

Profiles of the Hard-to-Employ and the Implications for Job Success¹

Elizabeth B. Bolton
Professor of Community Development
Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences²

-
1. This document is FCS9188, one of a series of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published November 2002. Revised May 2006. Reviewed March 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
 2. Elizabeth Bolton, professor, Community Development, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Millie Ferrer-Chancy, Interim Dean

To participate in the Welfare-to-Work program individuals must qualify by meeting specific criteria. In order to qualify as Hard-to-Employ individuals they must be a current recipient of TANF/WTP for at least 30 months or are within 12 months of becoming ineligible or were former TANF/WTP participants and no longer receive benefits because of time limits.

Table 1. Number and Percent of Participants with a particular Risk Factor.

Risk Factor	Frequency	Percent
Current Recipient of TANF	399	82.3
Dropout	205	57.7
Poor Work History	187	38.6
Teen Pregnancy	105	21.6
No High School/GED	78	16.1
Medicaid	67	13.8
Food Stamps	61	12.6

In order to qualify as long-term Welfare Dependent, individuals must be current TANF/WTP recipients and also demonstrate other characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependency, e.g., school drop out, teenage pregnancy, poor work history, victim of domestic violence, etc. All of these criteria can be considered risks associated with welfare dependency. The increased number of risks an individual has associated with their life will certainly affect their ability to find and maintain sustainable employment (Table 1).

Currently, 34% (165) of participants in the program qualify as hard-to-serve and 59% (284) qualify as long-term welfare dependent. The majority of participants are female at 89% while only 11% of the participants are male (see **Figure 1**). The oldest participant in the program to date is 58, while the youngest is 15. The average age of program participants is 31 years. Furthermore, while most participants are female and in their early thirties, the majority are also single with over 51% (251) indicating their marital status as such (see **Figure 2**). Only 10% (44) of participants indicated their current marital status as being married. Slightly over 20% indicated that they were either divorced, separated or widowed. The implications of this demographic are important when we consider that most participants are potentially without a partner to assist them with daily household routines, of which childcare is certainly included. According to **Figure 3**, 54% of participants have at least one and as many as four children. Therefore the importance of childcare becomes critical for single mom's who wish to work.

