe benefits, if any (If none, so state)
			\$ _____ per _____	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Health plan ₂ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid vacation ₃ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid holidays ₄ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid sick leave ₅ <input type="checkbox"/> Meals ₆ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <hr/> <hr/>

Explanatory notes, if any

Q8. In general, how satisfied are (or, were) you with this job? Would you say . . .

₁ *Very much?*

₂ *Somewhat?*

₃ *Not at all?*

Q9. Did you receive any *training* from this employer?

₁ Yes

₂ No

₃ Don't Know (e.g., not sure)

Q10. Was information about your disability shared with this employer – either by you or by someone else?

₁ Yes *If, "Yes," When? (CHECK ONE.)*

₁ Before taking the job

₂ After taking the job

₃ Not sure (e.g., don't remember)

₂ No

₃ Don't Know (e.g., don't remember)

Speaking of Employment

Q11. Did you or anyone else ask for anything, so that you could do your job better, or be more comfortable (an *accommodation*)?

- ₁ Yes ☛ If “Yes,” what was requested? _____
_____)
- ₂ No ☛ *SKIP TO Q13.*

Q12. Did you get what you asked for?

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No
- ₃ Don’t Know (e.g., don’t remember)

Whether you are working now or not, here is something we would like to know.

Q13. What has helped you stay employed? *IF NOT WORKING, ASK* What would have helped you keep your job or stay employed?

LISTEN AND WRITE DOWN WHAT THE PERSON SAYS. IF ANYTHING SAID, ASK “Anything else?” TWICE, AND WRITE DOWN.

IF THE PERSON DOESN’T HAVE MUCH TO SAY, ASK: “What about . . . (AND WRITE DOWN WHAT THE PERSON SAYS)

- a. Mental health services (e.g., therapy, medications)?
- b. The money you make?
- c. Feeling good (e.g., diet, exercise, self-esteem)?
- d. Help with Social Security or other benefits?
- e. People at work (e.g., co-workers, the boss)?
- f. Employment services?
- g. Family or friends?
- h. Groups (e.g., club, 12-step program)?
- i. Being able to get around town
- j. Help for your family (e.g., childcare)
- k. Anything else? _____

Q14. To what extent have our employment services helped you? Would you say . . .

- ₁ *Very much?* ₂ *Somewhat?* ₃ *Not at all?*

Q15. To what extent have our benefits counseling services helped you? Would you say . . .

Speaking of Employment

Very much?

Somewhat?

Not at all?

Q16. To what extent does your current (or, most recent) job fit with your career goals? Would you say . . .

Very much?

Somewhat?

Not at all?

Q17. Over the past year, have you had any contact by phone or in-person with the local office of the Social Security Administration?

Yes ➤ *PLEASE ANSWER Q18.*

No ➤ *SKIP TO Q21.*

Don't Know (e.g., don't remember) ➤ *SKIP TO Q21.*

Q18. How would you describe the contact in terms of helpfulness, courtesy, and/or clarity (or understanding)? _____

Q19. How confident are you in the accuracy (correctness) of any information you received from Social Security Administration staff? Would you say . . .

Very confident?

Somewhat confident?

Not very confident?

Q20. How, if at all, have your interactions with Social Security Administration over the past year affected your feelings and attitudes toward working? Would you say . . .

Positively?

Negatively?

Not at all?

Here are a couple of questions about school, college, or vocational training

Q21. Are you taking classes, attending college, or otherwise going to school or participating in a training program?

Yes

No ➤ *SKIP TO Q23.*

Q22. To what extent does this *educational program* fit with your career goals? Would you say . . .

Very much?

Somewhat?

Not at all?

We are almost finished. Just three more questions

Q23. Compared with six months ago, has your *financial situation* changed?

Yes ➤ *ASK "In what way?"* _____

No

Q24. Compared with six months ago, has your *life or well-being* changed?

Yes ➤ *ASK "In what way?"* _____

Speaking of Employment

_____)
_____)
 No

Q25. Regarding employment, is there anything that you would like help with now? (e.g., getting a new job, help with benefits, help dealing with change, a job club, etc.)

Yes *If "Yes," What would you like help with?* _____)

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If referred to someone, please give name or agency: _____)

No

Don't Know (e.g., not sure)

Thank you very much. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix C.
Mail Questionnaire

A Follow-Up Survey of Individuals Who Received Vocational Services and Took Jobs

ID# _____

Confidential

Explanation

The purpose of this survey is to learn from your experience since taking the job described below, whether you are still working or not, so that services and supports can be improved and made more responsive to each person's needs and aspirations. The survey is CONFIDENTIAL. The ID# is simply to avoid asking you to complete the same survey twice. Your name will never be on this questionnaire. Grouped information will be used. We would appreciate your candid views. There are no right or wrong answers. If you have any questions about this survey or need help with the questionnaire, please call _____ and ask to speak with (or leave a message for) _____, who is directing this survey work.

This is the ₁ 6 month, ₂ 12 month, or ₃ 18 month follow-up survey, related to your having taken the job described below:

Name of employer (entity): _____

Job title or occupation: _____

Date took job (month/day/year): _____

Number of work hours per week at that time: _____

Starting wage: \$ _____ per hour

Q1. Are you still working for this employer?

₁ Yes

₂ No

Q2. Are you working for anyone else?