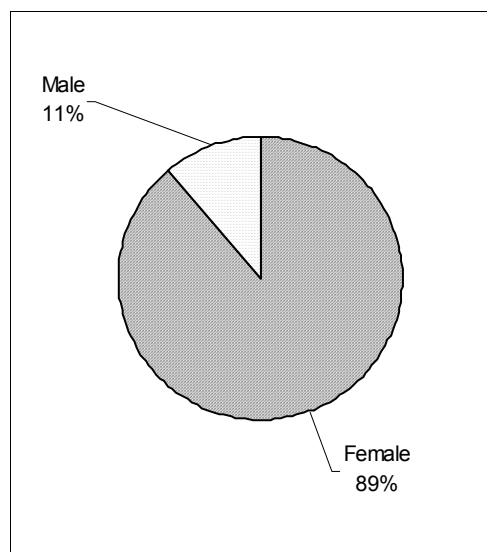


Figure 1. Gender of Participants

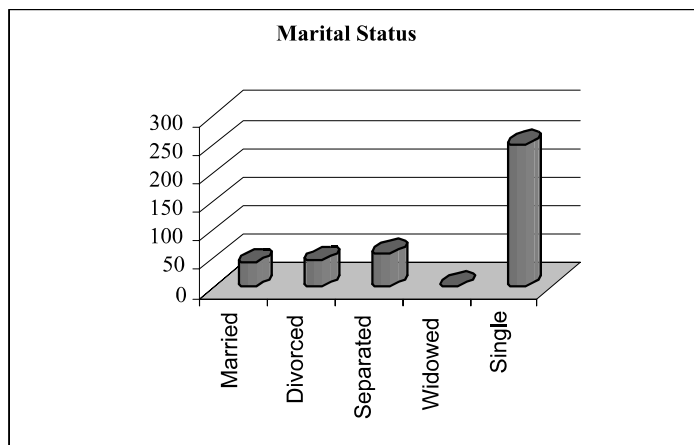


Figure 2. Marital Status

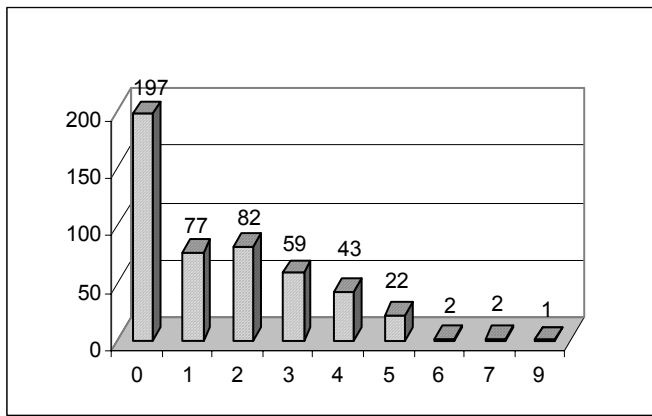


Figure 3. Participants' Number of Children

As mentioned before, most participants have compounded risks which decreases their ability to attain or maintain sustainable employment. When we add up the number of risks with which these individuals must struggle we find that on average most participants have an average of 2.5 risk factors (**Figure 5**). Close to 50% have at least three or more of these risk factors to contend with, some as many as ten. When the number of risk factors are compared between various groups, we find that women on average will have more risk factors than men, with a mean difference of 2.5 that is significantly different. Furthermore, Caucasians will also have a statistically significant higher mean number of risk factors.

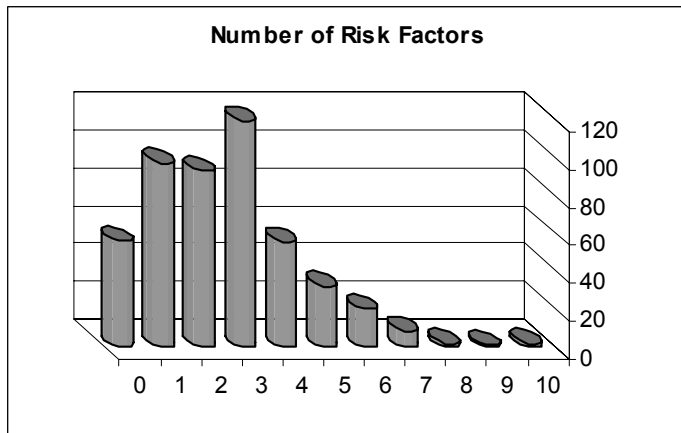


Figure 5. Number of Risk Factors

esteem, and success. This momentum may be the key to finding and maintaining gainful employment.

This report, **Profiles of the Hard to Employ and the Implications for Job Success**, is part of the UF/IFAS Welfare-to-Work Initiative (Grant #A6218) funded by the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation (formerly Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security). The Principal Investigator is Elizabeth B. Bolton, Professor of Community Development, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences.

Being single, and having children are important added risk factors which make it difficult to find sustainable employment for many program participants.

The majority of program participants are African-American with 64% (306). The next largest group were Caucasian with 29% (140) and 7% (32) identified themselves as Hispanic (Figure 4). There were three individuals who identified themselves individually as Filipino, Native American, and Asian. Because there were so few in these categories they were not included in **Figure 4**.

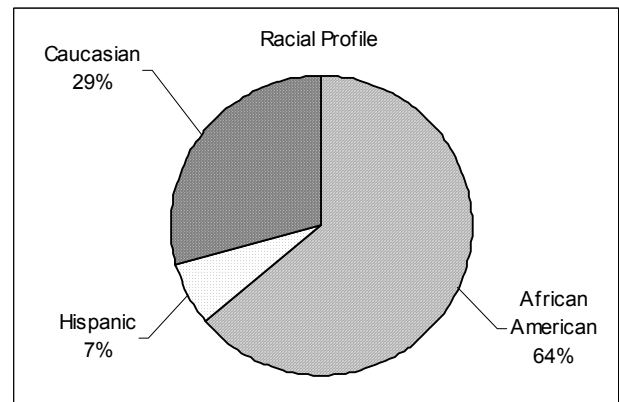


Figure 4. Racial Profile of Participants

Overall, the average participant in the Welfare-to-Work program is female, African-American, single, 31 years of age with more than 2 children and has, on average, 2.5 risk factors associated with their life. The combination of multiple risks and being single with children make the move from welfare to sustainable employment difficult for these individuals. The implications for their ability to succeed in this program would seem equally improbable. Yet, they do succeed and have progressed far beyond their own expectations. Why they succeed is not easy to quantify. There are strong correlations between successful completion of one educational component and another. There seems to be a certain momentum that plays a key role in building individual pride, self

Footnotes

1. This document is FCS9188, one of a series of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published November 2002. Revised May 2006. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
2. Elizabeth Bolton, professor, Community Development, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension service.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Larry Arrington, Dean.

Copyright Information

This document is copyrighted by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) for the people of the State of Florida. UF/IFAS retains all rights under all conventions, but permits free reproduction by all agents and offices of the Cooperative Extension Service and the people of the State of Florida. Permission is granted to others to use these materials in part or in full for educational purposes, provided that full credit is given to the UF/IFAS, citing the publication, its source, and date of publication.