₁ Yes

₂ No (IF "YES" TO Q1 OR Q2, SKIP TO Q5. OTHERWISE, ASK Q3.)

Q3. Are you going to school, looking for work, or doing something else? (CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY)

₁ Looking for work

₂ Going to school

₃ Doing something else What? (please describe: _____)

Q4. Can you tell us why you left your most recent employer? Were you laid off, did you quit, or were you let go (discharged)?

₁ Laid off (lack of work)

₂ Quit *If Quit*, what was the reason?

₁ Poor health

₂ To go to school (e.g., college)

₃ For another reason -- (please describe: _____)

₃ Let go (fired, discharged)

₄ Some other reason -- Please describe: _____)

Speaking of Employment

Q5. Over the past six months (26 weeks), in about how many weeks did you work for pay or profit?

_____ weeks

Q6. When you were working, about how many hours, on average, did you work each week?

_____ hours per week

These next questions are about your principal current job. If not working, please answer for your most recent job.

Q7. Who are you working for? What kind of work do you do? How many hours do you work each week? How much do you make? Do you receive any benefits, such as a health plan or paid time off?

Name of employer (e.g., company)	Kind of work you do (e.g., job title, tasks performed)	Hours worked per week	Rate of pay	Fringe benefits, if any (If none, so state)
			\$ _____ per _____	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Health plan ₂ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid vacation ₃ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid holidays ₄ <input type="checkbox"/> Paid sick leave ₅ <input type="checkbox"/> Meals ₆ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____ _____

Explanatory notes, if any

Q8. In general, how satisfied are (or, were) you with this job? Would you say . . .
₁ *Very much?* ₂ *Somewhat?* ₃ *Not at all?*

Q9. Did you receive any *training* from this employer?

- ₁ Yes
₂ No
₃ Don't Know (e.g., not sure)

Q10. Was information about your disability shared with this employer – either by you or by someone else?

- ₁ Yes *If, "Yes," When? (CHECK ONE.)*
₁ Before taking the job
₂ After taking the job
₃ Not sure (e.g., don't remember)
₂ No
₃ Don't Know (e.g., don't remember)

Speaking of Employment

Q11. Did you or anyone else ask for anything, so that you could do your job better, or be more comfortable (an *accommodation*)?

- Yes ☛ If "Yes," what was requested? _____
_____)
- No ☛ *SKIP TO Q13.*

Q12. Did you get what you asked for?

- Yes
 No
 Don't Know (e.g., don't remember)

Whether you are working now or not, here is something we would like to know.

Q13. What has helped you stay employed? *IF NOT WORKING, What would have helped you keep your job or stay employed? PLEASE EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS.*

What helped the most?

Anything else?

Anything else?

What about anything else on this list?

- a. Mental health services (e.g., therapy, medications)?
- b. The money you make?
- c. Feeling good (e.g., diet, exercise, self-esteem)?
- d. Help with Social Security or other benefits?
- e. People at work (e.g., co-workers, the boss)?
- f. Employment services?
- g. Family or friends?
- h. Groups (e.g., club, 12-step program)?
- i. Being able to get around town
- j. Help for your family (e.g., childcare)
- k. Anything else? _____

Q14. To what extent did our employment services help you?

- Very much* *Somewhat* *Not at all*

Q15. To what extent have our benefits counseling services helped you?

Speaking of Employment

₁ Very much?

₂ Somewhat?

₃ Not at all?

Q16. To what extent does your current (or, most recent) job fit with your career goals?

₁ Very much

₂ Somewhat

₃ Not at all

Q17. Over the past year, have you had any contact by phone or in-person with the local office of the Social Security Administration?

₁ Yes ➤ *PLEASE ANSWER Q18.*

₂ No ➤ *SKIP TO Q21.*

₃ Don't Know (e.g., don't remember) ➤ *SKIP TO Q21.*

Q18. How would you describe the contact in terms of helpfulness, courtesy, and/or clarity (or understanding)? _____

Q19. How confident are you in the accuracy (correctness) of any information you received from Social Security Administration staff? Would you say . . .

₁ Very confident?

₂ Somewhat confident?

₃ Not very confident?

Q20. How, if at all, have your interactions with Social Security Administration over the past year affected your feelings and attitudes toward working? Would you say . .

₁ Positively?

₂ Negatively?

₃ Not at all?

Here are a couple of questions about school, college, or vocational training

Q21. Are you taking classes, attending college, or otherwise going to school or participating in a training program?

₁ Yes

₂ No

Q22. To what extent does your *educational program* fit with your career goals?

₁ Very much

₂ Somewhat

₃ Not at all

We are almost finished. Just three more questions

Q23. Compared with six months ago, has your *financial situation* changed? Would you say it is . . .

₂ Much better now?

₁ Somewhat better now?

₀ About the same? OR

₋₁ Worse now?

Speaking of Employment

Q24. Compared with six months ago, has your life or well-being changed? Would you say things are . . .

- ² *Much better now?*
- ¹ *Somewhat better now?*
- ⁰ *About the same? OR*
- ⁻¹ *Worse now?*

Q25. Regarding employment, is there anything that you would like help with now? (e.g., getting a new job, help with benefits, help dealing with change, a job club, etc.)

- ¹ Yes *If "Yes," What would you like help with?* _____

_____)
- ² No
- ³ Don't Know (e.g., not sure)

Thank you very much. Is there anything you would like to add?